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بررسى تاثير هوش معنوى بر اخلاق حرفه ایى كادر پزشكى بيمارستان آيت اله طالقانى جالوس سيده زينب نقيبى،اسدالهُ مهرارا

# AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ATTITUDES OF IRANAN MA LEARNERS TOWARDS THE ACEDMIC WRITING COURSE 

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#### Abstract

WRITING IS A PROCESS OF EXPLORING IDEAS AND THOUGHTS AND SPEAKING THEM OUT THROUGH WRITING. ONE CAN WRITE ABOUT A TOPIC PROVIDED THAT THEY SHULD HAVE SUFFICIENT THOUGHTS TO PUT INTO WORDS. HOWEVER, IDEAS ARE NOT ENOUGH BY THEMSELVES. THE REASON TO WRITE IS A VITAL ISSUE. THIS PAPER ATTEMPTS TO MAKE AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSE OF WRITING. TO DO SO, AN EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO UNVEIL THE ATTITUDES OF EFL LEARNERS TOWARDS WRITING ACADEMIC ESSAYS. HAVING TAKEN AN OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST, 52 MA CANDIDATES AGED 25-35 BOTH MALE AND FEMALE, WERE GIVEN A 5-POINT LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPED BY PAYNE (2012). IT WAS FOUND THAT THE PARTICIPANTS WERE MOSTLY INTERESTED IN WRITING, AND HAD SUFFICIENT LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE FOR SELF-EXPRESSION. THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT THE RESPONDENTS' MAIN GOAL IN DOING ACADEMIC WRITING WAS TO MEET PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS. THEY ALSO STATED THAT THEY COULD EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH WRITING TO MEET THEIR EMOTIONAL NEEDS. IT WAS ALSO FOUND THAT THE RESPONDENTS WERE MOTIVATED IN THE ESSAY WRITING COURSE BOTH INSTRUMENTALLY AND INTEGRATIVELY.


KEY WORDS: EFL, INTEREST, LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE ,EMOTIONAL NEEDS, MOTIVATION

## 1. Introduction

Writing is an important skill in all academic disciplines at all school levels. Students' ability to write clearly and effectively affects their academic performance across the curriculum (Hidi \& Boscolo, 2007). Furthermore, most professions require good writing skills while others need even higher levels of competency.

Of the four language skills, writing has always been the main concern of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) practitioners and researchers (Jones, 2008). The usual justification for this is that the ability to write in English is considered vital to equip learners for success in college and their future careers (Tuan, 2010). EFL learners generally regard writing as a difficult component in their English language learning and academic writing is considered as a complex activity in higher education as it involves a series of processes and technical knowledge on the part of the student. Students' writing difficulties are related to two main reasons: their negative affect towards writing (i.e., their high writing apprehension and low writing self-efficacy) and the lack

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of regular assessment. The latter is related to other factors, such as the large class size and the use of traditional methods of teaching and assessing writing. These are some of the factors that prevent the students from developing writing autonomy and critical thinking skills.

Modern research on writing suggests that writing is a process that goes through various stages (Kroll, 1990). This process teaches the students to learn to write by writing. In other words, writing is the process of exploring ideas and thoughts and learning about them through writing. The term 'affect' refers to aspects of learners' emotion, feeling, mood, or attitude which condition behavior (Arnold, 1999). It is considered as a very important contributing factor to success in learning. In foreign language learning, aspects like 'attitude' and 'motivation' are the best predictor of foreign language learning achievement. Language apprehension or anxiety is, on the other hand, considered to be an inhibitor for this achievement. In relation to writing, affect has to do with the 'writer's perceptions and beliefs' and the 'writer's personal knowledge' (Abdellatif, 2007).

In addition, the writing process contributes to the development of learners' cognitive skills in attaining the required strategies in the learning process such as analysis, synthesis, inference, etc. (Bacha, 2002). However, most Iranian EFL students have been found to have an inadequate competence in L2 (language 2) writing (Jafari \& Ansari, 2012; Dastjerdi \& Samian, 2011). The failure of Iranian EFL students in L2 writing as effectively as they should can perhaps be attributed to a variety of factors including L2 writing instruction and/or lack of motivation, Writing includes many different cognitive steps that a student must undertake in order to be successful. These steps include memory retrieval, goal setting, planning, problem solving, and evaluation (Flower \& Hayes, 1981). The number and complexity of these steps assumes a high level of motivation on the part of the student.

Motivation for writing is an important factor in writing competence (Pajares, 1996). Students who lack motivation for writing will not readily engage in academic writing activities. These students may exhibit high anxiety about writing, low self-efficacy for writing, and a lack of self-regulation and self-determination when writing.

Motivation is a very large and well-studied field. In fact, it is so large that sometimes it is hard to draw connections among motivation and specific activities such as math and science, or even writing (Hidi \& Boscolo, 2007). With writing being such an integral part of human existence, it is very important that studies of motivation and writing be conducted. It is even more important that the outcomes of these studies have real-world applications that can be implemented to increase the quality of all students' writing.
The first question an instructor of a writing-intensive class might ask when initially meeting students is, "To what extent are these students motivated to write?" The second question is, "Why are these students motivated to the extent they are?" The third question is likely, "How can I increase these students' motivation to write?" These questions, and the lack of clear answers to them, often lead to writing instructors becoming frustrated when teaching writing (Payne, 2012). This study attempts to if there is any positive attitude toward the course essay writing on the part of the master EFL learners of Islamic Azad University of Rasht, Iran.

The Academic Essay writing course is an important constituent of foreign language learning program which is taught both at undergraduate and postgraduate programs. At the undergraduate program, students are introduced to basics of writing, while at the postgraduate program, the learners are expected to learn different types of essays which will finally lead to professional writing and hence producing dissertations and journal articles. Thus, the significance of academic writing cannot be denied. What the students are supposed to produce in this course is usually designated by the respective department; however, the method and style of writing should be in accordance to the standards of writing. In some respects, writing academically resembles doing writing modules in IELTS examinations where candidates are supposed to do two tasks in 60 minutes. In task 1 (about 20 minutes), candidates are asked to look at a diagram or table and present the information in their own words. They are assessed on their ability to organize, present, and possibly compare data, describe the stages of a process,
describe an object or event, or explain how something works. In task 2 (about 40 minutes), candidates are presented with a point of view, argument or problem. They are assessed on their ability to present a solution to the problem, present and justify an opinion, compare and contrast evidence and opinions, evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or arguments. Candidates are also judged on their ability to write in an appropriate style.

## 2. Background

Second language motivation was studied systematically by Gardner (1985) in the Canadian context where there was no globalisation influence. His theory of L2 motivation was based on the belief of L2 learning as a social psychological experiment, because students are confronted with products of another cultural community and their reaction to this situation can be interest and enthusiasm, boredom, or frustration (Gardner, 1983). Based on this notion, he developed the so called the socio-educational model with four major elements: the social milieu in which language learning takes place, individual differences, language acquisition context and outcomes. Within that context, it was hypothesized that cultural belief in that social milieu was affected by attitudinal variables of integrativeness (positive attitudes towards other language community) and attitudes towards learning situation (evaluative reactions to the learning situation). It was hypothesized that language learning motivation was influenced by the above two variables (Gardner, 1988). In the model, integrativeness was considered as the central component of the L2 motivation and as the genuine interest in learning the second language in order to psychologically come closer to other language communities (Gardner, 1997).

The concept of integrativeness was begun to be questioned in the foreign language contexts where they did not have direct contact with the L2 community and with the globalisation phenomenon (Chen, Warden, \& Chang, 2005; Csizer \& Dornyei, 2005; Lamb, 2004). Especially Chinese FL learners were not motivated by the integrativeness and they were motivated by the specific cultural requirements of the country in learning English (Chen et al., 2005). Moreover, Csizer \& Dornyei (2005) found the insufficiency of integrativeness to elicit the language learning motivation of Hungarian learners. They found that the complexity of language learning motivation with integrativeness was closely related to instrumentality (a component associated with utilitarian benefits and goals) and attitudes towards L2 speakers. Within this context integrativeness lost its strength to enlighten the learner motivation. As a result of this, learner motivation was identified with reference to their self-concept. Integrativeness was reinterpreted as "ideal L2 self" and "ought to L2 self" (Csizer \& Dornyei, 2005: 35). Based on these findings L2 Motivational Self System (LMSS) was implemented and tested by Dornyei and his followers from all over the world with the emerging trends of globalization. In LMSS there are three main components as ideal L2 self (L2 specific facet of one's 'ideal self'), ought to L2 self (attributes that one ought to possess to meet the expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes) and L2 learning experience (executive motives related to the immediate language learning environment such as the impact of teacher, curriculum, peers and so on) (Dörnyei, 2009). LMSS was validated in FL and L2 contexts with reference to the emerging learner needs to the globalisation process. Since English has become the communication mode of the globalisation, learners' ideal self is influenced by the international posture or desire to interact with the international community by using English (Csizer \& Kormos, 2009), because learners realize that through learning English they can gain the opportunities of globalisation.

The studies conducted in Pakistani and Chilie found ideal L2 self as the most influential factor in learner motivation (Islam et al., 2013;(Kormos et al., 2011) while studies conducted in Japan, Indonesia, Iran, Hungary and China found attitudes and learning experiences as the most influential factors in learner motivation (Taguchi, 2013; Lamb, 2012). More over these studies found a weak contribution of ought to L2 self to the motivated learning.

Motivation is an essential element of successful language acquisition and is a dynamic process subject to continuous flux (Do"rnyei, 2001). Williams and Burden (1997) suggest that each individual L2 learner's motivation is influenced by both external factors related to the
sociocultural and contextual background of the learner and internal factors related to the individual learner. Internal factors include the learners' attitudes towards the activity, its intrinsic interest, and the perceived relevance and value of the activity.

Motivation is also affected by the learners' feelings of mastery and control over the learning activity and their interest in it. According to Noels (2001), three psychological needs have to be met in order to enhance motivation: "(1) a sense of competency achieved through seeking out and overcoming challenges; (2) autonomy; (3) relatedness - being connected to and esteemed by others belonging to a larger social whole" (p. 54). To increase intrinsic ESL motivation, Oldfather and West (1999) argue that "a sense of self-worth" (p. 16) and "selfdetermination" (p.17) are essential, and learners need to be given "ample opportunities for social interaction and self-expression" (p. 16). Richards (1993) also mentions "personal causation," "interest," and "enjoyment" as indispensable factors.

Both Bolton and Luke (1999) and Lin (1996) suggest that English plays a negligible role in students' lives outside a formal learning environment in Hong Kong since motivation to use and learn English has been predominantly driven by extrinsic desires for vocational or socioeconomic advancement. Some of the major reasons suggested by students for learning English include improving their job opportunities or studying in tertiary institutions in Hong Kong or abroad (Fan, 1999; Hoosain, 2005; Lin \& Detaramani, 1998).

The Academic Writing Motivation was developed based on such aspects of motivation as apprehension, intrinsic and extrinsic goals, perceived value of writing, and self-efficacy for selfregulation (Pajares \& Johnson, 1996; Pajares \& Valiente, 1997; Zimmerman \& Bandura, 1994). Writing apprehension leads to avoiding writing tasks, especially when writing is to be graded (Daly \& Hailey, 1984). Writing apprehension can be loosely defined as the negative feeling of anxiety over writing exercises. Students who have writing apprehension will most always find a way to avoid the writing task by either not turning in work or being absent on days when writing is going to be required. Daly and Miller (1975) developed a 26 -item questionnaire to measure writing apprehension that they patterned after existing scales used to assess communication apprehension. Writing apprehension is often a consequence of lack of confidence in one's capability to write or learn to write - this capability is referred to as writing self-efficacy (Pajares \& Valiante, 1997).

Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as, "personal beliefs about one's capabilities to organize and implement actions necessary for attaining designated levels of performance" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Students with high self-efficacy beliefs show greater intrinsic interest in tasks, set higher achievement goals, put forth more effort when they encounter difficulties and approach difficult tasks as challenges (Payne, 2012). Pajares (2003) discusses ways of measuring writing self-efficacy that have proven popular. One way of measuring student's writing self-efficacy is to assess students' confidence in their ability to successfully use proper grammar and perform mechanical writing skills in their compositions. Another way of measuring writing self-efficacy involves assessing students' confidence in completing writing tasks (Pajares, 2003). Such tasks might include writing a research paper, writing a literary analysis paper, writing a short story, writing a letter, writing an email, or posting a written response in an online forum.
Self-regulation refers to the process of taking control of and evaluating one's own learning and behavior. Students' perceived self-regulatory skills predict the confidence with which they face academic tasks. Students who have the confidence to use self-regulated learning strategies have higher intrinsic motivation and academic achievement (Shunk \& Zimmerman, 1994).

An essential component of motivation is goal orientation. There are two basic types of motivational goals: intrinsic goals and extrinsic goals. Intrinsic motivation is the undertaking of an activity for its inherent benefits rather than some other identifiable consequence. Intrinsic motivation exists between the individual and the activity to be performed. That is to say not all people are motivated to do all tasks; there is a go-between that is intrinsic motivation. Because of its existence in between the individual and the task, intrinsic motivation has sometimes been defined as something being interesting or the rewards one receives from being engaged in an

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intrinsically motivated task. Intrinsic motivation is believed to result in long-term changes in behavior and greater persistence toward achievement (Ryan \& Deci, 2000).
Ryan and Deci (2000) assert that there is a widely varying gradient of autonomy found in extrinsic motivation. For instance, a student completing a writing assignment just because his parents threatened to ground him is vastly different from the student who does the writing assignment because he believes it will help them get into his chosen profession. Both of these examples involve extrinsic motivation, but in the latter there is much more choice and autonomy than in the former.

Gardner and Lambert (1972, as cited in Fazel, \& Ahmadi, 2011).) differentiate between two kinds of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Integrative orientation occurs once a learner tries to identify himself with the culture of L2 group; it characterizes students who study a second language because they are interested in the cultural values of the target language group. An instrumental motive occurs when a learner wishes to attain a goal by means of L2 and refers to language situations where the student has a utilitarian goal for instance employment, professional advancement, or exam purposes. They suggest that integrative motivation is more effective for second language acquisition. It is believed that students who like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which the language is used are most successful. In contrast to integrative motivation, there is instrumental motivation. Hudson (2000) characterizes instrumental motivation by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language.

It is important to remember that motivation is not fixed and that teachers can work actively to improve students' motivation (Do"rnyei, 2001). One way of enhancing students' motivation and engagement to write is to provide opportunities for them to engage at a more meaningful level with the language through refocusing their writing classes to make them relevant to their social and cultural context as well as designing writing tasks which have meaning and interest to them and offer opportunities for social interaction and self-expression (Lo \& Hyland, 2007).
Working on elementary school students, Lo \& Hyland (2007) found out that encouraging young writers to write about topics of interest and relevance to them and providing them with genuine audiences can have a liberating and confidence-building effect. With the importance of the learner status in the circle of language learning; affective factors such as learners' attitudes, empathy, inhibition, motivation and anxiety have been accounted for successful outcomes of language learning in different contexts, ( $\mathrm{Na}, 2007$ ).

A study by Pajares and Valiante (1997) reported that despite no gender differences in writing performance, females had higher writing self-efficacy than males. One study indicated that in general, females are more motivated in the feminine sex-typed areas of reading and writing while males are more motivated in the masculine sex-typed areas of mathematics, science, and sports. The gender gap in motivation related to mathematics and sciences narrows as students get older, but the gender gap in motivation related to reading and writing remains pronounced throughout the school years (Meece et al., 2006).
Daane (1991) found that students who reported early pleasure in reading and continued exposure to literature wrote with more syntactic and semantic complexity and imaginative language than their peers who reported early frustration with reading and infrequent or no continued exposure to literature. Pascarella et al. (2004) concluded that a higher amount of reading was related to improvement in attitude toward literacy activities. The amount of reading in which a student engages relates to his or her writing ability and motivation.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Question

This study seeks to answer the following question:
How do the Iranian MA EFL students view the academic essay writing course?

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### 3.2. Participants

The participants of the study included 52 MA EFL students ( 20 males and 32 females) at Islamic Azad University of Rasht, Iran. They were aged from 25 to 35. They had enrolled in Advanced Academic writing course, for the academic year 2015/16.

### 3.3. Procedure

An Oxford placement test was administered to the study population which placed them at an upper intermediate level. Then a questionnaire developed by Payne (2012) was adapted for the participants. Some of the items were removed or modified to suit the study population. So the original questionnaire had 37 items. The questionnaire followed a 5 -point Likert Scale; For each item there was a statement that prompts participants to indicate their level of agreement with the statement. There was a response scale for each item for the participants to use to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. The response scale ranged from zero to four, and values for the scale were as follows: $0=$ Strongly Disagree; $1=$ Disagree; $2=$ neutral; $3=$ Agree; $4=$ Strongly Agree. The questionnaires were distributed among 52 participants and the collected data were then analyzed. The collected data was subjected to analysis at item level through descriptive statistics. The frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of each item were calculated.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The result of the placement test is given in Table (1)
Table 1: Result of placement test
Descriptive Statistics

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Participants | 52 | 19 | 61 | 43.62 | 10.434 |
| Valid | N | 52 |  |  |  |
| (listwise) |  |  |  |  |  |

As Table (1) indicates, there were 52 participants in the placement test. The minimum score was 19 and the maximum one was 61 with a mean score of 43.62 and SD of 10.43.
To test the homogeneity of the scores in the placement test, a normality test was run as given in Table (2):

Table 2: Test of normality
Descriptive

|  | Statistic | Std. Error |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Mean | 43.62 | 1.447 |  |
| 95\% Confidence Interval | Lower Bound | 40.71 |  |
| for Mean | Upper Bound | 46.52 |  |
|  | 43.94 |  |  |
| Median | 45.00 |  |  |
| Variance | 108.869 |  |  |
| Std. Deviation | 10.434 |  |  |
| Minimum | 19 |  |  |
| Maximum | 61 |  |  |
| Range | 42 |  |  |
| Interquartile Range | 15 |  |  |
| Skewness | -.391 | .330 |  |
| Kurtosis | -.405 | .650 |  |

Kolmogorov-Smirnova ${ }^{\text {a }}$ Shapiro-Wilk

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| Statistic | Df | Sig. | Statistic | Df | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| .091 | 52 | $.200^{*}$ | .973 | 52 | .273 |

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The Shapiro-Wilk test result indicates the p-value is 0.273 and it can be concluded that the data comes from a normal distribution. And the result of the normality test indicates that the participants were homogenous.

A questionnaire developed by Payne (2012) was distributed among the participants and 50 copies were fully completed and returned. The questionnaire contained 37 items. They covered two general areas: linguistic and metalinguistic factors. The linguistic items included such questions as their command of vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation in English. The metalinguistic factors were divided into interest and goal. The items related to goal inquired the respondents' intention regarding the reason for writing academically which finally resulted in two new categories, namely finding a job and getting self-satisfaction.


Figure 1: Respondents' awareness of their linguistic knowledge
The linguistic factor covered items on the respondents' command of grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation in writing. As Figure (1) shows, $14.76 \%$ of the respondents strongly agreed that they had good ability in writing, $32.47 \%$ believed that their writing skill was fine, $25.83 \%$ expressed no comments, $26.57 \%$ said that they had problems with writing skill and finally only $9.23 \%$ strongly believed that they had problems.

The following tables reflect the views of the respondents about the items on the questionnaire.


Figure 2: Respondents' interest in academic writing
As Figure (2) shows, $22.57 \%$ of the respondents found academic writing a very interesting course and $36.86 \%$ liked. However, $22 \%$ had no idea, $14 \%$ disagreed, and finally $4.57 \%$ of the respondents strongly disagreed with writing essays.

The next category which displays metalinguistic factors included the attitudes of the respondents toward writing essays in terms of their goal as given in Figure (3).


Figure 3: Respondents' goals for doing academic essays
The goal included both better future careers and self-satisfaction. Statistics show that $29.92 \%$ showed their strong agreement for the writing essays course to help them reach their goal, $45.83 \%$ showed their agreement, $16.29 \%$ had no idea; $20 \%$ said that they didn't like writing.

## 5. Conclusion

The study on the attitudes of Iranian MA EFL students towards the academic essay writing course at Islamic Azad University of Rasht, Iran, revealed that about half of the respondents

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(about $46 \%$ ) believed that they had an acceptable level of linguistic knowledge which could help them in writing academic essays. Although this result is not very significant, it may suggest that the sample population can represent a group of learners who are at a level which can be a good launching pad for postgraduate studies.

Based on the findings, a majority (about $59 \%$ ) of the study population had a positive idea about writing essays. And finally, regarding the reasons for doing the academic essay writing course, it can be concluded that a majority of respondents (about 74\%) had a positive view that goal was very important to them. And this goal was equally shared between getting a good job and fulfilling their emotional satisfaction.

In spite of the general agreement on the part of the respondents to the items indicating that their linguistic knowledge is at an acceptable level, they generally like writing academically and their goals are very well defined for them, there is a serious hazard. Since academic writing is an indispensable part of any academic curriculum, there must be a kind of enthusiasm toward this course, but as the general figure shows about $20 \%$ of the respondents showed no willingness to specify their stance against this course and about $20 \%$ showed their partial or total disagreement with this course. Therefore, it is of vital importance to address this issue more elaborately and extensively to detect the impediments to progress in writing. As Lo and Hyland (2007) stressed motivation is a key factor. Motivation is influenced by learners' sense of agency and feelings of mastery and control over the learning activity and their interest in it. Hence, it is essential for the instructor to identify the factor that can assist the students in enhancing their self-motivation especially in writing task. In order to make the students motivated during the lesson, it is necessary for the instructors to tailor the lesson in a way that it can captivate the students' interest in writing. The writing tasks, in fact, should be able to provide opportunities for the students to write with interest.

Finally, to answer the research question which seeks to unveil the Iranian MA EFL learner's attitudes toward doing the academic writing course, it can be said the academic writing course is viewed as a means for the learners to achieve their end goals: better career and selfsatisfaction. Therefore, it is suggested that writing teachers present to the students the topics which are more useful for occupational purposes in addition to those which can help students express their feelings, as well.

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# THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL-ORIENTED VS. ECLECTIC-ORIENTED INSTRUCTION ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION WAS AN ATTEMPT TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL-ORIENTED VS. ECLECTIC-ORIENTED INSTRUCTION ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY. TO THAT END, AN OPT TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO 110 EFL STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INSTITUTES. LEARNERS WHO SCORED BETWEEN ONE ABOVE AND BELOW THE STANDARD DEVIATION WERE SELECTED FOR THE STUDY, BECAUSE THIS STUDY FOCUSED ON ELEMENTARY LEARNERS. SO 40 LEARNERS WERE SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY AND THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP, EACH GROUP CONTAINED 20 LEARNERS. THEN A READING COMPREHENSION TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS AS A PRE-TEST TO TAKE THEIR INITIAL KNOWLEDGE OF READING COMPREHENSION. THE READING SECTION OF THE PET TEST WAS SELECTED TO TEST THE READING ABILITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WERE TAUGHT USING AN ECLECTIC APPROACH IN FIFTEEN SESSIONS .THE CONTROL GROUP WERE TAUGHT USING A STRUCTURAL-ORIENTED APPROACH. FINALLY BOTH GROUPS SAT FOR THE POST-TEST FOR READING COMPREHENSION TEST. AN INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST WAS CONDUCTED TO SEE IF STRUCTURAL-ORIENTED APPROACH HAD ANY EFFECTS ON READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY. THE RESULTS WERE COMPUTED AND ANALYZED THROUGH SPSS AND IT WAS EXPLORED THAT ECLECTED-ORIENTED APPROACH HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY. THE RESULTS ALSO INDICATED THAT THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE PARTICIPANTS/ SCORES USING A STRUCTURAL-ORIENTED APPROACH IN THIS RESEARCH.


KEY WORDS: READING COMPREHENSION, ECLECTIC-ORIENTED APPROACH, STRUCTURAL-ORIENTED APPROACH, EFL

## INTRODUCTION

In the modern educated world communication is a fundamental skill necessary for success in every venue of life. We are constantly bombarded with communicated messages, whether they are encoded in spoken, written, or visual forms. Consequently, one of the essential components of the effective use of communication is the ability to read written language proficiently; however, reading seems to be a lost art in our modern society. Although the majority of the population can read, many children, teenagers, and adults seriously struggle with this highly important skill, making it necessary to determine what steps educators need to take to improve reading aptitude amongst the general public.
There have been Different language teaching methods to improve the quality of teaching and achieve the desired impact on students. Some of these methods could not develop the learners'
reading comprehension ability. Therefore a lot of methods have come to overcome the limitations of the previous ones. One of the accepted methods in the field of foreign language teaching (EFL) is the eclectic method.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to compare the effect of structured-oriented instruction and eclectic-oriented instruction on Iranian EFL learners 'reading comprehension ability. When learners comprehend, they interpret, integrate, critique, infer analysis, connect and evaluate ideas in texts. They negotiate multiple meanings not only in their heads but in the minds of others. When comprehending, learners strive to process text beyond word-level to get to the big picture. When comprehension is successful, learners are left with a sense of satisfaction from having understood the meaning of a text. Comprehension takes the learner to a new level of active understanding and insight. It enhances language and vocabulary knowledge. Good learners use a variety of comprehension strategies simultaneously and, according to Pressley (2002), they know how to deliberately apply specific strategies to aid their comprehension, particularly with regard to challenging texts/information. Goals of school instruction in Iran often include a statement of the desirability of critical reading skills; however, there is seldom a sequential plan for the development of these skills below Pre- university level.

## Significance of the study

1. For teacher

The significance of the research is to explore and prove whether the eclectic approach is effective to be applied in teaching reading so that the learners can improve their reading ability as optimally as possible. The result of the study will be used as a consideration to raise teachers' awareness in developing and applying the suitable technique in their teaching and learning process.
2. for student

The use of the eclectic approach in the teaching and learning process will surely attract the students' attention because they feel that whatever they study in the classroom is actually useful for their daily life. They think that the classroom situation is interesting and the students can imagine themselves in a situation related to the text but beyond their own experience. Besides, the use of the eclectic approach in teaching reading will activate the students to learn.

## Review of the Related Literature

The last decade has brought a growing consensus on the range of skills that serve as the foundation for reading and writing ability (Neuman, 2000). Children must develop code-related skills, phonological awareness; the alphabetic principle many systematic correspondences between sounds and spellings, and a repertoire of highly familiar words that can be easily and automatically recognized (McCardle, 2001)(McCardle \& Chhabra, , 2004) Given the tremendous attention that early literacy has received recently in policy circles and the increasing diversity of our child population, it is important and timely to take stock of these critical dimensions as well as the strengths and gaps in our ability to measure these skills effectively. (Roskos, 2006) Verbal abilities are consistently the best predictors of later reading achievement (Scarborough, 2001) skilled readers typically draw upon multiple levels of the language system with abilities encompassing vocabulary, syntax, and discourse. (Anastasopoulos, 2003) Vocabulary size in optimal settings may increase exponentially in the early years with children learning to comprehend words spoken to them before they are able to produce them on their own. (Snow, 1998) Word knowledge, however, is not just developed through exposure to increasingly complex language, but to knowledge-building language experiences that involve children in developing and refining networks of categorically-related concepts. (Neuman, 2001)

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For children to become skilled readers they will need to develop a rich conceptual knowledge base and verbal reasoning abilities to understand messages conveyed through print. Successful reading ultimately consists of knowing a relatively small tool kit of unconscious procedural skills, accompanied by a massive and slowly built-up store of conscious content knowledge. It is the higher-order thinking skills, knowledge, and dispositional capabilities that enable young children to come to understand what they are reading. (Celano, 2006) Learners who struggle with comprehension possess inefficient strategies and use them inflexibly. They are usually unaware of what good comprehenders do and need to be shown how and when to apply a small repertoire of comprehension strategies. Providing students with explicit instruction in comprehension strategies can be an effective way to help them overcome difficulties in understanding texts (Graham \& Bellert, 2004). The more explicit the comprehension strategy and self-regulatory instruction, the higher the likelihood that the learner will make significant gains in comprehension (Manset-Williamson \& Nelson, 2005). As learners become more competent and confident of their comprehension, the less support they require from the teacher. (Pearson, 2002)
From the later 1960s, Situational Language Teaching began to be rejected. Later on, some new principles were rapidly accepted. They became known as the Communicative Approach of which there are many versions. All of them aim to "(a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication." (Richards, 1986, p.66). It starts from a theory of language as communication. Classroom activities focus on meaningful tasks and information sharing. In these activities, students contribute a lot in a cooperative atmosphere. The teacher is the facilitator of the communication process and the participant of learning-teaching group. It is a great progress to include communicative and contextual elements into teaching since language is a tool for communication. Its classes are much more interesting. However, sometimes students have no sense of achievement. It is difficult for students with poor grammatical ability to develop ideal communicative competence. And the adoption of CLT requires the development of materials and evaluation systems.
In the mid-fifties, Audiolingualism appeared on the basis of Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) in America. Although in many aspects, it sounds similar to the Oral Approach, it differs in its alliance with American structural linguistics and contrastive analysis. Language is viewed as a system containing meaningful elements governed by certain rules. Behaviorism manifests itself in this approach. Language is regarded as verbal behavior and habit formation is considered crucial. Dialogues and drills are the basic elements of practice. Aural-oral training is provided before developing other skills. This approach leads to widely used courses such as English 900. When its theoretical foundations were attacked, this approach declined. Its failure can also be traced to "lack of effectiveness of the techniques in the long run" (Stern, 1983, p. 465). Basic patterns cannot ensure learners the ability to talk about different topics.

## Materials and Methods

The study was conducted with 40 Iranian students who are studying English at different institutes in Iran. Researcher tried to have the same number of female and male participants in both experimental and control group.

## Data Analysis Procedure

The results of post test were analyzed for further discussion via ANCOVA on the scores obtained from experimental and control group to see whether eclectic approach in reading had any effects on EFL learners' reading comprehension ability.

## Results

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT (Oxford Placement Test) test. The results are shown in Table (4-1).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

| $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | SD |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 110 | 32 | 10.32 |

This table shows the result obtained from the proficiency test, OPT. The mean and standard deviation are presented.
Table (2) shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one excluded.

Table 2: Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test Cases

| Included | Excluded <br> Percent |  | N | Total <br> Percent | N | Percent |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pre-test ${ }^{*}$ group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |
| Post-test ${ }^{*}$ group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |

Forty participants were selected for this study. They were divided into two groups, experimental and control. The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in table (3).

Table 3: Descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pretest | 20 | 18.00 | 25.00 | 21.5000 | 1.96013 |
| Posttest | 20 | 28.00 | 39.00 | 33.0500 | 2.87411 |
| Valid N (list wise | 20 |  |  |  |  |

## Interpretive Statistics

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in the table 4.4. The mean and standard deviation of each group are included.
In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis "Eclectic-oriented instruction will not affect Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ability", the differences between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA.
Before running ANCOVA, the following hypotheses were examined:
$\square$ Linear relationship between variables (pre-test and post -test)
$\square$ Equality of variances
$\square$ Homogeneity of regression
$\square$ The linear relationship between pre-test and post-test was examined through spread


As graph(1) shows, because the regression lines are parallel, there is a linear relationship between the two variables, pre-test and post-test. It means that the relationship between the two variables in both groups is the same. In order to examine the equality of variances, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
In order to examine the equality of variances, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Table 4: Levine's Test of Equality of Error Variance

| F | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| .517 | 1 | 18 | .481 |

According to table 4 the calculated F is not significant. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.
The data in table (5) are related to test of homogeneity of regression. Before running covariance, between-subjects effects of pre-test-group should be investigated.

Table 5 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

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| Source | $\begin{array}{l}\text { Type III Sum of } \\ \text { Squares }\end{array}$ |  | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | \(\left.\begin{array}{l}Partial <br>

Squared\end{array}\right]\) Eta

As table 5 shows, between subjects effect $(a, b)$ is not significant $(F=0.075, \operatorname{sig}=0.787)$. It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between - subjects effect of post-test and the group to show whether mean scores of the two groups are the same or not. The result of this analysis is demonstrated in table 6.

Table 6: Mean of reading comprehension ability

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| pretest | 20 | 18.00 | 25.00 | 21.5000 | 1.96013 |
| posttest | 20 | 28.00 | 39.00 | 33.0500 | 2.87411 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 20 |  |  |  |  |

Table 7 shows the means of dependent variable of reading comprehension ability. The data demonstrate that the means of experimental group are upper than control group. Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of reading comprehension ability in experimental and control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table 4.8.

Table 7: Sum of analysis of covariance

| Source | Type lll Sum of Square | df | Mean Score | F |  | Sig |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Partial Eta Squared |  |  |  |  |  |
| Corrected Model | 1879.415 | 2 | 939.71 | 354.48 | .00 | .95 |
| Pretest | 818.52 | 1 | 818.52 | 308.76 | .00 | .89 |
| Group | 805.42 | 1 | 805.48 | 303.84 | .00 | .89 |
| Error | 98.08 | 37 | 2.65 |  |  |  |
| Total | 46200 | 40 |  |  |  |  |

As it can be seen, the corrected model ( $\mathrm{f}=00, \mathrm{~F}=354.48$ ) is statistically significant. The results $(\mathrm{F}=303.84, \mathrm{Sig}=.00, \mathrm{Eta}=.89)$ shows that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is significance difference between experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis "eclectic-oriented instruction will not affect Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ability" will be rejected, so it can be concluded that eclectic approach had an effect on Iranian EFL Learners reading comprehension ability.

## Conclusion

Educational researchers argue that children do not learn to read naturally; therefore, when used independently, whole language or language experience methods are not an effective way to teach reading to elementary students (Pressley \& Rankin,

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1994). As Spache and Spache (1969) point out, "Few of the reading behaviors we expect to see in comprehension or critical reading, except perhaps vague main ideas and retention of scattered details, appear spontaneously among pupils (p. 470). Secondly, children's reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities and vocabularies do not develop simultaneously. Instead, their reading and writing abilities develop at a much slower rate than their speaking and listening abilities. Therefore, information cannot be easily transferred from one mode of communication to another at this stage of development (Matthes, 1972).
The whole language method teaches beginning readers to use pictorial clues to identify unknown words, but what happens when the student progresses beyond picture books? For these reasons, the whole language method falls short as a useful method for teaching reading to elementary students.

The results of the present study also supports the findings of the former studies indicating that an eclectic approach to teaching reading has a stronger influence on the reading comprehension ability of EFL learners.

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# INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THE CURRENT STUDY WAS EXECUTED TO EXPLORE THE PROBABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND THE SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL (ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE) LEARNERS. MATERIALS FOR THIS RESEARCH STUDY INVOLVED ROSENBERG'S QUESTIONNAIRE, ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST, AND TEST OF SPEAKING TASK. A TOTAL OF 32 INTERMEDIATE FEMALE STUDENTS, STUDYING AT NOURELAHI LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN TABRIZ, CONTRIBUTED IN THE PRESENT STUDY. THE PARTICIPANTS FIRST OF ALL WERE ENQUIRED TO FILL THE ROSENBERG'S QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE CHARACTERIZED AS EITHER LOW OR HIGH SELF-ESTEEM. TO EXAM THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS PRESENTED IN THE EXISTING STUDY, PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT WAS USED AS THE KEY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS. THE UPSHOTS SHOWED A STRONG SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND THE SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS. THE ACHIEVED SCORES OF SPEAKING PERFORMANCE HAD A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HIGH SELF-ESTEEM OF THE LEARNERS, THAT IS, THE HIGHER SELF-ESTEEM THE LEARNERS, BETTER THEIR PERFORMANCE ON SPEAKING.


KEYWORDS: SELF-ESTEEM, DESCRIPTIVE SPEAKING PERFORMANCE, TASK, SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.

## 1. Introduction

Speaking skill is one of the four language skills in learning English language in EFL setting. Oral performance refers to second language learners' performance in speaking. Speaking plays an essential role in language learning. It is clear that learning of speaking is the most important skill that second language learners need to develop their ability to communicate ideas and information effectively in target language. Speaking can be recognized as an integral part of language learning process in ELT classroom.
Khansir (2013) argued that "Today, English language is used as a world language; it is used as language in international business, sciences and medicine. Even in countries where English is not first language, a number of English words are used (p.1141)". English is the most common language that is widely used, and it has a special place in the school curriculum in foreign countries. Today, the role of English language is so important in all scientific societies in general and the role of English speaking is very vital in spoken communication in particular.

Another significant factor affecting language learning is self-esteem. Bandura's self-esteem component of social cognitive theory describes how self-perceptions regarding the capability to perform specific tasks strongly influence one's engagement in and successful completion of a task (Klassen, 2002). According to the self-esteem theory, those who do not believe in their skills and capacities avoid engaging in tasks which require those skills, while people who believe in their abilities do not give up in the face of difficulties (Nazzal, 2008). According to Bandura, "If self-efficacy is lacking, people tend to behave ineffectually, even though they know what to do" (1986, p. 425).
Self-esteem has always played a crucial role in learning language in general and in speaking in particular. Some of the speaking problems are closely related to psychological factors out of which self-esteem is an overwhelming is- sue that has determining effects on language learning. What this points to is that the importance of self-esteem as a crucial factor affecting motivation may not be underestimated. One way to clear out speaking problem of the learners is to make a connection between self-esteem and speaking skill.
This study aimed at finding out how psychological factors such as self-esteem Affects the' speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners.

## 2. Literature Review

The role of self-esteem in learning second language as is one of the major important factors is very vital; because, success or failure of a learner depends mostly on the degree of ones' self-esteem. There are so few researchers attempted to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and speaking performance of the EFL learners. Some of these studies which are related to self esteem and other skills are mentioned below:
In keeping with the study by Badran A. in (1999) among 50 randomly chosen university scholars about discovering a strong relationship between self-esteem and writing achievement, no significant correlation was described in this study. Neither was any report related with the low level of self-esteem and its correlation with low level of writing; furthermore, nor was any outcome concerns with a association between high level of self-esteem and high level of writing performance.
Also in other two studies that investigated the relationship between self-esteem and writing ability in Saudi Arabia (Al-Hattab, 2006) and in Iran (Fahim and Rad, 2011) reported significant relationship between self-esteem and writing ability.
Gahungu (2007) conducted his PhD dissertation on investigating the relationship between self-esteem and language ability of 37 university students studying French. The data of the participants' self-efficacy were gathered through a questionnaire with 40 questions to measure their level of confidence, and a cloze test to measure their level of proficiency in French, and also some interviews and observation. In the end, he reached the positive effects of self-efficacy on language learning.
Rahimi and Abedini (2009) in a study examined the relationship between self-efficacy and listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners based on their listening comprehension test performance. The results showed a statistically significant correlation between high and low self-efficacious students and their rate of listening comprehension. Furthermore, self-efficacy in listening was significantly related to listening proficiency.
Hetthong and Teo (2013) searched the relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance and explored whether students' overall writing self-efficacy predicts their overall writing performance. The participants were 51 third-year students of a Thai university, and a questionnaire and a paragraph writing test were used. The results showed "there is a significant positive relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance both at the section level and the sub-skill level. Furthermore, the overall writing self-efficacy predicts the overall writing performance" (p. 157).
Kalanzadeh, et. al. (2013) examined the impact of Iranian EFL students' self-esteem on their speaking skill. The participants of this study were selected by using a questionnaire in
order to diagnose the high and low self-esteem ones. After that, a standard oral proficiency test was used in order to measure five sub-skills related to speaking: vocabulary, structure, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehensibility. After analyzing the data, the results showed a statistically significant correlation between the participants' self- esteem and speaking ability.
Therefore, the aim of the current study was to find the relationship between personality type and speaking performance of EFL learners in Iran.

## Research Question and Hypothesis

The research question and hypothesis pretended in this research study are as the succeeding:
Research Question: Is there any significant relationship between the self-esteem and the speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners?
Null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the self-esteem and the speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Design of the study

With the intention of discovering suitable responses to the pretended questions, the researchers followed assured and solid processes and made use of definite instruments, which are described.

### 3.2 Participants

The sample for this study was selected from a population of initially 50 female Iranian intermediate students of English, studying in Nourelahi Language Institute, Tabriz. To be included in the last subject group, partakers who involved the age collection of 15-21, were demanded to join all stages of the research study. Though, 18 partakers were not capable enough to be involved in the analysis and were accordingly removed from the complete sample. Consequently, out of the original group of 50 partakers, just 32 were found competent to be involved in the ending analysis of data.

### 3.3 Materials

Tapping the essential data, Rosenberg's questionnaire was run to the students as the main data collection device, which was targeted at defining which partakers were low selfesteem and which ones were high self-esteem. Two descriptive speaking tests were correspondingly used to define the learners' speaking ability. And a language placement test to ration the student's proficiency level. The subsequent segment is dedicated to the providing of a sufficient description of language placement test, Rosenberg's questionnaire (RQ), and two descriptive speaking tests used in this study.

### 3.3.1 Oxford Placement Test by Lynda Edwards

This test involves 60 short items, each with four alternative selections from which the testees have to select the correct response. The first 50 items are grammar and vocabulary, and the remaining 10 items, nevertheless, are reading comprehension tests.

### 3.2.2 Rosenberg's Self-esteem Questionnaire

Rosenberg's standardized questionnaire of self-esteem was used to assess individual selfesteem, therefore it was examined through using item reply theory. The Rosenberg selfesteem scale contained 10 questions and each question involved 4 choices, all of which were offered in Persian language to avoid any misperception for the Iranian learners.

### 3.3.3 Tow Descriptive Speaking Topics

A set of data collection tools was recycled to analyze produced speech from partakers with the purpose of measuring their English language speaking ability. In order to do this the researcher did use two topics for descriptive speaking: 1) Describe about Tabriz. 2) Who is your favorite person? Describe his/her outstanding characteristics.

### 3.4 Procedures

With the aim of running this research study the succeeding phases were taken in the current study. With the purpose of clearing the language proficiency level of the learners, 50 female students were taken apart in a placement test (Oxford Placement Test). After taking the placement test, 32 of them could meet the requirement of the study, it means that proficiency level of 18 of them couldn't place at the same level. The given time was 60 minutes.
Then in another session Rosenberg's questionnaire of self esteem was given to the study partakers. The investigators prepared it a point to make available the students with some indications concerning the responding process and the significance of their careful answering. The given time for responding the questionnaire was about 10 minutes. After running the test in two different sessions the researchers (Ph. D) asked the learners to speak about the topics individually. The given time was 5 to 8 minutes to speak about the first topic. After two days the partakers had next descriptive topic to speak about, again. This (second oral exam) would be done with the purpose of providing more precise and correct scores of the partakers' speaking ability.
The partaker's speaking abilities were rated by two Ph. D raters in line with the scoring standards of TOEFL (taking cohesion/coherence, grammatical accuracy, appropriate word choice into account, pronunciation). Therefore for each partaker there was a number (ranging from 0 to 20) which revealed his or her descriptive speaking ability.
Because every partaker had spoken two times, and more additionally the speaking abilities were rated by three high qualified raters, their speaking abilities were analyzed and scored individually. Then the results were given out by team decision.
Data then were entered into SPSS statistical software. The research question went through Pearson Correlation test.

## 4. Results

In order to appraise the relationship between self-esteem and the descriptive speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was run. As the results displayed in table 1, mean score obtained from QSE test is 15.28 and its' standard deviation is 6.285 whereas the mean of ESPT is 13.69 and its' standard deviation is 3.374 . The lowest score is 7 and the highest score is 19 . So, it revealed that there was significant relationship between the self-esteem questionnaire (QSE) and English speaking performance test (ESPT) in this research.

Table1. The Mean and Standard Deviation of Self-Esteem Questionnaire (QSE) and English Speaking Performance Test (ESPT) based on descriptive statistics

|  | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| ESPT | 32 | 13.69 | 3.374 | 7 | 19 |
| QSE | 32 | 15.28 | 6.285 | 6 | 28 |

As table 2 shows, the mean score of speaking performance of low self-esteem of the learners is 12.26 and its' standard deviation is 3.331 , while the mean score of high self-esteem learners' speaking performance is 15.77 and its' standard deviation is 2.204Indeed, based on the upshots, high self-esteem subjects were characterized by a better performance on speaking performance compared to low self-esteem subjects.

Table2. Case Summaries of Speaking Performance

| Self-esteem | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Low | 19 | 12.26 | 3.331 | 7 | 18 |

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| High | 13 | 15.77 | 2.204 | 11 | 19 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Total | 32 | 13.69 | 3.374 | 7 | 19 |

As table 2 shows, the Correlation Coefficient calculated regarding the relationship between selfesteem and the speaking performance of subjects equals .639, with the level of significance being 0.00 , which, of course, points to the existence of a statistically significant correlation between the two variables in question. So, it revealed that there was significant relationship between the self-esteem questionnaire (QSE) and English speaking performance test (ESPT) in this research.

Table3. Correlation

|  |  | ESPT | QSE |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ESPT | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.639^{+*}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 32 | 32 |
| QSE | Pearson Correlation | $.639^{+*}$ | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 32 | 32 |

## 5. DISCUSSION

In the current study, an endeavor was made to discover response to the question in relation to the relationship between self-esteem and the speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners. Proper statistical procedures and processes were followed to achieve the essential answers for the research question. The analysis confirmed that learners with high self-esteem performed better than the students with low self-esteem. As it is clear self-esteem played a very significant and main role in learners' spoken production. Even though, in line with Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Çetinkaya (2007), self-esteem is the first and key factor in speaking performance. Consequently, the researchers came to the conclusion that self-esteem might possibly play a basic role as well.
This study was in proportion to McCroskey and McCroskey's (1986a, 1986b) findings that willingness to communicate is positively associated with self-esteem and self-perceived communication competence. Furthermore, this study verified that as Chan and McCroskey (1987) comprehended, learners with higher self-esteem were more likely to have more speaking performance in class than those who had lower self-esteem.
In relation to the consequences of this study, as Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu (2004) claim, students who show willingness to communicate in various contact situations are more inclined to initiate communication in the classroom.
As this research has proved, in accordance with Yashima's (2002) study, students' selfconfidence and self-esteem in L2 communicative competence is important for their willingness to be involved in L2 communication. Therefore, as it is found in this study, high self-esteem can have a positive impact on learners' speaking performance.

## 6. Conclusion

The chief purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and speaking performance of Iranian EFL Learners. With the intention of finding obvious verification for this relationship, the collected data were analyzed through Pearson Correlation Coefficient test. As it is crystal clear, from the results point of view, we can claim that having a high self-esteem may assurance the high quality of speaking performances in terms of fluency and accuracy. All in all, it must be highlighted that the

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effect of high self-esteem had strong sound effects on speaking performance of the learners.
This study is addressed here the limitations of the past conducted studies as the implicit recommendation for future research. These limitations might influence the results directly or indirectly. Firstly, gender of the students was not taken into account in terms of being male or female. Secondly, this study is not done on a large group. Thirdly, some respondents might be dishonest in volunteering information on their perceptions of self esteem. Furthermore the researcher dealt with some factors that had already taken place e. g parenting styles and therefore could not be manipulated by the researcher.

Therefore, further researcher can carry out with different form of research in large group or regard to speaking skill or others. Further research can take this limitation into account in order to have a comprehensive role of different measures of self-efficacy, self-concept, and self-esteem on learners' improvement.

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# THE EFFECT OF COHERENCE ESTABLISHMENT STRATEGIES ON EFL LEARNERS LISTENING COMPREHENSION 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY WAS CONDUCTED TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF TEACHING COHERENCE-ESTABLISHMENT STRATEGIES ON ENGLISH AS-A-FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION. TO THAT END, 20 FEMALE AND 20 MALE LEARNERS WERE SELECTED THROUGH CONVINCE SAMPLING FROM PARDIS LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN HAMEDAN. THESE PARTICIPANTS WERE DIVIDED INTO AN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (GROUP A) AND A CONTROL GROUP (GROUP B). AT FIRST PET LISTENING TEST WAS GIVEN TO THE LEARNERS AS A PRETEST TO TAKE UP THE INITIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANTS IN BOTH GROUPS. THEN THE SUBJECTS IN TWO GROUPS ATTENDED 10 NINETY MINUTE CLASS SESSIONS DURING WHICH THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WAS TAUGHT COHERENCE ESTABLISHMENT STRATEGIES. AT THE END OF THE SESSIONS, ANOTHER PET LISTENING TEST WAS GIVEN AS A POSTTEST. FINALLY, THE PERFORMANCES OF BOTH GROUPS WERE COMPARED THROUGH RUNNING ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE (ANCOVA). THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT EXPERIMENTAL GROUP HAD OUTPERFORMED CONTROL GROUP. THIS CAN HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING.


KEYWORD: COHERENCE STRATEGIES, LISTENING COMPREHENSION, EFL LEARNERS

## Introduction

Listening comprehension is at the heart of language learning. Learners want to understand second language (L2) speakers and want to comprehend a variety of L2 multimedia such as DVDs and the Internet. At the same time, listening is an important language skill to develop in terms of second language acquisition (SLA) (Vandergrift, 2007). SLA studies have demonstrated that comprehensible input is critical for language acquisition as well as comprehensible output (Swain, 2000). Hinkel (2006) mentions that "a key difference between more successful and less successful acquirers relates in large part to their ability to use listening as a means of acquisition" (p. 94).

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In spite of its importance, L2 learners often regard listening as the most difficult language skill to learn (Martin, 2000). As Vandergrift (2007) points out, one of the reasons might be that learners are not taught how to learn listening effectively. A narrow focus on the correct answer to comprehension questions that are often given in a lesson does little to help learners understand and control the process leading to comprehension. When learners listen to spoken English, they need to perceive and segment the incoming stream of speech in order to make sense of it. The listener cannot refer back to the text in contrast to a reader who usually has the opportunity to refer back to clarify understanding. Moreover, as Stahr (1993) asserts, "spoken language is characterized by assimilation as well as unclear articulation, and lexical units are not necessarily as clearly marked as in text; this lack of clarity of spoken language makes word segmentation an extremely difficult task for L2 listeners" (p. 582).

Discourse oriented approach to language education (Nunan,2000) implies teaching language as a set of choices showing how language is structured in different contexts of use. A discourse oriented approach also encourages learners to develop language awareness exploring relationships between form, meaning and use, which enable language learners, to grasp the underlying features of the text types. From a cognitive perspective, Grabe and Kaplan (2014) argues for building awareness of discourse structure by highlighting key words that signal text structure, identifying a paragraphs function, finding patterns of discourse organization in a text, etc.

Berkani(2011)states that" the field of discourse is very broad, but in regard to language teaching it is possible to define five areas: cohesion, coherence, information structure, turn taking, and critical discourse analysis"(p.7). One these fields of study are coherence. According to Schiffrin (1987) coherence can be regarded as a connection between utterances with discourse structure, meaning, and action being combined.

Coherence can be treated as a "semantic property of discourse, based on the interpretation of each individual sentence reactive to the interpretation of other sentences" (Van Dijk, 1977, p. 93). Coherence between sentences, in Van Dijk's point of view, is "based not only on the sequential action relation between expressed and interpolated propositions, but also on the topic of discourse of a particular passage".

The present study is an attempt to the effect of coherence establishment strategies on EFL learners' listening comprehension.

## Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, listening skill is being taught so superficially in Iranian foreign language acquisition context that most of the English learners cannot master it and encounter numerous problems in forthcoming stages of their studies as well as in their real life situations (Hayati, 2009). Most L2 learners regard listening as one of the most difficult language skills (Hayati, 2009). One of the reasons for this issue may be that learners do not know how to listen. When learners try to comprehend the spoken language, they should perceive and divide the received stream of speech into different sections to get the intended meaning. Unfortunately, listeners, in contrast to readers, do not have the chance of referring back pervious sections to make their understanding more clear. Optimized progress of listening skill should be achieved by particular attention to be process rather than product (Saragi and Coulthard, 2014) But how these processes can be observed is always matter of question.

Widdowson (1978) believes discourse involves the context and needed to be interpreted through the understanding of discourse structures and the use of many strategies; for example, to comprehend discourse, students interpret the discourse assuming that if one thing is said after
another, the two things are related in some way. Despite its importance, has been allocated in ESL/EFL teaching. The process of employing listening strategies on the part of learners, and explicitly teaching listening skills on the part of teachers has been overlooked through a strong emphasis on product of listening (Block, 2003).

One of the possible reasons for failure of listening skill may be the method of examination and the stress imposed to the language learners to take exams. Unfortunately, traditional, product oriented tests examines the learners current level of language proficiency and do not provide any direct evidence concerning the processes that may have influence/ fail to influence the happening of that performance( Cohen, 2001).

## Related studies

Kafes (2012) investigated Turkish EFL learners' ability in composing cohesive texts in their first language and in English as their foreign language, and to examine whether there are similarities between lexical reiteration cohesive devices they employ in composing cohesive texts both in Turkish and in English. The study was conducted with participations of 40 students. The analysis of the data has revealed striking similarities between English and Turkish in terms of the employment of lexical recitation cohesive devices. The results have shown that repetition of the same lexical recitation cohesive devices.

Kafes (2012) examined the role of Discourse Analysis (DA) in English and foreign language (EFL) learning. The paper focused on and applied three questions in D.A, i.e what are the relations between sentences, paragraphs and information chucks; what kind of cohesive devices were adopted for the coherence; and how the topic was developed. The paper suggested that well understanding of devices in semantic relations such as matching and logical sequence relations, grammatical connectives, lexical signaling devices, repetition, paraphrases and questions to clarify the clause relations, as well as a structural analysis to both global and local levels was most helpful to successful EFL learners.

Messai (2011) investigated, the study of language in use, unifying different levels of linguistic description and explanation. This article introduced and discussed some of the theoretical and logical bases of DA. It discussed the inform language teachers and teacher trainers, so that they could pass on to their students on enhanced ability to systematically explore communicative language use across a myriad of contexts and social purpose. The results have been shown that DA can help to account for psychological, social, and psychological relations that motivate language choice for communication.
Hedley (2002), intermediate among coherence, substitution and reference by non-English major Chinese students. The author collected data through students' questionnaires. The findings of this study suggested that the similarities and differences were confirmed either in all participants or in two gender groups. Some significant differences were found, for instance, male scored relatively higher in the men substitution and reference than did female, whereas female performed better in the mean coherence compared to males in some fields.

Hashemi (2012) addressed the impact of coherence on TEFL students' critical thinking (CT) ability in Reading Journalistic Texts classes. The study utilized an experimental and control group. The result of study indicated that coherence has positive affect on CT of learners.

Rassuli (2013) mentioned, cohesive devices are necessary elements in writing since them link different clauses, sentences and paragraphs to make the thread of meaning the writer is trying to communicate obvious. These devices seem to be problematic for English language learners so this study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of explicit teaching of cohesive devices on Iranian EFL learners' use of these features and the extent to which it can improve the learners' writing quality. For this purpose from among 86 intermediate two homogenous groups were formed. The experimental group had the advantage of attending a course on grammatical cohesive devices and a pretest and a posttest were administered at the beginning and at the end of the course. By

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comparing the results of the tests it was found that the instruction could promote the learners' use of cohesive devices, it could help the learners develop more cohesive writings but the learners' writing quality didn't improve by the instruction.

Yinxiu Ji (2014) Traditional approach of listening teaching mainly focuses on the sentence level and regards the listening process in a passive and static way. To compensate for this deficiency, a new listening approach, that is, discourse-oriented approach has been introduced into the listening classroom. Although discourse analysis is a comparatively new field and there are still considerable gaps in our knowledge about it, it has in effect provided new insights into language teaching involving listening. Some theories in discourse analysis such as cohesion, coherence, schema, relevance, etc. are critically important in enhancing the students' listening comprehension ability and improving their communicative competence. The present study was undertaken to observe the correlation between the theories of discourse analysis and the nature of listening comprehension and to further trace the developmental differences in the learners' listening proficiency brought from this discourse-oriented approach. Through analysis of listening difficulties and experiment, the present study confirmed the effectiveness of discourseoriented approach, which might add a bit more to the understanding of discourse analysis. Pedagogically, it suggested a relatively uncomplicated procedure that might have considerable and varied payoffs in terms of listening teaching and learning.

## Methodology <br> Participants

The participants to the study included 40 EFL students in two intact classes conveniently sampled from among 80 intermediate, female and male learners between 14 to 30 years old at Pardis Language Institute in Hamedan, Iran. The homogeneity of the participants was assured as they had been placed in that level by the institute through administration of Preliminary English Test (PET) developed by university of Cambridge ESOL Examinations. These 40 students were randomly assigned to two classes, one experimental group and one control group.

## Data Collection Instrument

To carry out the present study two instruments were used. The first instrument was PET listening test as pretest to take up initial differences between participants in groups. As a post test this source was used to take up initial differences between receiving treatment, and the control group. The second instrument was the "Objective PET" book. Sections of reading and listening, was done during the term, were chosen by this book.

The reliability of the listening part of PET test as reported in official website of the Cambridge University -http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/principles - is 0.77 with standard Error of Measurement (SEM) index of 2.14. The listening part of the PET is composed of 7 close-ended items in which each correct answer receives one point. The time needed for administration of the PET was about 10 minutes, plus 5 minutes to transfer answer to the answer sheet. Student's answer sheets were scored according to the answer key provided by manual of the test.

## Procedure

The data collection procedure started in spring 2015 at Pardis Language Institute (PLI) in Hamedan. The participants to the study included 40 EFL students in two intact classes conventionally sampled at Pardis Language Institute in Hamedan, Iran. These 40 students were randomly assigned to two classes, one experimental group and one control group, 20 people each. The treatment phase took about 5 weeks during which the participants attended the class twice a week. Each session lasted for one and half hours. This research was conducted during 10 class sessions. This procedure was also the same for control group.

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First, the listening sections of a Preliminary English Test (PET) was given to both experimental and control group as a pretest to take up initial differences between the participants then the actual phase of the study began by teaching coherence strategies in the experimental group. Every session students were taught one strategy. By teaching coherence establishment strategies they learnt what each strategy mean; for instance: transition from strategy in order to make it more tangible they used it in sentence e.g. example. Then "Objective PET" book by Hashemi and Thomas (2010) were used, in order to practice more, they read the book passage and the teacher asked them to find that coherence tie or strategy in the passage. Then they analyzed the text in class.

Order of strategies which were introduced and how they were taught:
Session 1:
Strategy: Transition from old information to new information
This strategy says:
Place known information at the beginning of each sentence and place new information at the end of each sentence. The new information that is placed at the end of the first sentence then becomes known information to be placed at the beginning of the next sentence. Example: From the moment you wake each morning to the moment you fall asleep again at night, your life is filled with choices. Your first choice is when to get up ... (McTaggart, Findlay \& Parkin 1999, p. 1.4)

Session 2:
Stratetgy: Summary words
This strategy says:
This also involves transition from old information to new, but instead of beginning the next sentence with the same or a similar word to the one with which the previous sentence ended, you begin the new sentence with a word that summarises several words in the previous sentence or the whole idea. The summary word is usually used together with a reference word such as "this" or "these" Example: At any one point in time, there is a fixed amount of labour, land, capital, and entrepreneurship. These resources can be used to produce goods and services ... (McTaggart et al. 1999, p. 2.4).

Session 3:
Strategy: Thematic consistency
This strategy says
The theme of a sentence is the word or phrase that begins the sentence. If the sentence beginnings all relate to the main idea of the paragraph it is easier for the reader to focus on that idea. Example: Scarcity is not poverty. The poor and the rich both face scarcity. A child wants a 75 cent can of soft drink and a 50 cent chocolate bar but has only $\$ 1$ in her pocket. She experiences scarcity. Faced with scarcity, we must choose among the available alternatives (McTaggart et al. 1999, p. 1.4). In this passage there are two related themes: one that relates to scarcity and one that relates to the people who experience it.

## Session 4:

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Strategy: Parallel constructions
This strategy says:
If sentences in which the ideas are connected have similar patterns it is easier for the reader to see the relationship between the sentences. Example: In ordinary speech, the word 'market' means a place where people buy and sell goods such as fish, meat, fruits, and vegetables. In economics, a market has a more general meaning (McTaggart et al. 1999, p. 2.9).

## Session 5:

## Strategy: Lexical ties

This strategy says:
The repetition of words or synonyms in a paragraph assists the reader to see the connection between the sentences. Example: Markets coordinate individual decisions through price adjustments. To see how, think about your local market for hamburgers. Suppose that too few hamburgers are available so that people who want to buy hamburgers are not able to do so. To make the choices of buyers and sellers compatible, buyers must scale down their appetites or more hamburgers must be offered for sale (or both must happen). A rise in the price of hamburgers produces this outcome. A higher price encourages producers to offer more hamburgers for sale. It also curbs the appetite for hamburgers and changes some lunch plans. Fewer people buy hamburgers, and more buy hot dogs. (McTaggart et al. 1999, p. 2.10). In this paragraph there are many words that have to do with buying and selling: market, buy, sell, sale, buyers, sellers, and price. There is also another string of related words that have to do with decisions, choice and plans. In addition, there is a third string that connects with food: hamburgers, appetite, lunch, hot dogs.

Session 6:
Strategy: Transition signals
This strategy says:
Transition signals are words or phrases that introduce a sentence and indicate its relationship to the previous sentence. Example: The opportunity cost of producing an additional tape is the number of bottles of cola we must forgo. Similarly, the opportunity cost of producing an additional bottle of cola is the quantity of tapes we must forgo (McTaggart et al. 1999, p. 3.3). There are many different transition signals. There are transition signals to indicate sequence; logical divisions of an idea; time; example; comparison; contrast; addition; opposition and conclusion.

## Session 7: <br> Strategy: Reference words

This strategy says:
Reference words are words that point back to words in previous sentences, for example, the, the other, another, the others, some, this, these, that, those. Comparative expressions can also act as reference expressions. Example: A feature of the labor market for young workers is a system of minimum wage rates that have to be paid. These rates are an example of a minimum price law.... The minimum wage rate system is a consequence of government intervention in the labor

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market.... In other cases, instead of setting the price, governments fix a quantity.... Even more frequently, governments impose taxes.... In yet other cases, governments try to ban markets. Those for drugs like heroin are obvious examples (McTaggart et al. 1999, p. 7.2).

Session 8:
Strategy: Repetition to link ideas, sentences, paragraphs
This strategy says:
Repeating key words or phrases helps connect and focus idea(s) throughout the essay. Repetition also helps the reader remain focused and headed in the right direction. Example: Most students are intimidated by the works of William Shakespeare. They believe Shakespeare's sonnets and plays are far complicated to read and understand.

## Session 9:

Strategy: Transitional expressions to link ideas, sentences, paragraphs
This strategy says:
Transitional expressions, such as however, because, therefore, and in addition, are used to establish relationships between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. They serve as signals to let the reader know the previous idea, sentence, or paragraph is connected to what follows. For a list of the most commonly used transitional expressions, refer to the Southeastern Writing Center's handout Useful Transitional Words and Phrases. Example: Many students believe they cannot write a good essay because they are not writers. However, as they practice writing and work on developing their writing skills, most students are able to gain the needed confidence to start thinking of themselves writers.

Session 10:
Stratey: pronouns to link ideas, sentences, paragraphs
This strategy says:
Pronouns are used to link or connect sentences by referring to preceding nouns and pronouns. Pronouns can also help create paragraphs that are easy to read by eliminating wordiness and unnecessary repetition. Example: Mr. Thompson agreed to meet with members of the worker's union before he signed the contract. He was interested in hearing their concerns about the new insurance plan.

Each session after learnt each strategies, they listened to the listening part of the, Objective PET, book through the following procedure:

Before listening: The topic was introduced to students and checked what they know about topic. One of the ways that was done was brainstorming, so they had some discussion and also questions related to the listening content and new vocabulary they needed for listening.

During listening: Students listened for selected details or general content that Objective PET book asked them to focus on.

After listening: After listening to the topic, new vocabularies and information were checked.
At the end again they analyzed what they had listened to and learned that session.

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Group B: in control group, students had listened to listening of Objective PET book and they had focused on Listening.

Before listening activates; topic was introduced to students and it was checked what they know about it. The strategy used was brainstorming, so they had some discussion and also questions related to the listening information and new vocabulary they needed for listening.

During listening activities; students listened to selected detail or general content that Objective PET book asked them to answer.

After listening activities; after listening to topic, new vocabularies and information were checked. This was a good way on discussion group, craft project, writing task, game, etc.

After 10 sessions of such instruction, both groups, were administered the same listening exam test as posttest.

## Design of Study

The study reported here is a quasi-experimental study with a pre-test, post-test control and treatment design. According to Dinardo (2008), a quasi-experiment is an empirical study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on its target population. Quasi-experimental research shares similarities with the traditional experimental design or randomized controlled trial, but they specifically lack the element of random assignment to treatment or control. Instead, quasi-experimental designs typically allow the researcher to control the assignment to the treatment condition, but using some criterion other than random assignment.

## Data analysis

As the study aimed at examining the effect of coherence establishment strategies as independent variable on EFL learners listening comprehension, as there were pretest and posttest administered in two groups: experimental and control group, the comparison of the relative efficiency of independent variable could be measured through ANCOVA statistical procedure which assumes the normal data.

Table 1 Summarizes the basic descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation as well as Skewness and Kurtosis values for the pre-test and post-test scores in this study for both experimental and control groups.

## Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Experimental and Control Group

|  | Group | Pretest | Posttest | Pre.EXP | Pre.Cont | Post.Exp | Post.Con |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| N Valid | 40 | 40 | 40 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Mean | 1.5000 | 3.6500 | 4.5750 | 3.7000 | 3.5500 | 5.0500 | 4.0500 |
| Std. Deviation | .50637 | 1.14466 | 1.21713 | 1.17429 | 1.14593 | 1.14593 | 1.09904 |
| Skewness | .000 | .205 | -.004 | .221 | .331 | -.107 | .157 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .374 | .374 | .374 | .512 | .512 | .512 | .512 |
| Kurtosis | -1.108 | -.776 | -.620 | -.917 | -.474 | -.474 | -.670 |
| Std. Error of Kurtosis | .733 | .733 | .733 | .992 | .992 | .992 | .992 |
| Minimum | 1.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 |


|  | Group | Pretest | Posttest | Pre.EXP | Pre.Cont | Post.Exp | Post.Con |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| N Valid | 40 | 40 | 40 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Mean | 1.5000 | 3.6500 | 4.5750 | 3.7000 | 3.5500 | 5.0500 | 4.0500 |
| Std. Deviation | .50637 | 1.14466 | 1.21713 | 1.17429 | 1.14593 | 1.14593 | 1.09904 |
| Skewness | .000 | .205 | -.004 | .221 | .331 | -.107 | .157 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .374 | .374 | .374 | .512 | .512 | .512 | .512 |
| Kurtosis | -1.108 | -.776 | -.620 | -.917 | -.474 | -.474 | -.670 |
| Std. Error of Kurtosis | .733 | .733 | .733 | .992 | .992 | .992 | .992 |
| Minimum | 1.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 |
| Maximum | 2.00 | 6.00 | 7.00 | 6.00 | 6.00 | 7.00 | 6.00 |

As Table 1 shows, the mean scores for the experimental group on the pretest and the posttest were 3.70 and 5.05 while for the control group they were 3.55 and 4.05 respectively. Moreover, the Skewness and Kurtosis values were between $\pm 2$, which according to George and Mallery (2010) indicate that the data were descriptively normal.

## Normality of the Distribution of Test Scores

Table 2
Kolmogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks' Test for Normality of Test Scores

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk statistics for the pretest and posttest scores. Here, a non-significant Sig. value of more than .05 is indicative of normality. In our study, the Sig. values obtained in both cases are larger than .05 , suggesting the assumption of normality for our pretest and posttest.

## Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

Investigates the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable for each of our groups to check if there is any interaction between the covariate and the treatment.

## Table 3

Test of between Subject Effects

Dependent Variable: Posttest

| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Corrected Model | 29.457 a |  | 3 | 9.819 | 12.483 |
| Intercept | 19.418 | 1 | 19.418 | 24.686 | .000 |
| Group | .106 | 18 | .000 |  |  |
| Pretest | 18.662 | 106 | .135 | .715 |  |
| Group * Pretest | 1.467 | 1 | 18.662 | 23.725 | .000 |
| Error | 28.318 | 1 | 1.467 | 1.865 | .181 |
| Total | 895.000 | 40 | .787 |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 57.775 | 39 |  |  |  |

a. $\quad$ R Squared $=.510$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.469$ )

In the output obtained in Table 4, the value obtained for the interaction term is $[f(1,36)=1.86$, $\mathrm{Sig}=.181]$, which shows that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was not violated.

## Linearity of regression lines

To check this assumption a grouped scatterplot of the covariate, post-test scores of the dependent variable and independent variable was plotted. As Figure 1 below shows, there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable (scores of post-test) and the covariate (scores of pre-test) for our groups.


Figure1 Linear relationship among regression lines.

## Homogeneity of Error Variance

To check this assumption, Levene's statistic was used.

## Table 4

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances
Dependent Variable: Posttest

| F | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| 1.252 |  | 1 | 38 |

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
a. Design: Intercept + Pretest + Group

As Table 4 indicates, the Levene's value obtained is $[\mathrm{f}(1,38)=1.25, \mathrm{Sig}=.270]$, which is larger than the cut-off value of .05 implying that the equality of error variances assumption has not been violated.

## Table 5

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)
Dependent Variable: Posttest

| Source | Type III Sum <br> of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta <br> Squared |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Corrected Model | $27.990^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 2 | 13.995 | 17.385 | .000 | .484 |
| Intercept | 19.281 | 1 | 19.281 | 23.952 | .000 | .393 |
| Pretest | 18.965 | 1 | 18.965 | 23.559 | .000 | .389 |
| Group | 7.888 | 1 | 7.888 | 9.799 | .003 | .209 |
| Error | 29.785 | 37 | .805 |  |  |  |
| Total | 895.000 | 40 |  |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 57.775 | 39 |  |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.484$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.457$ )

Here the aim was checking whether the groups were significantly different in terms of their scores on the dependent variable (post-test) while controlling for possible effects of the covariate (pretest). As the table shows, the value obtained for the Group was $[f(1,37)=9.79, \mathrm{P}=.003$, partial $\left.\eta^{2}=.209\right]$. This can imply that groups differ significantly. That is, there was a significant difference between the posttest scores for subjects in the experimental and control group after controlling for the possible effects of the pretest.

Another piece of information which can be of interest is the effect size, as indicated by the corresponding Partial Eta Squared value. The value in this case was .209 that was an average effect size according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines. This value also shows how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. We can convert the partial eta square value to a percentage by multiplying the value by 100 . In our study, this explains for 20.9 percent of the variance.

## Table 6

Estimated Marginal Means

## Estimates

Dependent Variable: Posttest

| Group |  |  | $95 \%$ Confidence Interval |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: |
|  | Mean | Std. Error | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |

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| Experimental | $5.020^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .201 | 4.613 | 5.426 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Control | $4.130^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .201 | 3.724 | 4.537 |

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest $=3.6500$.

As the table reflects, the estimated marginal means point to a better performance of the experimental group.

Taken together all this shows that the research null hypothesis that "Teaching of coherenceestablishment strategies does not have a significant effect on EFL learners listening comprehension" is rejected. This implies that teaching such strategies can improve their listening performance.

## Conclusion

The results of data analysis presented significant effect of coherence-establishment strategies practice on listening comprehension of the participants in the first group (experimental group) who outperformed the participant in control group in terms of listening comprehension. As the result of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) indicated null hypothesis of study was rejected. Based on these findings it can be concluded that teaching coherence-establishment strategies will result in EFL learners' better performance on listening comprehension. This strategy could provide a more comfortable and interactive atmosphere so that they get more opportunities for negotiation. Also it can be made for involving students in listening practice which includes a focus on coherence-establishment strategies since such practices could be beneficial to both students and teachers, as the can help reduce problems in listening comprehension, because coherence devices help learners to understand better (Haliday \& Hasan, 1976).

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# PERSONALITY TYPE AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF IRANIAN MALE EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY WAS AN INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXTROVERSION/INTROVERSION PERSONALITY TYPES AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS. IN ORDER TO INVESTIGATE THIS, 60 HIGH-INTERMEDIATE PARTICIPANTS FROM MALES TOOK PART IN THE STUDY AT NOURELAHI INSTITUTE IN TABRIZ, IRAN. TO COLLECT SOME PARTS OF THE DATA, THEY WERE ADMINISTERED THE LAST VERSION OF EYSENCK PERSONALITY TEST (EPQR, 1999) TO SHOW THE PARTICIPANTS' PERSONALITY TYPE. ANOTHER PART OF THE DATA WHICH WAS THE PARTICIPANTS' SPEAKING PERFORMANCE WAS GATHERED BY SPEAKING TEST. MEANWHILE 3 PH.D NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS AT THE SAME INSTITUTION SCORED THE PARTICIPANTS SPEAKING PERFORMANCES. THE COLLECTED DATA WENT THROUGH INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TTEST AND THE RESULTS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS INDICATED THAT THERE WAS A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE AND DESCRIPTIVE SPEAKING PERFORMANCE.

KEYWORDS: PERSONALITY TYPE, EXTROVERSION, INTROVERSION, SPEAKING PERFORMANCE, INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, EYSENCK PERSONALITY TEST

\section*{1. Introduction}

Language learning and language success have been gone under investigation from various dimensions. Researchers have tried to discover factors that facilitate or harden the learning quality. One of these factors is undoubtedly the extroversion/introversion personality types of the learners. Experienced teachers usually come across situations in which students with relatively same level of linguistic knowledge are remarkably different in their performance. In other words, teachers are sometimes surprised by high and low scores of students in conditions that those students have studied the same textbooks, have received the same instructions from their teacher and have shared the similar conditions for learning; but after taking a performance test, the results are significantly different.


Regarding the relationship between extroversion/introversion and L2 learning, in fact, there are two major contradictory hypotheses. The first which has been the most widely researched and is accepted more by applied linguists is that extroverted learners will do better in acquiring basic interpersonal communication skills. The rationale for this hypothesis is that sociability will result in more opportunities to practice, more input, and more success in
communicating in the L2. The second hypothesis is that introverted learners will do better at developing cognitive academic language ability. The rationale for this hypothesis comes from studies which show that introverted learners typically enjoy more academic success, perhaps because they spend more time reading and writing (Ellis, R., 1994). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that extroversion may facilitate the learning of spoken English, but that introverts have more patience and thus may excel in areas of pronunciation, reading, and writing (Brown, H.D., 2000)

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in the relationship between personality types and second language learning. Personality types have been studied in terms of their influence on, or correlations with second language learning, especially language learning skills such as, speaking, writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar. The personality type has received considerable critical attention. Some researchers have found that this personality type has little or no correlation with oral performances of second language learners. However, others have stated that personality type correlates significantly with speaking performance. In the light of these contradictory results, this study aims to add evidence to one side or the other by reinvestigating the comparison between personality type and oral performance.

## 2. Literature Review

Most studies in the field of personality types have focused on oral performance of second language learners. The existing data are rather controversial, and there is no general agreement about the effects of personality type on oral performance. Researchers have tested oral performance of second language learners in terms of fluency, accuracy, complexity, speech production, pronunciation and overall oral production (global impression). Many researchers have found that personality type correlates significantly with second language learners' oral performance. Extraverts were found to be more proficient than introverts. More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about correlation between extraversionintroversion and second language learners' oral performance.

Rossier (1976) attempted to determine whether personality type was a significant variable in the learning of English as a second language by Spanish speaking high school students in the United States. A positive correlation was found between personality type and oral English fluency as judged by three raters when variables representing the written aspects of English and the length of stay in the United States were controlled.

Similarly, Dewaele and Furnham (2000) conducted a study to test the speech production of second language learners in order to investigate a possible correlation between personality style and oral fluency and accuracy. The participants were twenty-five Flemish university students. They had taken French at a high school level for six to eight years. They participated in conversations in interpersonal stressful and neutral situations. The interpersonal stressful situation consisted of an oral exam of about ten minutes. The exam aimed at evaluating the learners' proficiency in the target language. The neutral situation involved conversations between the same researcher and participants in a relaxed atmosphere. It was found that extraverted students achieved greater fluency in an oral production task compared to introverts. They also found a significant relationship between personality type and speech rates in both formal and informal situations. However, when the relationship between personality type and hesitation was investigated, they found a significant correlation only in the formal (stressful) situation.

In another study, Vogel and Vogel (1986) investigated 89 German students' oral French inter language and found that some types of learners were more fluent in an oral production task than others. They also found that more inhibited speakers had longer pauses in their speech. These studies therefore suggest that extraverted individuals may be more fluent when speaking in a second language oral production task than introverts. They also found that more inhibited
speakers had longer pauses in their speech. These studies therefore suggest that extraverted individuals may be more fluent when speaking in a second language.

The exceptions are Busch's (1982) study where no significant relationship was found between personality type and fluency of Japanese adult students, and Dewaele's (1996) study where no significant relationship was found between personality type and fluency as measured by the number of filled and empty pauses in speech.

In another study to investigate the relationship between personality type and anxiety characteristics of Japanese students and their oral performance in English, Manalo and Greenwood (2004) used 73 native-speakers of Japanese who were studying English at various language schools in New Zealand. They were administered a story-retelling task, which was scored in terms of oral fluency, accuracy, complexity, and global impression. The spoken data collected from the story-retelling task were analyzed in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Contrary to quite a number of previous studies (e.g. Dewaele \& Furnham, 2000; J. Rossier, 1976; Vogel \& Vogel, 1986), this study found that extraversion did not correlate significantly with fluency, accuracy, or complexity dimensions of the participants' oral performance. Another characteristic that differentiates this study from the previous studies is the investigation of neuroticism as another personality style with oral performance. Similar to the finding on the extraversion and oral performance, neuroticism also did not correlate significantly with accuracy, fluency, or complexity dimensions of participants' oral performance.

Similarly, in another study, Daele (2005) examined the effect of personality type on L2 oral proficiency. The participants were 25 Dutch-speaking adolescent secondary school students learning both English and French as a foreign language, in secondary school in Flanders, Belgium. The participants' oral speech production in both French and English was tapped by means of an oral retell task based on a wordless picture story. Each recorded oral retelling was measured in terms of fluency, complexity, and accuracy. Although extraverted students outperformed introverted students in terms of lexical complexity in both target languages at the beginning of the study, no effects were found for fluency measures. The influence of extraversion on lexical complexity disappeared for French and even reversed for English at the end of the study. This study also tested the hypothesis that the influence of extraversion as a stable personality trait remains unvarying across different languages. The hypothesis is supported by that the effect of personality type on the exact same linguistic variable, namely lexical complexity was found in both target languages.

According to the explanation above, the writer had found an interesting case of how personality factors might contribute the students' success in foreign language learning especially in English speaking skills. The writer hopes that the findings of this research may help the speaking class lecturer to understand the personality, method (learning style and learning strategy) that the students develop for gaining success in the speaking class. Also to help the students of speaking class to understand themselves and their needs in order to make the learning process runs well.

## Research Question and Hypothesis

Research Question: Is there any statistically significant difference between extroversion/introversion and the speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners?

Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference between extroversion/introversion and the speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners.

## 3. Methodology

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### 3.1 Design

Relying on quantitative approach based on comparison research to collect data, this study attempted to investigate the effect of each type of extroversion/introversion personality types on speaking performance. Personality type was the independent and speaking score was the dependent variable of this study.

### 3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were 60 male EFL learners with the age range of 17-22. They were EFL learners at Nourelahi Institute in Tabriz, Iran.

### 3.3 Instruments

In this study three sets of instruments were used to collect the intended data to answering the research question in different processes .In the following paragraphs each of three utilized in the study are described.

### 3.3.1 Oxford Placement Test by Allen (1985)

This test consists of 50 short items, each with three alternative choices from which the testees have to choose the correct response. The first 20 items are meaning-wise independent of one another, the remaining 30 items, however, are sequential.

### 3.2.2 Eysneck Personality Questionnaire

To examine the individual trait in question, i.e. extroversion/introversion, the researchers made use of Eysenck Personality Test (EPQ-R) (Esyneck, 1999), which is the shortened version of the last Eysenck test (1999). This test consists of two criteria known as psychotisim and extroversion/introversion, and a total of 12 yes/no questions is allocated to gauging each criterion. It should be emphasized that the questions used in the current probe are only those which have been developed for determining introversion and extroversion. According to what Eysenck reports in the test manual, the reliability of the questionnaire is $88 \%$ and $84 \%$ (for extroversion and introversion scale) and $61 \%$ and $62 \%$ (for psychotisim scale) for males and females, respectively

### 3.3.3 Two Descriptive Topics

A set of data collection instruments was used to analyze elicited speech from participants in order to measure their English language speaking performance. To do this the researcher used two topics for descriptive speaking: 1) Describe about Tabriz. 2) Who is your favorite person? Describe his/her outstanding characteristics.

### 3.4 Procedures

As mentioned before, three sets of data in different processes were needed to conduct the present study: Eysenck personality test, a test of language proficiency, and two descriptive topics to measure speaking performance.

Arrangements were made with the officials of the Nourelahi Institute to collect data from their high-intermediate classes. The researcher explained both to the officials and the learners that their responses would be used only for research purposes. Then, each participant was given the pack of instruments. It should be mentioned that all the participants were told NOT to write their names on the instruments, because it might affect their honesty in responding. Each pack of data had a code, $1,2,3,4$, etc. For completing the Eysenck Personality Test, the allocated time was 20 minutes. And then the participants had 40 minutes to answer the language proficiency test. A total of 90 language learners with the age range of $17-22$ were given the instruments needed to collect data. Among them, 18 learners returned the questionnaire, language proficiency test, etc.

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blank so that the researcher had to remove them. Moreover, 12 learners couldn't be placed at the same level of language proficiency as other participants. It means that the language proficiency level of these 12 learners belong to very low levels of language proficiency, though, they have been placed by the institute. At last 60 learners could meet the requirements of the study who included males at high-intermediate level. In two different sessions the students were asked to speak about the topics individually. They were given 8 to 10 minutes to speak about the first topic. After two days the participants had next descriptive topic to speak about, again. This (second oral exam) would be done in order to provide more exact and accurate scores of the participants' speaking performance.

The participants' speaking performances were rated by three raters according to the scoring standards of TOEFL. So, for each participant there was a number (ranging from 0 to 8 ) which showed his speaking performance. Since each participant had spoken two times, and more additionally the speaking performances were rated by three high qualified raters, their speaking performances were analyzed and scored individually. Then the results were given out by team decision. Since scoring speaking tasks has a subjective nature, therefore the mean score of two speaking scores were recorded as the final speaking score.

Data then were entered into SPSS 16 to answer the research question. To test the research hypothesis in the present study, Independent Sample T-test was applied to see whether the interaction difference is significant. The level of significance for the statistical analysis was set at 0.05 .

## 4. Results

Table 1 reveals the frequency of subjects' introversion and extroversion. Drawing on the information given there, $36.6 \%$ of subjects ( 22 learners) were found to be extroverts and $63.4 \%$ ( 38 learners) were marked as introverts

Table 1. Descriptive Frequency Distribution of Subjects Regarding Introversion and Extroversion

| Personality | Frequency | Percent |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Extroversion | 22 | 36.6 |
| Introversion | 38 | 63.4 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

The finding pertinent to subjects' speaking performance is presented in Table 2. Based on the descriptive statistics reported, the mean speaking performance for extrovert subjects is 4.75 and the standard deviation is 0.670 , whereas the mean speaking performance for introvert equals 2.74, and the standard deviation is 1.027 .

Table 2. Statistical Indices Related to Introvert and Extrovert Subjects Regarding their Speaking Performance

| Speaking ability | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean Std. Error | Maximum | Minimum |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Extrovert | 4.75 | 0.670 | 0.095 | 5 | 3 |
| Introvert | 2.74 | 1.027 | 0.128 | 5 | 1 |
| Total | 3.14 | 1.725 | 0.159 | 5 | 1 |

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After making sure that the two groups of extraverts and introverts were not at the same level of L2 oral proficiency, Independent Sample T-test was run to determine whether there is any significant difference in the performance of the extravert and introvert participants on speaking performance. The results in table 3 indicate that there was a statistically significant difference ( P value is smaller than .05) between the personality type and speaking performance of learners ( $\mathrm{r}=.027$ ). Therefore the null hypothesis "There is no statistically significant difference between the extroversion/introversion and the speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners" was rejected and the alternative hypothesis confirmed

Table 3: Independent Samples Test on the performance of the extraverted and introverted groups on

| speaking performance. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Groups | Number | Mean | SD | $\mathbf{t}$ | df | SIG |  |
| Extroverted | 22 | 4.75 | .670 |  |  |  |  |
| Introverted | 38 | 2.75 | 1.02 | 1.32 | 48 | .027 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## 5. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the current research, it was revealed that, there was a significantly difference between the speaking performance of high-Intermediate Iranian EFL learners with their introversion/extroversion (indeed, extrovert subjects were found to have a better performance on speaking compared to their introvert counterparts). In what follows, a laconic discussion is provided for the obtained outcomes for the research question.

The research question addressed the viable difference between introversion/extroversion and speaking performance, and throughout the study it was demonstrated that a significant difference exists between introversion/extroversion and the speaking performance of highintermediate Iranian EFL learners. The results further indicated that extrovert subjects had a better performance on speaking compared to their introvert counterparts. With regard to the result Ellis (1994) stated that introverted learners do better at developing cognitive academic language ability. The rationale for this hypothesis came from studies which showed that introverted learners typically enjoy more academic success, perhaps because they spend more time reading and writing.

Also extraverts are sociable, like parties, have many friends and need excitement; they are sensation-seekers and risk-takers, like practical jokes and are lively and active. Conversely introverts are quiet, prefer reading to meeting people, have few but close friends and usually avoid excitement (Cited in Ellis, 2008).

This finding is in accordance with Busch's (1982) findings, where he concluded that in general extroverted students are more successful in language learning. It should be added that the focus of Busch's study was on pronunciation, whereas the researchers in the present study addressed the descriptive speaking performance of individuals.

Also, the upshots gained by Shackleton and Fletcher (1984), partially didn't contradict the present finding, in that, these researchers found that extroverts had a better performance apropos verbal fluency tasks. Moreover, Skehan (1989) found that extroverts are better language learners because they would benefit both inside and outside the classroom by having the appropriate personality trait for language learning since learning is best accomplished, according to most theorists, by actually using the target language.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the difference between EFL extroverted and introverted students in terms of their speaking performance. In order to measure the degree of personality type, Eysenck personality questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument of

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this study. After running an Independent Sample T-test, the results revealed that there was found statistically significant difference between them. Regards the present study results, the findings of this study can be initially useful for teachers of speaking skill. Knowing this fact that some specific personality types perform better than other types in language performance, enables teachers to pay more attention to individual characteristics of language learners. For example if a learner is more extroversion, then the teacher can predict that $s / h e$ is more capable of being a better descriptive speaker. Also material developers can find the results of this study beneficial in terms of this fact that text books can be designed and developed to be more suitable for specific personality types.

This study investigated the difference between extroversion/introversion and speaking performance. Other studies can be done to study the relationship/difference between other language skills such as reading, writing or listening. Also other instruments such as MBTI scale can be used to determine personality type. The participants of this study were young male adults. Other studies can be done with the participation of children or teenagers in both genders.

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# THE EFFECT OF EMPLOYING EXPLICIT PRAGMATIC AWARENESS-RAISING INSTRUCTION ON ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS' USE OF POLITENESS STRATEGY OF REQUEST VIA E-MAILS 

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#### Abstract

THE CURRENT STUDY AIMED AT EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EMPLOYING EXPLICIT PRAGMATIC AWARENESS-RAISING INSTRUCTION ON IRANIAN ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS' USE OF POLITENESS STRATEGY OF REQUEST VIA EMAILS. TO ANSWER THE FORMULATED RESEARCH QUESTIONS, 45 IRANIAN ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS, WHO STUDIED IN TORSYS ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN KASHMAR, IRAN, WERE SELECTED VIA ADMINISTERING THE QUICK PLACEMENT TEST (QPT). THE PARTICIPANTS WERE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED INTO AN EXPERIMENTAL (N= 23) AND A CONTROL GROUP (N=22). FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY, TREATMENT SECTION LASTED FOR TEN 10 SESSIONS ONCE A WEEK AND 90 MINUTES EACH SESSION. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONTROL GROUP DID NOT RECEIVE ANY INSTRUCTION ON PRAGMATICS. THE PARTICIPANTS IN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED EXPLICIT PRAGMATIC INSTRUCTION ON USING POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN EMAILS. TO BE SURE OF HOMOGENEITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS, A PRE-TEST WAS TAKEN BEFORE THE TREATMENT. AFTER THE TREATMENT, THE PARTICIPANTS WERE GIVEN A POSTTEST. MULTIPLE CHOICE DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASK (MDCT) AND WRITTEN DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASKS (WDCT) WERE UTILIZED IN BOTH PRETEST AND POSTTEST TO COLLECT THE REQUIRED DATA. THE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PERFORMED SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN THE STUDENTS IN THE CONTROL GROUP FROM THE PRETEST TO THE POSTTEST OF THE STUDY. THE RESULTS ALSO REVEALED THAT EMPLOYING EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF REQUEST SPEECH ACT HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON RAISING THE PRAGMATIC AWARENESS OF THE PARTICIPANTS.


KEY WORDS: PRAGMATIC AWARENESS-RAISING, EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION, POLITENESS, TREATMENT, REQUEST

## 1. Background and purpose

E-mail has been one of the most widely used communication tools in recent years. It is an easy way to send and receive messages. It has many advantages including the speed of delivery, the low cost, the ability to send high volumes of content, and the ability to send an email to a lot of people simultaneously. Baron (1998) believes that what has led to its success is its convenience, marginal cost, speed of transmission and flexibility. Cameron (2003,p.29) pointed that email as a

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communication tool in general is increasingly characterized by 'a preference for directness over indirectness' and it has become one of the most acceptable means of communication to meet this purpose. People, especially students, use email for different purposes including communicating with faculty, getting advice, requesting information, exchanging information, asking for clarification, and contacting friends. Although e-mail is one of the newest and most-used communication methods, after talking and face-to-face communication, it seems that few people have ever learned how to use it effectively. It is also not used widely as the result of more mistakes, stress, and less productivity. There were two reasons for selecting this topic: first e-mail has become a frequently used interpersonal communication medium and it often serves as a requesting function, especially in institutional settings; second, according to Chen (2001) and Harrison (2002) e-mail provides naturalistic language data, which can be used to study learners' actual language performance in real life communication.

The first purpose of this research was to investigate the probable effects of explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction on the use of request politeness strategy by Iranian advanced EFL learners in emails. The second purpose of the study was to identify whether gender has any effect on employing requests by Iranian advanced EFL learners to the professors via email. The third purpose of the study was to investigate the requests strategies, the type of requests, and the degree of directness that the Iranian advanced EFL learners prefer or use in emails. The forth purpose of this research was to identify typical discourse organization and politeness strategies that the Iranian advanced EFL learners demonstrate in their e-mail requests to professors in English and also to find out what factors influence their choice of these linguistic politeness strategies used for requests.

Although e-mail is a very useful instrument in communication, it seems that its widespread use in academic and business settings has caused some new challenges and problems for students and writers. Because it is a relatively new form of communication, fundamental and primary social standards for writing and responding to e-mail such as politeness or directness, pragmatic, contexts, and coherent message should be developed and trained. Miscommunication can easily happen when people have different expectations about the e-mails that they send and receive. Email is used for many different purposes, such as getting advices, contacting friends, communicating with faculty and professors, requesting information, exchanging information, and asking for clarification. Depending on the purposes, the messages differ in their degree of formality, intended audience, and desired results. Writers sometimes ignore the social context and power relationship. Therefore, this ignorance leads to the neglect of special social standards required for writing emails effectively. There is a common insight among students that emails are unintentional and unplanned in terms of the use of informal language, symbols, vocabulary, grammar and syntax. Although emails have brought professors and students to a closer contact, removing some of the traditional obstacles between students and their professors, it has been led students write to their professors and supervisors using the language and style meant for their friends. Students need to take it into account that writing email to the faculty is not the same as writing email to their friends. They should consider the power and status relationship between faculty and students when writing e-mails. Some students are not aware of the pragmatics and sociolinguistic norms in writing emails. They often transfer their first language (L1) politeness strategies when writing e-mail. Hawisher and Selfe (2000) believe that students are not aware of this fact that politeness strategies may vary from one culture to another and Brown and Levinson (1987) point that all cultures communicate politeness in terms of linguistic or non-linguistic perspectives. Ignorance of the pragmatic, context, and situation where communication occurs is one of the biggest problems that students face it when writing emails to faculty. Another problem that students face it when writing emails to faculty is the lack of knowledge about writing strategies and appropriate use of requests to address faculty. They do not know when and how use politeness strategies in emails. To develop student's English writing, there are many
textbooks such as academic writing, paragraph development, and college writing, etc., and also some courses at universities and institutions. But there are not any courses to develop email writing effectively and appropriately.

## 2. Significance of study

This study was carried out to find out whether explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction has any effect on the use of politeness strategies in requests done by Iranian advanced EFL learners in their e-mails to professors. This study also aimed to look at the gender differences in using speech acts and styles. Although researchers have paid attention to many aspects of the application of e-mail including academia, business, institutional settings, and pragmatics of email messages, they haven't paid attention to the explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction of e-mail messages. In recent studies, Harford and Bardovi-Harling (1996), Weasenforth and Biesenbach-Lucas (2000), and Chen (2001) have paid attention to the pragmatics of e-mail messages. Kitao (1990), Trosborg (1995), Kim (1995), and Kim (2000) have studied the performance of English requests by a particular cultural group. Each of these researchers noticed signs of negative transfer of L1 pragmatics and concluded with the need for explicit instruction in making English requests.

The researcher believed that the findings of the current study on the probable effects of explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction on the use of politeness strategies in emails would help students to communicate more effectively with faculties and use appropriate politeness strategies in writing emails. The researcher also believed that the findings of the study would increase students' understanding of the styles, methods of writing, requests, and politeness strategies based on the context and situation. And at the same time, Iranian students might benefit from instruction in writing e-mails based on the results of this research.

## 3. (De) Limitations of the study

This research was conducted by a desire to understand the effects of explicit pragmatic awareness-raising on the use of politeness strategies by Iranian advanced EFL learners in their emails. The following limitations raised by this research:

First, teaching explicit pragmatics was a complex task and overwhelming indeed. Appropriate use of language depends on the cultural values, situations, contexts, interlocutors, and other variables. Just teaching formulaic phrases or forcing language learners into the target conventions and standards was not likely to enhance pragmatic ability. The second limitation was the small number of variables and language features. It would be helpful to examine data from a large scale and different areas, including speakers of other languages, and students with different proficiencies in their second language. One of the limitations of the study was the limited number of participants and it was also difficult to find qualified subjects. The difficulty in having more participants was mainly due to the qualitative research paradigm chosen for this study. The researcher believed that the knowledge of interpersonal communication could be better informed through qualitative investigation because such an orientation provided more indepth and thorough explanations for the performance of social acts. And also e-mail had not been very much investigated because of the difficulties in accessing private e-mails. The third limitation was determining the exact level (advanced level) of proficiency of the learners. The researcher faced the problem of determining the accurate level of students in this study. Some students might not show the exact level of their language proficiency in the placement test.

## 4. Research questions and Hypotheses

The following questions are raised by the researcher:
Q.1: Does explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction have any significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' use of politeness strategy of request via emails?
Q.2: Does explicit instruction of pragmatic have any significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' production of linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate requests?
Q.3: Does gender have any significant effect on the choice of speech act of request by Iranian advanced EFL learners via e-mails?

According to the above-mentioned research questions, the following null hypotheses were developed:

H0.1: Employing explicit pragmatic awareness raising instruction has no significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' use of speech act of request via e-mails.

H0.2: Explicit instruction of pragmatic doesn't have any significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' production of linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate requests?

H0.3: Gender has no significant effect on the choice of speech act of request by Iranian intermediate EFL learners via e-mails.

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. Participants and settings

The study was conducted at Torsys Foreign Language Institute of Kashmar, Iran. A sample of 87 students who were studying English translation and English language and literature were selected based on a non-random. They were studying English language at Torsys from 2010 to 2015 over 20 semesters. They were both male and female and their age range from 19-28 years old. The participants were selected on the basis of performance on a general proficiency test, i.e. Quick Placement Test (QPT) which is developed by Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2001). This research was carried out during the students' regular English classes at Torsys. To observe the ethical issues, the researcher ensured that all participants' data would be used in the research and guaranteed that participants' private information including their names, addresses, and identifying features would be kept confidential and used only for the aims of this research. They were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups.

### 5.2. Instruments

To collect the required data for the accomplishment of this study, the following instruments were administered.

## a) Quick Placement Test (QPT)

To ensure the participants' homogeneity, QPT developed by Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2001) containing 60 multiple-choice items; grammar, vocabulary, cloze test was administered to a large population of EFL learners in Kashmar ( $\mathrm{N}=87$ ). Those participants whose scores were $48-54$ out of 60 took part in the study. Participants were allowed to complete the questioner in 30 minutes. QPT (developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL) has been found to be valid in 20 countries via administering to more than 2,000 learners. Also, the reliability indexes of the test calculated by

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the trial phases are close to 0.9 for the 60 item test and 0.85 for the 40 item test which confirm the reliability of this test (Geranpayeh 2003).

Having completed the QPT, the subjects were asked to complete an individual background questionnaire (IBQ) which was designed by the researcher. This questionnaire elicited background data about students, including their age, gender, academic year, self- rated language proficiency, years of English study, their native language background, their language learning experience, the amount of their exposure to English outside the classroom context, and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or international English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores if any. 10 minutes were allocated for its completion. (See appendix A).
b) Multiple- Choice Completion Discourse Task (MDCT) and Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT):

The participants were given a pre-test of request speech act including multiple choice discourse completion task (MDCT) for interpretation and Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) for use. Finally the groups were given a parallel post-test of the speech acts of the study including MDCT for interpretation and WDCT for use. To obtain the significant differences between groups an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the means of pre-test and post- test scores between them. A multiple choice discourse completion tasks (MDCT), which was the modified version of Lyster and Ranta"s (1994) pragmatic test and a standard test, was used to collect the required data. The reliability index was found to be 0.76 , which is, according to DeVellis (1991), a respectable reliability. MDCT consisted of test items where the participants were asked to select the correct response (the key) from several given choices. Multiple-choice questions commonly include an instruction to the testee and a stem. The key and distractors follow in random order. This MDCT consisted of 10 items (see appendix B). The participants were asked to choose the correct choice from several given choices. 15 minutes were allocated for completion of the test. The test consisted of incomplete discourse sequence that socially differentiated situations. Each discourse sequence presented a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, the social distance between interlocutors, and their states relative to each other followed by an incomplete dialogue. Participants were asked to complete the task by selecting the appropriate option, thereby providing the speech act aimed at the given context.

There was an email discussion for the participants, leading to cultural and pragmatic awareness-raising. Then WDCTs was administered. It was used to assess the participantse knowledge of request speech acts prior to and after the treatment phase of the study. WDCT contained 5different situations to which the participants had to respond in written form via email. The treatment was started after pretest. Immediately after the treatment, post-test was conducted. The required data for post-test were the same as those in pretest.

## 6. Procedure

### 6.1. Data collection

Getting permission for running the study was the first step of the study. In order to get the permission for conducting the study, the researcher consulted with the supervisor of Torsys Foreign Language institute. The next stage of this study was an introduction session. The researcher informed the participants about the procedures of the study. Participants were also provided with sufficient information about the purpose of the study. After introduction session the participants were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire and take Quick Placement Test (QPT), developed by Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2001) containing 60 multiple-choice items; grammar, vocabulary, cloze test. It was employed to assess the participants 'homogeneity and their general knowledge of

English of the current study. QPT (developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL) has been found to be valid in 20 countries via administering to more than 2,000 learners. Also, the reliability indexes of the test calculated by the trial phases are close to 0.9 for the 60 item test and 0.85 for the 40 item test which confirm the reliability of this test (Geranpayeh 2003).

### 6.2. Pre-test

Administering MDCT and WDCT as pre-test were the next stage of the study. The multiple choice discourse completion task, used both in pretest and posttest, was the modified version of Lyster and Ranta"s (1994) pragmatic test and was standard tests. They were used to collect the required data. MDCT consists of 10 items. The participants were asked to choose the correct response from several given choices. The reliability index was found to be 0.76 , which is, according to DeVellis (1991), a respectable reliability. Having administered the MDCT there was an email discussion for the participants, leading to cultural and pragmatic awareness-raising. Then WDCTs was administered. It was used to assess the participants" knowledge of request speech acts prior to and after the treatment phase of the study. WDCT used in this study was a modified version of Rezvani, Eslami Rasekh, and Dastjerdi (2014). For checking the reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was estimated. The value for Alpha coefficient was 0.75 which is an acceptable figure .WDCT contained 5different situations to which the participants had to respond in written form via email. The pre- and the post-test in the form of written production were administered in a computer lab by asking the participants to read five different scenarios and send emails to real addresses provided to them making a request a professor (i.e. higher status). All emails were later checked and printed for analysis. It should be noted that the situations in the pre- and post-test were all different. The treatment was started after pretest. Immediately after the treatment posttest which was parallel in nature to the pre-test was conducted.

### 6.3. Treatment

Having informed the participants on the processes of the study, determined the participants' proficiency level, administered the individual background questionnaire, and performed pretest phase, the researcher selected groups, control group and experimental group, and started treatment stage. For the purpose of the study, treatment section lasted for ten (10) sessions once a week and 90 minutes each session. The participants in the control group did not receive any instruction on pragmatics. The participants in experimental group received explicit pragmatic instruction on using politeness strategies in emails. To make sure that treatment materials and the research procedure were clear and feasible in the classroom setting, the researcher consulted an expert at the same institute. He was responsible for conducting treatment section and the researcher was the observer of the process. The participants in experimental group were given explicit instruction on pragmatics with a focus on teaching request features and using epoliteness strategies such as tact, generosity, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Each session, new strategies were presented and the participants were asked to write an email to the instructor based on what was covered in that session (covered materials are discussed in the following lines). The participants were presented with instructions based on the rules of politeness strategies with the purpose of comprehending how politeness guidelines were helpful in making more acceptable and polite emails.

After presenting politeness principles, the instructor started teaching those strategies, each session the focus was on one strategy, and provided necessary information on the way these principles could be applied to different computer mediated communication. The primary focus was on those strategies that participants encounter in their academic careers. Each session, the instructor worked on one aspect of politeness principles. The materials used for this course were Leech's (1983) politeness maxims, including tact, generosity, appropriateness, modesty, agreement, and sympathy, web sites on the internet devoted to politeness strategies including

Shea's (1994) netiquette page, Rinaldi's (1998) user guidelines and netiquette page, and Hombridge's (1995) RFC 1885: netiquette guidelines page, and Lakoff's (2011) rules of politeness including a) Be clear : quality, quantity, relevance, and manner, and b) Be polite : don't impose, give options, and make other feel good. Johnstone (2008) mentioned that these subsets of be polite refer to the maxim of formality or distance, the maxim of hesitancy or deference, and the maxim of equality or camaraderie. The instructor used aforementioned web sites in order to raise awareness of email pragmatics as an issue that applies to the entire internet community. Each unit lasted 90 minutes and continued the entire treatment. Some poor emails were provided as a task after teaching and the participants were asked to find poor elements of emails and discuss about the ways to make them more polite (see appendix B). Participants were asked to write an email to the instructor based on what covered in the class.

### 6.4. Post-test

One week after treatment phase, the participants both in experimental and control group were asked to take a multiple choice discourse completion task and written discourse completion test.

### 6.5. Data coding and data rating

For QPT descriptive statistics was calculated to examine the distribution of scores on the test. The mean, standard deviation, skewness, and standard error of measurement were calculated to determine the extent to which the scores were normally distributed. These statistics were calculated with and without outliers to investigate the influence of extreme scores on the distributions. An independent samples t-test for QPT was calculated. Having gathered the required data, in pretest and posttest, Participants" responses to written discourse completion test items were scored considering the type of language used; that was each linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate request was given four points. Answers that were grammatical but not pragmatically appropriate or vice versa, were given two points and answers that were neither grammatical nor pragmatically appropriate, were given zero. All the correct answers were added up to a total sum. The total score for WDCT was 20. An English specialist in the field was asked to score the WDCT items. WDCT used in this study was a modified version of Rezvani, Eslami Rasekh, and Dastjerdi (2014). For multiple-choice items in pre- and post-tests, the best response was grammatically and pragmatically appropriate one depending on the context, social distance and status. Accordingly, a learner answered all 10 multiple-choice items correctly, was given 20 points. After the data were categorized and coded, as explained above, the coded data were analyzed using t-test. The data collected through the MDCT and WDCT were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS. Descriptive statistics including the mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, and frequency of occurrence were calculated. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the means of pre-test and post- test scores and significant differences between groups.

## 7. Design

The purpose of this study was to reveal whether explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction has any effect on using politeness strategies by Iranian advanced EFL learners in their emails to faculty. This study adopted a quasi-experimental, pre-test and post-test design (pretest, treatment, and posttest). This research was conducted in two intact classes. For the purpose of the study, one group ( 20 participants) was experimental group with a specific treatment condition, the other one was control group ( 20 participants). The control group did not receive any kind of instruction. An instructor from the department of English studies participated in this study and the researcher was the observer of the study. The instructor conducted the treatment and taught both experimental and control group for 90 minutes for 12 sessions.

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## 8. Results and Discussion

Although e-mail is a very useful instrument in communication, it seems that its widespread use in academic and business settings has caused some new challenges and problems for students and writers. Because it is a relatively new form of communication, fundamental and primary social standards for writing and responding to e-mail such as politeness or directness, pragmatic, contexts, and coherent message should be developed and trained. Miscommunication can easily happen when people have different expectations about the e-mails that they send and receive.

Email is used for many different purposes, such as getting advices, contacting friends, communicating with faculty and professors, requesting information, exchanging information, and asking for clarification. Depending on the purposes, the messages differ in their degree of formality, intended audience, and desired results. Writers sometimes ignore the social context and power relationship. Therefore, this ignorance leads to the neglect of special social standards required for writing emails effectively. There is a common insight among students that emails are unintentional and unplanned in terms of the use of informal language, symbols, vocabulary, grammar and syntax. Although emails have brought professors and students to a closer contact, removing some of the traditional obstacles between students and their professors, it has been led students write to their professors and supervisors using the language and style meant for their friends. Students need to take it into account that writing email to the faculty is not the same as writing email to their friends. They should consider the power and status relationship between faculty and students when writing e-mails. Some students are not aware of the pragmatics and sociolinguistic norms in writing emails. They often transfer their first language (L1) politeness strategies when writing e-mail. Hawisher and Selfe (2000) believe that students are not aware of this fact that politeness strategies may vary from one culture to another and Brown and Levinson (1987) point that all cultures communicate politeness in terms of linguistic or non-linguistic perspectives. Ignorance of the pragmatic, context, and situation where communication occurs is one of the biggest problems that students face it when writing emails to faculty. Another problem that students face it when writing emails to faculty is the lack of knowledge about writing strategies and appropriate use of requests to address faculty. They do not know when and how use politeness strategies in emails. To develop student's English writing, there are many textbooks such as academic writing, paragraph development, and college writing, etc., and also some courses at universities and institutions. But there are not any courses to develop email writing effectively and appropriately.

### 8.1. Normality of data from placement test, pretests and posttests

To make sure that the data are normal, Kolmogrov-Smirnov Test was used. The null-hypothesis of this test indicates that the data distribution is normal. If p-value is greater than .05 , the nullhypothesis is supported.

Table 1.
Results of the Normality of Research Variables Using Kolmogrov-Smirnov Test

|  |  | QPT | WDCpr <br> e | MCDpr <br> e | WDCpos <br> t | MDCpo <br> st |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| N |  | 45 | 45 | 45 | 45 | 45 |
| Normal Parameters $^{\mathrm{a}}$ | Mean | 50.8000 | 10.7111 | 10.8000 | 12.5556 | 12.6667 |
|  | Std. Deviation | 2.11703 | 2.05185 | 1.90215 | 2.06217 | 1.73205 |


| Most <br> Differences | Extreme | Absolute | .180 | .135 | .130 | .136 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  |  |  | .165 |  |  |
|  | Positive | .180 | .109 | .130 | .130 | .165 |
|  | Negative | -.162 | -.135 | -.121 | -.136 | -.135 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | 1.209 | .906 | .870 | .912 | 1.109 |  |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .108 | .385 | .436 | .376 | .171 |

a. Test distribution is Normal.

Note: QPT stands for Quick Placement Test; WDCpre stands for Written Discourse Completion Task Pretest; MCDpre stands for Multiple Choice Discourse Task Pretest; WDCpost stands for Written Discourse Completion Task Posttest; MDCpost stands for Multiple Choice Discourse Task Posttest;

Based on data in Table 1, P-value for all variables is greater than 0.05 [sig(two-tailed) $>0.05$ ], therefore the null-hypothesis of "Kolmogorov-Smirnov" indicating the distribution normality is accepted.

### 8.2. Results of QPT

To ensure that the participants are homogeneous, QPT was administered to 87 EFL learners and those participants who scored 48 to 54 out of 60 were selected. Table 2 shows the data.

Table 2
Results of independent samples $t$ - test for QPT

| Groups | N | M | SD | t | df | sig(two- <br> tailed) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: |
| Cont. | 22 | 50.95 | 2.05 | .47 | 43 | .63 |
| Exp. | 23 | 50.65 | 2.20 |  |  |  |

Note: Cont stands for Control; Exp stands for Experimental, N stands for Number; M stands for Mean; SD stands for Standard Deviation; T stands for $t$-value; df stands for degree of freedom, Sig stands for level of significance;

As data in Table 2 show [ $\mathrm{t}=.47$; sig ( two -tailed=.63)>.05; $\mathrm{df}=43$ ], no statistically significant difference is observed between control ( $\mathrm{N}=22, \mathrm{M}=50.95$; $\mathrm{SD}=2.05$ ) and experimental ( $\mathrm{N}=23$, $\mathrm{M}=50.65$; $\mathrm{SD}=2.20$ ) groups, since p -value is more than .05 . Therefore, the homogeneity of the participants in both control and experimental groups was confirmed at the outset of the study.

### 8.3. Results of Pretest Data Analysis of Control and Experimental Groups

### 8.3.1. Results of WDC Pretest

To compare the means of the two groups in WDC at the start of the study, independent samples t-test was employed by the researcher to further ensure the participants' homogeneity.

Table 3
Results of independent samples $t$ - test for WDC Pretest

| Groups | N | M | SD | t | df | sig(two- <br> tailed) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Cont. | 22 | 10.95 | 2.08 | .77 | 43 | .44 |
| Exp. | 23 | 10.47 | 2.04 |  |  |  |

As observed in Table 3, there is no significant difference ( $\mathrm{df}=43, \mathrm{t}=.77, \operatorname{sig}=.44>.05$ ) between control ( $\mathrm{N}=22$; $\mathrm{M}=10.95$, $\mathrm{sd}=2.08$ ) and experimental $(\mathrm{N}=23 ; \mathrm{M}=10.47, \mathrm{sd}=2.04$ ) groups before the treatment in WDC.

### 8.4. Results of MCD Pretest

Again independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the means of the two groups. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Results of independent samples $t$ - test for MCD Pretest

| Groups | N | M | SD | t | df | sig(two- <br> tailed $)$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Cont. | 22 | 10.54 | 1.87 | .87 | 43 | .38 |
| Exp. | 23 | 11.04 | 1.94 |  |  |  |

As Table 4 shows, there is not any statistically significant ( $\mathrm{df}=43, \mathrm{t}=.87, \mathrm{sig}=.38>.05$ ) between control ( $\mathrm{N}=22, \mathrm{M}=1.054, \mathrm{SD}=1.87$ ) and experimental $(\mathrm{N}=23, \mathrm{M}=11.04, \mathrm{SD}=1.94)$ groups in MCD pretest.

### 8.5. Results of Posttest

### 8.5.1. Results of WDC Posttest

To test the first null-hypothesis "Employing explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction does not have any significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' use of politeness strategy of requests via e-mail", independent samples t-test was employed to compare the means of the two groups in WDC posttest. Results are summarized in Table 5.

Table5

Results of independent samples $t$ - test for WDC Posttest

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Groups | N | M | SD | t | df | sig(two- <br> tailed) |
| Cont. | 22 | 11.68 | 1.86 | 3.02 | 43 | .004 |
| Exp. | 23 | 13.39 | 1.92 |  |  |  |

As Table 5 shows, participants in the experimental group ( $\mathrm{N}=23, \mathrm{M}=13.39, \mathrm{SD}=1.92$ ) performed significantly ( $\mathrm{df}=43, \mathrm{t}=3.02, \mathrm{sig}=.004<.01$ ) better than those in the control group $(\mathrm{N}=22, \mathrm{M}=11.68$, $\mathrm{SD}=1.86$ ) in WDC posttest. Therefore, the first null-hypothesis was rejected at the .01 level of significance. It was found that the treatment had significant effects on Iranian advanced EFL learners' use of politeness strategy of requests via e-mail.

### 8.5.2. Results of MCD Posttest

To test the second null-hypothesis "Explicit instruction of pragmatics does not have any significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' production of linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate requests" the same data analysis procedure as that of the first nullhypothesis, was followed. Table 6 summarizes the observed data.

Table6
Results of independent samples $t$ - test for MCD Posttest

| Groups | N | M | SD | t | df | sig(two- <br> tailed) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Cont. | 22 | 11.95 | 1.43 | 2.91 | 43 | .006 |
| Exp. | 23 | 13.34 | 1.74 |  |  |  |

As Table 6 shows, the experimental group ( $\mathrm{N}=23, \mathrm{M}=13.34, \mathrm{SD}=1.74$ ) performed significantly ( $\mathrm{df}=43, \mathrm{t}=2.91, \operatorname{sig}=.006<.01$ ) better than the other group ( $\mathrm{N}=22, \mathrm{M}=11.95, \mathrm{SD}=1.43$ ) in MCD posttest. Accordingly, the second null-hypothesis was also rejected. It was, therefore, found that the treatment had significant effects on Iranian advanced EFL learners' production of linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate requests.

### 8.6. Results of Gender

Concerning the third null-hypothesis "Gender does not have any significant effect on the choice of speech act of request by Iranian advanced EFL learners via e-mail" independent samples t -test was conducted through which the mean of male participants in the experimental group was compare to that of female ones in that group. Results are shown in Table 7.

## Table7

Results of independent samples t - test for WDC Posttest (Role of Gender)

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| Groups | N | M | SD | t | df | sig(two- <br> tailed) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Female | 12 | 13.60 | 1.77 | .44 | 21 | .004 |
| Male | 11 | 12.78 | 2.08 |  |  |  |

As Table 7 shows, there is a significant difference ( $\mathrm{df}=21, \mathrm{t}=.44$, $\mathrm{sig}=. .004<.05$ ) between female( $\mathrm{N}=12, \mathrm{M}=13.60, \mathrm{SD}=1.77$ ) and male ( $\mathrm{N}=11, \mathrm{M}=12.78, \mathrm{SD}=2.08$ ) participants in WDC posttest. Therefore the third null-hypothesis proposing a significant effect of gender was supported.

## 9. Discussion

To achieve the objectives of the present study, three research questions were posed. The research questions included: 1: Does explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction have any significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' use of politeness strategy of requests via e-mail? 2: Does explicit instruction of pragmatic awareness have any significant effect on Iranian advanced EFL learners' production of linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate results? 3: Does gender have any significant effect on the choice of speech act of request by Iranian advanced EFL learners via e-mail?

The questions were addressed and the following results were obtained:
First, based on the data analysis procedure a significant positive effect of explicit pragmatic awareness-raising instruction on Iranian advanced EFL learners' use of politeness strategy of requests via e-mail was found. The present finding lent support to what found by Gholamia and Aghaeib (2012) which explored the effect of explicit and implicit instruction on Iranian EFL Learners' production and recognition of language functions. They found that the participants, who received explicit focus on form instruction, outperformed those in the implicit group. Their findings are encouraging for the use of explicit pragmatic instruction in classrooms to develop a greater pragmatic competence. Alcon (2005) in a similar study on requests found that although an improvement in learners" appropriate use of requests did take place after instructional period, the explicit group showed an advantage over the implicit one. Similarly, Rezvani, Eslami Rasekh and Dastjerdi (2014) explored the effects of explicit and implicit instructions on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic development speech acts of request and suggestions in focus via e-mail. It was found that Iranian EFL earners' production of requests and suggestions improved significantly after both explicit and implicit instructions. This finding was also in line with what found by Abdollahizadeh Masouleh, Arjmandi, Vahdany (2014). They indicated that explicit metapragmatic instruction facilitates interlanguage pragmatic development.

Concerning the second research question, data analysis indicated positive significant effect of explicit instruction of pragmatic awareness on Iranian advanced EFL learners' production of linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate results. This finding was in agreement with what found by Gholamia and Aghaeib (2011) which indicated that pragmatic awareness-raising had significant effect on EFL learners' use of request strategy. Similarly, it was in line with what found byVahid Dastjerdi and Rezvani (2010). They explored the Impact of Instruction on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners'Production of Requests in English. They found that explicit instruction was effective in leading learners to produce linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate requests. This finding was also in line with previous studies that report the benefits

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of explicit instruction for L2 pragmatic development (Billmyer, 1990; Bouton, 1994; Rose and Ng Kwai-fun, 2001; Safont, 2003, 2004, 2005; Takahashi, 2001). More specifically, findings with regard to the second research question in this study lend further support to those studies on the positive effects of explicit instruction which employed explanation and discussion of rules as their approach to provide learners with metapragmatic information (Kubota, 1995; LoCastro, 1997; Trosborg, 2003; Yoshimi, 2001; Wish off 2000).

The third research question was, finally, addressed. It was found that gender has significantly contributed to the choice of speech act of request by Iranian advanced EFL learners via e-mail. This finding was in line with what found by Farashaiyan, Tan (2012). They probed the relationship between gender, language proficiency, and pragmatic knowledge. They indicated that female learners performed more satisfactorily on the tests than their male partners did. Similarly, it was also in agreement with what found by Zangoei, Nourmohammadi, Derakhshan (2014). They explored the effects of contextual factors, namely exposure to instruction and gender difference on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic perception of the illocutionary act of apology. They found that gender has a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic perception of the illocutionary act of apology.

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# THE PREDICTION POWER OF THE READING ABILITY OF IRANIAN UNDERGRADUATES ABOUT THEIR TRANSLATION ABILITY 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY INVESTIGATES THE PREDICTION POWER OF THE READING ABILITY OF THE STUDENTS, WHO MAJOR IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION, ABOUT THEIR TRANSLATION ABILITY. IN FACT, IN THIS STUDY, THE READING ABILITY OF THE STUDENTS ACT AS AN INDEPENDENT VARIABLE, AND ITS AIM IS TO PREDICT THE SUCCESS OF THE STUDENTS IN THE DEPENDANT VARIABLE WHICH IS THE TRANSLATION ABILITY. IN THIS STUDY, THE DATA WERE GATHERED FROM 30 SENIOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION MAJOR. IN FACT, THE SCORE OF TWO COURSES, TRANSLATION AND READING, WERE GATHERED AND ANALYZED BY USING SIMPLE LINEAR REGRESSION. THE RESULT INDICATED THAT THOSE STUDENTS WHO PERFORMED BETTER ON THE READING COURSE WERE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN THE TRANSLATION COURSE.


KEY WORDS: TRANSLATION ABILITY; READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY; EFL STUDENTS

Introduction
All of the skills and sub-skills of a language are crucial for language learners. One of the significant skills is reading. Reading skill is very significant especially for language learners since they can understand their textbooks by reading them. When language learners have difficulty in reading and comprehending a text in the target language, they cannot cope with other language areas which will need some reading ability (Decker, 2007).

One of the skills that need the reading ability is translation. Students should first read a passage then begin to translate. Translation is also a significant skill since it can help people to exchange opinions and thoughts no matter what their mother tongue is. "In communities where a great number of cultures intermingle, differences of world views lead to misunderstandings. The reason is that one group is always unaware of others' cultures. To familiarize people of different traditions, translation can be very useful and effective." (Miremadi, 2005, p.13) Therefore, translation can have a great effect on people's lives.

It is obvious that there is a relationship between reading a text and translating it. In other words, when students read and comprehend a piece of text better, they are more likely to translate it more appropriately.

The main aim of the present study is to gather the students' reading comprehension scores and to discover whether the students who were more successful at the reading comprehension test are more likely to get better scores at translation test.

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## Review of literature

In 1950s, an interest appears in studying translation and its evaluation strategies. This interest in 1990s leads to an increase in the power in the translation studies. This period was filled with translator training programs. In Iran, the Department of translation has presented the course of Translation. Its goal is to increase the students' general proficiency of English and their translation ability.

One interesting issue regarding translation is the different definitions which are introduced by multiple researchers. "Translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language." (Newmark, 1981, p.10) Or Nida (1974) defines translating as follows: "Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style." (p. 83) "Every translator gives a new definition of translation after years of translating." (Farahzad, 1990, p.1) Generally, subtle differences in the definitions of translation do not lead to any major changes in this research. Although academic achievement of the students who study Translation has always been a great concern, it has not received enough attention.

In the history of research, it has been agreed that reading is a very complicated process that involves different factors which interact with one another. When it comes to EFL students, the complexity is even more compounded. "The translator must be aware of the implicit and explicit information which is being communicated or read." (Larson, 1984, p. 43) In fact being able to read competently is one of the most important skills that we need to have in today's society. Readers usually use a variety of reading strategies (e.g. grouping or recombination) in order to comprehend the text.

The relationship between the reading ability and the translation ability have already been investigated by a number researchers such as Ristiyanti, 2013; Tavakoli, Hatam and Shafiei, 2012; Rahemi, Jufri and Ardri, 2013; Farahani \& Siyyari, 2015.

Ristiyanti (2013) conducted a research studies to discover whether there is a significant relationship between the reading comprehensino and the translation ability of the eleventh grade university students. "The result of the research shows that there is a significant correlation between the reading comprehension and the translation ability of the eleventh grade students of SMA 1 Bae Kudus in the academic year 2013/2014." (Ristiyanti, 2013, p. 9)

In a similar study, Farahani \& Siyyari (2015) investigate the effect of teaching reading comprehension skills on translation quality of EFL. Learners took a pre-test on translation and a pre-test on reading comprehension. Later, a treat based on reading comprehension skill was offered. Then a test based on the treatrment was given. Finally, two post-tests on translataion and reading comprehension was given. The result indicated that the students translation ability was improved; however, the correlation between the reading comprehension and translation scores was not significant.

## The purpose of the study

The purpose of this paper is first to diagnose the participants' proficiency level in the reading course (by collecting their reading scores), and second to investigate the possibility of predicting the proficiency level of translation by the use of the level of reading ability. In other words, the reading scores of students try to predict the success of students in translation ability. It is also worth mentioning that all of the students of English Translation major take their translation course after passing their reading course.

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## Method

## Participants

This study is conducted with the scores of 30 senior students of English Translation major studying at the Department of Foreign Language of Rasht Azad University. All of the participants are in the $21-23$ age range. Besides, half of the participants are female and the other half are male in order to keep the research in an equal situation. The reading scores and translation scores of these participants were selected randomly. Neither the researcher nor the readers have any information about the identity of these participants.

## Data Analysis

The data of this study has been analyzed by the SPSS software. And the statistic that is used for this study is simple linear regression in order to find out if the reading ability of Iranian undergraduates can predict their translation ability.

## Result

The aim of this study, as it was mentioned before, is whether the reading ability of students has power to predict their translation ability.

The result of using simple linear regression, as can be seen in Table 1, shows that there is a high degree of correlation between the two variables. In other words, a significant correlation (i.e. .912) exists between the reading ability and translation ability of the participants.

Table 1. Correlations between reading scores and translation scores

## Correlations

|  |  | Translation <br> score | Reading score |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Pearson Correlation | Translation score | 1.000 | .912 |
|  | Reading score | .912 | 1.000 |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | Translation score | . | .000 |
|  | Reading score | .000 |  |
| N | Translation score | 30 | 30 |
|  | Reading score | 30 | 30 |

The power of prediction of the independent variable in this study is specified by the amount of adjusted R square (i.e. . 82 according to Table 2). In other words, the level of the reading ability of the participants can have $82 \%$ prediction power for the translation ability.

Table 2. R Square of the reading scores and the translation scores

## Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R <br> Square | Std. Error of the <br> Estimate |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | $.912^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .831 | .825 | .773 |

In table 3, the sum of squares of Regression is 82.232 and it is more than the sum of squares of Residual i.e. 16.735 . It shows that the result of this study is mostly due to the independent variable rather than other factors.

Table 3. Regression and Residual squares
ANOVA

| Model |  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Regression | 82.232 | 1 | 82.232 | 137.589 | .000a |
|  | Residual | 16.735 | 28 | . 598 |  |  |
|  | Total | 98.967 | 29 |  |  |  |

Finally, as can be seen in Table 4, the level of significance is zero ( $0<. \mathrm{o5}$ ). And t is 11.730 (more than 2.33). These two data show that there is a significant relationship between the dependant and independent variable.

Table 4. Coefficients of the scores

Coefficients ${ }^{a}$

| Model |  | Unstandardized Coefficients |  | Standardized Coefficients | $t$ | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | B | Std. Error | Beta |  |  |
| 1 | (Constant) | . 254 | 1.432 |  | . 178 | . 860 |
|  | readingscore | . 950 | . 081 | . 912 | 11.730 | . 000 |

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The result of the research indicates that there is a significant correlation between the reading comprehension scores and the translation ability of the Iranian English Translation students. According to the results, teachers or curriculum designers need to make students read variant types of text and try to comprehend and discover the main ideas or specific information of the passages. Generally, different reading strategies need to used and taught by the teachers. And students should improve their reading strategies to become a successful translator.

## Conclusion

The main focus of this study was to test the prediction power of the reading ability of students about their translation ability. The data were gathered from senior students, who major in English Translation, and they were analyzed. At the end, all of the results and analyses that are taken from the above tables confirm the theory behind this study. So, the reading ability of students has the power to predict the success of students in their translation ability. In other words, those students who perform better on the reading course are more successful in their translation course.

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# THE IMPACT OF USING MUSIC ON EFL LEARNERS' LEARNING OF INTONATION PATTERNS ACROSS MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS: THE CASE OF IRANIAN LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY WAS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF USING MUSIC ON EFL LEARNERS' LEARNING OF INTONATION PATTERNS ACROSS MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS IN IRAN. IN THIS QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY, 60 IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS WERE CONVENIENTLY SAMPLED AND ASSIGNED INTO EITHER AN EXPERIMENTAL OR A CONTROL GROUP. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WERE GIVEN A TREATMENT INVOLVING MUSIC. AFTER ALL THE SEASONS OF INSTRUCTION THE STUDENTS WERE GIVEN A POST TEST. THE DATA COLLECTED FROM THE PRETEST AND THE POST TEST WERE THEN ANALYZED THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF ANCOVA TO INVESTIGATE THE PATTERNS OF DIFFERENCE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GROUPS. THE RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS SHOWED A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PERFORMANCES OF THE GROUPS. FURTHERMORE, WE FOUND THAT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE ARE EFFECTIVE IN LEARNERS' LEARNING OF INTONATION. THE PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS COULD BE OF VALUE TO ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING, AND LEARNING INCLUDING TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND INSTITUTES.


KEY TERMS: MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE, MUSIC, INTONATION PATTERNS, MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

## 1. Background

Following Gardener (1983), it is believed that, different students think differently. The brains of individuals vary to some extent. In other words, the application of intelligence is different in

[^2]individuals. Learners are divided into three general categories including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Multiple Intelligence (MI) Theory (Gardener, 1983, 1985) is developed based on these three categories. MI Theory is effective in developing the abilities of learners for communication. According to this theory, there are eight kinds of intelligences that are different in types and degrees in individuals. Gardner (1983) in his first book entitled Frames of Mind, introduced seven types of intelligence as, Linguistics/Verbal, Logical/Mathematical, Musical/Rhythmic, Bodily/Kinesthetic, Spatial, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal Intelligences. To this he added Naturalist Intelligence in 1999. We know that all of these types of intelligence are in relationship with learners' communication and, they are beneficial in developing learners' cognition, perception, and language learning.

Generally, the MI theory is effective in developing learning styles in schools all over the world. The theory is important in learning because teachers know that learners can learn in multiple ways. For instance, two different students may answer a question like each other, but by employing two different abilities in the area of their interest. So, this theory can be used as an instrument to increase the motivation of students' language learning. According to Nelson (2003), "Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences requires teachers to adjust their instructional strategies in order to meet student's individual needs." (p. 140).

Different studies have been done around the world, on different aspects of Gardeners' MI Theory; one aspect which has received particular attention is the impact of Musical Intelligence on the development of pronunciation of EFL learners. Most such studies have shown that, using music and songs is effective on EFL learners' learning language. Considering significance of Musical Intelligence, and the complexities of the learners' learning pronunciation, in this study, we will investigate the impact of applying music and songs on EFL learners' learning of intonation patterns across different levels of Musical or Rhythmic Intelligence in Iran. When we are studying a foreign language to achieve communication, it is essential to have a good pronunciation. Students at all levels should work on their pronunciation skills to be successful learners in the language. Most of the time, the teachers do not attention to pronunciation as well as the four skills, so it is not positioned well in their syllabi. Miyake (2004) in an article claimed that, pronunciation has been called the Cinderella of ELT (being locked away and out of view).

One of the main processes in learning is pronunciation because even if different structures may be applied correctly, if the pronunciation and aspects such as intonation, rhythm and stress are not produced correctly, the intended message cannot be delivered and it results in misunderstanding, and failure in communication. Regarding the importance of improving the pronunciation of EFL learners, particularly intonation in this field, we will be looking for the impact of applying music and songs in our classrooms on the intonation of EFL learners in Iran.

Generally, there are different difficulties in the process of learning English as a foreign language. According to Garcia (2007) and Martinez et al. (2006), one of the main complexities of learning EFL is pronunciation. The study by Silverman (2001) on complexity of elements of ESL learning indicated that, the most complex part of learning of language is the pronunciation and recognition of phonological elements. According to Garcia (2007), Flor et al. (2006), and Techmeier (1969), the most difficult skill in learning a foreign language is pronunciation. They believed that, the child cannot pronounce a word correctly, because he is weak in his listening skill. Therefore, he cannot hear the word correctly to pronounce it well. Coe (1972) stated that music has not been applied enough in language classrooms. Murphey's (1992a) argued that, teachers do not use music and songs in the education system. Kelly (1988) believed that, the other common problem that students are suffering from is the lack of motivation and interest in the learning. From a psychological prospective, music is used for decreasing anxiety of different people, and utilizing a mild music can decrease the stress of students in the classroom; however,

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in the Iranian educational system, less attention is paid to the role of music in the classroom. According to Gardener (1997), the Musical Intelligence is used for motivating students in learning English in different countries. The increasingly pace of learning a foreign language can results in decreasing of anxiety and increase of motivation; it can be happened by applying music and songs in the classroom.

According to Gardener (1983), different societies with different cultures have different types of intelligences. People use their own abilities to manage certain tasks that increase their motivation to get skilled in those fields. He also argued that, culture also plays a great role in the development of the intelligences. According to Amy and Brualdi (1996), the teacher can use a song about a musically intelligent student to learn about the revolutionary war about what happened. According to Richard (1997), by applying musical intelligence in developing intonation teachers and learners can determine the other intelligences in themselves. On the other hand, we want to show that applying songs can increase the pace of development of EFL learners' intonation, although learning pronunciation of a foreign language is a complex process for students, (Garcia, 2007). Significance for this study lies on making our educational system familiar with new methods of teaching pronunciation, and particularly intonation. Finally, applying music and songs can be useful in the process of language learning in the classroom. The students can be educated by their interests based on the abilities that they have, so in our educational system, we can make a speedy learning with motivated students that study based on their interests.

In this study, we want to investigate the effects of applying music on the development of intonation of EFL learners in Iran. Furthermore, we want to show that students performances can varied through different levels of musical intelligence.

Therefore, we answered to below research question base on the hypothesis that, Music did not have significant effects on EFL learners' learning of intonation patterns across Musical Intelligence levels in the case of Iranian learners:

- Did using music have a significant effect on EFL learners' learning of intonation patterns across musical intelligence levels in Iran?


## 1. Literature review

After the introduction of Suggestopedia by Lazanov, who believed that students learn more effectively in a relax environment by listening to a mild music in the classroom, music found an important place in classroom teachings of languages. This status was further strengthened in 1983 when Howard Gardner introduced the new theory of Multiple Intelligence in his first book entitled, frames of mind, stating that intelligence is not just the knowledge of language and mathematics and that there are other types of intelligence such as emotional, interpersonal, spatial, musical and so on. He also stated. The theory is important in learning because teachers know that learners can learn in multiple ways. For instance, two different students may answer a question like each other, but by employing two different abilities in the area of their interest. According to Gardener's MI Theory, all people are benefited by Musical Intelligence when they are born. Gardener (1985) stated that, "All normal people possess some musical intelligence." (p. 285). He noted that "even some individuals who have experienced significant amnesia from brain damage can maintain their musical abilities, while conversely, others become disabled musically yet keep basic language skills." (Gardener, 1986, p. 118).

In 1992, several resource books were published about the use of music in the language classroom all expressing positive effects of incorporating some sorts of music in the classroom. For example, Graham (1992) believed that, "Jazz Chants", can develop
learning in the language classroom, and Siskova (2008) stated that "the history of music proves that music and language have always been connected, which implies that teaching the vocabulary of a foreign language through songs could be effective" (p. 11). Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011) also maintained that music in the class is as an instrument that helps learners to be relaxed and be free from anxiety. We can even motivate our students to learn a new language by applying music in the classroom.

Meanwhile different studies were carried out to investigate the effect of using music and songs on the acquisition of different aspects of a foreign. Anton (1990), for example, conducted a research on the development of rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation of ESL learners by applying music and songs. He found that most of the activities like singing songs, listening to the songs and writing your own songs can improve your rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation. In another study, Arleo (2000) examined the relationship between music and intonation. He stated that the rhythm and melody of music are in a direct relationship with improvement of stress and intonation of foreign language learners. In the same line, Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, and Levy (2002) conducted a research on the relationship between phonological awareness, music perception skills, and early reading skills on 100 participants; they were 5 years old children. They found that there was a significant relationship between musical intelligence and both phonological awareness, and reading development. The results indicated that, music perception can stimulate the auditory system related to reading that partially overlaps with phonological awareness. In a similar study, Anvari et al., (2002) found out that, Musical Intelligence appears to tap the auditory system related to reading that partially overlaps with those related to phonological awareness.

Later on, Overy (2003) carried out an experimental study about the effects of music that focused particularly on rhythm and timing abilities for dyslexic children. The participants were the children that were suffering from dyslexia. These children had difficulty with rhythmic abilities. She used a pretest, posttest control group design and found that, music in the classroom was effective on both phonological and spelling skills. She believed that, the dyslexic children could develop their abilities through listening to music in the classroom. In the same line, Slevc and Miyake (2006) found that, those adult students with more advanced Musical Intelligence spoke English with better pronunciation than those, with less developed Musical Intelligence. More recently, Torkeh (2014) conducted a study on investigating the impact of music on EFL learning. The participants were 140 Persian native speakers both male and female at an intermediate stage of English language proficiency. She found that, the relationship is statically significant and music has a direct effect on language proficiency.

As the above review reveals, using music is effective in learning English or a foreign language. All the studies that are mentioned above are around learning English as a second language, and generally foreign language and development of pronunciation or the other skills of language. In this study, we want to find the impact of using music on development of particularly intonation of EFL learners through different levels of Musical Intelligence in Iran.

## 2. Method

This study aimed at, determining whether applying music could be effective on the proficiency of intonation patterns of EFL learners across different levels of Musical Intelligence in Iran. In this part, the design of the study, the participants, the instruments, and data analysis are described.

### 3.1 Participants

The participants of the study included 60 EFL students in four intact classes at Jahad English language institute in Iran who were selected through convenience sampling. They had an English background as a foreign language in Jahad institute at intermediate level of English language proficiency. The 60 participants were randomly assigned into an experimental and a control group, 30 people each;

### 3.2 Research Design

The study reported here, is a quesi-experimental research that aimed to explore the impact of applying music on learning intonation patterns of EFL learners across different levels of Musical Intelligence in Iran.

### 3.3 Instruments

The instruments used to collect the data included an online version of Gardener's Musical Intelligence test, designed by Mandell in 2008, and a multiple choice intonation test, that was used as both pre-test and post-test. The musical intelligence test included 20 multiple choice items; the choices were geometric shapes which demonstrated the intonation variations; the students listened to the music and picked the correct geometric shape through the correct intonation variation. The students had 10 minutes to answer the items on the musical intelligence test. The administered post-test was in parallel with pre-test. The intonation tests examined all three main patterns of intonation, including request, statement, and question patterns. Each of the tests included 20 items and the students had 10 minutes to answer the items. The intonation test was based on intonation part of Jahad institute test. The reliability of all tests was checked by test retest reliability before the treatment.

### 3.4Procedure

After selecting the sample of the study and assigning the participants to their groups, all participants were given a pretest to check their knowledge of intonation patterns before the treatment. Then, three different patterns of intonation were introduced to participants, which consisted of request, statement, and question patterns; and described about the rising, falling, and rising-falling intonation in different patterns. Moreover, several examples of these patterns were brought to students. Different examples of intonation patterns in our experimental group were thought by applying music. Then, these examples were written on the board and repeated aloud. Then students were asked to repeat the sentences after the instructor and write one sentence for each pattern includes statement, command, Wh-Question, Yes/No Question, and Tag Question and read the sentences aloud. Finally, we found that they had learnt what rising, falling, and rising-falling intonation were.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Groups

The descriptive statistics of the participants' pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and the control groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in the Groups

|  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Pretest | Posttest |
| N Valid | 60 | 60 |
| Mean | 11.9000 | 13.6833 |
| Std. Deviation | 3.50157 | 3.36730 |
| Variance | 12.261 | 11.339 |
| Skewness | -.012 | -.198 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .309 | .309 |
| Kurtosis | -1.155 | -1.173 |
| Std. Error of Kurtosis | .608 | .608 |
| Minimum | 5.00 | 8.00 |
| Maximum | 18.00 | 19.00 |

As Table 1 indicates, the mean score for the groups in pre-test was 11.90 with a standard deviation of 3.50, while for the post-test, these were 13.68 and 3.36 respectively. Moreover, Skewness and Kurtosis values for both pretest and posttest were within the ranges of $+/-1.96$ which implies that the data were descriptively normal.

### 3.2 Testing Normality Assumptions

Although the data summarized in Table 1 point to the normal distribution of scores, to get statistical evidence for the normality of scores, normality assumptions for running ANCOVA were also checked. These included normality of distribution of test scores, linearity assumption, homogeneity of regression slopes, and equality of error variances.

### 3.2.1 Normality of Distribution of Test Scores

To check this assumption, one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk's tests were run. As the results of the Kolmogrove-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests in Table 2 indicate the levels of significance for the scores in the pre and post test were all larger than .05 which pointed to the normal distribution of test scores.

Table 2 Normal Distribution of Test Scores

|  |  | Kolmogorov-Smirnova $^{2}$ |  |  | Shapiro-Wilk |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  | Groups | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Pretest | Experimental | .137 | 30 | .160 | .937 | 30 | .077 |
|  | Control | .143 | 30 | .118 | .935 | 30 | .069 |
| Posttest | Experimental | .123 | 30 | $.200^{*}$ | .945 | 30 | .121 |
|  | Control | .157 | 30 | .057 | .907 | 30 | .063 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

### 3.2.2 Linearity of Regression Lines

For testing this assumption a scatter-plot was drawn. As Figure 1 below shows there was a linear relationship between pretest and post test scores as there seemed to be no interaction between the lines; therefore, it might be argued that the assumption of linearity of regression lines was also held.


Figure 1 Linearity of regression lines

### 3.2.3 Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

This assumption was checked by measuring the interaction between group and the covariate (pretest). As the results summarized in Table 3 indicate, the value obtained for the interaction between groups and pretest was $[\mathrm{f}(1,52)=.084, \mathrm{P}=.774]$, which indicated that interaction between the independent variable and covariate was not significant and the assumption of the homogeneity of the slope of regression lines was met.

### 3.2.3 Homogeneity of Error Variance

As it is shown in Table 3 the row for the pre-test shows that the pre-test was significantly related to the post-test ( P -value $<0.05$ ) with the magnitude of.854. The row for Groups is the indicator of the main effect of the treatment on the dependent variable. After adjusting for pretest scores, there was a significant effect of the group $\left[F(1,57)=19.56, \mathrm{P}<.05\right.$, partial $\left.\eta^{2}=.256\right]$. As P -value obtained was less than 0.05 , it could be argued that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the posttest after removing the possible effect of their entry knowledge as tested through the pretest. This implies that the experimental group has outperformed the control group in post-test and $25.6 \%$ of variance of the experimental group's post-test scores is related to the effect of instruction treatment.

Table 3 Analysis of Covariance
Dependent Variable:Posttest

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| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta <br> Squared |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Corrected Model | 576.943 |  | 2 | 288.471 | 178.649 | .000 |
| Intercept | 54.362 | 1 | 54.362 | 33.666 | .000 | .862 |
| Pretest | 540.126 | 1 | 540.126 | 334.497 | .000 | .371 |
| Groups | 31.588 | 1 | 31.588 | 19.562 | .000 | .854 |
| Error | 92.040 | 57 | 1.615 |  |  | .256 |
| Total | 11903.000 | 60 |  |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 668.983 |  | 59 |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.862($ Adjusted R Squared $=.858)$

To check the homogeneity of variances, Levene's statistic was used. Leven's statistic tests the assumption that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. The results of Levene's test were not significant for the posttest $[\mathrm{F}(1,58)=.214, \mathrm{P}$ $>$.05). Based on these results it can be concluded that there were not any significant differences between the variances of the groups. After checking normality assumptions, in order to investigate the research hypothesis and for the purpose of eliminating the effect of pre-test on students' performance in the post-test, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run, the results of which are reflected in Tables 4.

Table 4 Learners Performance across Musical Intelligence levels

|  | N | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error | 95\% Confidence Interval for Mean |  | Minimum | Maximum |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | Lower Bound | Upper <br> Bound |  |  |
| High | 10 | 16.3000 | 1.49443 | . 47258 | 15.2309 | 17.3691 | 14.00 | 18.00 |
| Medium | 10 | 13.5000 | 2.22361 | . 70317 | 11.9093 | 15.0907 | 10.00 | 17.00 |
| Low | 10 | 8.9000 | . 99443 | . 31447 | 8.1886 | 9.6114 | 8.00 | 11.00 |
| Total | 30 | 12.9000 | 3.48742 | . 63671 | 11.5978 | 14.2022 | 8.00 | 18.00 |

As the data in the table show, the mean differences between the participants across three levels of musical intelligence (high, medium, low) were all significant at $\mathrm{P}<.05$ which may imply that musical intelligence may have acted as a moderator variable in the interaction between the independent variable, which was teaching songs and music, and the dependent variable, which was learning of intonation patterns. This observation indicates that performance of the participants was correlated with their level of musical intelligence.

As the results summarized, concerning the participants in the control group also the mean differences across three levels of musical intelligence (high, medium, low) were all significant at $\mathrm{P}<.05$ which could have implied that musical intelligence may have influenced the performance of the participants in this group as a moderator variable.

In this study analysis of covariance was conducted to compare the effectiveness of using music on EFL learners' learning of intonation patterns across musical intelligence levels in Iran.

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Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes, and reliable measurement of the covariate. After adjusting for pretest scores, there was a significant difference between the two groups in post-test scores on the effects of applying music and song.

The data analyzed showed that there was statistically significant improvement in the participants' score after the treatment. Therefore, the main findings of the study may be summarized as:

1. Using music is impactful on EFL learners' learning of intonation patterns across three different musical intelligence levels in Iran.
2. The students who have high musical intelligence are better in learning intonation patterns.

In the present study, we conclude the music were effective on learning of intonation of EFL learners across three levels of musical intelligence. Different scholars have studied about the impact of music on development of all aspects of language learning. Generally, they believed that using music in educational programs can help learners to learn better. For example, Torkeh (2014) did a study on the impact of music on EFL learning. The participants were 140 Persian native speakers both male and female at an intermediate stage of English language proficiency. She found that, the relationship is statically significant and musical has a direct effect on language proficiency. Based on the results that were indicated above, we can find that music are effective on English or any foreign language learning.

In this study, it was clear that applying music increase the pace of learning and perception of learners. Moreover, Sleve and Miyake (2006) believed that applying music and songs through learning a foreign language can motivate students and develop learning. Furthermore, they found that, those adult students with more advanced Musical Intelligence spoke English with better pronunciation than those, with less developed Musical Intelligence.

Lazanov (Bancroft 1982) introduced Suggestopedia method. He believed that students learn more effectively in a relax environment by listening to a mild music in the classroom. Following the Suggestopedia method, Anton (1990) did a research about the development of rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation of ESL learners by
applying music and songs. He found that most of the activities like singing songs, listening to the songs and writing your own songs can improve your rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation. we could find that applying music can decrease the anxiety of learners and they could understand the patterns with more assurance.

Arleo (2000) studied about the relationship between music and intonation. He stated that the rhythm and melody of music are in a direct relationship with improvement of stress and intonation of foreign language learners.

According to Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011), music in the class is as an instrument that helps learners to be relaxed and be free from anxiety. We can even motivate our students to learn a new language by applying music in the classroom. In this study, we found that applying music can increase the pace of learning in the class because the enthusiasm of learners for learning was visible. On the other hand, the learners' conception of intonation patterns was varied through different levels of musical intelligence.

## 4. Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from the present study is that music have significant effect on EFL learners' learning of intonation patterns across three different musical intelligence levels in the case of Iranian learners.

In this study, we faced with the limitations of applying music in university classes, so in this study in institution classes, with the students with different ages and different educational levels. In this method the students also studied in different educational courses; however, we preferred to do my study on learners that study in the field of English language. Moreover, in that respect we had some restrictions with my exams. We could not find a Musical Intelligence test that valued by a high validity. So, we used public online MI Tests to investigate the impact of using songs on development of intonation patterns of EFL learners across different levels of Musical Intelligence. The last limitation was the gender restriction; because this study performed on female students in Jahad institution, like the other institute. So we did not compare the impact of using music on learning of intonation patterns on both males and female participants.

The pedagogical implications of the findings could be of value to all those involved in foreign language teaching and can have numerous pedagogical implications for the language learning system in Iran, and language teacher educators in this field of study, and EFL learners. Some of these implications can be as follows:

1. Syllabus designers
2. Teachers
3. Learners

Generally, different syllabus designers can apply music in their syllabi in different fields of language, for instance the teachers use music in teaching vocabulary. The other teachers can apply music in their classes particularly children language teaching classes to improve learners' pronunciation learning. Of course, it is better that the students concentrate on learning the other arts besides learning English as a foreign language to progress the pace of learning pronunciation and particularly intonation by developing in music fields.

Having conducted the present study, and during the research project ideas came up for other lines of research which can be summarized here. More studies on pronunciation are thus needed. We suggest further studies on the impact of music and songs in the field of pitch discrimination and word stress. Further investigations should be designed to address the impact of music and songs through the other fields of Multiple Intelligence such as, kinesthetic intelligence in learning and improving intonation.

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# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AUTONOMOUS AND INTERACTIVE TASK BASED INSTRUCTION ON ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PHRASE PATTERNS 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY INVESTIGATED THE INFLUENCE OF AUTONOMOUS AND INTERACTIVE TASK BASED INSTRUCTION OFENGLISH PHRASE STRUCTURESON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF THE LEARNERS. IT HAS TRIED TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AS TO WHAT DEGREE SUCHINSTRUCTION IN CLASS WILL RESULT IN A BETTER PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS ON ENGLISH PHRASE STRUCTURES .TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, AT FIRST TWO HOMOGENEOUS GROUPS WERE SELECTED USING AN INTERMEDIATE NELSON TEST. THEN THE PARTICIPANTS IN THESE TWO GROUPS FOLLOWED TWO DIFFERENT TREATMENTS. IN ONE GROUP THE AUTONOMOUS AND INTERACTIVE INSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH PHRASE STRUCTURES WAS IMPLEMENTED AND IN THE OTHER ONE THE TRADITIONAL FORM OF INSTRUCTION WASIMPLEMENTED. FOLLOWING THE TREATMENT, THE LEARNERS WERE ASSIGNED TO WRITE PASSAGES. THE AIM OF WRITING PASSAGES WAS TO SEE TO WHAT EXTENT THEY WOULD EMPLOY ENGLISH PHRASE STRUCTURESIN THEIR WRITINGS. AN INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T- TEST WAS USED TO ANALYZE THE DATA OF THIS STUDY. THE RESULTS WERE EXPRESSIVE OF THE EFFECT OF AUTONOMOUS AND INTERACTIVE INSTRUCTION OF PHRASE PATTERNS AT MORE ADVANCED LEVEL WRITING. THE IMPLICATION OF THIS STUDY FOR THETEACHERS CAN BE THAT MORE AUTONOMOUS AND INTERACTIVE CONDITION FOR LEARNING SENTENCE STRUCTURES AT MORE ADVANCED LEVELS WILL BE LEADING TO A BETTER ACQUISITION OF THOSE STRUCTURES


## 1. Introduction

This is the age of information and communication and as a result, we need toexchange our own ideas and achievements with the people of different parts of the world. Since English is an internationally well-known language, most publications and website materials employ English as their medium of communication. The students who want to acquire English well should have the ability to manipulate all language skills successfully. One requisite for mastery of a language is to have a high command of its phrase structures.
Teacher may feel ensure of how to push students up the ladder of language learning .As far as productive skills are concerned, learners need to produce an acceptable core of vocabulary; employ appropriate word order patterns; use acceptable grammatical patterns (e.g., tense, agreement, plural), patterns, and rule; express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms; and use cohesive devices in discourse.
For instance, according to Malay (1988), writing necessitates a number of items: a high level of organization in the development of ideas and information; a high level of preciseness so that there is no ambiguity concerning the meaning; the employment of complex grammatical tools for concentrating and emphasis; and a careful selection of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and
sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers.
As it has been accounted for, one essential component of language learning is the acquisition of its sentence structures. As a result one fundamental question regarding language teaching is "How canteachers assist learners to acquire the structures of sentences?" Actually, there are lots of proposals regarding this issue. Different approaches have attempted to find an appropriate solution for this issue. One approach which has been claimed to facilitate communication is task based approach. Lots of studies havefocused on evaluatingthe effect of this approach on reading and vocabulary, but does it have any facilitating effect on acquiring the sentence structure, particularlyphrase structures? This issue is going to be dealt with in this paper.
In fact, Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a subclass of communicative language teaching. Many researchers define the word "task" differently. Nunan (1989)offers a definition of it as a piece of classroom work that engageslearners in understanding, manipulating, generating, or interacting in the target language where their attention is basically concentrates on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a concept of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act on its own. Skehan (1998) attempted to sum up some characteristics of a task. In his definition, meaning is primary; there exists an aim thatmust be worked toward; task completion has some preference.
Within the current varying interpretations of TBLT concerning classroom practice, recent studies show three recurrent characteristics: there exists the compatibility of TBLT with a learnercentered educationalphilosophy (Ellis, 2003; Richards \& Rodgers, 2001); it includes certain components like goal, procedure, specific outcome(Skehan, 1998), and it supports meaningful activities that are content-oriented, and not linguistic forms (Breen, 1987). Knowing that the complex interactions of a number of factors containing materials, activities, and evaluative feedback impresses language acquisition, TBLT has a striking, positive effect onthese elements(Ellis, 2003b). This exhibits that TBLT can supply learners with natural sources of meaningful materials which in turnestablish ideal situations for real-life communicative activities. Particularly, in EFL (English as a Foreign Language)settings, where learners don't have so much access touse the target language on a daily basis, it is essential forlanguage learners to be supplied with real chances to beexposed to language use in the classroom (Rashtchi\& Keyvanfar,2007).
Basedon these definitions, the word task is interpreted in different ways. What is common in all these definitions is the fact that they emphasize the significance of meaning rather than language forms. One feature that is emphasized in this study is the autonomy and interaction the learners are to undertake while doing the tasks? Do these features have any significant role in the process of sentence structure acquisition? This issue is going to be investigated in this paper.

## 2. Literature Review

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and particularly the role of tasks in second or foreign language acquisition has attracted a lot of attention in recent years. TBLT, a methodology that is extensively employed in language learning (Ellis, 2003; Willis \& Willis, 2007), is supposed to be as an approach which has the potential to compensate for the shortcomings of communicative language teaching (CLT) and can be regarded as "a logical development of it" (Richards \& Rodgers, 2001, p. 223).
A review of foreign language literature has exhibited different definitions for the term "task" on its underlying assumptions, involving the domain and perspectives. The following definitions on task are illustrated by linguists conducting task research.
$\square$ Breen (1989) defines task as every structural language learning attempt that has a certain goal, suitable content, a specified working procedure, and a range of consequences for those who undertake the task.

Skehan (1996a) considers tasksas activities which have meaning as their primary goal, whose success isassessed inaccordance with achievement of a consequence, leadingto the fact thattasks usually have somesimilarity to real-life language use.
$\square$ Willis (1996) asserts that tasks are always activities in which the target language is employed by the learners for a communicative aim (goal) so as togain a consequence.

Bygate et al (2001) also argued that a task is an activity which requires learners to employ language, underlining meaning, to achieve a goal, and which is selected in order that it is most probable to supply information for learners which will help them assess their own learning.
$\square$ Candlin (2001) believes that tasks themselves are regarded as being possibly ofdifferent levels of demand on learners, in terms of cognitive load, language difficulty, and conceptual content, and can need variable completion times and be undertaken in different contexts and situations.
$\square$ Ellis (2003a) asserts that a task is a work plan that requires learners to have a pragmatic processing of language to achieve an outcome that can be assessed in terms of content (rather than language).
It can be concluded that tasksconcentrate on both meaning and form and persuade students to consider EFL learning as a purposive experience (Bygate et al., 2001; Skehan, 1996a; Willis, 1996). Impressive tasks are employed to motivate learners as learning EFL is imaginative, challenging, exciting, and pleasurable (Hui, 2004). The learners aresupplied with sufficient opportunities to apply different techniques in EFL for communication (Willis, 1996). Tasks necessitate complying with much flexibility to adjust with learners' language proficiency, and authentic tasks can be employed to attain learningobjectives that make EFL instruction easier (Breen, 1989; Skehan, 1996a). Teachersmust determine to what degree they adopt TBLT based on their professional decisions (Hui, 2004).

Tasks can be classified into two categories of generaland specific, which can varybased on the insights and perceptions of different linguists and researchers. Pica et al. (1993), for instance, categorized tasks as per interaction types in the product like (a) jigsaw, (b) information-gap, (c) problem-solving, (d) decision-making, and (e) opinion exchange. Willis (1996) later suggests sixkinds of task as per knowledge including (a) listing, (b) ordering and sorting, (c) comparing, (d) problem solving, (e) sharing personal experience, and (f) creative. Practically, it is precious for teachers to get familiar withtools to distinguish tasks as "the different components of a syllabus can be fulfilled as to be made up of different types of tasks" (Hui, 2004, p. 23).

TBLT has been utilized not only because of its theoretical foundations concerning second language acquisition, but owing to the sound rationale beyond itsexecution (Jeon\& Hahn, 2006). The application of TBLT is actuallyanoutcome of a better sense of the nature and procedures of EFL learning and also because of the fact that other approaches, for example, presentation-practice-product are not sufficient (PPP) (Hui, 2004).The consequence of using a PPP model is that learners are not able to apply the structure precisely, despite the fact that grammatical rules have been accounted for with care (Ritchie, 2003). Clearly, we encounter a gap between students' mastering a rule and putting it into action incommunication, and we are uncertain whether the grammar-based PPP model is influential to language acquisition (Ritchie, 2003).
TBLT shows that language learning is a dynamic process that makescommunication and social interaction easier rather than a product attainedthrough practicing language items, and that learners learn the target language much better through being naturally exposed to meaningful tasks (Jeon\& Hahn, 2006). Such a perception of language learning led to the development of different task-based approaches in the 1980's (e.g., Breen, 1987; Candlin\& Murphy, 1987; Nunan,

1989; Prabhu, 1987), and over the 1990's, resulted in a detailed practical framework for communicative classrooms in which learnerswent through cycles of pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task feedback (Skehan, 1996b). In recent years TBLT has been re-analyzed from distinct angles containing oral performance, writing performance, and performance assessment (Ellis, 2003b).
TBLT can make up for the weaknesses of theCommunicative Language Teaching (CLT) and is viewed as analternative to it by researchers (Klapper, 2003). Conventional L2curricula, containing CLT, divide the language into lexis, structures, notions or functions, which are then chosen andarranged forstudents to learn in a consistent and regular way. In this supposedly 'synthetic' syllabus (Wilkins, 1976), exposures to the targetlanguage is intentionallylimited and allocated, and the separate parts of the syllabus are progressively built on each other in the beliefthat this can direct the learner towards mastery of L2. TBLT discards this type of syllabus, and makes use of process-oriented syllabi, inwhich communicative tasks are planned to uphold learners' tangible language use.
Skehan (1996) disapproves of the conviction that a specific concentration on acertain formresults in learning and automatization. He maintains thatthe long-accepted belief that learners will learn what is taught in theorder in which it is taught doesn't carry much reliability inlinguistics or psychology any more. Certainly, some SLA studies have exhibitedthat naturalistic and classroom L2 learners infrequently acquire new anddiscrete linguistic forms at once, one at a time or in apredetermined order (Ellis, 2000). Instead, learners seem to passthrough clear developmental phases in their acquisition ofgrammatical forms (Meisel,et al., 1981).
Consequently, an area pertinent to TBLT has been work on 'focus on form' in language education. Long (1991, cited in Ellis,2003) differentiated 'focus-on-forms' from 'focus-on-form': whilethe former includes taking separate linguistic items out ofcontext and detaching them for individual study as part of an a priorisynthetic syllabus, in a focus-on-forms approach to instruction, learners are engaged first and primarily in meaning-based activitiesbefore any awareness is given to particular linguistic characteristics. Long(ibid.) illuminates that the aim of form-focused instruction is accordingly to makelinguistic forms prominentin order that learners can observe the gap whichresults from the divergence between input (the target languageideal) and their own output (their existinginterlanguage). In otherwords, in focus-on-forms approach, this attention to the formal linguistic characteristics happens incidentally, or appears out of primarily meaning-focused instruction, while in focus-on-form it getsthe chief concern of classroom activity (Ellis, 2003).
In addition, in recent years many teachers inall disciplines have been searching for ways to revise the conventional forms of instruction, in which knowledge is conveyed, in a one-wayprocess, from a dominant teacher to a class of quiet, obedient, "passive" learners. They have looked for ways to have a "student-centered" classroom and have examined the various ways inwhich students can have more active positions in discovering and processing knowledge. This aspiration to make learning more studentcenteredis repeated in customary attempts, in diverse areas ofthe curriculum, to initiate approaches like experimental learning or co-operative learning, which involve students actively in thelearning process (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Underlying all ofthese approaches is a desire to engage students in some sort of purposeful communication with information, entities and/or ideas, oftencollectively, in order to builds up their skills and knowledge.
Skehan (1998) has investigated the possibility that tasks maybe chosen and implemented so that particular pedagogic outcomesare achieved. It can be said that any pre-designed task will bechanged by the way the learner interacts with it. As a result, theoutcome may not be consistent with the objectives intended by thetask designer, who may be the course book writer or the teacher. Similarly, Breen (1987) distinguishes between 'task-as-work plan'and the actual 'task in process' and suggests that the two maydiverge. Kumaravadivelu (1991) is another researcher who arguesthat in the context of task-based pedagogy, learning outcome is theresult of a fairly unpredictable interaction between the learner, thetask, and the task situation. Thus, achieving
success in task-basedpedagogy depends largely on the degree to which teacher intentionand learner interpretations of a given task converge.
Building on these insights from SLA and form-focusedapproaches, TBLT aims to ensure that learners are given plentifulopportunities for two things: (1) receiving meaningful input, orexposure to L2, and (2) having output or experiencing language use. The former is elaborated on by Krashen (1987) undercomprehensible input while the latter is called by Swain (1985, cited in Ellis, 2003) as 'pushed output', which enables learners topick up or acquire those skills and elements of language they aredevelopmentally ready for.
Concerning task based approach we encounter a bunch of research being conducted mainly on vocabulary and reading. Task-based writing instruction that lies within the framework of TBLT involves students in active mutual work basedon tasks that are logical for them and concerned with their real life experience (Kawachi, 2003; Ryan \&Deci, 2000).
Regarding writing task characteristics, researchers have commented on some qualities of tasks like the amount of time accessible to learners (Chaudron, 1985), whether the task is completed individually or collectively (Oxford, 1997), and it can be concluded that all these variables influence the process of learning how to write.
There exist different types of tasks to foster the writing performance of the learners. However, despite their diversity, task-based writing activities "are done with the purpose of producing something, reaching a conclusion, or creating a whole picture of something within a preset framework" (Tilfarlioglu\&Basaran, 2007, p. 135).

As far as the acquisition of sentence structure is concerned, no systematic study has been conducted to find any link between the employment of task based approach and performance of learners on sentence structures particularly phrase structures.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

Participants were selected from the college level population of freshmen studying General English at the Science and Applied University.They were sixty students of different majors at the age range of 19 to 28 . The subjects were selected based on a version of an Oxford Placement Test, 60 intermediate-level learners were selected out of the total 102 students of the two classes. The test consisted of grammar (20 items), vocabulary (20 items), reading comprehension (20 items) together with the writing section. The allocated time to answer the questions was 45 minutes. After the papers were corrected, 60 students were selected as the intermediate group based on the OPT manual. They had the same nationality and cultural background, and were willing to take part in the research. In the following stage, they were randomly divided into two experimental and control groups.

### 3.2. Materials and Instruments

BecauseActive Skills for Reading Book. 3 by Neil J. Anderson and Michael, Jr. Anderson (2oo7) contained the structures at complex level and there were plenty of clause structures that could be changed into phrase ones; it was used as the basis for studying. The structures chosen to be taught based on task based approach and traditional ones.

To have the homogeneous groups, the researchers employeda version of an Oxford Placement Testa5). It comprisedof grammar (20 items), vocabulary (20 items), reading comprehension (20 items) together with the writing section. Its reliability index was computed through KR-21 formula as ( $\mathrm{r}=0.903$ ). Having completed the treatment, the teacher assigned the participants in these two groups to write passages toshow theirperformance on the phrasepatterns.Basicallya phrase is a group of connected words (within a sentence) with no subject and verb. A phrase may
functionas a noun, verb, adverb, adjective or preposition in a sentence. The function of a phrase relies on its structure (words it holds). On in accordance with their functions and constructions, phrases are classified into different kinds including noun phrase, verb phrase, adverb phrase, adjective phrase, , infinite phrase, participle phrase and gerund phrase.
Since they needed to be familiar with the topics, these subjects were assigned to write on the topics that had been covered during the term.

The aim of selecting the same topics was to ensure that the kind of the text and topic will not affect the learners' use of phrase patterns. The students were requestedo keep the size of their writings at around 150 words to eliminate the effect of the size of text on the number of complex structures.

### 3.3. Procedure

In both classes, writing tasks concerning daily life were assigned to subjects in and out of class, such as translation, writing different letters (invitation, condolence, and letters of thanks), emails,, plans for the meetings, applications for job application and compositions on diverse topics. Nevertheless, teaching approaches varied in these two experimental and the control classes. To be more precise, in the experimental class, what was different from the control class was that autonomy and interaction as learning strategies were taught to students and always practiced by subjects. The teacher always reminded and supervised students to employ these strategies to find solutions for their problems. In the control class, students just fulfilled various tasks as the teacher required without being taught about the concepts of autonomous and interactive learning strategies.

In the experimental class, to practice writing, the teacher would first suggest some questions concerning the subject. Take the subject titled with "popular university majors" for example. Questions could be: what university majors arepopular in your country? What are the reasons for the popularity of such majors? Students were motivated to discuss these questions with their group members and if necessary, the teacher could offer the needed assistance. Following thatstage, some students were asked to presentan oral report about their discussion. Next, the teacher displayed some advantageous demos for that topic in the form of PPT. Over thisstage; the teacher would request students to pay particular attention on the sentence structure, particularly phrase patterns. Then, students discussed about the complex sentence structures that they had learned from the demos and some students were randomly required to report to the entire class about their discussions, for example, which structureneeds to be paid certain attention to write a good passage and how to write a proper one similar to the demos. After discussion, students needed to write a passageconcerned with that topic. Group members first graded the passages for each other with regard to the sentence structure, grammar and language accuracy. Then they handed another revised paper to the teacher, who graded all the compositions and gave timely feedback to them. Some good sentences or common mistakes chosen from their passages would be displayed next class.

Following this treatment, these two groups were assigned to write newpassages. Narrative type of topics were assigned for learners because it sounds that learners need less background knowledge and reasoning ability in generating narrative passages.

Narration entailsless reasoning ability and the writer has enough knowledge about what $\mathrm{s} / \mathrm{he}$ wishes to write. The topics of this narrative task were approximately the same. The goal of selecting virtually the same topic was to make certain that the type of the text and topic will not influence the learners' exploiting of complex sentence structures. The students were requiredto keep the size of their passage at around 150 words to remove the effect of the size of text on the number of complex structures.In their writing it was mandatory to use eight clause structures

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(complex structures) through defining, describing, or explaining certain processes. Some participants avoided doing the assigned tasks. They followed avoidance strategies.

### 3.4. Design

This study was to investigate the effect of task based approach on the use of complex sentence structures by learners. In other words, to what extent such approach would yield more complex structures in learners' performance. To do this study, a comparison group design which is a typical sort of experimental study was adopted. Here autonomous and interactive task based approach was used as independent variable (treatment) to differ between these two groups. To measure the effect of treatment a pretest/ posttest design was used. To ascertain the participants' homogeneity prior to their treatment, Nelson's proficiency test was given to them. To measure the effect of treatment, writing narrative passages wasassigned as posttest. The number of complex structures (adverb, adjective, and noun clauses) in their writings would be indicative of the effect of instruction on the participants.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

To have the comparability of two groups, a version of an Oxford Placementwas used. The findings were used to place learners in two homogeneous groups. Following the treatment, students were assigned to write passages. The aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of task based instruction emphasizing interaction and autonomy of learners on their production of English phrase patterns and find out to what extent it created the desired learning effects regarding this certain aspect of grammar at advanced level.

## 4. Result

Since this study sought the English phrase patterns in the writings of the participants, the frequencies of the given patterns in narrative passage were counted carefully. The obtained scores from students' writing task were compared using Independent Sample $t$-test in order to check whether the instruction could improve the learners' writing scores with regard to the use of complex structures.
Table one shows that the mean of these two groups are different.To find out the significance of this difference. Independent Sample $t$-test was run.

Table 1: group statistics

## Group Statistics

| Task | N | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| structure Autonomous | 30 | 4.2667 | .73968 | .13505 |
| 2 | 30 | 2.0000 | 1.17444 | .21442 |

The findings in table 2 shows that the observed (ot=8.945) is greater than the critical $t(0.679)$, so there is a significant difference between these two groups.

Table two: Independent Samples Test to show the difference between groups

## Independent Samples Test

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| structure Equal variances assumed | 2.190 | . 144 | 8.945 | 58 | . 000 | $2.26667$ | . 25341 | 1.75942 | 2.77391 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | $8.945$ | 48.879 | $.000$ | $2.26667$ | $.25341$ | \|1.75740 | $2.77594$ |

Despite the fact that materials and time limit were the same for both groups, the results indicated the better performance of the participants on complex structures at sentential level following task based instruction that emphasized autonomy and interaction.

The research question dealt with in this study was whether teaching autonomous and interactive oriented task based instruction could have a better influence on learners' use of phrase patterns. The resultsrevealed an increase in students' employmentof phrase patterns owing to the effect of autonomous and interactive task based instruction. This proposes that EFL learners who are given the opportunities to practice grammar patterns through autonomous and interactive tasks may be more equippedto work out more complicated structures.. The potentialconclusion that may be drawn from the above statistical analysis is that the learners who were instructed the techniques of autonomous and interactive task based instruction generally tended to score higher with respect to the use of complex structures.

## 6.Conclusion

The principal purpose of conducting this study was to see the usefulness and likelihood of task based instruction in college English writing classes. The prevailing traditional methods of teaching have weakened the four skills including writing, since such approaches to EFL teaching consider students as passive learners who listen to the teacher and write down their notes without being actively engaged in language learning. How is it possible to integrate these skills while teaching grammar?

The results have demonstrated that: The use of an interactive task based class in teaching English syntax is more efficient in improving the achievements of Iranian learners than the traditional way. Moreover; it can be concluded that there is a link between teaching through interaction and the employment of language in everyday communication owing to the fact that classroom interaction activities are based on the integration of the grammatical forms with the tangible use of those structures, since teaching by means of interaction generates the suitable atmosphere, which is similar to the real world. The less the number of students in the class, the more the opportunities to interact and negotiate the meaning among students will be.

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It seems in EFL contexts like Iran, where learners don't have much exposure outside the classroom, they have to learn formal properties of language in the classroom. The structures at initial levels are not so challenging, but when they come to upper stages of language learning, the conscious and explicit knowledge of more complex sentence patterns gets more urgent. In other words, when they are to deal with more complex ones, they need to be more attentive, interactive and conscious of the rules. In this study it has been attempted to create an autonomous environment where participants could handle the burden of instruction themselves.
The other contributing variable on structure acquisition is the facilitative role of interaction in learning grammar. Students conducted with interactive task based instruction in the experimental class were more active than the students exposed to the traditional teaching in the control class. It provides an interesting learning atmosphere for the use of target language and activates learners' motivation to the utmost. Such interaction can improve learners' integrated skills since all linguistic skills are interrelated. It can offer learners the chance to reflect on their knowledge through analyzing and discussing it with their partnersas well as having the opportunities to test and evaluate their mental knowledge regarding grammar.
The practical dimension of this study for teachers is that it can offer a solution for a significant issue in teaching English that is teaching grammar. One basic choice is between implicit or explicit type of teaching grammar. This study shows that when we are combining these two method through an interactive and autonomous structure where learners explicitly analyze those structures in group and implicitly reflect on them ,they tend to show better performance in this respect.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THEIR LEARNING STYLES (REFLECTIVITY/IMPULSIVITY) 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY AIMED TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OVERALL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS COMPONENTS AND REFLECTIVITY/IMPULSIVITY LEARNING STYLE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEARNING STYLE OF 52 FEMALE EFL LEARNERS FROM AVAYE NO AND MORAD TAKRO PRIVATE INSTITUTES IN TABRIZ WERE OBTAINED THROUGH BAR-ON'S EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT INVENTORY AND LEARNING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE. THEN, PEARSON'S CORRELATION ANALYSES WERE CONDUCTED TO MEASURE THE DEGREE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS WELL AS ITS COMPONENTS AND LEARNING STYLE OF THE PARTICIPANTS. THE RESULTS OF THE CORRELATION ANALYSES INDICATED THAT OVERALL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE HAD A STATISTICALLY POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LEARNING STYLE OF THE EFL LEARNERS. IT WAS ALSO FOUND THAT AMONG COMPONENTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ONLY INTRAPERSONAL, ADAPTABILITY, AND STRESS MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS REVEALED A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP WITH LEARNING STYLE OF THE PARTICIPANTS. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY COULD HELP TEXTBOOK DESIGNERS, CURRICULUM PLANNERS, FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTITUTES, TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND THEIR PARENTS TO PROVIDE AND USE DIFFERENT METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING.


KEY WORDS: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, LEARNING STYLE, REFLECTIVITY, IMPULSIVITY

## 1. Introduction

Positive emotions can facilitate the process of language learning and improve learners' language performance (Meng \& Wang, 2006). On the contrary, negative emotions impede language learning and reduce learners' learning capacity. Krashen (1982) in his affective filter hypothesis assumed that existence of an internal obstacle which interfered with second language acquisition when learners felt anxious or bored. According to Rossiter (2003), research in second language acquisition has revealed that language learning is improved through attention to affect. Human's

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affect and feelings may influence speaking or generally oral performance of any individual. These affective features of the learners may affect the learners' preferences regarding the learning styles.
The learning styles that this study concerns is reflectivity/impulsivity dimension that Kagan, Rasmon, Day, Albert, and Phillips (1964) referred to as conceptual tempo within an individual's cognitive style. According to Kagan et al., "reflection is defined semantically as the consideration of alternative solution hypotheses, either classifications or problem-solving sequences, when many are available simultaneously. Reflection does not refer to delay that is the result of fear of failure, timidity, or inability to generate a solution" (p. 21). Kagan and Kogan (1970) argue that anxiety contribute to an impulsive or reflective strategy which is different in two types of individuals. For reflective individuals, the source of anxiety is the expectation that the social environment will consider the person as incompetent because of making mistakes. For impulsive ones, the anxiety derives from the expectation that he will be judged incompetent if he responds too slowly.
But, EFL learners do not use the same learning styles and employ a set of totally different learning styles to learn a second or foreign language (Cohen \& Dornyei, 2002). In the past learners were considered to be using the same learning styles and they were not different in terms of their emotional intelligences and personality traits. Therefore, teachers taught them in the same way. Also, the most important problem is that even nowadays most of the ESL and EFL teachers are not aware of the differences that exist in the learners in terms of personal characteristics and deal with all the learners in the same way. Therefore, the following two research questions were proposed

1. Is there any significant correlation between learners' overall emotional intelligence and their learning styles?
2. If there is any, which components of EI are correlated with their learning styles?

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a relatively new field of study (Mayer \& Cobb, 2000; Ghosn, 2001), and as such, few studies relating to its effects on second language learning have been undertaken (e.g., Campbell \& Ortiz, 1991; Argaman \& Abu-Rabia, 2002). The term "Emotional Intelligence" (EI) was coined by two psychologists, Salovey and Mayer (1990), and popularized by Goleman's publication of Emotional Intelligence in 1995. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the capacity to process emotional information accurately and efficiently, including that information relevant to the recognition, construction, and regulation of emotion in oneself and others (Mayer \& Salovey, 1995).
If emotional intelligence can be categorized as one of the intelligences, then we may raise the question, what is intelligence? As Salovey and Mayer (1990) reported, "Intelligence has been defined differently in different epochs" (p. 186). Gardner (1993), in his book Frames of Mind, provided an early view of intelligence to the public. He mentioned that, "The Egyptians had located thought in the heart and judgment in the head or kidneys. Pythagoras and Plato had held the mind to be in the brain. Aristotle thought that the seat of life is in the heart, while Descartes placed the soul in the pineal gland" (p. 14).
Bar-On (1997) describes emotional intelligence as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p.14). Based on this description it is clear that emotional intelligence is a significant factor to achieve success in life and emotional quotient is strongly correlated with general emotional health. Bar-On (1997) believes that his model is the most inclusive and functional model of emotional and social intelligence among current models. The focus of BarOn's model is on the basic emotional and social abilities and skills. He claims that the potential for performance is based on those abilities. It is composed of a set of actions or tasks and it is organized with the purpose of prosperous prediction of people's ability to deal with requirements of daily life.

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On the other hand, two types of learner characteristics that this paper is concerned with are reflectivity and impulsivity which rely on a continuum of a learning style. Psycholinguistic studies have indicated that human mind and thinking play a crucial role in language learning. According to psycholinguists, with regard to thinking, learners react in different manners when dealing with learning activities. When learners are asked to do an activity, answer a question, or retain some piece of information from memory, some of them reflect on for a moment, but some other respond impulsively without thinking. A large number of learning activities and tasks are used broadly in language classrooms which are based on mental processing.
Kagan et al. (1964) were the first researchers who proposed the reflectivity and impulsivity (RI). Brown (2007) states that individuals show certain tendencies and preferences toward reflectivity and impulsivity in their personalities. He points out that many psychological studies have been done to indicate the extent to which a person is willing to produce either quick guesses and take risk in reaction to a problem (i.e., impulsivity), or slower, more calculated decisions (i.e., reflectivity). Ewing (1977) proposes two styles that are closely related to the reflectivity and impulsivity dimension and refers to them as systematic and intuitive styles. The former refers to one who takes a number of various successive risks before achieving the stage of solution. The latter, as Ewing states, refers to systematic thinkers who tend to take every related thing concerned with a problem into consideration and weigh all options, and then, after extensive reflection, produce a solution.
Reflectivity and impulsivity are two characteristics of human beings concerned with cognitive domain. Kagan (1965) consider reflective individuals as "the individual who take relatively longer response and make fewer errors" (p. 615). Messer (as cited in Jamieson \& Chapelle, 1987) believes that "reflectivity/impulsivity are the extent to which a person reflects on a solution to a problem for which several alternatives are possible" (p. 532).
Chao (2003) examined the association between emotional intelligence and foreign language anxiety among private college students who were learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan. The sample population of his study was consisted of 306 students who enrolled as freshmen or sophomores in the private college. The findings of his study revealed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence as a whole factor and foreign language anxiety. He also came to the conclusion that gender difference affected the way emotional intelligence skills were employed.
Alavinia and Ebrahimpour (2012) looked into the viable relationship between emotional intelligence and learning styles of freshman Iranian EFL learners. To this end, they administered Bar-On's EQ-i (1997) questionnaires as well as a user-friendly version of learning styles questionnaire to 132 students ( 42 males and 90 females). The final analysis of data, implemented mainly through the use of Pearson product moment correlation and t-test, pointed to a positive meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and learning styles ( $\mathrm{r}=0.66$ ). Furthermore, in line with the findings, a significant difference was found to be at work with regard to the performance of different genders on Bar-On's EQ-i.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Participants

Participants of this study were 52 female EFL learners from Avaye No and Morad Takro private institutes in Tabriz where the researcher is a full time teacher. The age range of participants was between 17 and 25 .

### 3.2 Instruments

Three different instruments were used to conduct this study:

1. Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i): to conduct the present study a translated version of this questionnaire to Persian was used.
2. The instrument for collecting data regarding the learners learning style was a questionnaire developed based on two questionnaires used by Soloman and Felder (2004) and Cohen, Oxford and Chi (2001).

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### 3.3 Procedure

Before starting the main study, a pilot study was conducted to check the reliability of both questionnaires. From the results of pilot study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability for each component of emotional intelligence was calculated which are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for Each Section of EQ-i

| EI | Cronbach's Alpha |
| :--- | :---: |
| Intrapersonal | 0.84 |
| Interpersonal | 0.90 |
| Adaptability | 0.85 |
| Stress Management | 0.87 |
| General Mood | 0.80 |

As it is clear from the results, all components of emotional intelligence indicated acceptable internal consistency index. Moreover, the amount of Cronbach's Alpha for the learning style questionnaire was 0.83 that was also acceptable.
The main phase of the study began with administration of the Persian translation of the EQ-i and learning style questionnaires to the participants. The time given to completion of each questionnaire was 20 minutes. After scoring the participants' responses to the questionnaires, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the relationships between the scores obtained from the EI questionnaire and their scores obtained through learning styles questionnaire.

## 4. Results

The first research question of the study aimed at investigating the existence of any correlation between learners' overall emotional intelligence and their learning styles. For this purpose, the researcher ran a Pearson's correlation analysis on the collected data. Table 2 presents the results of this analysis:

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation between Overall Emotional Intelligence and Learning Style

|  |  | Emotional <br> Intelligence | Learning <br> Style |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: |
| Emotional Intelligence | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.968^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 52 | 52 |
| Learning Style | Pearson Correlation | $.968^{* *}$ | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 52 | 52 |

Based on the results presented in Table 2, overall emotional intelligence and learning style scores were highly correlated ( $\mathrm{p}<0.01$ ) with the coefficient of 0.968 . Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study was rejected. It means that there was a significant relationship between overall emotional intelligence and learning style of the participants of the study.
To determine which components of emotional intelligence are correlated with the participants' learning styles, another Pearson's correlation analysis was performed the results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation between Components of Emotional Intelligence and Learning Style Scores

|  |  | Intrapersonal | Interperson <br> al | Adaptabilit <br> $y$ | Stress <br> Manageme <br> nt | General <br> Mood |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Learning <br> Style | Pearson <br> Correlation <br> Sig. (2-tailed) | $.537^{* *}$ | -.245 | $.538^{* *}$ | $.527^{* *}$ | -.091 |
|  | N | .000 | .079 | .000 | .000 | .521 |
|  |  | 52 | 52 | 52 | 52 | 52 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
The results in Table 3 indicate that there was moderate positive correlation between intrapersonal, adaptability, and stress management components of emotional intelligence and learning style scores ( $\mathrm{p}<0.05$ ) with the correlation coefficients of $0.537,0.538$, and 0.527 , respectively. Therefore, in answer to the second research question of the study, it can be mentioned that among five components of emotional intelligence, only intrapersonal, adaptability, and stress management components are significantly correlated with the learning style of the participants of the study.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The statistical analysis of the first research hypothesis revealed that overall emotional intelligence was significantly correlated with the learning style of the participants of the study. In the statistical analysis of the second research question it became clear that from among five components of emotional intelligence, intrapersonal, adaptability, and stress management components were correlated with learning style of the EFL learners and interpersonal and general mood components did not reveal a significant relationship with learning style.
The findings of the present study were in line with the results of Alavinia and Ebrahimpour's (2012) research. Both studies revealed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and learning style of the EFL learners.
Shahtalebi, Sharifi, Saeedian, and Javadi (2012) also investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and learning style and found similar results to the present study in terms of overall emotional intelligence. Furthermore, regarding the components of emotional intelligence, only the intrapersonal component indicated a significant relationship with learning style in their study.
This study revealed some contrary results comparing to the findings of Shahtalebi and Javadi's (2014) study. They found significant relationships only between interpersonal and impulse control components of emotional intelligence and learning style none of which showed a significant relationship to the learning style in the present study.
As intrapersonal, adaptability, and stress management components of emotional intelligence indicated a positive relationship with the degree of the reflectiveness of the participants, it may be true that we say the more the participants are reflective and think on the outcomes of their actions and behaviors, the more they can overcome their stress and therefore are apt to conform with their environmental conditions and at last improve their intrapersonal disorders.
The result of the study can be useful for both EFL and ESL learners and teachers. Learners step into learning process with their own characteristics, uniqueness, and way of learning a language including their own emotional characteristics.

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# THE EFFECT OF USING FOCUSED TASKS THROUGH INPUT FLOODING ON READING COMPREHENSION SKILL OF IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS 

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#### Abstract

IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT TASKS PLAY IMPORTANT ROLES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING. TASK IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT AFFECTS THE LEARNER'S ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING. INPUT FLOODING IS PROVIDING A PLETHORA OF NATURAL EXAMPLES OF THE FORM IN FOCUS IN A TEXT ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE VERY HIGH FREQUENCY OF THE STRUCTURE IN QUESTION WILL ATTRACT THE LEARNER` ATTENTION TO THE RELEVANT FORMAL REGULARITIES. (DOUGHTY AND WILLIAMS, 1998A) THE PRESENT STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN ORDER TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE PLANNED FOCUSED TASKS WHICH FOCUS ON FORM THROUGH INPUT FLOODING HAVE SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY. FOR THIS PURPOSE, 90 LEARNERS, ON THE BASIS OF THE OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST AS A PROFICIENCY TEST WERE SELECTED FROM AMONG 120 LEARNERS. THEN THEY WERE RANDOMLY DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS, EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROLLED GROUP. THE LEARNERS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED FOCUSED TASKS (FG) WHILE IN CONTROLLED GROUP, THE LEARNERS RECEIVED UNFOCUSED TASKS (NFG). THE DATA WAS COLLECTED THROUGH THE PRETEST AND POSTTESTS OF READING COMPREHENSION ADMINISTERED TO THE BOTH GROUPS. THIS STUDY PRIMARILY USED EXPERIMENTAL COMPARISON-GROUP PRETEST/POSTTEST DESIGN TO GAIN BROADER PERSPECTIVES ON EFL LEARNERS READING COMPREHENSION ABILITIES. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT FOCUSED TASKS SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED EFL LEARNERS READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY.


## KEYWORDS: FOCUS ON FORM, FOCUSED TASKS, INPUT FLOODING, PLANNED FOCUS ON FORM, READING COMPREHENSION

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, most researchers of a second or a foreign language pay special attention to the activity of reading, believing that reading is one of the most important skills for ESL/EFL learners (Grabe and Stoller, 2001; Lynch \& Hudson, 1991). As Eskey (2005) has pointed out, many EFL students rarely need to speak the language in their day-to-day lives but many need to read it in order to "access the wealth of information" (p.563), recorded exclusively in English.

When the issue turns to second language (L2) reading, the role of grammar becomes more complex. For one, L2 reading differs from L1 reading in that L2 readers "start to read in the second language before achieving the kind of grammatical maturity and the level of oral vocabulary that L1 readers attain before they begin to read" (Shiotsu, 2009, p. 16). Thus, L2 learners must learn how phrases are constructed and cases are assigned to the constructed phrases in a new language (Koda, 2007). Grammar constitutes a crucial concept of the language and it is a device for constructing and expressing meaning without which, effective communication would be impossible (Crivos \& Luchini, 2012).

The effectiveness of teaching grammar and the necessity of learning grammar for L2 learners is now a well-established fact in Second Language Acquisition (Borg \& Burns, Celce- Murcia, Cullen, Davies, Ellis, Fotos, Sheen, as cited in Abbasian Boroujeni, 2012) which has led to reconsideration of the role of grammar in L2 classroom.

The non-interventionist focus on meanings` problem, which helped learners to become fluent, but was insufficient to ensure capable levels of accuracy, led to the introduction of a viable third option by Long (1991) called focus on form which attempts to capture the strengths of an analytic approach while dealing with its limitations. Long (1991) defined it as follows: 'focus on form... overtly draws students attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication' (p. 45-46). Hence, both teacher and learners are engaged in language use communicatively. However, occasion arise when the learners choose to focus on form.

From this perspective, reading-based focus-on-form activities are especially suitable for many EFL situations because of the traditional emphasis on comprehension and translation skills (Fotos, 1998). Reading material can be modified by highlighting, so that the target structure becomes salient while the learners are reading for meaning (Fotos, 1998).

Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2002) distinguished two types of focus on form: planned focus on form and incidental focus on form. The linguistic elements to be focused are pre-determined in planned focus on form. Planned focus on form involves the use of communicative tasks designed to elicit the use of particular linguistic structure in a meaning-based context. The teacher decides in advance what forms should be focused on.

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

### 2.1 Second/Foreign Language Reading

Second language reading differs from first language reading in that L2 readers "start to read in the second language before achieving the kind of grammatical maturing and the level of oral vocabulary that L1 readers attain before they begin to read" (Shiotsu, 2009, p.16). Different people use the term "reading" in different ways. However, no one single definition tells the complexity inherent in the ability to read (Grabe, 2002). Janzen (2007) observes that reading is "crucial to the academic achievement of second language learners" (p. 707).

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When learners read a text, their main goal is to comprehend its meaning. So comprehension is the ultimate goal of all reading; that is, the ability to understand a text underlies all reading tasks. Thus, main-idea comprehension should be at the core of all reading instruction (Grabe and Stoller 2013).

Grabe (2009) and Berhardt (2011) indicated that reading comprehension instruction is an essential part of reading instruction. This is also a concern identified by Schacter (2006) and Pressley (2006).

More transparently, it can be said that reading comprehension is to recognize in all respects the information, feelings, and thoughts that are desired to be transmitted as they are, without having caused any misunderstanding in its course and without leaving any doubtful points behind (Kavkar, Oguzkani,\& Sever (1994), as cited in Aksan \& Kisac, 2009).

### 2.2 Second Language Reading and the Role of Grammar

However, the role of grammar in L2 reading has not received much attention by researchers (Alderson, 1984; Nassaji, 2007; Shiotsu \& Weir, 2007; Urquhart \& Weir, 1998). On the one hand, this may be attributable to the very nature of reading as a receptive language skill for comprehending the messages of the texts. Thus, knowledge of structure was regarded to have less to do with comprehending a text than levels of other components such as vocabulary, background knowledge, and reading strategies. On the other hand, the 30 -year long dominance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that puts a near-exclusive emphasis on macrolanguage skills and communicative functions has somewhat downgraded the need to address the issue of the role of grammar in L2 reading (Han \& D'Angelo, 2009; Urquhart \& Weir, 1998). This problem has been further magnified by the over-adoption of L1 reading research in L2 reading studies, with the distinct complexity of L2 reading left largely unattended (Bernhardt, 2005).

Most studies addressing the role of grammar in L2 reading explored the issue by measuring the correlation between learners' grammatical knowledge and their L2 reading comprehension ability (Urquhart \& Weir, 1998). For example, Alderson (1993) reviewed the data from the English Language Testing Services (ELTS) Revision Project and found a considerable overlap between scores on the grammar test and the reading test, which led him to propose a significant role of grammar in L2 reading. In a similar vein, in Kuhn and Stahl's (2003) review of theories and research on reading instruction, training L2 readers to parse sentences into meaningful phrases and providing them with already syntactically segmented texts were revealed to promote L2 reading comprehension to a significant level. That is to say, the abilities to identify syntactic roles of words, dissect sentences into meaningful chunks, and recognize the syntactic structure of a sentence seem to contribute to the construction of meaning from the text.

Further evidence of the role of grammar in L2 reading comes from studies that compared the relative importance of grammar with that of other L2 reading components, such as background knowledge and vocabulary (Barnett, 1986; Barry \& Lazarte, 1995, 1998; Shiotsu \& Weir, 2007). In a more recent study conducted by Shiotsu and Weir (2007), where the scope of grammar was clearly delineated as encompassing the knowledge of inflectional morphology, verb forms, and transformations, grammatical knowledge again emerged as a stronger predictor of L2 reading ability.

### 2.3 Tasks as a Vehicle for Focus on Form

Indeed, for many, focus on form is a fundamental methodological principle of task-based language instruction (Brandl, 2008; Doughty \& Long, 2003, 2009; Robinson, 2011). In fact, for Ellis (2009) "the only characteristic common among all task-based approaches is the inclusion of a focus on form" (p. 225). While input enhancements and processing instruction procedures are

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examples of effective focus on form techniques, the use of tasks can be a powerful vehicle for their implementation. Moreover, advocates of task-based language teaching "do not view attention to form as an optional element of task-based language teaching, but as necessary to ensure 'noticing', which Schumidt (1994) viewed as a requisite for acquisition to take place" (p. 232). Indeed, for Robinson (2011) tasks can foster form-function-meaning mappings by providing opportunities for noticing the gap between a learner`s production and focus on form input (p.2).

### 2.4 Types of Tasks

There are two general types of tasks: unfocused tasks and focused tasks
2.4.1 Unfocused Tasks. Unfocused tasks may dispose learners to choose from a range of forms but they are not designed with the use of a specific form in mind.
2.4.2 Focused Tasks. Researchers considered ways in which tasks can be employed to elicit use of specific linguistic features, either by design or by the use of methodological procedures that focus attention on form in the implementation of a task. Such tasks were called focused tasks. Focused tasks aim to induce learners to process, receptively or productively, some particular linguistic feature, for example, a grammatical structure. (Ellis, 2003, p. 16) Of course this processing must occur as a result of performing activities that satisfy the key criteria of a task, i.e. that language is used pragmatically to achieve some non-linguistic outcome. (Ellis, 2003, p. 16)

Adriano Bello Uriarte (2013) investigated the effects of focused tasks for enhancing acquisition in EFL contexts, the results indicated that focused tasks put together all the elements necessary to facilitate vocabulary acquisition, integrating all of the features that are part of knowing a word.

### 2.5 Focus on Form Instructions

2.5.1 Types of Form-Focused-Instruction. Ellis, Basturkmen, Loewen (2002) expressed two types of form-focused instruction, focus-on-forms and focus-on-form.
"Focus on forms is evident in the traditional approach to grammar teaching based on structural syllabus."(Ellis, 2008, p. 962)

Focus-on-forms instruction involves the pre-selection of specific features based on a linguistic syllabus and the intensive and systematic treatment of those features. The instruction processes as the learners show mastery of sequentially presented grammatical forms (Long, 1991: Long and Robinson, 1998: Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen, 2002). In this kind of language instruction, the teacher or syllabus designer is required to analyze or break the L2 into its components, that is, words, collocations, grammar rules, phonemes, intonation and stress patterns, structures, notions or functions. But it is considered as a non-communicative approach as it doesn't foster L2 development which enables learners to function in real-world communication (Poole, 2005).

Whereas, Long (1991, p. 46) stated a 'Focus on form' is a type of form-focused instruction; it 'overtly draws learners` attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in the lesson whose overriding focus is on meaning and communication'.

Doughty and Williams (1998, p. 4) stated "focus on form and focus on forms are not polar opposite in a manner that form and meaning have been regarded. A focus on form entails a focus on the formal elements of language; whereas focus on forms is limited to such a focus, and focus on meaning excluded it". They suggested that focus on form involves a prerequisite engagement in meaning before attention to linguistic features can be expected to be effective.

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Haung (2008) had done a research in which he used EFL learners` analytical grammatical knowledge to design a post-task approach to foster learners` self-initiated attention. Students were asked to transcribe their dialogues cooperatively and then to reflect on different aspects of their oral production individually. It was found that learners paid close attention to their mistakes according to their individual learning needs and proficiency levels.

Skehan (1998) proposes TBLT Focus on form, or intermediate TBLT, which emphasizes different aspects of language performance, particularly accuracy, fluency, and complexity. The introduction of elements while performing the tasks will promote attention to language forms (Rod Ellis 1997). The instruction built around a focus on form result in faster learning and higher levels of proficiency. So the TBLT Focus on form is comparatively a most practical and effective teaching approach for the TEFL learners.

TBLT Focus on Form emphasizes focusing on forms and meaning at the same time, and attentional manipulation is most important. Skehan (1988) argues that what is needed is to consider approaches which, in the context of meaningful communication, draw learners` attention to language forms naturally rather than artificially. He elaborates on the idea with the processing-based analyses of tasks as departure. That is, more demanding tasks consume more attentional resources simply for task transaction, with the result that less attention is available for TBLT.

Ellis, Loewen and Basturkmen (2006) described focus on form episodes as involving brief 'time-outs' from the attempt to communicate, "learners switch backwards and forwards from treating language as a tool for communication and functioning as language users to treating it as an object and functioning as teachers and learners" (p. 137).

The "noticing Hypothesis", which provided the theoretical underpinning of Form-FocusInstruction (FFI) claims that learners must consciously notice forms in the input in order to acquisition occur. The noticing hypothesis is compatible with the claim that Form-FocusInstruction (FFI) can aid acquisition by drawing learners attention to forms in the input (cited in Ellis, 2001).

### 2.6 Focus on Form Techniques

- Input flooding: providing a plethora of natural examples of the form in focus in a text on the assumption that the very high frequency of the structure in question will attract the learner`s attention to the relevant formal regularities. (Doughty and Williams, 1998a)
Input flood means that a teacher provides students with "plentiful exemplars" of a linguistic feature both orally and textually so that students can acquire ample opportunities to encounter a certain linguistic feature. That is to say, a target grammar is repetitively presented by input flood; therefore, students are likely to notice the form, function, and meaning of the grammar unconsciously without metalinguistic explanations or error corrections (Doughty and Williams 236).

Using input flood, Martha Trahey and Lydia White conducted an experiment in which the purpose was to discover whether students could correct the grammatical error of putting an adverb between a verb and a direct object. According to the result of input flood, students made a grammatical error such as "Anne watched quietly the television" even though sufficient input such as "Anne quietly watched the television" was repeatedly provided during class (qtd. in Ellis, "Talking Shop"9). For this reason, Doughty and William state that using input flood alone is "too implicit to be maximally effective" (238).

- Task-essential language: the necessity of using specific forms to complete a task. (Doughty and Williams, 1998b)
- Input enhancement: directing the learner`s attention to a specific form in a text by highlighting, underlining, coloring, rule giving,.... (Long and Robinson, 1998)
- Negotiation: asking and answering questions about how a special form is learnt and taught. (Lightbown, 1998)
- Recast: corrective reformulation of children`s utterances that preserve the child`s intended meaning. (Long and Robinson, 1998)
- Output enhancement: promoting students to produce output coating specific forms. (Doughty and Williams, 1998a)
- Interaction enhancement: an instructional treatment making students produce output by providing interactional modifications in order to help students notice a mismatch between their interlanguage and target language form. (Doughty and Williams, 1998b)
- Dictogloss: a procedure encouraging students to reflect on their own output by reconstructing a text which is read to them. (Swain, 1998)
- Consciousness raising tasks: tasks promoting the occurrence of a stimulus event in conscious awareness and its subsequent storage in long term memory. (Harely, 1998)
- Input processing: interpreting input with the goal of incorporating the knowledge into one`s interlanguage. (Williams and Evans, 1998)
- Garden path: a technique telling learners in advance about a linguistic regularity plus its exception by pointing out the error made at the moment of generality. (Doughty and Williams, 1998b)
2.7 Types of Focus on Form Instruction

Focus on form

## Types of Focus on Form



Enriched input


Input flood
Focused
focus on form

Input enhancement
feedback

Figure 2.1: Types of Focus on Form

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Ellis (2001) improved Long's (1991) definition of FonF instruction by distinguishing two types: 'Planned focus-on-form' and 'incidental focus-on-form.'

Ellis et al. (2002) defined the former as a kind of instruction which involves the use of focused tasks, i.e. "communicative tasks that have been designed to elicit the use of a specific linguistic form in the context of meaning-centered language use" (p. 420).

In this case, then, the focus on form is predetermined. The teacher decides in advance what forms should be focused on. The form is selected based on the teacher`s familiarity with the students and the general perception of students` inter-language needs or based on the systematic investigation of the areas in which the students have problems (Ellis, Basturkmen, Loewen, 2002; Nassaji, 2000).

Farrokhi, Farahman (2011) aimed to investigate the different effects of existence or nonexistence of planned focus on form, corrective feedback focused on the simple past tense errors, on the Iranian EFL learners` oral accuracy. The findings indicated that both experimental groups which received corrective feedback, although different type of feedback, performed significantly better than control group.

In 'incidental focus on form' (Ellis, 2001), attention is distributed to a larger range of forms and none of these is preselected for instructional treatment (Leeser, 2004; Loewen, 2003; Klapper, \& Rees, 2003; Ellis, 2001; Williams, 2001; Ellis, Basturkmen, \& Loewen, 2002).

Incidental focus-on-form involves the use of communicative tasks which are designed to elicit the use of general rather than specific forms. The forms are focused on in the process of communication, peripherally, and then the focus returns to communicative activity again (Ellis, Basturkmen, Loewen, 2002; Nassaji, 2000).Incidental focus-on-form may cause learners to attend to form, meaning, and use in a single cognitive event, and this joint processing that takes place is proposed to facilitate "the cognitive mapping among forms, meaning, and use that is fundamental to language learning" (Doughty, 2001, p. 211).
2.7.1 Types of Planned Focus on Form. One type of planned focus on form, enriched input, consists of plentiful exemplars of the target structures, which are specially modified so that the learners to notice the target form in the context of meaning-focused activities. The technique of input flood, which is one of the methods of enriched input, involves plentiful exemplars of the target structure with no intentional drawing of the learners` attention to the structure.

Another subgroup of enriched input, input enhancement, intentionally draws the learners` attention to the target structure by means of some highlighting devices such as enlarging, coloring, italicizing, or underlining.

Focused communicative tasks, which are categorized as a type of planned focus on form, are designed to help the learners produce the target structure while performing a communicative task in the classroom. In other words, focused communicative tasks are primarily meaningfocused, resulting in the learners` employing some features that have been specifically targeted (Ellis, 2002, p. 21).

While Ellis`s categorization of focus on form is made on the basis of whether the instruction is intensive or extensive, Doughty and Williams (1998) suggested a taxonomy of focus-on-form techniques depending on the degree of explicitness or obtrusiveness of the techniques. A revised taxonomy of different types of focus-on-form techniques are presented in Figure 2.2

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| Explicit |  | Implicit |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Brief rule | Metalinguistic | Output | Recast | Input |
| explanation | enhancement |  | enhancement | flooding |

Figure 2.2: Types of Focus-on-Form Techniques
Input flooding and input enhancement refer to the same techniques as input flood and enhancement respectively in Figure 2.1 by Ellis (2001). Recast and output enhancement can be categorized as a type of incidental focus on form, usually given as a corrective response when errors occur. The two explicit focus-on-form techniques, meta-linguistic explanation and brief rule explanation, have been thought to be grouped into rather traditional grammar instruction. However, they are regarded as types of focus-on-form techniques as long as the rule explanation is brief and succinct.

Farrokhi, Ansari and Mohammadnia (2008) how fived experienced EFL teachers initiated focus on form episodes to raise attention to form in elementary and advanced levels, through observing seventy hours of communicatively-oriented instruction between the teachers and their students. They also examined the frequency and type of focus on form episodes, i.e. vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The results suggested that the proficiency of the learners did not affect the rate of learner-initiated focus on form episodes. This study also indicated the overall distribution of the overall distribution of the linguistic form episodes varied across proficiencies.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research question and hypothesis

Q1: Is there any difference between reading comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners taught by planned focused tasks through input flooding and that of learners who are taught through the traditional method (translation and explicit learning)?
H1: There is no difference between reading comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners taught by planned focused tasks through input flooding and that of learners who are taught through the traditional (translation and explicit learning).

### 3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were chosen through systematic random sampling from the higher-intermediate level students. Their age range was 17 to 18 years and they were studying English as a foreign language in Shevar institute in Amol. They consisted of 120 male learners who took the Oxford Placement Test as a proficiency test. The results of the Oxford Placement Test revealed that they were more or less at the same level of language proficiency and 90 of them who met the criterion (The criterion for selection was half of standard deviation above the mean and half of standard deviation below the mean.) were chosen as the participants of this study. They were then randomly divided into two groups, one Experimental group and one Controlled group, each consisting of 45 people.

### 3.3 Instruments and materials

To meet the purpose of the present study, the following research instruments were used.
a) Oxford Placement Test

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b) Test of Reading Comprehension in English: this test was developed based on the Oxford English Testing` criteria. It consists of twenty five multiple-choice items that are divided into three parts consisting of a cloze passage (10 items), a reading text in three paragraphs ( 7 items) and a reading text in six paragraphs (8 items) for assessing the participants` comprehension ability.
c) The book Mosaic 2 Reading: the book mosaic reading by Branda Wegmann and Miki Knezevic (2007) is a book designed for task based instruction that is suitable for task based approach. This book was used in both FG and NFG but the method used in these two groups was different.
d) The same reading comprehension test was used as post-test.

### 3.4 Procedure

The methodological design for the current study consisted of a pre-test, treatment, and a posttest. This research was conducted in a normal English setting, where two groups of students participated in a control group and in an experimental group.

Before the pedagogical intervention all 120 students were tested by the Oxford Placement Test. Those who gained scores with one standard deviation (SD) bellow and one standard deviation (SD) above the mean were considered as the participants for the next level. Ninety homogenous learners were chosen from the total participants and were assigned into two groups based on random sampling, 45 participants in FG and 45 participants in NFG.

Before treatment, learners were given a reading comprehension test as a pretest that was based on Oxford English Testing Criteria. Then the reading skill were taught through planned focused tasks based on the task- based language teaching in FG for 10 sessions during the 18session; three days a week, which lasted about one and half months. The treatment took about 40 minutes during each session.

For FG, each session, the class time was divided into three phases: pre-task, task and post task. In the first phase (pre task stage), before reading the text, the participants were introduced to the topic of the reading texts; their prior knowledge was activated through previewing a reading that included looking at the title, and any photos, charts, or illustrations, the first and the last paragraph, the first line of each of the other paragraphs and through questions and answers. They tried to identify more exact or colorful (interesting, exciting) synonyms and antonyms they choose instead of plain and boring ones through an activity in the form of False and True. In this activity they read some phrases from the text and determine if the word in the second column is a correct synonym of the italicized word in the first column. (They don't have to repeat the same word over and over. They use words that are more exact and expressive than the common ones.)

In the second phase (during task stage) the learners would read the instruction section of the task prior to approaching the text so as to know what to do. Then a few minutes were allocated to silent reading, followed by initial answer to the questions that were mentioned by the teacher. Learners negotiated and discussed the answers with the help of the teacher`s ongoing feedback.

In the final phase (post-task stage) after task completion (on the part of the learners) the essential reading skills (e.g. skimming, scanning, inferring) were taught explicitly to the learners. After reading, the learners improved their study skills through underlining and marginal glossing. Then learners did the task for recalling information of the text in an activity in form of multiple choice questions. Then learners worked in small groups and discussed on the text. Learners also completed a summary that was in the form of a fill in the blank activity. Then they talked about the text and beyond the text.

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Within the NFG, the participants didn't receive any particular treatment. The teacher discussed the topic to activate learners` knowledge. Students read the text silently afterward the linguistic features of the texts highlighted through analyzing the structures, vocabularies, discussing language points, and translating the text into their L1.

Following the completion of the aforementioned treatment, all students in both groups took a reading comprehension test as post-test after three weeks on reading comprehension ability to evaluate the effectiveness of planned preemptive focused on form on reading comprehension ability. The post-test questions were parallel with the pretest.

## 4. Results and Discussions

The major purpose of the present research was to inspect the possible effects of planned focused tasks through input flooding on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ability. The data was collected through the pretest, and post-test of reading comprehension ability administered to the both groups.

### 4.1 Examining the Reliability of the OPT test and RCT Test.

A pilot study was done with 20 EFL learners who were representative of the main sample with respect to their general foreign language proficiency. The reliability of 50 items of the OPT test as well as Reading Comprehension Test (RCT) were estimated through running Cronbach's Alpha. The indices of reliability were interpreted according to the reliability standards suggested by Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott (1994).

## Table 4.1.

Suggested Standards (Adopted From Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott, 1994)

| Interpretation of the findings | Reliability indices |
| :--- | :--- |
| Good | .80 |
| Acceptable | .70 |
| Marginal | .60 |
| Poor | .50 |

The determined values of Cronbach's Alpha for the OPT test and RCT were (.78) and (.78), respectively which were both acceptable based on the determined criteria. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.

## Reliability Statistics for the OPT Test and RC Test

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items | N |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| OPT test | .78 | 50 | 20 |
| RCT test | .78 | 25 | 20 |

### 4.2 Results

The OPT test results, pre-test, and post-tests results is provided respectively.
4.2.1 The Results of the Oxford Placement Test (Sampling Phase). A test of general English proficiency, oxford placement test (OPT), was administered to 120 EFL learners in English for

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general purpose (EGP) classes in a private institute. Based on the mean score ( $\bar{x}=37.88$ ) and standard deviation of the students' score $(S D=7.86), 90$ students were selected from the subject pool. Then every other student was assigned to focused group (FG) and non-focused group (NFG) as experimental and control groups, respectively. The following table (4.3) illustrates the descriptive statistic of students' performance on OPT.

Table 4. 3.
Descriptive Statistics of OPT test

|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| OPT | 120 | 20.00 | 62.00 | 37.88 | 7.86 |
| Valid N <br> (listwise) | 120 |  |  |  |  |

4.2.2 Statistical analysis of the Pre -Test. In order to probe the null hypothesis of this study stating no difference between reading comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners taught by planned focused tasks through input flooding and that of learners who are taught through the traditional (translation and explicit learning), an independent sample t-test was conducted on the participation's' scores in FG and NFG group. This was done to compare the mean scores of both groups as far as their reading comprehensions concerned. Table 4.4 shows the result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. As indicated in table the test distribution on reading performance is normal. Therefore, the result is significant which retains the null-hypothesis.

Table 4.4.

Test of normality

| Group | Kolmogorov-Smirnov ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |  |  | Shapiro-Wilk |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| FG | . 123 | 45 | . 085 | . 955 | 45 | . 077 |
| NFG | . 118 | 45 | . 133 | . 961 | 45 | . 134 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

An independent sample t-test was conducted to probe the probable mean differences. Table 4.5 indicates the descriptive statistics of pre-test for reading comprehension of FG and NFG groups and table 4.5 shows the result of independent sample t-test. As indicated in the table 4.6 the significant level of the Leven's test is .83 . This is larger than the cutoff of .05 . As indicated in the table the sig value is .91 at $\mathrm{df}=28$ with the t value $=.11$. The results indicate that FG and NFG groups were not statistically different despite their differences in their mean ( $\mathrm{FG}=17.55$ and NFG=17.60).

## Table 4.5.

Descriptive Statistics for reading comprehension of FG and NFG groups in pre-test

|  | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| RC_Score | FG |  | 45 | 17.5556 | 1.96047 | .29225 |
|  | NFG |  | 45 | 17.6000 | 1.87568 | .27961 |

Table 4.6.

Independent Sample t-Test for reading comprehension of FG and NFG groups in pre-test

| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  |  |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| F |  | Sig. | t | df | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sig. } \\ \text { (2- } \\ \text { tailed) } \end{gathered}$ | Mean Difference |  | Std. Error <br> Difference | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lo | ver | Upper |
| RC_Score | Equal variances assumed |  | . 043 | . 837 | -. 110 | 88. | . 913 | -. 04444 | . 40446 | . 84823 | . 75934 |
|  | Equal variances not assumed |  |  |  | -. 110 | 87.829. | . 913 | -. 04444 | . 40446 | . 84825 | . 75937 |

4.2.3 Statistical analysis of the Post-Test. Following the completion of the treatment, all students in both groups took a reading comprehension test as post-test after three weeks on reading comprehension ability to evaluate the effectiveness of planned focused on form on reading comprehension skill through input flooding and determine the difference between the performance of two FG and NFG. The post-test questions were parallel with the pretest.

After the intervention all participants took part in post-test. The mean score of reading comprehension for the FG group was $(x=20.13)$ which was greater than the mean score for NFG group ( $\mathrm{x}=18.71$ ).Table 4.7 presents the details of the descriptive statistics of both FG and NFG group in post-test.

Table 4.7

Descriptive Statistics for reading comprehension of FG and NFG in the Post-test

|  | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| RC post test Score | FG |  | 45 | 20.1333 | 1.97254 | .29405 |


| NFG | 45 | 18.7111 | 2.19112 | .32663 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

To see whether the intervention was effective or not, the mean scores of two groups were compared through an independent sample t-test. The results were presented in the table 4.8 below. As indicated in table 4.6 the sig value is not greater than the p . value $(\mathrm{t}(88)=.002)$. The result indicates that the difference in students' performance at the post-test is significant. In other word, the null hypothesis of this study stating no significant effect of planned focused tasks with focus on form instruction on EFL learners' reading comprehension is rejected leading to the conclusion that FG outperformed the NFG in their reading comprehension.

Table 4.8
Independent Sample T-test for the post-test of FG and NFG group

|  |  | Levene's <br> Test for <br> Equality of <br> Variances |  |  | t-tes | t for Equalit | y of Means |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | F Sig. | t | Df | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sig. } \\ \text { (2- } \\ \text { tailed) } \end{gathered}$ | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | $95 \%$ <br> Confidence Interval of the Difference |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower Upper |
| RC <br> post- <br> test | Equal variances assumed | . 773.382 | 3.236 | 88 | . 002 | 1.42222 | . 43949 | . 548822.29562 |
|  | Equal variances not assumed |  | 3.236 | 87.046 | . 002 | 1.42222 | . 43949 | . 548692.29575 |

Based on the findings summarized in the previous section, the research question of the study is answered and discussed as follow:

RQ1: Is there any difference between reading comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners taught by focused tasks and that of learners who are taught through the traditional method (translation and explicit learning)?

As the findings of the study showed, and based on the pre-test results, at the beginning of the research both of the learners were at the same level of the reading comprehension but after the treatment, and as the results of the post-test indicated, that there was a noticeable difference between the participants' performances in the two groups and the experimental group (FG) performed better than the control group (NFG).

Although both of the control group and the experimental group made progress in reading comprehension skill, the point that should be considered is that the experimental group which was taught using planned focused tasks through input flooding showed more progresses and outperformed in reading comprehension.

This finding is consistent with some previous studies done by Spada (2011) stating that a mere focus on meaning and mere exposure to the L2 is not enough for learners. So they can't reach proficiency in the language and develop their productive skills. Therefore, this finding will support this hypothesis that the use of planned focused tasks through input flooding technique proved to be effective in reading comprehension skill. In other words, as Pica (2002) points out, meaning-centered instruction led to low levels of linguistic accuracy (i.e., non-target morphology and syntax) and the issue of form was overlooked. Researchers have advanced the possibility that there can be an interface between explicit and implicit knowledge, that is, in the realm of grammar teaching the practice of grammar rules could be of value when that explicit teaching affects the acquisition of implicit knowledge (DeKeyser, 2007).

Task-based is a kind of instruction in which language learners, performing activities, are engaged in meaningful, goal-oriented communication to solve problems, complete projects and research decisions ( as noted by Seyyei, Keivan 2012). Tasks have been used for a broad range of instructional purposes, serving for example, as units of syllabuses, activities for structure or function practice, and language-focusing enhancement to content-based curricula. (Seyyedi, 2012)

Robinson (2003b) argues that task-based pedagogy can facilitate the cognitive processes involved in second language production (performance) and acquisition (development), and their relationship. In EFL settings where learners are not exposed to the second language and do not interact meaningfully on a regular basis, it is of major importance to bring learners into contact with realistic language use in the classroom (Jeon\& Hahn, 2009).

Since the implication of focused tasks which focus on form through input flooding technique was an important point in the progress of reading comprehension ability, the researcher decided to administer a post-test on reading comprehension test.

According to the results and comparison between the pre-test and post-test, it was revealed that the experimental group (FG) had different results from the control group (NFG) in comprehension of a reading text. In fact, they not only promoted their ability in the comprehension of a text but also they had better knowledge of language form in making sentences accurately and fluently.

In the control group it seemed that the learners had difficulty in comprehension and accurate form of sentences. Moreover, they couldn't retain the knowledge for a long time.

This noticeable difference between the two groups of the learners was quite clearly due to the kind of the instruction to them. With respect to the analysis of the data, the null hypothesis in the study could be statistically rejected because it was proved that using focused tasks was effective and facilitate comprehending of texts. In other words focused tasks significantly affected EFL learners` reading comprehension ability. So there was a significant difference between two groups` performance.

## 5. Conclusion

As noted before, according to Long (2000), focus on form is largely motivated by, albeit not exclusively, Schumidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schumidt, 1990, 2001). This hypothesis holds that noticing, a cognitive process that involves attending to the input learners receive, is inevitably a conscious process and is a necessary condition for second language learning. Schumidt (1990, 2001) has argued that attention and its subjective correlates noticing, i.e. registering formal features in the input, and noticing the gap, i.e. identifying how the input to which the learner is

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exposed differs from the output the learner is able to generate, are essential process in L2 acquisition. The results of this study confirmed that there should have been a call for integration of meaning-focused and form-focused instruction as a complementary approach in the EFL/ESL classrooms in order to promote both learners fluency and accuracy. Teachers and researchers should not stigmatize a focus on forms approach since it has proven to be equally effective in fostering language abilities.

In this study, the researcher attempted to examine whether focused tasks served the function of improving institute students` reading comprehension ability, learning motivations, and positive attitudes. Using focused tasks through input flooding could guide learners toward a real-life communicative learning environment, and learners would benefit by interacting with peers through task-based activities. Learners could have more chances to communicate in the target language and enhance their language ability.

The results of this study are in support of the studies conducted by Panahzade and Gholami (2013). They investigated the impacts of planned preemptive FonF on EFL learners` oral accuracy. The results showed that providing upper-intermediate female learners with planned preemptive focus on form was beneficial in terms of their oral production. In addition, the findings of this study support the research done by Fallah Golchin (2013) who investigated the enhancing reading comprehension of Iranian advanced EFL learners through task-based reading activities. Based on his findings, participants in the first group (task-based reading) made significant progress in their post test with respect to reading comprehension.

In conclusion, using focused tasks which focus on the ability to perform a task or activity by integrating meaning and forms of the language at the same time through input flooding is of most importance to EFL learners to use language fluently and accurately. In addition, using tasks in a reading comprehension activity will promote the learners` ability in comprehension of the texts.

### 5.1 Pedagogical Implications

Taking the results of the present study into account, a number of pedagogical implications are suggested. This study provides strong support for the assumption that a combination of formal instruction and communication oriented instruction through input flooding is highly beneficial to L2 learners in an EFL situation. The results of this study revealed that the integration of focus on form and focus on meaning can positively affect L2 learning when it has a particular linguistic focus. Also, students built up their self-confidence and self-fulfillment through taskbased activities, dared to express their ideas, and learned to work together in class through taskbased activities- not only their language ability but also their communicative ability improved rapidly. The major issues addressed in this study were whether EFL learners` reading ability was promoted. Results showed that FG had significant improvement in their reading comprehension after the pedagogical instruction. As some students had problems with reading strategies, in this respect, teachers should help students identify effective reading strategies and that students can be encouraged to implement them in their L2 reading.

The findings of this study would be of great interest for language teachers who are interested in improving the reading comprehension ability of EFL learners by using focused tasks through input flooding. Task-based reading is a manifestation of language in use and is a communicative tool for language learning. In addition, the findings of this study are of significance for materials developers in developing materials which adhere to the basics of FoF instruction.

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# INVESTIGATING IRANIAN EFL STUDENT'S READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT 

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#### Abstract

DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT (DA), WITH ITS ROOTS IN VYGOTSKY'S THEORY OF MIND, TAKES THE AMALGAMATION OF ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION MUCH FURTHER BY ENABLING TEACHERS TO IMPROVE LEARNERS' CAPABILITIES BY CONTINUALLY ATTUNING THEIR MEDIATION TO THE LEARNERS' CHANGING NEEDS (POEHNER, 2008). THIS STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DA PROCEDURE IN THE AREAS OF EFL READING COMPREHENSION. IN PARTICULAR, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DA COMPARED WITH STATIC ASSESSMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS WAS EXPLORED. A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DESIGN WAS IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS. THE PROCEDURE CONSISTED OF A PRE-TEST, MEDIATED LEARNING PHASE, AND A POST-TEST. THE PARTICIPANT OF THE STUDY INCLUDED 60 MALE IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE L2 LEARNERS AGED 21-30 LEARNING ENGLISH AT HOR LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN TEHRAN, IRAN. THE INSTRUMENTS UTILIZED IN THIS STUDY INCLUDED A OPT PROFICIENCY TEST AND TOEFL READING COMPREHENSION TEST. A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT WAS EXPLORED FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WHO HAD RECEIVED MEDIATION. THE OUTCOMES ALSO SHOWED THAT THE STUDENTS' GAIN SCORES IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WERE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THE STUDENTS' GAIN SCORES IN THE CONTROL GROUP WHO UNDERWENT THE STATIC TESTS. THE OUTCOMES OFFER THAT DA IS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF RECOGNIZING THE LEARNERS' ABILITIES AND HELPING THEM TO CONQUER READING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS.


KEYWORDS: DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT, STATIC ASSESSMENT, ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT, READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY

## 1. Introduction

Dynamic Assessment (DA) has become an important trend for researchers and theorists over the past years. It's defined as a method which recognizes individual differences for instruction and

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embeds intervention within the assessment procedure by involving suitable forms of mediation that are sensitive to the individual's current capabilities and subsequent performance with the aim of improving learner development (Lidz\&Gindis, 2003).In other words, DA differs from traditional testing in terms of the theoretical trend, the assessment procedures based on, and the interpretation of outcomes (Carney \&Cioffi, 1992). It is about the relationship between testing and teaching. More particularly, DA concentrates on the assessment process as well as the product. It attempts to describe and alter the student's performance during testing by introducing material or instructions to elicit higher attainment levels (Embretson, 1987). Dynamic assessment is aimed to explore how students respond to instruction during the assessment process. Consequently, when diagnosing reading problems, the emphasis is on gathering data associated with the strategies that are utilized by the student during the reading decoding process (Carney \&Cioffi, 1992). Moreover, the dynamic assessment approach to evaluating reading problems attempts to recognize the student's learning potential as defined by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

Dynamic assessment is tended to explore how students respond to instruction during the assessment process. Thus, when diagnosing reading problems, the emphasis is on gathering information associated with the strategies that are utilized by the student during the reading comprehension process (Carney \&Cioffi, 1992). Similarly, the dynamic assessment approach to diagnosing reading problems tries to investigate the student's learning potential as defined by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

There are two general approaches to DA, both of which could be traced to the different situations in which Vygotsky introduced the Zone of Proximal Development. The first is called interactionist DA. It has its origins in Vygotsky's qualitative, interpretation of the ZPD one that foregrounds instruction-learning over evaluation. The leading support of interactionist DA is Reuven Feuerstein(Feuerstein, Rand, \& Hoffman, 1988; 2003). At the heart of Feuersteins approach is the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) - a construct mirroring Vygotsky's understanding of mediation. Another approach to DA and the one the researcher has concentrates on in this study is related to as interventionist model, which follows a quantitative approach, and it is similar to a psychometric approach. It is recently used as a pretest-mediation (intervention) - posttest experimental approach. The role of teacher is interactive, cooperating with the student to impact change in the skill being assessed (Lidz, 1987).

Traditional assessment of reading is inconsistent with current knowledge about reading and provides limited information for developing appropriate instruction. DA is an alternative to traditional assessment that involves the interaction between the examiner and student in the evaluation process. DA has characteristics that show its potential for evaluating reading disability in a way that is consistent with current knowledge in the field of reading. It also can provide information useful for developing individualized reading instruction. There are still very few studies examining the relationship between reading and dynamic assessment. A more detailed account of the students' strengths and weaknesses can be provided by using a dynamic assessment approach to assess their reading abilities. This information would lead to more effective instructional programming during remediation, resulting in improved reading abilities for the student.

The present study investigates effectiveness of dynamic assessment compared to static assessment of reading comprehension.

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

### 2.1. Dynamic assessment in L2

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal development, which offers that different individuals can have the same benchmark score on a non-dynamic test but are differ in the degree to which they can benefit from instruction. DA is not a novel method to psychological and educational assessment; some of its recent applications have been around for more than 30 years (Feuerstein, Jeannet, \& Richelle, 2003; Guthke \& Wingenfeld, 1992). Haywood

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and Lidz (2007) elaborate that DA is not a single approach of assessment, but refers to a wide range of tasks that depart from static or non-dynamic assessments (NDA) by consisting of intervention and learner responsiveness to intervention as necessary elements to recognize the learner capabilities.

Although DA is new to applied linguistics, there have been some researches that have investigated the applications of these methods to L 2 instructional settings. Some of these studies have fallen short of the mark by losing face of what makes a procedure dynamic. This was the case with the research fulfilled by Grigorenko, Sternberg, and Ehrman (2000) on the CANALF-T. Other studies have been more fruitful. For example, Kozulin and Garb (2002) conducted an interventionist method to DA that they are recently using with adult immigrants studying EFL. The outcomes of their study show that the procedure is both applicable and useful in getting information on students' learning potential. It is proved that students with a similar performance level indicate different, and in some cases completely different ability to learn and implement new text comprehension strategies. One interesting dimension of their work is the manner in which they report the results of the DA method. Rather than producing a qualitative report of each learner's performance for all levels of the study, they showed the learners' abilities with a single score which they themselves called Learning Potential Score (LPS) which is the difference between the learner's pretest and posttest scores.

DA gives information integral for fruitful remediation, which is the final goal of this assessment and is not given by traditional non-dynamic tests. Lidz (1995) investigated that traditional standardized assessment trails the learner's cognitive improvement to the point of "failure" in his/her independent functioning, but DA directs the child to the point of attaining success in mediated performance because it aims at recognizing barriers to more effective leaning and performance, to investigate ways to overwhelm those barriers on subsequent learning and performance sufficiency (Haywood \& Lidz, 2007, p.3). The philosophy behind dynamic assessment is that some people can attain much more cognitively if provided the chance to work with a 'significant other' to develop their cognitive efficiency. The goal of dynamic assessment is to make effective use of cognitive functioning, rather than simply to sample it, and it is here that a paradigm shift in cognitive assessment takes place (Grigorenko \& Sternberg, 1998, p. 77).

An important advantage of DA is offering suggestions according to developmental potential which is not uncovered by traditional non-dynamic tests (Davin, 2011). In dynamic assessment the learners are taught on how to perform specific tasks, and mediated assistance on how to master them are provided. Their improvement in the ability to solve similar tasks is then measured (Kirchenbaum, 1998).

DA aims at evaluating the learner's at times covered potential or retain capacity in a dynamic, process - oriented, and malleable way in which assistance or mediation is given by instruction and feedback for cognitive skill acquisition (Campbell \& Carlson, 1995; Elliott, 2003 ; Gillam \& McFadden, 1994; Kirkwood, Weiler, Bernstein, Forbes \& Waber, 2001). The logic behind this method of assessment is that if a learner can develop on initial performance when mediated, s/he has the potential to attain more (Ukrainetz, Harpell, Walsh \& Coyle, 2000). DA is totallly based on the rationale that assessment of an individual's present knowledge is not approximately as uncovering as an assessment of that individual's potential so in dynamic assessment recognizing potential performance is more emphasized than assessing usual performance.

There are several approaches to dynamic assessment which vary in the way that they approach mediation (Poehner, 2008; Thouësny, 2010). This interventionist DA study utilizes the advantage of Grigorenko\& Sternberg's cake and sandwich models (Sternberg \& Grigorenko, 2002).The former is more integrated, suggesting mediation throughout the administration of the assessment, but the latter has a form similar to traditional evaluations (Poehner, 2008), the pretest-intervention-posttest format. In this approach, intervention is "sandwiched" between a statically administered pre-test and post- test. The performance on the post-test can then be compared to the pre-test for determining how much development an individual made as a consequence of the intervention. Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002) similarly mention that these
procedures can be implemented in either an individual or group situation.

### 2.2. DA-based reading comprehension studies

In a comprehensive review of the application of DA to educational contexts, Haywood and Lidz (2007) contended that "Campione and Brown (1987) have been pioneers in their attempts to assess specific academic domains in the framework of DA" (p.77). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) mention that the entire body of research in this new trend of research involves only few research that concentrate on L2 learners or bilinguals. Bendar and Kletzian (1990) implemented a pretest-intervention-posttest format to 29 students from grade 9 to 12 and they observed development in their reading.

Pishghadam, Barabadi, and Kamrood (2011) implemented a computerized dynamic assessment on 104 university students with moderate proficiency level. The software could calculate the non-dynamic assessment score of the participants, that is their score before any intervention of each item, as well as a dynamic assessment score, which is the score after providing mediation for unsuccessful answers. Using a t-test the researchers compared the dynamic and non-dynamic score of the participants and found a significant difference implying the usefulness of dynamic assessment in increasing the reading comprehension score of the participants. These researchers however didn't investigate the amount of transcendence ability of the participants. It would be more appropriate if they had investigated whether the participants could apply the suggested hints and mediations in similar tasks or test items or not because comparing scores merely before and after the mediation cannot imply the learners improved reading comprehension ability.

In another study on dynamic assessment of reading comprehension Naeni and Duvall (2012) used a mixed method to study the improvements in reading comprehension performance of 10 university students by applying the mediation of dynamic assessment approach to instruction and assessment. The mediation phase of their study included three intervention sessions each on one particular reading comprehension sub-skill among three which were finding the main idea, inference, and finding out the meaning of unknown words. Their findings reveal significant improvement in the reading comprehension performance of the participants after the mediation.

Campione and Brown (1987) as mentioned in (Haywood and Lidz, 2007) have been pioneers in their attempts to assess specific academic fields in the framework of DA. Although primarily known for their highly structured approach to DA of mathematics learning, they, and primarily their student Palinscar, also designed a highly clinical appraisal of reading in the context of their reciprocal teaching model (Palinscar \& Brown, 1984). Students are monitored during reading comprehension groups considering their capabilities to summarize, formulate questions, clarify inconsistencies, and predict what will happen next. The teacher primarily models these skills, increasingly releasing the role of group leader to the students. During this process, the teacher goes on to model and provides feedback and prompts to improve the students' development of competence. The probabilities for transfer are maximized because the activities occur in the context to which they are to implement (Campione \& Brown, 1985). There is no formal prescription for these interactions and no structure for recording of observations, although it would not be demanding to devise informal ratings or formats for anecdotal records.

Ruijssenaars and Oud(1987, in Hamers, Pennings,\&Guthke, 1994) as cited in (Haywood and Lidz, 2007), also pioneers in this area, studied a long-term procedure in which they compared the impacts of two reading programs with groups of kindergarten children. Intervention was provided by the classroom teacher during fifteen 10-minute sessions. The students were given pretests, as well as posttests that followed each of the lessons, a retention test 2 weeks following the completion of the sessions, and a reading speed test 5 months after completion of the sessions. The researchers investigated that $49 \%$ of the variance in the final criterion measure could be accounted for by the posttests from the final learning session.

Tissink, Hamers, and Van Luit (1993) as cited in (Haywood and Lidz, 2007) applied their learning potential model to specific academic domains, including reading and spelling. Using a

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pretest- intervention-posttest format, these researchers intended to produce information that would predict later school attainment, profile strengths and weaknesses in children's cognitive functioning, and provide information relevant to classroom instruction. Their domain-specific procedure relevant to both reading and spelling is the Auditory Analysis Test. The components of this procedure consist of memory for sentences, auditory segmentation of words in a sentence and syllables within a word, "objectivation," to demonstrate which of two words is the longer and repeating a word leaving out one syllable, separation of the first phoneme of words, and phonemic analysis segmenting words into their phonemes. Both pretest and posttest consist of 40 items, with 15 transfer items added to the posttest. The intervention suggests a series of nonstandardized prompts (repeated presentation, revelation of item structure, provision of solution strategy, and modeling) that are suggested as needed in response to learner errors. This procedure is proper for children in kindergarten and first grade, or any other children who are in the early levels of reading development. The authors provide data considering construct, concurrent, and predictive validity; item analysis; and reliability. The domain specific tests were investigated to be better predictors of school attainment than the domain-general. Also, learning curves of the students differed per domain; that is, there did not seem to be a general feature of learning potential; rather, domain-specific responsiveness to intervention.

The Abbott, Reed, Abbott, and Berninger (1997) study of 16 second graders with severe reading and writing disabilities offers yet another approach within the broader DA model. These authors designed their study within the concept of "response to intervention" implementing growth curves as measures, with their tutorial intervention spanning a full program year. The tutorial targeted orthographic and phonological awareness, accuracy and fluency of word recognition and comprehension monitoring, handwriting fluency, spelling, and composing. The sessions began during the summer with 1-hour twice-weekly meetings over the course of 8 weeks; this went on through the school year with 1-hour once-weekly individual meetings over an average of 36.5 weeks. The lessons were standardized and scripted. This study indicated gains beyond chance for most of the children on most of the measures but also showed their differential responses to the treatment. The results also produced individualized suggestions for their next school year. Following the above mentioned studies, this study attempted to explore the effect of mediation which is sandwiched between pretest and posttest on the Iranian L2 learners reading comprehension performance. The following research question guided the study:

Does mediation in DA lead to better results in Iranian students' reading comprehension performance?

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Participants

The research participants for the present study included the researchers as the mediators and two groups (i.e. the experimental group and control group) of students. A total of 60 students of English at intermediate level attending Hor language Institute in Tehran Iran were randomly selected. Their age ranged from 21 to 30 . For the portion of the classroom instruction that involved DA in the EG (experimental group) and SA (static assessment) the CG (control group), the researchers were the sole instructors of DA. All the participants were native speakers of Farsi and were chiefly from middle socio-economic background. Students' participation in the classroom activities was the main researchers' concerns in the classroom. It should be mentioned that all the participants were male in gender.

### 3.2. Instruments

To collect quantitative data for the present study, three instruments were utilized: (1) a homogeneity test (i.e. the Oxford Placement Test); (2) a pre-test (i.e. a TOEFL reading proficiency

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test; and (3) a post-test (i.e. a TOEFL reading proficiency test). The OPT was used to homogenize the research sample. Because the researchers wanted to investigate the effect of DA on students who had low-reading ability, students in the group with the lowest level of reading proficiency was chosen as the research sample. Their current reading proficiency level was measured by the pre-test and the hypothesized development in their reading comprehension ability after the treatment was determined by the post-test.

### 3.2.1. Oxford Placement Test

To homogenize the participants, an Oxford Placement Test was used before the research intervention (DA training in the EG, and SA training in the CG). Some 30 EFL Iranian EFL learners with similarly low achievement levels in reading proficiency were selected. The reading comprehension ability before and after the DA-treatment in the EG (experimental group) and SA (static assessment) the CG (control group) was the major concern.

### 3.2.2. Pre-test and post-test

In order to recognize the testees' current level of reading comprehension, a reading comprehension test was administered as one of the primary sources of data for this investigation. The 60 students with low-reading ability participated in the pre-test ( 30 in the EG, and 30 in the CG). It included twenty multiple choice items for two reading passages. These passages were selected from Longman Complete Course for the TOFEL TEST (Deborah Philips, 2005). The passages have different topics and almost of the same length and number of test items. The aim of giving different reading subjects was to avoid topic bias and topic familiarity. Time allocation for the pre-test was forty-five minutes. In assessment, one point was awarded for a correct item.

Results of the post treatment test were compared with those of the pre-test for making inferences on the efficiency of the DA training in the EG and the SA training in the CG via the change in the students' reading comprehension performances. The post-test in the EG was taken by thirteen out of the fifteen students who had gone through the pre-test and the DA training. In addition, the post-test in the CG was taken by thirteen out of the fifteen students who had taken the pretest and received the SA treatment. It should be pointed out the researchers utilized a pilot study in order to determine the reliability and the validity of pre-test and post- test. 30 advanced students, including 15 male and 15 female intermediate EFL students participated in the pilot study. The procedure was conducted in a single session. Instruments and procedure of the main study were applied as well. The result showed that both pre-test and posttest are reliable(r=.8).

### 3.3. Procedure

To homogenize the research population ( $\mathrm{N}=150$ ), an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was taken. According to the test results, the population was sorted into three groups of reading-low, reading-mid, and reading-high students. As many as 60 participants with the lowest level of reading comprehension proficiency were randomly selected and assigned to an Experimental Group ( $\mathrm{N}=30$ ) and a Control Group $(\mathrm{N}=30)$. In order to determine their current level of reading proficiency, a TOEFL reading comprehension pre-test was administered to both groups. Afterwards, DA training was applied to the EG in 8 successive 90 -minute sessions on reading comprehension. Unlike EG, static assessment was applied to the CG. In the end, another TOEFL reading comprehension post-test was administered to the research groups to measure their reading comprehension level performance after their treatment.

### 3.3.1. DA sessions

The goal of this section was to focus on the mediational move introduced by the researchers (or mediators) during the study. The amount of mediation provided to each participant depended on the number of incorrect answers to each question. The participants received mediation on the

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questions they answered incorrectly. Therefore, the more incorrect answers a participant gave to the question, the more mediation he received. In addition, based on Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), intervention should be provided in gradual progression. The purpose is to estimate the minimum level of guidance required by the students to successfully perform a given question. Therefore, guidance normally starts at a highly strategic (implicit) level, and progressively becomes more specific, more concrete, until the appropriate level is reached. In order to make the dynamic assessment more systematic, in this study the researchers designed a series of mediation which began with the most implicit hints to the most explicit ones as follows:

## Mediation from most implicit to most explicit

- Scanning
- Skimming
- Identifying Main and Detail Ideas
- Guessing the Meaning of the Words from the Context
- Identifying References
- Making Inferences

At the beginning of the each session, the students were asked to ask questions whenever they encounter any problem on reading comprehension. The mediations used in each session included hints, prompts, questions, and explanations. The researchers also introduced different kinds of strategies such as, Finding Definitions or Word Guessing, Questions Implied Detail or Inference Questions, Paraphrase Questions, Pronoun Referent Questions and Main Idea Questions that could be used to answer a reading comprehension question. In the four first sessions, for example, the texts were followed by detail questions; the researchers clarified the strategies for answering these kinds of questions correctly. It should be mentioned that when the explanations were difficult for students, they were explained in their native language, in this case Persian.

The researchers also helped students to understand the requirement of text comprehension, suggested feedback, let the students orally report the answering strategy, explain the reason, and examine the strategies that were introduced. In addition, in order to make interaction possible during mediation, the researchers let the students to use their native language.

The following transcriptions of excerpts from dialogues between students and mediators during the intervention sessions indicate some of the mediating prompts and the effect of the mediations. Below we see from the dialogues between the mediator and the student S1 that the learner was aided to explore the best response via different prompts which consisted of a lesson on implementing what the researcher notes as transitions, terms or phrases which link a main point with additional details.

Intervention session (1) with the mediator (M) and student 1 (S1): (The words in the students' native language have been italicized

1. M : What is the answer to question 1 ? What is the main idea of the passage 1 ? (S1 starts to read the passage)
2. S1: Is it (a)....... norm?
3. M: Why did you choose (a)? Because it is at the beginning of the paragraph..?
4. S1: No
5. M: What does "norm" mean?
6. S1: price ....something .....barchasb (label)
7. M: No ....No. it doesn't mean label (barchasb)
8. M: It...it is something about tradition or custom....
9. S1: I didn't know
10. M : Sometimes, there are some strategies to help us to find the main idea, e.g 11. R: transitions help
11. S1: Transitions...?
12. M: words like "because" to show the reason, "but", they convey meaning (S1 starts to read it again )
13. S1: yes ...here............in other words?
14. S1: The answer $\qquad$ .is " $b$ "?
15. M : Is it giving you how to......
16. S1: No...no...
17. M : The writer is comparing.........Which places mentioned?
18. S1: Airport and....
19. M: two settings...
20. S1: Rustic and.....
21. $\mathrm{M}: ~ Y e . ~ S o$ $\qquad$ .what is the purpose ....? (looking at the other items)
22. S1: Variable yani (means)........?
23. M: It is from the verb "vary", you know the meaning...I'm sure
24. S1: different...yes ..it is about different places.....yes this is the answer yes 26. M: ye... good

The next excerpt indicates student S1's application and development after the first attempt:
27. M: Now, passage 2, read it and answer question 7 .
(After some minutes)
3. S1: there is.... "however"
4. S 1 : it is number c
5. M: How did you choose it?
6. S1: main idea should be after "however".... (he
starts to read the sentences after "however"
7. S1: During the course of the next two English began to spread around....
8. S1: I think it is c.

Here, we see that student S1 successfully implementing what was demonstrated during the initial intervention, uncovering a near transfer of learning. Near transfer "involve(s) the principles learned originally but in different combinations" in contrary to far transfer or very far transfer, which consist of more novelty, or maintenance which "involve(s) no transformations" in a given activity (Campione \& Brown, 1990, p. 152). Indicators of transfer are indicators of learning and while "transfer tasks differ in degree of similarity... [they] require the same underlying skills and abilities" (Toglia \& Cermak, 2009, pp.571, in reference to Toglia, 2005).

### 3.4. Data Analysis

In order to respond to the research question of the present study, the collected data was analyzed in the following way. For the analysis of the collected data of the study SPSS version 21 software package for statistical analysis in social sciences was used that included a summary of the basic descriptive statistics of the OPT scores, the pre-test and post-test scores, the reading comprehension in the experimental and control groups, and running independent sample t-tests to identify the difference between the two groups in terms of their gain scores. In fact, gain scores were calculated for both groups to determine if the students in the groups made any improvement from their pretest to posttest. More importantly, the analysis was done to either reject or confirm the null hypothesis of the study.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Normality Tests

The present data are measured on an interval scale and the subjects' perform independently on the tests. The assumption of normality is also met. As displayed in Table 1 the values of skewness and kurtosis are within the ranges of $+/-2$.

Table 1: Normality Tests

| Group |  | N | Skewness |  | Kurtosis |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |  |
| Experimental | Pretest | 30 | .090 | .412 | -.788 | .820 |
|  | Posttest | 30 | -.015 | .443 | -.136 | .820 |
| Control | Pretest | 30 | .081 | .435 | -.810 | .820 |
|  | Posttest | 30 | .340 | .431 | -.140 | .820 |

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The assumption of homogeneity of variances will be discussed when reporting the results of the independent t-test although in case the group sizes are equal there is no need to test this assumption (Bachman 2005).

### 5.2. Pretest of Reading Comprehension

An independent $t$-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' mean scores on pretest of reading comprehension in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of reading comprehension ability prior to the main study. As displayed in Table 2 the mean scores for experimental and control groups on pretest of reading comprehension are 30.21 and 29.43 respectively.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

| Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Experimental | 30 | 30.214 | 4.5561 | .7951 |
| Control | 30 | 29.434 | 3.8524 | .7029 |

The results of the independent t -test $(\mathrm{t}(58)=.64, \mathrm{P}=.52>.05, \mathrm{R}=.08$ it represents a weak effect size) indicate that there was not any significant difference between experimental and control groups' mean scores on the pretest of reading comprehension. Thus it can be concluded that the two groups enjoyed the same level of reading comprehension ability prior to the main study.

Table 3: Independent t-test Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F Sig. |  | T | Df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95\% <br> Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  | Lower |  |  |  |  | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | . 435 | . 501 |  | . 630 | 57.912 | . 502 | . 6981 | 1.0745 | $1.4793$ | 2.8692 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | . 630 | 57.112 | . 502 | . 6981 | 1.0745 | $1.4799$ | 2.8696 |

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's $\mathrm{F}=.435, \mathrm{P}=$ $.501>.05)$. That is why the first row of Table 3, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

### 5.3. Post-test of reading comprehension

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An independent t-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' mean scores on posttest of reading comprehension in order to probe the effect of using translation as an ELT technique on the improvement of the Iranian EFL learners reading comprehension ability. As displayed in Table 4 the mean scores for experimental and control groups on posttest of reading comprehension are 32.65 and 30.21 respectively.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Posttest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

| Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Experimental | 30 | 32.650 | 3.6514 | .6091 |
| Control | 30 | 30.210 | 4.0211 | .7065 |

The results of the independent t -test $(\mathrm{t}(58)=2.248, \mathrm{P}=.02<.05, \mathrm{R}=.30$ it represents a moderate effect size) indicate that there was significant difference between experimental and control groups' mean scores on the posttest of reading comprehension. Thus it can be concluded the nullhypothesis as using mediation in DA does not have any significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL is rejected. The experimental group - after receiving translation techniques - outperformed the control group on the posttest of reading comprehension.

Table 5: Independent t-test Posttest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | T | Df | Sig. <br> (2- <br> tailed) | Mean <br> Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95\% <br> Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | . 242 | . 508 | 2.242 | 57.912 | . 020 | 2.2991 | 1.0010 | . 3920 | 4.4040 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | 2.242 | 57.354 | . 020 | 2.2991 | 1.0010 | . 3917 | 4.4044 |

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's $\mathrm{F}=.242, \mathrm{P}=$ $.508>.05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 5, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

### 5.4. Reliability Indices

The K-R21 reliability indices for the pretest and posttest of reading comprehension are .79 and . 84 .

Table 1: K-R21 Reliability Indices

|  | N | Mean | Variance | k -r21 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pretest | 60 | 30.052 | 17.522 | .79 |
| Posttest | 60 | 31.485 | 16.201 | .84 |

### 5.5. Construct Validity

A factor analysis through the varimax rotation is carried out to probe the underlying constructs of the pretest and posttest of reading comprehension. The SPSS has extracted only one factor which accounts for 92.79 percent of the total variance.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues |  |  | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Total | $\%$ <br> Variance | Cumulative \% | Total | $\%$ <br> Variance | Cumulative \% |
| 1 | 1.785 | 92.758 | 92.724 | 1.701 | 92.793 | 92.793 |
| 2 | . 135 | 7.095 | 100.021 |  |  |  |

As displayed in Table 2 both pretest and posttest of reading comprehension load on a single factor, i.e. they tap on the same underlying construct.

### 5.6. Discussion

As Lidz (1991) noted, "to merely describe the learner's performance does not allow us to draw conclusions or to derive recommendations" (p.24). Assessment information should make it possible to uncover the reasons for the learner's poor functioning, as well as to suggest effective mediation.

To this end, this study investigates the effects of Dynamic Assessment on the reading comprehension performance of the EG participants. The researchers (mediators) implemented DA in the EG, while the CG received non-dynamic assessment or Static Assessment. The research instruments consisted of a pre-test (that is, a TOEFL reading comprehension test), and a post-test (that is, a TOEFL reading comprehension test). It should be added that the research was homogenized through an Oxford Placement Test which sorted the population into three groups of reading-low, reading- mid, reading-high students. 60 students were randomly drawn from the group with the lowest level of reading comprehension proficiency. The participants in both groups participated in these three consecutive steps of the research procedures: the pre-test (that is, a TOEFL reading comprehension test), DA was used for the EG and SA was implemented for the CG and the post-test (that is, a TOEFL reading comprehension test). The primary aim of this study was to determine the impacts of utilizing DA Reading Comprehension. To put it another way, the researchers were to determine if DA can be implemented instead of SA to improve the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (hereafter ZPD) to develop the comprehension of content-based lessons.

The outcomes showed a trend in the direction of some advantages for the use of DA. The participants of the EG attained higher scores on the post-test of reading compared with the participants of the CG. The study investigated some statistically significant evidence to uphold the general effectiveness of DA use in reading comprehension tasks. The EG had an ample amount of practices and consistent exposure to different kinds and strategic ways to answer the questions in the reading comprehension texts. This may have resulted in their knowledge gains which were possibly manifested in the post-test scores.

This study conducted based on the suggestions of Poehner and Lantolf (2005) and provides empirical support for their claim that DA principles can make classroom formative assessment practices more efficient by providing assistance that is continually tuned and returned to learners needs. The inclusion of interaction brought to light the degree of learners' comprehension and control over linguistic forms and their relationship to meaning, and also helped with the recognition of problems due to the poor performance. Evidence was also presented to offer that interaction provided a chance for these problems to be addressed and for learners to enhance. The fact that the learners themselves arrived at a greater awareness of their capabilities, as evidenced by the verbalization data, is particularly important. According to Vygotsky's (1986) argument the goal of instruction should be to render the invisible visible.

In this research, development in the post-test performance by the low-reading group was promising. Perhaps this group found DA as an effective learning and/or test performance strategy. This study found statistically significant evidence that DA is effective for the EG. Specifically, DA use has been statistically seen as effective for low-skilled readers. This finding could support previous claims concerning the applying of DA in educational setting in Islamic Republic of Iran. The findings of this study about the effect of dynamic assessment on reading comprehension ability of EFL learners are in line with the results of previous studies in the literature for example Kozulin and Grab (2002), Poehner (2008), Albbeva (2008), Birjandi, et al. (2011), Pishghadam, et al. (2011), and Naemi and Duvall (2012). It worth mentioning that the results of the present study are also in line with the results obtained in the study of Campione \& Brown (1987), Valencia, Campione, Weiner, and Bazzi (1990), Abbott, Reed, Abbott, and Berninger (1997), Kletzien and Bednar (1990), and Kozulin and Garb (2002).

According to this study, it can be said that if we want to use suitable instructional techniques for a better reading comprehension, teachers or rather mediators should implement tasks and feedbacks within dynamic reading-competence tests. Most of the time, DA in the domain of reading and text comprehension depends on instruction and practice in meta-cognitive knowledge such as strategies which is specific to certain reading tasks and goals. Also, successful DA depends on the enhancing of domain-specific processes which are essential to do the tasks and practices.

The outcomes of this study highlights the point that the EFL reading comprehension combined with DA can enhance students' reading competence and build up their reading confidence in the following chain reflection. Face to face interaction with the teacher reveals students' progress. In the last session, the students could answer the questions by themselves so that the researchers could conclude that the DA had a positive effect on reading comprehension.

### 5.7. Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that dynamic assessment had a significant effect on promoting the student's attainment in reading comprehension. It was also showed that students who had benefited from DA had higher scores of reading compared to the students who did not experience the mediated intervention. These outcomes lend more empirical support for the dynamic assessment approaches.

The mediator (assessor) actively intervenes during the course of the assessment with the learner with the goal of intentionally making changes in the learner's current level of

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independent functioning. The assessment concentrates on the learner's processes of problem solving, consisting of those that promote as well as obstruct successful learning. The results of this study revealed that mediation led to improved performance, but not the learners' enhanced understanding of the processes underlying that performance. Thus, the results of this study are in support of Haywood and Lidz (2007) who explained that DA is an interactive procedure that objectively measures the degree of change that takes place in response to cues, strategies, feedback, or task situations that are introduced during testing. Intervention techniques are embedded within assessment procedures in a deliberate attempt to make changes in performance that are observed and measured. In contrast to static assessment, dynamic assessment concentrates on individual differences and changes rather than the comparison to normative or typical performance. The goal is to measure how and to what degree performance can develop with guidance.

### 5.8. Implication of the study and suggestions for further research

The instructional value of dynamic EFL assessment lies in the fact that its outcomes can be utilized for the development of individual learning plans for students with different learning needs. Moreover, having in mind that the purpose of testing is to assess the teaching program and the enhancement of the learners, this study inspires the test developers to bring about changes in testing, enhancing tests to affect the quality of teaching as well as improving the students' ability to be creative in their performance on tests. Along with the development of teaching and testing for improving the quality of educational curriculum, the use of the related materials shouldn't be ignored in view of the fact that the materials developed are of great importance in any classroom. On the basis of the outcomes of this study, the materials developers for reading course or workshops can focus on the learners' needs to make language courses more relevant to their needs. Although this study strongly supported the positive role of dynamic assessment intervention-based regarding L2 reading comprehension development, there is a need for further studies to be commissioned not only in the area of L2 reading comprehension, but also in all other language skills and sub skills, with learners of different proficiency levels to better uncover the relative share of DA-based mediation in the fulfillment of the most important concern in education, i.e. learning.

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# COGNITIVE DIMENSION OF PROVERBS IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN 

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#### Abstract

PROVERBS ARE A RICH AND MENTALLY ECONOMICAL RESOURCE TO PROCESS DIFFERENT REAL WORLD EXPERIENCES AND CONCEPTUALIZE THEM. IN MOST OF THE PROVERBS THE SOURCE DOMAIN CARRIES OUT WITH DIFFERENT ANIMALS. THIS QUALITATIVE STUDY AIMS TO DO A CONTRASTIVE COGNITIVE AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN ANIMAL PROVERBS BY COMPARING THE NAME OF SOME ANIMALS IN THESE TWO LANGUAGES. THIS STUDY TRIES TO INVESTIGATE THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE MECHANISM IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN STRUCTURES IN RELATIONS TO METAPHORS WITHIN A CATEGORIZATION AND CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK. THIS ANALYSIS REVEALS HOW PROVERBS SHARE A SIMILAR UNDERLYING SCHEMA OF COGNITION, WHILE THEY REFLECT DIFFERENT CULTURAL BELIEVES. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY REVEALED THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN DEGREE OF SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE TWO LANGUAGES, BUT SEVERAL ASPECTS OF SUCH METAPHORS ARE CULTURE-SPECIFIC. THIS UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL STUDIES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS.


KEYWORDS: COGNITION; ENGLISH LANGUAGE; PERSIAN LANGUAGE; METAPHOR; CULTURE.

## Introduction

Proverbs are a conceptual universal phenomenon, with high communicative and instructive power (Corbonnel, 1996; Flavell, 1997; Junceda, 1998\& Canalleda 2001). They are conceptual universal phenomenon with similar mental mechanism in all languages. Even more, animal proverbs constitute an interesting and informative source of folk knowledge. Universally, all of the speakers around the world use the same cognitive mechanisms in order to produce, understand and transmit proverbs. But they use the words and the name of animals differently.

Culture, religion, age, gender, etc. may have different important roles such as fortune or misfortune, good luck or bad luck in the formation of idioms and proverbs of the other languages. Because of these differences, the cultural beliefs carry by the animal proverbs in

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societies and the symbols of good luck or bad luck may be reflected in the name of special animals in idioms and proverbs of each society. According to social and pragmatic view in proverbs beyond the linguistic structure background knowledge and cultural beliefs are important to convey.

Each animal has its typical instinctive behavior. However, folk culture and knowledge might differ among cultures depending on their experience in interacting with the various animals which are reflected in the proverbs of their language. Clearly to understand the structure of proverbs, understanding of the structure of metaphor is necessary (Balogun 2006).

From the cognition point of view, metaphor means understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest, 'Metaphors as linguistics expressions are possible precisely because metaphor is in conceptual system of human'. In another definition from Lynne Cameron (1999):
...thought is itself structured metaphorically, and... systematicity of
metaphor on the surface of the language merely reflects underlying
conceptual structure in which something is understood ...
There are a large number of animal proverbs in Persian and English languages that some of their cultural connotations and the range of usage are the same or similar, and some are different. Accordingly, human beings have similar capabilities of thought, similar laws of cognition, and some animals have the same important role in people's lives and the same attributes and features (Panther 2003).

Generally the domain of animal life is one of the most elaborate ones, which we use to understand the human domain. In animal proverbs a smart animal deceives a fool one; a weaker animal receives advantage from a stronger one, weaker animals eat the leftovers of stronger animals; a stronger animal takes the food of a weaker. Also, the use of different parts of animals from head to tail; the teeth of a dog, the skin of a pig, the tail of a fox, the eyes of a wolf, the stomach of an ox, the mouth of a bird, the head of a rabbit. Some common propositions that take place in schemas for animals in most of the world are as follow:

- Pigs are dirty, messy and rude.
- Lions are courageous and noble.
- Foxes are clever.
- Dogs are loyal, dependable and dependent.
- Cats are independent.
- Wolves are cruel and murderous.
- Gorillas are aggressive and violent...

However there are some similar animal proverb both in Persian and English that they display and demonstrate the same quality in human perception, human emotion and the human condition of existence;
(1) To cry crocodile tears
?aŝk-e temsāh
(2) To kill two birds with one stone

Bā yek tīr dow neŝu:n rā zadan
(3) The blind leading the blind

## Ku:ri: kə ?asā kəŝə ku:rə di:gar ?ast

Some animal proverbs in English and Persian share the same root idea but differ in figurative ways of expression. That is, they are close in meaning but different in expression. They contain the same advice, counsel, wisdom or warning, and they can perform the same functions in life.In all of these proverbs context is essential for their correct interpretation, because it provides the correct message in an indirect way (Kövecses 2002).

In general proverbs are used for communication and according to communicative principles in all languages every communicator needs pragmatic reasoning in order to understand them. In this study, a selection of proverbs from both Persian and English languages allow to reach amount of background knowledge and cultural beliefs that animals in these two languages portray differently. The conceptual differences of the proverbs related to their specific usage in English and Persian will be interpreted according to great chain metaphor.

## Background

## Figuration and Metaphor in Proverbs

Lakoff (1989) defines proverbs as metaphoric in nature. Figuration and metaphor are so related to each other. They both are from the most basic processes of human mind in comprehension. Generally, human thought and conceptual processes are metaphorical. Figurative meaning tend to people in different cultures think in terms of the connotations of their first culture. Nesi (1995) discussed the figurative meanings to the names of different animals in different cultures, and highlights some of the problems language learners and translators face when dealing with single word conventional metaphor.

Conceptual theory of metaphor was first introduced in detail by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in Metaphors We Live By. This theory has questioned and challenged the traditional linguistic views in which metaphor is viewed as a matter of words rather than thought or action. People believe that the function of metaphor is only a device of the poetic imagination (Lakoff \& Johnson, 1980). Halupka (2003) dealt with combined metaphorical or vocative uses of animal names in Serbian in addressing people, both abusively and affectionately, to express the speakers' attitude towards their addressee. Nadim (2000) examines animal roles in Shirazi proverbs with an approach to sociolinguistics. After analyzing about 100 animal expressions, he concludes that donkey expressions metaphorically are the most frequent ones and have some salient semantic molecules such crazy, worthless, and absurd.

Hsieh (2001) studied the origins, constructions, meanings and applications of the animal metaphors in Chinese and German. This study also included the ways of thinking and the cultural particularities of the respective societies as implied in the metaphors. Hsieh (2003) represented a study which contained 2980 Mandarin Chinese and 2630 German written and spoken animal expressions. Animal expressions in that corpora included: metaphors, similes, proverbs, sayings, frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations and routine formulae. Hsieh analyzed the semantic functions of animal names, the concepts of them, and the applications of the corpora in both languages. Also, Hsieh (2004) represented a paper in which

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the results of a cross - lingual study of Mandarin Chinese corpus and German Corpus of fixed animal expressions were presented. She examined the underlying conceit and also the metaphorical tenors of the expressions in both languages and discussed the proportions of different types of underlying conceits and the salient metaphorical tenors they convey and the positive and negative tenors which show animal expressions are the vocabulary of values.

Hsieh (2007) in the other study explored the origins, lexical changes, and meanings of dragon lexemes in Mandarin Chinese. She found that the dragon plays an important role for the Chinese and it is a mythical creature. After the lexical change was examined, the study focused on the semantic development of long lexemes, and the Chinese values. Hsieh (2008) compared animal and plant metaphors in order to show the semantic autonomy of language and the cognitive level of using these metaphors. She found that metaphors are not scientific, but the essence of metaphors and nature overlap, and animal metaphors are active and plant metaphors are static expressions.

## Conceptual interaction patterns in proverbs

Goosens (1990) distinguishes four patterns of interaction between metaphor and metonymy, which Ruiz de Mendoza (1999b) summarized in two, as a result of the distinction he makes between source-in-target and target-in-source metonymies: "one, in which the output of a metaphoric mapping provides de source for a metonymy, and another, in which a metonymic mapping provides the source for a metaphor" (1999a: 19). From all these patterns, the metonymic expansion of the source of a metaphor provide the relevant material for the construction of a metaphoric mapping which will produce a generic space.

Therefore, these two patterns of interaction are relevant when we deal with proverbs, since they allow for the use of the Specific For Generic metonymy that constitute proverbs. For the head of a dog part, we have a metaphorical understanding of leaders as being the head of a body, in terms of the basic metaphor Control Is Up, so by virtue of this metaphoric understanding, we can map part of an animal that is physically up (the head) onto that of a person, which is physically, and in turn metaphorically up, and still preserve the generic-level structure. Here, the Great Chain metaphor interacts with one basic metaphor: Control Is Up, and with a metonymy of the source-in-target kind, the Specific For Generic one, which involves domain expansion: head stands in a sub-domain relation with person. In this case it stands for the person that has a leading role.

Proverbs often consist of specific-level concepts, which help to interpret proverbs. In the proverb The early bird catches the worm, the bird, catch, and worm are specific-level concepts. The early bird is anyone who does something first, catching is obtaining something, and the worm is anything obtained before others. The interpretation is facilitated by the metaphor generic is specific. The generic meaning of the proverb is that if you do something first, you will get what you want before others. Given this generic-level interpretation, the proverb can apply to a wide range of cases that have this generic structure. This kind of metaphor can give us a generic-level interpretation of specific level proverbs and also allows us to apply the generic interpretation to a specific case that has the appropriate underlying generic structure (Kovecses 2002).

## Culture in Proverbs

Culture is people's everyday experiences. What role does culture play in making proverbs? Human experience consists of a large range of conventional models. Some parts of these models are cultural patterns that both help people to make indirect speeches such as proverbs and to interpret the proverbs. As these experiences make culture and proverbs are made based on

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cultures and the patterns of making culture differ from one country to another, so the processes of making proverbs by cultural notes, as their raw materials, are different. Boers (2003) suggested that in different cultures, metaphor may have different source domains that map onto the same target domain. Many complex conceptual metaphors reflect the various cultural models in that way.

Sometimes, humans are not the best selection for conveying these cultural and religious notes because of ethics. In this regard, Kovecses (2002) states, 'the only way these meanings can have emerged is that humans attributed human characteristics to animals and then reapplied these characteristics to human'. It means that animals were personified first, and then the human-based animal characteristics were used to understand human behavior. That is why in some cases animals have similar images across cultures, but in many other metaphorical expressions of this type they represent culture-specific concepts.

The area of cross-cultural variation in metaphor has raised great interest among metaphor researchers. A number of studies are based on the comparison of different metaphorical concepts and expressions in cultures, as well as in different languages. Such cross-cultural variation, specially of the first type, can be seen in the way people interpret the relationship between things in the world. In fact, Lakoff and Turner (1989) described this relationship in the form of the great chain of being metaphor. They see a hierarchy of concepts as related to the things in the world. In this study in order to investigate the role of cognitive mechanism in English and Persian structures in relations to metaphors within a categorization and classification framework some metaphorical expressions based on animal terms in two are analyzed.

## Method

## Data Collection

All of the English and Persian proverbs of this study, inside of the text or in the end table, are selected from internet. The reasons for using internet for date gathering instead of other sources was for its easy availability in libraries, book shops, and institutions, and also electronic dictionaries compiled the words, expressions, meanings, and definitions, so they are proper sources for semantic analysis.

In this study 1771 Persian animal expressions were analyzed and only few of them showed some aspects of se

From all of the entitled proverbs in the table only some of them compared analytically inside the text and the rest of them are only for more information.

## Procedure

This study through a one by one comparison between some English proverbs and their Persian equivalent proverbs, tries to reflect similarities or differences between the animal images in the two languages. There are many animal proverbs with dogs, fishes, cats, birds, dragons, tigers, wolfs and so on both in English and Persian but only some animal proverbs are selected for this research. The data has been extracted from a number of proverbs both in English and in Persian from internet.

However, what is obvious is that a single concept of meaning has been expressed by specific elements which exist in each region, and it can be said that each region uses its exclusive and familiar concepts and each person uses his schema to inference about a single meaning. Linguistic schema includes the decoding features a person needs in order to understand how

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words are organized and fit together in a sentence. Schemata are the guiding structures in the comprehension process.

When a speaker uses proverbs to convey his intention indirectly participates in a communicative relation and uses cognitive strategies as mental knowledge. On the other hand listener as another member in this communication should interpret this context based on his mental and cognitive knowledge. Furthermore, the difference between speaker and listener, such as the cross-cultural differences in proverbs, will be illustrated to show their different cultural believes that influence their cognitive, logical and mental interpret.

According to the great chain metaphor, all attributes will lead to a specific behavior. This allows for the creation of metaphorical schemas about different animals. Many terms and phrases in the English and Persian languages go back to a time so long ago when horses were of extreme importance. Maybe their similarities in horse proverbs are a little more because of the originate of this animal in the past time. But animals and horse as one of them has a different place in the culture of England people. Consider to the following examples:

## (3) Don't look a gift horse in the mouth

Dandūn-ə asb-ə pī̂skeŝ rā nemīŝmārand
This proverb refers to the practice of horse traders determining the age of a horse by its anterior teeth, or incisors. The incisors erupt and wear down according to a fairly consistent schedule through the life of the horse. As the incisors wear down, the chewing surface changes in appearance, exposing more and more in the anterior teeth. By looking at the lower incisors to see which permanent teeth have erupted and considering their stage of wear, knowledgeable horse traders can estimate the age of the horse.

Since older horses are less useful for heavy work, determining the age helps to evaluate a horse's worth. Hence, looking a gift horse in the mouth is the equivalent of asking someone how much they paid for a gift they have just given you and then complaining that it was not expensive enough. In the past time most of the empires and king sent and got horse as gift to each other. As this proverb shows both languages use horse as the suitable and important animal for conveying inner message. Most of the people who use this proverb are not familiar with this presupposition. Historically, in Persian literature one of the most common animals for a gift were goat, sheep and hardly horse.
(4) Eating like a horse

Mesl-ə gāv xordan
Generally, this proverb originates from the fact that ruminant like horses, cows, sheep and goats spend much of their time consuming large quantities of food. The horse, on the other hand, has just one chamber in its stomach. The horse's digestive system is only about one third the size of that of a cow. This fact means that food passes through a horse much faster than it does through a cow or other ruminant, so the horse requires more food in order to obtain sufficient nutrients. Accordingly, in Persian culture instead of horse cow is the best symbol for gluttony because of its big body that is not fast enough for riding. It could only eat and move slowly but need a lot of food. On the other hand in old Persian horse was symbol of quickness and speed. Persian writers used horse for power and nobility.

## (5) Work like a horse.

Mesl-ə xar kār kardan

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In English culture horses could be used to pull heavy loads. Although horse in ancient England was used for pulling or pushing heavy things and cart, in Persian culture, as referred, from past to present time both writers and common people have used donkey as a symbol for corvée and hard labor. From years ago, Iranian used donkey as a cheap and easy animal for carrying and riding rather than horse. They also used donkey for corvée people.

In general, culturally horse as a famous animal in English proverbs is more usual than Persian proverbs. So, hors in most of the translated English proverbs to Persian replaces with another ruminates or even grazer especially donkey. No matter in the East or the West, the dog is familiar to everyone. Dogs, according to this, are portrayed as dependable, dependent and loyal. The proverbs about dogs reflect the cultural difference between English and Persian customs.

English speaking people more like raising dogs than Persian people and their aims and attitudes towards dogs are quite different. In the western culture, the dog is treated as their favorite pet, and it is referred to as man's best friend. It is not uncommon for an Englishman to kiss his dog, and to take it to see a doctor when it is ill. For them, dog is loyal and dependable, so they love it and praise it. Although dog is an animal, it is usually used to prefer to human beings in their culture.

Contrarily, Persian people don't like dog as a pet and most of them know it as a filthy animal. In fact they dislike dogs. In Persian literature dog is used to describe the bad guys, those who are cruel and unscrupulous. People keep them as watchdogs to protect their life and property against thieves. Therefore in most of the translated proverbs from English to Persian, according to different cultural situation, different animals are used instead of dog:
(6) A dog is like a dog
xar hamîŝo xar ast
In this English proverb, dog is used for clearing the stable essence of everybody but its Persian equivalent proverb uses donkey as an unchangeable character. This proverb in Persian language conveys a negative sense. Maybe it is because of the dullness of donkey in Persian writer's mind, as an un-intelligent animal that its training is difficult. According to old English stories about dogs' fidelity, it is clear that English writers never forget the loyalty of Muck that saved his owner from fire. The stable fiddle essence.
(7) Dog's fur will never change

Xālhay-ə palang hīchvaqt avaz nemîŝavand
In this English proverb, as the previous one the stable essence and nature of person is symbolized in dog. On the other hands, in the Persian equivalent has a positive sense. Tiger as one of the powerful and famous animals in Persian ancient culture (tiger of Sistan) shows power and nobility.
(8) A dog's son is also a dog

Gorg-zādə āqebat gorg mīŝavad
The contrast of dog-child and dog in English with wolf-child and wolf in Persian shows the different usage of animals according to different cultures but similar speaker's intention, goodessence or bad-essence is congenital. English proverb with both negative and positive meaning communicates, but its Persian equivalent wants to conveys wickedness and greed. In Persian
literature wolf is as the most wicked animal. Even today based on its wickedness has been produced some wolfish people that shows badness and evilness in the frame of wolf.
(9) Act like an ape *

Məslə tu:ti: taqli:d kardan
Likewise, in English when a human is said to act like an ape the expression conveys the idea that this person acts foolishly, and even wildly. This saying assumes that apes are foolish and wild. In Persian ape does not use as foolish or wild symbols conversely it conveys intelligence. In fact this animal in Persian proverbs is the best symbol for ugliness and hardly uses for imitation. On the other hands parrot (tu:ti:) is the most famous symbol for imitation and foolish doing.

## (10) Beating a dead horse

?az gāvə nar ŝi:r xāstan
In English when someone is doing something pointless over and over, without arriving to any conclusion or profit, disapproval may be expressed by means of this proverb. What can be inferred from this proverb is that the usual procedure would be beating a horse while he is alive to make him yield to our desires, but certainly not a dead one. While according to the traditional culture of farmers in Persian language milk was an important food and it was pointless to milk a cow without arriving to any conclusion or profit.

## Results and discussion

Animal metaphors in English and Persian were compared in order to determine whether the selected animal images were identically, similarly, or differently used in metaphorical expressions. Despite the cultural differences, all proverbs show a common metaphorical schema. Proverbs usually concerning the relationships between people and animals in metaphorical meaning (Lakoff and Turner 1989). Generally, we can understand people in terms of lower-order forms of being or even in terms of their attributes and behavior. The domain of animal life is the most elaborate ones, to understand the human domain.

It is clear that animal words are not only the sigh of real animal but also gifted with special cultural connotations of different cultures. According to great chain metaphor theory that is a cultural model what is universal about proverbs is the cognitive-schematic mechanisms speakers use in order to produce, understand and transmit them. Schemata are the guiding structures in the comprehension process. That is, speakers decoding features in order to understand how words are organized and fit together in a sentence. Different groups of people may develop similar or partly similar or very different group-level cognition. Listeners as participants in a communicational context use cognitive strategies as mental knowledge and linguistic features in order to inference and comprehend proverbs.

Generally speaking, the major differences in proverbs lie in culture that contains religions, customs and history that they share the underlying deep meaning in most cases and all of them are invariably composed through the same mental mechanisms. Cultural background knowledge affects proverb comprehension.

Region and environment for having different elements may have different influences on idioms and proverbs of the area in which they are applied. It means that each area uses the familiar concepts to convey a meaning in the form of idiomatic expressions; therefore concepts which are used in idioms and proverbs to express a meaning may vary from one region to another. In this

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regard, in both English and Persian cultures animals that are used for men and women according to some background or social features are different. According to Kövecses (2002), this deep meaning is based on both knowledge and image. In different cultures and civilizations, the same kind of animal might be given different cultural connotations, which will lead to the vacancy of cultural connotation in the other language, and lead to obstacles for cross-exchanges, (Canalleda 2000).

Emotion understanding is one of the other important constituents of social understanding. It deals with comprehension of the nature, causes, consequences and possibilities of control and regulation of emotions. Persian and English word selection in animal proverbs is under the domain of this factor too.

In general, the proverbs are nearness in meaning because human beings universally have similar capabilities of thought, similar laws of cognition, and some animals have the same important role in people's lives in these two cultures. On the other hand, because of different course of history between these two social groups, they are discrepant in religion, customs and history. These discrepancies make animal proverbs different in their cultural connotations in these two languages. Because of these discrepancies, considering the differences and similarities of the cultural beliefs carried by the animal proverbs should be related.

According to the present study in English proverbs the representation of people with animals is more frequent, and in Persian the personification of abstract elements such as feelings and the appearance of man as representative of human kind. However, both cultures have equivalent versions with people's animals metaphor. This study emphasizes that animals have their own features and cultural connotations in their own languages, some of them are the same in English and Persian, but most of them are different.

All the differences presented in the study especially show different cultural scripts, but they share the underlying deep mental and schematic meaning in most cases and all of them are invariably composed through the same mental mechanisms. As a result, animals have their own features and cultural connotations in their own languages. Some of their cultural connotations are the same in English and Persian, but most of them are different, and some even exist only in their own language.

## Conclusion

Therefore, if people want to have a good grasp of animal proverbs, they must understand the connotations of these words especially the cultural connotations. Only deeply acquaint with the cultural convention and living customs can they understand the cultural differences in animal proverbs between these two languages. Finally this study concluded that according to the similarity between human mind's process of language learning and similarity between meanings in the world, figurative and schematic process of using animals in proverbs follows a different and interesting way.

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Note1: Persian is an Iranian language within the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European languages. It is primarily spoken in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and countries which historically came under Persian influence.

## Appendix: A list of some famous English animal Proverbs and their Persian equivalents

| English proverbs | Persian equivalent proverbs | Literal English Translation of <br> Proverbs |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| To do the donkey work | Məslə xar kār kardan | To do the horse work |
| My ass never had hair <br> from the time it was a foal | Xarə man ?az korəgi: dom nadāŝt | My ass never had tail from the <br> time it was a foal <br> Here is a pretty kettle of <br> fish Xar bi:yār va bāqāā bāā kon |
| Bring an ass and loud grouse <br> Don't count your chicken <br> until they hatch Ju:jə rāāxarə pāi:z mi:ŝmārand | Count your chicken in the end <br> of fall |  |


| Barking dogs seldom bite | Gorbə kə ji:q mi:konə gāz nəmi:gi:rə | Screaming cat never bite |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Every dog is a lion at home | Gorbə tu:yə xu:nə ŝi:rə | Every cat is a lion at home |
| A black sheep | Gāvə pi:ŝu:ni: səfi:d | A black cow |
| The cock of the walk | Məslə tāvu:sə maqru:r | The peahen of the walk |
| Curiosity killed the cat | Zabānə sorx sarə sabz bə bād mi:də | Red tongue hit Green head |
| Have a dog's life | Məslə sag zəndəgi: kardan | Have a dog's life |
| Drink like a fish | Mast va xomār | Drunkard man |
| He makes a pig of himself | Meslı sag qazā xordan | He makes a dog of himself |
| He separates sheep from the goats | Xoru:s rā az morq jodā kardan | He separates cocks from the hens |
| Cats have nine lives | Sag haft ju:n dārə | Dogs have seven lives |
| The wolf in sheep's clothing | Gorg dar ləbāsə mi:ŝ | The wolf in ewe's clothing |
| He looks like a drowned cat |  | He looks like a drowned mause |

# THE IMPACT OF TYPE OF TEXT AND INTONATIONAL CLUES ON IRANIAN STUDENTS SCHEMATIC KNOWLEDGE 

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#### Abstract

: NATURALLY, LANGUAGE CARRIES KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION. LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION IS AN INTERACTIVE PROCESS CONSISTING OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE, REAL INFERENCING, COGNITIVE TASKS AND CONCEPTUAL ABILITIES. SUCCESSFUL COMPREHENSION, HOWEVER, IS ACTUALLY THE RESULT OF A COMPLEX COGNITIVE PROCESSES.ACCORDING TO THE PREVIOUS RESEARCH WHEN LISTENERS ARE EXPOSED TO UTTERANCES, THEY CAN ESTABLISH SCHEMAS GENERALIZING OVER THE SOUNDS THEY HEAR OR PRONOUNCE. LISTENERS IN A COMMUNICATIONAL CONTEXT USE DIFFERENT COGNITIVE STRATEGIES AS MENTAL KNOWLEDGE AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF TEXT FOR INFERENCING AND COMPREHENDING. THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT FICTION AND NON-FICTION PASSAGES ON PARTICIPANTS' SCHEMATIC KNOWLEDGE. IN THIS STUDY FOR 60 MALE AND FEMALE TEENAGERS (13-19) AND 60 MALE AND FEMALE YOUNG ADULTS (20-26) TWO FICTION AND NON-FICTION PASSAGES WERE READ. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT PARTICIPANT IN THESE TWO AGE GROUPS USE DIFFERENT SCHEMATIC KNOWLEDGE FOR MAKING INFERENCING AND THIS ALSO DIFFERED FROM FICTION TO NONFICTION TEXT.

KEY WORDS: COMPREHENSION, INFERENCING, SCHEMATIC KNOWLEDGE, FICTION, NON-FICTION.


## 1. Introduction

Generally, inferring is a strategic process in which one generates assumptions, makes predictions, and comes to conclusions based on the given information (Richards \& Anderson, 2005). According to Keene and Zimmerman (1997), inferring is going beyond the literal text, making it personal and three-dimensional, and weaving it into our own stories. Listeners actively process information based on their schematic knowledge and get into inferencing and comprehension according to personal experiences from the real world and comprehension is the process of
constructing the interpretation of what text is about(Anderson \& Lynch, 2003). Language comprehension is an interactive process consisting of background knowledge, real inferencing, cognitive tasks and conceptual abilities. Successful comprehension, however, is actually the result of a complex cognitive processes. In order to communication take place and to be meaningful, prior knowledge or schema needed to be activated within these structures by means of an introductory instructional strategy.
It has been found out that listeners relied mostly on contextual clues when they tried to guess meanings from context. Huckin and Bloch (2002) measured the influence of contextual clues and schematic knowledge on listeners' ability to guess and comprehend the meaning from context. According to Adams (2003), presupposed knowledge and mental reference influence the listener's inferencing of the intended meaning.
This study tries to investigate how male and female teenagers and young adults have different inferencing from fiction and non-fiction passages because of their different schematic knowledge processing.

## 2. Schematic Knowledge

The schema is the mental map or set of mental connections in mind about a particular idea of thing (Myhill, Jones \& Hopper, 2006). The schema contains general knowledge about that domain, including a specification of the relationships among its attributes and the schema provides hypothesis about incoming stimuli, which include plans for interpreting and gathering schema-related information.
Studies investigated that schematic knowledge facilitates listening comprehension and helps listeners deal with barriers in listening learning. In the other study McDonald (1999) showed that schema theory details how listeners store and use knowledge about a domain. The theory predicts what information people will select for memory storage, that information will be abstract, and that the information will be interpreted in light of existing and previous knowledge. The richness of a schema affects listening positively for messages that add new information to an existing schema and schemas are particularly helpful for listening during conversation and when a message is complex since they aid in reducing processing load.

## 3. Fiction and Non-fiction

Fiction and non-fiction passages were used to investigate if patterns existed between imaginary information and facts. Kamil and Lane (1997) found that the use of narrative text is viewed as the most logical way to early reading achievement. In fiction, a reader or listener has to identify the characters and follow the events of the story.
In general, stories can offer a valuable way of contextualizing and introducing new language, making it meaningful and memorable (Wasik \& Bond, 2001; Whitehurst \& Lonigan, 1998; Wright, 2000). Fiction texts are associated with feelings and memories, as they are a distinctive manifestation of cultural values and perceptions (Duck, 2005).
According to Duck (2005) narrative genres are the primary way by which young students can comprehend and communicate in the world around them. Besides, they presented linguistic forms, grammar, phrases, vocabulary, and formulaic speech within a meaningful and structured context that supports comprehension of the narrative world (Glazer \& Burke, 1994; Jennings, 1991; Koisawalia, 2005; Mallan, 1991).
However, nonfiction has a different framework. Nonfictional text represents comprises the bulk of passages that students must listen and respond to in standardized tests (Hoyt, Mooney, \& Parks, 2003). In non-fiction, a reader needs to comprehend the topic, learn new facts related to it, and be able to find and remember important information (Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons, \& Fountas, 2005).

Boynton and Blevins (2003) emphasized the fact that reading and understanding nonfiction text demands abstract thinking. Students must access, comprehend, and integrate new concepts and ideas. Therefore, it is crucial that students be able to recognize the structure of nonfiction text.

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Duke (2005) indicated that there were many benefits to teaching nonfiction in the classroom and early literacy instruction should include nonfiction materials. Nonfiction is literature that is not fictional (Mish, 2005).
In the recent studies, fiction versus non-fiction passages did have an impact on clue selection, logical thinking skills, and inferencing abilities of the participants. The results of this study indicate that participants' clue selection, logical thinking abilities, and overall inferential thinking abilities in female were more developed in fiction passages than nonfiction passages. So inferential thinking abilities are affected by the use of fiction versus non-fiction passages.

## 4. Imagery Process of Fiction and Non-fiction Passages

Imaging is a sensory link that connects listeners to incoming language and from prior knowledge, accesses background experiences, establishes vocabulary, and creates and stores information in both long term and short term memory. The mental imagery that listeners experience while listening, either spontaneously or induced by instruction, has powerful effects on comprehension, memory, and appreciation for contextual inferencing.
Comprehension often happens at higher levels such as meaning integration (Yang, \& Schmalhofer, 2008). Brain imaging studies of language comprehension have demonstrated that there is a comparable network of areas of the brain activated in higher-order cognitive processes of listening comprehension at the word, sentence, and discourse level (Jobard, Vigneau, Mazoyer, \& Tzourio-Mazoyer, 2007).
Mental imaging studies of complexity effects on brain activation have also shown comparable modulation of brain activity by task complexity in both listening and reading comprehension tasks (Carpentier, 2001; Constable, 2004; Just \& Carpenter, 1987; Keller, Carpenter, \& Just, 2001).
According to Prat, Keller and Just (2007), individual differences in listening comprehension are associated with brain resources, imaginary activities and schematic inferencing during task performance (Constable, 2004; Jobard, 2007; Michael, 2001).

## 5. Intonational Changes

Understanding spoken language can be described as an inferential process based on the perception of several cues rather than a simple match between sounds and meaning. Prosody and intonation are two important aspects of all languages of the world. In general prosody refers to the grouping and relative prominence of the elements making up the speech signal. Intonation on the other hand refers to phrase-level characteristics of the melody of the voice.
Speech through a sequence of legal sound units in a language has some characteristics that conveys messages. The characteristics that make listener perceive these effects are collectively referred to as prosody. Prosodic cues such as pitch gestures, accent and stress characteristics reflect the physiological as well as habitual aspect of a speaker (Heck, 2002).
When listener listens to people's utterance, some sounds or group of sounds in speech can relatively be heard higher or lower than others. This relative height of speech sounds as perceived by a listener is called pitch.
When speaking, people generally raise and lower the pitch of their voices and form pitch patterns as intonnational cues of utterance. Each cue is a complex perceptual entity, expressed primarily using three acoustic parameters: pitch, energy and duration. Prosodic characteristics in speech conveys some important information regarding the identity of the spoken language.
Pitch is a perceptual attribute of sound. The physical correlate of pitch is the F0 of vibration in vocal folds. This property is used in speaker's verification, by comparing F0 contours. There are two allophones for this pitch accent: Low-Higher $\left(\mathrm{L}+\mathrm{H}^{*}\right)$ and High $\left(\mathrm{H}^{*}\right)$, the former is used for words and phrases with final stress, e.g., nouns and adjectives longer than one syllable, and also for vocatives. (Adams, 2003).

## 6. Method

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Listeners as participants in a communicational context use cognitive strategies, mental knowledge and the information that can be found in the text or operations as steps in order to inference and comprehend. Naturally, cognitive, social and psychological factors influence mental understanding and inferencing in order to comprehend (Adams, 2002).
Naturally, speakers mark the pragmatic force of the information in an utterance. As a result, intonational events can often provide information to the listener about the prosodic structure of text, in addition to carrying a pragmatic message. In spoken interaction a tone of voice, a feeling about the way speaker spoke, the atmosphere of a conversation often give significant cues to different age groups of listeners for inferencing different types of passages (Wagner,2006).
According to Keene and Zimmerman (1997), inferencing is going beyond the literal meaning of text for weaving inferencing into mind as a meaningful communication. According to the result of this study this mental inferences differ from male to female and in different age group.

### 6.1. Participants

In this study, the participants included 60 male and female teenagers and 60 male and female young adults. The age range for the teenagers and young adults were 13-19 and 20-26 respectively. The samples were randomly chosen after Oxford Placement Test (OPT) from 100 male and female teenagers and 100 male and female young adults studying English as their second language.

### 6.2. Materials and Procedures

The materials for testing participants' inferencing of passages and evaluating their listening comprehension ability of making schematic references consisted of two fiction and two nonfiction passages that were read aloud to participants. Passages were created according to Leslie Holzhauser-Peters, M.S., CCC-SLP from Lexile Site ${ }^{4}$. Two fiction and two non-fiction passages were created for each group. The passages were no more than 150 words.
After participants, according to OPT, were randomly chosen, during the study two fiction and non-fiction passages were read aloud without considering intonational changes to control group (CG). Then, the same passages were read with applying intonational changes to experimental group (EX). By the way, passages for every age group were chosen differently. Responses were recorded verbatim.

According to Lexile's score, participants were given scores from zero to four based on their logical inferencing, clue selection and mental interpretation as follow: After it the data are compared and investigated according to SPSS software SPSS is a comprehensive and flexible statistical analysis and data management solution. SPSS can take data from almost any type of file and use them to generate tabulated reports, charts, and plots of distributions and trends, descriptive statistics, and conduct complex statistical analyses and make mathematical and statistical relationship between parts of research.

Table1
Explanation of participants' Inference/logical Thinking of the passages

| Lexile's Score | Participant's Inferencing and clue selection |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\mathbf{4}$ | The correct and true logical inference or mental thinking most of the time |
| $\mathbf{3}$ | The correct and true logical inference or mental thinking some of the time |
| $\mathbf{2}$ | The correct and true logical inference or mental thinking not some of the <br> time |

[^3]| $\mathbf{1}$ | The correct and true logical inference or mental thinking not most of the <br> time |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\mathbf{0}$ | Participants did Not attempt to guess or explain |

## 7. Results and Discussion

Participants of different age groups in CG and EX were given scores based on their inference and logical thinking skills and their ability to determine what clues are most important in the inferencing and comprehension of the fiction and non-fiction texts.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistic of Male Teenagers from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts Without Considering Intonational changes

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Fiction | 30 | . 00 | 4.00 | 2.7000 | 1.02217 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | . 00 | 4.00 | 3.3561 | . 69763 |
| Valid (listwise) | N 30 |  |  |  |  |

Table 3
Descriptive Statistic of Female Teenagers from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts Without Considering Intonational changes

|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 3.4506 | .58124 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 2.3100 | 1.0019 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |  |  |  |  |

Table 4
Descriptive Statistic of Male Young Adults from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts Without Considering Intonational changes

|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 2.9800 | .9605 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 3.5933 | .5200 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |  |  |  |  |

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Table 5
Descriptive Statistic of Female Young Adults from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts Without Considering Intonational changes

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 4.3265 | .3605 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 2.9123 | .5200 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |  |  |  |  |

Table 6
Descriptive Statistic of Male Teenagers from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts With Considering Intonational changes

|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 2.9954 | .86944 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 4.2014 | .49763 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |  |  |  |  |

Table 7
Descriptive Statistic of Female Teenagers from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts With Considering Intonational changes

|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 4.8798 | .41124 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 2.8800 | .97510 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |  |  |  |  |

Table 8
Descriptive Statistic of Male Young Adults from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts With Considering Intonational changes

N Minimum Maximum Mean $\quad$| Std. |
| :--- |
| Deviation |

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 3.0986 | .7605 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 5.0123 | .3980 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |  |  |  |  |

Table 9
Descriptive Statistic of Female Young Adults from Fiction and Non-fiction Texts With Considering Intonational changes

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 5.4562 | .3405 |
| Non-Fiction | 30 | .00 | 4.00 | 3.0010 | .4900 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |  |  |  |  |

Tables display that the greatest mean score $(M=5.4562)$ belonged to the female young adults' comprehension of fiction passages in the experimental group and the lowest mean score (2.3100) belonged to the female teenagers comprehension of non-fiction in the control group. In general, as tables statistically describe, intonational changes (Falling and Rising) and type of passages (Fiction and Non-fiction) impact male and female teenagers and young adults' schematic knowledge and mental references based on their previous background knowledge and personal experiences.

Table10
The Significant Result of Participants' Inferencing and Comprehension

| Source | Type III Sum |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |  |
| Intercept | 2220.417 | 1 | 2220.417 | 4005.728 | .000 |
| Gender | .017 | 1 | 4.017 | 7.030 | .003 |
| Age | 4.267 | 1 | 4.267 | 7.697 | .006 |
| Intonation | 15.000 | 1 | 15.000 | 27.061 | .000 |
| Type of Text | 15.425 | 1 | 15.425 | 28.000 | .000 |
| Error | 64.300 | 116 | .554 |  |  |

In this study 0.05 is significant index. It means that according to SPSS statistical result of this study .05 is meaningful source for measuring the other scores. As Table 10 shows the level of significant of gender, age, intonation and type of passage in this study are less than 0.05 (.003<.05, $.006<.05, .000<.05$ ). It means that there is meaningful relationship between type of passages and genders' inferencing based on their schematic knowledge. In the other word fiction or non-fiction passages have different impact on their listeners' inferencing. As the result show gender as another factor or variable has impact on the listener According to the results females' inferencing of the fiction passages are more logical and based on the real world experience while males' inferencing of the non-fiction passages are more based on their logical thinking and true experiences of the real world. Also according to the result of the study intonational changes in the speaker's utterance impact listeners inferencing of the different passages, too. That is, when

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reader or teacher in the study changes intonation male and female listeners have different inferences and when the result are compared between Ex and CG the study can accept this factor as another important variable that impacts inferencing. The result of this study can be applied for second language teachers in the classroom and between two genders in order to increase learning quality and quantity. Off course this topic is not investigated in this research, but can be worked in the next researches.

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# ROLE OF THINKING-ALOUD PROTOCOL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS; A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY INVESTIGATES THE EFFECT OF THINKING ALOUD READING STRATEGIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF IRANIAN ADVANCED EFL STUDENTS. TWO ADVANCED CLASSES OF EFL STUDENTS AT SHOKOUH ENGLISH INSTITUTE IN MASHHAD WERE SELECTED. THEN THE TREATMENT STARTED FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP THROUGH WHICH, THEY PRACTICED CUED-THINK ALOUD PROCEDURES IN RELATION WITH FOUR MAJOR READING STRATEGIES SELECTED FOR THE STUDY. THE FINDINGS OBTAINED FROM THE STATISTICAL RESULTS OF PRE AND POST TESTS OF READING COMPREHENSION AND READING STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE, POINTED TO STATISTICALLY MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GROUPS. IT WAS FOUND THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, WHO WERE EXPOSED TO PARTICULAR READING STRATEGIES THROUGH THINKING ALOUD PROCEDURES, DEVELOPED GREATER EFFECTIVENESS IN READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS. BESIDES, TWO OTHER QUESTIONNAIRES WERE DEVELOPED TO SEE WHETHER TEACHERS AND THE STUDENTS WERE INTERESTED IN USING THINK - ALOUD PROCEDURES OR NOT. THE RESULTS, OBTAINED THROUGH SPSS AND MODELING APPROACH CALCULATED THROUGH LISREL 8.8, SHOWED THAT TEACHERS CONSIDERED THINK-ALOUD AS AN ACTIVITY WHICH CAN MOVE THE CLASS TOWARDS LEARNER-CENTEREDNESS, AND CAN INVOLVE THE STUDENTS IN LEARNING PROCESS. ON THE OTHER HAND, STUDENTS UNPREDICTABLY CONSIDERED THE THINK-ALOUD PROTOCOL TO BE DISTRACTING AND JOKEY, WHICH LED THE CLASS TO MORE TURMOIL.


KEYWORDS: THINK - ALOUD PROTOCOL, READING COMPREHENSION, ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS, TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE.

## 1. Introduction

Research in second language reading has, for the most part, concentrated on investigating the general reading strategies of readers and whether strategy training can enhance overall reading comprehension. There is general agreement that strategy training in general reading strategies does improve comprehension of second language readers. Research on reading development has shown that good readers use strategies that are not used by poor readers. Research also suggests that students learning to read can and need to be taught how to use specific strategies for understanding a text (Lavadenz, 2003).
The teaching technique employed in this research is a think-aloud, in which a reader makes his reading process manifest to others by verbalizing all that he is noticing thinking ,feeling, and doing as he reads a text. This research tried to investigate whether thinking aloud reading strategies had any effect on the reading comprehension skills of Iranian EFL students or not. To investigate such a role, the following null hypothesis was formulated:
Thinking aloud reading strategies do not have any effect on the development of reading comprehension skills of Iranian advanced EFL students.

## 2. Review of Literature

Research in second language reading has, for the most part, concentrated on investigating the general reading strategies of readers and whether strategy training can enhance overall reading comprehension. There is general agreement that strategy training in general reading strategies does improve comprehension of second language readers. Reading for comprehension is the primary purpose for reading, raising students awareness of main ideas in a text and exploring the organization of a text are essential for good comprehension (William Grabe, cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002).
The think-aloud method of making thinking either audible or visible has a long history in research on composing and is widely applied to determine usability of texts as well as to uncover the processes by which readers construct meaning.(Strachan,2002).The think-aloud method has its roots in psychological research it was developed from older introspection method (Someren,et al.,1994). Currently the think-aloud method is accepted as a useful method by a large part of the scientific community in psychology and it also has its place in the repertoire of many knowledge engineers.
The idea of thinking aloud reading strategies presented in this research has evolved from ideas formulated by Lev Vygotsky.learning is the crucial element ,and we recognize that teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin, two parts in the same dance. According to Lev Vygotsky, as quoted in Willhelm (2001, p.9) "We must learn ways of reading and thinking in order to participate fully in our culture and to make meaning within it; these ways have to be passed from experts to novices in the context of meaningful, collaborative activity."(Willhelm, 2001, p.9)
How can individuals profit from social interaction? In the Vygotskian perspective, it is "under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" $(\mathrm{Yu}, 2004$, Wilhelm, 2001) that learners move from one lower level to a higher level. This guidance or collaboration is "scaffolding" in Vygotskian social integrationist constructivism.
In L2 learning, an interesting type of scaffolding or tool is the comprehensible input provided by language teachers. Comprehensible input is at least to some degree comprehensible to the specific learner but at the same time a bit above the learner's current level of development or proficiency. In a 2001 article, Julie Coiro talks about think-aloud as a strategy that good readers (or listeners) use as they interact with text. According to Coiro (2001), think aloud is a technique in which students verbalize their thoughts as they read and thus bring into open the strategies they are using to understand a text The think-aloud can be used as both an instructional tool and as an assessment tool with students at almost any grade level.

### 2.1. Effective Comprehension Strategy Instruction

Research shows that explicit teaching techniques are particularly effective for comprehension strategy instruction. Adler (2004) claim," In explicit instruction, teachers tell readers why and when they should use strategies, what strategies to use, and how to apply them." Effective comprehension strategy instruction can be accomplished through cooperative learning, which involves students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. One goal of teaching reading is to help students develop as strategic readers. Reading strategies can be defined as" plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning"(Duffy, 1993, p.232, cited in Renandya, 2002.p.287) Reading strategies, according to Joy Janson (quoted in Renandya, 2002) range from bottom-up vocabulary strategies, such as looking up an unknown word in the dictionary, to more comprehensive actions, such as connecting what is being read to the reader's background knowledge.

### 2.2. Metacognitive awareness and reading strategies

Research in the area of reading has begun to focus on the metacognition. While previous research has focused on strategy use, researchers are examining reader's awareness of strategies during the reading process- their metacognitive awareness.
Metacognitive knowledge or awareness is knowledge about ourselves, the tasks we face, and the strategies we employ (Singhal, 2001).Knowledge about ourselves, Singhal maintains, is knowledge about how well we perform on certain types of tasks or our proficiency level. Knowledge about tasks may include knowledge about task difficulty level.

### 2.3. Improving comprehension with think-aloud strategies

Thinking-aloud in reading comprehension is considered a method of inquiry, a mode of instruction, and a means of encouraging social interaction. In a 1997 article, Isabel L. Beck pointed out that:" as a method of inquiry, the analysis of verbal reports provided by readers thinking aloud revealed the flexible and goal- directed processing of expert readers. The use of thinkaloud to improve reading comprehension, is based on the following notions about poor readers: -draw on background knowledge as they read
-make predictions as they read
-visualize the events of a text as they read
-recognize confusion as they read
-recognize a text's structure / organization as they read
-identify/recognize a purpose for reading
-monitor their strategy use according to the purpose for reading the text
In other words, poor readers do not necessarily think while they are reading.
Teaching strategies are important only insofar as they assist reader to comprehend and respond to text. In other words, think-aloud are useful teaching strategies when they help a reader through her zone of proximal development, assisting her to develop a particular strategy or set of strategies that she cannot yet use independently, and when these strategies help her to engage with a text important to her current purposes.

### 2.4. Free-response Think-aloud

A free-response think-aloud is indeed free- it's freewheeling monologue wherein a reader reports on everything she or he can about what they are thinking, doing, seeing, feeling, asking, and noticing as they read. Instead of focusing on general-process strategies of reading, now they are interested in hearing every move a reader makes.

### 2.5. Cued Think-Aloud

With cued-think-aloud, teachers guide students to notice certain things about a text and an author's craft. When teachers want to develop students' ability to notice particular features of the text and then apply particular strategies to interpret them. A cued think-aloud draws students' attention to the authors' important codings, to all the inner thoughts, details, and seemingly unimportant asides that, if missed, can thwart comprehension and dampen one's engagement

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with a book. Through the think-aloud, the student is required to slow his speed and respond to all these textual cues. (Wilhelm, 2001, p.82) To help students notice these codes, instructors initially provide assistance by underlining such features and asking students to be sure to respond to all or some of these as they read, both individually and working in groups. To highlight rules of notice and how a reader is expected to interpret them, teachers can think-aloud in front of students.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Participants

In order to carry out this research, two advanced classes at Shokouh English Institute with about 46 students participated in this study. There were 23 students in each class. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 28 . They were all females. The subjects all came from the same language background, Farsi.
All of the students had already completed elementary and intermediate Levels at Shokouh English Institute, and their years of English study ranged from three to four. For the researcher to make sure whether the participants were at the right or wrong place according to the level of their proficiency, TOEFL Reading Proficiency Test, (2005 version) was administered to both Groups. After analyzing the data, the researcher compared the mean scores of the groups to a TTest. . Making sure the groups were homogenized, the researcher randomly called one class experimental and the other control group. This is in line with the design of this research which is quasi-experimental with intact sampling.

### 3.2. Procedure

The main study was undertaken with 46 students in two classes of experiment and control The Groups, experiment and control, started with a test of reading comprehension as a pre-test. The test was chosen from Interchange, Third Edition, Passages Placement and Evaluation Package (2005). It included 40 reading comprehension test items within two sections A and B. In order to determine the reliability and validity of this test, it was validated according to a known, world-wide, standard test of English language proficiency. In a pilot study, a few days before the main study began, these two tests, TOEFL and Interchange, Objective placement tests were both given to 20 students who were similar in terms of language ability to the ones in the main study.
After collecting the scores, the common coefficient of correlation which is known as Pearson product correlation coefficient, was used to estimate the strength of the relationship between two tests. According to this, the mean scores of the two tests did not differ significantly, so that the correlation between the two tests was near positive. After collecting the obtained data, students were given pre-test Reading Strategy Questionnaire. The statements on the questionnaire were designed in a way that they represented the existence of the four reading strategies highlighted in this study. The four reading strategies emphasized in this study were:

## - Activating background knowledge and experience

- Making predictions
- Visualizing
- Monitoring understanding and self-correct

Students were asked to rate the statements on a 4-point scale from (1) "I don't know this strategy" to (4) "Always I use this strategy". One of the purposes of this questionnaire was to collect information on Students' frequency of strategy use prior to treatment. In terms of validity and reliability of such an instrument, this questionnaire was expert evaluated and peer reviewed by the advisor of this research. As a result of this, some items on the questionnaire were discarded, some were revised and some new items were added. Then, to form a pilot study, it was given to 20 advanced students with the same characteristics as the target sample. After that, the reliability and internal consistency of the items were estimated through Cronbach's Coefficient of Correlation.

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The next step was to administer the questionnaire to participants in both experimental and control groups so that students could indicate the extent to which they used a particular reading strategy. It also measured the frequency of students' self-reported strategy uses in the beginning (pre-questionnaire) and at the end of the treatment (post- questionnaire).
In this research twelve reading passages from spectrum, 6 were selected. The participants in control group followed the usual teaching employed by most teachers of reading comprehension lessons. But the experimental group received special treatments based on think-aloud procedures and reading strategies.
The instructions planned for the experimental group followed closely the aims, activities and steps carried out and suggested by the following researchers, whose work utilized think-aloud (as a research tool) and also the use of think-aloud as an instructional tool (; Davey, B. 1983; J. Mark Rankin, 1988; Wilhelm,2001; Mina Singhal, 2001; Joy Janzen( cited in Renandya, 2002) C.R. Adler, 2004; Roger Farr 2004; Goh Hock Seng, 2007; Hui- Fang Shang, 2007).
At the end of the treatment, the 16th session, Interchange Objective Placement Test and Reading Strategy Questionnaire were re-administered to both groups so that information on post-test scores and strategy useobtained. SPSS (version, 15) was utilized to analyze the obtained data.

## 4. Results and Discussions

For this study, the researcher has utililized SPSS, ver.15, EXCEL, 2003 and STATISTICA programs. Now before referring to the data procedure and analysis, it is better to restate the research question: "Do thinking aloud reading strategies have any effect on reading comprehension skills of Iranian advanced EFL students?"

### 4.1. Pilot study

Table 1. Reliability Analysis of Reading Comprehension Test

| Variable | Correlation between TOEFL and Reading Comprehension. <br> Marked correlations are significant at $\mathrm{p}<.05000$ <br> Number of the participants in Pilot $=20$ |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Reading Comprehension Score |  |
|  | Correlation coefficient between reading compression and TOEFL <br>  | $\mathrm{P}=.000$ |

At first in order to determine the reliability and validity of the Test of Reading Comprehension, both TOEFL and the test of reading comprehension were given to a group of 20 people in a pilot study, and then the researcher studied the reliability of Reading Comprehension using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. It is a measure of the strength of the relationship between two sets of data. According to this, correlation coefficients between two variables result in a value that ranges from -1.00 to +1.00 .the more the value is closer to +1 , the more reliable the test is. As this table shows, the correlation between TOEFL, and Reading is .8306 which is close to +1 and the $p$ value is .000 which is smaller than Alpha ( 0.05 ), so: P Value $=0.000<0.05$ then the result is; there is a meaningful relationship between TOEFL and the Test of Reading Comprehension.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis of Reading Strategy Questionnaire

| Total Cronbach's Alpha | Number of items |
| :--- | :--- |
| .95 | 55 |

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As pilot study, the Reading Strategy Questionnaire was given to a group of 20 students similar to the main participants in the study to determine the reliability and internal consistency of the items in it. Tables 2 shows the total Cronbach's Alpha which is .959 and also illustrates the reliability of the questionnaire in two forms, total and item deleted through Cronbach's Alpha. In order to estimate the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire, the researcher has utilized the Cronbach's Alpha. Usually the alpha $65 \%$ or more is acceptable reliability .The questionnaire proved to be highly reliable according to the estimated number of total alpha which is .959 ( $95.9 \%$ ). Also for more accurate study, the Cronbach's alpha for each item in Deleted Form is estimated. In other word, alpha is estimated after deleting every item in the questionnaire. The result shows that the estimated coefficients are close to the total alpha which is .959. This means that there is no single question that causes to lower the reliability and all 55 questions are significant, so that they are not deleted or discarded from the questionnaire.

### 4.2. Determining the Homogeneity of the Groups

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of TOEFL

| groups | Number | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard error of <br> measurement |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Experimental | 26 | 63.57 | 15.067 | 2.751 |
| Control | 28 | 62.90 | 15.916 | 2.906 |

In quantitative research, it is advisable when presenting the $t$-test results, to precede them with a descriptive statistics table displaying the mean $X$, standard deviation S.D., and size of sample N , in order to provide a better insight into the data. Table 1 shows the features of TOEFL for both experimental and control groups in order to homogenize them before the treatment started. The initial number of the participants in both groups is 54 . The mean of the scores according to table 1 for experimental group is 63.57 and for control group is 62.90 , and the standard deviation for the Experiment is 15.067 and for the Control is 15.916 .

Table 4. T-Test results for TOEFL between experimental and control groups

|  | Leven's <br> equality <br> variances | for <br> of |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: |
|  | F | significance | t- <br> value | Degree <br> of <br> freedom | Significance <br> (2-tailed) | Mean <br> difference | Std. Error <br> Difference |  |
| equal <br> variances <br> assumed | .024 | .877 | .167 | 58 | .868 | .667 | 4.001 |  |
| not <br> assumed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The results of the T-Test is represented in Table 2- according to this table, the levene's Test is used to show the equality of variances at P - value $=0.877>0.05=$ Alfa, it means the equality of

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variances is accepted .so according to this result P value is .868 for both groups which is larger than .05 level of significance. That means there is no significant difference between the scores both groups received from TOEFL, so the groups are homogenized. ( $\mathrm{P}-$ Value $=0.868>.05$ )

### 4.3. Pre-Test

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for Pre-Test of Reading Comprehension

| Group1(experimental) <br> group 2(control) | T-test for independent samples. Reading Comprehension <br> Note: Variables were treated as independent samples. |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Valid N <br> Group 2 | Std. Dv. <br> Group 1 | Std. Dev. <br> Group 2 | F- ratio <br> Variances | P <br> Variances |
|  | 23 | 3.509445 | 3.499859 | 1.005486 | 0.989879 |

The scores out of pre-test of reading comprehension in experimental group and pre-test of reading comprehension in control groups are illustrated in this table. It shows the equality of variances in two groups and the result is that variances in both groups are equal. According to this table $P$-value is larger than 0.5

Table 6. T-Test for independent samples/ Pre-test of Reading Comprehension

| Group1(experimental) group 2( control) | T-test for independent samples. Reading Comprehension Note: Variables were treated as independent samples |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Mean Group 1 | Mean Group 2 | t-value | DF | P | Valid Group 1 |
| Pre-test of reading <br> comprehension in <br> experimental group vs. pre-  <br> test of reading <br> comprehension in <br> group control  | 57.95652 | 57.60870 | 0.336563 | 44 | 0.738047 | 23 |

As this table (6) shows, the mean of the scores in reading comprehension for experimental group is 57.956 and for control group is 57.608 . And P - value is 0.738047 , which is the mean scores are very close to each other. This means that there is no significant difference between the groups at the beginning of treatment in test of reading comprehension. In another word: P -Value $=0.738047$ $>0.05$
So the groups are homogenized in reading comprehension skill.
In quantitative research, if P -value is larger than 0.05 , the null hypothesis is accepted, but if P value is smaller than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Strategy Questionnaire in Pre-Test

| Strategies | groups | number | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Activate <br> background <br> knowledge | Experimental | 23 | 4.52 | .790 | .165 |
|  | Control | 23 | 4.61 | .783 | .163 |
| Making predictions | Experimental | 23 | 14.04 | 2.033 | .424 |
|  | Control | 23 | 15,96 | 2,915 | .608 |
| Making a mental <br> picture | Experimental | 23 | 4,26 | .915 | .191 |
|  | Control | 23 | 4,74 | .864 | .180 |
| monitor <br> understanding | Experimental | 23 | 9.48 | 2.172 | .453 |
|  | Control | 23 | 11.17 | 1,922 | .401 |

This table shows the number of the participants in the study, mean scores, standard deviation and standard error of measurement of four reading strategies selected for experimental and control groups at the beginning of treatment, as this table shows there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the groups.

Table 8. T-Test results of Reading Strategy Questionnaire in Pre-Test

| strategies | Equal variances | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | T-Test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | F | Sig. | T | Df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean <br> Difference | Std. Error Difference |
| Activate background knowledge | Assumed | . 001 | . 974 | -. 375 | 44 | . 710 | -. 870 | . 232 |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { not } \\ & \text { assumed } \end{aligned}$ |  |  |  | 43.996 | . 710 | -. 87 | . 232 |
| Making predictions | Assumed | 7.815 | . 008 | $2.581$ | 44 | . 97 | -1.913 | . 741 |
|  | Not assumed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 2.581 | 39.309 | . 97 | -1.913 | . 741 |
| Making a mental picture |  | . 191 | . 664 | $1.822$ | 44 | . 570 | -. 478 | . 263 |
|  | Not |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |


|  | assumed |  |  | $1.822$ | 43.856 | . 570 | -. 478 | . 263 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Monitor understanding | Assumed <br> Not assumed | 1.110 | . 298 | $\begin{aligned} & 2.804 \\ & - \\ & 2.804 \end{aligned}$ | 44 $43.363$ | $.125$ $.125$ | $\begin{aligned} & -1.696 \\ & -1.696 \end{aligned}$ | $.605$ $.605$ |

As it is evident in this table, the equality of variances are made clear and T-test results for four reading strategies in pre-test, are reported .According to these results, for every strategy the P Value is more than .05 of significant level, so there is no meaningful difference between the scores each group received from each strategy in pre-test. This means that the subjects in experimental and control groups at the beginning of treatment are homogenized in terms of strategy use.

### 4.4. Post- Test

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Comprehension Test

|  | T-test for independent samples. Reading Comprehension <br> Note: Variables were treated as independent samples |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Valid N <br> Group 2 | Std. Dv. <br> Group 1 | Std. Dev. <br> Group 2 | F- ratio <br> Variances | P <br> Variances |
|  |  | 3.807627 | 3.353955 | 1.288826 | 0.556830 |

The scores out of post-test of reading comprehension in experimental group and post-test of reading comprehension in control groups are illustrated in this table. It shows the equality of variances in two groups and the result is that variances in both groups are equal. According to this table P -value is larger than $0.5, \mathrm{P}$-Value $=0.5568>0.05$

Table 10. T-Test results for Post-Test of Reading Comprehension

| Group1(experimental) group 2( control) | T-test for independent samples. Reading Comprehension Note: Variables were treated as independent samples |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Mean Group 1 | Mean Group 2 | T-value | DF | P | Valid Group 1 |
| Post-test of reading comprehension in experimental group vs. Post-test of reading comprehension in control group | 83.04348 | 68.39130 | 13.84849 | 44 | 0.000000 | 23 |

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This table shows the mean scores of the post-Test of Reading Comprehension in both experimental and control groups. The mean score in experimental is 83.043 and in control group is $68.391, \mathrm{~T}$-value is 13.84849 , And P-Value is 0.000000 which is smaller than 0.05 . This amount shows the positive result. Therefore, we conclude that the means between two groups are not equal and there is a significant difference between them. According to this statistics, we can reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. ( $\mathrm{P}-\mathrm{Value}=0.000000<a 0.05$ So that Reject H0).

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Strategy Questionnaire in Post-Test

| Strategies | groups | number | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Experimental | 23 | 11.39 | .941 | .196 |
|  | Control | 23 | 4.61 | .783 | .163 |
| Making predictions | Experimental | 23 | 37.22 | 2.522 | .526 |
|  | Control | 23 | 15.96 | 2.915 | .608 |
| Making a mental <br> picture | Experimental | 23 | 11.30 | .974 | .203 |
|  | Control | 23 | 4.74 | .864 | .180 |
| monitor <br> understanding | Experimental | 23 | 26.83 | 2.289 | .477 |
|  | Control | 23 | 11.17 | 1.922 | .401 |

In this table all the statistical elements of both experimental and control groups in relation with four reading strategies selected for this research are described and reported. For example, the mean score for the strategy of activate background knowledge in experimental group is 11.39 and in control group is 4.61 , while the standard deviation for this strategy in experiment is .941 and for control is .783 .according to this table, the difference is meaningful, and the mean difference between the two groups in applying the strategies is statistically significant.

Table 12. T-Test Results of Reading Strategy Questionnaire in Post-Test

| Strategies | Equal variances | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | T-Test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | F | Sig. | T | Df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean <br> Difference | Std. Error <br> Difference |
| Activate background knowledge | Assumed <br> not assumed | . 260 | . 612 | $26.577$ <br> 26.577 | $44$ <br> 42.588 | $\begin{aligned} & .000 \\ & .000 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 6.783 \\ & 6.783 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & .255 \\ & .255 \end{aligned}$ |

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As it is clear in this table, the T-test results for four reading strategies are reported .According to these results, for every strategy the significant level is less than . 05 , so there is a meaningful difference between the scores each group received from each strategy in post-test. P-Value $=$ $0.000 \ll a 0.05$ this difference is clear in every strategy that experimental group used. These tables (11 and 12) have made this fact clear that our experimental group used all strategies properly while the control group did not.
With respect to the homogeneity of the participants in both groups at the beginning of treatment in terms of strategy use (table 8), we conclude that, this improvement is the result of the especial treatment.
In order to assess the relationship between teachers and students' perspectives regarding thinkaloud procedures, two questionnaires were developed and employed. To describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between teachers and students' perspectives, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to find the relationship between the two variables. The results of the correlation coefficients between teachers and students' perspectives are reported in Table. 13.

Table 13. Pearson's Correlation Matrix between QMRI \& CKE

|  | Teachers | Students |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Teachers | 1.00 |  |
| Students | $.41^{*}$ | 1.00 |

* Correlation is not significant at .05 level (2-tailed)

As indicated in table 2, the teachers' and students' perspectives didn't have any congruence and the correlation coefficient was not acceptable.

## 5. Modeling Approach

The most significant basis on which SEM is based is the correlation matrix and/or covariance matrix. So, for the purpose of this study, first, the data obtained from the questionnaires of TNI and TPI were analyzed using SPSS software and then the correlation matrix which was obtained from the SPSS was imported to and run through LISREL software.

Figure 1. Relationships between Teachers and StudentsVariables


Chi-Square $=13$, P-Value $=0.16$, RMSEA $=0.035$

Since the Chi - Square equals 13 , the p-value is larger than 0.05 and RMSEA is less than 0.05 , we conclude that the model is fit. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) equals 0.91, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) equals 0.76 and Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) equals 0.35. These findings also confirm that the data fits the model.
The values which are written on each arrow are demonstrated in the Estimated Mood, and they are not interpretable. In all SEM models run in LSREL software, the values of Estimated Mood are not interpretable because there is no principle to which one can compare these values. In order to make the values interpretable, we should change the mood from Estimated Mood to T-Value Mood. Having changed the mood to T-Value mood, we see that all the values written on the arrows of the above model changed and are higher than 1.96 (1.96 is a predetermined principle value to which all the values are to be compared). As it is illustrated in Figure 1, the relationship between teachers and students equals 2.75 and based on the SEM literature, since this figure is larger than 1.96, we come to the conclusion that there is a statistically meaningful relationship between teachers and students.
The findings of modeling approach confirm that teachers and students do not have the same idea concerning Think-aloud procedures. Further investigation of the questionnaires revealed that teachers considered think-aloud as an activity which can move the class towards learnercenteredness, and can involve the students in learning process. However, students surprisingly considered the think-aloud protocol to be distracting and funny, which led the class to more chaos.

## 6. Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

The results revealed that thinking aloud reading strategies had positive effect on the development of reading comprehension skills of Iranian EFL advanced students. Considering the

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findings of this study, it can be concluded that the participants in experimental group who were exposed to particular reading strategies through thinking aloud procedures, developed greater effectiveness in reading comprehension skills._According to this statistics, we can reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance.
Results of statistical analysis pointed to statistically significant difference between the performance in reading comprehension skills of the experimental and control groups. Hence, the instructional procedure under the special treatment, contributed to the improvement of the EFL advanced students' reading comprehension skills in this study. And also the development of strategy use by the end of the treatment was certainly proved to be the result of the instruction. Based on the research and according to the statistical results of this study, improvement in strategy use has positive effect on reading comprehension skills, and for sure to put strategies into practice and make sense of the reading texts, students need think aloud procedures as teaching techniques. Therefore, the null-hypothesis that thinking aloud reading comprehension does not have any effect on the development of reading comprehension skills was rejected.
The evidence from this study suggests that there is no need to delay explicit strategy instruction for EFL students. A significant implication is that teachers of English language learners in today's classrooms need to be able to teach students strategies that will help them read effectively. For this reason, the most effective teaching technique is think-aloud procedures and modeling the way expert readers use reading strategies.
Further investigation of the questionnaires, given to teachers and students, using LISREL 8.8, revealed that teachers considered think-aloud as an activity which can move the class towards learner-centeredness, and can involve the students in learning process. Conversely, students unpredictably considered the think-aloud protocol to be distracting and humorous, which led the class to more turmoil.

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# IMPROVING WRITING PROFICIENCY AND CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY THROUGH PROCESS-BASED WRITING INSTRUCTION: A STUDY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY INTENDS TO EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF PROCESS-BASED APPROACH ON IMPROVING LEARNERS' WRITING AND CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS. TO THIS END, 60 IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL STUDENTS AGED 18-23 WERE SELECTED FROM AMONG 120 ACCESSIBLE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS. THE STUDENTS WERE SELECTED BASED ON THE RESULT OF THE OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST (OPT) THAT TESTED THEIR GENERAL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND FURTHER WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL. INITIALLY, A PRE-TEST FOR ASSESSING CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY AND A PRE-TEST FOR ASSESSING WRITING SKILL OF THE PARTICIPANTS WERE ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS. THE CONTROL GROUP ONLY RECEIVED THE CONVENTIONAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION ON WRITING WHICH WAS THE TRADITIONAL OR PRODUCT- BASED APPROACH, BUT STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP STUDENTS WERE TAUGHT TO WRITE USING THE PROCESS-BASED APPROACH. AFTER 12 WEEKS OF INSTRUCTION BASED ON PROCESS-BASED APPROACH, A POST-TEST FOR CRITICAL THINKING AND A POST-TEST FOR WRITING WERE ADMINISTERED TO THE STUDENTS. THE DATA COLLECTED WERE SUBJECT TO STATISTICAL ANALYSIS. THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT PROCESS-BASED APPROACH WAS OF POSITIVE EFFECT ON LEARNERS' WRITING PROFICIENCY AND CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY.


KEY WORDS: PROCESS-BASED APPROACH, WRITING ABILITY, CRITICAL THINKING, EFL

## INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language involves the handling of four basic skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In fact, the ultimate skill that learners should master is writing. It is a basic communication skill that cannot be acquired and it can be culturally transmitted or can be learned through formal instruction (Brown, 2001). Writing and speaking, among the four skills of language, are productive skills. Certainly, there are significant differences between them. White (1992) stated that all normal people learn to speak while writing should be taught to them. Compared to speaking, writing requires greater demands on the learners because there is no immediate feedback in written interaction.

In fact, Writing is an enormously complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to manifest control over a number of variables simultaneously. Control over content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation are the variables that are important in the sentence level. In addition, the information must be structured and integrated into cohesive and coherent contexts and discourses by the writer (Bell \& Burnaby, 1984).

The very fact of placing emphasis upon the process has affected the quality of the process of teaching writing. In fact, one of the most important developments in terms of widespread and influential impact on writing instruction until recently is the understanding and teaching of writing as a process. Almost every current article and book on writing is still concerned with the 'process' in one sense or another and the emphasis in writing instruction saw a general paradigm shift from product to process-oriented between the 1970's and 1980's (Smith, 2000; Applebee, 1986; Faigley et al., 1996).Most of the studies on Process-Based approach aimed at investigating the application of the Process-Based approach and its effects on the students writing achievement. All of the present studied confirm the effectiveness of Process-Based approach on students writing improvement.

In fact, the Process-Based approach emerges as a reaction against the Product-Based approach and is rooted in the recognition of the writing process as cyclical, recursive or even disorderly rather than simple and linear. In the Process approach the focus changes from the text to the writer. It gives special emphasis on a cycle of writing activities which move learners from the generating of ideas and the collection of data through to the 'publication' of a finished text (Tribble, 1996). Its nature and the stages through which the learners worked was perhaps the most important feature of process writing approach. This process was not only designed to help student make a better product but it was designed to help them learn to become better writers.

As EFL teachers, we all understand the challenge of writing in a foreign language. We work very hard to improve our learners' writing ability in English but always face an unsatisfactory and even disappointing outcome. This is not surprising because in traditional classes the student will be doing nothing further with their writing and they often pay little attention to the teacher's comments. As Parson (1985) notes, under these conditions, there isn't much of a sense of owner ship, invention or investment in the writing.

Critical thinking is the other serious factor which is related to our discussion. Critical thinking is a very hotly controversial topic these days. All teachers are now aware of the importance of equipping learners' with critical thinking techniques and they are attempting to teach these techniques in the most appropriate way. In fact, children are not born with critical thinking skills and education could be the first step for promoting critical thinking among them.

Critical thinking is the ability of thinkers to assume responsibility of their own thinking and develop appropriate criteria and standards for analyzing and assessing their own thinking (Elder \& Paul, 1994). There is a consensus, in spite of the range of definitions that have appeared over time, that critical thinking is an active process that goes beyond basic acquisition and memorization of information to the ability to recognize and rationally consider multiple concepts or elements that constitute a body of thought (Adelphi, MD. 2006; Jones,Hoffman, Moore, Ratcliff, Tibbetts, \& Click, 1995).

Developing students' ability to reflect on their own learning process is believed to be helpful for their learning progress. Indeed, higher-order thinking skills increase higher order learning skills which in turn enable students to reach higher levels of language proficiency. Educators of English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL) and modern foreign languages have attempted to integrate the promotion of thinking skills into language curriculum (Renner, 1996).

Since students are moving beyond being simply consumer of knowledge to learning how to make meaningful contributions to that knowledge, it is particularly crucial that they develop strong critical skills. In view of the fact that writing is an activity which forces students to organize their thoughts, think deeply about their topic and present their conclusions in a persuasive manner, writing activities are the best way to teach critical thinking. Goatly (2000) mentioned that the
existence of some sort of writing such as persuasive or argumentative writing which have been difficult for the students is one reason that we might expect writing to improve critical thinking.

As it can be observed in above review of studies, a good deal of previous studies has been conducted on the effect of Process-Based approach on writing skill. On the other hand, the developing the critical-thinking among EFL learners has been highlighted by educators. However, in an Iranian context, few studies have been conducted on the issues of critical thinking among EFL learners. This study, therefore, is an attempt to investigate the impact of ProcessBased approach whose critical thinking are developed based on an integrative perspective.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1- To what extent does Iranian EFL students' writing ability improve by applying processbased approach in teaching writing?

2- To what extent dose process-based approach in teaching writing enhance Iranian EFL learners' critical thinking ability?

## METHODOLOGY

## Instrument

The Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to the participants for the purpose of determining that they were at the same level of English proficiency and ensuring their homogeneity.

Moreover, in order to identify the degree of the students' critical thinking ability, Ennis and Weir's test (1985) was employed. The test aimed at evaluating a person ability to assess an argument and to devise in writing an argument in response. Therefore, it recognizes a creative dimension in critical thinking ability. It was in a form of a letter in which the writer made a proposal and offered a variety of arguments in support of it. Each argument emerged in a separate numbered paragraph. The examinee's task was to read the letter and then write an essay evaluating the argument of each paragraph and the letter as a whole. Also, an argumentative composition test was administered to the students. The test's manual included criteria and scoring sheet.

## Participants

The study was conducted on sixty Iranian Female intermediate EFL students aged 18-23. They were selected from among 120 available Iranian EFL learners studying at Avaye Mehrvarzan language institute. The students were selected based on the result of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and placed into the same level. This group was divided into two groups. The first thirty of the whole sixty students were considered as control group and the second thirty of the whole were considered as experimental group. The sample consisted of only female students to control for the effect of gender.

## Procedure

After selecting the students, the researcher administered the tests to the students. Initially, a pretest for critical thinking and finally a pre-test of writing were administered to both groups. The control group only received the conventional classroom instruction on writing which was the traditional or product-based approach. Students were supplied with a standard sample of text and they were expected to model and follow the standard to construct a new piece of writing.

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On the contrary, in the experimental group students were taught to write using the ProcessBased approach (Model of Herwins) which consists of five stages. In stage one or pre-writing, they were provided by a writing task and helped to generate vocabulary and ideas by applying a number of strategies in class like brainstorming. In stage two or first draft composing, they were asked to use vocabulary and ideas from the previous stage to express what they wanted to convey in their writing. In stage three or feedback, they received comment from the teacher or their peers and were asked to move on to new ideas in another draft. In stage four or second draft writing, students were asked to modify their previous draft by revising, adding, and rearranging ideas based on the comment they receive from the teacher or peers. Finally, in stage five or proofreading student were asked not only to discover new ideas and language forms to express their ideas in writing but also to focus on the appropriate use of vocabulary, layout, grammar and mechanics( $\mathrm{O}^{\prime}$ Brien,2004). After 12 weeks of instruction based on Process-Based approach, a post-test for critical thinking and writing were administered to the students again. The objective of the post-tests and observations and was to see whether the students have shown any change of behavior in this important factor and whether their writing ability had improved.

## RESULTS OF THE LEARNER'S WRITING PROFICIENCY AND CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY

First of all, in order to summarize the data such statistical techniques as drawing different types of tables and a number of descriptive statistics such as mean, median, variance and standard deviation were conducted. In fact, before going through inferential statistics, some descriptive measures were incorporated in Table1

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-Test Writing

| Groups | N | Mean | SD | SEM |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| control | 30 | 11.3833 | 2.54675 | .46497 |
| experimental | 30 | 12.1583 | 2.95912 | .54026 |

As it can clearly be seen in the above and table, there is a slight difference between the two means.

In order to make sure that this difference is not significant, a t-test was run to see if there was any significant difference for pre-test of control and experimental groups. The results of the t-test on pre-test Writings in two groups are indicated in table 4.2.

Table2.The Results of the t-test on the Pre-Test Writings

|  | Paired Differences |  |  |  |  | T | DF | Sig. (2tailed) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error <br> Mean | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |  |  |  |
| Pair Pre-test control <br> group <br> and <br> pre-test <br> experimental group | . 775 | 3.59762 | . 65683 | 2.71837 | . 03163 | 1.093 | 29 | . 045 |

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Table 2, shows the results of the t -Test between pre-tests of writing. The amount of t observed (t-observed $=1.093$ ), according to Table 2, above, is not significant at probability level of $p=.01$; consequently, it can be claimed that the participants in the two groups were fairly homogeneous concerning their ability in writing in English.

Further analysis was applied to the scores of the post-test writings of the two groups to find out if the Process-Based Instruction had any effects on writing ability. Table3 shows the descriptive Statistics for the post experiment writing.

Table3.Descriptive Statistics for the Post-Test Writing

| Groups | N | Mean | SD | SEM |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Control | 30 | 12.1333 | 1.57941 | .28836 |
| experimental | 30 | 14.5833 | 2.04616 | .37358 |

According to Table 3 there is a 2.45 mark difference between the means of the two groups. In order to understand whether this difference is statistically significant or not, the researcher employed another $t$-test. Table 4 reveals the results of this second $t$-test.

Table 4. The Results of the t-test on the Post-Test Writing

|  |  | Paired Differences |  |  |  |  | T | DF | Sig. (2- <br> tailed) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error <br> Mean | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Lower |  |  | Upper |  |  |  |
| Pair | Post- test control group postexperimental group |  | 2.45000 | 2.36843 | . 43242 | 3.33439 | 1.56561 | 5.666 | 29 | . 000 |

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the amount of t-observed (t-observed=5.666) is significant at the probability level of $p=.000$ which stands for a statistically significant difference. Put it differently, the participants who received Process-Based Instruction outperformed the control group and presented better writings. So, the null hypothesis stating that "Process-Based approach in writing does not have any effect on writing ability" is safely rejected and it can be claimed that writing ability enhancement is positively affected by Process-Based approach.

In addition, with regard to the second research question, that is, to what extent does Process-Based approach in teaching writing enhance EFL learners' critical thinking ability, a t-test was conducted for pre-Tests and another t-test was run for post-Tests of critical thinking tests of each group to determine whether Process-Based approach had any impact on participants critical thinking ability and whether the difference was significant. The results of the t-test in two groups are indicated in Tables 6 and Table 8.Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of the pre-test critical thinking test

Table5.Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-Test Critical Thinking Test

| Groups | N | Mean | SD | SEM |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| control | 30 | 10.4167 | 1.90545 | .34789 |
| experimental | 30 | 11.4333 | 2.00746 | .36651 |

Table6.The Results of the t-test on the Pre-Test critical thinking test

|  | Paired Differences |  |  |  |  | T | DF | Sig. (2tailed) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error <br> Mean | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |  |  |  |
| Pair Pre-test control group preexperimental group | 1.01667 | 2.72594 | . 49769 | 2.03455 | . 00122 | 2.043 | 29 | . 050 |

Table 6, shows the results of the t-test between pre-tests of critical thinking test. The amount of $t$ observed (t-observed=2.043), according to Table6, the difference between the two groups is not significant at probability level of $p=.01$ as set by the researchers.

More analysis was applied to the scores of the post-test critical thinking tests of the two groups to realize if the Process-Based instruction had any effects on critical thinking ability. Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics for the post-test critical thinking tests.

Table 7.Descriptive Statistics for the Post-Test Critical Thinking Test

| Groups | N | Mean | SD | SEM |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| control | 30 | 10.9000 | 1.66298 | .30362 |
| experimental | 30 | 12.7833 | 1.88658 | .34444 |

Based on Table 7 there is a 1.88 mark difference between the means of the two groups. So as to understand whether this difference is statistically significant or not, the researcher employed another t-test. Table 8 shows the results of this second t-test.

Table8. The Results of the $t$-test on the Post-Test critical thinking test

|  | Paired Differences |  |  |  |  | T | DF | Sig. (2tailed) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error <br> Mean | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |  |  |  |
| Pair Post-test control 1 group postexperimental group | 1.88333 | 2.19888 | . 40146 | 2.70441 | 1.06226 | 3.691 | 29 | . 000 |

According to Table 8, it can be seen that the amount of $t$-observed ( t -observed=3.691) was significant at the probability level of $p=.000$ which stands for a statistically significant difference. Differently stated, the participants who received Process-Based Instruction outperformed the control group and demonstrated better critical thinking abilities. As a result, the null hypothesis stating that "Process-Based approach in writing does not have any effect on critical thinking ability" is safely rejected and it can be claimed that critical thinking ability is positively affected by Process-Based instruction.

## DISCUSSION

The obtained results and findings of the current study possess the ability to lead to the conclusions which are undoubtedly of high importance. To this end, the present study aimed to answer two questions. The first one was to what extent does EFL students' writing ability improves by applying Process-Based approach in teaching writing. To answer this, students were taught to write using the Process-Based approach which consists of five stages. In fact, the Process-Based approach is a teaching approach that concentrates on the processes a writer undertakes when constructing meaning. Unlike the Product-Based approach this teaching approach ends with editing as a final stage in text creation. The Process-Based approach may consist of recognized stages of the writing process like pre-writing, writing and re-writing and it involves peer and teacher conferencing (Murray, 1972).

After comparing the results of the experimental group performance and those of the control group, the researcher came to the conclusion that these two groups were significantly different. In other words, the group undergoing the Process-Based instruction outperformed the control group. Consequently, through the data gathered the null hypothesis was rejected and it was found that Process-Based approach affect writing ability in a positive way. This finding adds to a growing body of research that has investigated the effect of Process-Based approach on writing performance. The findings of the present study are in line with those of other researches that teaching the group of writing techniques recognized together as writing process is related to higher average writing proficiency among students (Elbow, 1973; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1985; Sommers, 1982, Goldstein\& Carr, 1996, Croes, 1990, Harris, 1992, De La Paz \& Graham, 2002).In addition, these findings are in agreement with Dean and Rumsey(1998) who stated that explicitly teaching the Process-Based approach to the students has positive impact on enhancing their writing proficiency. Also, in line with previous studies (Bruno,1983), the present study found that the writing of students taught using the Process-Based approach was superior compared with the students using the traditional method and this was particularly the case in terms of the overall organization and format.

Concerning the second question which states to what extent Process-Based approach in teaching writing does enhance EFL learners' critical thinking ability, the results revealed that the students in the experimental group performed better than the control group. Consequently, the second null hypothesis was rejected and it was found that Process-Based approach affects critical thinking ability. This is in line with Paul \&Elder (2003) findings that Process-Based Writing possesses the characteristics which are used in critical thinking and since Process-Based Writing encourages problem-solving and critical reasoning it can increase critical thinking ability.

In the final run, it is suggested that EFL teachers in Iran focus on Process-Based instruction. In fact, in order to enhance the writing proficiency and critical thinking ability of Iranian students the teaching of process-based approach should be an indispensable part of the English language teaching (ELT) program in Iranian high schools and universities.

## CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Even though writing is vitally important in both academic and daily lives of people, the majority of students suffer from difficulties of writing in a foreign language. Writing plays a role as a communicative tool through which international trade and diplomacy are done, scientific and technological advancements are emphasized and news and information are disseminated (Crystal, 1997, 2000; Graddol, 1997).Among the four language skills, writing is the most complex and difficult skill to master. As said by Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 303), "this difficulty is not only in organizing of ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable texts". Hence, there is a need to use a method that increases the EFL students writing ability. One of the most important developments in terms of widespread and influential impact on writing instruction until recently is the understanding

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and teaching of writing as a process. Almost every current article and book on writing is still concerned with the 'process' in one sense or another and the emphasis in writing instruction saw a general paradigm shift from product to process-oriented between the 1970's and 1980's (Smith, 2000; Applebee, 1986; Faigley et al., 1996).Therefore, the current study was an attempt to investigate how Process-Based approach in teaching writing impacts Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. The findings imply that the Process-Based approach increases the writing proficiency and students who undergo it are more likely to achieve high writing proficiency.

Furthermore, one of the chief inadequacies of Iranian institutions is lack of a systematic and efficient program for teaching critical thinking. Consequently, Iranian students lose their selfconfidence and innate sense of curiosity which are the two vital necessities for their growth and development (Bazrafkan \& Bagheri, 2014). The results of this study showed that applying Process-Based Instruction increased learner's critical thinking. Thus, it can be used by Iranian EFL teachers to increase learners' critical thinking ability.

Through showing how the Process-Based approach contributed to the development of students writing ability and critical thinking, the study hopefully helps in supplying evidence in support of this teaching approach in Iranian EFL classrooms.

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# THE INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY ON EFL SYLLABUS DESIGN 

\author{


#### Abstract


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THE MAIN GOAL OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE IS TO COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. IN AN ERA OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY, INTERNET-BASED LEARNING AND TEACHING IS AVAILABLE IN MOST COUNTRIES. LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH COMPUTER MEDIATED INSTRUCTION IS THE TREND IN MANY FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING PROGRAMS. THIS PAPER OUTLINES POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF TECHNOLOGY ON EDUCATION. INTERNET-BASED LEARNING APPROXIMATES REAL-LIFE LEARNING CONTEXT BY ALLOWING STUDENTS TO USE A LANGUAGE FOR THE SAME PURPOSES THAT THEY WILL USE IT OUTSIDE SCHOOL. ALTHOUGH TECHNOLOGY HAS A LOT OF ADVANTAGES, IT DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR A GOOD TEACHER. AUTHENTIC AND UP-TO-DATE TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE VIA THE INTERNET FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS, BUT TEACHERS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLES TO USE TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOMS. THEY SHOULD PLAN THE LESSONS. IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED THAT THERE ARE CRITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE SYLLABUS DESIGN: MATERIAL, LEARNERS, AND TEACHERS.

KEY WORDS: CURRICULUM DESIGN, NEEDS ANALYSIS, COMPUTER MEDIATED INSTRUCTION

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language, and the aim of learning English is to communicate with people from other countries and other culture. Communication is the most important part of language. The communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. So some communicative approaches such as communicative language teaching (CLT) focuses on language use rather than language usage, which means that learning how to communicate in the second language rather than acquire language forms, meanings, and functions. The teacher emphasizes all of the components (grammatical, discourse, functional,
sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. The focus is on both linguistic and functional competence. In CLT, students work with language at suprasentential or discourse level. So, language is not just its sentences and consists of larger meaningful units of discourse. Activities that are truly communicative, according to Morrow (1981) have three features: information gap, choice, and feedback.

There is also a link between language and culture. Grammatical accuracy is necessary for language learning and communicating effectively, but when language "is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways" (Kramsch, 1998, p.3). Recently, intercultural competence is an important part of EFL classrooms (Liaw, 2006). Intercultural communication should "be viewed and analyzed as complex process" (Stire, 2006, p.5). Byram, Gribkova \& Starkey, (2000) States:

To give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other culture as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviors; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience (p.10)

The course the teachers teach should be based on some kind of written syllabus. After setting the goal (whether in terms of a national language policy or a particular school), relate to the learners and conditioned by the setting, leads to an appropriate syllabus construction (McDonough, Shaw, Masuhara, 2013).

Long (2005) believes that language program should be designed with a comprehensive needs analysis. The needs and interests of learners should be included in content, materials, classroom activities, or in teaching methodology (Min 2008). Different kinds of methods conducted by researchers and course designers for an effective needs analysis such as unstructured interview, surveys and questionnaires, and classroom observation (Long 2005; Burden, 2008).

Materials and methods are closely linked, and as it is stated the main goal of language learning is communication. Many advocates of CLT has focused on the use of authentic materials in the classroom. Therefore, the use of authentic materials in the language teaching courses should be increased. A course material should include: Pronunciation practice, introducing new vocabulary grammatical rules, listening practice, speaking communicative tasks, reading texts, and some interesting and fun activities (UR, 1996; Richards 2001). The emphasis of communicative language Teaching is on the process of language, rather than mastery of language.

The focus of a communicative approach was on meaning and the student, rather than on the language itself. As noted above, students should use authentic materials and consider 'intercultural communicative competence' (Byram et al. 2002) to acquire English.

Many researchers prove that students can experience cultures and using their language skills through meaningful learning situations relevant to the authentic communication events (Cunningham, Fagersten, \& Holmsten, 2010; Kilimci, 2010; Wu\& Marek, 2010; Wu, Yen, \& Marek, 2011). But the question is what teachers can do to reach these goals. The teacher has different roles in CLT. First. They must provide activities and exercises that enable learners to achieve the communicative activities should contain communicative processes such as information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction. Second, the teacher is a facilitator of learning. He facilitates the communication process between all participants in the classroom and between the students and different activities and the last role of the teacher is to act as an independent person within the learning-teaching group.

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Technology can help increase the input, and the authenticity of resources, and connect students with other students from different countries. Nowadays, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) includes the use of the Internet, communication tools, email, and audio/video conferencing, software designed for language learning, and digital audio and video materials to enhance language learning. Computers are vehicles which facilitate human-to-human communication.

The teachers use the Internet and the World Wide Web to teach language in the classroom. Today, language professionals suggest focusing on accuracy without omitting the communication intention, or what is known as focus on form (Long 1991). Technology provide some possibilities for increasing accuracy in different skills and presenting meaningful and communicative activities.

Recent descriptive and empirical research on the effects and applications of computermediated communication (CMC) has produced some interesting findings about interaction and language acquisition (Belz, 2002; Belz \& Kinginger, 2003; Chun 1994).

Teachers play an important role on designing materials for language learning. They can use different digital technology in language teaching. The students also have access to information, and have more free time to explore it. The internet can be useful for both teachers and students, and therefore affects the syllabus of a course. The computer network technology provides authentic material for language teaching and learning. The most important pedagogical advantage of the Internet technology is the availability of authentic material which is up-to-the minute information (Walker, Hewer, \& Davies, 2008).

Sociocognitive theory is brought by Vygotsky (1981) is facilitated by the Internet technology. Based on this theory the teacher should provide both comprehensible input and different kinds of authentic social discourse situation and discourse communities that would be encountered outside the classroom. The Internet provides various context for social interaction where students can work with text and negotiate meaning with peers and teacher, and having access to discourse communities and the creation of new ones (Kern \& Warschaver, 2000).

The Internet has much influence on foreign language syllabus design. It can change the role of teacher and the students. The role of teacher is the provider of information. The students have access to Internet facilities. Through their self-access Internet facilities, the students will be more independent and active. Crookes and Lehner (1998) point out that "[T] he purpose of education is to develop critical thinking by presenting student's situation to them as a problem so that they can perceive, reflect, and act on it" (p.321). Students must develop critical skills to use information significantly, and teachers have to train them in these skills. Pennycook (2001) talked about critical literacy, suggesting a new curriculum in which students should develop both knowledge of text content and knowledge about texts and text genre. In general, the Internet technology is a kind of learner-centered model because it is a learning and teaching tool.

Many researchers believe that using computers helps students have the sense of freedom and encouragement. They can create new ideas and increase their problem solving skills while providing self-responsibility. Language learners can read computer-based reading texts which are authentic and motivating (Anderson and Speck, 2001; Brown, 2003; Wang, 2004). Using computer in the classroom engages the students in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. In addition to providing authentic materials, learners can use rich vocabulary.

But there are some curriculum problems when teachers use computer-based materials. First, they may have to spend teaching students how to use the computer and software because some students do not have any background. Second, some information available on the Internet
is not desirable, appropriate, or relevant to student's studies. Third, because of physical limitations on the connection to the Net, access to the web is slow, and downloading may be slow. And the last problem is the possibility of violations of privacy when personal information is posted to emails or blogs.

## Conclusion

The traditional language teaching and language classrooms are slowly changing with the use of technology. Internet-based learning and teaching is now available in many educational institutions in many countries. Via the Internet, language learners could see authentic and up-todate teaching and learning materials. There are a lot of advantages of using technology in EFL classrooms for providing easy and authentic activities and also creative tasks. It will motivate the students and improve classroom atmosphere. But, teachers have significant roles in order to use technology in the classroom. They should plan and organize the lessons. Educational developers design appropriate curricula which provide an active approach to learning so that students can understand subject content and analyze data and information, and develop creative thinking and communication skills (Alexander, 1995).

Although the use of these media provide new possibilities in language teaching it also present a new problem, namely, e-safety. Students will be exposed to harmful information. There is easy availability of online materials. The students can use blogs, online chat, e-mail, and wikis. These media provide a real communication opportunities. Students can write for a real purpose with a real audience and have video conferences with other people in other countries. But when they register at a website, students' personal information may be exposed, and the information can be enclosed.

Finally, there is a relationship between EFL and technology. It is essential to realize these relationship and to develop learning programs and methods based on them.

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# COMPROMISE ESTABLISHMENT BETWEEN DEVELOPMENTAL AND LOGICAL PARADIGMS IN CHILD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 

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#### Abstract

ALL HUMAN BEINGS HAVE REMARKABLY ACQUIRED THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE WITH ASTONISHING EASE AND SPEED REGARDLESS OF ITS COMPLEXITY AND DIFFICULTY. THIS FASCINATING MATTER HAS LONG ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE LINGUISTS AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE SAME WAY. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE DISCLOSES THAT IT IS BIOLOGICALLY PROGRAMMED, INDICATING "GENETIC CONTROL" (LUST, 2006; 2); NEVERTHELESS, THE "LANGUAGE PROGRAM" (LUST, 2006; 2) CANNOT BE ENTIRELY INNATE. CHILDREN ARE NOT PROGRAMMED BEFORE BIRTH TO ACQUIRE A PARTICULAR LANGUAGE. ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE OF THE NEARLY 7,000 LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD ARE SIMILARLY LEARNABLE, CHILDREN DO NOT ACQUIRE THEIR LANGUAGE WITHOUT BEING EXPOSED TO IT. THIS APPARENTLY PERPLEXING DEVELOPMENTAL MATTER FORMS THE BASIS OF FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH. THUS, THE APPROACHES UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THIS STUDY ARE COMPRISED OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGM PROPOSED BY PIAGET AND LOGICAL PARADIGM PROPOSED BY CHOMSKY THAT MUST BE COMBINED IN CASE THE SOLUTION TO THE SIGNIFICANT PUZZLE OF CHILD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IS EVER TO BE DECIPHERED. THE PRESENT STUDY AIMS AT PROVIDING A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICAL REALITIES CONCERNING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATING THEM TO ESSENTIAL THEORETICAL ISSUES WITH REGARD TO THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE AND MENTAL ABILITIES.


KEY WORDS: CHILD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGM, LOGICAL PARADIGM

Introduction

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Study of language acquisition, especially first language acquisition, is regarded as one of the most fundamental issues which is identified nowadays by definite and occasionally incompatible approaches. It has thus aroused a heated debate among many scholars, and in this respect, many theories have been proposed to date. Lust (2006) has embarked on two approaches relevant to the study of first language acquisition. On the one hand, developmental approach studies language acquisition with regard to the fact that language is practically acquired over time. On the other hand, logical approach studies language acquisition formally, usually regardless of experiential examinations of child language. Piaget's developmental theory proposes that cognitive development requires a continuous restructuring of mind progression due to physical growth and social experience. On the basis of his paradigm children establish a perception with regard to whatever surrounds them, afterwards they come upon inconsistencies between what they have previously experienced and what they detect in the world around them. Chomsky's logical paradigm, however, emphasizes the fact that children are biologically endowed with capability for language acquisition. His theory is completely based upon the rationalist philosophy of Descartes, stressing the innateness of Language Faculty, yet merging the function of restrained input in language development (Lust, 2006).

The aforementioned approaches to first language acquisition; that is, developmental and logical proposed by Piaget (1983) and Chomsky (1980) respectively, are going to be introduced and described in this study. The present paper also attempts to investigate whether the two approaches can be merged in order to come to a solution to this seemingly complex matter concerning first language acquisition.

## Piaget's Theory

What a learner acquires is not taken into consideration in Piaget' paradigm, rather how it is learned seems to be of paramount importance. Piaget's theory was found out to differ from others in several other ways:

- It is concerned with children, rather than all learners.
-It emphasizes on development, rather than learning, so it does not address learning of information or specific behaviors.
-It contains separate stages of development rather than a gradual increase in number and
complexity of behaviors, concepts, ideas, etc.
There are three basic components to Piaget's cognitive theory:

1. Schemas (Building blocks of knowledge).
2. Adaptation processes that enable the transition from one stage to another (equilibrium, assimilation and accommodation, Williams and Burden 2000, p.22).
3. Stages of development:
-sensorimotor,
-preoperational,
-concrete operational,

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-formal operational (Piaget 1972, 1955; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969)
The goal of Piaget's theory is to explain the mechanisms and processes by which the infant, and then the child, develops into an individual who can reason and think using hypotheses. To Piaget, because of biological maturation and environmental experience, a progressive reorganization of mental processes leads to cognitive development. Children construct an understanding of the world around them, then experience differences between what they already know and what they discover in their environment. Williams and Burden (2000) believe that Piaget's theory is 'action-based' because it is about the process of learning rather than what is learned.

## Chomsky's Theory

Nativism revolves around the idea that the child is biologically endowed with innate capacity to acquire a language. This approach relied entirely on the rationalist philosophy stressed by Descartes. "Rationalist" acknowledges the innateness of a powerful Language Faculty (Chomsky 1986, 1999, 2000) in the human species but integrating the role of constrained experience in the "growth of language" in order to explain language development. This innate capacity entails the Universal Grammar which is defined by Chomsky (1980) as a "theory of innate mechanisms, an underlying biological matrix that provides a framework within which the growth of language proceeds"

As Gass and Selinker (2008) state "If children have to learn a complex set of abstractions, there must be something other than the language input to which they are exposed that enables them to learn language with relative ease and speed. UG is postulated as an innate language facility that limits the extent to which languages can vary" (p.161).

In addition, Brown (2007, p.29) points out "Universal grammar (UG) research attempts to discover what it is that all children, regardless of their environmental stimuli (the language[s] they hear around them) bring to the language acquisition process."

## Compromise between Two Theories

Lust (2006) believes that in order to fully account for language learning, the two theories developmental and logical -- should be merged. Therefore, she emphasizes the inherently computational nature of language acquisition performed by Language Faculty and rejects reducing the language acquisition to changes in fundamental cognitive architecture for language acquisition.

As Perception and production in every area - phonology, syntax and semantics -- were discovered to develop together and at the same time, it can be said that development in knowledge provides the basis for this general development. Basic computational mechanisms of development may be related to the combination of perception and production. In this regard, Lust (2006) points out the importance of environment in exposing the child to input needed for the computational analysis. In the area of Perception of phonology, for instance, Lust enumerates some of the children's remarkable ability concerning language acquisition gained through assistance of their innate knowledge in interaction with the environment:

In the Initial State, infants for the first time hear sounds in the speech stream and begin to consult these physical phenomena in the process of language acquisition. To support her position, Lust has provided several pieces of empirical evidence in each of the subsystems of language knowledge which are acquired. It is assumed that all normal-hearing children, from birth or earlier, will be exposed to a wide range of ambient language (ranging from single word utterances to complex utterances) not only between child and parent, but between adults and

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between other children in all of the situations of children's normal life. In this sense, they are thoroughly full of potential evidence.

Children must acquire a generative system which allows infinite possibilities in language, and also rules out infinite impossibilities. For this, we would expect them to need both positive and negative evidence. Units of language do not agree with "divisions" in the speech stream. Pauses or silences do not correspond to any of the requisite units. Fundamental units are combined.
a. Mares eat oats
b. Mairsy Doates (Lust, 2006, p.33)

This example reflects the inherent ambiguity in mapping units to the continuous speech stream. Words are more difficult to understand and are less clearly articulated in fluent speech than when isolated. A sentence of only about some words can be articulated and perceived differently. All words are not first presented individually to the children. Children must be able to notice the same sounds but classify them differently, or be aware of different sounds and classify them similarly, depending on the system of the language being acquired. For example:

Variations in aspiration [ +h or -h ] occur in English
a. kit
b. skit


Even if a language learner is able to determine the relevant phonological or sound units in the speech stream, they still must determine the structural relations among them. Kuhl (1976) as cited in Lust (2006) conducted an experiment and discovered that children could identify the contrasts between sounds even in situations where variability due to the speaker's voice was observed. It is worth noting that a mapping to the specific language phonology occurs around six months (confirming Chomsky's innatist theory on the one hand, and Piaget's developmental paradigm on the other hand).

Lust (2006) further explicates that although children's acquisition of phonology is determined by UG principles and constraints, their actual experience can't be decided by UG. To put it differently, there are variations in children's production. For instance, consonant cluster reduction in English may result in voiceless stops especially in initial position, but the same is not true in Telugu. Therefore, again she emphasizes the role of environment. As can be observed, variation in children's phonological deformation suggests not only their creativity, but also their analysis of the phonology of the specific language they acquire.

Not only is the acquisition of segmental aspects of phonology UG constrained, but also development of suprasegmental aspects. For instance, children's early deformations reveal that they not only innately through some kind of formal analysis have access to syllable units (e.g., in unstressed syllable omission), but also know prosodic organization. For example, evidence suggests that young bilingual children differentiate their early word pattern on the basis of the language they are learning. A young Italian-English bilingual produced more monosyllabic utterances in English, and more polysyllabic in Italian.

Children show sensitivity to suprasegmental features over the first year of life. For instance, French two-month olds distinguish bisyllables with initial stress from those with final stress. Furthermore, American infants (six months) showed a distinction between a list of English and a
list of Norwegian words. We can conclude that both Chomsky's innatist theory, and Piaget's developmental paradigm are necessary for language learning.

The acquisition of semantics like other aspects of language is a very complex process which can surprisingly be achieved by children in a gradual manner. There is a limitless set of possible meanings in any particular context. Before knowing a language, how could a language learner determine what meanings to assign? Possibly Children do not depend on ostensive contexts for early word learning. They learn new words by overhearing them as well (Akhtar, Jipson and Callanan 2001). Joint attention between child and caregiver does not determine or explain infant word learning (Carpenter, Nagell and Tomasello 1998). There may be something innate about the human assumption of a relation between linguistic form and meaning. The evidence above suggests only that meaning in itself cannot be a unique and independent of linguistic knowledge, which can solve the essential language acquisition problem for children in the Initial State. A relation between external context and linguistic form will not work unaided (Gleitman 1994, 188). In order to make specific forms of semantic bootstrapping work, the formal linguistic categories which are mapped to meaning categories would presumably have to be made available to children so that they could map to them. Even very early in infancy, children demonstrate meaningfulness. The results of some studies have found relationships between the infants' babbling and its meaning. During the first twelve months, children understand the meaning of many words although they do not produce words and sentences in that period. Beyond twelve months, children create different words and sentences gradually.

The growing dimensions of language knowledge appear to support each other not simply follow each other. For instance, expanding phonetic and prosodic knowledge aids words detection (Jusczyk 1999; Jusczyk, Houston and Newsome 1999) and languages differentiation and classification (Ramus et al. 1999). The development of words assists in the cognizance of phonemic as well as phonotactic contrasts (e.g., Brent, Gafos and Cartwright 1994). Sentence units appear to help the acquisition of phonology (Mandel, Jusczyk and Kemler Nelson 1994; Jusczyk 1997). Syntactic structure seems to aid the development of semantics and vice versa (Gleitman 1994). This indicates that infants are constantly merging different forms of linguistic knowledge ( Jusczyk 1997).

## Conclusion

Study of first language acquisition is closely involved in a challenge between developmental paradigms such as Piaget's (1983), in which realizing cognitive development depends on understanding its developmental change over time, and a paradigm such as Noam Chomsky's (1980) in which understanding cognitive development depends on a formal description of "the Initial State". In order to solve the problem of human language acquisition, Lust (2006) points out that L1 researchers try to merge these two approaches by providing a description of practical issues of language development and relating them to essential theoretical matters with respect to the essence of language and the cognitive ability:
A.The process of language acquisition develops after the infant is born and continues throughout childhood. No "prelinguistic" process is found out to exist. Language acquisition usually starts when the child generates his first words, but these words are the conclusion of the preceding, complicated language development. Words are not the "building blocks" of language acquisition as opposed to the common belief, rather they are acquired alongside the development of the formal system of language and to some degree as a consequence of this.
(B) Language acquisition moves on along with the basic levels of representation which are considered essential for knowledge of language phonology, syntax and semantics. No stage can be found that lacks one level of representation; that is, a stage wherein only "words" are
accessible to children does not exist. While children are eliciting words from the speech around them, they formally analyze it with respect to each level of representation essential for language knowledge.
(C) Children seem to develop formal representations concerning different areas of language knowledge even prior to gaining access to meaning.
(D) Children seem to constantly employ linguistic principles and constraints with respect to different dimensions of language knowledge. This growing development proceeds from general to more specific rules.
(E) Children create an indirect relationship with the input regarding all areas of language knowledge -- syntax, semantics or phonology. In addition, children's application of the input data is continuously directed by their linguistic analysis in all dimensions of language knowledge.

The description presented above help L1 researchers in different ways: 1) to assume that there exists a primary Language Faculty not only in the initial stages of language acquisition but also in the subsequent processes. This Language Faculty creates the basic architecture, principles and parameters that are necessary for the production of a language, 2) to seek for a broad theory about language acquisition that takes accurate theories concerning both linguistic competence as well as developmental change into account, 3) to better understand the theory of Universal Grammar as a model of the Language Faculty and of the Initial State. UG presents the primary architecture, the epistemological primitives essential to every level of linguistic representation, and the computational system necessary for merging different levels of representation, and 4) to modify the current views concerning language development. Children according to Lenneberg $(1964,589)$ "are endowed with an innate propensity for a type of behavior that develops automatically into language". Language acquisition, however, was found to result from several years of complex formal computation during which children are gradually mapping from a biologically programmed Language Faculty to the specific language grammar (SLG); in other words, children are detecting their language through generating it based on the input they acquire from the environment.

In sum, The facts provided by Lust in each area of language knowledge support biological programming in human species of formal properties of a Language Faculty, and they demonstrate the "Strong Continuity Hypothesis" of UG; that is, they show that the formal architectures are available in the initial state and that they continue throughout the whole course of language acquisition. Furthermore, she proves that language acquisition at all stages is continuously guided by child's performing some linguistic computation (some linguistic constraints and principles) in every aspect of language knowledge through his indirect access to input. Moreover, she emphasizes that exposure to input is necessary for the child to be able to perform the computational analysis. Therefore, she emphasizes the complementary role of both innate knowledge and input provided in the environment in assisting children acquiring their first language.

All in all, Lust helped us better understand the theory of Universal Grammar as a theory of innate mechanisms incorporating the essential architecture of language acquisition (the primitives needed for each level of syntax, semantics, phonology in addition to linguistically specific computational system for combining different levels of representation). Innateness and learning, thus, are not contradictory, but complementary in language acquisition. This is consistent with an acquisition model which involves an "instinct to learn" (e.g., the Gould and Marler 1987; Jusczyk 1997; Jusczyk and Bertoncini 1988) based on which organisms are guided in
their learning by innate learning predispositions; that is, organisms are preprogrammed to learn certain things in certain ways.

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# THE EFFECT OF MIND MAPPING ON READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

MIND MAPS ARE VISUAL FRAMEWORKS SUCH AS FIGURES, DIAGRAMS, OR CHARTS USED TO PRESENT STRUCTURAL KNOWLEDGE SPATIALLY WITH THE INTENTION OF EMPOWERING COMPREHENSION AND LEARNING. MIND MAPS ARE EFFECTIVE ON COMMUNICATING INFORMATION BECAUSE THEY CAN CLARIFY COMPLEX CONCEPTS INTO SIMPLE AND MEANINGFUL DISPLAYS, SO THAT LEARNERS CAN DEVELOP A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT. THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY IS TO FIND THE EFFECT OF MIND MAPPING ON IMPROVING IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY. THE RESEARCH DESIGN IS QUASIEXPERIMENTAL WITH PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST EXAMS. THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST MEANS WERE MEASURED BY USING THE TTEST FORMULA. THE RESULT SHOWS THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT BETWEEN THE STUDENTS WHO WERE TAUGHT BY USING MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE AND THOSE WHO WERE TAUGHT TRADITIONALLY. THE RESEARCHER CONCLUDED, THAT INCORPORATING MIND MAPPING INTO THE TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION SKILL ENHANCES STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF TEXT AND IMPROVE THEIR READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENTS. THIS TECHNIQUE CAN STIMULATE THE STUDENTS' PLEASURE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS OF READING COMPREHENSION. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE TEACHERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF USEFULNESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF USING MIND MAPPING IN TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION.


KEY WORDS: MIND MAPPING, READING COMPREHENSION, EFL

## Introduction

In foreign language acquisition, the term language acquisition refers to the processes through which someone acquires one or more foreign languages. Language is considered to be a key for conveying a qualified education, so scholars tried to find new teaching strategies, technique and methods. Reading is the most important skill which human should acquire, as it is

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the means of communication, enjoyment and pleasure. As for reading, being one of the basic language skills taught, integrating old information with new information, it has an important role in human life as socialization, developing the conceptual perception level of students' comprehension, learning and personal development and upgrading student success, etc. A lot of researches have been down to improve reading skills. Comprehension is critically important to development of students' reading skills and therefore their ability to obtain an education. Indeed, reading comprehension has come to be viewed as the "essence of reading" (Durkin, 1993), essential not only to academic learning but to life-long learning.

In order to eliminate the problems faced in language learning specially reading comprehension, the researcher investigated the effect of mind mapping on reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. Mind mapping allows you to summarize the most important content of text and book pages in one or more mind maps. Converting text to mind map assists the learning process and encourages new ways of thinking.

Mind maps can be drawn by hand, either as "rough notes" during a lecture, meeting or planning session, for example, or as higher quality pictures when more time is available. Mapping is a well-known facilitation tool widely used for structuring problems and generating critical thinking. It focuses individuals on the concepts and links they used to make sense of their world and their knowledge. Maps are very much like street maps or high-way maps - they help individuals locate themselves in space, in this case, conceptual space, and help figure out what directions to take, what pathways exist from here to there (Bryson et al., 2004). The use of mapping tools in teaching courses becomes more frequent as many fascinating, easy in use visualization software tools are available nowadays. Maps can be used at all stages of course preparation, teaching and evaluation. They really prove to be effective in giving instructors a continuous improvement process in teaching the course due to visual multicolored representation that establishes a landscape, or domain. However, the results of the few available studies are not consistent. Some of the studies have shown that different kinds of knowledge mapping tools may also potentially become effective in improving reading comprehension ability like Siriphanich and Laohawiriyanon, (2010), Ayu Indrayani, (2014) ,Yagmour Sahin, (2013), Gek Moi and Lian, (2007) hat are available in review of the literature. This study is different from previous studies, the results of the studies that previously carried out in this area are not about my country. In light of this research the researcher wants to recommend the teachers to use this tool for enhancing students reading comprehension and develop their attitude to reading comprehension. The aim of this research is to examine the effect of mind mapping on reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners.

## Background of the Study

Reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. The researcher define reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Reading comprehension is one pillars of the act of reading, it's the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. Without comprehension reading is nothing more than tracking symbols on a page with eyes and sounding them out.

## Mind Mapping

A mind map is a diagram used to visually organize information. A mind map is often created around a single concept, drown as an image in the center of a blank landscape page to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas emanate from those.

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Mind mapping or "idea" mapping has been defined as 'visual, non-linear representations of ideas and their relationships' (Biktimirov and Nilson 2006). Mind maps comprise a network of connected and related concepts. However, in mind mapping, any idea can be connected to each other and the aim of mind mapping is to find creative associations between ideas thus, mind maps are principally association maps. Formal mind mapping techniques arguably began with Buzan (Buzan 1974; Buzan and Buzan 2000). These techniques involved using line thicknesses, colors, pictures and diagrams to aid knowledge recollection. Buzan makes the following recommendations when mind mapping (http://www.mindmap example.com/samples.php, Buzan and Buzan 2000).

1. Place an image or topic in the center using at least 3 colors.
2. Use images, symbols, codes, and dimensions throughout your Mind Map.
3. Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
4. Each word/image is alone and sitting on its own line.
5. Connect the lines starting from the central image. The central lines are thicker, organic and flowing, becoming thinner as they radiate out from the center.
6. Make the lines the same length as the word/image.
7. Use colors - your own code - throughout the Mind Map.
8. Develop your own personal style of Mind Mapping.
9. Use emphasis and show associations in your Mind Map.
10. Keep the Mind Map clear by using radial hierarchy, numerical order or outlines to embrace your branches

## Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is an essential skill for further learning, especially for students who have to read in order to get information from text, books, researches, report, etc. Moreover, learners have to read more various and complicated texts. A great number of children struggle with reading. Unfortunately, a large percentage of students in our country are not effective in their attempts to acquire and use information from text due to significant deficiencies in reading comprehension in English, specially poor readers cannot understand the meaning of certain text, nor remember the subjects. Thus, there is no shortage of evidence pointing to the fact that some individuals experience reading comprehension difficulties. The nature and origins of reading comprehension difficulties, however, are not so clear.

The teachers found that the students who have low ability in reading comprehension cannot recognize the information learned from the text and cannot connect their own knowledge to the new information received from the reading test and also some students felt boring while reading from a textbook. To solve this problem the teachers can use mind mapping strategies so the teacher is able to get students involved in mind mapping to solve the problem. The researcher used mind mapping to improve students reading comprehension and motivation. Based on the back ground above, there are some identified problems:

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1. Reading comprehension of English text still becomes a hard activity to do for students, because they still have difficulties in getting information from text, especially narrative text.
2. Students' reading comprehension achievements are low.
3. The teaching and learning process of reading comprehension runs conventionally in class.

## Research Question

Q: Does mind mapping have any effect on reading comprehension ability of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners?

## Research Hypothesis

H0: Mind mapping does not have any effect on reading comprehension ability of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners.

## Purpose of the Study

In order to comprehend written texts, the reader needs to have some basic knowledge, strategies and awareness. Mind mapping was developed as an effective method for improving reading comprehension, achieving higher level of concentration and creativity and organizing more concise communication. Mind mapping gives students an overview, enable them to plan assignment and make them more attractive. Therefore, the purpose of present study is to investigate the effect of mind mapping on reading comprehension ability on EFL intermediate learners and to examine that this kind of knowledge mapping strategies can improve the students' reading comprehension ability and prove their effectiveness on language teaching. By creating a mind map from text you can revisit it and consolidate your knowledge or simply use it to digest information - the act of writing and summarizing creates greater meaning and understanding. If the student revisit the text that he have created the mind map from, he can see for herself that he instantly have a greater appreciation and comprehension of the writing having mind mapped it out. Mind maps are fibulas way to learn plan and create, they have an infinite number of uses such as planning exam revision, idea generation and coping with information overload. Mind mapping invented by Tony Buzen, uses a combination of images, colors and words to encourage creativity and make learning fun. A mind map capture everything on one page presenting a complete and overall picture in a highly memorable and user-friendly format that can be navigated with hand or software .By a mind map the brain can move easily from word to word and allow ideas to flow. The researcher tries to find ways to make learning process, especially reading comprehension active and interesting and easy to learn. The researcher wanted to survey the effect of mind mapping on reading comprehension ability of EFL students and its effectiveness.

In This study the goal is to investigate the effect of using mind mapping skills as a mapping strategy on enhancing the quality of reading. Students were trained in the use of mind mapping in reading comprehension. Findings of this research reveal that the application of mind mapping is a useful strategy in reading comprehension or not.

## Significance of the Study

Converting text to mind map helps the learning process and encourages new ways of thinking. Mind mapping allows students to summarize the most important content of text in one or more mind mapping and then help them to recall and memorize the text easily.With mind
mapping a person can glean important information from disunion and presentation too. The result of the study is expected to be useful for the writer herself hence, it can enrich her knowledge in teaching reading. Besides, it can be English teachers reference in stimulating their students to read and comprehend the various reading materials by using mind mapping in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Finally, the students can be motivated to read more hence they can improve their reading comprehension. It provides a personal approach to learning for the children. Mind Mapping is an effective tool for helping children remember important lessons and recall them. In this way mapping helps teachers design units of study that are meaningful, relevant, pedagogically sound, and interesting to students. Mind mapping supports effective teaching. As a pedagogical tool, the visibility of mind mapping provides an effective approach for promoting better understanding in students. Its flexibility also means that it possesses several uses in the classroom. "Using Mind Mapping for lesson planning can help teachers identify a logical teaching route and increases recall of the subject matter. This can boost teaching confidence and facilitate the smooth running of lessons" (QTD (Boyson, 2009, cited in Think Buzen Ltd p.19).

## Review of the Related Literature

Siriphanich and Laohawiriyanon, (2010) sought about using mind mapping techniques to improve reading comprehension ability of Thai EFL University students. This article reports on investigation into the use of mind mapping technique whether it can improve reading comprehension ability and the students' opinions towards the use of mind mapping technique. The research design used in this study was one-group pretest-posttest design. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analyses from pre-and post-tests, a questionnaire, and an interview. The participants of the study were 35 first-year students enrolling in a compulsory reading course called Communication and Reading Skills at a university south of Thailand. Fifteen students (5 highly successful, 5 who did not show any improvement, and 5 unsuccessful) were selected for retrospective interviews. The results suggested that 1) The English reading comprehension post-test mean score of students was higher than the pre-test mean score at the 0.05 level of significance; 2) most students were satisfied with their own reading comprehension ability; 3) they enjoyed working in group and agreed that mind mapping technique was a useful technique and can be applied to non- English subjects.

In a research about mind mapping Gek Moi and Lian, (2007) sought mind maps for enhancing reading comprehension. This research paper examined the use of Mind Mapping as a tool in teaching comprehension skills to pupils. The key aims of the research were to help pupils understand and remember text passages better, develop pupils' general thinking skills and enhance pupil confidence in attempting comprehension questions. In this research two Primary 4 classes (10 years old) of mixed ability took part in this project, one class held 33 pupils and the other 34 pupils. It was conducted over a period of 10 weeks and three sub-units of the current Chinese syllabus were selected as the comprehension passages to be studied. For the first three sessions, the teachers explained the vocabulary along with teaching pupils how to form a Mind Map. Under the teachers' guidance, the pupils then started to revise and summarize the content of the comprehension passages in Mind Map form while working in groups of 5 or 6 . A pre and post-test were carried out for each of the three comprehension passages that were studied. During each test, pupils answered the same 4 comprehension questions based on each passage. The teachers involved in the study provided feedback on the pupils' learning interest and attitudes towards Mind Mapping as a learning style and direct responses were also sought from selected pupils. Analysis of the test results revealed that there were overall improvements in all the post-tests conducted. The teachers' commented that mapping out the contents of a passage helped pupils to overcome the phobia of lengthy passages and raised their ability to comprehend
the content. It was noted that pupils showed better understanding as they were able to see the relationship of the content visually and retrieve answers or key words from the Mind Map when answering the questions. The majority of pupils displayed eagerness in using Mind Maps, making the classroom environment livelier. Feedback from the pupils revealed that they found Mind Mapping useful for organizing information and more straightforward in helping them to understand the passage. They were also able to remember important information better. Due to the group dynamics at play, it was felt that the results of the experiment would have been more accurate if all pupils were to perform the Mind Map activities individually. The final conclusion incorporating Mind Mapping into the teaching of comprehension skills enhances student's understanding and memory of comprehension passages.

Ayu Indrayani, (2014) studied a Quasi Experimental research in Jakarta. The objective of this study is to find the effectiveness of mind mapping in improving students' reading comprehension achievement, especially for narrative text at the second grade students of SMA Mathla'ul Huda Parung Panjang Bogoracademic year 2013/2014. The subjects of this study were 70 students. Experimental research was used as a method in this study. The study was carried out in two classes, they are the controlled class and the experimental class.

The data were gathered through tests which were delivered into the pre-test and the post-test. The result of the study showed that the mind mapping technique is effective to use in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text. Gained score of the experimental class (27.14) is higher than the controlled class (17.71). From the result of statistic calculation, it is obtained that the value of t-observation (to) is 3.47 and degree of freedom (df) is 68 . In the table of significance $5 \%$, the value of degree of significance is 1.66. Comparing those values, the result is $3.47>1.66 \mathrm{which}$ means t-observation (to) score is higher than t-table ( tt ) score. In other word, the Alternative Hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the Null Hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. Therefore, teaching reading comprehension of narrative text by using mind mapping technique is effective.

Bekti, (2009) sought about the use of mind mapping as a technique in teaching reading comprehension, an experimental study on the eleventh grade students of SMK Negeri 8 Semarang in the academic year of 2006/2007. The objectives of this study are to search how mind mapping technique is applied as a technique in teaching reading comprehension and to find out whether this technique can affect the students' reading comprehension achievements. This study was experimental research. The population of this study was the eleventh grade students of SMK Negeri 8 Semarang in the academic year of $2006 / 2007$. The sampling process was administered by applying cluster random sampling. There were 180 students of the eleventh grade and 30 students were taken as the experimental group and taught by using mind mapping technique whereas other 30 students were the control group and taught without the use of mind mapping technique. The experimental group develops better as the average scores increase 2.40 point (from 70.06 to 72.46 ), whereas the average scores of the control group increased only 0.20 point (from 70.10 to 70.30 ). The significant differences of the two means were measured by using the $t$ test formula. The result shows that there is a significant difference in the reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using mind mapping technique and those who were taught conventionally. Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that reading comprehension is taught by using a variety of techniques which are, of course, appropriate to improve the students' reading comprehension achievements. Most of all, the teacher of English is always expected to be creative to invent new ideas of his own teaching reading comprehension technique since not all techniques suggested by experts are appropriate for the students he teaches. Besides, he is the one who knows his students' needs.

## Method

## Introduction

The overall goal of this research is to improve the reading comprehension ability. In this part researcher explains details of how to study and what was down in the research through four parts. "In the method section the reader can expect to inform about all aspects of the study. One reason for this is the later possibility of replication. Another reason is that in order for readers to come to an informed opinion about the research, they need to know as much details as possible about what was done."(Macky \& Gass 2005, p.9)

## The Participants

The participants of the present study was chosen from Jahad-e- Daneshgahi Department of Foreign Languages in Miyaneh. Ninety students will constitute the population of the present study who were the students with the age range of 16-25 that are at intermediate level. After giving Nelson homogeneity test to the population, 1 above and below SD about 60 intermediate students will be chosen as the participants for the study. All the participants were female and will come from a bilingual background, i.e. Turkish and Persian. They were native speakers of Turkish whose L2 is Persian, but all of them have passed required English courses at school and also some at university.

## The Instruments

1. The participants' general proficiency was assessed by using the standardized test of Nelson Denny Proficiency Test to ensure the homogeneity of the groups at the very beginning of the course.
2. A Nelson Deny reading proficiency test was designed as a pre-test to ensure that the participants reading proficiency level is homogenies. This test consisted of 5 short reading passages
3. For treatment the teacher taught reading passages from their books with mind mapping techniques in 6 sessions during 3 weeks, only for experimental group.
4. After the treatment the researcher constituted a teacher made test from the presented reading comprehension passages that was piloted. This test was consisted of 30 multiple choice items, everyone with 4 choices.

## Procedure

In this study the researcher sought a favorable meaningful difference of reading comprehension success to reply to the research question. At first the population was selected from Jahad-e- Daneshgahi Department of Foreign Languages intermediate students. Through a Nelson Denny proficiency test 60 homogenous learners -one SD above and below- was chosen between 90 participants and was assigned into two separate groups, one experimental ( 30 female EG) and one control group ( 30 female CG). Before the instructional treatment was started, the participants would be pre-tested by standardized test of Nelson in order to determine their level in reading comprehension. In the experimental group the course was carried out with mind maps while a traditional teacher-centered teaching approach was used in control group. During three week in 6 session the groups will receive their treatment. In this case the treatment is texts with mind mapping. Therefore, in order to determine the effect of treatment a teacher made post-test was also constructed by the researcher.

## The Design of the Study

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A typical experimental study usually uses comparison or control groups to investigate research question. Many second language researches involve a comparison between two or more groups, one is control group and others are experimental group. The design types can range from truly experimental to quasi-experimental. True experimental design must employ these characteristic
a. random selection of subjects
b. use of control groups
c. random assignment to control group
d. random assignment

In this study It will be decided to employ a quasi- experimental design which will include a pretest, a treatment activity, and an immediate post-test. It will be quasi-experimental, without random assignment. They employed both a control group and experimental group to measure the change that occurs in both groups.

In this sense, the researcher attempt to control for all confounding variables, or at least consider their impact, while attempting to determine if the treatment is what truly caused the change. There were two variables in this design mind mapping is independent and reading comprehension is dependent variable. By this design the researcher studied the effect of mind mapping on reading comprehension. The experimental design is often thought as the only research method that can adequately measure the cause and effect relations. The type of treatment activity in this study was some text with mind mapping that the researcher gave to the experimental group. One post-test was designed to assess the effectiveness of the treatment.

## Results and Discussion

The experimental data

## Statistics

|  | pretest.exp | posttest.exp | pretest.control | posttest.control |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| $\mathrm{N} \quad$ Valid | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | 14.5000 | 16.9333 | 14.8667 | 14.5000 |
| Median | 10.0000 | 15.0000 | 15.0000 | 15.0000 |
| Mode | 10.00 | $15.00^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 10.00 |  |
| Std. Deviation | 6.29039 | 5.32355 | 7.53719 | 6.20761 |
| Variance | 39.569 | 28.340 | 56.809 | 38.534 |
| Skewness | .873 | .409 | 1.055 | .549 |
| Kurtosis | -.331 | -.224 | .079 | 5.022 |
| Minimum | 8.00 | 10.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Maximum | 30.00 | 30.00 | 30.00 | 30.00 |

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown





Paired Samples Statistics

|  |  | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Pair 1 | pretest.exp | 14.5000 | 30 | 6.29039 | 1.14846 |
|  | posttest.exp | 16.9333 |  | 30 | 5.32355 |

Paired Samples Correlations

|  |  | N | Correlation | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Pair 1 | pretest.exp \& posttest.exp | 30 | .540 | .002 |
| Pair 2 |  |  |  |  |
|  | posttest.control | 30 | .533 | .002 |

Paired Samples Test

|  | Paired Differences | T | df | Sig. (2- |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |



The result shows that the mean of experimental group in pretest was 14.500 with SD: 6.290 after treatment in posttest it increased to 16.923 with SD: 5.323. According to the gained score in T- test $\mathrm{t}=2.365$, sig=0/025 (is less than t -value $=0.5$ ) the researcher find that the scores of experimental group significantly increased. Also the mean of control group in pretest was14.866 with SD: 7.537 and in posttest was 14.500 with SD: 6.866 . According to the $t$-test $=0.298$ and $\operatorname{sig}=0.768$ (more than t -value $=0.5$ ) it was concluded that there is no significant differences. It can be defined that teaching reading comprehension by using mind mapping is more effective than teaching reading comprehension without mind mapping since the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, teaching reading comprehension by using mind mapping gives positive influence on the students' comprehension achievement.

## The Conclusion

This research was conducted by using quasi-experimental design which is aimed to find out whether mind mapping is effective to improve students reading comprehension achievement. Based on the statistical calculation, there is a significant difference between teaching reading comprehension by using mind mapping technique and without using mind mapping technique. The result shows that the mean of experimental group in posttest is higher than the mean of control group, it means that the Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected. Hence, mind mapping technique is effective to improve students' achievement in reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

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# COMPARING THE EFFECT OF TASK-BASED (TBI) VS.CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION (CBI) ON EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY LEARNING 

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#### Abstract

VOCABULARY IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF LANGUAGE, THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE IN SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THEORISTS AND RESEARCHERS. ACCORDINGLY, MANY TYPES OF APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED TO THE TEACHING OF VOCABULARY. AMONG THESE APPROACHES, FEW OF THEM USED ON TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION AND CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION. THEREFORE, THE PRESENT STUDY WAS AN ATTEMPT TO COMPARE THE EFFECT OF TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION AND CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTIONON VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT OF EFL LEANERS. TO THIS END, 17 FEMALE AND 13 MALE LEARNERS WERE SELECTED THROUGH CONVENIENCE SAMPLING FROM ARIAN INSTITUTE IN GHORVE, SANANDAJ, IRAN. THESE PARTICIPANTS WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO COMPARISON GROUPS. FIRST A VOCABULARY TEST (TEACHER-MADE) WAS GIVEN TO THE LEARNERS AS A PRETEST TO TAKE UP THE INITIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANTS; THEN THE SUBJECTS IN TWO EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS ATTENDED 10 SEVENTY-FIVE-MINUTE-CLASS-SESSIONS DURING WHICH IN GROUP A, VOCABULARY WAS TAUGHT BASED ON TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION (TBI) AND IN GROUP B, IT WAS TAUGHT BASED ON CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION (CBI). AT THE END OF THE TREATMENT PERIOD, ANOTHER VOCABULARY TEST WAS GIVEN AS A POST-TEST. FINALLY THE PERFORMANCE OF BOTH GROUPS WERE ANALYZED BY ANCOVA, THE RESULTS OF WHICH SHOWED THAT GROUP B (CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION) HAD OUTPERFORMED GROUP A (TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION). THEREFORE, IT SEEMS THAT CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION MAY BENEFIT EFL LEARNERS MORE IN LEARNING VOCABULARY THAN TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION DOES.


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## KEYWORD: TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION, CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION, EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY LEARNING

## Introduction

Undoubtedly, one of the most important parts of language knowledge is knowledge of the words which is the central part of language learning. It means that vocabulary knowledge is a vital prerequisite of second language learning. It is a basic element to comprehend the meaning and to help learners to understand and communicate with others (Lewis, 1993). According to McCarthy (1994) vocabulary learning has different aspects that include remembering words, ability to use them automatically in different contexts. Vocabulary usually plays the greater role in communication than other component (Allen, 1983). According to Allen (1983) lexical problems frequently interfere with communication, and they result in failing in communication when people do not use the proper words. Increasing vocabulary knowledge is a basic part of the process of education, both as a means and as an end. Lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge is already an obvious and serious obstacle for many students, and their numbers can be expected to rise as an increasing proportion of them fall into categories considered educationally at risk (Nagy, 1988). At the same time, advances in knowledge will create an ever larger pool of concepts and words that a person must master to be literate and employable (Nagy, 1988).

However, there are many difficulties in vocabulary learning because the teachers and practitioners may use traditional methods of instruction to teach vocabularies and these techniques lead to loss of learners' motivation (Nagy, 1988). Nagy believes that teachers can adopt different instructional techniques to match with learners' need to increase their motivation (Nagy, 1988).

Exploring learners' need and increasing their motivation have major impacts on language learning. As Nagy (1988) maintains, the major motivation for vocabulary instruction is to help learners to understand materials. So it is important that foreign language teachers stimulate learners to learn vocabularies.

However, despite this vital role, vocabulary seems a much neglected part in different approaches and methods of language learning, making it of great importance to revitalize attempts to address the issue (Nation, 2001). Of course in the last two decade attempts have been made to introduce methods and techniques which reader as motivating as possible.

Task-Based Instruction (TBI) and Content-Based Instruction (CBI) have increasingly achieved popularity in recent years and have been recommended as a motivated way forward in English Language Teaching (ELT).

The effect of task-based instruction in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes has been addressed in the literature by a wide range of research. Studies have shown that tasks-based instruction can use in vocabulary class for enhancing learners' motivation (De la Fuente, 2006). Ellis (2003) believes that task-based instruction brings benefits to learners, one of them is motivation and Borphy (2013) states that motivation is a key for learning process since it stimulates learners to do their task.

Another approach which has been supposed to be motivating to learners is Content- based Instruction (CBI). Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is "an approach to language instruction that integrates the presentation of topics or tasks from subject matter class within context of teaching a second or foreign language" (Crandall \&Tuker, 1990, p.187). Some scholars such as Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Celce- Murcia (2001) believe that CBI is one of the most important parts in
language teaching and instruction. Stoller (2002) believes that CBI increases motivation and engages learners so that the students learn language quickly.

Therefore, the present study is an attempt to compare the effect of Task-based Instruction (TBI) and Content-based Instruction (CBI) on vocabulary development of EFL learners.

## Statement of the Problem

One of the most significant parts in communicating and conveying meaning is vocabulary. Vocabulary as an important component in all four skill areas of language is a crucial barrier which students have to deal with before they can make any progress in foreign language, because rich vocabulary improves students' ability to communicate through language skills (Schmitt, 2008; Scrivener, 2009).Nowadays, different methods, techniques and approaches have been proposed to help learners in learning second or foreign language. However, when it comes to vocabulary learning it seems that less attention has been paid to this area and vocabulary learning has been generally neglected in favor of emphasis on grammar and grammar teaching (Zandimoghaddam, 2007).

Zimmerman (1997) believes that second language learners have traditionally been taught by methods in which less attention is paid to vocabulary, therefore most teachers will continue to neglect vocabulary (Cady \&Huckin, 1997). Also Nagy (1988) states that the traditional techniques result in losing the learners' motivation. Traditional methods continue to be used regardless of the more recent ones. Ames and Archer (1988) insist that methods used in teaching English classes fail to motivate the students and stimulate their involvement in class activities.

Most of the English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners are aware of the importance of vocabulary in studying a Foreign Language. They are aware of their need to enhance vocabulary learning and also to improve their communicative competence, nevertheless in the Iranian context, in spite of new methods and approaches in teaching vocabulary, most of the teachers use the traditional techniques the focus of which is on the translation of texts without any interaction in their classes and it results in losing the students' interest (Zandimoghaddam, 2007).

As mentioned above, most of the teachers use different types of approaches, among these approaches few of them have been based on task-based or content-based approach. The main significance of this study is filling this gap that is comparing the effect of task-based and contentbased instruction on developing EFL learners' vocabulary learning.

Task-Based Instruction (TBI) is a kind of approach which can be used in vocabulary classes to enhance learners' motivation and vocabulary gain (De la Fuente, 2006; Joe, 1998; Prabhu, 1987; Ruso, 2007). So teaching vocabulary through task-based instruction can be beneficial to the students and can help them to learn more easily and make learning enjoyable, because this approach has some characteristics like meaningfulness, interaction, cooperation, peer feedback, natural language use (Nunan, 2001; 2004).

Content- Based Instruction (CBI) motivates students because they receive relevant information in another language and this organizes the goal itself. Students learn two things at the same time and they do not question the importance of learning them (Vasquez, 2009). Stoller (2002) argues that CBI promotes critical thinking skills and enables learners to learn language more quickly and with more pleasure. This study makes a significant theoretical contribution to the second language vocabulary learning because its findings can be used as evidence for and against certain theories and approaches to vocabulary learning.

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Finally it is worth mentioning that learning vocabulary will result in improved competence, change attitudes, growth in interpersonal skill, self-confidence and self-awareness (McFerin, 1999; MeaIman, 1993; Ross-Gordon \& Dowling, 1995).

Therefore, the importance of this study is that its results will be helpful to teachers who are looking for appropriate ways to help students to increase their vocabulary knowledge.

## Related studies

## Importance of Vocabulary Learning

Richards and Renandya (2002) suppose that "vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write (p.255).

McCarthy (1994) propose of vocabulary learning should include both remembering words and the ability to use them automatically in a wide range of language central arises (cited in Marzban, 2012, p.37).

According to his definition, there is a distinction between knowing a word and using a word. So the strategies of vocabulary learning must include strategies for using and knowing a word. For the first time, when learners are faced with new words, some of them are using dictionary but other try to guess the meaning and usage from context and there are so many strategies for remembering the word such as (take note, repetition that led to rote learning, types of tasks and activities that teacher use in their class).The main benefit obtained from all learning strategies, include strategy of vocabulary learning, is that they enable learners to take more control of their own learning so student can be take more responsibility for their studies(Nation,2001)

Also Nation (2001) believes that a large amount of vocabulary could be acquired with the help of vocabulary and learning strategies prove useful for students of different language levels.

Also, McCarthy said that in the most of language the biggest competent of any language is vocabulary, there is no problem that how well student learn grammar and how successfully the sounds of foreign language are mastered without word to express a wide range of meaning, communication in foreign language just cannot happen in any meaningful way (McCarthy,1990, cited in Juruičkova , 2006)

In many research such as (Allen,1983) talk about vocabulary and the importance of it, he believes vocabulary is powerful carrier of meaning and teacher and learners confirm that for learning language we need to vocabulary, also he said, when people don't know and don't use of word in right form so the communication collapse (Allen, 1983, cited in Juřičková, 2006).

Some researchers refer to the importance of learning vocabulary.

- "Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learner" (Zimmerman 1987,p.5). The result of lack of vocabulary knowledge is lack of meaningful communication.
- The main benefit that can be obtained from all learning strategies is autonomy; students can take charge of their own learning (Nation, 2001,p.222) and gain independence and self-direction.


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Nation (2001) believes that a large amount of vocabulary can be acquired with the help of vocabulary learning strategies and that the strategies prove useful for students of different language levels.

Also researchers believe that, there is relationship between vocabulary and the student's ability to construct meaning. This relationship can help teacher to improve the student's ability to construct meaning before a text is read. For this assumption, there is challenge, this challenge has occurred because reader acquire vocabulary in a variety of ways through wide reading.

Vocabulary has major role for learning any language whether you are teacher or you are student, vocabulary must be thought.

## Task- Based Instruction

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) or Task-based Instruction (TBI) focuses on the use of authentic language and asking students to do meaningful task using the target language.

Nunan (2004) believes that "task is an important element in syllabus design, classroom teaching and learner assessment" (Nunan, 2004, p.1). According to Willis "task always activity where the target language is used by learner for a communication purpose in order to achieve an outcome (Willis, 1996, p.23).

Richard and Rodgers (2001) state that TBI or TBLT could be functional, interactional and in some cases structural models of language.

When it comes to the theory of learning, Richard and Rodgers (2001) propose that "tasks provide both the input and the output processing necessary for language acquisition". "Task activity and achievement are motivational" (Richard \& Rodgers, 2001, p.228).

Although there is a divergence of views among the advocates of task-based language teaching in relation to the core principles of TBLT, Swan (2005) emphasizes that there is a general agreement among them on the characteristics listed below:

- Language instruction must be mainly naturalistic language use, and related to the meaning rather than language.
- Instruction must support learner-centeredness rather than teacher-centeredness.
- Communicative tasks are especially suitable devices for such an approach
- There is the best way to attract the attention of the students to linguistic component as they emerge incidentally in lessons whose main focus is on meaning or communication.
- Pre or post tasks language study are more beneficial, because they may be make contribution to internalization by leading or other factors.


## Content- Based Instruction

If the learners want to meaningful communication, it follows that language learning must involves meaningful context, and if they want to listen, speak, read or write in other languages, they must listen to, speak, read or write about something, and this need meaningful content has given rise to CBI.

Content- Based Language Teaching (CBLT) or Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is a realistic approach to teaching of language. Its focus is on the particular information or topic and it do not

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have a direct attention to the language itself. Some scholars, such as (Celce- Murcia, 2001; LarsenFreeman, 2000) believe that CBI is as influential contribution to foreign language instruction, Stoller (2002) argues that it is a teaching method that emphasize learning about something rather than about language.

Increased interest is as a significant effect on the learners in over the last ten years (Brown, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Richards and Schmitt (1983) define CBI as "CBI refers to an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus" (Richard \& Schmitt, 1983, p.204).

Brinton et al. (1989) states that CBI "is the integration of particular content with language teaching aims, the concurrent teaching academic subject matter and second language skill" they also state "CBI approaches view the target language as a vehicle through which subject matter content is learned rather than as the immediate object of study"( Brington et al. 1989, p.5)

Krahke(1987) has noted that CBI is "the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught" (Krahke, 1987, p.54).

## Methodology

## Participant

The sample of the present study included 30 EFL learners conveniently sampled from among 70 aging from 17 to 23 of Arian Institute in Ghorve, Sanandaj, Iran including 13 males and 17 females at the intermediate level taken from two intact classes at the institute. The participants had learnt English for about 5 years and reached the intermediate level. The sampling design of the study was convenience non-probability design. These 30 participants were randomly assigned into two comparison groups, 15 people each.

## Instrument

To carry out the present study, various instruments were used:
The Pretest: The first instrument was a teacher- made vocabulary test which was administered prior to the actual phase of study to take up the initial differences between the groups. It was a 30- multiple-choice-item test in a Cloze format in which participants were supposed to choose an alternative answer from 4 alternatives. The time needed for administration of this test was about 35 minutes, plus 5 minutes to transfer answers to the answer sheet. Their texts were taken from an available book such as "Four Corners" by Richards and Bohike (2011), the reason for choosing this book was the level of it which was for intermediate level students. The reliability of the test was ensured in a pilot study with ten of the participants. This test was administered to both groups before the treatment.

The Posttest: This test was composed of 30 close-ended items in which each correct answer received one point. The time needed for administration of this vocabulary test was about 25 minutes, plus 5 minutes to transfer answers to the answer sheet. Their items were selected from students' course book "Select Reading" by Lee and Ganderson (2001), the reason for choosing this book was the level of it which was for intermediate level of students. It was parallel to the pretest and the reliability of the test was ensured in a pilot study with ten of the participants. This test was administered after the actual phase of study to compare the performance of groups.

## Procedure

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The data collection procedure started in Spring 2015 at Arian Institute in Ghorve, Sanandaj, Iran. The participants in this study included 30 EFL learners in two intact classes conveniently sampled at Arian Institute in Ghorve, Sanandaj, Iran. These participants were randomly assigned into two comparison groups, 15 people each. First, the vocabulary test was given to them as a pretest to take up the initial differences, between the participants. This research was conducted during 10 class sessions, each session taking one hour and thirty minutes. Task-based instruction and Content-based instruction were used to teach vocabulary in the groups. The materials used in the current study were 5 reading texts from the students' course book" Select Reading" by Lee and Ganderson (2001). The reason for choosing this book was the level of it which was for intermediate level students.

Group A, was taught based on Task-based instruction. First a passage taken from the book" Select Reading" was given to the participants and then some tasks were presented. Their class time was divided into 3 phases: pre task, task- cycle, post task based on Willis (1996).In pre-task, the text was used to activate the background knowledge of the students (schemata) and to introduce the new vocabularies; it means that some questions about the topic of the text was asked, before the participants read the text.

For example, if the topic of the lesson was "Literary Tradition" the following questions might have been asked:
"Who can talk about the history of literary tradition?"
"Can anyone name some of the famous poets of that time?"
Then they were allowed to look at the text to guess the meaning of the words which were underlined and then they wrote the definitions of the words from dictionary.

Task-cycle, the participants were engaged in completing different tasks. This phase offers learners the chance to use whatever language they already know in order to carry out the task and then to improve their language under teachers' guidance while planning their reports on the task. This stage offers learners a holistic experience of language in use.

Guessing task: The teacher wrote some words on the broad and described their meaning, then the students had to guess which words were being described.

Negotiation of meaning: In this task the class was divided into A and B groups, then they sot facing each other, each group had the word with definitions and they try to ask each other.

Information gap: Student A would have the vocabulary words written on strips of paper and student B would have the definitions of those words. Working together, they paired words and definitions to learn new vocabulary.

Matching: Students work in groups, in the blank they should write the correct letter to match items.

In the post-task, the learners showed their ability in using the task and reported their activities that they had done during in their class. In this phase, the learners read the text again and also identified some vocabularies which seemed problematic to them then asked teacher for help.

Group B, was taught based on Content-based instruction. Similar texts to those in group A (taken from the book" Select Reading") were used to teach vocabularies. The first text was "The Art of Genius", the teacher started to ask about the students' background knowledge about geniuses while mentioning the name of some geniuses (Galileos, Enistein, etc) and their life. The

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students then talk about the books that they had read in their science course at school, the movies they had seen and the news they had heard. They were the given time to read the text in pairs in order to get the general meaning. After reading the text, the teacher asked the students to evaluate the text by comparing the new pieces of information with their previous knowledge. Then, she posed some open-ended questions about geniuses and the ways to think like them. Once reading was over the students did exercises that follow the text, these exercises included five true or false sentences and four close ended questions about new vocabularies in the text. At the end, the students were arranged in small groups to do translate the text based on the knowledge that they received during the class.

After the end of the treatment period, the posttest was administered to the participants in both groups.

## Design

The research method used in the current study was quasi- experimental with pretest, posttest and two experimental groups.

## Data analysis

As the aimed at comparing the effect of Task-Based Instruction vs. Content-Based Instruction as the independent variable on EFL learners' vocabulary learning as the dependent variable and as there were a pretest and posttest administered in two experimental groups. The comparison of the relative efficiency of independent variable could be best measured through ANCOVA statistical procedure which assumes the normality of the data.

This table summarizes the basic descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation for the pre-test and post-test in this study for both groups.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for the Groups

|  | N | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { Minimu } \\ \mathrm{m} \end{array}$ | Maximu m | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Skewness |  | Kurtosis |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. <br> Error | Statistic | Std. <br> Error |
| Group | 30 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.5000 | . 50855 | . 000 | . 427 | -1.148 | . 833 |
| Pretest | 30 | 20.00 | 27.00 | 24.3000 | 2.11969 | -. 540 | . 427 | -. 611 | . 833 |
| Posttest | 30 | 23.00 | 29.00 | 26.2000 | 1.74988 | -. 286 | . 427 | -. 651 | . 833 |
| Pre.Content | 15 | 20.00 | 27.00 | 24.0667 | 2.34419 | -. 668 | . 580 | -. 731 | 1.121 |
| Pre.Task | 15 | 21.00 | 27.00 | 24.5333 | 1.92230 | -. 198 | . 580 | -1.042 | 1.121 |
| Post.Content | 15 | 23.00 | 29.00 | 26.5333 | 1.68466 | -. 583 | . 580 | . 149 | 1.121 |
| Post.task | 15 | 23.00 | 29.00 | 25.7333 | 1.86956 | . 144 | . 580 | $-1.024$ | 1.121 |
| Valid N | 15 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

As Table1 shows, the mean score and the SD for the pretest scores in the first experimental group (content-based) were 24.06 and 2.34 while for the second experimental group (task-based) they were 24.53 and 1.92. These for the posttest scores in the first experimental group were 26.53

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and 1.68 and for the second experimental group were 25.73 and 1.86 respectively. Furthermore, Skewness and Kurtosis values in the table were between $\pm 2$, which, according to George and Mallery (2010) show that the data are descriptively normal. Although the data summarized in Table 1 point to the normal distribution of scores, to get statistical evidence for the normality of scores, normality assumptions for running ANCOVA were also checked. These included checking the normal distribution of test scores, homogeneity of error variances, linearity of slope of regression lines, and homogeneity of regression slopes.

## Assessing Normality Assumptions

Table 2
Testing the Normality of the Distribution of Test Scores

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
b. There are no valid cases for Pretest when Group $=2.000$. Statistics cannot be computed for this level.

As Table 2 shows, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov values obtained for pretest and posttest scores in the first experimental group (content-based) were not normal; however, as the sample size for each group in the study was less than 30, according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), ShapiroWilk's estimate provides a more reliable measure of normality of scores. Thus, as the ShapiroWilk's values obtained for the groups in both the pretest and the posttest were all larger than the significance value of .05 , it was implied that the test scores were all normally distributed.

## Equality of Error Variances

To check this assumption Levene's statistic was used.
Table 3
Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances ${ }^{a}$

Dependent Variable:Posttest

| F | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| 3.470 |  | 1 | 28 |

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
a. Design: Intercept + Pretest + Group

As Table 3 indicates, the value obtained was $\mathrm{F}(1,28)=3.47$, $\mathrm{Sig}=.073$, which was larger than the cut-off value of .05 implying that the assumption of equality of error variances had not been violated.

## Linearity of Slope of Regression Lines

To check this assumption a grouped scatterplot of the covariate, post-test scores of the dependent variable and independent variable was plotted. As Figure 1 below shows, there was a linear relationship between the dependent variable (scores of post-test) and the covariate (scores of pre-test) for our groups.


Figure 1. Linearity of regression lines.

## Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

This assumption investigates the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable for each of our groups to check if there is no interaction between the covariate and the treatment.

Table 4
Test of between Subjects Effects
Dependent Variable:Posttest

| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Corrected Model | 50.897 |  | 3 | 16.966 | 11.638 |
| Intercept | 29.697 | 1 | 29.697 | 20.371 | .000 |
| Group | .489 | 1 | .489 | .335 | .000 |
| Pretest | 42.550 | 1 | 42.550 | 29.188 | .000 |
| Group * Pretest | $\mathbf{8 4 3}$ | $\mathbf{1}$ | $\mathbf{1}$ | $\mathbf{8 4 3}$ | $\mathbf{. 5 7 8}$ |

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| Error | 37.903 | 26 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Total | 20682.000 | 30 |
| Corrected Total | 88.800 | 29 |

a. R Squared $=.573$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.524$ )

In the output obtained in Table 4 the level of significance for interaction term (shown above as Group*Pre-test) was greater than $.05(\mathrm{P}=.454)$ which indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was not violated.

Having checked normality assumptions, we can now proceed with the ANCOVA analysis to find out the differences between our groups.

## Testing the Research Hypothesis

The main ANCOVA results are presented in Tables 5 and 6

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics

## Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable:Posttest

| Group | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Content-Based | 26.5333 | 1.68466 | 15 |
| Task-based | 25.8667 | 1.80739 | 15 |
| Total | 26.2000 | 1.74988 | 30 |

## Table 6

## Analysis of Covariance

## Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable:Posttest

| Source | Type III Sum <br> of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta <br> Squared |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Corrected Model | $50.054^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 2 | 25.027 | 17.440 | .000 | .564 |
| Intercept | 28.894 | 1 | 28.894 | 20.135 | .000 | .427 |
| Pretest | 46.721 | 1 | 46.721 | 32.557 | .000 | .547 |
| Group | 6.654 | 1 | 6.654 | 4.637 | .040 | .147 |
| Error | 38.746 | 27 | 1.435 |  |  |  |
| Total | 20682.000 | 30 |  |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 88.800 | 29 |  |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.564$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.531$ )

To check whether the groups were significantly different in terms of their scores on the dependent variable (post-test) while controlling for possible effects of the covariate (pretest) ANCOVA was run. As Table 4.6 shows, the value corresponding to independent variable (Group) was $\mathrm{F}(1,27)=4.63$, Sig $=.040, \mathrm{P}<.05$, partial $\eta^{2}=.147$ ) which implies that groups differed significantly. This implied that there was a significant difference between the performances of the groups as far as vocabulary learning was concerned.

Another piece of information which can be of interest is the effect size, as indicated by the corresponding Partial Eta Squared value. The value in this case was .147 that was a small effect size according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines. This value also shows how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. We can convert the partial eta square value to a percentage by multiplying the value by 100. In our study, this explains for 14.7 percent of the variance.

Now, to decide about the direction of this difference Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni correctionwere estimated. Table 7 indicates the results of pairwise comparisons.

Table7
Pairwise Comparisons

## Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable:Posttest

| (I) Group | (J) Group | Mean Difference (IJ) | Std. Error | Sig. ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | 95\% Confidence Interval for Difference ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Content-Based | Task-based | .948* | . 440 | . 040 | . 045 | 1.851 |
| Task-based | Content-Based | -. $948 *$ | . 440 | . 040 | -1.851 | -. 045 |

Based on estimated marginal means
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

As the table reflects, the mean differences between the groups (MD=.948) was significant at $\mathrm{P}=0.04$, which points to a better performance of the content-based group. This means that there was no significant difference in vocabulary learning of EFL learners through task-based instruction and content-based instruction.
All in all, the results show that the research null hypothesis that "There is not any significant difference in vocabulary learning of EFL learners through Task-based Instruction and Contentbased Instruction" is rejected. This can indicate that teaching vocabulary through a focus on content may result in better vocabulary gains than teaching vocabulary through designing tasks.

## Discussion

As mentioned earlier, in order to find the answer to the research question, the post-test mean scores of the participants in first experimental group (TBI) and second experimental group (CBI) were compared and it was revealed that the members of second experimental group (CBI) had outperformed the participants in the first experimental group (TBI) in terms of vocabulary learning.

Several studies have intended to investigate the effect of content-based and task-based instruction on different areas of second language. The results obtained by some of them are in line with the findings of the present study.

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Thanh and Huan (2012) investigated the effect of task-based language learning and student motivation in vocabulary acquisition. The result of their study indicated that task-based instruction has significant effect on vocabulary performance of the students.

Sarani and Sahebi (2012) investigated the importance task-based instruction on vocabulary ESP courses. Data analysis showed that the task-based approach was more effective in teaching technical vocabulary compared to the traditional one.

The present study confirms the results of Khoshsima (2009) who studied the role of contentbased text to motivate students. His finding indicated that content-based instruction motivated the students and improved their English proficiency.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study support Ya-Ling-Tsai (2010) study which indicated that students' general and academic English proficiency were improved via contentbased instruction.

Marashi (2011) who studied on the impact of content-based and task-based instruction in critical thinking on EFL learners' reading comprehension. He found that there was not a significant difference concerning the impact of content-based and task-based instruction on EFL learners' reading comprehension.

The analysis of students' reading comprehension through task-based and content-based instruction in Malmir and Najafi Sarems' (2011) study, revealed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after teaching task-based method.

## Conclusion

The results of data analysis presented above pointed to a significant effect of content-based instruction on vocabulary learning of the participants in second experimental group (CBI) who outperformed the participants in first experimental group (TBI) in terms of vocabulary learning.

As the result of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) indicated, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that content-based instruction can contribute to improvement of L2 vocabulary instruction in Iranian EFL context and learners can benefit from it more. This method could provide a more comfortable and interactive atmosphere so that they get more opportunities for negotiation. The participants can also learn how to work with peers, and how to values difference through their experiences of working together (Speck, 2002). The finding of the present study cannot be considered conclusive in any possible way, which implies the necessity of investigating the issue by other scholars.

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# INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WRITING COMPLEXITY, ACCURACY, AND FLUENCY AMONG GRADUATE STUDENTS OF TEFL 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY SOUGHT TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) AND WRITING COMPLEXITY, ACCURACY, AND FLUENCY (CAF) AMONG GRADUATE EFL STUDENTS. TO THIS END, 124 PARTICIPANTS (84 FEMALES AND 40 MALES) WERE SELECTED FROM MA STUDENTS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL). ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED FROM SIX INTACT CLASSES. TO ASSESS THE PARTICIPANTS' EI, BAR-ON'S EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT INVENTORY (EQI) WAS ADMINISTERED. ALSO, THE PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED TO WRITE AN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING. THE WRITING TASK WAS SCORED BY TWO RATERS, YIELDING INTER-RATER RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS OF 0.84, 0.87, AND 0.94 FOR WRITING COMPLEXITY, ACCURACY AND FLUENCY, RESPECTIVELY. THE RESULTS OF THE PEARSON CORRELATIONS REVEALED THAT EI HAD SIGNIFICANTLY POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH WRITING COMPLEXITY ( $R=.13, P<.05$ ), WRITING ACCURACY ( $R=.15, P<.05$ ) AND WRITING FLUENCY ( $R=.21, P<.05$ ). AMONG THE SUBSCALES OF EI, INDEPENDENCE HAD THE HIGHEST RELATIONSHIP WITH WRITING ACCURACY ( $R=.31, P<.05$ ); PROBLEM SOLVING HAD THE STRONGEST ASSOCIATION WITH WRITING COMPLEXITY ( $R=.39, P<.05$ ); AND FLEXIBILITY HAD THE MAXIMUM CORRELATION WITH WRITING FLUENCY ( $R=.43, P<.05$ ). THE FINDINGS HAVE SOME ILLUMINATING IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL/ESL PRACTITIONERS.


KEYWORDS: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, WRITING COMPLEXITY, WRITING ACCURACY, WRITING FLUENCY, EFL LEARNERS

## 1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is regarded as one of the most important parts of individual personality that enhances the chance of success in life, school and work (Salovey, Mayer, \& Caruso, 2006). Bar-On (2006) provided a theoretical basis to evaluate different aspects of EI. BarOn (2006, p.14) defined EI as "a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands".
Bar-On's (2006) model of EI consists of the following components: a) the capability to understand, perceive and express emotions and feelings b) the capability to recognize and understand other's
emotions and relate with them c) the capability to handle, adapt, modify and solve problems of oneself and others d) the capability to regulate, control and manage emotions and feelings e) the capability to be positive and self-motivated.
As learning an L2 is an intellectually complex process, EI may have a positive relationship with L2 learning (Ehrman, Leaver, \& Oxford, 2003). In effect, several barriers in L2 learning can be removed by considering learners' emotions, and consequently, L2 learning can be facilitated (Tsuboya, 1998).
One of the demanding skills for L2 learners is writing (Barkaoui, 2007). The role of writing skill especially in academic context is growing in recent years. The reason of interest in writing is due to publishing research internationally, and it means publishing in English (Leki, 2001).
L2 writing can be analyzed and assessed in terms of notions of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) which are three important dimensions of L2 performance (Skehan, 1998). CAF provide significant criteria for assessment of the EFL learners' performance in oral and written activities (Housen \& Kuiken, 2009). Moreover, CAF are distinct components of L2 performance which can be separately measured (Housen \& Kuiken, 2009). Each component of CAF is important in L2 performance and more attention to one of them may have a negative influence on the other components in L2 learning process (Skehan, 2009).
Complexity, as the first component of CAF, is defined as "a dynamic property of learner's interlanguage system at large or as a more stable property of individual linguistic elements that make up inter-language system" (Housen \& Kuiken, 2009, p. 5). There are two kinds of complexity; lexical complexity and syntactic complexity. Lexical complexity refers to total number of complex words in a text and "syntactic complexity is characterized by lexical complexity and a clause with any type of non-canonical words order" (Ghonsooly \& Shalchy, 2013, p. 149).
Accuracy is the oldest and commonly notion which is used to measure L2 proficiency. Housen and Kuiken (2009, p. 3) stated that accuracy is the most consistent component of CAF and refers to "degree of deviation from the norm" that it means identifying errors. In other words, learners produce accurate language when they control L2 grammar features in their performance (Housen \& Kuiken, 2009). A range of measures are used to assess L2 production accuracy in applied linguistics, for example, the proportion of error free clauses (Skehan, 2009); the correct verb forms (the percentage of accurately used verbs in the task) (Ellis \&Yuan, 2004); and the number of errors per 100 words (Mehnert, 1998).
Fluency refers to the number of syllables and words and pauses in a text (Housen \& Kuiken, 2009). Concerning fluency, a range of measures are available to assess fluency in learner's performance; first, breakdown fluency by number and length of pausing; second, repair fluency by number of repetition, reformulation, false starts, and replacements; third, measured by rate of syllables per minute.
To the best of the researchers' knowledge, in spite of a growing body of research investigating the relationship between EI and L2 learning, few studies have been conducted on examining the relationship between EI and L2 writing, and there is a paucity of research on the relationship between EI and writing CAF. Moreover, the problems related to the lack of writing ability are not just because of the learners' lack of language knowledge, but from the previous studies it can be claimed that learners' affective factors can be effective in writing process (e.g. Farjami \& Ghebali, 2013; Ghasemi, Behjat \& Kargar, 2013, Sadeghi \& Farzizadeh, 2013). Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between EI, as an important affective factor, and three dimensions of L2 writing, i.e. complexity, accuracy, and fluency, among graduate EFL learners. To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were addressed:
Q1. To what extent do emotional intelligence and writing complexity correlate among graduate students of TEFL?
Q2. To what extent do emotional intelligence and writing accuracy correlate among graduate students of TEFL?
Q3. To what extent do emotional intelligence and writing fluency correlate among graduate students of TEFL?

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Participants

A total number of 150 MA TEFL students whose age ranged from 24 to 50 participated in this study. The participants were selected from six intact classes. The sampling technique was nonrandom convenience sampling. The setting of the study was Azad University of Ahvaz, Iran. Twenty six participants who did not complete either the EI questionnaire or the writing task were excluded from the study. Finally, 124 participants ( 84 females and 40 males) formed the final sample.
All of the participants did their BA in English Language Teaching, English Literature, or English Translation at different universities of Iran. Most of the participants were also English teachers at different schools or English language institutes. Therefore, they were acquainted with different types of writing such as essay writing and academic writing. The MA students were selected to allow the researcher to measure the complexity, accuracy, and fluency of L2 writing with a higher certainty.

### 2.2 Instruments

### 2.2.1 EI Questionnaire

Two instruments were used in this study. First, Bar-On's (2003) EQ-i was used to assess the participants' EI. The original version of the questionnaire included 133 items but later Bar-On reduced the size to 117 items. In the present study, the Persian version of questionnaire was used to avoid misunderstanding of the content for the participants. According to Dehshiri (2003), this questionnaire has reliability and validity in Iranian context and the Cornbach's alpha coefficient of the test is found to be 0.76 . This questionnaire consists of 90 items in five EI domains including fifteen sub-scales. The questionnaire is adjusted into the Likert scale and the respondents can select the answers from 1 to 5 as: $1=$ strongly disagree, $2=$ disagree, $3=$ somewhat agree, $4=$ agree, and $5=$ strongly agree.
The first EI domain is intrapersonal skill ( 30 items) which is divided into self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence. The second EI domain is interpersonal skill (18 items) which is divided into empathy, interpersonal relationship, and social responsibility. The third EI domain is adaptability skill ( 18 items) which is divided into problem solving, reality testing, and flexibility. The fourth EI domain is stress management (12 items) which is divided into stress tolerance and impulse control. The fifth EI domain is general mood ( 12 items) divided into happiness and optimism. Each test subscales is consisted of 6 questions. The minimum score is 90 and the maximum score is 450 .

### 2.2.2 Writing Task

The second instrument was the writing test based on the IELTS argumentative writing topics in Task 2. The researcher assembled a series of argumentative topics from the common IELTS topics list. Five topics were selected by the researcher from the topic lists which were related to the educational issues. Then, the researcher conducted a pilot test to determine some factors such as the topic novelty, participants' enthusiasm to the topic, and participants' familiarity to the topic. Hence, ten MA English language students were asked to write about these topics. The students commented on the topics. Most of them suggested one topic: 'Some people believe that exams are an inappropriate way of measuring students' performance and should be replaced by continuous assessment. Do you agree or disagree with this view?'
The researcher chose the argumentative topic for the writing task because of pedagogical implication of argumentative essay. According to Hyland (2003), argumentative essay is consisted of three elements; thesis which introduces the proposition, argument which discusses ground for thesis, and conclusion which presents the significant of the argument stage. In this study, measuring writing ability was determined in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency. It
should be mentioned that some writing criteria were not considered in the current study, for instance, layout, handwriting, and capitalization.

### 2.3 Measuring Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency

Complexity, accuracy, and fluency were measured to evaluate the participant's L2 writing. In this study, the L2 writing variables were computed following the study conducted by Ellis and Yuan (2004). In the writing task, the word limit was considered 250 words, and the required time to do the task was considered 40 minutes based on the IELTS writing, Task 2. Measuring each aspect of the participants' L2 writing (complexity, accuracy, and fluency) is explained in the following sections.

## Measuring Complexity

In the present study complexity referred to syntactic complexity. It measured by the portion of clauses to T-units in participant's written text. T-unit is defined as a measure of structural complexity of sentences (Richards \& Schmidt, 2010). T-units were used because the syntactic complexity of the written language can be evaluated by the number of T-units relative to the length of the text. T-units consist of one main clause with whatever dependent clauses that jointed to it. Compound sentences contain two or more T-units because they have two or more independent clauses. In addition, in this study, writing complexity was rated by two raters who were well-experienced and expert English teachers with MA degree. The Pearson correlation was used to measure the reliability of two raters' scores. The inter-rater reliability of writing complexity was 0.84 .

## Measuring Accuracy

Accuracy measure was based on the error free clauses (Ellis \& Yuan, 2004). According to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 81), clause is "a group of words which form a grammatical unit and which contain a subject and a finite verb". In the present study, all errors were considered in accordance with Keshavarz' (2012) classification of errors. Keshavarz (2012) established a linguistic classification of errors. In this classification, there are four major categories of errors; orthographic, phonological, lexico-semantic, and morphological-syntactic errors. Orthographic errors refer to spelling errors, and word formation errors, lexico-semantic errors refer to the errors that are related to the semantic properties of lexical items in the sentences, and morphological-syntactic error refer to the errors that are related to the wrong use of verbs, tenses, prepositions, article, etc. Phonological errors were not considered in present study. In addition, in this study, writing complexity was rated by two experienced English teachers with MA degree. The Pearson correlation was used to measure the reliability of the two raters' scores. The interrater reliability of writing accuracy was 0.87 .

## Measuring Fluency

Measuring fluency was based on the number of words per minute (Ellis \& Yuan, 2004). The total number of words produced by the participants' written text was divided by the total number of minutes. In the present study, the time to complete the writing task was set at 40 minutes. This time was selected in accordance with IELTS writing Task 2. Therefore, the number of words produced by the participants was divided by 40 . This criterion for measuring fluency was adapted from Ellis and Yuan (2004). In this study, writing fluency was measured by the researcher. The inter-rater reliability of writing accuracy was 0.94 .

### 2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was accomplished at two sessions in two consecutive weeks. The process of data collection had two phases; in the first phase Bar-On's EI test (2003) was given to the participants to measure their EI. This questionnaire was a self-report measure of EI and consisted of 90 items in the form of short sentence. In the present study a Persian version of Bar-on's test

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was applied. The questionnaire was adjusted into Likert scale and participants selected their answers from 1 to 5 as: 1= strongly disagree, $2=$ disagree, $3=$ somewhat agree, $4=$ agree, $5=$ strongly agree. The participants received some directions by the researcher to fill the questionnaire in appropriate way. The time allocated to the questionnaire was twenty minutes which was determined based on the standard time for EQ questionnaire in Persian version that consisted of 90 items (Khooei, 2014).
In the second phase, the participants' writing ability was tested. The participants were asked to write an essay based on the particular topic: "Some people believe that exams are an inappropriate way of measuring students 'performance and should be replaced by continuous assessment. Do you agree or disagree with this view?" Their essay was considered at least 250 words and they were written their essay in 40 minutes. The time was allocated based on the standard time for essay writing. The writing data was collected at the beginning of sessions. In order to establish the expected discipline for performance of the test, the teachers cooperated with the researcher. Moreover, the researcher explained the aim of the research for participants and gave them a promise that their answers to the tests would be confidential and the results would not have any effect on their course score. After collecting the essay writing, they were rated by two experienced English teachers.

### 2.5 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, the researcher computed the mean scores of the two raters on writing complexity and accuracy. The scores of EI questionnaire were also scored following the questionnaire guidelines. The data obtained from the writing test and EI scale were analyzed by SPSS, version 20. Correspondingly, to find the relationship between EI and writing CAF, the Pearson correlation coefficients were computed.

## 3. Results

To investigate the relationship between EI and writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency of EFL graduate students, the Pearson correlation was conducted. Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the participants' total EQ and subscales scores and their scores on writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency.

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Statistics

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Emotional Self-Awareness | 23.16 | 3.666 | 124 |
| Assertiveness | 20.35 | 3.943 | 124 |
| Self-regard | 24.18 | 3.162 | 124 |
| Self-actualization | 23.84 | 3.771 | 124 |
| Independence | 22.79 | 4.191 | 124 |
| Empathy | 26.18 | 3.068 | 124 |
| Social Responsibility | 26.02 | 3.031 | 124 |
| Interpersonal Relationship | 25.32 | 3.500 | 124 |
| Problem Solving | 23.19 | 2.222 | 124 |
| Reality Testing | 20.32 | 3.879 | 124 |
| Flexibility | 20.19 | 3.871 | 124 |
| Stress Tolerance | 19.45 | 4.547 | 124 |
| Impulse Control | 18.18 | 6.127 | 124 |
| Optimism | 23.61 | 3.549 | 124 |
| Happiness | 24.02 | 3.223 | 124 |
| Total EQ Score | 340.77 | 35.215 | 124 |
| Writing Complexity | 1.82 | .430 | 124 |
| Writing Accuracy | .64 | .239 | 124 |


| Writing Fluency | 3.58 | 1.573 | 124 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

As Table 1 illustrates, empathy allocates the higher mean ( $M=26.18, S D=3.068$ ). Salovey and Mayer (1990) stated empathy is a central sub-skill of EI that can be served as an important component in interpersonal skills. In contrast, impulse control gained the lower mean ( $M=18.18$, $S D=6.127$ ). It is observed from Table 4.1 that writing fluency had the highest mean ( $M=3.58$, $S D=1.57$ ) and writing accuracy enjoyed the lowest mean ( $M=.647, S D=.239$ ) among the L 2 writing measures.

## The Results of Correlation Coefficients between EQ and CAF

It is worth mentioning that to determine the strength of the relationship between participants' EI and their writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency Cohen's (1988) criteria were followed to interpret the strength of relationship. According to Cohen (1988), a small correlation is represented by .10, a moderate correlation is considered by .30 , and large correlation is presented by .50 .

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients between Writing CAF and EQ Subscales

|  | Writing Complexity | Writing <br> Accuracy | Writing Fluency |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Self-awareness | $.14^{\circ}$ | .10 | $.16^{\circ}$ |
| Assertiveness | $.25^{\circ}$ | $.19^{\circ}$ | $.35^{\circ}$ |
| Self-regard | $.13^{\circ}$ | $.17^{\circ}$ | $.25^{\circ}$ |
| Self-actualization | .08 | $.28^{\circ}$ | $.22^{\circ}$ |
| Independence | $.16^{\circ}$ | $.31^{\circ}$ | $.37^{\circ}$ |
| Empathy | .07 | $.15^{\circ}$ | $.21^{\circ}$ |
| Social Responsibility | $.13^{\circ}$ | $.19^{\circ}$ | .10 |
| Interpersonal Relationship | .11 | .08 | $.25^{\circ}$ |
| Problem Solving | $.39^{\circ}$ | $.22^{\circ}$ | $.29^{\circ}$ |
| Reality Testing | $.17^{\circ}$ | $.20^{\circ}$ | $.14^{\circ}$ |
| Flexibility | .12 | $.14^{\circ}$ | $.43^{\circ}$ |
| Stress Tolerance | $.22^{\circ}$ | $.18^{\circ}$ | $.34^{\circ}$ |
| Impulse Control | $.19^{\circ}$ | $.25^{\circ}$ | $.17^{\circ}$ |
| Optimism | $.18^{\circ}$ | .12 | $.22^{\circ}$ |
| Happiness | .10 | .09 | $.18^{\circ}$ |
| Total EQ Score | $.13^{\circ}$ | $.15^{\circ}$ | $.21^{\circ}$ |

P<. 05
To address the first research question, the Pearson Correlation Coefficients were computed between EQ and writing complexity scores. As Table 2 displays, a small but significant correlation was observed between total EQ scores and writing complexity ( $r=.13, p<.05$ ). Moderate significant correlation between writing complexity and problem solving ( $r=.39, p<.05$ ). Small significant correlations were found between writing complexity and self-awareness ( $r=.14$, $p<.05$ ), assertiveness ( $r=.25, p<.05$ ), self-regard ( $r=.13, p<.05$ ), independence ( $r=.16, p<.05$ ), socialresponsibility ( $r=.13, p<.05$ ), reality testing ( $r=.17, p<.05$ ), stress tolerance ( $r=.22, p<.05$ ), impulse control ( $r=.19, p<.05$ ), optimism ( $r=.18, p<.05$ ). No significant correlations were found between writing complexity and self-actualization ( $r=.08, p>.05$ ), empathy ( $r=.07, p>.05$ ), interpersonal relationship ( $r=.11, p>.05$ ), flexibility ( $r=.12, p>.05$ ), happiness ( $r=.10, p>.05$ ).
In order to address the second research question, the correlation coefficients between EQ and writing accuracy scores were analyzed. It can be seen in Table 2 that small but significant correlation was found between total EQ scores and writing accuracy ( $r=.15, p<.05$ ). Moderate significant correlation between writing accuracy and independence ( $r=.31, p<.05$ ). Small correlations were found between writing accuracy and assertiveness ( $r=.19, p<.05$ ), self-regard
( $r=.17, p<.05$ ), self-actualization ( $r=.28, p<.05$ ), empathy ( $r=.15, p<.05$ ), social responsibility ( $r=.19$, $p<.05$ ), problem solving ( $r=.22, p<.05$ ), reality testing ( $r=.20, p<.05$ ), flexibility ( $r=.14, p<.05$ ), stress tolerance ( $r=.18, p<.05$ ), impulse control ( $r=.25, p<.05$ ). No significant correlations were found between writing accuracy and interpersonal relationship ( $r=.08, p>.05$ ), optimism ( $r=.12, p>.05$ ), happiness ( $r=.09, p>.05$ ).
To answer the third research question, the correlation coefficient between EQ and writing fluency scores were computed. As shown in Table 2, small but significant correlation was found between total EQ scores and writing fluency ( $r=.21, p<.05$ ). Moderate significant correlations were found between writing fluency and assertiveness ( $r=.35, p<.05$ ), independence ( $r=.37, p<.05$ ), flexibility ( $r=.43, p<.05$ ), stress tolerance ( $r=.34, p<.05$ ). Small significant correlations were found between writing fluency and self-awareness ( $r=.16, p<.05$ ), self-regard ( $r=.25, p<.05$ ), self-actualization ( $r=.22, p<.05$ ), empathy ( $r=.21, p<.05$ ), interpersonal relationship ( $r=.25, p<.05$ ), problem solving ( $r=.29, p<.05$ ), reality testing ( $r=.14, p<.05$ ), impulse control ( $r=.17, p<.05$ ), optimism ( $r=.22, p<.05$ ), happiness ( $r=.18, p<.05$ ). Moreover, no significant correlation was found between writing fluency and social responsibility ( $r=.10, p>.05$ ).

## Results of Correlation Coefficients between L2 Writing Measures

Table 3 shows the correlation coefficients between L2 writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency.
Table 3. Correlation Coefficients between L2 Writing Measures


As Table 3 depicts, writing fluency ( $r=.51, p<.05$ ) has a strong and significant correlation with writing complexity. Also, writing accuracy has a significantly moderate correlation with writing complexity ( $r=.45, p<.05$ ). However, writing accuracy and fluency enjoyed the lowest correlation ( $r=.36, p<.05$ ).

## 4. Discussion

Q1. To what extent do emotional intelligence and writing complexity correlate in EFL graduate students?
The results indicated that writing complexity was associated with the most of EI subscales (selfawareness, assertiveness, self-regard, independence, social responsibility, problem solving, reality testing, stress tolerance, impulse control, and optimism). However, the results also revealed insignificant relationship between several EI subscales and writing complexity such as self-actualization, empathy, interpersonal relationship, flexibility, and happiness. These findings are in agreement with Khooei's (2014) findings which demonstrated a positive relationship between students' EI and their oral complexity. In Khooei's (2014) study, EI as a whole factor had a positive relationship with oral complexity but in current study, EI as a whole factor had a positive relationship with writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency.
Q2. To what extent do emotional intelligence and writing accuracy correlate in EFL graduate students?
In the light of the results obtained from the correlations between EI and writing accuracy, it was revealed that writing accuracy is correlated with the most of the EI subscales (assertiveness, selfregard, self-actualization, independence, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship, problem solving, reality testing, flexibility, stress tolerance, impulse control,
optimism, and happiness). However, the findings revealed insignificant relationship between several EI subscales and writing accuracy such as self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, optimism, and happiness. As stated earlier, writing in L2 comprises retrieval of words and grammatical structures with a more conscious attention (Schoonen et al., 2003). It is therefore likely that those who are emotionally intelligent can control their emotions effectively to focus on retrieval of words and structures when writing a text. Therefore, they have a higher accuracy in their writing compared with those who have low level of EI. The findings of the present study are consistent with those of Ghasemi et al. (2013) who found that the connection between EI and writing improvement is straight. However, the findings of present study do not support the findings of Farjami and Ghebali (2013) who found insignificant relationship between EI and coherence in EFL writing.
Q3. To what extent do emotional intelligence and writing fluency correlate in EFL graduate students?
The predominant conclusion derived from the study revealed that EI as a total factor had a more statistically meaningful correlation with writing fluency of students. In addition, comparing the results of correlation coefficients between EQ subscales and writing CAF revealed that among all subscales of EI, flexibility (a subscale of adaptability ability) had strong correlation with writing fluency. The results indicated that writing fluency was associated with the most of the EI subscales (self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, empathy, interpersonal relationship, problem-solving, reality testing, flexibility, stress tolerance, impulse control, optimism, and happiness). However, the results indicated insignificant relationship between social responsibility (a subscale of EI) and writing fluency. Moreover, these findings support the idea of Salovey et al. (2006) who suggested that EI is one of the most important parts of individual personality that enhances the chance of success in life, school and work. Hence, it could be assumed that EI may increase the chance of success in L2 writing process in general and L2 writing fluency in particular.

## Implications of the Study

The findings of this study may shed light on the promoting educational instructions by pedagogical developers for EFL learners. If we develop EI through educational programs in which writing is used as an important skill in L2 learning, learners can benefit from EI skills which can help learners understand themselves, perceive and express their emotions freely, cooperate with other students, solve their problems in difficult situations, and control their emotions effectively.
This finding has several important implications for learners, teachers, managers, material developers, and curriculum designers that are required to be aware from the prominent role of EI in language learning process. EI should be taught in the classroom. Therefore, language policy makers should put more emphasis on introducing, exploiting, and developing courses and programs for EFL learners to be informed from EI skills, the effect of EI on L2 learning, and the important role of EI in their life.
The findings of present study may help learners modify their beliefs toward the language learning. If learners be informed from this fact that their emotions can affect their L2 learning process, they may try to improve their emotional competence which is learnable. A familiarity with own EI can therefore help learners to change their emotions in an appropriate way. As stated before, learners with higher EI can be more successful in their L2 learning process because the positive EI can facilitate learning process and negative EI can disturb the learning process.
Moreover, if we accept that instructional goals can be influenced by teachers' emotions and perceptions, teachers are expected to be aware from their emotions, express them and manage them effectively. In addition, teachers are required to be aware from their learners' EI. To do this, it is recommended that teachers provide an EI questionnaire at the beginning of the course. If teachers be aware of learners' EI, they can help them to remove some affective variables that

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interrupt L2 learning process. Teachers can provide a positive and warm environment in the classroom to foster EI in their learners.
Teachers should pay attention to learners' EI by using more emotional approaches in L2 teaching. L2 teachers can develop learners' EI by using some techniques in the classroom such as group discussion or pair work (to reinforce intrapersonal skills), using light music or watching movie (to reinforce stress management skills), self-disclosure (to reinforce interpersonal skills), designing game or puzzle (to reinforce adaptability skills), and theater(to reinforce general mood skills). Studies show that L2 teachers that shift their teaching approach from traditional approach to humanistic and communication approaches are more successful in L2 teaching (Ghanizadeh \& Moafian, 2010). In humanistic and communicative approaches learners feel security because they have more chances to cooperate and interact either with other students or with the teacher (Freeman, 2003). Moreover, teachers' empathy with students can decrease foreign language anxiety. In other words, intrapersonal skills have a crucial role in either L2 teaching or in L2 learning.

## Suggestions for Further Research

The results obtained from the present study lead to several recommendations for the future research. Further studies should consider the effect of gender and cultural background as well. Moreover, they should also work on the impact of factors such as learners' age, their background knowledge and their professions on development of these three variables (complexity, accuracy and fluency). In addition, further experimental investigations are needed to work on other language skills such as reading, speaking and listening. Considerably, more work will be needed to assess other kinds of writing such as expository, narrative or academic. Also, further research might explore the relationship between EI and giving a lecture in academic settings. Moreover, it would be interesting to assess the effects of other measures for assessing writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency.

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# IMPACT OF BLENDED LEARNING, WEB-BASED LEARNING, AND TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM LEARNING ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THE STUDY WAS MAINLY INTENDED TO EXAMINE AND COMPARE THE IMPACT OF BLENDED LEARNING (BL), WEB-BASED LEARNING (WB) AND TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM LEARNING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY ACQUISITION. THEREFORE, A SAMPLE OF 49 EFL LEARNERS WERE SELECTED USING A PLACEMENT TEST WHO WERE THEN PLACED RANDOMLY PLACED INTO THREE GROUPS: TWO EXPERIMENTAL AND ONE CONTROL. THE FIRST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, BL, RECEIVED BOTH THE TRADITIONAL METHOD OF CLASSROOM TEACHING AND ONLINE TEACHING, THROUGH THE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES PRESENTED VIA THE BLOG. THE LEARNERS IN THE WB GROUP HAD ACCESS TO THE SAME MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES JUST THROUGH THE WEB WITHOUT ANY OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION. THE THIRD GROUP CONSISTED OF LEARNERS WHO WERE TAUGHT BASED ON TRADITIONAL, FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING METHODS. THESE PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED FEEDBACK IN THE CLASSROOM. IN THE LAST SESSION, TO COMPARE THE PROGRESS OF LEARNERS A POSTTEST WAS ADMINISTRATED. THE COLLECTED DATA WERE ANALYZED USING BOTH DESCRIPTIVE AND INFERENTIAL STATISTICS. BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, PARTICIPANTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS, I.E. THE BLENDED LEARNING AND THE WEB-BASED GROUPS OUTPERFORMED THOSE OF THE CONTROL GROUP IN TERMS OF VOCABULARY ACQUISITION. HOWEVER, A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RESULTS SHOWS THAT PARTICIPANTS OF THE BLENDED GROUP HAD A SLIGHTLY BETTER PERFORMANCE THAN THOSE OF THE WEB-BASED GROUP.


KEYWORDS: BLENDED LEARNING; WEB-BASED LEARNING; VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

## 1. Background

Blended learning (BL) is a challenging concept to define. Horn and Staker (2011) offered one popular definition that has been endorsed by others (Bernatek Cohen, Hanlon, \& Wilka, 2012): "Blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-andmortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element
of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace" (p. 3). Taylor and Newton (2013) noted that it is important for institutions to communicate a common definition to instructional staff, but Tucker and Morris (2011) report that the gap between intent and implementation may limit a staff's ability to meet that definition. For example, when an institution encourages staff to create blended learning environments that accommodate flexibility in "time, content, access requirements, pedagogy approach and design and delivery," most teachers will only be able to achieve flexibility in their delivery (p. 905).

Other areas of flexibility such as a shift to student-centered pedagogy require more intensive attention to course activities and, consequently, more teacher preparation and planning. When blended learning is compared to traditional instruction, many studies have reported equivalent (Delialioglu \& Yildirim, 2008; Dziuban, Moskal \& Hartman, 2004; Napier, Dekhane, \& Smith, 2011) or improved learning outcomes (Cortizo et al., 2010; Cottle \& Glover, 2011; Horn \& Maas, 2012; Kenney \& Newcombe, 2011; Shen, Lee, \& Tsai, 2011; Svenningsen \& Pear, 2011; Tracey \& Young, 2007; Yapici \& Akbayin, 2012b).

A recent meta-analysis suggests that there are generally no significant differences in outcomes for blended and fully online modes, although thoughtful use of instructional elements could tip the scale in either direction (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, \& Jones, 2010). The lack of significance in comparisons of educational technology environments is common, as often the same pedagogy is simply replicated in different formats resulting in the same learning (i.e., a lecture is a lecture whether delivered in a blended or online mode). Still, learning advantages of blended instruction have been noted including increasing student: information literacy skills through enhanced work with technologies (Dziuban et al., 2004); self-regulation and time management skills through independent work with nontraditional course resources (Hsu \& Hsieh, 2011; Riffell \& Sibley, 2003); self-monitoring of progress through increased teacher and/or system feedback (Yapici \& Akbayin, 2012a); motivation to learn through more compelling and authentic resources (Cottle \& Glover, 2011; Monteiro, Leite, \& Lima, 2013; Park \& Park, 2012; Pata, Pedaste, \& Sarapuu, 2007; Yang et al., 2013); and opportunities to work at one's own pace and go back over course materials for increased understanding (Dalsgaard \& Godsk, 2007; Horn \& Staker, 2011; Yapici \& Akbayin, 2012a). Educators report that the design and teaching of blended courses is generally more time consuming than it is for traditional courses (Benson, Anderson, \& Ooms, 2011; Hill, 2006; Kenney \& Newcombe, 2011; Korr, Derwin, Greene, \& Sokoloff, 2012; Napier et al., 2011; Welker \& Berardino, 2005-2006).

Nation and Chung (2009, p. 552) contend that "computer-assisted vocabulary learning can be an effective way of getting help with vocabulary". As research in the field of computerbased vocabulary learning reveals, this has proved to be true; however, learners are also required to become both active learners (i.e., invest time and effort so as to increase their involvement load) and strategic learners (i.e., apply how-to- learn skills or vocabulary learning strategies) if they want to be successful vocabulary learners. Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) studied effectiveness of forums, blogs and wikis in an English as foreign language (EFL) blended learning course in a university in Tokyo, Japan. They applied the study in three blended classes and got students' perceptions through questionnaire, interview and written assignments (Miyazoe \& Anderson, 2010).

In quantitative analysis, it is found that wikis preferred as the favorite among forums and blogs by students and that students had positive feelings on blended learning such as novel, easy and fun as most frequently occurring words in their perceptions and blended learning is regarded as supportive learning environment for the course (Miyazoe \& Anderson, 2010). Donnely (2010) conducted a study on interaction in blended problem-based learning at a university environment. She studied other side of the blended problem-based learning that is perceptions of academic staff. In this qualitative study, experiences of 17 academic staff participants in a blended problem-based learning (PBL) module were asked and their perceptions provided (Donnely, 2010). She advocated technology to support interactions. Furthermore, use of

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harmonization in blended PBL will create perfect blend of online and face to face environments (Donnely, 2010).

López-Pérez, \& Rodríguez. (2011) reported 1431 students' perceptions that participated in blended learning activities. They indicated that students got positive perceptions on blended learning. It is also observed that blended learning reduced drop-out rates and raised exam pass rates (López-Pérez et. al., 2011). Yeh, Huang , \& Yeh. (2011) focused on knowledge management in a blended learning environment. Their aim was to examine blended learning environments' effects on pre-service teachers' professional development in creativity instruction. They used a special model for knowledge management. This model includes four modes in knowledge management that are socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. The name of the model, SECI, comes from the initials of these four modes. An experimental study was conducted with instruments on professional knowledge and teaching efficacy (Yeh et. al., 2011). They measured students' responses with repeated measure analysis of variance and it was found that blended learning environment could improve participants' professional knowledge and personal teaching efficacy related to creativity instruction.

Yen and Lee (2011) blended mobile learning, web-based learning and classroom teaching in their study and aimed to find out problem solving patterns and their impact on learning achievement. They used quasi-experimental method and gathered information on selfassessment by students, weekly interviews, logs and achievement test. Results indicated that gender is an important factor on enjoying using technological tools in learning environments; classroom group discussions encourage students to interact more and achieve high learning outcomes in the problem solving process; students should be encouraged and appropriate learning strategies should be used according to students (Yen and Lee, 2011).

Jia, Chen, Ding, Ruan, (2012) conducted their study on 96 middle school students who are taking English course in China. They used model as blended learning management system tool and conducted an experimental study. They measured students' performance on six different tests throughout the semester and compared the results on both control and experiment groups. The results indicated that blended learning with vocabulary assessment system improved both the vocabulary acquisition and exam performance of students. However, only thirty percent of the students wanted to use the system outside the class. The reason of that is predicted as students' heavy workload (Jia et. al., 2012).

One of the most popular research aspects to date has perhaps been the relationship between vocabulary and context or, more precisely, the development of vocabulary through computer enhanced reading skills programs and the contribution of computer-assisted reading instruction to vocabulary development (Ellis 1995; Goodfellow 1995; Tozcu and Coady 2004; LeLoup and Ponterio 2005; Cobb 2007). Based on the belief that context contributes to vocabulary learning, and that using context is the most widely recommended strategy (Graves 2006), the use of multimedia environments and the implementation of context-embedded approaches for explicit and implicit vocabulary development through extensive on-line reading activities or the implementation of hypermedia tools - i.e. hypermedia-enhanced learning environments - have attracted a great deal of attention (Kang 1995 ; Coll 2002 ; Nikolova 2002 ; Jones 2004 ; Yoshii 2006 ; Sydorenko 2010 ). Another relevant aspect of research is the acquisition of vocabulary thanks to the use of electronic dictionaries/glossaries. The use of conventional (or paper) dictionaries and glossaries for the learning of new words has long been regarded as a positive learning strategy for vocabulary growth and development and the advent of electronic dictionaries has contributed to further the research on this issue. Electronic features may be found in the literature on vocabulary learning as portable electronic dictionaries, software-based dictionaries or online dictionary websites (Stockwell 2007).

## 2. The study

Over the last ten to fifteen years, vocabulary has been considered as a component of language proficiency, both in L1 and L2 language acquisition. Knowledge of words is now
considered the most important factor in language proficiency and school success, partly because of its close relation with text comprehension (Bernhardt, 2005). Without knowledge of words, understanding sentences or texts is not possible. It has been realized that knowledge of words is multidimensional and includes various types of knowledge. In addition, language teachers have always been concerned about finding and developing the best way to teach vocabulary more effectively. In fact, the development of technology, such as the internet and other forms of technological advances like multimedia opened new channels for teachers to present their best attempts in teaching vocabulary. One such technique is the application of blended learning in teaching different language skills and sub skills (Ameri-Golestan \& Ghahari, 2013). Thus, it is believed that blended learning can be a practical and at the same time amazing tool to both making students attracted and motivated to learn English vocabulary more efficiently, considering the fact that most language learners in Iran are young people who are amazed by new technology. Accordingly, this study was mainly intended to examine and compare the impact of blended learning, web-based learning and traditional classroom learning on the acquisition of vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners in foreign language classrooms. Accordingly, the present study is going to address the following questions:

1. Does blended learning impact Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition?
2. Does web-based learning impact Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition?
3. Which of the three vocabulary teaching methods (i.e., blended, web-based, and traditional) have better results among Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Participants

The participants of the study were 49 Iranian male and female EFL learners who were learning English in a language institute in Isfahan and they were selected from among a larger sample of 80 EFL learners based on their scores the Solution Placement Test (Edwards, 2007). The aim of the placement test was to make sure that all the participants were homogenous. Then, the participants were randomly placed in two experimental and one control groups. In one of the experimental groups, Blended Learning (BL), participants ( $\mathrm{N}=16$ ) received the materials, i.e. new vocabularies, through classroom learning plus learning via the web. In the second experimental group, Web-based (WB), participants ( $\mathrm{N}=17$ ) tried the web-based method and received the materials, exercises and feedback just through the web. Finally, in the third group, i.e. the control group, participants $(\mathrm{N}=16)$ were instructed based on traditional teaching methods of vocabulary and received the instruction, materials and feedback just through traditional face to face methods.

### 3.2 Instruments

### 3.2.1 The Solution Placement Test

In order to make sure that the participants were homogeneous and place them in the relevant groups, Solution Placement Test was used. It assesses general knowledge of the key language as well as the receptive and productive skills based on learners' proficiency level. The test consists of three sections: The first section contains 50 multiple-choice items to assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary from elementary to intermediate levels. The second part contains10 graded reading comprehension items. Finally, the third section assesses students' ability to produce the language through a writing task.

### 3.2.2 Vocabulary list

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The participants were given a vocabulary list which served as the main instructional material of the course and was presented during the course. This list consisted of 50 words which had been prepared based on a vocabulary learning website (http://www.vocabulary.com/lists/52473\#view=definitions\&word=reflect). This website consists of up to 1,000 vocabulary words carefully chosen to present common words that appear in every day academic and business writing. The words are accompanied by definitions, synonymies and examples by having the chance of ranking them from easy to hard or vice versa.

### 3.2.3 Pretest

In order to make sure that the participants did not know the target words, a test of 30 multiple-choice items was designed based on the wordlist. Participants of the study took part in this exam on the first day of the study. Before the administration of the pretest, the test was given to a similar sample in order to make sure that it was reliable ( $\mathrm{r}=.73$ ). in addition, the three university lecturers were asked to read the items and validate it.

### 3.2.4 Posttest

At the end of the treatment and in order to examine the effect of the instruction- the impact of blended learning on Iranian EFL learners, the participants attended a posttest including 30 multiple-choice items. The aim of administering the posttest was to make sure that changes which had taken place were due to the treatment and not any other intervening factors.

### 3.2.5 The blog

Since an important part of the course was online instruction and participants were supposed to send and receive the materials through the web, a blog (http://engvocabularyclass.blogfa.com) was designed for the BL and WB groups. The content of the blog was in line with the course. In addition, the participants of the WB group were required to receive all the materials, such as the word list, exercises, lessons and feedback through the blog. For some other materials or exercises, the instructor and participants had to use emails. The collected that were analyzed through descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics including one-way ANOVA and post hoc comparisons such as Scheffe.

## 4. Results

Table 4.1 presents descriptive data for the participants' performance on the placement test. As it can be seen, the mean score of the BL group (27.02) is slightly higher than those of WB and Control groups (26.36 and 26.75):

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Participants of the Placement Test

|  | Std. |  |  |  |  | Std. |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | N | Mean | Deviation | Error | Minimum | Maximum |
| Blended Learning | 16 | 27.02 | 2.02 | .56 | 25.00 | 32.00 |
| Web-based | 17 | 26.36 | 2.71 | .77 | 24.00 | 36.00 |
| Control | 16 | 26.75 | 2.96 | .59 | 27.00 | 40.00 |
| Total | 49 | 26.71 | 2.25 | .61 | 24.00 | 40.00 |

The results of Levene test in Table 4.2 indicate that the intergroup differences were not significant ( $\mathrm{P}>0.05$ ) and that the participants were completely homogeneous.

Table 4.2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for the Placement Scores

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| Levene <br> Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| .257 | 2 | 46 | .79 |

In order to make sure that the difference among the three groups under study in terms of their placement scores was not statistically significant, a one-way ANOVA was run as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 One-way ANOVA for the Placement Test Scores

|  | Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Between Groups | 2.61 | 2 | 1.03 | .168 | .692 |
| Within Groups | 124.13 | 46 | 7.31 |  |  |
| Total | 130.27 | 40 |  |  |  |

The results show that there was no statistically significant difference ( $p>.05$ ) among the three groups: $F_{(2,41)}=.168, p=.692$. In other words, the participants of the Web-based group $(M=$ 26.36, $S D=2.71$ ), the Blended Learning group ( $M=27.02, S D=2.02$ ), and the Control group $(M=$ $26.75, S D=2.96$ ) were completely homogeneous in terms of the level of proficiency.

In order to examine the impact of blended learning on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition, the participants took part pretest to make sure that they did not know the target words. The descriptive statistics of the test are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Descriptive Statistics for the Pretest

|  | N | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error | $95 \%$ Confidence Interval Min. <br> for Mean <br> Lower <br> Bound | Max. <br> Upper <br> Bound |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Control | 16 | 7.06 | 1.39 | .35 | 6.32 | 7.80 | 5.00 | 9.00 |
| Blended | 16 | 7.63 | 1.20 | .30 | 6.98 | 8.27 | 5.00 | 9.00 |
| Web | 17 | 6.76 | 1.48 | .36 | 6.00 | 7.53 | 5.00 | 9.00 |
| Total | 49 | 7.14 | 1.38 | .20 | 6.75 | 7.54 | 5.00 | 9.00 |

As it is shown in this table, there is no significant difference in means, standard deviation and standard errors of pretest scores of the participants. Before conducting the one-way ANOVA, in order to test the homogeneity of variances for the pretest scores of all three groups, the Leven's test was conducted. The results of the Leven's test are shown in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for the Pretest

| Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| .786 | 2 | 46 | .462 |

As shown in table above, the test of homogeneity of variances in confidence level of 95\% is not rejected, so it can be concluded that there was no significant differences in participants' performances in pretest ( $\mathrm{P}>0.05$ ). Table 4.6 represents the results of one-way ANOVA for

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comparing the pretest scores among all three groups of the study (i.e. blended learning, webbased, and traditional groups).

Table 4.6 Results of One-way ANOVA for the Pretest

|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Between Groups | 6.25 | 2 | 3.13 | 1.677 | .198 |
| Within Groups | 85.75 | 46 | 1.86 |  |  |
| Total | 92.00 | 48 |  |  |  |

The results show that there was no statistically significant difference at $p>.05$ level among the three groups: $\mathrm{F}(2,46)=1.677, p=.198$. In other words, there was no statistically significant difference among the participants of the Blended group ( $M=7, S D=1.20$ ), the Web Based group $(M=6.73, S D=1.48)$, and the Control group $(M=7.06, S D=1.39)$ in the pretest. The results ensured that any possible effects that happened during the experiment would be the result of the treatment.

In order to examine the impact of blended learning on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition, the participants sat for the posttest as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for the Posttest

|  | N | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error | 95\% Co <br> Interval <br> Lower <br> Bound | dence <br> Mean <br> Upper <br> Bound | Min. | Max. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Contr ol | 16 | 22.44 | 4.05 | 1.01 | 20.28 | 24.60 | 16.00 | 28.00 |
| Blend ed | 16 | 25.63 | 3.74 | . 93 | 23.63 | 27.62 | 18.00 | 30.00 |
| Web | 17 | 20.82 | 3.56 | . 86 | 18.99 | 22.65 | 13.00 | 28.00 |
| Total | 49 | 22.92 | 4.22 | . 60 | 21.71 | 24.13 | 13.00 | 30.00 |

As it is shown, the blended learning participants' mean score (25.63) was higher than the control group and web-based group (22.44 and 20.82), and the lowest mean was gained by the web-based group.

In order to test the homogeneity of variances for the posttest scores of all three groups, the Levene's test was run, the results of which are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for the Posttest

| Levene Statistic | df 1 | df 2 | Sig. |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| .678 | 2 | 46 | .512 |

As shown in table above, the test of homogeneity of variances in confidence level of $95 \%$ is not rejected, so it can be concluded that there was no significant differences in participants' performances in pretest ( $\mathrm{P}>0.05$ ). Table 4.9 shows the results of one-way ANOVA for comparing the posttest scores among all three groups.

Table 4.9 ANOVA for the Posttest

|  | Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean <br> Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Between <br> Groups | 195.52 | 2 | 97.76 | 6.832 | .003 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |


| Within <br> Groups <br> Total | 658.16 | 46 | 14.31 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

As it can be seen, there was a significant difference ( $\mathrm{P}<0.01$ ) among the participants of the control group $(M=22.44, S D=4.05)$, Blended Learning group $(M=25.63, S D=3.74)$ and Web-based group ( $M=20.82, S D=3.56$ ). Nevertheless, to locate the difference among the control and experimental groups, the one-way ANOVA was followed by post-hoc tests as shown in Table 4.9.

|  | $\begin{gathered} \text { (I) } \\ \text { Groups } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { (J) } \\ \text { Groups } \end{gathered}$ | MeanDifference(I-J) | Std. <br> Error | Sig. | 95\% ConfidenceInterval |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Bound | Bound |
| Scheffe | Control | Blended | -3.19 | 1.34 | . 07 | -6.57 | . 20 |
|  |  | Web | 1.61 | 1.32 | . 48 | -1.72 | 4.95 |
|  | $\begin{gathered} \text { Blende } \\ \mathrm{d} \end{gathered}$ | Control | 3.19 | 1.34 | . 07 | -. 20 | 6.57 |
|  |  | Web | 4.80 * | 1.32 | . 00 | 1.47 | 8.13 |
|  | Web | Control | -1.61 | 1.32 | . 48 | -4.95 | 1.72 |
|  |  | Blended | -4.80* | 1.32 | . 00 | -8.13 | -1.47 |
| Bonferr oni | Control | Blended | -3.19 | 1.34 | . 06 | -6.51 | . 14 |
|  |  | Web | 1.61 | 1.32 | . 68 | -1.66 | 4.89 |
|  | Blende <br> d | Control | 3.19 | 1.34 | . 06 | -. 14 | 6.51 |
|  |  | Web | 4.80 * | 1.32 | . 00 | 1.53 | 8.08 |
|  | Web | Control | -1.61 | 1.32 | . 68 | -4.89 | 1.66 |
|  |  | Blended | -4.80* | 1.32 | . 00 | -8.08 | -1.53 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
The results clearly show that presenting a blended learning strategy to the students did make a difference in their performance in the posttest. As can be seen, participants of the Blended Learning group outperformed those of the Web Based group, but not those of the Control group. In fact, the results of the experiment indicated that blended learning had a significant impact on increasing Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition.

## 5. Discussion

The results of the study indicated that blended learning affected the acquisition of the vocabulary. This is in line with many other studies done in the field of blended learning, such as Keshta (2003) who investigated the effectiveness of a blended learning program on developing writing skills. Accordingly it can be suggested that blended Learning provided students with a better learning environment through a variety of multimedia resources which enhanced selflearning strategies and reflected on their achievement of English language. It was also shown that web-based learning had some effects on EFL vocabulary acquisition as indicated by Miyazoe and Anderson (2009). The results of this study also showed that the participants in blended learning groups significantly outperformed those in the web-based and control groups in terms of vocabulary acquisition. A comparison of the two other groups (blended and web-based groups) shows that participants of the web-based group had a slightly better performance than those of the control group. This also points to the effectiveness of web-based learning (Ghahari \& AmeriGolestan, 2014).

## 6. Conclusion

Blended Learning remains a relatively new concept at many academic institutions; however, recent research appears to indicate that when "appropriately" implemented, blended learning can significantly improve the learning experience (Marsh, 2012). This study was aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using blended learning programs and traditional and webbased learning on developing learners' vocabulary acquisitions in second language contexts. The findings of the study revealed that although there were statistical differences in the performance of traditional and web-based groups, there were more significant differences in favor of the blended learning group. This can be implied that blended learning were more effective compared with the other two methods and showed more effects on learns' vocabulary acquisition and retention, as the participants of the BL group consistently showed the clear advantages of this new experience in enhancing their vocabulary knowledge. The results of this study are completely in line with a plethora of previous research on blended learning and CALL, which have revealed positive influences of blended learning on students' performance, increased access and flexibility, students' participation and motivation and more active and deeper learning (see Charles \& Lallich-Boidin, 2009; DeGeorge-Walker \& Keeffe, 2010; Lopez-Perez, Perez-Lopez \& Rodriguez-Ariza, 2011; Ladyshewsky, 2004; Motteram, 2006; Macedo-Rouet, Ney; Ugur, Akkoyunlu \& Kurbanoglu, 2011).

As such, language institutions are encouraged to provide teachers with blended-learning lesson plans and the principals should improvise training courses for instructors in order to make them familiar with the advantages of blended learning method an also to train them how to apply the strategies method. Syllabus designers and language programmers can also redesign their programs and try to use blended learning strategies and online CALL materials into their course designs. Teachers may also choose the suitable blended method for students in line with their needs and abilities and based on the students' involvement.

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# BILINGUAL EDUCATION: HISTORY, CONTROVERSIES, AND THE PHILOSOPHIES THAT DRIVE IT 

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## Introduction

Bilingual education has been, and is, a controversial and emotive topic in the United States. Immigrants have flocked to the United States in search of something better than what they had in their home country. Immigrants come for financial reasons, political asylum, and search for wealth and prosperity. Immigration is a global phenomenon, not inclusive to the United States. In recent months Hungarian police "supervised" hundreds of immigrants into an "Alien Holding Center" who are seeking asylum from war torn countries such as Serbia. According to Grulovic, Djurica and Robinson, (2015) an 11.5-foot fence was constructed along the borders of Hungary with Serbia to keep immigrants from crossing the border. Overwhelmed, 104 busloads of immigrants were sent to Austria and Germany as a way of reducing the impact of such an influx of people. In the United States border guards deport 11.7 million refugees back to their homeland, (Preston, 2013). According to Martin and Yankey 69,900 legally entered the United States in 2014 for political asylum. Dicerbo, (2006) estimates that one in five will be a school -aged child, requiring access to a free and appropriate public education. Because of immigration, both legal, and illegal, the U.S. public School system has felt the "strain" of providing an appropriate and free education to all. The National Center for Public Policy Research (n.d.) issued the following news release, "Each of the tens of thousands of illegal immigrant children pouring across the U.S.-Mexico border remaining in this country is legally entitled to a free public education."

The U.S. Constitution stipulates in the $14^{\text {th }}$ Amendment that no state may deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (The U.S Constitution online, 2007).Within those rights comes a legal obligation to educate all children within the borders of the United States.

Enforcing the $14^{\text {th }}$ Amendment in the public school system has been a duty since the judgment held by the Supreme Court in the case of Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka in 1954 (Webb, 2006). That responsibility has continued to be a controversial subject in the community, in the school system, and in the court system (Mora 2000). The daunting question that politically has been a major issue remains to be: how do we educate them appropriately?

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the history of bilingual education. The literature review will investigate the various controversies that surround bilingual education, and the philosophical forces behind bilingual education.

## Review of the literature

## The History of Bilingual Education

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The passing of the Bilingual Act of 1968 reinforced the necessity for bilingual education in the United States several years after the decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) (Tafoya 2007). The Brown case was the beginning of legislation focusing on equal opportunities in education for all children. The Bilingual Act of 1968 created federal grants for the promotion of fair and equitable educational opportunities. Title VII under that act appropriated funding to the public school districts to implement programs that would meet the needs of the growing immigration population.

In 1970 the department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) summarized the bilingual act and determined that no one could be excluded from the funding provided by Title VII because they were non proficient in English (Mora, 2005). From 1968-1994 The Bilingual Act of 1968 underwent five reauthorizations to further accommodate English Language (ELL) Learners (Mora 2000). The latest changes have occurred with the legislation of No Child Left Behind in 2001 (Verdugo and Flores,2007).

When society deems that current legislation is in violation of the constitution, laws change. Legislation that legally enforces bilingual education is not an exception. Lau v. Nichols in 1974 drew attention to Chinese speaking students in San Francisco, California. It was determined that those students were floundering in school because they lacked the ability to interact in English. The Supreme Court ruled that equality did not exist if the children did not understand the vernacular in which the instruction was delivered. Moreover, Castaneda v. Pickard was an additional case that advanced the promotion of bilingual education. Castaneda v. Pickard determined that school districts must have: (1) a pedagogically sound plan for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, (2) sufficient qualified staff to implement the plan, and (3) a system to establish and evaluate the program (Tafoya 2007).

Two U.S. states have passed legislation determining that Language Immersion (English Only) is the dominant and appropriate strategy when educating non-native English speakers. The state of California led the initiative entitled Proposition 227. Allowing for only one year of structured instruction in English, following years enforced "English Only". In 1998, 61\% (California, 1998) of the constituency voted in favor of Proposition 227. Essentially the proposition stated that nonEnglish speaking students enroll in English-only educational programs. Closely imitating California, Arizona, in 2000 passed Proposition 203 with a $63 \%$ supporting vote, which was very comparable to Proposition 227. The Arizona legislation was similar in the fact that a limited enrollment of one school year in structured English instruction with "English Only" following. In both cases structured immersion offered little first language support (Combs, Evans, Fletcher and Jimenez, 2005). Again in 2002, in the same vein, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandated that non-English speaking students be placed in structured immersion classes for no longer than one year before mainstreaming into the general education milieu. NCLB also stated that English language learners must be tested in English on State accountability tests (Combs et al., 2005; Crawford, 2002a). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has strengthened the voice of community members who are proponents of English Only. However, on November 5, 2002 Colorado voters defeated Amendment 31, with a margin of $56 \%$ to $44 \%$ (Mitchell 2002). According to Escamila, (2003) grass roots leadership, public participation, and strategic publicity made the difference.

Supporters of bilingual education continue to champion that voice by upholding past victories (Lau V. Nichols, 1974), which legislated that teaching must be in a language that the child can understand. Needless to say it is still one of the hottest debates in educational circles today (Crawford, 2002b). During the primary presidential election for 2016, Donald Trump and opponent Jeb Bush debated immigration and English Only status. Bush, who occasionally responded in the Spanish language, outraged Trump who asserted that Bush should "set the example by speaking English while in the United States", (Egan, 2015).

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## Controversies concerning bilingual education

English-only sentiment is not something new to present day society. According to Snyderman and Herrnstein (1983) it was believed that I.Q. tests were administered to immigrants in the early 1900's as a form of documentation to exclude him or her from entry into the United States. Those who appeared to be feebleminded as evidenced by the scores on the assessment were determined unworthy of entering the United States. Administering English assessments to non English participants is somewhat synonymous with present N0 Child Left Behind legislation that mandates All children are tested in English on state high stakes evaluations.

During the twenty-first century, one of the loudest opposing voices to bilingual education was that of Ronald Unz. An affluent Californian, Unz financially supported California's Proposition 207, and Arizona's 203 (Escamilla, 2003). When questioned about the successfulness of English only, his replies stated that he was reasonably confident that the opposition to the propositions would diminish when test scores revealed improvement in English skills (Delevett, 1999). Contrary to the bold belief that Mr. Unz projected, some opponents expressed the notion that the California and Arizona laws have simply shifted the responsibility for English language learners to teachers who are monolingual and have less training in teaching English as a second language (Mora 2000).

Multiple studies have concluded that it takes a non-native speaker at least two to ten years to become fluent in a second language (Fillmore and Snow, 2002; Hakuta, 1984; Thomas, 1997). Thomas and Collier (1997) conducted an extensive long-term study from 1982-1996. This study compared programs designed for second language learners and their effectiveness for positive student outcomes. Six school districts were compared in several regions within the United States. They concluded that non-English speakers over the long term benefit from dual language programs. Dual language programs teach academic content area in the native language before teaching content in English. Thomas and Collier (1997) further elaborated that by teaching a child in their native language transitioning to English would happen at a smoother and more rapid rate. Combs et al. (2005) conducted a study that researched the effects of Proposition 203 on teacher, administrator, students and families. The survey concluded that dual language programs were superior to structured immersion programs. Despite research advocating for bilingual education proponents of English Only continue to proclaim the benefits of immersion. Hakuta, (1984) conducted a study to determine what the public sentiment and understanding was of the bilingual programs in the New Haven School District. The study consisted of a Likert type survey with various questions about the bilingual programs in the school district. Participants were chosen randomly from the telephone book and then mailed a survey. Those that did not return the surveys were contacted. The researchers found that community members in opposition to bilingual education were basing their opinions on personal experience. Comments included were, "No one taught me in my own language. I had to learn the hard way and it took me less than a year even though I spoke my own language at home." "This is an English speaking country. If parents want their kids to speak Spanish, they should teach them at home like I taught my kids". Bennett (1986), former Secretary of Education reported that seventeen years of bilingual education from 1969-1986 presented no evidence that bilingual education benefitted those children who it was intended to serve.

Rossell (2000) challenged the effectiveness of bilingual education by saying that the best programs for second language learners are structured immersion programs. Her opinion was based on classroom observations where the majority of English language learners were of Mexican American heritage. She further elaborated that those of a Mexican American heritage are the ethnic group that is most likely to fill up a classroom, and most likely to have a Spanish speaking teacher. Therefore, it was easier to find a qualified bilingual teacher for them to teach

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academic content in their native language. Rossell summarized that Mexican American children whose native language is Spanish will have an easier time transitioning from Spanish to English because they also have a Roman alphabet similar to the English alphabet. However, Rossell's major concerns included equity for children from an Asian, African or Eastern European heritage whose first language did not have a Roman alphabet. She argued that there is a lack of consistency in programs regarding bilingual education and that equal access to a free and appropriate education was not pervasive. She asserted that programs catered to Mexican American students and did not offer the same standards to other ethnic groups.

According to DiCerbo (2006) 900,000 immigrants were admitted for lawful permanent residence in the United States. One in six $(175,364)$ of those immigrants were from Mexico. However, 70,116 immigrated from India, 57,827 immigrated from the Philippines, 51,156 from China, 31,514 from Vietnam, 30, 492 from the Dominican Republic, and 29,795 immigrated from El Salvador. Although Spanish-speaking students out numbered all the other languages, equity for all students, as determined by Lau v. Nichols (1974), did not prevail.

According to Kymlicka (1999) immigrant communities have chosen to immigrate and therefore have chosen the right to assimilate into the community in which they are living. He claims that group rights conflict with individual rights and that there is confusion over the group rights and individual rights. Kymlicka (1999) stated in an interview with Marin (1999) that in his growing up years he thought that the concept of justice meant giving the Quebecois and Aboriginals special status. Lee (2014) found that even if bilingual education is provided, children do not always take advantage of the instruction. In her study of kindergarten children in a twoway immersion class with an equal population of Korean speakers, and English speakers the Korean children chose to speak in English to peers and teachers. Lee concluded that the children saw "English" as a language of power and chose to use it even when $70 \%$ of the curriculum was delivered in the Korean language. In a similar study, Tabari and Sadighi (2014) found that students who were more advanced in a second language were less willing to use, or to agree that instruction in the native tongue was not an inhibitor towards second language acquisition.

Webb (2006) and Orvando (2003) posited that bilingual education has been a topic of debate among educators as early as the Common School era. In the early history of the public school bilingualism was the norm in public schools for those communities that had a large percentage of migrant populations. German was frequently the language of instruction, and early settlers feared that America would become a land of multiple languages and ethnicities. The debate against bilingualism at that time was much the same as it is today. Many feared that English language acquisition would be delayed if the child's mother tongue was used, and that tax dollars would be spent unwisely. The most dominant perception at the time was that by immigrating, participants had "chosen" a land and therefore should speak English. Those who were advocates encouraged the notion that English would be learned at a faster rate if lessons were in the mother tongue first, and therefore would transfer to English at a faster rate. By maintaining their and culture the students would value where they came from and who they were as an individual.

The philosophies that drive bilingual education
According to Williamson (2007) there are two main philosophical views that surround equity in education. The first is Assimilation, the belief that immigrants should assimilate into the mainstream culture and strive to blend in with the rest of the population (Williamson, 2007). Kymlicka (1999) makes the assertion that immigrants should not be catered to because they have chosen to immigrate; therefore by free will they have relocated to a new land. The second view is a liberal philosophy of equity in education.

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Liberalism had its' beginning through Paulo Friere, who was a Brazilian educator. Friere was dedicated to bringing literacy skills to the impoverished as a way to liberate them from environments that kept them in a bondage of ignorance (Gutek, 2004). To a liberal, bilingual education is a way to help the downtrodden reach a higher potential.. The main belief underlying liberalism in education is the intent to raise a person's consciousness to think critically about the society that they are living in. With that acute sensitivity to the environment they can then change it for the betterment of humanity (Gutek, 2004).

In a similar vein John Dewey was also a proponent for bilingual education. He championed that the ability to communicate with others is the first step in the construction of knowledge. If students cannot communicate with each other than the sharing of knowledge is impossible. Dewey created an education theory fostering bilingual education until language acquisition mastery at grade level was achieved (Noddings, 2007).

In recent history, past president Ronald Reagan was one of the main voices promoting Assimilation. Regan strongly believed that it was against American ideals to have programs that intentionally preserved native language to the deficit of English acquisition. Regan's conservative views were based in the belief that institutions have a responsibility to preserve the past and to be dedicated to the original goal of education. That goal would be the basics. The basics included learning English as quickly as possible (Gutek, 2004). Comparatively, Rodriguez (2007), shared memories of her mother who instilled in her the "you've got to be better" ideal. Rodriguez compared her mother's words to the growth of a tree. If roots are not strong the plant will not grow. According to Rodriguez, family is the key to keeping a heritage alive and vibrant.

Rodriguez emphasized assimilation. Assimilation without losing your own culture was very important to her. She made mention of how her home was "Mexico" to her. The roles of her family as well as the activities, food, and furnishings in the home were all about Mexico. She stated that she felt like she was in Mexico when she was in her home. She defined culture as keeping a heritage identity as well as blending with the community that you are living in.

Crawford (2001) argues that civil rights and equity in education have been violated with the mandates in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Crawford, 2002b). Assessment in English, enrollment in structured immersion classes, and one-year enlistment limitations all violate civil rights laws. Mora (2005) would agree that language minority children are being denied an equal opportunity in the educational setting.

Is it possible to have a view of bilingual education based in the middle? Is it possible to have a philosophical model that is between the "sink or swim" philosophy and the "Uncle Sam dependency" model?

Essentialism might be one of those middle ground philosophies. Gutek (2004) states that essentialism is a cornerstone of what education should be. Essentialists demand that a curriculum be well defined, teach basic skills, and reflect moral characteristics.

Perhaps Communitarianism might be another middle ground. Communitarianism promotes individualization but also assimilation. In other words immigrants retain their heritage and culture in their private lives but assimilate into the dominant culture in their public lives. By doing so they can contribute to the society and the society can contribute to them. Rodriguez (2007) in her reference to having "Mexico" in her home meant retaining heritage and culture at home while participating in the dominant community.

## Conclusions

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In reviewing the related literature the research illuminates that the ideal bilingual programs are one-way or dual language programs that teach children academic content in their native language and then add English after the students have several years of instruction in their first language (Thomas and Collier 1997). A typical program for one-way designs might be math, reading, language arts, social studies and science in the native language and perhaps art in English. The bulk of the day is taught in the first language. Dual language programs include native English speakers who desire to learn a second language. In these programs the percentage of English to second language may be the same. Thomas and Collier (1997) suggest that the best programs start with a $90 \%$ first language, $10 \%$ second language and then increase teaching in the second language to a higher percentage in future years. Hakuta (1984) suggests that transition to a second language is easy if the child is fluent in academics in their first language. That transition to language acquisition may require seven to ten years to become fluent in a second language.

As evidenced by recent political debates and proposition initiatives, the controversy over bilingual education remains to be in the limelight of American society, especially political venues. As immigrants seek to find solace and calm in the United States, ethnicity and cultural differences may be perceived as a disability rather than desirable. It is ironic that after 61 years since the jury deliberated in Brown vs. Topeka, that equity in education is still a major issue. When adult men such as Donald Trump and Jeb Bush taunt each other about "English Only" from a public pulpit, it seems we still have a long way to go.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KRASHEN'S AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS AND IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING SKILL. 

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#### Abstract

THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY IS TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE AND KRASHEN'S AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS. TO THIS END, 47 MALE AND FEMALE EFL LEARNERS (34 FEMALES AND 13 MALES), MAJORING TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL) AT ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY OF URMIA, WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED. THEY WERE GIVEN THREE QUESTIONNAIRES: AMTB MOTIVATION SCALE DEVELOPED BY GARDNER (1985), FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY SCALE DEVISED BY HORWITZ (1986) AND SELF- ESTEEM SCALE DEVISED BY ROSENBERG SCALE (1965). IN ADDITION, THE LEARNERS NEEDED TO WRITE A THREE PARAGRAPH WRITING IN ORDER TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE VARIABLES WITH LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE. THE PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENT WAS RUN TO FIND THE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN THE VARIABLES OF THE STUDY. THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT THERE WAS NO RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE SO-CALLED VARIABLES AND EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE. GIVEN THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, THE OBTAINED RESULTS MAY HELP EFL TEACHERS, TEACHER TRAINERS, AND MATERIAL DEVELOPERS TO POSSESS A BROADER PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS THE TEFL PRACTICE AND TO TAKE PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENTS OF THE DESIRED OBJECTIVES AND EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION.


KEY WORDS: KRASHEN'S AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS, FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY (FLA), MOTIVATION, SELF-ESTEEM, WRITING PERFORMANCE

## 1. Introduction

Although learning a foreign language is a cumbersome task, actually it has a great educational value. Such learning with its different productive and receptive skills gives the opportunity for
stockholders and instructors to enrich students' awareness. In addition, it introduces the other cultures and various ways of life and types of thinking (Takrouri, 2002).

Nowadays, learning English has become a necessity all over the world. English is the most common language that is widely used. No doubt, learning English requires mastering the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing requires thinking and cognitive processes to be produced. It is considered the most complex skill because it goes through different stages i.e., prewriting, writing and editing, to reach its final product. Writing is an important tool, probably the most efficient L2 learning tool available for learning a language (Zhang \& Chen, 1989). As Richards and Renandy (2002) state, one of the most difficult skills for L2 learners to master is the writing skill, which its difficulty lies in generating and organizing ideas and also, in translating those ideas into a readable text.

Writing is one of the four skills which like speaking falls in the productive category of the skills (Chastain, 1988). It is an activity that requires a mental effort to "think out" the sentences and the ways of joining them to be meaningful and communicative. Writing is a difficult process and for learning, writing input is essential but not sufficient. McKay (2002) believes that "Writing is such a complex process that one cannot be able to give his/her students simple formula for good writing. What the students do to engender is an awareness of the complexity of the process and to help them better manipulate each component of the process in order to meet their writing objectives" (p. 254).

Nunan (2001) proposes that a major challenge for language educators is to investigate different ways of helping language learners produce coherent written discourse. It seems that what stands in the way of producing a coherent text is deficient knowledge of cohesive ties on the part of language learners which is complemented by insufficient practical opportunities to engage in the process of writing within the classroom and under the supervision of the teacher.

As stated above, writing and its performance contain two angles, the cognitive and affective factors. In order to narrow down the study, the present study aimed to focus on the latter role that is the affective aspect. The term affective filter at first has been introduced in late seventies; it is "like a mental wall that raises in a student's head reducing or effectively shutting their ability to learn" (Dulay \& Burt, 1977). Anxiety, motivation and self-confidence are three factors that comprise affective filter (Krashen, 1982). It is the responsibility of an instructor to do his/her best to lower a student's affective filter with reducing his/her anxiety and raising his/her motivation and self-confidence. Affective filter and its different categories fall in the field of natural approach. In fact, natural approach language methods use teaching strategies that reduce affective filter automatically (Krashen, 1981).

Different studies have investigated the effect of anxiety, motivation and self- esteem separately on EFL learners' writing (Nogueras, 1999; Babaee, 2012; Teksan, 2013). In spite of the presence of studies that have been conducted in this field, no special study has been done to investigate the relationship of Krashen's affective filter variables on writing performance of university level students. In this study, the researcher investigated the relationship of those three factors which Krashen called "Affective Filter Hypothesis", on writing, in one comprehensive study. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no similar research has been attempted before.

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

Writing is as much an emotional as a cognitive process, so that the affective factors strongly impact all phases of the writing process (Pajares \& Johnson, 1993). Hence, the lower standards of writing proficiency could be due to many various factors including cognitive or affective ones.

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For instance, many students are not accustomed to write in their mother language and writing has less role in their daily life, so they fear to write in a foreign language and find it much difficult (McAvoy, 2005). Others fear of making errors and of teacher's views. Besides, writing entails expressing their thoughts and revealing their characters and this may be against their wish to write freely. Thus, writing is a combination of cognitive and affective processes. Therefore, to optimize learning, equal attention should be given to the two sides; cognitive and affective. Learning English as a foreign language is one aspect of that broad process of learning. Therefore, not having a balance between those two domains, English learning process will be negatively affected. Anders (2002) claims that language learning is affected by both domains which are the mental and emotional sides of human behavior.

A growing number of published research and scholarship in the last two decades shows that the belief system of language learners has a crucial role in their success and failure in language learning (Bernat, \& Gvozdenko, 2005; Berant, 2008). As well, such studies disclose that learners' beliefs about their own capacity and personal models and processes are much more significant than universally accepted theories of learning, and some psychometric measures or individual difference factors such as intelligence or aptitude (Ellis, 2008; Bernat, 2008) and it is argued that belief systems are influential because they raise learners' consciousness and shape their attitudes towards language learning, learning strategies and policies (Buyukyazi, 2010). Therefore, understanding learner beliefs is essential, since they can have a facilitative or detrimental effect on learning and the way learners feel about, approach, and act upon a language (Bernat \& Gvozdenko, 2005). In the context of language pedagogy, beliefs as metacognitive knowledge ( Oz , 2007) have been defined as common assumptions that learners hold about themselves as learners, about the nature of language learning, the learning process, and the factors influencing their learning (Wenden, 1999).

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) attempted to identify foreign language anxiety by organizing "Support Group for Foreign Language Learning" and inviting the freshmen of University of Texas to take part in it. Although 225 students wanted to participate, due to time and space limitations, only two groups of fifteen students had the opportunity. The participants discussed their problems and difficulties in speaking, in test taking times, and they had headaches and trembling associated with anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) found that the experiences in the support groups helped the development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

Grodnick (1996) randomly selected 50 students from Union County College to examine the correlation between self-esteem and writing achievement. He utilized Coopersmith Self-esteem Scale and the writing course grades to find the correlation. The results revealed that students' self-esteem levels did not have a significant correlation with proficiency level of writing.

Hassan (2001) attempted to find out whether there was a relationship between writing apprehension and EFL self-esteem, and the quality and quantity of students' writings. 32 Egyptian English major university students participated in this study. Results revealed that writing apprehension of EFL students had a negative correlation with their self-esteem. Low apprehensive students had higher self-esteem and high apprehensive students had lower selfesteem. Lower apprehensive students wrote better than high apprehensive students and vice versa.

Gditawi, Noah, \& Abdul Ghani (2011) attempted to examine the relationship between motivation, learning reading and writing in sixth graders in public schools in the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. This study tried to identify the level of motivation in sixth graders attending public schools in Jordan, their academic achievements in reading and writing, and the effect of
motivation on their learning reading and writing. 852 students, 460 males and 392 female, participated in this study. Results revealed that the mean of motivation was above average (3.91), the mean of reading and writing achievement was above average ( 11,92 ). Moreover, a positive significant correlation was found between motivation and learning reading and writing. Motivation had a significant influence on learning reading and writing.

Al- Shourafa (2012) investigated the effect of motivation on English writing skills among Jordanian 10th grade students in Al- karak Directorate of education. The participants were 198 male and female students. The results of the study indicated that there were statistical significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between external and internal motivation due to gender variable. And that there were statistical significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the level of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation among 10th grade students due to the level of motivation.

Mousapour Negari and Talebi Rezaabai (2012) examined the relationship between the students' anxiety in essay writing and their writing performance in EFL context. There were 75 Iranian EFL students who participated in TOFEL proficiency test. The findings revealed that the students felt less nervous in writing when their papers were not scored compared to the time when their papers were scored by the teacher, and also, the correlation between final writing test and anxiety were significantly high.

Gkonou (2013) in a study to examine the nature of, and the connection between the English language classroom speaking and writing anxiety of 128 Greek EFL learners in private language settings, measured speaking anxiety by Horwitz and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, and writing anxiety was operationalized by Daly and Miller's (1975) Writing Apprehension Test. The findings indicated that a significant and high correlation was between classroom anxiety and speaking anxiety, thus the English language classroom context is a source of speaking anxiety and also, writing anxiety was found to load primarily on items relating to attitudes towards writing in English followed by self-derogation for the process and fear of negative evaluation by the teachers and/or by fellow students.

Marzban and Sadeghi (2013) in an attempt to explore the interlaced relationship between attitude and motivation on the one hand and, and speaking within the context of Iranian EFL university students on the other hand conducted a research with the participants consisted of 65 freshmen majoring in English Translation, English Literature, and Electrical Engineering at the University of Isfahan. Three instruments were used to gather data: Oxford Placement Test (OPT), two subscales of AMTB (Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery) designed by Gardner (1985), a kind of indirect interview with the 65 chosen students. The analysis of the results revealed that there were significant differences between the students with positive attitude and those with negative attitude regarding their speaking ability; namely, the students with positive attitude had higher speaking scores than the students with negative attitude. Further analyses showed that integratively-motivated students scored higher than instrumentally-motivated ones on speaking test. Moreover, gender did not make any differences amongst EFL learners as far as attitude, motivation, and speaking ability were concerned.

In conclusion of the literature review, foreign language researchers and educators have increasingly focused their attention on anxiety, motivation and self- esteem as important affective factors in foreign language achievement. As we saw previous studies have investigated the effects or relationship of anxiety, motivation and self- esteem on writing skill, each factor in an individual study, in this study, the investigator studied the relationship of all these three factors together on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. Therefore, implementing a research to provide insights about this area seems beneficial. Moreover, since L2 learners have difficulties in commencing, maintaining, and ending their compositions, and also in organizing and developing

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their ideas, and because affective filter factors such as anxiety seem to interfere with writing performance, so a study in investigating emotional factors and the relationship of these factors with writing performance of learners in a context like Iran may be beneficial and effective. This research investigated the relationship between affective filter's variables with writing performance of Iranian EFL learners at university level.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the research questions formulated for this research are as follows:

RQ1: Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL learners' anxiety and their writing performance?

RQ2: Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL learners' motivation and their writing performance?

RQ3: Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL learners' self- esteem and their writing performance?

Based on the research questions above, it is hypothesized that:
HO1: There is no relationship between Iranian EFL learners' anxiety and their writing performance.

HO2: There is no relationship between Iranian EFL learners' motivation and their writing performance.

HO3: There is no relationship between Iranian EFL learners' self- esteem and their writing performance.

## 3. Method

## Participants

A total of 47 out of 80 bachelor male and female EFL learners majoring in TEFL was selected through stratified random sampling technique from Islamic Azad University of Urmia during academic year 2014-2015. Through the use of stratified random sampling technique, the researcher organized the population by university classes and selected appropriate number of juniors and seniors. Thirty-three of participants were female and fourteen were male. Twentytwo of the students were juniors and twenty-five of them were seniors.

## Instruments

In this research, the data collection tool was questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered in English because all participants were students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The questionnaires were taken in their original form. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) was utilized to assess the participants' anxiety. In order to evaluate the participants' motivation, AMTB motivation scale developed by Gardner (1985) was employed. For measuring self-esteem, the researcher used the Rosenberg scale by Rosenberg (1965). In addition, the participants were asked to write a 2 or 3 paragraph writing on a given topic.

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## Design of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the correlation between anxiety and writing performance, motivation and writing performance, and self-esteem and writing performance. So, the nature of this study is correlational. It aimed at collecting descriptive and analytical data concerning anxiety, motivation and self-esteem of Iranian EFL students and their writing performance. The overall design of this study is survey. Survey is an attempt to obtain data from members of a population to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or some other variables. One can easily gather data from large samples of participants. A questionnaire is one basic way to collect data from a sample.

## Procedures

Initially, a total of 47 bachelor EFL learners (male and female, junior and senior) majoring in TEFL was selected through stratified random sampling technique from Islamic Azad University of Urmia.

It took the researcher 2 sessions to collect the needed data. Each semester in Iranian universities contains sixteen sessions. Three previously introduced questionnaires were administered to participants on $8^{\text {th }}$ session. The researcher administered the questionnaires to a sample of fortyseven English learners in Islamic Azad university of Urmia. The questionnaires were distributed among the subjects at the end of their class time with the cooperation of their English instructors in the spring semester, 2015. They were given brief information about the purpose of the questionnaire and its scope. Before administering the questionnaires, the time was arranged with three lecturers. It must be noted that the students' names were required to be written by them since the researchers needed them to analyze the questionnaires and correlate the results with participants' writing performance. The participants were told that their identities would be kept confidential, no information revealing their identity would be used in the study, and their scores would not influence their course grades. They were also requested to state their true and honest responses. In addition, the subjects were informed to ask for any clarifications they might have. It took the participants roughly forty minutes to fill out the questionnaires.

On $12^{\text {th }}$ session the participants were asked to write a 2 or 3 paragraph writing. The topic of the writing was "Traffic". Allowed time to hand in the writing was thirty minutes. Beside the researcher herself, a qualified teacher scored the participants' provided writings. The scores were out of 20 . The scores given by two raters were highly correlated ( $\mathrm{r}=0.86, \mathrm{p}<0.05$ ). The inter-rater reliability was very high and also significant. Both writing scores and the data gathered through questionnaires were statistically processed and analyzed using SPSS program.

## Data Analysis

The present study investigated the relationship between motivation, anxiety, and self-esteem with the Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. First, descriptive statistics was presented. Then, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was run to find the correlation coefficient between the variables of the study. Three different correlations were run, one between proficiency and anxiety, the other between proficiency and motivation, and one more between proficiency and self-esteem.

## 4. Result

The descriptive statistics of scores obtained from two raters is represented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Scores out of Two Raters

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Rater_1 | 17.5851 | 1.81874 | 47 |
| Rater_2 | 17.9255 | 1.65496 | 47 |

Table 4.2. Correlation between Rater 1 \& Rater 2

|  |  | Rater_1 | Rater_2 |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Rater_1 | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.862^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 47 | 47 |
| Rater_2 | Pearson Correlation | $.862^{* *}$ | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 47 | 47 |

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

As the above table reveals, the scores given by two raters are highly correlated ( $\mathrm{r}=0.86, \mathrm{p}<0.05$ ). Therefore, we conclude that the scores are reliable. This is the inter-rater reliability and it is very high and also significant.


Figure 4.1. Correlation between Two Raters

## Descriptive Statistics in Correlation between Variables

In this phase, the correlation between different variables is determined. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 represent the descriptive statistics and the correlation between anxiety and writing performance:

Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :--- | :---: | ---: | ---: |
| Writing | 17.5851 | 1.81874 | 47 |
| Anxiety | 96.1064 | 14.19466 | 47 |

Table 4.4 Correlation between Writing and Anxiety

|  |  | writing | Anxiety |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| writing | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.116 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .437 |
|  | N | 47 | 47 |
| Anxiety | Pearson Correlation | -.116 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .437 |  |
|  | N | 47 | 47 |
|  |  |  |  |

As the above tables show, there is no correlation between anxiety and writing ability of students. The correlation is not only low but also insignificant ( $\mathrm{r}=-0.11, \operatorname{sig}>0.05$ ). Therefore, we conclude that there is no relationship between writing performance and anxiety.


Figure 4.2. Correlation between Writing and Anxiety
Tables 4.5 and 4.6 represent the descriptive statistics and the correlation between self-esteem and writing performance:

Table 4.5. Descriptive Statistics

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| writing | 17.5851 | 1.81874 | 47 |
| self-esteem | 20.4255 | 5.46827 | 47 |

Table 4.6. Correlation between writing and self-esteem

|  |  | writing | self-esteem |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | ---: |
| writing | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .244 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .098 |


|  |  |  | 47 |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| self-esteem | Pearson Correlation | .244 | 47 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .098 | 1 |
|  | N | 47 | 47 |

As the above table shows, there is no correlation between self-esteem and writing ability of students. The correlation is not only low but also insignificant ( $\mathrm{r}=-0.09, \operatorname{sig}>0.05$ ). Therefore, we conclude that there is no relationship between writing performance and self-esteem.


Figure 4.3. Correlation between Writing and Self-esteem
Tables 4.7 and 4.8 represent the descriptive statistics and the correlation between motivation and writing performance:

Table 4.7. Descriptive Statistics

|  |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| writing | 17.5851 | 1.81874 | 47 |
| motivation | 394.6809 | 38.77589 | 47 |

Table 4.8. Correlation between writing and motivation

|  |  | writing | motivation |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| writing | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .140 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .346 |
|  | N | 47 | 47 |
| motivation | Pearson Correlation | .140 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .346 |  |
|  | N | 47 | 47 |

As the above table shows, there is no correlation between motivation and writing ability of students. The correlation is not only low but also insignificant ( $\mathrm{r}=-0.14, \operatorname{sig}>0.05$ ). Therefore, we conclude that there is no relationship between writing performance and motivation.


Figure 4.4. Correlation between Writing and Motivation

## 5. Discussion

This study has been concerned with affective factors that may have a relationship with Iranian EFL learners' writing skill with a special focus on anxiety, motivation and self- esteem. In the light of what the current literature suggested as factors for language learning and more specifically writing performance, the findings of this study paint a grim picture. The results of this study are not in line with the results obtained by Gkonou (2013) who mentioned a significant and high correlation between classroom anxiety, speaking anxiety and writing anxiety. Moreover, the results of this study are not in line with those of Mousapour Negari \& Talebi Rezaabai (2012) who found out that there is a statistically high correlation between the students' anxiety in essay writing and their writing performance in EFL context. Ganschow et al. (1994) did a study exploring differences in foreign language anxiety and native oral and written language skills among college students. The results of the study revealed that students significantly differ in their English oral and written achievements in terms of the amount of FL anxiety they suffer from. Al- Shourafa (2012) came to conclusion that there is a relationship between motivation and English writing skill of Jordanian $10^{\text {th }}$ grade students in Al- Karak Directorate of education. Cheng, Horwitz \& Schallert (1999) looked at the relationship between language anxiety and writing. They found that second language writing anxiety, as operationalized by the SLWAT (Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test), appears to be a language-skill-specific anxiety because it not only had a higher correlation with writing achievement but also had a significant predictive ability in this aspect. They suggested, therefore, that the anxiety generally associated with language classes and writing anxiety were clearly distinguishable.

The study found that motivation and writing performance were not significantly correlated. This may be due to the complex mixture of factors described by different motivational theories and language learning processes. Some of the possible explanations are: (a) even when an ambiguously positive perception has been formed in an individual, tasks in which pupils engage and the process that these tasks are being completed in an educational place like a class may lack one or more of the optimal conditions specified by motivation theories (Carroll, 1963; Krashen, 1982; Maehhr, 1983), or (b) learning a language except native language itself may resulted in negative attitude towards the language and culture, though some students remain enthusiastic with the study of the language itself as an academic subject (Nocon, 1991) or possibly, (c) within

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individual learners themselves these factors interacts with some unsatisfied lower needs experienced at a certain time or day, leading to erratic responses as an expression of their dissatisfaction (Oppenheim, 1992). Unfortunately, this study does not shed light on these complex issues.

And also, the third null hypothesis which was dealing with no correlation between self- esteem and writing performance of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance came true. This was not in line with Hassan (2001) who tried to determine if writing apprehension and EFL self-esteem are related to the quality and quantity of students' writings. The findings of his study showed that writing apprehension of EFL students negatively correlated with their self-esteem. On the other hand, Grodnick (1996) supported the hypothesis that students' self-esteem levels do not show a significant correlation with proficiency level of writing. He selected 50 random compositions of Union County College students to study the correlation between self-esteem and writing achievement and used Coopersmith Self-esteem Scale and the writing course grades to determine the correlation.

## 6. Conclusion

This study investigated any possible relationship between anxiety, motivation, self-esteem and Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. Forty-seven EFL learners studying at Islamic Azad University of Urmia participated in the study. Students were given three questionnaires: FLCAS, AMTB and Rosenberg scale. Four sessions later they were asked to compose a two to three paragraph writing. Data gathered from this study were analyzed using SPSS. There were three hypotheses in this study. The first one claimed that there is no relationship between Iranian EFL learners' anxiety and their writing performance. The results of data analysis accepted the first research hypothesis and represented that there was no relationship between Iranian EFL learners' anxiety and their writing performance. The second hypothesis was accepted based on the results and cleared that there was no relationship between Iranian EFL learners' motivation and their writing performance. Finally, the third hypothesis which claimed that there is no relationship between Iranian EFL learners' self-esteem and their writing performance was accepted in terms of results.

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# BELIEFS OF IRANIAN UNDERGRADUATE EL LEARNERS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY EXAMINED THE BELIEFS OF IRANIAN EL LEARNERS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING. TO THIS END, 120 IRANIAN UNDERGRADUATE LEARNERS OF EFL AT ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY IN MASHHAD WHO COMPLETED A QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY. IN FACT, THEY WERE SURVEYED USING HORWITZ' (1987) 35-ITEM BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING INVENTORY (BALLI). BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING INVENTORY (BALLI) EXAMINES FIVE THEMES SUCH AS BELIEFS ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE APTITUDE, LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES, THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING, DIFFICULTY INVOLVED IN LEARNING, AND MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS. THE PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY WERE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON LATENT VARIABLES EXPLORED BY THE BALLI, AND A PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS. THE FINDINGS MANIFESTED THAT EFL LEARNERS EXPRESSED STRONG AGREEMENT WITH MOTIVATION AND EXPECTATIONS AND THE LEAST AGREEMENT WITH DIFFICULTY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING. ALSO, THE FINDINGS SUGGEST IF EL LEARNERS ARE EQUIPPED WITH MOTIVATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND LEARNING STRATEGIES, THEY WILL BE EAGER TO LEARN EASILY.


KEY WORDS: BELIEFS, LANGUAGE LEARNING, EL LEARNERS

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, researchers in the field of language learning have shown great interest in learners' individual characteristics that can affect the learners. Beliefs about language learning have been one of the research focuses. Researchers have found that foreign language learners come to the language class with some preconceived ideas or beliefs about language and language learning and that these beliefs can indicate what expectations the learners have and what actions in their language learning they will take (Abraham \& Vann, 1987; Holec, 1987; Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1987). Therefore, researchers have been investigating the beliefs that language learners possess and the factors that affect learners' beliefs in order to find ways to help learners adjust their beliefs to facilitate their language learning.

The idea that learners' beliefs about foreign language learning have an influence on their success or failure in achieving competence in a foreign language is well documented (Horwitz, 1988; Jernigan, 2001; Kern, 1995; Miele, 1982; Rifkin, 2000; Strevens, 1978). As an example,
foreign/second language learners may have strong beliefs about the nature of the language under study, the process of language acquisition, language learning difficulties, their aptitude, effective use of certain learning strategies along with effective teaching methodologies, and their particular learning needs. Identification of these beliefs and their reflection on language learning can enhance pedagogical practices and syllabus design in language courses (Arnold, 1999; Breen, 2001).

Language researchers have found that learners' beliefs determine them and have main influences on their learning behaviors and language learning. In fact, successful learners consider attitudes toward learning, beliefs about the language learning processes, expectations, and experiences (Altan 2012; Benson, 2001; Cotterall, 1995; Dörnyei 2005; Horwitz 2007; Nyikos \& Oxford, 1993; Rad 2010; Sakui \& Gaies, 1999;). Horwitz (2007) considers learners' beliefs about foreign language as central principal in each experience which deals with human behavior. Altan (2012) believes that at least some knowledge of English is urgent to make progress in life and work. Because it provides high social status and job opportunities with individuals. According to Rad (2010) and Dörnyei (2005), beliefs and attitudes of learners about foreign languages are fundamental and in the focus of educational progress.

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

The groundwork for the research into learner beliefs was laid for the most part in the 1970s and 1980s, with studies that had emphasis in validating and defining key concepts such that further research could take place. Work like Bartley's 1970 article correlating belief with attrition, Gardner's (1985) exploration of the belief-dependent socio-economic model of language learning and learners' attitudes (Horwitz, 1988) largely emphasized the task of operationalizing the target construct, crafting a survey from its primary identified components, and validating that survey. Important instruments such as the Foreign Language Attitude Scale (FLAS) (Bartley, 1970), the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985), and the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) (Horwitz, 1988) were the tools that were created, validated, or used in those studies. Other texts of the time that focused on individual student differences, notably Spolsky (1989) and Skehan (1989) also depended on these instruments to define these concepts.

Descriptions of student perceptions and beliefs have also been common in the field, often focusing on specific aspects of the language learning classroom: first language (L1) usage (RolinIanziti \& Varshney, 2008), technology (Peters, Weinberg, \& Sarma, 2009), the native versus nonnative class instructor (Hertel \& Sunderman, 2009), and, in the context of incoming freshmen in a university program, preferred classroom activities (Mandell, 2002).

In fact, a substantial number of studies on beliefs about language learning have been conducted involving various groups of foreign and second language learners and teachers: American learners learning foreign languages (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Mori, 1999), ESL learners from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Abraham \& Vann, 1987; Cotterall, 1995; Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1987), and EFL learners in various countries (Huang, 1997; Kunt, 1997; Peacock, 1999, 2001; Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Truitt, 1995; Wen \& Johnson, 1997; Yang, 1992, 1999), and in-service and pre-service foreign and second language teachers (Horwitz, 1985; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999, 2001).

Therefore, the present study is going to gain a better understanding of the latent variables explored by the BALLI that are important to EL learners.

The hypothesis that will be tested is that:

1. To what extent do Iranian undergraduate EL learners are affected by their beliefs about language learning?

## 3. Methodology <br> 3.1. Participants

The participants for this study were 120 Iranian undergraduate learners of EFL at Islamic Azad University in Mashhad who completed a 35-item questionnaire. They ranged in age from 18 to 41 , forming a proportion of $33 \%$ males and $67 \%$ females. Table 1 summarizes participants' gender, age, and educational level.

Table 3.1: Demographic Information of the Undergraduate Learners ( $\mathbf{N}=\mathbf{1 2 0}$ )

| Gender | $\%$ |
| :--- | :---: |
| Males | 33 |
| Females | 67 |
| Age | $\%$ |
| $18-20$ | 36 |
| $20-30$ | 43 |
| $30-41$ | 19 |
| Educational level | $\%$ |
| Freshman | 24 |
| Sophomore | 26 |
| Junior | 28 |
| Senior | 22 |
|  |  |

As can be seen in Table 1, 33\% of the sample are males and $67 \%$ are females. It shows that the majority of the learners are female learners. The learners range in age from 18 to 41 . In fact, $70 \%$ are of university age. EL learners are distributed across freshman ( $24 \%$ ), sophomore ( $26 \%$ ), junior ( $28 \%$ ), and senior ( $22 \%$ ).

### 3.2. Instruments

In order to carry out the study, the researcher used a questionnaire that was derived from Horwitz' (1987) 35-item Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI). It is a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) explores five logical areas.

### 3.3. Procedure

To collect data, 120 undergraduate learners of EFL completed a questionnaire, in which it measured learners' beliefs about language learning. The present study used demographic information and the descriptive statistics on latent variables explored by the BALLI.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The data processed through the latent variables, explored by the BALLI. In fact, the statistical procedures used in the study were descriptive statistics and a principal component analysis.

## 4. Result and Discussion

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Latent variables explored by the BALLI consist of Horwitz's (1987) separation of items under her five themes:

1. Foreign Language Aptitude
2. Difficulty of Language Learning
3. Nature of Language Learning.
4. Learning and Communication Strategies
5. Motivation and Expectations

Table1 shows summary of principal component analysis results in the light of Horwitz's (1988) themes.

Table 1. Principal Component Analysis Results in the Light of Horwitz's (1987) Themes

| FL Aptitude | $1,2,5,6,10,11,16,19,30,33,35$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| Difficulty | $3,4,15,26,34$ |
| Nature | $8,12,17,23,27,28$ |
| Learning and Communication Strategies | $9,13,14,17,18,21,22,26$ |
| Motivation and Expectations | $20,24,29,31,32$ |

The data from learners' statements about language learning were analyzed separately to see the influences of five themes and their items on EL learners. From table 2 to table 6, a collection of items is included to determine the learners' perceptions. Table 2 concerns with the learners' beliefs about foreign language aptitude.

Table 2. Learners' Statements about Foreign Language Aptitude

| Items | Agree | Disagree |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. | 110 | 10 |
| 2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages. | 105 | 15 |
| 5. I believe that I will learn to speak English very well. | 95 | 25 |
| 6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages. | 115 | 5 |
| 10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language <br> to learn another one. | 108 | 12 |
| 30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent. | 120 | 0 |
| 33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. | 106 | 14 |
| 35. Language learning involves a lot of memorization. | 45 | 75 |
| 11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not | 20 | 100 |
| good at learning foreign languages. | 66 | 54 |
| 16. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages | 40 | 80 |
| 19. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages. | $70.45 \%$ |  |

Table 2 indicates that 70.45 \% of EL learners agreed that they were interested in first theme (foreign language aptitude). Item 30 shows that intelligent persons are apt to speak more than one language. And for item 11, the majority of learners are disagree.

Table 3 reflects the beliefs of EL learners about difficulty of language learning.
Table 3. Learners' Statements about Difficulty of Language Learning

| Items | Agree | Disagree |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 3. Some languages are easier to learn than others. | 88 | 31 |
| 4. English is a difficult language. | 69 | 51 |

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15. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language,
how long would it take them to speak the language very well?
25. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language. 70 50
34. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it. 103 27
68.75%
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According to table 3, 68.75 \% agreed that they were not highly interested in second theme (difficulty of language learning). For item 15, most of learners agreed that learning a language takes less than 2 years.

Table 4 shows the learners' responses to nature of language learning.
Table 4. Learners' Statements about Nature of Language Learning

| Items | Agree | Disagree |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 8. It is important to know about English-speaking cultures <br> in order to speak English | 103 | 17 |
| 12. It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country. | 67 | 53 |
| 17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is | 87 | 33 |
| learning vocabulary words | 69 | 51 |
| 23. The most important part of learning a foreign language is <br> learning the grammar | 69 |  |
| 27. Learning a foreign language is different than learning other <br> academic subjects. | 115 | 5 |
| 28. The most important part of learning English is learning how <br> to translate from my native language to English or from English <br> to my native language. | 60 | 60 |
|  | $69.60 \%$ |  |

Table 4 indicates that $69.60 \%$ of participants agreed that they were interested in third theme (nature of language learning). For item 27, 5 persons only are disagree.

Table 5 demonstrates the learners' statements about learning and communication strategies.
Table 5. Learners' Statements about Learning and Communication Strategies

| Items | Agree | Disagree |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  |  |
| 18. It is important to repeat and practice a lot. | 91 | 19 |
| 7. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation. | 73 | 33 |
| 13. I enjoy practicing English with the native English speakers I meet. | 109 | 1 |
| 22. If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it | 85 | 25 |
| will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on. |  |  |
| 26. It is important to practice with cassettes or tapes. | 97 | 13 |
| 14. It is o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in English. <br> 9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly. <br> 21. I feel timid speaking English with other people | 80 | 102 |

Based on table 5, 75.20 \% of learners agreed that they were interested in forth theme (learning and communication strategies). They believe that cassettes and tapes, practice, and native English speakers are important factors.

Table 6 shows the beliefs of learners about motivation

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Table 6. Learners' Statements about Motivation and Expectations

| Items | Agree | Disagree |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak English. | 80 | 40 |
| 24. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know native <br> English speakers better and their cultures. | 70 | 50 |
| 29. If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities <br> for a good job | 108 | 12 |
| 31. I want to learn to speak English well. <br> 32. I would like to have friends who speak English as a native language. | 120 | 06 |

Table 6 indicates that $81 \%$ agreed that they were highly interested in motivation and expectations. All of them like to learn to speak English well.

Table 7 lists the most agreed with and least agreed with themes from Horwitz's questionnaire.
Table 7. Most and Least Agreed with Themes from Horwitz's Questionnaire

| Theme | $\%$ |
| :--- | :---: |
| Motivation and Expectations | 81 |
| Learning and Communication Strategies | 75.20 |
| Foreign Language Aptitude | 70.45 |
| Nature of Language Learning. | 69.60 |
| Difficulty of Language Learning | 68.75 |

This table shows that EFL learners expressed strong agreement with motivation and expectations and the least agreement with difficulty of language learning. $81 \%$ agreed that they were highly interested in motivation and expectations and $68.75 \%$ agreed that they were lowly interested in difficulty of language learning.

## 5. Conclusion

Beliefs are central constructs in the disciplines dealing with human behavior and learning (Ajzen, 1988; Fishbein \& Ajzen, 1975). In the classroom context, the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and metacognitive knowledge that students bring to the learning situation have been recognized as significant contributory factors in the learning process and ultimate success (Breen, 2001). For example, second or foreign language students may hold strong beliefs about the nature of the language under study, its difficulty, the process of its acquisition, the success of certain learning strategies, the existence of aptitude, their own expectations about achievement, and teaching methodologies. Identification of these beliefs and their reflection on language learning can improve syllabus design and pedagogical practices in language courses (Arnold, 1999; Breen, 2001). The purpose of the present study was to investigate the beliefs of Iranian postgraduate learners about foreign language learning. The findings demonstrated that EFL learners expressed strong agreement with motivation and expectations and the least agreement with difficulty of language learning. The main message is that if EL learners are equipped with motivational instruments and learning strategies, they will be eager to learn English language easily. In summary, paying serious attention to learners' beliefs about foreign language learning accelerates the process of learning and improving.

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# THE EFFECT OF COLLABORATIVE WRITING PRACTICE ON EFL LEARNERS' WRITING ACCURACY, COMPLEXITY AND FLUENCY 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY INVESTIGATED THE EFFECT OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE ON EFL LEARNERS' WRITING FLUENCY, COMPLEXITY AND ACCURACY AMONG IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS. TO THAT END, 60 EFL STUDENTS AT ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY, HAMEDAN BRANCH, IRAN WERE CONVENIENTLY SAMPLED AND THEN WERE ASSIGNED INTO TWO GROUPS: ONE EXPERIMENTAL AND ONE CONTROL, 30 PEOPLE EACH. AFTERWARDS, ALL THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE TWO GROUPS WERE GIVEN A PRETEST WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY THE AN 8-WEEK TREATMENT WHERE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WERE INSTRUCTED TO WRITE COLLABORATIVELY; WHEREAS, IN THE CONTROL GROUP THE PARTICIPANTS WROTE INDIVIDUALLY. AFTER THIS TREATMENT PERIOD, THE POSTTEST WAS ADMINISTERED. TO COMPARE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GROUPS ON THE THREE VARIABLES OF CONCERN, MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE (MANCOVA) WAS RUN. THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE ON EFL WRITING PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF ACCURACY, COMPLEXITY AND FLUENCY IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AS COMPARED TO THE CONTROL GROUP.


KEYWORDS: COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE, EFL WRITING, ACCURACY, COMPLEXITY, FLUENCY

## Introduction

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In applied linguistics, concept of practice, although always important, has been treated differently at different times. Before Krashen (1982), and Krashen and Terell (1983), the concept was associated with the practice on producing the language products, mainly writing, speaking and doing exercises, believing these can help consolidate one's learning. However, Krashen (1982) and later on, Krashen and Terell (1983) radically broke with this tradition in that they saw a minimal role for the practice with the product believing that it is meaning-focused processing of the right (comprehensible) kind of input which results in the acquisition of competence, the idea being that a great deal of comprehensible input over time can lead to considerable fluency and accuracy in learning a second language. Nevertheless, studies conducted with students in Canadian immersion programs (e.g., Swain, 1985), showed that even though students had been exposed to great amounts of comprehensible input in French, and were somewhat fluent in it, they had still not acquired grammatical competence in that their performance reflected many syntactical errors in French.

Out of this controversy, Swain (1985) suggests that "output" is a missing factor. She proposes the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis in which she claims "output practice that extends the linguistic repertoire of the learner as he or she attempts to create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired" (p. 252) is an essential condition for second language (L2) acquisition. Swain $(1985,1995,1998,2005)$ also points out some crucial functions of output practice in second language acquisition including noticing function, hypothesis formulating and testing function, metalinguistic function and syntactic processing function.

As Swain's was in line with a premise shared by the fields of cognitive psychology, cognitive sciences and second language acquisition, all of which believe that learning does not take place without noticing (Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990, 2001; Tomlin \& Villa, 1994), it seemed to open a more tangible perspective to second language researchers and teachers than that advocated by Krashen and his followers. Nevertheless, what kind of output practice may result in better comprehension of the language, and, thus, will promote learning more has raised its own concerns and issues.

Therefore, a line of studies ( e.g., Dekeyser, 2007; Shehadeh, 2011) have tried to investigate the types of collaboration that are conductive to learning in a more meaningful way. The results have led researchers to develop and refine their conception of the output practice and to suggest that collaborative tasks (such as Information Gap Tasks) may be perhaps one of the best ways to get students to produce comprehensible output. The reason that these types of tasks and other kinds of pair and group work activities may be useful is that, whereas individually learners may be novices, working together they have access to their partner's knowledge and can essentially rise above their individual level of competence (Swain, 1995). By doing this, learners working in a pair or in a group can produce comprehensible output beyond their competence level and learn something new (or at the very least, consolidate existing knowledge).

However, compared to research that examined the benefits of collaborative work for the spoken discourse, research investigating the benefits of collaborative work for the written discourse in L2, especially collaborativ writing (CW), is scant (Storch, 2005; Storch \& Wigglesworth, 2007). For instance, Storch ( 2005, p.153) states that "although pair and group work are commonly used in language classrooms, very few studies have investigated the nature of such collaboration when students produce a jointly written text." Storch points out that most past studies on collaborative work in the L2 classroom "have examined learners" attitudes to group/pair work in general, rather than to the activity of collaborative writing" (p. 155). More important for the purpose of this study, Storch also stresses the novelty represented by the pedagogical strategy of having students compose in pairs (p.168).

A review of the literature shows that now there are many questions pertaining to the role of practice that deserve more attention and further investigation: How much practice and of what type is needed to get control over a skill or sub-component of skill? How skill-specific and how task-specific is the effect of practice; in other words, how much transfer can be expected? How much feedback should be given, how, and at what time to maximize the effect of practice? Can explicit knowledge be automatized through practice to the point of becoming equivalent to implicit acquired knowledge? How does automaticity develop in the course of practice? How does the type of practice affect its outcomes?

Therefore, it seems warranted to conduct research which would try to address such concerns in real classrooms, in settings where learners share their mother tongue and have limited out of school exposure to the target language.

## Related studies

In a research by Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) two groups of mostly Chinese English-as-a-second-language learners who participated in the study were asked to write an argumentative essay in pairs and individually under time constraints. The results of the analyses of recorded pair dialogues and participants' written tasks indicated that collaboration had positively impacted accuracy, but had not had a significant effect on participants writing fluency and complexity. They concluded that working collaboratively in a classroom context would advantage learners. The analyses of the pair dialogues suggested that when composing collaboratively learners found considerable opportunities to share ideas, pool their language knowledge and interact on different aspects of writing.

In another study, Franken and Haslett (2002) examined whether interaction with a partner as compared with writing individually resulted in written texts of higher quality. Their study recruited twenty-two high school students from various backgrounds who were involved in doing summary writing tasks or writing argumentative essays. The results obtained showed that interaction with a peer could have positive effects on the texts that the participants produced. The findings also revealed that working individually results in significantly higher mean scores for linguistic accuracy and complexity in a summary writing task. Their findings also indicated that interaction with a peer is more effective in argumentative writing tasks where learners are required to have more specific domain knowledge in order to generate ideas and support their ideas as well.

Regarding individual versus collaborative pair work, Storch (2005) studied the effectiveness of collaborative writing on L2 argumentative essays. Her study analyzed both the final product of their writing task (in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity) as well as the nature of interaction during the task. The results revealed that collaboration among team members leads to many opportunities for idea exchanging and peer feedback. Moreover, the results also indicated that the students who produced the text in pair wrote shorter but grammatically more accurate and more complex texts in comparison to those who produced the texts individually. But the difference between the individual and group work was not statistically significant, suggesting that the reason for this lack of significant might probably have to do with short length of the text and the small sample size, thus there is a need for further research.

More recently, Storch and Wigglesworth (2010) conducted a four-week period study. The study inluded three phases. In phase 1, 48 advanced learners worked in pairs to write a text based on a graphic prompt. In phase 2, the learners reviewed the feedback they received from their teacher and jointly rewrote their text. In phase 3, each of the learners composed a text individually using the same prompt as in phase 1 . The texts written by the pairs after the feedback were analyzed for evidence of uptake of the feedback provided by the teacher, and texts produced by students individually in phase 3 for evidence of retention. The researchers found

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that different linguistic and affective factors, such as the type of errors the learners make in their writings, and more importantly, learners' attitudes, beliefs, and goals towards the writing task may affect uptake and retention.

As a review of literature, there are not many studies in relation to collaborative writing and its effects on grammatical accuracy, complexity and fluency all at the same time. So the first aim of the current research is to investigate this important matter.

The present paper contributes to this line of enquiry by exploring the occurrence and value of negotiated interaction in group-work, written tasks by a group of EFL learners at an Iranian higher education institute. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Does collaborative practice significantly affect EFL learners' writing fluency?
2. Does collaborative practice significantly affect EFL learners' writing complexity?
3. Does collaborative practice significantly affect EFL learners' grammatical accuracy? Methodology

Testing the Normality Assumptions
Testing the Normality of the Distribution of Test Scores
To check the normality of the distribution of test scores, Kolmogrov-Smirnov test was run.
Table 1 below illustrates the results of this test.
Table 1
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Checking Normality of the Scores

|  | Pre.Accur <br> acy | Post.Accur <br> acy | Pre.Compl <br> exity | Post.Comp <br> lexity | Pre.Fluen <br> cy | Post.Fluen <br> cy |  |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| N |  | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 |
| Normal | Mean | 10.2667 | 6.0333 | .9250 | 1.3613 | 10.7533 | 11.4850 |
| Parametersa,b | Std. Deviation | 5.17447 | 2.48362 | .39300 | .55289 | 2.01111 | 3.18049 |
| Most Extreme | Absolute | .102 | .095 | .158 | .134 | .066 | .065 |
| Differences | Positive | .102 | .094 | .158 | .134 | .063 | .065 |
|  | Negative | -.055 | -.095 | -.074 | -.070 | -.066 | -.055 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | .791 | .733 | 1.225 | 1.040 | .509 | .502 |  |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .558 | .656 | .100 | .229 | .958 | .962 |  |

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.

As it is clear from Table 1, the values obtained for the scores in both the pretest and the posttest on accuracy, complexity and fluency are all larger than the Sig value of .05 (the last row of the table). This implies that the test scores were normally distributed.

## Testing Equality of Error Variances

The homogeneity of error variances was tested through Levene's statistic, which tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. As Table 2 indicates, the results of this test were non-significant as far as accuracy ( $\mathrm{Sig}=.436, \mathrm{p}>.05$ ), complexity (Sig= .711, p> .05) and fluency (Sig= .986, $\mathrm{p}>.05$ ) were concerned. Therefore, these results can be taken as a sign that there were not any significant differences between the variances of the groups.

Table 2
Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

|  | F | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Post.Accuracy | .616 | 1 | 58 | .436 |
| Post.Complexi | .138 |  | 1 | 58 |
| ty |  |  |  | .711 |
| Post.Fluency | .000 | 1 | 58 | .986 |

## Testing Equality of Covariences

To check this assumption which is assumed by MANCOVA, Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was run. Box's M tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups.

Table. 3
Box's Test for Equality of Covariences

| Box's M | 3.676 |
| :--- | ---: |
| F | .578 |
| df1 | 6 |
| df2 | 24373.132 |
| Sig. | .748 |

As the data in Table 3 show, the Box's Sig. value of .748 is much larger than the critical $P$ value of .05 which is an indication of the equality of covariance matrices for the groups.

## Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

This assumption was checked by measuring the interaction between groups and the covariates (pretest scores for accuracy, complexity and fluency). As the data summarized in Tables 4 and 5 show, the Sig. value obtained for interaction between groups and pretest scores for accuracy, complexity and fluency as covariates indicated in rows for Groups * Pre.Accuracy , Groups * Pre.Complexity, and Groups * Pre.Fluency were all larger than . 05 , which indicated that interactions among the independent variable and covariates were not significant and the assumption of the homogeneity of the slope of regression lines was met.

Table 4
Between-Subjects Factors

|  |  | Value Label | N |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | ---: |
| Groups | 1.00 | Experimental | 30 |
|  | 2.00 | Control | 30 |

Table 5
Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Dependent <br> Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean <br> Square | F | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected Model | Post.Accuracy | 81.559a | 7 | 11.651 | 2.146 | . 055 |
|  | Post.Complexity | $5.626^{\text {b }}$ | 7 | . 804 | 3.367 | . 005 |
|  | Post.Fluency | $276.451{ }^{\text {c }}$ | 7 | 39.493 | 6.410 | . 000 |
| Intercept | Post.Accuracy | 11.788 | 1 | 11.788 | 2.171 | . 147 |
|  | Post.Complexity | . 245 | 1 | . 245 | 1.028 | . 315 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 49.314 | 1 | 49.314 | 8.004 | . 007 |
| Groups | Post.Accuracy | 7.868 | 1 | 7.868 | 1.449 | . 234 |
|  | Post.Complexity | . 165 | 1 | . 165 | . 692 | . 409 |
|  | Post.Fluency | . 291 | 1 | . 291 | . 047 | . 829 |
| Pre.Accuracy | Post.Accuracy | 7.935 | 1 | 7.935 | 1.461 | . 232 |
|  | Post.Complexity | . 212 | 1 | . 212 | . 889 | . 350 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 33.913 | 1 | 33.913 | 5.505 | . 023 |
| Pre.Fluency | Post.Accuracy | 22.078 | 1 | 22.078 | 4.066 | . 049 |
|  | Post.Complexity | 1.737 | 1 | 1.737 | 7.279 | . 009 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 4.645 | 1 | 4.645 | . 754 | . 389 |
| Pre.Complexity | Post.Accuracy | 2.107 | 1 | 2.107 | . 388 | . 536 |
|  | Post.Complexity | . 061 | 1 | . 061 | . 256 | . 615 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 62.225 | 1 | 62.225 | 10.100 | . 002 |
| Groups * Pre.Accuracy | Post.Accuracy | . 043 | 1 | . 043 | . 008 | . 929 |
|  | Post.Complexity | . 250 | 1 | . 250 | 1.049 | . 310 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 18.913 | 1 | 18.913 | 3.070 | . 086 |
| Groups * Pre.Complexity | Post.Accuracy | 14.645 | 1 |  | 2.697 | . 107 |
|  | Post.Complexity | . 060 | 1 | . 060 | . 251 | . 619 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 2.975 | 1 | 2.975 | . 483 | . 490 |
| Groups * Pre.Fluency | Post.Accuracy | 4.485 | 1 | 4.485 | . 826 | . 368 |
|  | Post.Complexity | . 005 | 1 | . 005 | . 023 | . 880 |
|  | Post.Fluency | . 005 | 1 | . 005 | . 001 | . 978 |
| Error | Post.Accuracy | 282.375 | 52 | 5.430 |  |  |
|  | Post.Complexity | 12.410 | 52 | . 239 |  |  |
|  | Post.Fluency | 320.366 | 52 | 6.161 |  |  |
| Total | Post.Accuracy | 2548.000 | 60 |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Complexity | 129.229 | 60 |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Fluency | 8511.130 | 60 |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | Post.Accuracy | 363.933 | 59 |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Complexity | 18.036 | 59 |  |  |  |


a. R Squared $=.224$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.120$ )
b. R Squared $=.312($ Adjusted R Squared $=.219)$
c. R Squared $=.463($ Adjusted $R$ Squared $=.391)$

## Testing the Research Questions

After checking the normality assumptions, and making sure we can use parametric measures, we turned to testing the research hypotheses. To that end, the multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was run to check whether involving the participants in collaborative practice could have had any significant effects on the EFL learners' writing performance as far as grammatical accuracy, grammatical complexity and writing fluency were concerned. The results of this test are summarized in tables 6 to 9 .

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics for the Groups

|  | Groups | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Post.Accuracy | Experimental | 5.4667 | 2.43159 | 30 |
|  | Control | 6.6000 | 2.44385 | 30 |
|  | Total | 6.0333 | 2.48362 | 60 |
| Post.Complexity | Experimental | 1.5900 | .50179 | 30 |
|  | Control | 1.1327 | .51181 | 30 |
|  | Total | 1.3613 | .55289 | 60 |
| Post.Fluency | Experimental | 12.5600 | 3.22903 | 30 |
|  | Control | 10.4100 | 2.78609 | 30 |
|  | Total | 11.4850 | 3.18049 | 60 |

Table 6 displays the mean scores for the experimental group, and the control group on accuracy (EX. 5.46 vs. CON. 6.60), complexity (EX. 1.59 vs. CON. 1.13), and fluency (EX. 12.56 vs. CON. 10.41).

Table 7
Multivariate Analysis of Covariance
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Dependent <br> Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected Model | Post.Accuracy | 57.897 a | 4 | 14.474 | 2.601 | . 046 | . 159 |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | $5.334^{\text {b }}$ | 4 | 1.333 | 5.774 | . 001 | . 296 |
|  | Post.Fluency | $256.306{ }^{\text {c }}$ | 4 | 64.077 | 10.350 | . 000 | . 429 |
| Intercept | Post.Accuracy <br> Post.Complexi ty | 11.906 | 1 | 11.906 | 2.140 | . 149 | . 037 |
|  |  | . 271 | 1 | . 271 | 1.175 | . 283 | . 021 |


|  | Post.Fluency | 51.802 | 1 | 51.802 | 8.367 | . 005 | . 132 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pre.Accuracy | Post.Accuracy | 14.873 |  |  |  | . 108 | . 046 |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | . 236 | 1 | . 236 | 1.023 | . 316 | . 018 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 37.626 | 1 | 37.626 | 6.077 | . 017 | . 100 |
| Pre.Fluency | Post.Accuracy | 29.038 | 1 | 29.038 | 5.219 | . 026 | . 087 |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | 2.136 | 1 | 2.136 | 9.247 | . 004 | . 144 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 3.939 | 1 | 3.939 | . 636 | . 429 | . 011 |
| Pre.Complexit y | Post.Accuracy | 3.306 | 1 | 3.306 | . 594 | . 444 | . 011 |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | . 014 | 1 | . 014 | . 062 | . 804 | . 001 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 85.810 | 1 | 85.810 | 13.860 | . 000 | . 201 |
| Groups | Post.Accuracy | 25.447 | 1 | 25.447 | 4.573 | . 037 | . 077 |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | 2.313 | 1 | 2.313 | 10.014 | . 003 | . 154 |
|  | Post.Fluency | 76.399 | 1 | 76.399 | 12.340 | . 001 | . 183 |
| Error | Post.Accuracy | 306.037 | 55 | 5.564 |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | 12.702 | 55 | . 231 |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Fluency | 340.510 | 55 | 6.191 |  |  |  |
| Total | Post.Accuracy | 2548.000 | 60 |  |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | 129.229 | 60 |  |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Fluency | 8511.130 | 60 |  |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | Post.Accuracy | 363.933 | 59 |  |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Complexi ty | 18.036 | 59 |  |  |  |  |
|  | Post.Fluency | 596.816 | 59 |  |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.159$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.098$ )
b. R Squared $=.296$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.245$ )
c. R Squared $=.429$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.388$ )

The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run to compare the meaningfulness of the differences between the groups on the three variables of interest after considering the effects of the covariates. The results of MANCOVA summarized in Table 7 for accuracy $(\mathrm{F}(1,55)=4.57, \mathrm{P}<$ .05 , Partial $\eta^{2}=.077$ ), for complexity $\left(F(1,55)=10.01, \mathrm{P}<.05\right.$, Partial $\left.\eta^{2}=.154\right)$, and for fluency $\left(\mathrm{F}(1,55)=12.34, \mathrm{P}<.05\right.$, Partial $\left.\eta^{2}=.183\right)$, all indicated that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the posttest after removing the possible effect of their entry knowledge as tested through the pretest.

Although the F-values obtaied indicated significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the posttest scores of accuracy, complexity and fluency, after removing the possible

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effect of the pretest, the post-hoc comparison tests were run to compare the groups in each of the variables and to answer the research questions raised at the outset of the study.

Table 8
Estimated Marginal Means

| Dependent <br> Variable | Groups |  |  | $95 \%$ Confidence Interval |  |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  | Mean | Std. Error | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |  |
| Post.Accuracy | Experimental | $5.371^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .434 | 4.501 | 6.241 |
|  | Control | $6.696^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .434 | 5.825 | 7.566 |
| Post.Complexity | Experimental | $1.561^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .088 | 1.384 | 1.738 |
|  | Control | $1.162^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .088 | .984 | 1.339 |
| Post.Fluency | Experimental | $12.633^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .458 | 11.714 | 13.551 |
|  | Control | $10.337^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .458 | 9.419 | 11.256 |

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pre.Accuracy $=10.2667$, Pre.Fluency $=10.7533$, Pre.Complexity $=.9250$.

Table 9
Pairwise Comparisons

| Dependent Variable | (I) Groups | (J) Groups | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. <br> Error | Sig. ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | 95\% Confidence Interval for Difference ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower <br> Bound | Upper <br> Bound |
| Post.Accuracy | Experiment al | Control | $-1.325^{*}$ | . 619 | . 037 | -2.566 | -. 083 |
|  | Control | Experiment al | $1.325^{*}$ | . 619 | . 037 | . 083 | 2.566 |
| Post.Complexi ty | Experiment al | Control | . $399 *$ | . 126 | . 003 | . 146 | . 652 |
|  | Control | Experiment al | -. $399^{*}$ | . 126 | . 003 | -. 652 | -. 146 |
| Post.Fluency | Experiment al | Control | 2.295* | . 653 | . 001 | . 986 | 3.604 |
|  | Control | Experiment al | $-2.295 *$ | . 653 | . 001 | -3.604 | -. 986 |

Based on estimated marginal means

Based on the results displayed in Tables 8 and 9, it can be concluded that:
A. There was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group ( $\mathrm{M}=$ 5.37 ) and control group ( $\mathrm{M}=6.69$ ) ( $\mathrm{MD}=-1.32, \mathrm{P}<.05$ ) implying that involving subjects in collaborative practice can have significant effects on their grammatical accuracy.
B. There was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group ( $M=$ 1.56 ) and control group ( $\mathrm{M}=1.16$ ) ( $\mathrm{MD}=.399, \mathrm{P}<.05$ ) implying that involving subjects in collaborative practice can have significant effects on their grammatical complexity.

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C. There was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group ( $\mathrm{M}=$ 12.63 ) and control group ( $\mathrm{M}=10.33$ ) ( $\mathrm{MD}=2.29, \mathrm{P}<.05$ ) implying that involving subjects in collaborative practice can have significant effects on their writing fluency.

## Discussion and Conclusion

By using collaborative practice students can focus on language use and negotiation of meaning. This activity leads to increase the willingness of learners to become involved with writing.

Regarding the effects of collaborative practice on EFL learners' written production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity, the findings of the study and the results of data analysis revealed that collaborative practice had a positive effect on the participants' written fluency, complexity and grammatical accuracy in experimental group. The findings of this study indicated that participants in experimental group produced more accurate and complex language than participants who performed task without collaborative practice.
The results obtained seem to be in line with findings by other scholars in terms of writing accuracy, fluency and complexity while they differ from some others. For instance, as far as the effect of collaborative writing on learners' accuracy is concerned, the results obtained support the results of studies by Fernandez Dobao (2012), Elola (2012), Jafari and Ansari (2011), and Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) all of whom reported a positive effect of collaborative writing, be it in groups or pairs, on writing accuracy. Perhaps this positive effect can be justified in Wigglesworth and Storch's (2009) terms who propose that the knowledge the learners share acts as an enabler in collaborative writing activities, which allows them to produce more accurate texts as a result of pooled knowledge. However, there are also studies the findings of which are in contrast with those of the present study. For example, Shehadeh (2011), Storch (2007, 2005), and Franken and Haslett (2002) all reported that their studies did not show a significant effect for collaborative writing on learners' accuracy.
As to writing fluency, also, there are studies which either support or reject the findings of the present work. For instance, while studies by Al Tai (2015), Fernandez Dobao (2012), and Pae (2011) report positive effects for collaborative writing in terms of fluency, and, therefore, lend support to the finding obtained in this study, the results of studies by Biria and Jafari (2013,) and Wiggleworth and Storch $(2009,2007,2005)$ run in contrast to that of the present work since these studies do not find statistically significant changes in the performance of the learners in terms of fluency before and after the treatments.

Concerning the impact of collaborative practice on writing complexity, the present study found a positive effect as well. This finding is in line with the findings of studies by Pae (2011), Storch (2005), Malmqvist (2005) and Franken and Haslett (2002) which point to the significant effect of collaborative writing on complexity; nevertheless, there are studies which report opposite results such as studies by Fernandez Dobao (2012) and Storch and winggleworth (2007).

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# THE IMPACT OF SCIENTIFIC AND GENERAL TEXTS ON INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING 

ABSTRACT

THIS RESEARCH EXPLORED THE EFFECT OF TWO TYPES OF TEXTS, SCIENTIFIC AND GENERAL, ON INCIDENTAL LEARNING OF SOME TARGET GENERAL VOCABULARY ITEMS GIVEN IN BOTH SCIENTIFIC AND GENERAL TEXTS. MOREOVER, THE PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF PARTICIPANTS WAS ALSO CONSIDERED. TO THIS END, FOUR PAIRS OF READING PASSAGES WERE SELECTED. EACH PAIR CONTAINED ONE SCIENTIFIC TEXT AND ONE GENERAL AND ALSO EIGHT TARGET WORDS IN EACH TEXT. PARTICIPANTS WERE 80 FEMALE IRANIAN LEARNERS OF ENGLISH, BETWEEN 14 AND 15 YEARS OLD, STUDYING AT DEZFUL SAMA SCHOOLS. AFTER A FOUR-WEEK ATTENDANCE IN READING CLASSES, DATA WERE ANALYZED THROUGH AN INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST. RESULTS REVEALED NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING IN SCIENTIFIC TEXTS AND GENERAL TEXTS AMONG HIGH LEVEL STUDENTS, BUT A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE WAS OBSERVED AMONG LOW LEVEL STUDENTS AND THOSE WHO READ SCIENTIFIC TEXTS. RESULTS ALSO SHOWED THE SUPERIORITY OF HIGH LEVEL STUDENTS TO LOW LEVEL STUDENTS IN INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING.

KEYWORDS: INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING, TEXT TYPE, SCIENCE TEXT, GENERAL TEXT, PROFICIENCY LEVEL

## 1. Introduction

Vocabulary is obviously a very important element within a language as the overwhelming majority of meaning is carried lexically and, therefore, something to be taken into consideration both in second and foreign language teaching although not the only one that conveys meaning

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(Lopez Campillo, 1995). Virtually, anyone involved in the area of second/foreign language pedagogy is well aware of the significance of vocabulary teaching, as day after day the crucial role of the lexicon in language learning and communication is revealed to researchers. Second language vocabulary acquisition process involves several different learning processes and great attempts have been made to suggest approaches to account for this process. The most common approach lays emphasis on the distinction between incidental and intentional learning (Rashidi \& Ghanbari Adivi, 2010).

Richards and Schmidt (2002) define incidental learning as the process of learning something without the intention of doing so. It is widely believed in the applied field of language pedagogy that most vocabulary, in L1 as well as in L2, is acquired in an incidental fashion, as the byproduct of reading and listening activities, not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning (Hulstijn, 2003).

Incidental vocabulary promotes deeper mental processing and better retention. The learners get themselves fully involved in the process of deciphering the meaning through the clues available in the text. They think and rethink about the new words involving cognitive process which helps the learners retain the words for a longer period of time. Cognitive process includes both receptive and productive aspects of vocabulary. Learners understand not only the meanings in the given text but the related grammatical patterns, common lexical sets and typical association of the word with the context. Learning vocabulary through extensive reading also improves learners' fluency. Learners look at groups of words rather than each individual word while reading (Ahmad, 2011).

The process of acquiring the meaning of unknown words as a by-product of extensive reading depends on many factors that have been the focus of attention of many researchers. Central to this are factors such as the resources and procedures applied in meaning inference (Nassaji, 2003), the influence of reading task and learner factor (Hulstijn \& Laufer, 2001), the effect of dictionary or glossing support (Knight, 1994), or the types of texts (Gardner, 2004) (cited in Shokouhi \& Maniati, 2009).

Since the type of the text has been considered as an effective factor on incidental vocabulary learning through reading comprehension and since studies concerning this issue have paid little attention to the crucial effect of text type on incidental vocabulary learning, the current study is intended to investigate the effect that two different types of the texts, scientific and general, may have on incidental vocabulary learning.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Incidental Vocabulary Learning Through Reading Comprehension

The literature on second language incidental vocabulary learning is vast and, of course, controversial, in the areas of empirical, theoretical and practical studies. These controversies arise from the complexity of the relationship between depths of vocabulary knowledge L2 learners' lexical inferences. Therefore, in order to have a deep insight into these concepts some empirical researches conducted in this field are followed.

Kweon and Kim (2008) investigated incidental vocabulary acquisition in extensive reading among Korean learners of vocabulary. A pre-test was administered before reading followed by a post-test immediately after reading and a delay posttest one month after the first posttest. The results showed a significant difference of word gain between the pre-test and the first post-test and the most gained words were retained at the second post-test.

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In another study, researchers found a direct relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and reading comprehension in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting (Day, Omura, \& Hiramatsu, 1991). The level of students' proficiency has also been considered in their study. There were two groups of Japanese subjects, high school, and university. They were asked to read a short story silently which is very similar to extensive reading, reading for pleasure over time. A multiple-choice vocabulary test with five choices per item was designed as a post-test. In both groups of subjects, those in the treatment groups who read the story knew significantly more vocabulary than those subjects who had not read the story. The result of the investigation showed that appropriate exposure to previously unknown or difficult words through sustained silent reading for entertainment by EFL students has a positive effect on their ability to recognize these words in a vocabulary test.

### 2.2 Scientific Text vs. General Text

Koulaidis and Dimopoulos and Sklaveniti (2001) in analyzing the text of science and technology in textbooks and press material, use different criteria to classify and make distinction between scientific and everyday knowledge. Scientific textbooks primarily intend to lead the readers from the everyday commonsense knowledge towards the specialized body of techno-scientific knowledge. Science uses a specialized linguistic code. According to Halliday and Martin (1996, as cited in Koulaidis et al. 2001) basic realization of the specialized character of the techno-scientific linguistic code that is called formality are, the use of specialized terminology and notation; the use of nominalizations; syntactic complexity; and the use of passive voice.

Sharma (2007) points out the characteristics of general English. Diffuseness, ambiguity, subjectivity, pomposity, pleasurability are among these characteristics. He compares scientific with general writing. He considers brevity of scientific writing versus diffuseness of general writing. General writing is diffuse and rambling and often is so circumlocutory and verbose that the reader can infer many meanings and interpretations. Technical writing is so poised and balanced that it cannot allow its reader to draw many meanings and interpretations. There is ambiguity of general writing versus clarity of scientific writing. General writing is sometimes imaginative and intuitive that does not convince a man of reason. For some interpretations or arguments, the result often looks like mythical. Subjectivity of general writing stands versus objectivity of technical writing, but it does not mean that technical writing is always objective and flawless. In general writing, many eminent writers have used pompous language. In technical writing, communication is the most significant aspect that a writer should always care for and simplicity is a common feature for clear communication. Utility in technical writing is in front of pleasurability. A technical man writes to express rather than to impress. Expression is linked with utility, whereas impression to that of pleasurability. It may be said that the author forces his ideas whereas a general writer coaxes them.

Ewer (1971, as cited in Lowe, 2009) compares the English of science with more 'general' English. He notes a wide variation due to lexis and also found variations at the level of grammar. Robinson (1980, as cited in Lowe, 2009) believes that scientific English is general English plus the extra components of science.

### 2.3 Incidental Vocabulary Learning and Text Type

Not a lot of studies have been done relating to the text type and its impact on incidental vocabulary learning but as Shokouhi and Maniati (2009) believe, certain kinds of texts facilitate incidental vocabulary learning. According to Huckin and Coady (1999, as cited in Shokouhi \& Maniati, 2009, p.15), texts which are personally interesting to the learners are more conductive to incidental vocabulary acquisition. Pulido (2007) states that "Although topic familiarity has been shown to affect text processing, comprehension, and lexical inferencing and gain, it did not affect the role that text comprehension played in incidental vocabulary gain" (p. 182).

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Rashidi and Ghanbari Adivi (2010) investigated the amount of incidental vocabulary learning through comprehension-focused reading of short stories and explicit instruction to this goal. There were 40 participants in the experimental group who were given five 400 -word-level short stories and 40 ones in the control group who were taught twelve vocabulary items explicitly. The results showed that students in the incidental learning condition gained more vocabulary.

Shokouhi and Maniati (2009) investigated the effect of the genres of the reading text on incidental vocabulary acquisition. They considered two genres of text, expository and narrative. This study showed the relative superiority of expository texts over narratives in terms of enhancing readers' incidental acquisition of unknown words.

Studies done on the domain of teaching second or foreign language vocabulary can be helpful to the teachers, learners and whoever is integrated in teaching and learning language. To find out how to teach vocabulary effectively and efficiently and how to select related materials results in more effective teachers in our educational system and consequently more efficacious learning and learners.

Since studies concerning this issue have paid little attention to the crucial effect of text type on incidental vocabulary learning and since examining the effect of two types of text, science and general and also the effect of proficiency level have not been considered thoroughly, this study intends to shed light on this topic.

This study explores the effect of two types of texts, science and general, considering their differences in specialized words on incidental learning of some target general vocabulary items given in both science and general texts. Moreover, the proficiency level of participants is going to be considered.

## 3. Research Questions

The study addresses the following questions:

1. Does scientific and general reading comprehension have the same impact on incidental vocabulary learning?
2. Does the proficiency level of participants affect incidental vocabulary learning through reading comprehension of scientific and general texts?

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Participants

Participants of this study were 80 female Iranian EFL learners, between 14 and 15 years old, studying at Dezful Sama junior high school and high school. They were divided in two proficiency levels through a proficiency test, low $(\mathrm{n}=40)$ and high $(\mathrm{n}=40)$. Each group was randomly divided into two sub-groups named science and general. Therefore, there were four groups of participants; low science, low general, high science and high general. Each subgroup contained 20 students.

### 4.2 Instruments

### 4.2.1 English Language Placement Test

In order to divide the participants in two proficiency levels, low and high, the Quick Oxford Placement Test was administered. The test that is commercially developed by Oxford University considers grammar and vocabulary knowledge. It consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of 40 multiple-choice items and the second part, 20 multiple-choice items and started in case the participants finished the first part without problem. If they could answer more than 32 questions correctly, they were asked to answer the second part. The participants were divided into two groups of English proficiency level based on their proficiency score mean. 80 students were divided into equal low and high level groups since the median score was determined as the criterion to divide them into high and low level of students' proficiency.

### 4.2.2 Pre-test

The second instrument used in this study was a teacher-made multiple choice pretest. The test included two parts. The first part contained 32 multiple choice questions. The participants were asked to choose a proper answer for a blank and the second part contained 32 multiple choice questions that asked the participants to choose a Persian equivalent for the words given. The vocabulary items in the comprehension questions were the target words of the reading passages, each pair eight target words and 32 in all. This test was used to assess the participants' vocabulary knowledge in order to gain a homogenous group in terms of their vocabulary knowledge. The reliability of the teacher-made pretest was 0.90 .

### 4.2.3 Post-test

Another instrument used in this study was a series of teacher-made multiple choice posttests. In this study, the focus was just put on the learning vocabulary in the passages under the investigation. It means that it was not the purpose of the study to examine how well the words were used correctly in the exercises. To this end, there were four posttests. Each posttest was an immediate multiple-choice post-reading test which consisted of two parts and each part contained eight questions related to the target words given in reading passages.

### 4.3 Materials

### 4.3.1 Reading Passages

Materials used in this study were eight reading passages extracted from reading books Fact $\mathcal{E}$ Figures written by Ackert and Lee (2004), Select Readings pre-intermediate written by Lee and Gundersen (2002) and also Top Notch 2B written by Saslow and Ascher (2004). These books are common reading books which are taught in institution for elementary and pre-intermediate language learners. Science III textbook written by Poursafar (2010) published by Sama organization and it is taught in Sama Schools was another book used in this study. In addition, some texts adopted from the Internet website www.superteacherworksheets.com were used in this study. The texts were revised under the supervision of an expert and checked against Flesch readability formula to guarantee the readability level of texts. As the aim of the study was to consider the difference between incidental vocabulary learning through scientific and general passages, two kinds of passages were used, scientific and general. There were four pairs of passages; each pair contained a scientific and a general text. The target words in this study were 32 prepared from different word classes including nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs; 6 nouns, 11 verbs, 12 adjectives and 2 adverbs and one conjunction.

### 4.4 Procedure

This study started with a proficiency test to divide the students into 2 levels of low and high proficiency based on their proficiency score mean. Each group included 40 students. Then each group was randomly divided into two subgroups included 20 participants. Therefore, there were four groups of participants: low science, low general, high science and high general. Then a pretest designed by the researcher was administered to find out if the participants had gained the knowledge of the target words. The pre-test was a teacher-made multiple choice test that was validated by a pilot test. It was piloted among 15 students at the same proficiency level of participants. The pre-test showed that some participants were familiar with the target words. Thus they were removed and replaced by their synonyms which were new to the participants. Class instruction lasted for two weeks. Then the participants were taught some easy techniques of reading comprehension like how to scan passages and deal with unknown words and guess the meaning. The treatment and working with passages started from the third week. In the third week, the participants in each group were given a text based on their group who dealt with either scientific or general. The first pair of passages were used at this stage. The participants in low

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science group received the scientific text of the first pair and those in low general received the general passage. On the other hand, the participants in high science group received the same scientific passage and those in high general received the same general one. They were asked to read the passage and then answer 16 items followed each passage. This procedure took nearly from 20 to 25 minutes. In the fourth week, the second pair of passages was worked out as the treatment and the same procedure was conducted in the fifth and sixth weeks using the other pairs of passages. Each posttest included 16 items questions divided in two eight-question parts and each question was dedicated one point if it was answered correctly. Each participant was given a score out of 16 . It means that every participant was given 4 scores in all.

### 4.5 Data Analysis

Scores of the post-reading tests were analyzed through an Independent Samples $t$-test to determine whether or not there are significant differences between each subgroup's performances in terms of specific type of the text they have read. In each case, the independent variable was the type of the text (i.e. scientific or general) and the dependent variable was the participants' incidental acquisition of the target words. Moreover, the scores of 40 participants in high level and 40 participants in low level were compared to see if there was a significant difference between the high and low proficiency levels.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Results of the Text Types

To answer the first question of the study, an Independent Samples t-test was applied and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Independent Samples T-test Text Types and Vocabulary Learning

| Text Type | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Science | 40 | 30.3 | 12.11 |  |  |  |
| General | 40 | 26.2 | 12.69 | 1.47 | 78 | 0.14 |

The results of the Independent Samples t-test related to the influence of the type of the texts, science or general, along with the mean of two groups and the significance of their differences are presented in this table. Table 1 shows the observed $t$ is 1.47 , degree of freedom (df) is 78 and the significance is $\mathrm{p}<0.14$.

### 5.2 Inferential Analysis of the Results of the Text Types

Table 1 showed that although there was small difference between the amount of the mean of the group who read science $(M=30.3)$ and the one who read general $(M=26.2)$, there was not statistically significant difference between their vocabulary learning and the type of the text had no effect on incidental vocabulary learning through reading ( $\mathrm{p}<0.14$ ).

### 5.3 Descriptive Analysis of the Results of Text Types and Proficiency Levels

To answer the second question of the study which considered the proficiency level of the participants and its effect on incidental vocabulary learning through reading comprehension of scientific and general texts, at the first phase an independent samples t-test was applied to
compare the means of high proficiency level participants in two types of the texts, scientific and general.

Table2: Independent Samples T-test Text Type and High Level Participants

| Text Type | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Science | 20 | 38.5 | 11.93 |  |  |  |
| General | 20 | 33.4 | 13.91 | 1.24 | 38 | 0.22 |

Table 2 shows that the observed $t$ is 1.24 , df is 38 and the significance is $\mathrm{p}<0.22$. It shows that there was no statistically significant difference between vocabulary learning of the high level participants who read scientific texts and the ones who read general texts.

At the second phase, the mean of low proficiency level participants who read scientific texts was compared with those who read general texts. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3: T-test Text Type and Low Level Participants

| Text Type | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Science | 20 | 22.1 | 4.15 |  |  |  |
| General | 20 | 19 | 5.29 | 2.06 | 38 | 0.04 |

Table 3 shows that based on the observed $t(2.06)$, df (38) and the significance ( $\mathrm{p}<0.04$ ), there was statistically a significant difference between low level participants who read scientific texts and the ones who read general texts. The mean of science group ( $\mathrm{M}=22.1$ ) was significantly more than the mean of general group $(M=19)$ and also the standard deviations of two groups were small enough to make the significant difference.

At the third phase, the mean of high proficiency level participants was compared with the mean of low proficiency level participants without considering the type of the texts to see the difference between their performances.

Table 4: $T$-test Proficiency Level and Vocabulary Learning

| Proficiency <br> Level | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| High | 40 | 35.95 | 13.05 | 6.79 | 78 | 0.001 |
| Low | 40 | 20.55 | 4.95 |  |  |  |

Table 4 indicates that based on the observed $t(6.79)$, $\mathrm{df}(78)$ and the significance ( $\mathrm{p}<0.001$ ), there was statistically a significant difference between vocabulary learning of high and low levels. Based on the calculated means of two groups, high (35.95) and low (20.55), it is clear that the participants with high proficiency level had better performance in comparison with the participants with low level.

The overall results showed that in spite of small difference between the means, the type of the text had no significant effect on incidental vocabulary learning of high level participants. On the other hand, low level participants could learn vocabulary incidentally through reading scientific texts better than the general texts. The difference between the means (22.1 and 19) and also the significance ( $\mathrm{p}<0.04$ ) indicated in Table 5.3 verifies the fact. Comparing the performances of two proficiency levels without considering the type of the text showed that the learners who were higher in proficiency level could learn vocabulary incidentally through reading better than the participants with low level proficiency. The significance of this comparison ( $\mathrm{p}<0.001$ ) proves this fact.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

The researches (e.g., Shokouhi \& Maniati, 2009) were done on the types of the text and their effects on incidental vocabulary learning have shown that certain kinds of texts can facilitate incidental vocabulary learning and texts which are personally interesting to the learners are more conductive to incidental vocabulary acquisition. In this study after comparing the results of two groups (general and scientific texts) without considering the proficiency level of students, a small superiority of the science group was observed. The participants who read scientific texts could learn new vocabulary items better but there was not a significant difference since the results showed that the type of the texts, general or scientific passages had no significant effect on learning vocabulary incidentally.

The results of this study also indicated that high level students had the ability to read and comprehend texts better and more effective than the low level students. This comparison was done both in the area of science and general. The high level participants who read both scientific and general texts learned vocabulary incidentally better than low level students.

The results showed that low level participants who read scientific passages performed significantly better than those who read general texts. On the other hand, there was no significant difference between those high level participants who read scientific passages and the ones who read general ones. In other words, the type of the texts had no effect on incidental vocabulary learning among the high level students. Thus the effect of text types on vocabulary learning through reading comprehension was significant among low level participants rather than the high level students.

This study showed the importance of the level of students and learners proficiency in choosing materials for reading comprehension. Low level students always need some extra motivators to be attracted and learn. Using different types of texts with different topics and themes can help those kinds of students. There are a wide range of interesting and attractive topics and reading texts in the field of science which can be used for reading classes as materials.

The results of this study have some implications for teachers, students and also designers of teaching materials. Language teachers and learners are advised to practice vocabulary learning through reading comprehension incidentally. The interests and proficiency level of the students should be considered as important factors in selecting and designing materials by teachers and designers.

A number of caveats need to be noted regarding the present study. First, it should be noted that experimental studies have always faced some unforeseen problems because they have to be done in a natural learning environments. This study also faced with these sorts of problems as it was done at school. Among these problems are changes happening in the schedule and timetable of classes, absence of students which delayed the procedure sometimes and the lack of time or appropriate place to do the research.

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Another limitation of this study is that the texts used as the materials were modified to change some target words which were familiar for students. During this process some words were replaced by their synonyms which could affect the comprehension of the text as those synonyms might not have the exact and same meaning in that text and it can reduce the comprehensibility of the text.

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# USE OF DRILLS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPELLING 

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#### Abstract

THE DISCREPANCIES IN THE SPELLING PATTERN AND ORAL ARTICULATION OF WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE REVEAL THE REASONS WHY ENGLISH IS OFTEN REGARDED AS A DIFFICULT SUBJECT TO A SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER. THIS COULD BE EXEMPLIFIED IN THE SIX DIFFERENT PRONUNCIATIONS OF 'OUGH' ARTICULATED THUS IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS: BOUGH, COUGH, THOROUGH, THOUGHT, THROUGH, AND ROUGH. THIS SUBTLE, BUT OBVIOUS CHALLENGE OF MASTERY COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES. THE REPEATED ABYSMAL FAILURES OF STUDENTS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN WEST AFRICAN SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS (WASCE) AND SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (SSCE) AND THE CONSEQUENT LAMENTATION OF THE WAEC CHIEF EXAMINERS' REPORT NECESSITATED THIS RESEARCH. THIS STUDY ADOPTED A PRETEST POST TEST QUASI EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DESIGN WITH FOUR INTACT CLASSES OF SSII STUDENTS, WHO WERE SUBJECTED TO TREATMENT AND CONTROL. TWO RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND TWO HYPOTHESES GUIDED THE STUDY AND A SAMPLE OF 264 STUDENTS (COMPRISING 107 MALES AND 157 FEMALES) WERE USED. THE VALIDATION AND TEST OF RELIABILITY WERE ACCURATELY DONE. THE INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION WAS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT TEST (ELAT) WHICH WAS DEVELOPED BY THE RESEARCHER. DATA COLLECTED WERE ANALYZED USING THE INFERENTIAL STATISTICS OF MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE (ANCOVA) FOR THE HYPOTHESES AT 0.05 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE. THE RESULTS OF STUDY REVEALED AMONGST OTHERS THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE


IN THE SCORES OF STUDENTS TAUGHT ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPELLING WITH DRILLS AND THOSE TAUGHT WITH THE CONVENTIONAL METHOD; WHILE THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS WAS ACCEPTED, WHICH SHOWS THAT THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS TAUGHT SPELLINGS WITH DRILLS. BASED ON THESE RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE ON THE NEED FOR TEACHERS TO ADOPT DRILL METHOD IN TEACHING SPELLING TO SSII STUDENTS BECAUSE OF ITS DYNAMIC TRAITS.

KEYWORDS: DRILLS, SPELLING, ENGLISH LANGUAGE, ACHIEVEMENT, SECONDARY SCHOOL

## Introduction

English Language is the primary language of the majority of people in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, other former colonies of Britain, and territories of the United States. It is also an official or semi-official language of many countries with a colonial past, such as India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and South Africa. Even in countries where English is not a primary or official language, it is taught as a foreign language and used as the language of technology and diplomacy. English language is spoken in more parts of the world and by more people than any other language, except Chinese (Ker, 2002).

In Nigeria for instance, English language was introduced when the Great Britain colonized territories in Africa. Being a multi-lingual country, Nigeria has since adopted the English language as her Lingua Franca. As a matter of fact, of the entire heritages that were left behind by her colonial masters, probably none is more important than the English language. It has now become the language of government, business, commerce, education, the mass media, literature and much internal as well as international communication.

Apart from speech, which is informal, reading and writing are very important communication skills for everyone, especially for students in a formal set-up. To write well, one has to spell well. However, Bell (2004) observed that many students find spelling very difficult because they equate spoken words to the written form. They reason that if a writing system closely mirrors the spoken word, then differences in written forms will indicate differences in pronunciation and language usage. Nonetheless, those familiar with English orthography (spelling) know that this is not always the case.

Both speakers of English as their native language, and those who speak it as a second language, regard the spelling of English as one of its most difficult characteristics. The English spelling system is not based on a phonetic correspondence between sounds and letters, as is the spelling in Spanish and certain other languages. Instead, English spelling reflects the historical development of the language. The same combination of letters can produce different pronunciations (Okoli, 2000). Similarly, different combinations of letters can produce the same pronunciation. The six different pronunciations of 'ough' provide an apt example of the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation, as in bough, cough, thorough, thought, through, and rough. Although -ough is spelt the same in each of these words, it is pronounced in six different ways. Again, the letter ' i ' is pronounced '/i/' in the word 'fish'. The same letter is pronounced '/ai/' in 'find'. Furthermore, the 'a' in 'cap' is pronounced /æ/, while the same letter is pronounced / $\alpha: /$ in 'class' and / $\partial /$ in 'above'. These differences in pronunciation make up one reason why English is considered a difficult language for non-native speakers to learn (McAthur \& McAthur, 2001).

This problem might well explain the poor performance of students in WAEC-organized examinations in Nigeria, especially in the English language. In fact, Fatuase (2010) analyzed the

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results of the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations of candidates who obtained credit passes in at least five subjects, including the English language and mathematics and concluded that it was worrisome. For the year 2005, it was $27.53 \%$ of the total population of candidates. In 2006, it was $15.56 \%, 25.54 \%$ in $2007,13.76 \%$ in 2008 and $25.99 \%$ in 2009.

In summary, he complains that:
It is disheartening to note that some candidates are unmindful of their handwritings. Some of them cannot write some of the letters and numbers properly and this makes scoring of their responses not only difficult but also inaccurate. No matter how brilliant a student is, his intelligence will come to naught if he cannot manifest it by way of accurate response to questions before him in an examination (p. 46).

From the report above, a number of very relevant variables can be isolated. For instance, students' interest and attitude to sharpening their skills in handwriting and spelling is generally poor and the will to correct the anomaly is either low or non-existent. Teachers on their part display low commitment to this cause when they do not complete their respective syllabuses. Sometimes too, the methods employed, and the nonchalant attitude exhibited by the teachers, are most inappropriate in relation to the target population. This further clogs the stream of content assimilation and retention on the part of the students.

Earlier in an address by the head of Nigeria national office of the West African Examinations Councils at a press briefing held to announce the release of results of the November/ December 2008 WASSCE at the council's office in Yaba, Lagos, on Friday, February 20, 2009, it was revealed that of the total number of candidates that sat for the examination, 127,200 candidates, representing $34.1 \%$, obtained credits and above in at least five (5) subjects, including the English language or mathematics. Among them are 66,353 (17.8\%) male candidates, and 60,847 ( $16.3 \%$ ) female candidates. Similarly, 176,783 candidates representing $47.5 \%$ obtained credits and above in four (4) subjects, while 221,851 candidates representing $59.5 \%$ obtained credits and above in three (3) subjects. A total number of 266,505 candidates, or $71.5 \%$ obtained credits and above in two (2) subjects. Among the candidates that obtained credits and above in five (5) subjects, including the English Language and Mathematics, the results show that 29,268 candidates, $7.9 \%$ are science oriented; 7,552 candidates, $2.0 \%$ are social science biased, while 29,527 candidates, $7.9 \%$ are Arts oriented.

Recently, in the Vanguard of Thursday, April 24, 2014, a communique issued at the end of the 57th meeting of the Nigeria Examination Committee of the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) noted that there was a decline in the performance of candidates in English Language. Reasons tendered for this trend include:
inadequate preparation and rote memorization, illegible handwriting... misinterpretation of the demands of the questions and difficulty in framing their responses due to poor command of the English Language... inability to marshal their points and answers to questions that required detailed explanations, inability to spell technical words correctly (pp. 25-6).

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In the light of these challenges, the Nigeria-WAEC committee provided some solutions and called on stakeholders, especially students, to "make effort to improve upon their understanding of the English Language in order to appreciate the requirements of the questions and make their responses appropriate and coherent" (p.26).

Much of the English written by most people in Nigeria seems to be sub-standard, characterized by poor spelling. In fact, to a large extent, the print and electronic media are recognized, or acknowledged, as potent forces or channels for disseminating spoken and written words. Most times though, these media authorities disregard the $100 \%$ performance mentality, and thus violate most known rules of the English language. It is believed that while good spelling cannot make an essay, bad spelling can spoil it. Spelling errors erode the content quality of writeups.

Furthermore, the ugly trend in students' performance in English language and spelling has been attributed to the traditional approach used in the teaching of the subject in secondary schools. Aliyu (2002) observed that the success or failure of any educational endeavour or the effectiveness of any learning experience depends ultimately on the method adopted by the teacher. It has been established that conventional methods of teaching the English language and spelling are inadequate and even problematic (Johnson and Johnson, 2003; Routman, 2006). It is noteworthy that drills are seldom used to teach spelling in our secondary schools. The closest method to drill one sees is dictation, which is grossly inadequate for the intended objective.

Additionally, there is the speculation that science courses are for male students while females are better in literary arts and Home Economics (Ezeh, 2007). Contrary to these opinions, Okoye (2007) opines that neither boys nor girls are superior in intelligence. Okoye's stand indicates that gender has no influence on students' achievement in any subject. This shows that there exists controversy on the effect of gender on students' performances in different subjects or fields. This research work throws more light on the controversies highlighted.

Generally, the purpose of this research is to determine the use of drills and students' collective achievement in the spelling of the English Language words in secondary schools in Afikpo Education Zone. It will also determine if there is a gender-induced variation in students' achievement in the spelling of the English language words when drills are used to teach them. These give rise to the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of the use of drills on the mean achievement scores of students in the spelling of the English language words?
2. What is the effect of the use of drills on the mean achievement scores of male and female students in the spelling of the English language words?

## Review of Related Literature

Related literature on the nature of spelling in the English language, functions of the letters, spelling irregularities, spelling patterns, concept of drills, gender and academic achievement were reviewed and the theories of behviourism, cognitivism and constructivism informed the work. These theories focus on learning as observable aspects of learning in which the learner actively constructs or builds new ideas or concepts.

## Nature of Spelling in the English Language

The essential and distinguishing attributes of spelling in the English Language are quite interesting. The English language has relatively complex spelling rules when compared to other

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languages with alphabetic orthographies (the alphabetic spelling system used by a given language) (Ker, 2002). Because of the complex history of the English language, nearly every sound can be legitimately spelt in more than one way. This is because sounds do not perfectly mirror the words they represent. The examples below illustrate this: the sound /z/ can be spelt 'ss' as in 'possess', ' $z$ ' as in 'zoo' and ' s ' as in 'nose'; the sound /f/ can be spelt 'ph' as in 'phonology', 'gh' as in 'laugh' and ' f ' as in 'roof'; the sound $/ \int / \mathrm{can}$ be spelt ' ss ' as in 'passion', ' t ' as in 'lotion', 'c' as in 'ocean', 'ch' as in 'chef', 'sh' as in 'parish' and 'shoe', and so on. In like manner, many words can be legitimately pronounced in more than one way. Some words are spelt the same way but pronounced differently. This is called homograph. For example, the word 'wind' can be pronounced / wind/ as in 'air that moves quickly as a result of natural forces' as well as /waind/ as in 'to wrap or twist something around itself or something else, or to turn a handle several times'.

## Functions of the letters

Most spellings have to do with phonemic representations. Like most alphabetic systems, letters in English orthography may represent a particular sound. For example, the word 'yam' (pronounced /jæm/) consists of three letters ' $y$ ', ' $a$ ', and ' $m$ ', in which $<\mathrm{y}$ > represents the sound $/ j /$, 'a' the sound $/ æ /$, and $\langle m$ » the sound $/ m /$. Single letters or multiple sequences of letters may provide this function. Thus, the single letter ' $y$ ' in the word 'yam' represents the single sound $/ \mathrm{j} /$. In the word ship (pronounced $/ \int_{\underline{I} p /) \text {, the digraph 'sh' (two letters) represents the }}$ sound $/ \int /$. In the word ditch, the three letters 'tch' represent the sound $/ \mathrm{t} \int /$. Less commonly, a single letter can represent multiple sounds voiced in succession. The most common example is the letter ' $x$ ' which normally represents the consonant cluster /ks/. For example, the word 'exwife' is pronounced /eks'waif/ (Okoli, 2000).

The same letter (or sequence of letters) may indicate different sounds when it occurs in different positions within a word. For instance, the digraph 'gh' represents the sound /f/at the end of some words, such as 'rough' /rıf/. At the beginning of syllables (i.e. the syllable onset), the digraph 〈gh> represents the sound $/ \mathrm{g} /$, such as in the word 'ghost' (pronounced /goust/). Another type of spelling characteristic has to do with the origin of words. For example, when representing a vowel, the letter $\langle\mathrm{y}$ 〉 in non-word-final positions, represents the sound / I/ in some words borrowed from Greek, whereas the letter usually representing this sound in non-Greek words is the letter ' i '. Thus, the word 'myth', pronounced /mi $\theta /$, is of Greek origin, while 'pith', pronounced / $\mathrm{p}_{\mathrm{I}} \theta /$, is a Germanic word (Bell, 2009).

Some researchers such as Brengelman (2001), have suggested that, in addition to this marking of word origin, these spellings indicate a more formal level of style or register in a given text, although Rollins (2004) finds this point to be exaggerated as there would be many exceptions where a word with one of these spellings, such as 'ph' for /f/ (like telephone), could occur in an informal text. Generally, few spellings can be got through orthography, but many through sounds. This is because English, like many other languages, has many homophones (words that have the same sounds, that is, pronounced the same way but may differ in meaning or spelling, or in both). For example, 'bare' and 'bear', 'eye' and 'I', 'some' and 'sum', 'sun' and 'son', etc.

Spelling may also be used to distinguish between homophones. For example, the words 'hour' and 'our' are pronounced identically in some dialects (as /av(e)r/). However, they are distinguished from each other orthographically by the addition of the letter ' $h$ '. Another example is the pair of homophones 'plain' and 'plane', where both are pronounced /'plein/ but are marked with two different orthographic representations of the vowel sound /eI/ (Araromi, 2002). In some cases however, some homophones have no distinguishing factor in their sound production. Below are some examples:
a. Be and bee, been and bean, heal and heel, meat and meet, peace and piece, scene and seen, steal and steel, week and weak;
b. Board and bored, coarse and course, morning and mourning, warn and worn;
c. Blew and blue, flew and flu, threw and through, two and too, root and route;
d. Berth and birth, curb and kerb, fir and fur, heard and herd;
e. Berry and bury, bread and bred, lead and led, weather and whether;
f. Brake and break, stake and steak, male and mail, sale and sail, tail and tale, rain and reign, wait and weight, way and weigh;
g. I'll and isle, buy and by, hi and high, hire and higher, write and right;
h. Allowed and aloud, foul and fowl;
i. Know and no, loan and lone, pole and poll, road and rode, roll and role, sew and so;
j. Air and heir, bare and bear, fair and fare, pair and pear, stair and stare, wear and ware;
k. Knew and new, knight and night, knot and not;

1. Ascent and assent, base and bass, cell and sell, scent and sent, cereal and serial;
m . Guessed and guest, leased and least, passed and past, etc.
In written language, this may help to resolve potential ambiguities that may arise (e.g. 'He will write it' versus 'He will right it'). The particular edge or advantage written language has over the spoken language in this regard is that the reader often has no recourse to ask for clarification.

On the other hand, homographs make spelling a lot easier than homophones, since one will not have a hard time trying to decipher which meaning of a set of homographs he is to spell. For example, the word 'bay' has at least five fundamentally different meanings. The table below illustrates this assertion:

Table 1: Applications of the Homograph 'Bay'

| Word | Meaning |
| :---: | :--- |
| Bay (1) | 1. curved inlet of sea: an area of sea enclosed by a wide inward-curving stretch <br> of coastline |
| 2. land with curving hills around: a lowland area with curving hills partly <br> surrounding it |  |
| Bay (2) | 1. special area or compartment: an area that is divided off and used for a <br> particular purpose, e.g. in a building, bus station, or aircraft <br> vertical structures such as pillars or buttresses |
| 3. recess: a recess or alcove in a wall |  |


|  | trail of an animal <br> 2. (intransitive verb) make loud outcry for something: to call noisily and <br> aggressively for something bad to happen to somebody (e.g., an outraged <br> public baying for blood) |
| :--- | :--- |
| 3. (transitive verb) corner hunted animal: to corner or exhaust a hunted animal |  |
| so that it must turn and face its hunters (e.g., hounds baying a fox) |  |
| 4. (noun) position of no escape: the position in which a hunted animal or a |  |
| person being pursued has to face the hunters or pursuers |  |
| 5. keep somebody or something at bay: to keep somebody or something |  |
| unpleasant at a distance to avoid difficulty or harm |  |

(Source: Microsoft Encarta, 2009).

## Spelling irregularities

Attempts to regularize or reform the language, including spelling reform, have usually met with failure. The only significant exceptions were the reforms of Noah Webster which resulted in many of the differences between British and American spelling, such as center/centre, dialog/dialogue, honor/honour, grammar/grammer, program/programme, etc. Other differences, such as -ize/-ise in realize/realise etc, came about separately (Bell, 2004).

Apart from the twists the English spelling system has inherited from its past, there are other idiosyncrasies in spelling that make it tricky to learn. English contains 25 separate consonant phonemes and 20 vowel sounds. However, there are only 26 letters in the modern English alphabet, so there cannot be a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds. Many sounds are spelt using different letters or multiple letters, and for those words whose pronunciation is predictable from the spelling, the sounds denoted by the letters depend on the surrounding letters. For example, the digraph 'th' represents two different sounds (the voiced dental fricative and the voiceless dental fricative). The voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ / z/ can be represented by the letters ' $s$ ', ' $c$ ' and ' $z$ ' (Okoli, 2000).

Bell (2009) however noted that it is not the shortage of letters that makes English spelling irregular. Its irregularities are caused by the use of many different graphemes for some of its sounds, such as the long sounds which are: /i:/, /a:/, /o:/, /u:/, /3:/ (as exemplified in the words meat, bee, people; class, farm, yard, fall, cord, floor; do, school, shoe, blue; birth, bird, Thursday), and the use of identical graphemes for spelling different sounds (over, oven, move, ever, never).

Furthermore, English makes no attempt to spell most recent loanwords in the English way, but preserves the foreign spellings, even when they employ exotic conventions like the Polish 'cz' in Czech or the old Norse 'fj' in fjord (although New Zealand English exclusively spells it fiord). In fact, instead re-spelling loan words to conform to English spelling standards, the pronunciation changes in response to pressures associated with the spelling. One example of this is the word 'ski', which was adopted from Norwegian in the mid-18th century. It used to be pronounced 'shee', which is similar to the Norwegian pronunciation, but the increasing popularity of the sport after the middle of the 20th century helped the 'sk' pronunciation replace it (Bell, 2004).

Moreover, other causes of spelling irregularities still exist. For instance, at a time, the English language noticed an alteration in the spelling of some words. This was a misguided

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attempt to conform to 'etymology' (which is perceived to be the origin of the words). For example, the letter ' $b$ ' was added to debt (originally dette) in an attempt to link it to the Latin 'debitum', and the letter 's' in island is a misplaced attempt to link it to Latin insula instead of the Norse word 'igland', which is the true origin of the English word. The letter ' $p$ ' in 'ptarmigan' has no etymological justification whatsoever. Some are just randomly changed: for example, 'score' used to be spelled 'skor' (Emerson, 1997).

The spelling of English continues to evolve. Many loanwords come from languages where the pronunciation of vowels corresponds to the way they were pronounced in Old English, which is similar to the Italian or Spanish pronunciation of the vowels, and is the value the vowel symbols [a], [e], [i], [o], and [u] have in the International Phonetic Alphabet. As a result, there is a somewhat regular system of pronouncing "foreign" words in English (Carney, 2004), and some borrowed words have had their spelling changed to conform to this system. For example, 'Hindu' used to be spelt 'Hindoo', and the name 'Maria' used to be pronounced like the name 'Mariah', but was changed to conform to this system. It has been argued that this influence probably started with the introduction of many Italian words into English during the Renaissance, in fields like music, from which come the words andante, viola, forte, etc (Venezky, 2006).

Another major influence that has had a profound effect on the spelling of the English language words is the contribution of commercial advertisers. In an attempt to differentiate their products from others and make theirs unique, they introduce new or simplified spellings like 'lite' instead of 'light', 'thru' instead of 'through', 'smokey' instead of 'smoky' and 'rucsac' instead of 'rucksack'. The spellings of personal names have also been a source of spelling innovations. Affectionate versions of women's names that sound the same as men's names have been spelt differently. For example: 'Nikki' and 'Nicky', 'Toni' and 'Tony', 'Jo' and 'Joe'.

As examples of the distinctive nature of English spelling, the combination 'ou' can be pronounced in at least six different ways: / $\partial$ / in famous, /3:/ in journey, /av/ in loud, /v/ in should, /u:/ in you, /шә/ in tour; and the long vowel sound /i:/ has about nineteen (19) realizations and can be spelt in those different ways. Some examples include: paediatric, me, seat, seem, ceiling, people, chimney, machine, siege, phoenix. The palato-alveolar fricative $/ \mathrm{J} /$, for instance, has up to twelve (12) spelling patterns and the diphthong /ai/ has twenty-six (26) realizations. So spelling these sounds with the appropriate letters pose a lot of problems and thus contribute to spelling irregularities.

The average English-speaking child takes nearly three times longer to learn the basics of reading and writing than users of other alphabetic writing systems (Seymour, Aro \& Erskine, 2003). Numerous surveys in Anglophone countries during the past five decades have established that nearly half of all English speakers have severe difficulties with writing. One in five cannot even read properly, as was confirmed in 2005 by the UK's House of Commons Select Committee for Education.

The English writing system is uniquely difficult because it has spelling and reading problems. Other difficult alphabetic systems have only spelling problems. To become even just moderately competent spellers of English, learners have to memorize at least 3700 words with some unpredictable spellings. No other European language has more than 1000 unpredictable spellings (Bell, 2004).

## Spelling patterns

In a generative approach to English spelling, Rollins (2004) identifies twenty main orthographic vowels of stressed syllables that are grouped into four main categories: "Lax",
"Tense", "Heavy", "Tense-R". (As this classification is based on orthography, not all orthographic "lax" vowels are necessarily phonologically lax.)

Table 2: Orthographic Vowels of Stressed Syllables

| General Pronunciation (American) |  |  |  |  | Received Pronunciation (British) |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Letter | Lax | Tense | Heavy | Tense-R | Letter | Lax | Tense | Heavy | Tense-R |
| a | $\frac{\angle æ /}{\text { man }}$ | $\frac{\text { Lei/ }}{\text { mane }}$ | $\underset{\text { mar }}{ }$ | $\frac{\angle \varepsilon /}{\text { mare }}$ | a | $\underline{\angle æ /}$ man | $\underset{\text { Lei/ }}{\text { mane }}$ | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{a}: /}{\text { mar }}$ | $\frac{L \varepsilon \partial /}{\text { mare }}$ |
| e | $\frac{\angle \varepsilon /}{m e t}$ | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{i} /}{\text { mete }}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \angle 3 \angle \\ & \text { her } \end{aligned}$ | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{I} /}{\text { here }}$ | e | $\frac{\angle \varepsilon /}{m e t}$ | $\angle \mathrm{i}: /$ | $\begin{aligned} & \angle 3: \angle \\ & \text { her } \end{aligned}$ | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{I} \partial \mid}{\text { here }}$ |
| i | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{I} /}{\text { win }}$ | $\frac{\text { Lai/ }}{\text { wine }}$ | $\underset{\text { fir }}{\angle 3 \angle}$ | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{aI} /}{\text { fire }}$ | i | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{I} /}{\text { win }}$ | $\frac{\text { LaI/ }}{\text { wine }}$ | $\underset{\text { fir }}{\sim}$ | $\frac{/ \text { aıə } /}{\text { fire }}$ |
| 0 | $\angle \mathrm{a} \angle$ | $\frac{\text { ovol }}{\text { mope }}$ |  |  | 0 | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{p} /}{m o p}$ | $\frac{\angle \partial U /}{\text { mope }}$ |  | $\frac{\mathrm{o}: /}{\text { fore }}$ |
| u | $\frac{\angle \Lambda /}{h u g}$ | /ju/ <br> huge | $\angle 3 \angle$ | $\frac{\text { cur }}{\text { cure }}$ | u | $\frac{\angle \Lambda /}{h u g}$ | $\frac{\text { Lju:/ }}{\text { huge }}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { /3:/ } \\ & \text { cur } \end{aligned}$ | $\frac{\text { Liva/ }}{\text { cure }}$ |
| u | $\frac{\angle \mathrm{v} /}{\text { push }}$ | /u/ <br> rude |  | $\frac{\angle 0 /}{\text { sure }}$ | u | $\frac{\angle v /}{\text { push }}$ | $\frac{\text { Lu: } / 2}{\text { rude }}$ | - | $\frac{\text { Lvol }}{\text { sure }}$ |

(Source: Rollins, 2004)
The above shows that the pronunciation of a word can pose a little problem to its spelling. For instance, the letter ' $a$ ' can represent the lax vowel /æ/, tense /ei/, heavy /a:/, or tense-r $/ \varepsilon(\partial) /$. Heavy and tense ' $r$ ' vowels are the respective lax and tense counterparts followed by the letter ' $r$ '. Further, when the word 'sure' is pronounced the American way, it might be difficult for a second language learner to associate its spelling with 'sure' pronounced the British way.

Tense vowels are distinguished from lax vowels with a "silent" ' $e$ ' letter that is added at the end of words. Thus, the letter ' $a$ ' in hat is lax/æ/, but when the letter ' $e$ ' is added in the word 'hate' the letter ' $a$ ' is tense /ei/. Similarly, heavy and tense ' $r$ ' vowels pattern together: the letters 'ar' in 'car' are heavy / ar/, the letters 'ar' followed by silent ' $e$ ' in the word 'care' are / $\varepsilon ə r /$. The

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letter ' $u$ ' represents two different vowel patterns, one being $/ \mathrm{j} /$, the other $/ \mathrm{u}: /$. There is no distinction between heavy and tense ' $r$ ' vowels with the letter ' $o$ ', and the letter ' $u$ ' in the $/ v-u:-v /$ pattern does not have a heavy vowel member (Rollins, 2004).

Besides silent $e$, another strategy for indicating tense and tense-r vowels, is the addition of another orthographic vowel forming a digraph. In this case, the first vowel is usually the main vowel while the second vowel is the "marking" vowel. For example, the word man has a lax $a$ pronounced /æ/, but with the addition of $i$ (as the digraph ai) in the word ' $\mathrm{main}^{\prime}$ ' the ' $a$ ' is marked as tense and pronounced /ei/. These two strategies produce words that are spelt differently but pronounced identically, as in mane (silent e strategy), main (digraph strategy) and Maine (both strategies). The use of two different strategies relates to the function of distinguishing between words that would otherwise be homonyms (which means words that have the same spelling and pronunciation patterns; or homographs and homophones put together).

Besides the 20 basic vowel spellings, Rollins (2004) has a reduced vowel category (representing the sounds $/ \partial \mathrm{I} /$ ) and a miscellaneous category (representing the sounds $/ \rho \mathrm{I}$, av, aI, $\mathrm{av} /$ and $/ \mathrm{j} /+\mathrm{V}, / \mathrm{w} /+\mathrm{V}, \mathrm{V}+\mathrm{V})$.

## Concept of Drills

Drill, as an academic concept, is a relatively novel phenomenon. But for the purpose of context, we would understand drill as a disciplined, repetitious exercise employed as a means of teaching and perfecting a skill or procedure. In other words, it is a sequence of tasks, exercises, or words repeated over and over until they can be performed faultlessly, as used in teaching military skills, languages, or basic arithmetic (Microsoft, 2009). Spelling drill therefore means to name or write in correct order the constituent letters of a word, part of a word, or group of words.

Drill and practice systems are intended to supplement the instruction which occurs in the classroom. They are designed to improve - through practice - the skills and concepts that are introduced by the classroom teacher. They also encourage teachers to think about ways to make drilling more meaningful. Mumford (2002) proffered remarkable suggestions on effective strategies for teaching and learning the spelling of the English language words using drills. These suggestions cover when drilling on intonation, when drilling on different ways of saying words, when drilling on spelling, when drilling on vocabulary, when drilling on polite requests, and when drilling about grammar.

## Gender and Academic Achievement

Gender is a concept that is now being widely used in the field of education (Ogba and Ndaba, 2006). Gender refers to all the characteristics and the expected roles of men and women that a particular society has determined and assigned each sex (Emetarom, 2000). Oakely (1996) and Okeke (2000) define gender as socially constructed roles and learned behaviors as well as expectations associated with males and females. These definitions present gender as a social creation derived from certain assumptions about the nature and character of biological differences between males and females. On the other hand, Abubakar and Uboh (2010) define gender as those properties that distinguish organisms on the basis of their reproductive roles as females or males. This definition however presents gender as a natural phenomenon.

Deliberations and debates on the effect gender has on cognitive abilities have, for a long time, been polarized between biological factors and social factors. The biological factors school of thought trivializes the contributions of social factors and argues that brain structure, for instance, is a powerful determinant in the level of performance or achievement between males and
females. On several occasions from several studies carried out, Lynn (1998a, 1998b, 1999; Allik, Must and Lynn, 1999; Colom and Lynn, 2004) strongly holds that 'males have larger average brain sizes than females and therefore, would be expected to have higher IQs' (Dayıo_lu and Türüt-A_ık, 2004). Intelligence Quotient or General intelligence is here defined as the sum of verbal comprehension, reasoning and spatial (three or four-dimensional) abilities.

On the other side of the divide, a major proponent of the social factors school of thought, Mackintosh (1998) argues that gender difference does not determine general intelligence. He further postulated that general intelligence should be defined in terms of reasoning ability, with Progressive Matrices as the most appropriate way or formula to measure it. The Standard Progressive Matrices was constructed in the late 1930s as a test of non-verbal or abstract reasoning ability and the Advanced Progressive Matrices was constructed in 1947 as a more difficult version of the test suitable for those in the higher ability range (Lynn and Tse-Chan, 2003).

Nwafor (2008) observes that during the colonial era in Nigeria, most schools had predominantly male students. The schools basically aimed at producing literate men that would serve the white man. Ezeliora (2002), notes that in early times, the education of women and girls was seen as a wasted investment. This was because their duty in the society did not require such education. When girls were allowed access to formal education, domestic science was about the only course of study open to them (Allele-Williams, 1988). This stance is corroborated by Lassa (1995) who reveals that girls were made to do art subjects like needlework, nutrition, home management, music and the like. This observation is supported by (Ezeliora (2002) who states that "from earlier times, boys received more encouragement and support to study science while girls were not made to be in touch with the real science subjects". In most parts of the world, women are channeled to Liberal Arts and social science subjects, while men are encouraged to take up the hard core sciences.

According to Nnachi (2002), for years now, expectations for boys differ from expectations for girls in certain courses or subjects, thus enhancing gender stereotyping in academic activities. Witting and Williams (1984), state that teachers treat boys differently from girls, and tend to associate reading skills with girls and mathematical skills with boys. There seem to be speculations that boys perform better than girls in science subjects and that girls perform better than boys in art subjects. Omojuwa and Uguma (2003) are of the view that girls perform in verbal tests and tests involving memory than boys. They also agree that boys perform better in tests requiring inductive reasoning and arithmetic ability. In line with this opinion, Bottomley and Sampson (1987) are of the view that boys generally perform better academically than girls. However, some authors disagree with this notion and are of the view that there is no difference in intelligence between males and females that can be traced to gender. For instance, Okoye (2007) argues that the fact that men are regarded as a dominant and even superior sex does not mean that they are intellectually better than women. Agreeing with Okoye, Denga (1986) states that there is no evidence to show that there is a difference between males and females in academic achievement that is traceable to gender. Denga, however is of the opinion that girls tend to do better than boys in arts and languages, while boys tend to perform better than girls in mathematics and sciences.

There seems, therefore, to be a general perception that art subjects are designed for girls while science subjects are for boys. Agheyisi (1999) relates that formal education was for ages regarded as the exclusive preserve of males, and it now seems that modern technological scientific studies remain, in most cases, the privilege of men. Traditional gender symmetry has over the years continued to limit women's capabilities and constrain their chances to participate in all spheres of human endeavor (Ngonebu, 2002)..

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## Method of Research

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design using the pre-test post-test nonequivalent control groups. Intact classes were used so as to eliminate the randomization of subjects into control and experimental groups. The areas of study were Ivo and Ohaozara Local Government Areas in Afikpo Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The population of the study comprised 4,854 SS II students in the 80 public secondary schools in Afikpo Education Zone. The sample size for this study was 264 students (comprising 107 males and 157 females) drawn from four (4) intact classes of SS II students. These intact classes were selected through a simple random sampling technique from four (4) secondary schools from two local government areas, that is, Ivo and Ohaozara Local Government Areas in Afikpo Education Zone. Two schools were drawn from each local government area.

The instrument for data collection was the English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) which was developed by the researcher. The instrument comprised two sections: A and B. Section A contained information on the personal data of the testees while section B contained the 40 test items of ELAT. Items in Section A sought the personal data of the respondents, while items in Section B were grouped under the following aspects: parts of speech, oral English, determiners, subjective cases of nouns, objective cases of nouns, idioms and adjunct. The instrument was a multiple-choice test with four options each: A, B, C, D. There was only one correct answer among the options. A student was expected to tick the correct answer from among the options. The instrument was used for both the pre-test and post-test. However, the items in the pre-test were reshuffled before administering them as post-test. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using the Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

## $\underline{\text { Results and Discussions }}$

## Research Question 1

What is the effect of the use of drills on the mean achievement scores of students in the spelling of the English language words?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Results of Achievement based on Teaching Methods.

| Teaching Methods | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std Dev |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Use of Drill | 131 | 25.75 | 7.90 |
| Use of conventional teaching method | 133 | 23.38 | 7.30 |

From Table 3, the students that were taught spelling of the English language words with the use of drills had an adjusted mean score of 25.75 and a standard deviation of 7.90 while those taught the same lessons with the use of conventional teaching methods had an adjusted mean of 23.38 and a standard deviation of 7.30. This means that an application of drills as a teaching method in the English language spelling lessons has a positive effect on the achievement of students when tests are administered in that subject area. Their mean test scores increased, showing that the treatment made them perform better in their assessments.

## Research Question 2

What is the effect of the use of drills on the mean achievement scores of male and female students in the spelling of the English language words?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Achievement based on Gender.

|  | Males |  |  |  | Females |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Teaching Methods | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std Dev | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std Dev |  |
| Use of Drills | 59 | 26.32 | 7.16 | 72 | 25.27 | 8.48 |  |
| Conventional Teaching <br> Method | 48 | 22.39 | 7.90 | 85 | 23.51 | 6.94 |  |

From Table 4, male students had an adjusted mean of 26.32 and a standard deviation of 7.16 when taught spelling of the English language words using drills as a teaching method, while their female counterparts had an adjusted mean of 25.27 and a standard deviation of 8.48. On the other hand, male students had an adjusted mean of 22.39 and a standard deviation of 7.90 when taught spelling of the English language words using conventional method, while their female counterparts had an adjusted mean of 23.51 and a standard deviation of 6.94.

This result is quite interesting. When male and female students are taught the English language spelling together using drills as the preferred teaching method, the males perform better than females in achievement tests. However, when a conventional method is used to teach the same topic, females perform better in achievement tests. On the other hand, when the students are separated along gender lines and taught spelling of the English language words in isolation, both sexes perform better in achievement tests when drill is used as the teaching method rather than the conventional teaching method.

## Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean achievement score of students when taught spelling in the English language with drills and when taught with conventional teaching methods.

Table 5: ANCOVA Results of Achievement based on Methods of Teaching

| Source of <br> Variation | Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean <br> Square | F-cal | Sig of F | F-crit |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Covariates | 52.244 | 1 | 52.244 | .900 | .344 |  |
| Pretest | 52.244 | 1 | 52.244 | .900 | .344 |  |
| Main | 409.059 | 1 | 409.059 | 7.049 | .008 |  |
| Effects | 409.059 | 1 | 409.059 | 7.049 | .008 | 3.84 |
| Methods | 461.303 | 2 | 230.651 | 3.974 | .020 |  |
| Explained | 15147.027 | 261 | 58.035 |  |  |  |
| Residual | 15608.330 | 263 | 59.347 |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Significant at $\mathrm{P}<0.05$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |

[^5]
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Table 5 shows the result of an ANCOVA analysis of the data collected with pretest value as covariates. Since the calculated value of $F$ is greater than its critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected and this signifies that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement score of students when taught spelling in the English language with drills and when taught with conventional teaching methods.

Since this result rejected the null hypothesis, there arises a need to carry out a Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) in order to determine the degree of contribution of each treatment. Table 6 shows the results of the MCA analysis.

Table 6: Multiple Classification Analysis based on Methods of Teaching
Grand Mean= 24.42

| Variable + <br> Category | $\mathbf{N}$ | Unadjusted <br> Deviation | Eta | Adjusted for Independents + <br> Covariates Deviation | Beta |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Use of Drill | 131 | 1.33 | 1.30 |  |  |
| Conventional <br> Method | 133 | -1.31 | .17 | -1.28 | .17 |
| Multiple R <br> squared |  |  |  | .030 |  |
| Multiple R |  |  |  | .172 |  |

From table 6 above, the multiple classification analysis result shows a grand mean of 24.42. It follows that the adjusted grand mean for students taught spelling of the English language words using drills becomes $24.42+1.30=25.72$. On the other hand, the adjusted mean for students taught using conventional method becomes $24.42+(-1.28)=23.14$. The glaring difference between the mean scores is significant.

## Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean achievement score of male and female students when taught spelling in the English language with drills and when taught with conventional teaching methods.

Table 7: ANCOVA Results of Achievement based on Gender

| Source of <br> Variation | Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean <br> Square | F-cal | Sig of F | F-crit |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Covariates | 52.244 | 1 | 52.244 | .877 | .350 |  |
| Pretest | 52.244 | 1 | 52.244 | .877 | .350 |  |
| Main Effects | 3.399 | 1 | 3.399 | .057 | .811 |  |
| Gender | 37399 | 1 | 3.399 | .057 | .811 | 3.84 |
| Explained | 55.644 | 2 | 27.822 | .467 | .627 |  |


| Residual | 15552.686 | 261 | 59.589 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Total | 15608.330 | 263 | 59.347 |

* Not significant at $\mathrm{P}<0.05$

Table 7 shows the result of an ANCOVA analysis of the data collected with pretest value as covariates. The results showed an F-cal value of 0.057 and an F-crit value of 3.84 . Since the calculated value of $F$ is less than its critical value, the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there was no significant difference in the mean achievement score of male and female students when taught spelling in the English language with drills and when taught with conventional teaching methods. Since this result accepted the null hypothesis, there was no need to carry out a Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA).

## Summary of Findings

From the mean and standard deviation results, this study has revealed that the use of drills as a teaching method in the English language spelling lessons has a positive effect on the achievement of students when tests are administered in that subject area. This stance was corroborated by the test result of the first hypothesis. It held that the difference between the achievements of students in the spelling of the English language words when taught such using drill as a teaching method is quite significant when compared to that of students taught using conventional teaching methods.

The mean and standard deviation figures of the test result further showed that when male and female students were brought together and taught spelling of the English language words using drill as the teaching method of choice, the males performed better than the females when achievement tests are administered. On the other hand, when the same group was taught the same topic using conventional teaching method, females performed better than the males in achievement tests. This disparity though was not captured by the test result of the second hypothesis. It saw no significant difference in the mean achievement score of male and female students when taught spelling in the English language with drills and when taught with conventional teaching methods. However, when taught spelling of the English language words in isolation, both sexes perform better in achievement tests when drill is used as the teaching method rather than the conventional teaching method.

This suggests that males generally need more practice to get a piece or stream of knowledge stuck in their memory. Therefore, if a class is made up of only male students or consists of mixed sexes, use of drills should be applied in the teaching of the spelling of the English language words. If the class is made up of only female students though, it does not matter which teaching method is adopted.

## Conclusion

The study has shown that the use of drills in the teaching of the spelling of the English language words had significant effect on the students' cognitive achievement in the English language assessment tests. The use of drills thus appears to be a more effective teaching method than the conventional one as far as spelling of the English language words is concerned. It is hoped that when this formula is expanded to incorporate other classes in schools and extended to cover other schools, the results will be as encouraging as presupposed by this investigation.

## Recommendations

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1. Since it has been discovered that the use of drills as a method in teaching the spelling of the English language words generally makes students perform better, it is highly recommended. Teachers of the English language should without fear avail themselves to the application of this teaching method during their classes.
2. Principals and internal supervisors in the schools should ensure that teachers of the English language employ drills when teaching the spelling of the English language words.
3. Students should be encouraged to have drill practice sessions at home and in their leisure times. This can be done by giving them take-home assignments.
4. Parents and guardians should assist their children and wards to sharpen their spelling skills by overseeing the execution of such take-home assignments.
5. Government should organize in-service trainings and workshops for teachers on how to improve their resourcefulness in teaching, especially as it relates to languages.
6. Qualified teachers, with requisite training in education and the English language, should be recruited to teach the English language in schools.
7. Curriculum planners should also spot and capture these areas of need in subsequent updates to versions of the English language curriculum.
8. Authors in this field of the English language should be guided by the results of this research work as they churn out relevant academic materials.

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# A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' PARAGRAPH WRITING ABILITY 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION WAS AN ATTEMPT TO STUDY THE EFFECT OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' PARAGRAPH WRITING ABILITY. TO THAT END, AN OPT TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO 100 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INSTITUTES. LEARNERS WHO SCORED BETWEEN ONE ABOVE AND BELOW THE STANDARD DEVIATION WERE SELECTED. 40 LEARNERS WERE SELECTED AND THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP, EACH GROUP CONTAINED 20 LEARNERS. A WRITING TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS AS A PRE-TEST TO TAKE THEIR INITIAL KNOWLEDGE OF PARAGRAPH WRITING ABILITY. THE WRITING SECTION OF THE TOEFL TEST WAS SELECTED TO TEST THE WRITING ABILITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED TREATMENT IN ORDER TO HELP THEM IMPROVE THEIR WRITING ABILITY BY USING DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT IN TWELVE SESSIONS .THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED NO TREATMENT. FINALLY BOTH GROUPS SAT FOR THE POST-TEST OF THE SAME WRITING TEST. THE RESULTS WERE ANALYZED THROUGH ANCOVA AND IT WAS EXPLORED THAT USING DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' PARAGRAPH WRITING ABILITY.


KEY WORDS: DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT, MEDIATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE, COHESION, ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT.

## Introduction

Traditionally, written language has been measured by standardized tests that focus primarily on the products of writing. An emphasis is placed on the mechanics of writing which includes handwriting, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation. This focus on mechanical skills leads educators to emphasize lower level writing skills in assessment and in teaching rather than focusing on the process of writing. There is a propensity to assess what is taught. Current written language assessment measures, such as the Test of Written Language (3rd ed; Hammill and Larsen, 1996), do not effectively measure meaningful writing behavior and skills related to the process of writing (Beminger, Mizokawa, Bragg, 1991). Assessment procedures need to reflect

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the goals of writing instruction, in essence, the higher cognitive skills necessary for effective writing (Moran, 1987).

An increasing body of research has provided support for effective writing instruction that focuses on the writing process within a social context (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, 1988; Isaacson, 1988; Vygotsky, 1962). Several researchers have developed interactive writing programs which teach strategy development (Englert, 1992; Graham and Harris, 1987). This interactive approach between the teacher and student occurs through the use of scaffolding. Scaffolding is a form of support provided by the teacher to allow students to shift from their current unassisted level of functioning to a higher level of cognitive functioning (Brown and Ferrara, 1985). Teachers model the process of writing by verbalizing the strategies and self-questioning of strategy steps .

Rather than simply recognizing the current level of performance, dynamic assessment emphasizes optimal performance under specified conditions (Haywood et al., 1990). Dynamic assessment, therefore, attempts to link instruction to assessment, provides a more descriptive analysis of the student's strengths and an indication of where assistance is needed to acquire strategies (Campione, 1989). It is not suggested that dynamic assessment measures be used in isolation, rather that dynamic assessment adds to the complete understanding of a child's performance achieved with minimal assistance (Campione, Brown, Ferrara and Bryant, 1984).The major goal of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of one of dynamic assessment approaches, mediation through a mediated learning experience.

## Statement of the problem

Some of the difficulties that the students face in writing are problems related to grammar and vocabulary at sentence level. How to organize sentences into a larger unit like the paragraph is an even more important problem. Their academic writings lack unity and coherence as they tend to pay attention to accuracy at the sentence level. Many difficulties on writing lead students to be more susceptible to producing errors. In a study done by Razmjou and Dr. Riazi (2009) it was shown that the writing skill had been ignored at many institutes in Shiraz because of the difficulty of the skill. Therefore it is very important for students to be taught how to write a paragraph.

## Significance of the study

While similar tasks are used to assess learning, consider the following account of learning and assessment in this approach: "the major difference between assessment tasks and learning tasks is that in learning tasks, teachers need to conduct appropriate pre-task, while-task and post-tasks activities to ensure that learners can complete the tasks satisfactorily" (Candlin, 2001, p. 237). This description is revealing in that it betrays an enduring orientation toward assessment that has been carried over from standardized tests and that is perhaps the primary source of difference between assessment and instruction: the tester's goal of controlling all variables that might jeopardize an accurate measurement of an individual's abilities, understood to be represented by his solo performance. That is, the very kinds of interactions, feedback, supporting materials, and assistance that usually characterize good instruction, and in the task-based framework are necessary to help learners complete a given task, are not permitted if that same task is used for assessment purposes because they would obscure the learners' "true" abilities.

## Review of the Related Literature

Joseph Lebber did a research on Dynamic assessment of learning progresses in children with developmental disabilities. He elaborated on three case studies of children; one with autism, one with brain damage and one with Down syndrome. He showed that DA is able to visualize modifiability of cognitive functions and learning disposition that these can be enhanced and how
this can be done: through meditational learning. Amy M. Elleman explored Dynamic Assessment as a means of identifying children at-risk of developing comprehension difficulties. She found out that DA allows the professionals to ascertain where the breakdown in skills occurs which serves to inform effective remediation.

Alex Kozulin and Erica Grab studied Dynamic assessment of EFL text comprehension of at risk students. The study indicated that the procedure is both feasible and effective in obtaining information on students learning potential. It was confirmed that students with a similar performance level demonstrate different, and in some cases dramatically different ability to learn and use new text comprehension strategies. Zhang Yan-hong conducted two studies based on Dynamic assessment; the first is Dynamic assessment mode for online EFL writing classes. The researcher found out that owing to the timely help in terms of writing strategies, reference materials and encouraging remarks by the teacher, which does not only bring out students' initiative but also lead to harmonious interaction and cooperation between them, such dynamic assessment greatly improves students' writing abilities.

The second study by this researcher is constructing Dynamic Assessment mode in college English writing classes. It is proposed that such an assessment mode should provide graduated and contingent scaffolding instructional mediation according to the developmental needs of students in the process of writing, thus reflecting the dialectical integration of assessment and instruction, and making it possible to enhance both teaching and the development of students' writing ability. A case study of dynamic assessment in EFL process writing has been done by Lan Xiaoxiao Taishan medical university and Liu Yan Shandong agricultural university. This study was done on 30 English majors in college of foreign languages. The investigators studied the process writing ability of the students. The study was designed to test the effect of using Dynamic Assessment framework on students' writing ability and motivation by providing mediation as a vehicle for promoting students to span the ZPD established by the distance between them and their teacher or peers in a writing task and achieve the aim of enhancing their writing competence. The findings confirmed the realization of the central objectives: 1) Learners' writing ability can be substantially and comprehensively improved; 2) Learners' motivation of writing can be markedly stimulated.

Monika Knobel conducted the Dynamic assessment of written language. This study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of two types of dynamic assessment approaches, the graduated prompt and mediated learning experience, in assessing the composition writing of students with a learning disability and poor writers without a learning disability. Ten poor writers and eleven students with a learning disability from grades seven and eight wrote a composition using the spontaneous writing sample of the Test of Written Language-3. Since all students performed poorly on their initial composition, they were assessed using the graduated prompt approach to ascertain the number and type of prompts needed to improve written language.

Findings revealed that students as a group significantly benefitted from intervention with the graduated prompt however, compositions written by four poor writers without a learning disability and eight students with a learning disability did not improve by ten percent or did not score above the 25th percentile using the TOWL-3 composite. These students continued on in the study and received intervention through a mediated learning experience (MLE). As a group, students significantly benefitted with further individualized intervention from MLE. Maintenance of learning was found on posttest for poor writers and students with a learning disability who benefitted from the graduated prompt approach. Poor writers without a learning disability generally required low levels of prompting whereas poor writers with a learning disability required higher level prompting. The results of this study suggest that the graduated
prompt approach and MLE were effective methods of assessment for poor writers with and without a learning disability in recognizing potential to learn.

## Materials and Methods

In this study Oxford Placement Test Was used to make sure of the homogeneity of the groups. The writing section of TOEFL test was used as pretest and posttest of writing.

## Data Analysis Procedure

The results of posttest were analyzed for further discussion via ANCOVA on the scores obtained from experimental and control group to see whether using Dynamic assessment had any effects on EFL learners' paragraph writing ability.

## Results

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT (Oxford Placement Test) test. The results are shown in Table (1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

| $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | SD |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 100 | 32 | 10.32 |

This table shows the result obtained from the proficiency test, OPT. The mean and standard deviation are presented.

Table (2) shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one was excluded.

Table 2. Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test Cases

|  | Included |  |  | Excluded |  | Total |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | Percent | $\mathbf{N}$ | Percent | $\mathbf{N}$ | Percent |  |
| Pre-test group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |  |
| Post-test group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |  |

Forty participants were selected for this study. They were divided into two groups, experimental and control.

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in table (3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test

| Group | Pre-test | Post-test |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Experimental | Mean | 59.9 | 68.4 |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 20 | 20 |
|  | SD | 4.8 | 4.7 |


| Control | Mean | 58.45 | 58.1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 20 | 20 |
|  | SD | 5.64 | 5.2 |
| Total | Mean | 59.15 | 63.25 |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 40 | 40 |
|  | SD | 5.216 | 7.121 |

## Interpretive Statistics

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is particularly appropriate when subjects in two or more groups are found to differ on a pre-test or other initial variable. In this case, the effects of the pretest and/or other relevant variables are partialled out, and the resulting adjusted means of the post-test scores are compared. Through ANCOVA differences in the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared as though their initial status had been equated. In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis" Dynamic Assessment has no effect on paragraph writing ability of Iranian EFL learners." , the differences between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA .

In order to examine the equality of variances, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Table 4. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance

| $\mathbf{F}$ | Df1 | Df2 | Sig |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| .26 | 1 | 38 | .61 |

According to table (4) the calculated F is not meaningful. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.

The data in table (5) are related to test of homogeneity of regression. Before running covariance, between-subjects effects of pre-test-group should be investigated.

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Table 5. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Type lll Sum <br> of Square | Df | Mean Score | F | Sig |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected <br> Model | 1879.82 | 3 | 626.61 | 230.93 | .00 |
| Group (a) | 17.86 | 1 | 17.86 | 6.6 | .15 |
| Pretest (b) | 802.97 | 1 | 802 | 295.95 | .00 |
| Group*pretest <br> $\left(\mathrm{a}^{*} \mathrm{~b}\right)$ | 0.41 | 1 | .41 | .15 | .7 |
| Error | 97.68 | 36 | 2.71 |  |  |
| Total | 46200 | 40 |  |  |  |

As table (5) shows, between -subjects effect ( $\mathrm{a}^{*} \mathrm{~b}$ ) is not significance ( $\mathrm{F}=0.15, \mathrm{Sig}=0.7$ ). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between - subjects effect of post-test and group to show whether mean scores of two groups are the same or not. The results of this analysis are demonstrated in table (6).

Table 6. Mean and Corrected Mean of Paragraph writing Ability

| Source | Posttest |  | Corrected Mean |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | M | SD | M | SE |
| Experimental | 38.4 | 4.7 | 37.77 | .36 |
| Control | 28.1 | 5.11 | 28.72 | .36 |

Table (6) shows the corrected means of dependent variable paragraph writing ability. The data demonstrate that the means of the experimental group are upper than the control group.

Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of paragraph writing ability in the experimental and the control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table (7).

Table 7. Sum of analysis of covariance

| Source | Type Ill <br> Sum of <br> Square | DF | Mean <br> Score | F | Sig | Partial Eta <br> Squared |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected | 1879.415 | 2 | 939.71 | 354.48 | .00 | .95 |
| Model | 818.52 | 1 | 818.52 | 308.76 | .00 | .89 |
| Pretest | 805.42 | 1 | 805.48 | 303.84 | .00 | .89 |
| Group | 98.08 | 37 | 2.65 |  |  |  |
| Error | 96200 | 40 |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 4620 |  |  |  |  |  |

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As it can be seen, the corrected model ( $\mathrm{f}=00, \mathrm{~F}=354.48$ ) is statistically significant. The results $(\mathrm{F}=303.84, \mathrm{Sig}=.00, \mathrm{Eta}=.89)$ shows that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is significant difference between experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis "Dynamic Assessment has no effect on paragraph writing ability of Iranian EFL learners." will be rejected, so it can be concluded that the students' paragraph writing ability can be improved by using dynamic assessment.

Table 8. Independent t-test for male and female performance in paragraph writing

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  |  |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Source | $\mathbf{F}$ | Sig | $\mathbf{t}$ | Df | Sig <br> (two-tailed) | Mean <br> difference | Std. Error <br> Difference |
| Male | .243 | .628 | -.298 | 18 | .769 | -.28283 | .94995 |
| Female | .249 | .619 | -.306 | 17.973 | .763 | -.28283 | .92561 |

The results in this table indicate that there was not a significant difference between male and female performance in conversation.

## Conclusion

The results of the present study confirm the results obtained in the study conducted by Monika knodel (1996). Monica Knodel conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of two types of dynamic assessment approaches, the graduated prompt and mediated learning experience, in assessing the composition writing of students with a learning disability and poor writers without a learning disability. Ten poor writers and eleven students with a learning disability from grades seven and eight wrote a composition using the spontaneous writing sample of the Test of Written Language-3. Findings revealed that students as a group significantly benefitted from intervention with the graduated prompt. The students who did not improve by using graduated prompt continued on in the study and received intervention through a mediated learning experience (MLE).

As a group, students significantly benefitted with further individualized intervention from MLE. Maintenance of learning was found on posttest for poor writers and students with a learning disability who benefitted from the graduated prompt approach. Poor writers without a learning disability generally required low levels of prompting whereas poor writers with a learning disability required higher level prompting. The results of this study suggest that the graduated prompt approach and MLE were effective methods of assessment for poor writers with and without a learning disability in recognizing potential to learn.

Based on this research it is proposed that such an assessment mode should provide graduated and contingent scaffolding instructional mediation according to the developmental needs of students in the process of writing, thus reflecting the dialectical integration of assessment and instruction, and making it possible to enhance both teaching and the development of students' writing ability. The present study showed that students cooperated more with their teachers and showed more willingness on the part of the students in doing the writing assignments. The students also seemed to enjoy writing since they were more active and more willing to write and cooperate more while doing the task.

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# A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF METADISCOURSE THROUGH TEACHERS' EXPLICIT FEEDBACK ON IRANIAN UPPER INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING FLUENCY 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY WAS CONDUCTED TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF METADISCOURSE THROUGH TEACHERS' EXPLICIT FEEDBACK ON IRANIAN UPPER INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING FLUENCY. FOR THIS PURPOSE 100 LEARNERS OF ENGLISH PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY. HAVING BEING HOMOGENIZED BY AN OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST (OPT), 60 LEARNERS WERE SELECTED AND THEY WERE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED INTO TWO GROUPS OF 30, CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL. THEN BOTH GROUPS SAT FOR A PRE-TEST, WHICH WAS A SPEAKING TEST. THE PURPOSE OF THIS TEST WAS TO MEASURE THE LEARNERS' INITIAL SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE OF SPEAKING FLUENCY. AFTERWARDS, THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED TREATMENT BASED ON META-DISCOURSE THROUGH TEACHERS' EXPLICIT FEEDBACK. HOWEVER, THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED NO TREATMENT AND APPROACHED THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF TEACHING. THE TREATMENT PROCEDURE TOOK 10 SESSIONS. FINALLY AT THE END OF THE COURSE BOTH GROUPS SAT FOR THE POST TEST OF SPEAKING. THEN THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS WAS RUN THROUGH INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST AND ANCOVA. IT WAS EXPLORED FROM THE STUDY THAT LEARNERS' SPEAKING FLUENCY IMPROVES MORE WHEN THEY ARE PROVIDED WITH META-DISCOURSE THROUGH TEACHERS' EXPLICIT FEEDBACK. HOWEVER, THIS STUDY PROVIDES A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION IN CURRICULUM INNOVATION AND POLICY WITH RESPECT TO THE LEARNERS' SPEAKING FLUENCY DEVELOPMENT.


KEY WORDS: META-DISCOURSE, SPEAKING FLUENCY

## Introduction

Speaking in a second language involves the development of a particular type of communication skill. The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second or foreign language learners. Learners often evaluate their success in language learning on the basis of how well they

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feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency. Oral skills have hardly been neglected in EFL course. In designing speaking activities or instructional materials for second or foreign language teaching it is also necessary to recognize the very different functions speaking performs in daily communication and the different purposes for which our students need speaking skills.

Speaking is a communication skill. It improves performance because it is a practice to use language for communication. Language students often have doubts about their own ability to learn speaking of a second language. They have a poor self-image in this regard. Usually in the classroom situations each student receives a surprisingly small amount of practice. Students can only do what they are able to do within the walls of the classroom. This does not match those experiences that native speakers have in a life time of participating in their language and culture.

Brown and Yule (1983) believed that many language learners regard speaking skills as the criteria for knowing language. They defined fluency as the ability to communicate with others much more than the ability to read, write or comprehend oral language. They regarded speaking as the most important skill students acquire. Students assess their progress in terms of their accomplishment in spoken communication.

Speaking in an L2 has occupied a unique position through much of the history of language teaching. Due to the difficulty of studying speaking, it was easier for teachers to focus on written than spoken language. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns and Joyce, 1997).

According to Seiyedeh Masoumeh Asaei a large percentage of the world's language learners study English to develop proficiency in speaking, because speech is the most basic means of human communication, perhaps the most difficult aspect of spoken English is that it is almost always accompanied via interaction with at least one other speaker. This is one reason why many of us were shocked and disappointed when used our second or foreign language for the first time in real interaction. Oral skills have not always figured so centrally in second language pedagogy. The ability to speak a second language well is a very complex productive task if attempts are made to understand the nature of what appears to be involved. The problems of speaking a second language are not limited to a specific group of learners, or it is not restricted to a geographical area. Different learner groups encounter problems in improving their speaking fluency and Iranian learners are not an exception.

## Definition of key terms

Meta- discourse: Nash (1992) defines meta discourse as a kind of commentary, which is made in speaking or writing. He believes the essential feature of this commentary is that it is not added to the text, by a footnote or a postscript. However, it is combined with it, in the shape of words and phrases fitted into the unfolding message. Meta discourse is the author's linguistic and rhetorical manifestation in the text in order to "bracket the discourse organization and the expressive implications of what is being said" (Schiffrin, 1980, p. 231). Hyland (1998) believes that meta discourse is recognized as an aspect of our everyday language, which forms an important means of facilitating communication, supports the writer's position, and builds a relationship with an audience.

Speaking fluency: Brown and Yule (1983) believed that many language learners regard speaking skills as the criteria for knowing language. They defined fluency as the ability to communicate with others much more than the ability to read, write or comprehend oral language. They regarded speaking as the most important skill students acquire. Students assess their progress in terms of their accomplishment in spoken communication.

## Review of the related literature

Speaking is an interactive process which leads to constructing meaning that involves the development of a particular type of production, reception, and information processing in its typical grammatical, lexical, and discourse patterns (Burns \& Joyce, 1997). That is why Webb (1982) believes that oral practice is necessary for speaking. This idea is acceptable truly, but what if the time passes and people do not get the ability they wish during their instructions. Since problematic speaking can lead the speech of the learners to break down, a more careful insight to the useful ways of speech instruction is needed in English learning environment. Thus, the main purpose of the present study is to examine the effectiveness of meta-discourse through teachers' explicit feedback on students' speaking fluency.

Nash (1992) defines meta-discourse as a kind of commentary, which is made in speaking or writing. He believes the essential feature of this commentary is that it is not added to the text, by a footnote or a postscript. However, it is combined with it, in the shape of words and phrases fitted into the unfolding message. Meta discourse is the author's linguistic and rhetorical manifestation in the text in order to "bracket the discourse organization and the expressive implications of what is being said" (Schiffrin, 1980, p. 231). Hyland (1998) believes that meta discourse is recognized as an aspect of our everyday language, which forms an important means of facilitating communication, supports the writer's position, and builds a relationship with an audience. Therefore,
it is a major feature of the ways we communicate in a range of genres and settings.
Camiciottoli (2003) claims in L2 instructional contexts, an awareness of meta discourse is particularly useful in helping non-native speakers of English with the difficult task of grasping the writer's stance when reading challenging authentic materials. Bruce (1989) suggests that this ability enables non-native learners to better follow the writer's line of reasoning in argumentative texts. Kopple (1997) observes that specific instruction on meta discourse can be useful to help L2 readers learn to distinguish factual content from the writer's commentary.

Based on Kong and Xin (2009), the uses of meta discourse display different characteristics in various genres and styles. They believe the taxonomies of meta-discourse generally fall into two main categories of textual and interpersonal. They classified textual meta-discourse into seven categories of logical connectives, interpretative markers, attributors, validity markers, attitudinal markers, commentaries, and clarifying connectives. Among these categories, logical connectives are subcategorized to different parts depending on their occurrences and functions. Four of these logical subcategories (i.e, additional connectives, contrastive connectives, sequencers, and summative connectives ...) were chosen for instruction during the present research.

It should be noted that teaching meta-discourse means sensitizing students to rhetorical effects and features that exist within a given genre and community, and give them enough sources to interact with their readers in their own world (Hyland, 2005; Swales, 1990). According to Amiryousefi and Eslami Rasekh (2010), to teach meta-discourse features appropriately, teachers need to (1) understand their students' target needs; (2) consider the students' culturally prior learning experiences, which may be different from what is expected by the target readers; (3) view learning to write as learning to use language to encourage their students to see the target language as a way of meaning making and interaction with their readers, and put emphasis on the importance of the interactions by teaching them how certain devices can be exploited to construct such interactions and dialogues with the readers; (4) use authentic texts and expose their students to the most productive and frequently used meta-discourse features to make them familiar with their use and functions; (5) provide students with the tasks of manipulating and producing texts to identify meta-discourse features, and (6) provide the students with actual

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writing situations to actually use and test their knowledge and understandings of meta-discourse (Hyland, 2005, pp. 181-193).

The skill of speaking skill is as crucial as any other language skill. The four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) naturally appear together in every English class, even in the EFL context. As Peregoy and Boyle (2001) state, "Listening, speaking, reading and writing also occur naturally together in learning events in school at all grade levels, even though traditionally they were taught separately" (p. 107). In addition, Shumin (1997) states that learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammar and vocabulary. Learners should acquire the skill through interaction with each other. However, it is difficult for EFL learners to speak appropriate English in the classroom because of the limited language use in their real lives. Affective factors are the most important issues that may promote students' speaking.
Affective factors include self-esteem, emotion, attitude, anxiety, and motivation. Shumin believes that "L2 or foreign language learning is a complex task that is susceptible to human anxiety, which is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self doubt, and apprehension" (1997, para. 2). These are the factors that affect students' speaking in most EFL contexts and there are other issues as well. For example, the language level may be too difficult, or too much is given at once and the amount of the language the teacher gives the students in each session may be too much, according to Shumin (1997).

## Method <br> Participants

The participants of this study were 60 Upper intermediate Iranian EFL learners. There were no control of sex, who were selected randomly from among 100 learners based on the results of an OPT administered. The Mean and SD were calculated and eventually 60 learners with the score of 1 SD above and below the mean were selected to participate in this research. This study aims to investigate the degree of improvements in learners' speaking fluency. They were divided into two groups of 30 and were randomly assigned to the experimental group as well as control group.

## Materials

The investigation was conducted by the use of different materials. For the sake of data collection, the participants used three types of tests. An OPT test was taken in order to measure their proficiency level, and homogenize the groups, the test contains of two parts. The pre test of speaking was taken in order to measure learners' initial subjects' knowledge of speaking fluency. A post test of speaking, was used to measure the effectiveness of treatment.

## Procedure

This part of the study was conducted over a ten sessions and during normal class time. In the first session, for the purpose of homogeneity, Oxford Placement Test was administered.

They randomly were divided into two groups. One as a control group and other as an experimental group. Both groups sat for a pre-test of speaking. The purpose of this test is to assess the initial subject knowledge of the learners in speaking ability.

Then the control group received no treatment and approached the traditional method of teaching speaking, but the experimental group received treatment on the basis on meta-discourse.

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The teacher taught four categories of textual metadiscourse markers including additional connectives (e.g. "also", "besides", "furthermore", "in addition", "moreover", "what is more"); contrastive connectives (e.g. "but", "despite", "in spite of", "on the contrary", "conversely", "instead", "on the one/other hand", "similarly", "but then", "or rather"); sequencers (e.g. "firstly/secondly/thirdly/fourthly", "finally", "next", "(to) start with", "then", "after that", "in the end"); and summative connectives (e.g. "all in all", "in all", "briefly", "in brief", "in conclusion", "in general", "in short", "in summary", "summing up", "summarizing", "to sum up").

And finally the posttest of speaking fluency was administered in which the subjects' ability in both groups on the specific treatment program were assessed.

## Results

## Data Analysis and Findings

As it was mentioned earlier in chapter 3, 60 students took part in this survey. Each participant was supposed to answer the posttest in allocated time in their English class time. The very intended goal of current study was to investigate the effectiveness of meta-discourse through teachers' explicit feedback on Iranian upper Intermediate EFL learners' speaking fluency. Released data from tests were calculated through ANCOVAs for elaborating the manipulation of the program ${ }_{g}$ which was done by implementation of different teaching method and offering new material as treatment in experimental group. Also an Independent Sample T-test was used to show the degree of differences that would believe exists between control and experimental group. In brief it should be mentioned that after analyzing the descriptive statistics of students' speaking fluency scores on pretests and posttests, two statistical computations of the data including descriptive and inferential analysis are carried out.

## Descriptive Analysis of the Data

Descriptive statistics is the discipline of quantitatively describing the main features of a collection of data. It aims to summarize a sample, rather than use the data to learn about the population that the sample of data is thought to represent. Actually it deals with analyzing, describing and interpreting the data obtained from the participants. The measures used to describe the data set are measures of central tendency and measures of variability or dispersion. Measures of central tendency include the mean, median and mode, while measures of variability include the standard deviation, the minimum and maximum variables. Descriptive analysis of the obtained data of the current study which has been calculated by SPSS is presented below.

Table 1. Mean, Variance and Standard Deviation of Pretests for Control and Experimental Groups

|  | Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pretests | Control | 30 | 10.5333 | 4.51613 | 20.395 |
|  | Experimental | 30 | 10.6667 | 5.28716 | 27.954 |

Table (1) shows the descriptive analysis of the pretest scores of the control and the experimental group on speaking variable. Each group includes 30 participants ( $\mathrm{N}=30$ ) without any missing value (that means all selected subjects were present in the investigation). In this table, it is clearly observable that the mean scores for both groups are close to each other which have meaning. The meaning for closeness in two groups mean scores indicates that both control and experimental group were at the same level of knowledge in speaking before administrating any treatment and providing them any material.

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Table 2. Mean, Variance and Standard Deviation of Posttests for Control and Experimental Groups

|  | Groups |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Posttests | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|  | Control | 30 | 11.0667 | 5.00299 | 25.030 |
|  | Experimental | 30 | 14.5333 | 4.86885 | 23.706 |

Also, the descriptive analysis for the posttest scores of the control and the experimental group is shown in table (2). As it is shown in this table, all the students in both control and experimental groups similar to table (1) are present. The mean for posttest scores of experimental group is 14.53 as compared to the mean of posttest scores of the control which is 11.06 . It is crystal clear that these two groups are different in overall mean; it implies that both groups of the study are at a different level of speaking after the treatment process.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis for the Pretest and the Posttest of Experimental Group of the Study

| Group | Tests | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Experimental | Pre | 30 | 10.6667 | 5.28716 | 27.954 |
|  | Post | 30 | 14.5333 | 4.86885 | 23.706 |

Table (3) shows the pretest mean for experimental group, which is 10.66 , as compared to the mean of same group posttest which is 14.53 . As for the standard deviations obtained for the experimental group, there seems to be more variability among the pretest scores than the scores in the posttest.
Similarly, the descriptive analysis for the pretest and the posttest of control group of the study has been shown in table (4).

Table.4. Descriptive Analysis for the Pretest and the Posttest of Control Group of the Study

| Group | Test | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Control | Pre | 30 | 10.5333 | 4.51613 | 20.395 |
|  | Post | 30 | 11.0667 | 5.00299 | 25.030 |

According to this table, the mean for pretest of control group is 10.53 while the mean for its posttest score is 11.06 .

## Inferential Analysis of the Data

Inferential statistics is concerned with making predictions or inferences about a population from observations and analysis of a sample. That is, researcher can take the results of an analysis using a sample and generalize it to a larger population that the sample represents. This section focused on inferential analysis of the obtained data of this study that was calculated using SPSS, in which an Independent Sample $T$ test was selected for calculating the $t$ value and also ANCOVA (general linear model/ Univariate) for calculating the covariance.

Table 5. Independent Samples Test of the Study between 2 Posttests

> | Levene's |
| :---: |
| Test for |
| Equality of |
| Variances |

## t-test for Equality of Means

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$\left.\begin{array}{lccccccccc}\hline & \text { F } & \text { Sig. } & \text { T } & \text { df } & \text { Sig. } & \text { Mean } & \text { Std. Error } & \begin{array}{c}\text { 95\% Confidence } \\ \text { (2-tailed) }\end{array} & \text { Difference }\end{array} \begin{array}{c}\text { Difference } \\ \text { Difference }\end{array}\right\}$

In order to show and understand whether the statistical difference is occurred between two groups after treatment, there was a need to use an Independent Samples Test. The Independent Samples Test is a kind of parametric test which results in rejecting or supporting the hypothesis of the study. As it is shown in table (5) the t-value is calculated between the posttests of both control and experimental groups. The observed $t$ value shows to be -2.72 and the degree of freedom shows to be 57. Whether the level of significance equals to .843 the interpretation of data for rejecting or supporting the hypothesis of the study is possible.

The second type of inferential analysis of the data of the study is related to the degree of relationship between the pretest and posttest of speaking as a variable in both control and experimental group. In the case of calculating and showing the progress of groups from pretests to posttests, two ANCOVAs were used.

Table 6. ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) between Pretest and Posttest of Control Group

| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Corrected Model | 5.506 a | 1 | 5.506 | .214 | .647 |
| Intercept | 660.864 | 1 | 660.864 | 25.687 | .000 |
| PreCo/PostCo | 5.506 | 1 | 5.506 | .214 | .647 |
| Error | 720.361 | 28 | 25.727 |  |  |
| Total | 4400.000 | 30 |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 725.867 | 29 |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.008$ (Adjusted R Squared $=-.028$ )

Table 6 shows the covariates to be 0.214 , which is the calculated value between the two sets of pretest and posttest scores in the control group using SPSS.

Table 7. ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) between Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group

| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected Model | $40.561^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 1 | 40.561 | 1.756 | .196 |
| Intercept | 849.580 | 1 | 849.580 | 36.772 | .000 |
| PreEx/PostEx | 40.561 | 1 | 40.561 | 1.756 | .196 |
| Error | 646.905 | 28 | 23.104 |  |  |
| Total | 7024.000 | 30 |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 687.467 | 29 |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.059$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.025$ )

Also according to table (7) the obtained covariance value for experimental group is equal to 1.756 . This table reveals that the progress in experimental group has occurred while table (6) indicated that the control group has not any progress. This means that the degree of statistical distance

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between the pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group is representative of the differences between the means in these two sets of scores.

Table 8. The Covariance for the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

| Groups |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Between pre and post tests of <br> the control group | Between pre and post tests of <br> the experimental group |

Covariance $214 \quad 1.756$

In order to show the differences in a tangible way, Table (8) summarized the obtained covariance for the pretest and the posttest scores of the control and experimental group.

## Results of Hypothesis Testing

In this section the result of hypothesis testing is presented and explained. Flashing back to the first chapter of the study, the question and the hypothesis of study are remembered as below:

Q: Does meta-discourse through teachers' explicit feedback have any effect on Iranian upper Intermediate EFL learners' speaking fluency?
$\mathbf{H}^{1}$ : meta-discourse through teachers' explicit feedback does not have any effect on Iranian upper Intermediate EFL learners' speaking fluency

The hypothesis of the study, which mentioned above was rejected. Some evidences came to justify the rejection of the hypothesis. First, the result of T-test as shown in table 5 implies that the observed $t$ value is -2.720 in which the critical $t$ value determined on the basis of considering the 2-tailed significance level of 0.05 is 2.000 . Thus, the observed $t$ was higher than the critical $t$ and led to rejection of null hypothesis of the study. Also according to the analysis of covariance illustrated in table (8) covariance value (1.756) is more than 1. Another evidence to justify the rejection of the hypothesis was the value of level of significance calculated by SPSS that shows the value 0.843 . Scientifically, the variability in the two sets of tests was significantly different.

## Discussion and conclusion

In this study, the effect of meta-discourse instruction on speaking ability was studied. The results showed that the speaking ability was significantly improved in the experimental group after the treatment. While the speaking scores of the control group remained almost the same. This could lead to more emphasis on the role of learning Meta-discourse markers in enhancing the speaking ability. This is in accordance with the study of Pérez and Macia (2002), who suggested that metadiscourse markers enrich the speech, since textual discourse helps to structure discourse and hence they act as an aid for foreign language learners.
Moreover, although it cannot be emphasized widely, meta-discourse instruction can be a valuable cause to extend turns in pair discussions. It is a strategy to save the time to think for the next sentences for students with lower fluency. As a result, not only is it beneficial to remind the students to take care of their hesitations with such an easy strategy in speaking tests, but the characteristics of meta-discourse words, as fillers, make them good tools for assessors to check the speaker's skill. However, successful integration of the meta-discourse instruction into EFL classrooms is dependent on teacher's method. Therefore, teachers can benefit from metadiscourse instruction to enhance the speaking ability of their students. Furthermore, learner's needs, attitudes, and proficiency levels must be considered (Aminzadeh \& Entezari, 2011).

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# VERBAL REALIZATION OF LYING IN PERSIANKURDISH DISCOURSE; A PSYCHO-SOCIO LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS 

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#### Abstract

LYING IS AN ASPECT OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ONE CAN ANALYZE SUCH COMMUNICATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND FROM DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW. THIS ARTICLE PRESENTS A PRIMARILY PSYCHO-SOCIO LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF LYING. A DCT AND A QUESTIONNAIRE WERE DISTRIBUTED AMONG 156 IRANIAN KURDISH ADULTS. RESULTS SHOW THAT LIES ARE MOSTLY VERBALLY REALIZED THROUGH GIVING EXCUSES, APOLOGIZING, SWEARING, AND PRAISING. MOST OF THE LIES ARE TOLD TO SAVE FACE AND AVOIDING CONFLICTS. GENDER AND EDUCATION WERE FOUND TO AFFECT THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND LYING AND THE WAY THE LIES ARE VERBALLY REALIZED. WOMEN AND UNEDUCATED PEOPLE ARE MORE WILLING TO LIE THAN MEN AND EDUCATED ONES. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.


KEYWORDS: LIE, MOTIVATION, LYING STRATEGY, GENDER, EDUCATION LEVEL

## 1. Introduction

Adults have at their disposal an extensive repertoire of both verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies, which enable them to socialize and maintain interpersonal relationships. The rich verbal inventory permits speakers to select the appropriate linguistic behavior based on the situational context of the interaction. Many would prefer to choose linguistic expressions that are characterized by directness and truthfulness (veracity of the propositional content of the utterance) regardless of the effect that this strategy may have on the recipient. Others would consciously opt for a more polite and refined linguistic articulation to protect recipient's feelings as well as his/her social status.

Lying is an intentional act used to mislead another (DePaulo et al. 1996). According to DePaulo et al. (1996) people lie in one out of five social interactions, that have an average of one lie per day, to about 30 percent of those they interact with. Though lies can be told for personal gain, the majority seem to arise for psychological reasons (DePaulo and Kashy 1998). Broomfield, Robinson, and Robinson (2002) believed that adults during social interaction "routinely" (p.47) resort to white lies which are forms of deception as an interactional strategy to protect the feelings of the hearer and to avoid conflict and tension. Lying has many forms and comes under many names: white lies, faking, bluffing, acting, cover-ups, put-ons, and others (Bok, 1978). White lie, as a variation of lie, is socially and mentally accepted and deliberately used by adults to keep social rapports (Bussey, 1999; Peterson, 1995).

Developmental psychologists like Camden, Motley, and Wilson (1984) categorized different motivations (intentions) that govern the use of white lies in social interactions by adults. Based on
their findings adults intentionally use white lies to protect basic needs and rewards, maintain affiliation and protect one's self-esteem (saving face).

Turner et al. (1975) studied the motivations for lying and the relative frequency of lies for each motivation. The five major motivation categories and their frequency of occurrence are as follows:

Motivation:

1. To save face: ( $55.2 \%$ )
2. To guide social interaction: (9.9\%)
3. To avoid tension or conflict: ( $22.2 \%$ )
4. To affect interpersonal relationships: (9.6\%)
5. To achieve interpersonal power ( $3.2 \%$ )

In a similar study of motivations for lies, Hample (1980) generally replicated the Turner et al's findings and concluded, on the basis of a corpus of 42 lies, that their motivations fall into four categories, arranged here in terms of descending frequency of occurrence, of (a) benefiting self, (b) benefiting the other participants in the interaction, (c) benefiting the relationship, and (d) miscellaneous motivations.

Camden (1984) categorized the underlying motivations of telling lies into four main categories. He claimed that these categories are the rewards expected to result from the lie. The major reward categories are basic rewards (i.e., money, material goods, etc.); affiliation rewards (i.e., interaction initiation, leave-taking, etc.); self-esteem rewards (e.g., saving face); and other rewards (i.e., dissonance reduction, humor, etc.) (Camden, 1984).

Recently, Xu, Luo, Fu and Lee (2009) examined Chinese young and adult judgments for truthful and untruthful statements based on Sweetser's proposal. Results show that the communicative intent had a significant influence on Chinese children and adults' moral judgment whereas the social setting didn't have a bearing on their moral judgment.

In the same manner, Perkins and Turiel (2007) contend that a false statement made with an intention to help is not judged as a lie compared to a false statement told with intent to harm. Again, a false statement made in politeness setting is less likely to be judged as a lie compared to the same statements made in informational setting. It remains to be said that the most comprehensive approach to the study of white lies that covers the communicative intent of speakers and the effect of politeness settings on the evaluation and judgment of white lies is presented by Camden, Motley, and Wilson (1984).

Moreover, we are interested in answering the question "Why lie?" Are there justifications for lying when one is capable of telling the truth? Tact, Relational Stability, Psychological Compensation, and Power Deference are four strong underlying rationales for "white lies" proposed by Camden (1984).

### 1.1 Relevance theory

Relevance theory, first put forward by Sperber and Wilson (1986; 1987), is a framework for the study of cognition, proposed primarily in order to provide a psychologically realistic account of communication. Two general sets of assumptions underlie relevance theory. The first set is relating to cognition and claims that cognition tends to maximize relevance. The other sets of assumptions are concerned with the claim that understanding the utterances in communication is a matter of inferring the speaker's communicative and informative intentions.

Cognitive principle of relevance theory is postulated on the premise that cognitive systems tend to maximize relevance (Sperber \& Wilson, 1986, p.260). Accordingly, an input is more relevant if it yields more cognitive effects, and less relevant if it takes more mental effort to process. According to the relevance theory, something very similar applies to human cognition. The cognitive system should (if it is well adapted) be so constructed that it seeks and processes inputs that are cognitively valuable, all other things being equal; and, on the other hand, that it looks for things that are easy to process, all else being equal. If something is difficult to process,

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then it will only be worth attending to if the payoff is big enough. Conversely, if an input has a low payoff then it will only be worth processing if that is easy to do.

Relevance theory may also be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice's central claims: that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions (Wilson \& Sperber, 2004, p. 607). According to Grice, when a speaker means something by an utterance, he has a set of nested intentions. The first intention is to produce a certain response in the hearer. Referring to cognitive theory, the purpose of this intention is to modify the hearer's mental representation of the world by providing the hearer with information about the speaker's representation of the world. As an example if the speaker says "it's cold" he intends the hearer to come to think that it's cold. The second intention is to make the first intention recognized to the hearer.

According to relevance theory, the correct interpretation of each utterance is leaded by "the expectation that utterances should meet certain standards" (Wilson, 2009, p. 393). This theory is originated in Grice's conversation maxims: do not say things that are false; provide enough but not too much information; be relevant. Thus, covert violations of one or more of Grice's conversational maxims (quality, quantity, relevance, and manner) are believed to result in messages that are functionally deceptive. According to Sperber and Wilson optimal relevance is when the speaker "chooses the utterance that would be (or seem) the most relevant to the addressee" (1995, p. 269).

Putting all these together we can apply this theory to the phenomenon of lying. Truth-like lies are those which demand less mental effort to be processed. In relevance theory context is of prime importance. Every utterance we say must be relevant to the speech context. So for a lie to be believed it needs to be relevant to the context. This can lead us to an understanding of features of lie and how to recognize it from truth.

### 1.2 Optimality theory

Optimality Theory is a general model of how grammars are structured. Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky began working on a new approach in 1991 which later in 1993 they named it optimality theory. Since 1993, optimality theory stimulated important research in syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, and other areas. The foundation of this theory is based on the constraints on grammatical output. Two different kinds of influences can be identified: either the output is triggered or blocked. OT sets up a basic dichotomy between the operational component of the grammar and the constraint component. The operational component, called GEN, constructs a set of candidate output forms that deviate from the input in various ways. The constraint component, called EVAL, selects a member of this set to be the actual output of the grammar.

Hoop \& Swart (1998) and de Hoop (2000) applied OT to sentence interpretation. These authors argue that there is a fundamental difference between the form of OT as used in syntax on the one hand and its form as used in semantics on the other. Whereas in the former case OT takes the point of view of the speaker (production perspective), in the latter case the point of view of the hearer is taken (comprehension perspective).

Applying this theory to the phenomena of lying, when the sender, here the liar, sends a message, there are two choices for the receiver: either to block the message, do not believe the lie, or to trigger the message, believe the lie.

## 2. This study

### 2.1 Non-verbal realization of lies

Most people identify communication with speech, but it is possible to communicate with each other even without saying a word. Thus, in sociolinguistics, pragmatics and the other related fields there are reference to two major types of communication: verbal and non-verbal. Whereas verbal communication is realized through speech and writing, non-verbal communication occurs when people convey messages through ways other than words, which are
culturally determined (Kougl, 1997, pp.58-62). Rodman (1983) claimed that over $90 \%$ of meaning is conveyed non-verbally. As far as rodman's claim is concerned, being aware of NVC can improve our communication apprehension.

NVC has been classified in different ways. Argyle (1969) considered bodily contact, posture, physical appearance, facial and gestural movement, direction of gaze, and emotional tone, timing and accent as sub categories of NVC. Knapp (1972) includes body motion, or kinesic behavior, paralanguage, proxemics, physical characteristics, eye behavior, touching behavior, facial expression, and artifacts and environmental factors in classification of NVC. In a recent research, Darn (2005) lists thirteen common elements of NVC as follows: Kinesics, Proxemics, Haptics, Oculesics, Chronemics, Olfactics, Vicalics, Sound symbols, Silence, Adornment, Posture, Locomotion, and Expression.

Proxemics is defined by Clarck, Eschholz, \& Rosa (1972, p. 457) as "the study of the ways in which space handled". ALD (1992) defines it as "the study of physical distance between people when they are talking to each other, as well as their posture and whether or not there is contact during their conversation". Some factors may influence the proxemics behavior in a given situation. Syrdal, Koay, Walters, and Dautenhahn (2007) studied these factors and categorize them in two general categories of internal and external factors. External factors include cultural and subcultural norms, situational and interactional context, degree of acquaintance between actors and the relative social status between interlocutors. In their classification, internal factors were related to gender, personality, physical characteristics such as height, health and medical factors, and other individual differences.

Gesture is a form of non-verbal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages. Gestures include movement of the hands, face, or other parts of the body. Gesture processing takes place in areas of the brain such as Broca's and Wernicke's areas, which are used by speech and sign language (Xu, J., Gannon, P. J., Emmorey, K., Smith, J. F., \& Braun, A. R., 2009). Beattie (2004) proposed a categorization for different gesture types. This classification includes Emblems, Iconic gestures, Metaphoric gestures, Regulators, Affect displays, and Beat gestures.

Another form of nonverbal communications are facial expressions which can be adopted by humans voluntarily or involuntarily. The eyes are often viewed as important features of facial expressions. Aspects such as blinking rate can be used to indicate whether or not a person is nervous or whether or not he or she is lying. Also, eye contact is considered an important aspect of interpersonal communication. However, there are cultural differences regarding the social propriety of maintaining eye contact or not.

### 2.2 Verbal realization of lies

It has been noted by Matthew L. Newman, James W. Pennebaker, Diane S. Berry, and Jane M. Richards (2003) that linguistic style of speech, such as pronoun use, emotionally toned words, and prepositions are linked to a number of behavioral and emotional outcomes. Consequently, it can be inferred that lying has a special language so it can be distinguished from truth. Knapp and Comadena (1979) investigated the verbal and non-verbal characteristics of liars. They revealed that deceivers would exhibit significantly more uncertainty, vagueness, nervousness, reticence, dependence, and unpleasantness than would non-deceivers. In the same vein, Newman et al. (2003) examined the linguistic manifestations of false stories. They showed that compared to truth-tellers, liars show lower cognitive complexity, use fewer self-references and otherreferences, and use more negative emotion words.

Regarding previously done research, some issues need to be studied more. It is worth noting that there has been little if any research on verbal and non-verbal realizations of lying. On the other hand, since kinesthetic is culturally determined, results of this study would be different from the preceding studies. Further, shedding light on the underlying reasons of telling lies could be of prime importance in detecting liars.

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Therefore, this study is an attempt to investigate the phenomena of white lies telling by adult Iranians in their daily interactions. Hence, the purpose of this study is two-folds: first to investigate the psycho-socio motivational elements that underlie the use of white lies by adult Iranians using the classification of Camden et al. (1984). Secondly, to see how white lies are verbally and nonverbally realized.

Accordingly, this study is an attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

1) What reasons underlie lying?
2) How white lies are verbally realized?
3) Does gender, age, and education level affect verbal realization of white lies?

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Participants

A total 156 adults, participated in this study. Their age ranged from 19 to 53 with the mean of 28.63. Most of them were educated and holding academic degrees. Table 1 shows their demographic information. The participants were chosen from western provinces of Iran. They were native Kurdish but speak Persian as their second language. The DCT was administered first to participants, who were asked to write specific responses to the 20 situations presented. Afterwards, they were asked to respond to questionnaire items in which they have to rate the motivations, which most likely drove them to use white lies in the DCT.

Table1. Demographic Information

| Gender |  | Job |  |  |  | Marital Status |  |  | Education |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Male | Female | No <br> job | Student | Teacher | Business | Single | Married | Diploma | BA | MA |
| 61.5 | 38.5 | 15.4 | 23.1 | 30.8 | 30.8 | 69.5 | 30.8 | 38.5 | 23.1 | 38.5 |

Note: Numbers are in Percent

### 3.2 Instrument

Two types of data instruments are used: questionnaires (quantitative) and DCT (quantitative). This is done in order to enhance the reliability and validity of the collected data and the validity of the researcher's interpretations. The questionnaire consists of 11 items which try to investigate the underlying reasons of white-lie telling. The design of the questionnaire of factors behind lies is based on Camden's classification. The DCT consists of 20 situations covering the verbal realization of lying.

### 3.3 Procedure

The questionnaire and DCT were distributed among participants in February 2015. The collected data were entered into SPSS software for further analysis. Descriptive statistics, frequency, and ANOVA were run to analyze the data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The DCT represents the first instrument for collecting the data needed for the qualitative analysis of telling lies. The DCT includes twenty social situations, which were designed to drive participants to use lies in their expected responses. These social situations cover a variety of social events/acts stated in an elaborated fashion to cover the description of the setting, participants involved, relationship among participants, social distance, and a clearly stated goal-oriented question to elicit the desired responses. Moreover, participants were asked to read the situational prompts and then reflect for few seconds before they deliver their responses. Furthermore, the situations were structured to present a variety of either face saving or face enhancing self and others' image.

Analyzing the responses of participants, we found 10 dominant verbal realizations used in telling lies including: Excuse, Apology, Praising, Hesitation, Flattering, Joking, Exaggeration, Swear, Playing with words, and Getting others witnessing. These strategies are frequently used

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to deceive others. Table 2 and 3 show the frequency of each strategy and realization in different situations. As it can be seen the most frequent strategy was giving excuse. People most of the times try to justify their faults using unreal or deceiving excuses. As an example, I stuck in traffic, I have a guest, My grandfather was in hospital that day, I had a phone call, etc.

Table 2. Frequency of different strategies

|  | $\begin{gathered} \text { Excu } \\ \text { se } \end{gathered}$ | Apolo <br> gy | Praisi ng | Hesitati on | Flatteri ng | $\begin{gathered} \text { Joki } \\ \text { ng } \end{gathered}$ | Exaggerat ion | Swe ar | Playi <br> ng <br> with <br> word <br> s | Getting others witnessi ng |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | - | 7.7 | 69.2 | - | - |  | - | 7.7 | 15.4 | - |
| 3 | - | - | 15.4 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 38.5 | 7.7 | - | 23.1 | - |
| 4 | 53.8 | 46.2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | - | - | - | - |  | - | 30.8 | 69.2 | - | - |
| 6 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | 30.8 | 38.5 | - | - | 15.4 | - | 15.4 | - | - | - |
| 8 | 30.8 | 23.1 | - | - | - | - | 15.4 | - | - | 30.8 |
| 9 | - | - | - | 15.4 | 7.7 | 23.1 | - | 30.8 | 23.1 | - |
| 10 | - | - | - | - | - | 38.5 | - | - | 61.5 | - |
| 11 | 38.5 | 61.5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12 | 23.1 | 30.8 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7.7 | 38.5 |
| 13 | 46.2 | 53.8 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14 | - | - | - | - | - | 30.8 | 30.8 | 38.5 | - | - |
| 15 | 30.8 | 15.4 | - | 23.1 | - | 15.4 | - | 15.4 | - | - |
| 16 | - | - | - | - | 23.1 | - | 7.7 | 69.2 | - | - |
| 17 | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 18 | 30.8 | - | 38.5 | - | 15.4 | - | 15.4 | - | - | - |
| 19 | 53.8 | 23.1 | - | - | - | 23.1 | - | - | - | - |
| 20 | - | 46.2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 53.8 |
| $\begin{gathered} \text { Mea } \\ \mathrm{n} \end{gathered}$ | 26.93 | 17.315 | 11.155 | 2.31 | 3.465 | 8.47 | 6.16 | $\begin{gathered} 11.5 \\ 4 \end{gathered}$ | 6.54 | 6.155 |
| Note: Numbers are in Percent |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 3. Frequency of the most frequent realizations

| Most frequent realizations | Frequency |
| :--- | :--- |
| I stuck in traffic | $102(65 \%)$ |
| I have guest | $89(57 \%)$ |
| My grandfather was in hospital that day | $60(38 \%)$ |
| I had a phone call | $80(51 \%)$ |
| I am sorry, I don't have any money | $76(48 \%)$ |
| I swear that it is not of much profit for me | $85(54 \%)$ |
| You are the best teacher I've ever seen | $40(25 \%)$ |

The second frequent strategy to make the lie more truth-like, was using apologies. When somebody is asked for money, if he doesn't like to lend, he will use apology to tell a white lie (e.g.

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I am sorry I don't have any money). As far as Iranian culture is full of compliments, using apology plays the role of a cover to make the lie more believable.

The third frequent strategy was swearing. The religion of our participants was Islam. In Islam swearing to God is a confirmation that the speakers is telling the truth. But unfortunately, nowadays people hide their lies behind swearing. This strategy is mostly used by businessman and those who are selling cars (e.g. I swear that it is not of much profit for me). Despite the punishment specified in Islam for those who swear to God when lying, people are frequently using this strategy.

Praising was the fourth frequent strategy used by respondents. They used praising to wheedle their addressee. It was used mostly when talking to somebody in a higher social class, for instance students praise their professors to get more scores (e.g. you are the best teacher I've ever seen).

Joking, playing with words, and getting others witnessing were other strategies to cover the lies. Although there was a difference in using each of them by different education levels, their general frequency were the same.

An ANOVA was run to see if there is a significant difference among different levels of education and lying strategy use (table 3). Except for five situations (Q2, Q3, Q5, Q14, and Q15), the ANOVA output was significant for the remaining 15 situations showing a meaningful difference in strategies used by people of different education levels. More educated participants preferred more to use Apology, Joking, and Playing with words while less educated ones preferred using Excuse and Swearing. A T-test was also run to see if there is a significant difference between genders. Results show that there is a significant difference between male's and female's use of strategies (Sig. 2-tailed= 0.042). Females lie to protect their basic needs and self-esteem. Males in contrast were more likely to use white lies to protect other's self-esteem and emotional needs especially at the level of intimate relations. Moreover, females were found to use lies more than males. It supports the traditional view that females use white lies more than males (Camden et al., 1984).

Table 3. ANOVA analysis

|  | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Q1 | 2 | . 000 | . | . |
| Q2 | 2 | 9.769 | 1.435 | . 246 |
| Q3 | 2 | 7.641 | 1.283 | . 285 |
| Q4 | 2 | 4.410 | 37.287 | . 000 |
| Q5 | 2 | . 256 | 1.192 | . 310 |
| Q6 | 2 | . 000 | . | . |
| Q7 | 2 | 113.641 | 91.109 | . 000 |
| Q8 | 2 | 67.026 | 6.190 | . 004 |
| Q9 | 2 | 104.333 | 90.682 | . 000 |
| Q10 | 2 | 30.769 | . | . |
|  | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Q11 | 2 | 3.692 | 28.615 | . 000 |
| Q12 | 2 | 39.641 | 2.840 | . 066 |
| Q13 | 2 | 3.077 | 19.077 | . 000 |
| Q14 | 2 | 1.641 | 2.462 | . 094 |
| Q15 | 2 | 1.923 | . 291 | . 749 |
| Q16 | 2 | 2.564 | 11.923 | . 000 |
| Q17 | 2 | . 000 | . | . |
| Q18 | 2 | 36.923 | 11.446 | . 000 |
| Q19 | 2 | 93.564 | 16.995 | . 000 |

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Q20
2
216.103
37.287

A correlation was also conducted to see the relationship between different strategy use and participant's age. The Pearson coefficient was .105 which was not significant (Sig. 2-tailed: .406). It can be concluded that age doesn't affect people's lying. This is not in accord with Feldman et al. (1979) that claimed children are not as effective at deceiving as adults because they have less control over their nonverbal behavior and because they are less able to see their own behavior from the point of view of a lie detector. The reason may be due to the age group of our participants. Since they were all adults, this finding is not so much unexpected.

The second part of our instrument was dedicated to investigate the motivations behind telling lies. It was consisted of ten Likert scale questions. As indicated in table 5 participants most often lie to avoid embarrassment, Help a dear friend avoid embarrassment and/or punishment, and protect basic needs, save other's lives were the other most frequent motivations. It is in accord with the findings of Turner et al. (1975). It was interesting that only 10.4 percent of our subjects chose justify cheating, betraying and deceiving others as their reason of lying. It was more interesting that 9.1 percent of them were businessman.

Table 5. Percentage of each motivation
Agree Disagree

| 1 | To protect your basic needs | 76.9 | 23.1 |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 2 | To refuse commands or requests | 61.5 | 38.5 |
| 3 | To manipulate environment | 52.5 | 47.8 |
| 4 | To avoid self-disclosure during conversation | 69.2 | 30.8 |
| 5 | To avoid embarrassment | 88.2 | 11.8 |
| 6 | To either eliminate or initiate intimate relations | 52.8 | 47.2 |
| 7 | To save other's lives and possessions | 76.9 | 23.1 |
| 8 | To justify cheating, betraying and deceiving others | 10.4 | 89.6 |
| 9 | To help a dear friend avoid embarrassment and/or <br> punishment | 78.2 | 21.8 |
| 10 | To manipulate others' attitudes | 53.8 | 64.2 |

Confirming the results of the DCT, the $t$-test of gender and motivation showed a significant difference in motivations behind male's and female's lies. Camden et al. (1984) asserted that females significantly tend to use white lies to satisfy affiliation needs more than men. This research is consistent with this finding because participating females in this study used white lies to reduce relational conflict and avoid conflict more than men. Women told significantly more other-oriented lies than did men and significantly fewer self-centered lies.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the phenomena of white lies telling by adult Iranians in their daily interactions. Some common strategies of lying were found to be dominant among others. Giving excuses, over-apologizing, and false swearing were dominantly used by liars. Potential motivations behind lying were also investigated in this study. Lying to avoid embarrassment of self or others, to protect basic needs and possessions of self, save other's lives, and refusing requests were the most powerful motivations for lying. Slight differences between sexes were found in the ways of lying and the background motivations. Women were found to lie more than men. Females lie to protect their basic needs and self-esteem. On the other hand males were more likely to use white lies to protect other's self-esteem and emotional needs especially at the level of intimate relations.

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Education was also a predictive factor of lying. Results show that there is a significant difference in lies of those holding academic degrees and those who do not. More educated ones are less willing to use lies and even they are forced to lie, they tend to apology and play with words and rather than swearing or giving excuses. They know that excuses are not always acceptable.

This study was conducted to explore the reasons and verbal realization of lying. More studies can be done on the ways how to detect lies from truth. The limitation on the size of participants of this study would limit the generalizability of the findings.

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# WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH AMONG IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS 

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#### Abstract

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ON THE DETERMINANTS THAT CAN EXPEDITE OR HINDER LEARNERS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONTEXTS. THOUGH THE LITERATURE IS ABUNDANT WITH STUDIES ON MANY OF THESE VARIABLES, LITTLE IF ANY CAN BE FOUND TO HAVE TARGETED EFL STUDENTS OF PRIVATE INSTITUTES IN IRAN. AN EFFORT WAS MADE IN THIS STUDY TO EXAMINE THE SIMULTANEOUS IMPACT OF ANXIETY, SELF-CONFIDENCE, COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, AND INTERNATIONAL POSTURE ON 194 IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE. . TO THIS END, A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING ANALYSIS WAS USED TO EXAMINE THE PROPOSED MODEL OF THE STUDY. THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THEIR PERCEIVED LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE. THE STUDY CONCLUDES WITH CERTAIN PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS.


KEYWORDS: WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE, ANXIETY, COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, INTERNATIONAL POSTURE, EFL STUDENTS

## 1. Introduction:

Since the goal of second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning is to facilitate better communication and understanding between individuals who come from different cultural backgrounds and different languages, MacIntyre, Clément, Do"rnyei, and Noels (1998) emphasized communicative goals using the conceptual model of willingness to communicate (WTC). In this regard L2 proficiency is not considered as the ultimate goal of L2 learning but is seen as a means to achieve interpersonal/intercultural goals. Both state and trait variables, including self-confidence, intergroup motivation, intergroup attitudes, and personality, were shown to affect one's WTC in the L2 in a given situation. Contextual variables, such as when and where and to whom one is communicating, also affects ones desire to initiate and maintain communication.

Willingness to communicate is defined as a learner's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). As Do"rnyei (2003) points out, competence in the L2 may not be enough. Learners need to be not only able to communicate but also willing to communicate in the L2. Research has shown that a learner's WTC influences how frequently the learner actively engages in communicating in the L2

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(Clément et al., 2003; Yashima et al., 2004). Thus MacIntyre et al. (1998) propose that WTC in L2 should be conceptualized as the primary goal of language instruction and as a comprehensive conceptual framework to describe, explain and predict L 2 communication behavior.

Regarding previously done studies various linguistic, communicative, and social variables affect WTC. "These variables include state of communicative self-confidence, desire to communicate with a specific person; self-confidence, intergroup and interpersonal motivation; communicative competence, social attitudes, and intergroup attitudes; and personality and intergroup climate." (Ghonsooly et al., 2012) (pp. 198)

Language and communication are cultural matters. McCroskey and Richmond (1990) suggested that the relationship between WTC and other variables might be different from one culture to another. Studies of WTC have been conducted in Australia (Barraclough, Christophel, \& McCroskey, 1988), Sweden, (McCroskey, Burroughs, Daun, \& Richmond, 1990), Micronesia (Burroughs \& Marie, 1990; Burroughs, Marie, \& McCroskey, 2003), Finland (Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey, \& Richmond, 1991), Korea (Kim, 2004), and Japan (Matsuoka, 2005; Yashima, 2002), China (Wen \& Clément, 2003; Hsu, 2005), but few have been done in Iran (Ghonsooly et al., 2012; Zarrinabadi \& Abdi, 2011; Barjesteh et al., 2012). Most of this studies have been conducted in settings where English is learned as a second language while according to Oxford \& Shearin (1994) the differences between second language and foreign language settings could highly affect language learners. Those studies which have been done in Iran were aiming at investigating some variables which are not of interest in this study. The current study investigates L2 WTC among Iranian English learners who study English as a foreign language in private institutes.

Accordingly, the present study is an attempt to investigate the relationships among the variables which are believed to affect WTC in English among Iranian EFL students. These factors include language anxiety, self-confidence, perceived communicative competence, and international posture.

The objectives of the study are: 1) Examine the relationships among Anxiety, self-confidence, International posture, Communicative competence, and WTC. 2) Create a model using the mentioned variables.

The research questions of the study are:

1. What are the relationships among anxiety, self-confidence, international posture, communicative competence, and L2WTC?
2. To what extend each of mentioned variables affect L2WTC?

## 2. Review of the Literature

### 2.1. Language Anxiety

Learning has two main domains: Affective and Cognitive (Brown, 1994). Anxiety as an affective feature of learning is defined by MacIntyre (1998) as a feeling of worry and emotional reaction that arises while learning. Rachman, (1998) defines anxiety as the tense, unsettling anticipation of a threatening but vague event, a feeling of uneasy suspense. Spielberger (1983, p.15) defines anxiety as "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with the arousal of the nervous system". Generally we can say that anxiety is an uneasy feeling caused by something threatening. It is a type of performance problem like when some people get nervous trying new things. According to a variety of researchers (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz, \& Cope, 1986; MacIntyre \& Gardner, 1989, 1991a, 1991b), foreign language anxiety can be a predictor of success in learning the foreign language. It can be said that those

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students with relaxed personal conditions are benefiting from the second language class more than the anxious students. During this period of anxiety students go through feelings of worry and dread, have trouble concentrating, sweat, experience heart palpitations, and become forgetful. These psycho-physiological symptoms hinder the language learning experience (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Horwitz (1986) developed The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to assess three components of anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The relationship between communication apprehension, which is directly related to oral communication anxiety, and WTC has been investigated in many studies and all of them have shown that there is a negative relationship between L2WTC and anxiety (Gardner \& MacIntyre, 1993; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre \& Clément, 1996; Yashima, 2002; Ghonsooly et al., 2012). So, those are less anxious are more willing to communicate in L2.

### 2.2. Confidence in L2 communication

One of the personal factors, which is highly correlated with anxiety, is self-confidence. Selfconfidence involves judgments and evaluations about one's own value and worth. It can also be positively correlated with oral performance (Heyde, 1979). Two kinds of self-confidence, state and trait-like self-confidence have been defined by McIntyre (1998). State self-confidence, which is the interest of this study, is a momentary feeling of confidence, which may be transient within a given situation. Studies continuously indicated negative relationship between learners' selfperception of their communicative competence and anxiety (Cheng, Horwitz, Schallert, 1999; MacIntyre, Noels, Clement, 1997; Noels, Pon, Clement, 1996; Clement, Dornyei, Noels, 1994; Clement, Gardner, Smythe, 1980). Clement (1980) maintains that one's self-confidence in his language ability and his anxiety level can better predict his language achievement and consequently his language use. Revealed by Clement's study (1986) with Francophone students in Canada, self-confidence is positively associated with the oral language production of students. He also indicated that students' self-confidence is related to integrativeness and inter-ethnic contact.

### 2.3. Perceived Communicative Competence

Communicative competence refers to language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. A survey of communicative competence by Bachman (1990) divides it into the broad headings of "organizational competence," which includes both grammatical and discourse (or textual) competence, and "pragmatic competence," which includes both sociolinguistic and "illocutionary" competence. Research in WTC have shown the importance of a person's perception of her/his communication competence (McCroskey \& McCroskey, 1986; McCroskey \& Richmond, 1985), so those who perceive themselves as competent are more willing to engage in communication. In this regard, communicative competence is believed to greatly affect WTC. Several researchers (Hashimoto, 2002; Matsuoka, 2005; Yashima, 2002) investigated the relation between perceived communicative competence, WTC, and anxiety in university students. Results revealed the positive relationship between perceived communicative competence and WTC and negative relationship between perceived communicative competence and anxiety. Ghonsooly et al. (2012), following Clément (1980, 1986), considered L2 selfconfidence as anxiety and perceived communicative competence. His study showed that as anxiety decreases perceived communicative competence increases, and WTC increases too.

### 2.4. Willingness to communicate

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Willingness to communicate can be defined as the probability of engaging in communication (McCroskey \& Baer, 1985). It is the desire to speak in the second or foreign language. The concept of WTC was first introduced with reference to first or native language. It was brought into communication literature by McCroskey and Richmond (1987). McCroskey and his associates suggested that WTC reflected a stable predisposition to talk, which was relatively consistent across a variety of communication contexts and types of receivers. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998) "it is highly unlikely that WTC in the second language is a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1" (p. 546). Accordingly, WTC in second language (L2WTC) was defined as a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a second language. MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed a heuristic model of the WTC construct with an account of linguistic, communicative, and social psychological variables that might affect one's WTC in a second language communication context. The model proposes various potential influences on willingness to communicate in a second language. As it can be seen in Figure 1, three layers of influences represent situation- specific influences and three layers represent stable, enduring influences on second language communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Figure 1: Pyramid Model of WTC (waiting for permission from McIntyre)


Willingness to communicate subsumes all the other variables represented in the triangle and is a readiness to speak in a second language. Those who have a higher WTC are predicted to use the second language more often. Willingness to communicate implies a greater likelihood of using a second language (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Studies on WTC have shown that WTC is predictor of classroom participation in L1 (Chan \& McCroskey, 1987) and the initiation of communication in L1 (MacIntyre, Babin, \& Clement, 1999) and L2 (MacIntyre \& Carre, 2000). Therefore, willingness to communicate, which was suggested as the final intention to really initiate a communication, held a great value in the research of second and foreign language learning and instruction. (cf. McCroskey \& Baer, 1985).

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Tannenbaum and Tahar (2008) examined willingness to communicate among Jewish and Arab students of Israel. They found out that "the more favorable the participants' attitudes toward the TL, the higher their WTC in this language both inside and outside the classroom." (pp. 287) They also showed that WTC outside the classroom is significantly lower than inside the classroom. Similarly, in Iran, Zarrinabadi and Abdi (2011) studied 67 intermediate university EFL students' WTC. Results show that language orientations are more correlated with willingness to communicate outside than inside the classroom.

In another study on Iranian students' WTC, Barjesteh, H., Vaseghi, R., \& Neissi, S. (2012) indicated that learners are much more willing to communicate in group discussions and meetings with friends than other situations. They conclude that Iranian students are willing to initiate communication in situations experienced before, like group discussion or communicating with their friends.

Research in WTC is not limited only to EFL students. As such, Ghonsooly et al. (2012), investigated WTC among Iranian non-English major university students. His research participants were chosen among students of humanities (Arabic language and literature, social sciences, and geography) and Engineering students (computer, electronic, mechanic, industrial, and chemistry engineering). The results showed that L2 self-confidence and attitudes toward international community were two predictors of L2WTC in Iranian context. He has also suggested to investigate WTC among Iranian EFL students.

### 2.5. Attitude toward the International Community-International Posture

Learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards the languages (Starks \& Paltridge, 1996). Karahan (2007, p.84) states that "positive language attitudes let learners have positive orientation towards learning English". Consequently, the important role of attitude in language learning would influence the success or failure of students in their learning.

Attitude is of two kinds: positive and negative. A person with positive attitude toward a behavior has a strong positive belief in that behavior to the extent that positive consequences will arise. However, those with negative attitude toward a behavior have wrong beliefs about that behavior from which negatively valued consequences will result. According to Krashen (2007, p. 84) those with positive attitude have positive orientation toward learning English. Consequently attitude can play an important role in success or failure of students. As mentioned by McIntyre (1998) social situation is a factor affecting students WTC. A research has been done on Iranian non-EFL students by Ghonsooly et al. (2012) but no study has been done on EFL students. Accordingly this study will be done on Iranian EFL students.

In classifying attitude, Gardner (1985) considers it as a component of motivation in language learning. He states, "motivation refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (p. 10). However, Wenden (1991) proposed a broader definition of the concept "attitudes". He states that the term attitudes includes three components namely, cognitive, affective and behavioral. A cognitive component is made up of the beliefs and ideas or opinions about the object of the attitude. The affective one refers to the feeling and emotions that one has towards an object, 'likes' or 'dislikes', 'with' or 'against'. Finally, the behavioral component refers to one's consisting actions or behavioral intentions towards the object (ibid).

International posture is defined as a desire to learn English to communicate with the world. It is a general attitude towards the international community that "influences motivation [in learning a second language], which, in turn, predicts proficiency and second language communication confidence" (Yashima, 2002, p. 63). In community which English is not spoken as a daily language, learners do not have a clear affective reaction to a specific L2 group.


They might learn English to be able to communicate with those who are living abroad, for example United States or other English speaking countries.

Therefore, several studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between international posture and L2WTC. International posture is shown to be one of the significant direct predictors of L2WTC (Matsuoka, 2005; Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, \& Shimizu, 2004). On the other hand, international posture can be considered an important affective cultural construct (Piggin, 2010). Accordingly, the results can be different in Iranian culture.

## 3. The Proposed Model

Based on previous studies the following hypothesized model is to be tested in this study. According to Yashima (2002) a path from International posture to L2 WTC is hypothesized. Proposed by McIntyre (1994) a path can be drawn from communicative competence to L2WTC. According to Yashima (2004) anxiety affects L2 communication confidence and confidence in turn affects L2 WTC. Another path is hypothesized from perceived communicative competence to L2 communication confidence (Ghonsooly, 2012).

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Subjects

A sample of 194 learners participated in the current study. They were high-intermediate (140 learners) and advanced level (54) EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students of four prominent private language institutes in Sanandaj, a city in west of Iran. They included 113 females and 81 males whose age varied from 16 to 28 . They were studying English language from 3 to 15 years.
4.2 Instruments

Questionnaires will be distributed among them to collect data needed for the study. Four questionnaires are employed in this study. Communication Anxiety Inventory, Communicative Competence Scale, Willingness to communicate scale, and international posture scale will be used to collect data for the study.

Willingness to Communicate: Twelve items (Cronbach's alpha $=.94$ ) from McCroskey (1992) were used to assess participants willingness to communicate in English in terms of the communication context (public speaking, talking in meetings, group discussions, and interpersonal conversations) and types of receivers (stranger, acquaintance, and friend). The respondents chose the percentage of the time ranging from $0 \%$ to $100 \%$ that they would be willing to communicate in each case.

Perceived Communication Competence: Twelve items (Cronbach's alpha $=.95$ ) used by Yashima (2002) and MacIntyre and Charos (1996) were utilized to assess the extent to which the respondents feel confident communicating in English. The respondents self-evaluated their English competence by selecting a number ranging from $0 \%$ (entirely incompetent) to $100 \%$ (entirely competent). In this scale, the context and receivers of communication were the same with the WTC scale.

Communication Anxiety: This was measured by twelve items (Cronbach's alpha $=.93$ ) used by Yashima (2002). The respondents self-assessed their communication anxiety in English by indicating a percentage between $0 \%$ (do not feel anxiety at all) and $100 \%$ (always feel anxiety). The items covered the same context of communication and receivers as WTC and Perceived Communication Competence scales.

International posture inventory included following three sub categories:
Approach-Avoidance Tendency: Seven items (Cronbach's alpha $=.77$ ) adapted from Yashima (2002) were used to measure the respondents' tendency to approach or avoid Englishspeaking foreigners. Again, students indicated their degree of agreement on a 5-point scale by choosing a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

Interest in International Vocation/Activities: Six items (Cronbach's alpha $=.62$ ) adopted from Yashima (2002) were used to measure the degree of interest that a respondent showed in having an international career or living abroad. The respondents recorded their ratings on a 5point scale by choosing a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). An example item is "I want to live in a foreign country."

Interest in Foreign Affairs: Two items (Cronbach's alpha $=.80$ ) adopted from Yashima (2002) were used to measure the respondents' interest in international matters. An example item is "I often read and watch news about foreign countries." Again, students indicated their degree of agreement on a 5 -point scale by choosing a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

Self-Confidence: this scale is a standardized scale currently used by psychologists of Office of Education in counselling centers of Sanandaj. It consists of 25 items to assess the selfconfidence level of subjects. The reliability index (Cronbach's alpha) for this questionnaire is .92 .

All the questionnaires, except for self-confidence scale which was originally in Persian, were translated into Persian. The items of each inventory were first translated into Persian and then were back translated to ensure the conceptual equivalence of the translated versions of the scales with their main version. Slight modifications were made in the items of the scales to make them
more proper to use in the Iranian EFL context. The Cronbach's alpha for the Persian translation of questionnaire is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: reliability of Persian version of scales

|  | Anxiety |  | $\begin{array}{c}\text { International } \\ \text { Posture }\end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{c}\text { Communicative } \\ \text { Competence }\end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{c}\text { Willingness } \\ \text { to } \\ \text { Communicate }\end{array}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | \(\left.\begin{array}{c}Self <br>

Confidence\end{array}\right] .92\)

### 4.3. Procedure and Data Analysis

The administrators and principals of the four private language institutes were contacted to obtain permission for conducting the research project. They were first asked about the nature of the classes to ensure that learners enrolling in the four language institutes follow general communicative purposes. The participants were then asked to complete the questionnaires. The data collection began in January 2015 and ended in February 2015.

The gathered data were first converted into a computer file via SPSS version 22. Then the data were screened and cleaned to gain a fully-crossed dataset (a prerequisite for structural equation modeling analysis). The first analysis step was checking correlations among the variables using Pearson correlation coefficient. The second step involved the examination of the structural model comprising of the variables of the study which was carried out via AMOS version 22. Before running the structural model, measurement models were examined to check the validity of the linkage between the latent and observed variables. Eight intra-scale correlational paths were drawn between the items in order to satisfy the basic validity requirements of the model.

After running the structural model, certain fitness criteria were consulted to investigate the goodness of fit of our model to the data. The first consulted evaluative criterion was chi-square value. Despite being commonly reported in SEM studies, the statistical use of this value is believed to be in question as it is largely affected by the sample size. Apart from chi-square, chisquare to degree of freedom ratio ( $\mathrm{x}^{2} / \mathrm{df}$ ) and other overall model fit criteria were also consulted. For $x^{2} /$ df a value smaller than 3 is assumed to be statistically acceptable (Skaalvik \& Skaalvik, 2009). The overall consulted model fit indices included goodness of fit index (GFI), root mean square of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tukerlewis index (TLI), and normal fit index (NFI). For all these indices except RMSEA, values larger than 0.90 on a scale of zero to one, are considered to be good. As for RMSEA, a value below .05 is considered to be a good index of model fit (Bentler, 2007).

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Correlational Analysis

Table 2 reports the correlations among the main variables of the study. As demonstrated, L2 communication anxiety is negatively correlated with other four variables. The correlation for WTC and self-confidence, WTC and international posture, and WTC and communicative competence were $.446, .447$, and .501 respectively. They were all significant at $p<.01$. Correlations between anxiety and WTC was -.502. Anxiety was also negatively correlated with international posture (-.323), self-confidence (-.493), and communicative competence (-.328). Table 1 also demonstrates the correlation between international posture and self-confidence (.290), international posture and communicative competence (.337), and self-confidence and communicative competence (.372). All the correlations were significant at $\mathrm{p}<.01$.

Table 2
Correlations among measured variables.

| Variables | Self <br> Confidence | WTC | Anxiety | International <br> Posture | Communicative <br> Competence |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Self Confidence | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| WTC | $.446^{* *}$ | 1 |  |  |  |
| Anxiety | $-.493^{* *}$ | $-.502^{* *}$ | 1 |  |  |
| International Posture | $.290^{* *}$ | $.447^{* * *}$ | $-.323^{* *}$ | 1 |  |
| Communicative <br> Competence | $.372^{* * *}$ | $.501^{* *}$ | $-.328^{* * *}$ | $.337^{* * *}$ | 1 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

### 5.2. Structural Model Analysis

Figure 3 demonstrates the final structural model of the study with standardized path coefficients. As can be seen in Table 3, the chi-square is significant, indicating insufficient model fit. But as noted earlier, chi-square is highly affected by the sample size. To solve this problem, chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ( $\mathrm{x}^{2} / \mathrm{df}$ ) is consulted, which in case of our study displays a value (2.27) below the acceptable level of 3 ; furthermore, all the selected model fit indices show very good levels. Thus, it can be concluded that the final version of this model is an acceptable representation of our dataset concerning the measured variables. As indicated, all the hypothesized paths came out to be significant in different levels which is in accord with the literature (McIntyre, 1994; Yashima, 2002; Yashima, 2004; Ghonsooly, 2012). These paths were international posture $\rightarrow$ L2WTC, L2 self-confidence $\rightarrow$ L2 WTC, anxiety $\rightarrow$ L2 self-confidence, communicative competence $\rightarrow$ L2WTC, communicative competence $\rightarrow$ L2 self-confidence. All these paths were significant at $\mathrm{p}<.001$ level.

Two new correlational paths were found to be significant in this study. The first and more powerful one was a two-headed path between communicative competence and international posture. It can be concluded that international posture motivates students to improve their language knowledge and on the other hand those who are more powerful in language have more tendencies to go abroad. Another correlational path which came out to be significant in this study was the correlation between communicative competence and anxiety. As far as the factor loading value is negative, we can say that anxious students are less competent in English language and vice versa. Although it is already discussed by Hoshimoto (2002) that anxiety affects perceived communicative competence, here in this study it we found that perceived communicative competence affects anxiety in the same way that anxiety affects perceived communicative competence. Consequently, the path between these two variables is a two headed correlational path. These two paths were significant at $\mathrm{p}<.01$ level.


Fig. 3: The final model of willingness to communicate.
Note: WILL: Willingness to Communicate; INTP: International Posture; CMPT:
Communicative Competence; ANX: Anxiety
Flagged path coefficient indicates the level of significance. ** $\mathrm{p}<.01, * * * \mathrm{p}<.001$.

As it is shown in table 3, all other indices, except for chi-square value, came out to be in an acceptable level suggesting a good model fit for our data. Overall, it can be said that the final structural model of the present study gives us a proper picture of the data and the measured variables of the study.

Table 3: Fitness measures for the final model

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| Index | Obtained level | Accepted level | Evaluation |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\mathbf{X}^{\mathbf{2}}$ | $\mathrm{p}<.05$ | $\mathrm{P}>.05$ | Poor |
| $\mathbf{X}^{\mathbf{2}} \mathbf{d f}$ | 2.27 | $<3$ | Very good |
| GFI | .94 | $>.90$ | Very good |
| NFI | .93 | $>.90$ | Very good |
| RFI | .92 | $>.90$ | Very good |
| IFI | .95 | $>.90$ | Very good |
| TLI | .94 | $>.90$ | Very good |
| CFI | .96 | $>.90$ | Very good |
| RMSEA | .039 | $<.05$ | Good |

Note: GFI: Goodness of Fit Index; NFI: Normal Fit Index; IFI: Incremental Fit Index; RFI: Relative Fit Index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

## 6. Discussion

The results of the study provide several points to be discussed. First, the strongest predictor of WTC which is not in accord with the literature. The previous studies (Yashima, 2002; Clément, Baker, and MacIntyre, 2003; Ghonsooly, 2012) have founded L2 self-confidence as the stronger predictor of WTC but we L2 communicative competence is the strongest predictor of WTC. This seemingly inconsistent obtained finding is explicable in the light of the nature of our sample. The EFL learners in this study learned English in private language institutes. They were mostly teenagers who had a false self-confidence. Since the subjects of Ghonsooly (2012) was university non-EFL students and ours was private language institutes' students, it can be discussed that as far as university non-EFL students have to pass English courses as an obligatory course suggested by their university, are less confident in their abilities. As a resolution, students who have higher communicative competence are more willing to communicate in English than those who perceive their communicative competence as low.

Another significant path was that of international posture to WTC. As predicted, attitude toward intercultural communication or international interest directly influenced WTC in the L2. This finding is in line with the finding of Yashima (2002). It is not surprising that the more internationally oriented an individual was, the more willing he or she was to communicate in English. Such individuals are also more motivated to study English, and this leads them to improve their communicative competence. Consequently, a new correlational path between international posture and communicative competence appeared to be significant. Based on this path, it can be inferred that those who see themselves as competent language speakers, are more willing to integrate in international communication.

Another finding worthy of attention in the final model is the impact of communicative competence on L2 self-confidence. As it can be seen in the model, communicative competence affects WTC both directly and indirectly through L2 self-confidence. Based on the reviewed literature, communicative competence is one of the major predictors of L2 self-confidence (Yashima, 2012). Consequently, competent students felt a higher confidence in their abilities and this led to a higher willing to communicate in English. This finding supports the findings of Hashimoto (2002), Yashima (2012), Ghonsooly (2012).

The other path to be discussed is the correlational path between communicative competence and anxiety. It has been verified by Hashimoto (2002), Macintyre (1994), and Macintyre and Charos (1996) anxiety has a negative effect on communicative competence. As a new finding, we found out that communicative competence also has a negative effect an anxiety. As a result.

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Those who feel more competent in English language, are less anxious and consequently more confident. On the other hand, as far as the factor loading of this path is significant at $\mathrm{p}<0.01$ level, the validity and generalizability of this path need to be further investigated in future studies.

The negative effect of anxiety on L2 self-confidence has been confirmed by our model. This finding is in line with the previous studies (Macintyre, 1994; and Macintyre and Charos, 1996; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002; Ghonsooly, 2012). Regarding the literature, a path from selfconfidence to willingness to communicate appeared to be significant. So the more confident students are more willing to communicate in English. So it can be concluded that anxious students are less confident and consequently less willing to start or maintain communication.

The last but not least important path to be discussed is the correlational path between international posture and communicative competence. As noted earlier, there is no literature for this path and it is data-driven. The logic to justify this path can be related to the motivation of students. International posture as an attitude to integrate in international affairs motivates students to work on their English language capabilities and consequently become more competent in English. On the other hand, more competent students will become more interested in international communities. Since adding additional paths is regarded as exploratory, and datadriven, this path needs to be replicated and should be further investigated.

## 8. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship among different variables affecting WTC, including anxiety, L2 self-confidence, L2 communicative competence, and international posture. Unlike other studies in Iran which had targeted high school and university students, the sample of this study comprised of Iranian EFL learners learning English at private language institutes so the discrepancy between our findings and literature is not much surprising. Communicative competence was found to be the strongest predictor of L2WTC. The direct and indirect effect of communicative competence on WTC shows that by increasing communicative competence other predictors of WTC would change in a way to increase students' WTC.

Nonetheless, this study has some implications for teachers. One is that by increasing perceived competence and reducing language anxiety, the willingness to communicate may lead to more language use in the classroom. Creating a less threatening atmosphere to reduce anxiety and encouraging students to increase perceived competence may be effective in increasing willingness to communicate and frequency of L2 use in classrooms with Iranian ESL students.

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# SOME OF THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF USING COMPUTERS IN EDUCATION 

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#### Abstract

TODAY, THE COMPUTERS ARE UTILIZED AS A PART OF EACH FIELD AND HAVE FILLED OUR HEART WITH JOY, AS WE CAN COMPLETE THE DAY TO DAY ASSIGNMENTS VERY EASILY, YET THERE ARE A FEW FOCAL POINTS AND WEAKNESSES OF USING COMPUTERS .THE COMPUTER REVOLUTION IS BELIEVED TO BE MORE THAN JUST A TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND MAY CHANGE SOCIETY AS RADICALLY AS DID THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (AHMAD, CORBETT, ROGERS AND SUSSEX, 1985). AS A RESULT, KNOWING COMPUTER AND UTILIZING IT IN TEACHING LANGUAGE HAS FOUNDED ITSELF AS A SIGNIFICANT FEATURE OF LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFESSION IN MODERN EDUCATION. COMPUTER, INDEED, PROVIDES MANY ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES BOTH FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS. THAT IS WHY MANY LANGUAGE INSTITUTIONS, SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES NOW USE COMPUTERS IN DIFFERENT WAYS. UNFORTUNATELY MOST OFTEN, COMPUTER AND TEACHERS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE RIVALS, WHILE THEY SHOULD BE SEEN AS COMPLIMENTS TO EACH OTHER (KENNING \& KENNING, 1984). THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO MAKE LANGUAGE TEACHERS ACKNOWLEDGE THE PROS AND CONS OF USING TECHNOLOGY SO THAT THEY CAN MAKE THE MOST USE OF MODERN ONES TO ENHANCE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING.


KEY WORDS: CALL (COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING), ELTS (ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS)

## 1. Introduction

Education has taken on a new face with the advances in technology. The internet has opened up endless possibilities when it comes to making training available to anyone with a computer. Study materials are available online or through the mail in addition to more traditional class settings. Technology is wonderfully becoming highly significant in both our personal and professional lives, and our learners are using technology more and more. There is no doubt that technology in language learning is not new. Indeed, it has been around in language teaching for decades- one might argue for centuries, if we consider the blackboard as a form of technology. Tape recorders, language laboratories and videos have been in use since the 1960s and 1970s, and are still being used in classrooms around the world. Computer -based materials for language teaching, often referred to CALL (computer Assisted Language Learning), appeared in the early 1980s. Apart from its time and labor -saving function, technology can also give the idea of variety and bring new opportunities to people; connecting them to new thoughts and to people they otherwise might not have met. This increase in the availability of technology has led to an
explosion of interest in its use in the language classroom. In order for learning technology to be successful, it should be integrated into the curriculum (Graham Stanley, 2013). The main challenge in terms of keeping things fresh, especially in teaching has been getting a hold of new technology and mastering new technological things. Use of CALL for the teaching activities has become a widely acceptable way of knowledge transfer because of the flexibility and standardization of the overall educational process they offer. The main purpose of this paper is to make language teachers acknowledge the advantages and disadvantages of using computers so that they can make the most of efficiency of modern technology to enhance foreign language learning. One important issue to be discussed is that there are still many teachers need training to learn to use the basics of computer, navigating the internet and software programs that will allow them to create internet-based exercises or applications. Students are one step ahead their teachers when it comes to using computers. At the same time, the digital technologies era seems to belong to the young generation, and this is an important part that has to be considered and anticipated by the language teachers and needs as the same time to be turned into an advantage. There is no denying the fact that computers completely rule the life of average students in any corner of the world, whether it is in the form of hand-held devices, or printed textbooks. . Computers have become so widespread in schools and homes and their uses have expanded so dramatically that the majority of language teachers must now begin to think about the implications of computers for language learning. They have proved to be an asset in different sectors particularly education. Students enjoy activities that their teachers have gathered from on-line resources. It is also claimed that computer Assisted Language Learning and Teaching approach in language classes represents new ways of language teaching and learning which has a great impact on the learning of foreign language and consequently creates an ideal condition and environment which will facilitate learning (Hoven, 1999; Harrison, 1998; Holmes, 19998).

### 1.1. Definitions of CALL

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) was the expression agreed upon at the1983 TESOL convention in a meeting of all interested participants. This term is widely used to refer to the area of technology and second language teaching and learning despite the fact that revisions for the term are suggested regularly (Chappell, 2001). Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) may be defined as the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning (Levy, 1997). Given the breadth of what may go on in computer-assisted language learning (CALL)which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her definition of CALL that accommodates its changing nature is any process in language (Beatty, 2003) CALL has come to encompass issues of materials design, technologies, pedagogical theories and modes of instruction. Materials for CALL can include those which are purpose-made for language learning and those which adapt existing computer-based materials, video and other materials (Beatty, 2003)

### 1.2. Types of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)

The field of CALL involves the use of a computer in the language learning process. CALL programs
aim to teach aspects of the language learning process through the medium of the computer.
CALL
programs can be (and have been) developed for the many parts of the language learning process.
Some of
the factors that determine the characteristics of any CALL program include:
-the language taught,

- the language of instruction,
- the language writing system (both roman and non-roman character based),
- the level of the language to be taught (from absolute beginners to advanced),


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- what is to be taught (grammar, informal conversation and pronunciation) and
- how it is to be taught

Computers have been used for language teaching since the 1960.Computer -assisted language learning (CALL) is succinctly defined in a seminal work by Levy (1997) as "the search for study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". CALL embraces a wide range of information and communications technology applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages, from the "traditional" drill-and-practice programs that characterized CALL in the 1960s and 1970s to more recent manifestations of CALL, e.g. as used in a virtual learning environment and Web-based distance learning. It also extends to the use of concordances, interactive whiteboards, and Computer-mediated communication (CMC), language learning in virtual worlds, and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). The term CALI (computer-assisted language instruction) was in use before CALL, reflecting its origins as a subset of the general term CAI (computer-assisted instruction). CALI fell out of favor among language teachers, however, as it appeared to imply a teacher-centered approach (instructional), whereas language teachers are more inclined to prefer a student-centered approach, focusing on learning rather than instruction. CALL began to replace CALI in the early 1980s (Davies \& Higgins 1982) and it is now incorporated into the names of the growing number of professional associations worldwide (Adopted from Wikipedia the free encyclopedia). Development Computer assisted language learning (CALL) and teaching offers the language teacher and learner a lot of activities that, when carefully planned as part of lesson development, enable an easier and better understanding for Language learners. The role of the computer during classes as part of lesson development has known a few different stages of development and has nowadays become an integrative part of the language learning process. According to Barson and Debski in 1996 there has been a gradual development for computer assisted language learning (CALL).CALL has three different phases: which are referred to as behaviorist CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL (Barson \& Debski 1996)

### 1.1.2. Behaviorist CALL

Conceived in 1950s and implemented in 1970s.It is a sub-component of computer- assisted instruction. This mode of CALL featured repetitive language drills, also referred to as drill-and practice. This paradigm was popular in the United States; the computer was regarded as a tutor which never got tired and allowed students to work individually. Behaviorist CALL was first designed in the era of mainframe and the implemented to the personal computers. According to Ahmad, Corbett, Rogers and Sussex , 1985) PLATO was the best system which ran on its own special hardware consisting of a central computer and terminals and featured extensive drills, grammatical explanations, and translation tests at various interval. This type of CALL was based on the then-dominant behaviorist theories of learning.

### 1.2.2. Communicative CALL

Emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s when behavioristic approaches to language teaching were rejected at both theoretical and pedagogical level. Proponents of communicative CALL emphasized that computer-based activities should focus more on using forms rather than on the forms themselves. Teach grammar implicitly rather than explicitly, allow and encourage students to produce original sentences rather than just manipulate prefabricated language and use the target language predominantly or even exclusively (Jones \& Fortescue, 1987; Phillips, 1987; Underwood, 1984).Warschuer and Healey argue that communicative CALL corresponded to cognitive theories which focus on learning as a process of discovery ,expression, and development. Popular CALL software included text reconstruction programs (which allowed students to work alone or in groups to rearrange words and texts to discover patterns of language and meaning). Many of the proponents of the communicative CALL did not focus on
what students did with the machine, but rather what they did with each other while working at the computer. Although communicative CALL had priority over behavioristic CALL, it also came under criticism. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, critics pointed out that the computer was still being used in an ad hoc and disconnected fashion and thus 'finds itself making a greater contribution marginal rather than central elements' of language learning process (Kenning \& Kenning, 1990: 90). Warschauer (1996b) discusses that many teachers were moving away from a cognitive view of communicative teaching to a more social or socio-cognitive view, which placed greater emphasis on language use in authentic social context. Warschauer then adds that taskbased, project, and content-based approaches all sought to integrate learners in authentic environment, and also to integrate the various skills of language learning and use which led to a new perspective on technology and language learning which has been termed integrative CALL. It focuses more on using forms rather than on the forms themselves.

### 1.3.2. Integrative CALL

This is a perspective which seeks both to integrate various skills. (e.g. listening, speaking, reading , and writing) and also integrate technology more fully into the language learning process. In integrative approaches, students learn to use a variety of technological tools as an ongoing process of language learning to use, rather than visiting the computer lab on a once a week basis isolated exercises (whether the exercises are behavioristic or communicative). The mainframe of communicative CALL was behavioristic CALL. The PC the technology of communicative CALL, the multimedia networked computer is the technology of integrative CALL. The multimedia networked computer is the technology of integrative CALL. The multimedia networked computer is now available for almost majority of the students in the developed countries and provides possibilities for more integrated uses of technology as learning to read, write, and communicate via computer which has become an essential feature of modern life in the third millennium in the developed world. It is clear almost to anyone that many of the changes in CALL paradigms have originated from economic and social changes. As Warschauer and Healey (1998) argue, the shift to global information-based economies has meant a dramatic increase in the need to deal with large amount of information and to communicate across language and cultures. Consequently, teacher's roles have also changed with times and teachers are not the only sources of language information in the age of information. Warschauer and Healey also believe that as a result of the recent rapid political, social, and educational changes in the world, the teacher has become a facilitator of learning rather than the font of wisdom, and will find, select, and offer information in a variety of ways on the basis of what the students must learn in order to meet diverse needs.

## 2. Review of literature

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) technological and pedagogical development of CALL according to Warschauer and Healey (1998), "computers have been used for language teaching since the 1960s". This period can be divided into three main stages: Behaviorist CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL (Warschauer and Healey, 1998), or structural CALL, cognitive CALL, and Sociocognitive CALL (Kern \& Warschauer, 2000). During these three phases, the development of technology from mainframe computers to personal computers to networked computers paralleled in many ways the development of language teaching and learning theories (Kern \& Warschauer, 2000). Behaviorist CALL, or structural CALL was introduced in the 1960s and 1970s. At this period in time, computers were still room-sized and their disks were as big as the diameter of automobile wheels (Sanders, 1995). The programs used for language teaching were designed to teach through repetition and to check learners' responses to grammatical, vocabulary, or testing exercises and provide them with instant feedback on their answers. According to Kern \& Warschauer, this is "consistent with the structuralist approach, which emphasized that repeated drilling on the same materials was beneficial or even essential to
learning" The best example of this is the PLATO tutorial system at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, which was mainly used for grammar instruction, vocabulary drilling, and translation testing (Ahmed, Corbett, and Sussex, 1985). Communicative CALL or cognitive CALL was introduced in the 1970s and 1980s. In this era, mainframe computers were replaced by personal computers. Programs based on behaviorist learning theories were rejected for they generally were not successful to provide language learners with authentic communication.

New programs that facilitated communication such as "SimCity" or "Where in the World is Carmen San Diego" were used. This approach was in line with the communicative language approach, which views language as a system of communication. However, the game nature of some of these programs was considered a potential problem. The current stage is integrative CALL, or sociocognitive CALL, which started in the 1990s. This phase emphasizes the use of language in authentic language social contexts. According to Warschauer (1996), this stage is "based on two technological developments of the last decade-multimedia computers and the Internet." Warschauer points out that the multimedia technology represented by the CD-ROM allows the combination of various media such as sound, graphics, text, and video on one machine, which facilitates the integration of all four language skills. The advent of the Internet expanded the use of the computer into a medium for information processing as well as a medium for communication. Communicating via the computer can be either synchronous (e.g. chatting, conferencing, etc.), or asynchronous (e.g. email messages' bulletin boards). Synchronous communication, as Warschauer and Healey point out, can be achieved using specific software programs such as Daedalus or Common Space for local area networks (LAN), or via the Internet using various programs such as the Internet Relay Chat (IRC), MSN Messenger, Pal Talk, Free telephone, or other various chat media. Synchronous communication has been used for teaching foreign languages and English composition classes. Many foreign language teachers have used email in their classrooms to provide their students with authentic communication and carryout collaborative projects.
Research in this area is at a beginning stage. For example, a study by Wang (1998) comparing electronic and pen and pencil dialogues has shown that students using electronic mail "communicate more frequently, ask more questions, and use greater variety of language function" (Graus, 1999, p.16). Computer Applications in CALL Computer applications in CALL include: 1) Instructional applications in which learner and computer are directly involved in the learning process, and 2) general or non-instructional applications in which the computer is used as a technical assistant for: a) word processing, b) data managing, or c) researching into language learning or teaching (Kenning\& Kenning, 1983). Both applications can be employed to improve learner and instructor control over the learning and teaching process in EFL. The idea of CALL really began to gather momentum at the 2003 Euro CALL conference In Limerick, Ireland countless discussions followed on e-mail and phone learning technologies. Warschauer at the university of Hawaii investigating the social, cultural, and cognitive aspects of using new technologies in language teaching. Schlagal (1996), Thomas, Clift, \& Sugimoto (1996), and Yan (1994) investigated the use of e-mail in guiding reflective practices among student teachers.

## 3. Discussion

Recent years have shown explosion of interest in using computer and internet for language learning and teaching. Teachers are encountered students who have already acquired computer skills. So, it becomes vitally important for teachers at schools and especially professors at universities to use computer to ensure their audience they are keeping up with new technologies. In fact some students may have developed computer proficiency beyond their teachers, so it can make it easier for teachers to include computer in their teaching process. Above all, some of school teachers and university instructors avoid utilizing computer and internet in their teaching process. Many of them feel that the use of technology changes the dynamics of their classrooms, but educators have recognized that utilizing computer assisted language learning (CALL) and
internet can be convenient to create both independent and collaborative environment and provide students with language experiences as they move through the various stages of second language acquisition (Kung, 2002).

### 3.1.Pros of using computer

### 3.1.1. Privacy

Another benefit of CALL programs is the private environment it offers for self-conscious language learners (Brett, 1996). Many learners are shy in a traditional classroom setting, not participating as much as they would like, for fear of making mistakes and being the object of ridicule. The computer offers a forum where learners can lose their self-consciousness. The computer will not expose them when they make any mistakes (although the errors may be stored for review). The learners can learn within the sheltered, protected confines of the CALL program. Krashen (1985), noted that this may serve to lower affective filters.

### 3.1.2. Interactivity

Computers promote interactivity. Learners have to interact with the computer and cannot hide behind their classmates. If the learner does nothing, nothing happens. At the very least, learners have to start the CALL program. The program can only pass from one section to another with the "consent" of the learner. Thus learners have to drive the program. Usually they have to use the target language in exercises within the program. They have plenty of opportunities to practise the language in a one-on-one situation. They can practise the exercises as many times as they like, until they are satisfied with their results. CALL programs promote interactivity using many senses. Not only is text presented, sound can be heard and videos viewed. Sub-titles to videos can be switched on and off. Videos can be viewed in mute mode, so that learners can use various strategies to ascertain what is happening. Graphics can be used to demonstrate not just grammar items (for example, moving words around to form questions) but also for spatial related language topics (for example, the use of "in front of" and "behind"). If a sound does not exist in their own language, learners may have difficulty producing it. Alternatively, learners cannot "hear" the difference between their pronunciation and that of a native speaker. For example, native Japanese speakers find it very difficult to distinguish between $/ \mathrm{r} /$ and $/ \mathrm{l} /$. Learners can practise their pronunciation using visual models of the voice-producing region of the body showing the required position of the tongue and lips to produce the correct sound. Graphics of their speech output compared with the ideal can be viewed, so that discrepancies can be identified. This multi-sensory approach can enrich the learning process for the learner.

### 3.1.3. Motivation

Motivation is an important factor in language learning (Gardner, 1983; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992;Okada et al., 1996). Motivation encourages greater learner effort and thus greater language performance(Clément et al., 1977; Samimy and Tabuse, 1991). When looking at motivation in the field of language learning, consideration is given to the difference between foreign and second language learning (Au,1988). Foreign language (FL) learning occurs when the language being learnt is not used as the medium of communication (e.g. learning French in Ireland). Second language (SL) learning occurs in an environment where the language being learnt is that used in everyday communication (e.g. learning English in Ireland). In the FL situation, the learner has to seek opportunities to engage in the target language.

### 3.1.3. Feedback

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It is generally agreed that the provision of (almost) immediate feedback is beneficial for the learner (Neri,et al., 2001). Again, in the traditional classroom setting, it may not be possible to provide immediate feedback to each individual learner. However, the computer can give feedback at the touch of a button. Thus, learners can test their knowledge and learn from their mistakes. It is important that errors are corrected before they are converted into part of the learner's "language knowledge". CALL programs can not only correct errors but also reinforce the knowledge shown in correct answers.

### 3.1.4.E-Learning

Online learning, or e-learning, offers a number of advantages for students and teachers looking to develop a new content program or curricula - none bigger than the ability to offer that training anywhere, anytime. That means whether your trainees are all together in a classroom or scattered all over the country in different time zones, they can still tap into the same course materials, and at a time that's convenient to them. Teachers can optimize the timeliness and focus of the curriculum, students can better fit learning time into their schedules, and companies end up spending less on training their workforce.

### 3.1.5. Exams

Substantial cost reduction in the expenses of conducting an exam: no printing or distribution expenses for question papers. Maintain confidentiality and avoid paper leaks. Teachers can change question papers at the last minute by pulling questions from the Question Banks. They can also randomize sequence of questions for each examinee: No two examinees will see the same question at the same time. Users can view the exam results immediately after the exam.

### 3.1. 6. Access to Information

Another benefit of CALL is the control over access to information. A CALL program has the potential to provide more information to the learner (via links to electronic dictionaries, more detailed screens and links to other sites) (Egbert and Hanson-Smith, 1999), while conversely, learners can avoid information overload if they feel they are being overwhelmed. They can leave a program to give themselves time to absorb the new knowledge. In a traditional classroom setting, students cannot usually leave if they feel overloaded. They must wait until the class has ended; possibly not paying attention to what the teacher is saying and missing out on the topic being taught. With a CALL program, the user can leave when s/he wishes and come back to where s/he left off and start again. Thus, users have more control over the cognitive load they bear during a lesson. Also, non-linear access to that information is possible. The learner does not have to "follow the text exactly". Links can be followed and dictionaries can be looked up. A learner may feel more inclined to read extra information if it is only a click away, as opposed to having to open another book.

### 3.1.7. Repetition

Another benefit of CALL is the ability to repeatedly review information (Brett, 1996). This repetition can aid reinforcement, which is an important element in learning (Hebb, 1949). This can either be text, audio or video. Learners can listen to audio portions of a CALL program until they are satisfied that they have understood what is being said. Video segments can be watched in various modes (with/ without sound,
with/without subtitles) as many times as the learner wishes. This is obviously beneficial to the learner
and is a definite advantage over the traditional classroom situation in which it is not that easy to ask the
teacher to repeat something a number of times until it is understood.

### 3.2. Cons of integrating computer

### 3.2.1. Technological Dependence

This is the biggest fear to technology integration in the classroom. Once it's there, will everything fall apart if it is taken away? The first problem with this fear is that the likelihood of technology disappearing from society is very small. Nothing short of some traumatic or explosive global human tragedy would wipe the computer and the Web from the planet. In that case, survival would be the focus anyhow. Aside from that, how does even a temporary glitch in technology result in poor learning? If e-books are taken out of the classroom, will children no longer know how to read in a traditional text? Of course not! If the digital math flash cards on a tablet are unavailable, are students going to be baffled at how to use traditional worksheets and flash cards? If the computer breaks, will children not know how to write with a pencil? These questions may sound silly, but when a person realizes that technology in the classroom is meant to enrich and reinforce skills, rather than replace them, the fear of overdependence starts to dissipate.

### 3.2.2. Anti-Social Behaviour

CALL programs may promote anti-social behaviour (Pennington, 1996). Learners may get "wrapped-up "in the program and focus on learning the language in isolation. Except in certain situations (learning a language for reading purposes only or for the pure mental stimulation of doing so), the whole reason behind learning a language is to be able to communicate with others. If someone learns a language for the purposes of interacting with another human in the same language and yet s/he only "speaks" to a computer, surely that is missing the whole point of learning the language. Although the computer cannot force learners to speak with other speakers of the language, it can suggest to learners that they practise with other speakers at various points throughout the program

### 3.2.3 Learning Content

Another possible problem with CALL programs is that sometimes misleading, oversimplified explanations are provided. Not only will this waste the students' time, it will confuse them and will not meet their learning needs. Care must be taken to ensure that this is avoided in the design process. One further issue to consider is correctness - it is important that the linguistic elements of the language are reviewed with a native speaker to ensure correctness. This may be more difficult in the CALL situation than when dealing with more traditional learning media as the content provider may be more removed from the courseware production process than may be the case in the traditional production process.

### 3.2.4. decreases learners' creativity:

Different tasks are performed automatically by using computers. It reduces the need of students to create and increases laziness among them. Technology has also changed the way students' research. They do not feel like searching in different books or encyclopedia, they can do whatever they require by downloading or copy and paste things

### 3.2.5. Having little personal interaction:

Computer use in classrooms also decreases personal interaction. Children today are used to communicating with friends and strangers online through different sites. This is far more common than dealing with each other face to face in real life. The same is true in the classroom. While students have their eyes focused on computer screens, they do not look around themselves to interact with their fellow students or their teachers.

### 3.2.6. Disadvantages of the internet use in second language learning:

In the EL situation, there may be no previous material available on the language. The remaining speakers are usually not linguists with knowledge of language structures and may often not be fully competent in the language. CALL courseware developers do not have the luxury of choosing some clear-spoken member of the community to do the audio recordings and often have to accept whoever is able and willing to work with them. If the language has never been written or no formal alphabet has been established for it, CALL practitioners will have to agree on a writing system with the community. In other situations, where several alphabets or writing systems have been used for the language, one alphabet or writing system should be chosen for the courseware (unless, of course, agreement cannot be reached, in which case the courseware may be developed for two writing systems). Mainstream CALL assumes that the development of CALL courseware is culturally acceptable for the speakers of the language. However, in the EL situation, this may not always be the case. While some EL communities may welcome the development of modern CALL courseware for their language, other EL communities may not wish to disseminate information about their language to outsiders. Some EL communities may have cultural reservations about having recordings and images of those who have died (as is the case with Aboriginal people in some Native Australian communities). Research activities show that there are some disadvantages of the internet use in second language learning. Communication with native speakers affects reading skills defectively (Kern, 1995). This is also valid for listening, speaking and writing skills. Although it is a fact that the internet improves communicational and language skills, the important point is that teachers and learners are not sometimes aware of why, how, whom and where they teach and learn. Though a mass of materials in the internet can be found, integration of the materials into second language curriculum is a potential difficulty. Unluckily, using internet in language learning and teaching may be the waste of time if it does not depend on a language curriculum. Technology has also affected humans in classroom education. Since technology has been introduced as a medium for teaching back in 1900s, it has gradually replaced the human teachers and now students mostly rely on computers, television and other electronic mediums. Although these technologies brings certain benefits in the classroom, it causes some students to be distracted and unmotivated to learn at school because they believe that learning by themselves using the computer is a much better and faster way. According to Vota (2009), "Since technology itself requires proper motivation for its benefits to accrue, any school that can't direct student motivation capably will fail to do so with technology, as well (or worse, allow technology to distract students)". This clearly shows that students are still young and curious but they need an ongoing motivation, guidance and support to excel in education. Apart from that, technology also lessens/minimizes the learning time. Klaus (2010) states that technical troubles are often consume most of valuable teaching time. This happens when the student or teacher is not familiar with using the machine and they do not have adequate technical know-how to fix the machine. If there is any problem with the technology, the schools need to call for technician to fix the problem and it will delay the student from the actual lesson plan that the teacher has prepared for them. Thus, this would cause the class to be ineffective in a classroom where time is limited. Besides computer, television is also known as one of medium in educational purposes. However, Wilbur Schramm, the father of communications studies once questioned and actually carried out a test if television actually benefited towards education, which turn out to no avail (Singhal, 1987)

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## 4. Conclusion

The use of computer in education may considerably improve students' perception, visual memory and sensitivity. We might as well say that students' ability to create a piece of art on their own is enhanced by the use of a computer. (Erika perge, n.d) If educational evaluators turn their attention to such matters, the years ahead will produce studies that better reflect the breadth of computer uses in education and the breadth and depth of goals of language teaching. The authorities must remember that success depends on high-level commitment and long term support. Computer plays a key role in the modern educational system. Students find it easier to refer to the Internet than searching for information in fat books. The process of learning has gone beyond learning from prescribed textbooks. Internet is a much larger and easier-to-access storehouse of information. When it comes to storing retrieved information, it is easier done on computers than maintaining hand-written notes. In today's student-centered classrooms in which students take charge of their own learning, computers may help learners by providing them a wide selection of opportunities for developing their skills in the learning process. The advantages of having computers in schools outweigh any disadvantages. Computers have revolutionized much of modern life, either directly or indirectly, and learning how to use them in schools is extremely important. Children learn the ins and outs of computers at an early age. Although there are a few disadvantages that computers provide, the numerous advantages of having computers in schools outweigh these few concerns.

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## SYNTACTIC CHANGES

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#### Abstract

SYNTACTIC CHANGE IS A GRADUAL PHENOMENON THAT HAPPENS BELOW THE ENTRANCE OF SPEAKERS' CONSCIOUS AWARENESS. HOWEVER, SOME OF THESE CHANGES SEEM TO BE UNACCEPTABLE. IN FACT, CHANGES THAT ARE BASED ON ANECDOTAL OR IMPRESSIONISTIC OBSERVATIONS ARE GENERALLY UNRELIABLE. FOUR CORPORA CAN BE USED TO STUDY SYNTACTIC CHANGE, NAMELY BROWN AND LOB CORPORA AS WELL AS FROWN AND F-LOB. USING THE AFOREMENTIONED CORPORA, THE PRESENT STUDY REVIEWS THE CHANGES IN TWO AREAS OF SYNTAX: PRESENT PROGRESSIVE AND MODAL AUXILIARIES. IT IS INDICATED THAT GRAMMATICALIZATION AND SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS SUCH AS COLLOQUIALISATION ARE THE MAIN FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THESE CHANGES


KEY TERMS: SYNTACTIC CHANGE

## 1 .Introduction

Syntactic change varies from lexical change in at least two significant ways. First, it reveals much more slowly, sometimes taking years to cause its course to completion, and secondly, it tends to go to the next stage below the entrance of speakers' conscious awareness, which makes introspection-based statements on ongoing changes in English grammar notoriously unreliable. A third difficulty in pinning down syntactic change in current English is that a rather small number of alleged syntactic innovations are strongly disgraceful. This has biased discussion in favor of such high-profile subjects at the expense of developments that are more comprehensive and far-reaching in the long run. Examples which come to mind consist of the use of like as a conjunction (as in And it looks like as if it rains), or the use of hopefully as a sentence adverb
(Hopefully, they'll go back and set it up).We define "present" changes in English as those developments for which there has been a major diachronic dynamic since the beginning of the 20th century. For practical reasons, we concentrate largely on the written standard forms of British and the American English, completely aware that this policy will prevent us from including some cutting-edge innovations in contemporary spoken English which are likely to be incorporated into the standard in the long run. To analyze syntactic change, there are two approaches. Where the focus is on the diachronic development of grammars as decontextualised linguistic systems, syntactic change is often seen as an abrupt or discrete alteration of structures, rules and constraints (e.g. in the generativist tradition embodied in the work of David Lightfootfrom Lightfoot, 1979 to Lightfoot, 1999). But the study of recorded performance information in their linguistic and social context - as, for example, in grammaticalisation theory (Hopper/ Traugott, 2003) or the budding field of historical sociolinguistics (cf. Nevalainen/ RaumolinBrunberg, 2003) - the picture that comes out is one of step by step evolution rather than sudden change. Syntactic changes are considered as embedded in a context where semantic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors assume roles as determinants of change. However, even those scholars who understand syntactic change in terms of discrete steps will accept that the spread of linguistic innovations throughout the community is a gradual phenomenon. Not only will a change proceed gradually, but it will also proceed at differential speeds in various regional varieties of English and different styles and textual genres. This is why, after a necessarily short review of the literature on ongoing grammatical change in present-day English the present section will mainly be corpus-based focusing on the examination of substantial samples of different varieties of writing at different times. As the last point we will consider mid-twentiethcentury standard of American and British written English as documented in two widely known and widely used matching reference corpora, namely the Brown and LOB corpora. To cover developments towards the end of the twentieth century, we will also use the Frown and F-LOB corpora, which were built to match Brown and LOB as closely as possible in size and composition but includes texts published not in 1961, as the originals do, but in 1992 and 1991 respectively .The four equivalent corpora are available in untagged and tagged versions, making it possible to study changes in textual frequency in terms of not only single words and word sequences but also of grammatical categories. Beyond the restrictions of the written medium and the thirty-year period spanned by these corpora, we will where necessary extend our evidential base by making use of other electronic text resources, such as small collections of spoken data and the corpus formed from OED quotations.

## 2. Review of literature

The popular literature on present changes in the English language (see Barber, 1964 or Potter, 1975 for two typical examples) tends to concentrate on phonetic and lexical rather than on grammatical change. Among grammatical changes the focus is on cases which have aroused the concern of prescriptivists. A typical list of changes suspected to be going on in present-day standard English is the following one, which is largely based on Barber (1964, p. 130-144):
a. a tendency to regularize irregular morphology (e.g. dreamt dreamed )
b. revival of the "mandative" subjunctive, probably inspired by formal US usage (we demand that she take part in the meeting)
c. Removing of shall as a future marker in the first person
d. development of new, auxiliary-like uses of certain lexical verbs (e.g. get, want-cf., e.g., The way you look, you wanna/want to see a doctor soon)
e. extension of the progressive to new constructions, e.g. modal, present perfect and past perfect passive progressive (the road would not be being built/ has not been being built / had not been being built before the general elections)
f. increase in the number and types of multi-word verbs (phrasal verbs, have/take/give a ride , etc.)
g. placement of frequency adverbs before auxiliary verbs (even if no emphasis is intended - I never have said so)
h. do-support for have (have you any money? and no, I haven't any money $\rightarrow$ do you have/ have you got any money? and no, I don't have any money/ haven't got any money)
i. demise of the inflected form whom
j. increasing use of less instead of fewer with countable nouns (e.g. less problems)
k. spread of the s-genitive to non-human nouns (the book's color)
1."singular" they (everybody welcomed their suggestion)
m.a tendency towards analytical comparatives and superlatives (politer $\rightarrow$ more polite)

Of these, a-h belong to the verb phrase, while i-m belong to the noun phrase ( m - belong to neither). Certain of these supposed changes do have support from corpus evidence - b, c, d, e, $h$, $\mathrm{i}, \mathrm{l}, \mathrm{m}-1$ although in some cases the concentrate of change as mentioned above is misleading. Thus shall (item c) has been undergoing a general decline, not limited to the first singular and plural person. Similarly, the s-genitive (item $k$ ) has shown a general increase, not specific to nonhuman nouns. Be attentive that defining many of these changes as "current" or "ongoing" means extending the concepts somewhat. Whom, for example, has been optionally substituted by who in many usual uses since the Early Modern English period. By the 19thcentury, it was a marker of formal style, necessary only if preceded by a preposition. This is very much the situation today, and so any report that whom is on its deathbed is, to say the least, premature. Similarly, most of the truly new change in the comparison of disyllabic adjectives (item o) has not been in the direction of more analyticity but of reducing the variability of forms for individual adjectives (Bauer 1994, p. 80). Some recent work on current change has put the corpus-based approach with other methods in detailed studies of lexicogrammatical phenomena together. Rickford et al. (1995), for example, followed the new emergence of the topic-introducing preposition as far as(e.g. "as far as my situation, I am less than optimistic ..."), which they see as having been derived from clauses of the type as far as $X$ is concerned through a process of grammaticalisation. Some time before that, and without mentioning the technical term "grammaticalisation" - the heading under which such processes would almost certainly be subsumed in current work on syntactic change - Olofsson (1990) followed a similar development, namely the emergence of prepositional uses of following, splitting off from the mainstream use of the form as a participle in nonfinite clauses.The emergence of (Be) like as a quotation-introducing form in some spoken registers of American English (and increasingly in British English) is the focus of a study by Romaine and Lange (1991). Such studies are valuable, but, they say little about the language as a whole. It's difficult to generalize from their results, and an investigation of such cases will probably not direct the linguist to those parts of the grammatical core which are undergoing potentially farreaching change.

Two publications worth mentioning here because they met higher methodological standards than the others: Bauer (1994) stands out to support all statements he does with textual evidence, and Denison (1998) suggests a magisterial survey of developments in English grammar since 1776 that is unique in its comprehensiveness. Denison's work goes beyond others in supplying a list of
suspected changes in 20th-century English which is based on a systematic choice of the available evidence rather than on anecdotal observations and narrow prescriptive concerns.

## 3. Corpora and investigating current changes

The role of corpora is not always positive; it can also be negative since it provides evidence that some of the suspected changes have not actually been proceeding in a period. For example the "demise" of whom - to a large extent is assumed to be inevitable ever since Sapir put the case for it in his classic Language (1921, p. 166-174), but clearly not substantiated by later corpus findings. In the four corpora (LOB, Brown-LOB and Frown) providing the evidential database to present the following figures are obtained:

Table1. LOB, Brown-LOB and Frown

|  | 1961 | $1991 / 2$ | Difference (\%age of 1961) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| British English <br> (LOB/ F-LOB) | 217 | 177 | $-18.4 \%$ |
| American English <br> (Brown/ Frown) | 144 | 166 | $+15.3 \%$ |

The following figures show fluctuation or convergence between the two major regional standards. Synchronic results for the late 20th century based on the one-hundred-million-word British National Corpus (BNC) are also instructive. With a total raw frequency of 12,596, or c. 129 occurrences per million words, show that whom cannot be a rare word. Function of whom as a style marker becomes obvious by looking at its frequencies at different textual genres. There are around 141 instances per million for written English and 26 per million for spoken English and as many as 5 per million in conversations.

The positive role of corpora is of course more valuable to discover the changes that have not been noticed up to now. The next parts will be followed by introducing positive corpus evidence for grammatical developments, which Denison's 1998 has noted a pronounced diachronic dynamic since the late $18^{\text {th }}$ century. It is likely that these changes are still with us today, and can be considered truly current. With some of them, such as the get-passive or the going-to future, the crucial structural changes had already happened before the year 1776, Denison's starting point, so that any statistical increase in material from c. 1900 is likely to represent a spread of these innovations- for example, from less formal into more formal registers and styles (see, e.g., Hundt, 2001 or Mair, 1997). However, some other structures (for example certain new progressives, on which see 4.2 . below) represent genuine recent innovations in the sense that they were not firmly established in any style before the 20thcentury. Although the spotlight tends to fall on innovatory changes and their diffusion, corpora also provide evidence of changes in the direction of attenuation and loss. For example, the four corpora show a declining frequency in the use of many modal auxiliaries and of wh-relative pronouns. We will see these, together with gains in apparently competing categories - so-called semi-modals like going to, and that- and zero relativisation.

## 4.The changing verb phrase

### 4.1.Progressive verbs

Although four one-million-word corpora are not a good number to present definitive findings for constructions that are not common, but this number is more than enough to investigate the most important current trends in the tense, modality, aspect and voice systems of English, specially the continuing spread of the progressive form. Here two different phenomena like increasing in the frequency of progressive, and the foundation of them (progressive)in verbal paradigm in which was not usual until the $20^{\text {th }}$ century. What was mentioned above represents direct $20^{\text {th }}$ century progress of well-established long term trends. The increase in the frequency of

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the progressive from late Middle English onwards has been confirmed, for example, by Jespersen (1909-49: IV, 177), who used Bible translations from different periods as parallel historical corpora. Structural gaps in the verbal paradigm also builds on such previous episodes, for example the emergence of the progressive passive (dinner was being prepared) nearly 200 years ago, superseding "passive" dinner was preparing (on which see Denison 1998, p. 148ff.). Mair/ Hundt (1995) have gained the following figures in analysis of all progressive forms in the press sections (A-C, ca. 176,000 words each) of the four corpora:

Table 2: Progressive forms in the press sections $(A-C)$ of the four reference corpora

|  | 1961 | $1991 / 1992$ | Difference (\%age of <br> 1961) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| British English <br> (LOB/ F-LOB) | 606 | 716 | $+18.25 \%$ |
| American <br> English (Brown/ <br> Frown) | 593 | 663 | $+11.8 \%$ |

(Significances: LOB-F-LOB p < 0.01, Brown-Frown $\mathrm{p}<0.05$; LOB-Brown and F-LOB-Frown $\mathrm{p}>$ 0.05)

It can be understood that the increases observed are both statistically significant in British and American English. Further research was carried out by Nicholas Smith (2002).Nicholas noted a highly significant increase of $28.9 \%$ - from 980 to 1263 - for the active present progressive. Smith's equivalent provisional figures for Brown and Frown show a very similar trend (an increase of $31.8 \%$ from 996 to 1316). The increase in usage of progressive is not the same. The comparison between LOB and F-LOB shows a particularly high increase in the modal progressive - e.g. should be leaving - $(29.3 \%)$ and in the passive progressive - e.g. is being held $-(31.3 \%)$, while the past progressive actually shows a decrease of $9.0 \%$. Moreover, the steep increases in the modal and passive progressive in the British corpora are not matched by similar increases in the American corpora. Existingan overall and significant increase of progressive frequency has been in the course of the $20^{\text {th }}$ century looks beyond doubt. Providing an acceptable explanation makes it difficult. Is grammatical change directly our concern or are we considering one grammatical clue from a more general literary change, in which the norms of written English come closer to spoken application, where the progressive has presumably always been more usual than in writing? (for example, the findings in Bibber et al. 1999, p. 461-63.)Know and wish verbs show that there is little evidence of extending the progressive by combination of non-progressive verbs. One of the applications of continuous seems to bea new development: it's called interpretative use (see Huddleston and Pullum 2002, p. 165) in such contexts as:

1-It can only be pointed out that when Paul Gascoigne says he will not be happy until he stops playing football, he is talking nonsense. (F-LOB, A 09: 81f.)

2-When he speaks of apocalypsehe is talking rot. (Frown, D 02: 120f.)
In (1), the two above declare: he will not be happy...' and 'is talking rot' must refer to accurately the same boundary situations, since the second is just a more abstract interpretation of the previous one. What we seem to have here is a further extension of the basic uses of the progressive, namely seeing a situation 'from the inside' (Comrie 1976, p. 4), to the metacommunicative level. As Huddleston and Pullummention it, "the internal (imperfective) view is suitable to the explanatory function of the clause - in emphasizing duration, the progressive metaphorically slows down or extends the situation in order to be able to focus on
clarifying its nature" (2002, p. 165). Example (2) is similar: here it is enough to note that the Progressive (is ... speaking) and non-progressive (speaks) could be substituted. Another semantic extension of the progressive, to a 'future as a matter of course' interpretation (see Leech 1987, p. 68), appears to account for much of the increase observed between LOB and F-LOB in the modal progressive, especially with will (see Smith, 2003):
(3) He will be standing down at the next general election. (F-LOB, B 20:30)
(4) Why, you will be asking me to bomb Essen next. (F-LOB, F 24: 142)

Here the 'in-continuous' meaning of the continuous applies, not to the action of 'standing down' or 'asking' itself, but to the situation already set in train and leading up to that action, which is supposed to occur in the not-too-distant future. One possible reason for using Will + progressive, rather than the non-progressive will stand down, is that will+ V can be used to show that the action will be actuated deliberately by the speaker or the subject referent. By using the progressive, the speakers disclaim or background that implication. With these constructions, the four corpora show too small to produce conclusive results. The present perfect progressive passive is attested in none of them. The British data yield three instances of modalised passive progressives, two from LOB and one from F-LOB:
(5) To ridicule them only pushes them farther into themselves, so that they are not able to speak about it to anybody and the seeds of any amount of trouble are sown, the harvest of which may still be being reaped at forty or fifty. (LOB, D6: 16ff.)
(6) We have also to notice that while the entropy of our given system will increase with external or given time, this relation is not reciprocal, for, if we first choose our time, a rare state in our stationary process will just as likely be being approached as being departed from. (LOB, J18: 197ff.)
(7) So the news that a second park-and-ride route could be being introduced
for a trial period at Clifton Moor north of the city should be welcomed, especially as Christmas is approaching. (F-LOB, B18: 109ff.)
What's worth mentioning about these examples is that first the progressive is not necessary, yet in such structures it shows they have happened in recent years. Secondly, the profit of examples from the four corpora, while clearly not conclusive in itself, is not by chance. Modal forms of the type represented by examples (5) to (7) are easy to find in the 100,000,000-word British National Corpus(with textual data from the late 20th century). The present perfect passive progressive, on the other hand, is attested just once:
(8) That er, er, little action has been taken in the last thirty forty years since this has been being discussed, erm, I think the first international conference erm, produced their own report in nineteen sixty. (BNC, JJG 542)

Significantly, this is an example from a script of unplanned speech. Again, as in (5) to (7) above, the use of the progressive is not yet necessary. To put the corpus data in the nutshell, we can say that the complex forms in question can be proved if the database is adequate, and that their spread seems to happen more easily in the modal environments (be being) than in the present perfect (been being). Another former ambiguity in the use of the progressive was the progressive form of the copula - a use which can be traced back for about 200 years but maybe was not fully established until late in the $19^{\text {th }}$ century (Jespersen, 1909-49, IV: 225f.). Here, the four corpora suggest that this structure (although still rare) has increased in frequency in written English between 1961 and 1991/2. There is an increase from 3 to 20 instances of the progressive copula from Brown to Frown, and from 8 to 17 from LOB to F-LOB.

### 4.2. Modality: modal auxiliaries, so-called semi-modals, and the subjunctive

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It is well known that the class of modal auxiliaries as a separate syntactic category was appeared around the beginning of the Early Modern English period, and that in the later modern period, there has been an ongoing grammaticalisation of some verbal structures called "semi-modals "such as have to and be going to, which in function and behaviour overlap with these modals.The semi-modals are a rather loosely-defined grouping of verbal idioms, which are much more current in spoken than in written English - actually, some of them have acquired reduced pronunciations, reflected popularly in written forms such as gotta and gonna. In addition, the lexical verb wantshows early signs of auxiliation/ grammaticalisation, including phonetic erosion in wanna (Krug 2000, p. 117-166); this is why, though not an established semi-modal yet, it is included in the list in Table 4 below. It has been an open question how far the increase of these semi-modals has encroached on the use of modal auxiliaries. However, a study of the modals in our four corpora leaves no doubt that there is a decline in their use during the late 20th century, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Modals decline

|  | British <br> English <br> LOB F-LOB |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Log}^{*} \\ & \text { likhd } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Diff (\%) } \end{aligned}$ |  | Ameri <br> Englis <br> Brown <br> Frown |  | Log likhd | Diff (\%)** |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Would | 3028 | 2694 | 20.4 | -11.0\% | Would | 3053 | 2868 | 5.6 | -6.1\% |
| Will | 2798 | 2723 | 1.2 | -2.7\% | Will | 2702 | 2402 | 17.3 | -11.1 |
| Can | 1997 | 2041 | 0.4 | +2.2\% | Can | 2193 | 2160 | 0.2 | -1.5\% |
| Could | 1740 | 1782 | 2.4 | +2.4\% | Could | 1776 | 1655 | 4.1 | -6.8\% |
| May | 1333 | 1101 | 22.8 | -17.4 | May | 1298 | 878 | 81.1 | -32.4\% |
| Should | 1301 | 1147 | 10.1 | -11.8\% | Should | 910 | 787 | 8.8 | -13.5\% |
| Must | 1147 | 814 | 57.7 | -29.0 | Must | 1018 | 668 | 72.8 | -34.4\% |
| Might | 777 | 660 | 9.9 | -15.1\% | Might | 635 | 635 | 0.7 | -4.5\% |
| Shall | 355 | 200 | 44.3 | -43.7 \% | Shall | 267 | 150 | 33.1 | -43.8\% |
| Ought (to) | 104 | 58 | 13.4 | -44.2\% | Ought <br> (to) | 70 | 49 | 3.7 | -30.0\% |
| Need+v | 87 | 52 | 9.0 | -40.2 | Need+v | 40 | 35 | 0.3 | -12.5\% |
| Total | 14667 | 13272 | 73.6 | -9.5\% | Total | 13962 | 68.0 | 68.0 | -12.2 |

Log likelihood is a measure of statistical significance: a value of 3.84 or more equates with chisquare values $>0.05$; a value of 6.63 or more equates with chi-square values $>0.01$.
** The column headed Diff (\%) gives the increase (+) or decrease (-) in occurrences as a percentage of the frequency in the 1961 corpora.
The counts include verb and negative contractions: i.e., under will are counted won't and'll.
In this Table, the modals are listed in order of frequency in the LOB corpus, an ordering which differs comparatively little in the four corpora. There are, however, some big differences in the sharpness of the fall infrequency. The least frequent modals - shall, ought to and need (in auxiliary structures) - have plummeted, and the mid-frequency modals must and may have also declined drastically. On the other hand, the most usual modals will, canand would have kept their position forcefully. While BrE and AmE English have been developing along parallel lines (over-all loss of frequency by around $10 \%$ in both sets of corpora), it is nevertheless interesting to mention that figures for AmE English were slightly lower in 1961, and the decrease has been a little sharper in AmE since.It looks like a follow-my-leader situation, in which BrE is following in the track of AmE. Less transparent processes are seen with the different set of semi-modals listed in Table 4. There is an increase in the total frequency of this class in BrE and AmE, but this is
more than anything else due to the increase for need to, want to, and - in AmE - be going to. There is stability for other forms, and in one case (be to) even an important decline:

Table 4: Increase in the use of semi-modals in the four reference corpora

| BrE | LOB | F- <br> LOB | Log <br> likhd | Diff <br> $(\%)$ | AmE | Brown | Frown | Log <br> likhd | Diff <br> $(\%)$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Be going <br> to | 248 | 245 | 0.0 | -1.2 | Be going <br> to | 219 | 332 | 232.5 | +51.6 |
| Be to | 454 | 376 | 7.6 | -17.2 | Be to | 349 | 209 | 35.3 | -40.1 |
| Had <br> better | 50 | 37 | 2.0 | -26.0 | Had <br> better | 41 | 34 | 0.7 | -17.1 |
| (HAVE) <br> got to* | 41 | 27 | 2.9 | -34.1 | (HAVE) <br> got to* | 45 | 52 | 0.5 | +15.6 |
| Have to | 757 | 825 | 2.7 | +9.0 | Have to | 627 | 643 | 0.1 | +1.1 |
| Need to | 54 | 198 | 83.0 | +249.1 | Need to | 69 | 154 | 33.3 | +123.2 |
| Be <br> supposed <br> to | 22 | 47 | 9.2 | +113.6 | Be <br> supposed <br> to | 48 | 51 | 0.1 | +6.3 |
| Used to | 86 | 97 | 0.6 | +12.8 | Used to | 51 | 74 | 4.3 | +45.1 |
| want to | 357 | 423 | 5.4 | +18.5 | want to | 323 | 552 | 60.9 | +70.9 |
| Total | 2069 | 2275 | 9.2 | +10.0 | Total | 1772 | 2101 | 28.4 | +18.6 |

*Forms spelt gonna, gotta and wanna are counted under be going to, have got to, and want to.
Maybe what is interesting is that semi-modals are less frequent than the modals: added together they are less frequent than the single modal will!From this evidence it is obviously difficult to meet a general argument that the semi-modals are increasing at the expense of the core modals.On the other hand, going beyond the evidence of Tables 3 and 4 to look at spoken data, there are two reasons for seeing at least some link between the fall of the modals and the rise of the semi-modals. The first reason is that the evidence from spoken corpora, including much the same period, shows a steeper fall for the modals and rise for the semi-modals. In the comparison between the two small spoken corpora, modals fall $-17.3 \%$ and semi-modals rise $+36.1 \%$, in contrast with the figures for LOB and F-LOB of $-9.5 \%$ and $+10.0 \%$ respectively. It has been impossible to make such a comparison for AmE, because no such comparable corpora exist. However, the second striking result was met by comparing total frequency of modals and of semi-modals in a c. 4-million-word corpus of AmE conversation.Compared with a ratio of 1:5.9 (semi-modals: modals) for both F-LOB and Frown, the AmE corpus of conversation produced a ratio of 1:1.6.On the other hand, in current spontaneous dialogue among American speakers, semi-modals are more than $60 \%$ as frequent as core modals (using the lists of modals and semimodals in Tables 3 and 4). This is broadly different from the picture we get from the written corpora of the 1990s, both American and British, where the comparable figure is only $17 \%$. It suggests that, the spoken American variety of the language is the main driving-force of change in this area, as probably in others, and places the encroachment of semi-modals on the area of the modals in AmE speech, in frequency terms, beyond doubt. This has its most forthright demonstration in the fact that in the American conversational corpus mentioned above, $\operatorname{HAVE}$ (got) to is more than 10 times as frequent as must .In contrast to the semi-modals, the subjunctive in English is a historical relic, more characteristic of formal written style than of the spoken one.Only two forms of it remain with any degree of currency, and even these are not morphologically distinctive, and can usually only be identified following singular subjects. These

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are the mandative subjunctive occurring in That-clauses following special controlling items such as the verb suggest(10) and the so-called were-subjunctive signaling hypothetical meaning (11)
(10) Yesterday, he had suggested that he sleep in the spare room from now on. (F-LOB, K 22: 19f.) (11) It felt as if she werealone in the world. (LOB, P 16: 79f.)

In the early-to-mid 20th century, it was imagined that the English subjunctive was meeting the end of its long road of decrease. But for the later 20th century, the four corpora show an extremely interesting picture: whereas a gradual decline of the mandative subjunctive seems to continue in AmE, it has seen a modest revival, from very low ebb, in British English - apparently under the influence of American English, where this form shows greater currency. The weresubjunctive, on the other hand, shows a steadily decline in BrE - from 95 occurrences to 41 in LOB and F-LOB.

## 5.Conclusion

Before concluding, it will be as well to consider very briefly what factors have been influencing the changes have been mentioned. One factor intrinsic to the functioning of any language at any time is grammaticalisation - which, as we saw in the cases of the progressive and the semimodals, may take centuries to come to full fruition. A second factor is socio-cultural, and hence more specific to the social context of English in the 20thcentury: colloquialisation or the tendency for written language to adopt features associated with spoken language. There are strong indications that such a process has been at work in the written language for centuries (see Biber and Finegan, 1989) in this article it has been mentioned such diverse cases as the increasing use of the progressive and semi-modals; the decline of wh-relative pronouns and the rise in the use of thatand zero relative clauses; the growing use of contractions in written texts; the use of singular they. In written British English, a third factor - Americanisation - intermingles with the other two. We have looked at one case - the visible revival of the mandative subjunctive - where American influence seems to override colloquialisation, but often these two socio-cultural processes work together - for instance, in the increasing use of semi-modals and the declining use of be passives. In this article it has been demonstrated that there has been noticeable change in the past century even in a language variety such as written standard English, and that the spread of individual innovations can be documented in language corpora.Further, we have shown that those accounts of ongoing grammatical change that are based on anecdotal or impressionistic observation are generally unreliable. They can err in three ways: (1) suspecting change where there is fixed long-term variability; (2) over-emphasizing the importance of a small number of often marginal shibboleths important to prescriptivists; and (3) failing to notice the ever present groundswell of linguistic change, apparent in long-term developments in the core grammar. Further studies will have to account for nonfinite verbal forms and the changing of noun phrases, in particular text-type variation and regional variation in Standard English worldwide.

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# A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSITION WORDS THROUGH TEACHERS' FEEDBACK ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' IMPROVEMENT OF WRITING FLUENCY 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY AIMED TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSITION WORDS THROUGH TEACHERS' FEEDBACK ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' IMPROVEMENT OF WRITING FLUENCY. THE QUESTION THIS STUDY TRIED TO ANSWER WAS WHETHER USING TRANSITION WORDS THROUGH TEACHERS' FEEDBACK MIGHT ENHANCE A MORE ACCEPTABLE WRITING PERFORMANCE IN IRANIAN LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL. TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, 40 IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS PARTICIPATED IN THE EXPERIMENT OF THE STUDY. THEY WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED FROM AMONG A POPULATION OF 100 VIA AN OPT TEST SCORE OF AT LEAST ONE STANDARD DEVIATION BELOW THE MEAN. THEY WERE THEN DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS AND WERE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO AN EXPERIMENTAL AND A CONTROL GROUP. A PRETEST OF WRITING WAS ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS, THEN, THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED TREATMENT BASED ON TRANSITION WORDS WHILE THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED NO TREATMENT. A POSTTEST OF WRITING WAS THEN ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS. THE DATA OF THE STUDY WERE ANALYZED USING THE T-TEST TO INDICATE THE GROUPS MEAN DIFFERENCE, AND THE DEGREE OF PROGRESS FROM THE PRETEST TO THE POSTTEST OF THE STUDY IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WAS INDICATED BY CALCULATING THE ANCOVA. THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT THE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED HIGHER WRITING FLUENCY SCORES AFTER BEING TREATED WITH TRANSITION WORDS.


KEY WORDS: TRANSITION WORDS, TEACHERS' FEEDBACK, EFL, WRITING, WRITING FLUENCY

## Introduction

Writing is an important skill during long years of teaching to students, we are always involve with this view that how can our students write in good harmony in chronological order? This is an important issue for many years that all teachers, students, and staff are evolving with this
skill. Writing is a kind of speech that we don't have a chance to say directly to audience, it's a kind of logical connection to say our beliefs, ideas that are not possible to tell on that time and situation. It is important to view writing not solely as the product of an individual, but as a cognitive, social and cultural act. Writing is an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience (Hamplyones \& Condon, 1989).
We can see many different kind of styles in writing such as narration, description, comparative, etc. We are going to do a research to teach our learners how they can write a good description paragraph. Demanding for writing a good paragraph is crucial point of study. In this study, writing paragraphs are the salience part of research, so I take a look at different part of writing paragraphs (introduction-body-conclusion). In addition, I define some lines about paragraph; a paragraph is a group of sentences which develop one central idea and the central idea is usually stated in a topic sentence. If a paragraph announces its main idea in the topic sentence, and if all the supporting sentences contribute to the reader's understanding of the main idea, we say that a paragraph is unified or it has unity. In writing, you cannot make use of these auditory and visual aids, so you must think and plan carefully what you're going to write to ensure that your reader knows exactly what you mean. When the order in which things happen, or a time sequence, is used to develop a paragraph, this is called chronological order.

Arnaudet \& Barret (1990) mentioned that writing is a skill that you say your idea without any fear from face to face talks. It's a process that helps you to go deeply into your thoughts, and purpose your idea, to share your knowledge, and it also provides you a good condition for your confidence to say your idea frankly.

This study is intended as an investigation of how students learn the use of transition words through teachers' feedback of connectives and improve their writing fluency.

## Definition of key terms

Transition words: are phrases or words used to connect one idea to the next. Transitional words and phrases can create powerful links between ideas in your paper and can help your reader understand the logic of your paper. However, these words all have different meanings, nuances, and connotations. Transition words and phrases are vital devices for essays, papers or other literary compositions. They improve the connections and transitions between sentences and paragraphs. They thus give the text a logical organization and structure. Halliday (1994).

Teachers' feedback: according to Lee (2004) a teachers' feedback is a feedback presented by the teacher due to students' error that they benefit from it and, resulted in active correction of errors and improvement in writing skills.

EFL: The learners of a foreign language in a formal classroom setting that takes place in a country where the native language other than English is spoken (Gass \& Selinker, 2001).

Writing : is a skill that you say your idea without any fear from face to face talks. It's a process that helps you to go deeply into your thoughts, and purpose your idea, to share your knowledge, and it also provides you a good condition for your confidence to say your idea frankly. Arnaudet \& Barret (1990). Writing is an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience (Hamplyones \& Condon, 1989).

Writing fluency: referred to the average number of words, Terminable Units (T-units) and clauses. Wigglesworth and Storch (2009). And time is an important aspect of fluency, the number of words written per minute. Chenoweth and Hayes' (2001).

## Traditional approaches to writing fluency

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate whether learning to use transition words results in enhancing students' fluency in writing. The conceptual framework is based on the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976), and Halliday (1994). The set of Halliday and Hasan's cohesive relations is comprised of reference, substitutions, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical relations. Reference is the relation between a linguistic expression and its pronoun. Substitution is marked at representing a pre-ceding expression by a pro-form like one, do or so. Ellipsis is the omission of part of a sentence whose meaning will be retrievable from the preceding text. A conjunction is a cohesive device, which makes logical-semantic relations between linguistic expressions and links paragraphs. Lexical cohesion is the writer's choice of particular lexical items, which are related to the relevant preceding expressions.
In this classification, the use of conjunctions is an effective way for L 2 writers to build connections between ideas in text. White and McGovern (1994) call them "cohesive markers" (p. 67), and Jordan (1990) describes them as "connectives" (p. 121). These sources point out that such conjunctions lend a framework to meaning, helping the reader to follow the development of a text. According to Parrot (2004), learning to use conjunctions also helps learners to show how the points they relate to each other and to the whole text. He defines transitions as words which indicate logical relationships and sequences as "textual discourse markers" (p.302), and explains the main functions as numbering and ordering points, adding something, linking similar things together, introducing something that contrasts with expectations, generalizing, exemplifying and narrowing down, re-stating, and rounding off. In teaching ESL or EFL students' writing, Fukushima and Sato (1989) investigated the effectiveness of teaching transition words in expository discourse writing. Their research revealed that the teaching of transition words helps average student writers "construct proper organization in which their ideas are logically sequenced and developed, and this entails writing of better quality" (p. 35). Spycher (2007) also found that a student at lower levels of English proficiency could constitute logical relationships by using newly learned conjunctions (although, such as) and guide the reader to logical understanding.
However, there seems to be surprisingly few attempts to examine the effectiveness of teaching transition words through teachers' feedback in terms of writing fluency. Some potentially challenging areas might be identified from the previous research on the use of connectives as an effective device for improving oral fluency. For example, Ejzenberg (1992) found that connectives were one of the facilitating factors to promote nonnative speakers' fluency. Yashima et al. (1995) also found that the high school students' fluency was facilitated by the use of connectives such as "and", "but", "or", "so", "because", "then", etc. Kawaguchi and Kamimoto (2000) observed distinctive features of oral production by fluent and non fluent EFL learners, and the results indicated that the fluent speakers employed significantly more cases of coordination ("and", "so", "but", etc.) and subordination ("because," "when", "unless", "that", etc.) than the non fluent speakers. They referred to the fact that "connectives were used to combine sentences successively and to develop the idea of the previous sentence" (p. 29). It follows from the previous studies that the use of connectives facilitates speeches and that learning to use different types of transition words increases fluency in spoken discourse.
Although results from the studies mentioned above cannot be used for making predictions about what results will show in the present study, many language specialists and theorists point out similarities between speaking and writing, and emphasize the close relationship of oral and written language (Cook, 1989; Halliday, 1989, Burns \& Seidlhofer, 2002). Therefore, it is presumed that the instruction of the appropriate use of transition words helps students improve fluency in written discourse as well as in spoken discourse. Furthermore, since written discourse is not as time bound as spoken one, which has specific time lag between production and reception (Brown \& Yule, 1983; Nunan, 1993), it seems reasonable to suppose that students have more time to think of connections between sentences and to organize ideas logically while they are writing, rather than while speaking. Accordingly, learning to use transition words could be
more effective at facilitating students' fluency in written language than in oral language, so that the use of connectives may enable students to write more about the relevant information and to enhance their fluency in writing.

## Method <br> Participants

At the first stage, about 100 learners of English participated in the study. These students were taken the OPT test. This test was divided into 3 parts, cloze test, structure, and vocabulary proficiency. Students with scores of 1 standard deviation below and above the mean were selected. Having being homogenized by an OPT test 40 students were selected and they were randomly divided into two groups, control and experimental ( $\mathrm{N}=20$ ). The participants were varied in terms of age and the field of study. That is all students irrespective of their major and ages were selected based on selection tests.

## Materials

To conduct the present investigation and to implement the process of data collection, the researcher used various tools including the OPT test of English language proficiency in order to measure the subjects' current status of proficiency level. A pre-test of writing was given to the subjects to measure the subjects' initial differences in writing. And finally a post test of writing was administered to both groups to find out the effectiveness of the treatment.

## Procedure

This study took different steps in application and managing the methodology of the research, which includes the selection of the subjects, instrument and materials. It should be noted that three types of test were used in this study, one is an OPT test which was used to make the subjects homogeneous.
Having being homogenized by an OPT test and they were randomly divided into two groups. One as a control group and other as an experimental group. Both groups sat for a pre-test of writing. The purpose of this test was to assess the initial subject knowledge of the learners in writing fluency.

Then the control group received no treatment and approached the traditional method of teaching writing, but the experimental group received treatment based on transition words through teachers' feedback.

During the treatment, the researcher uses the transition words to support the learners create powerful links between ideas and the logical writing papers. The transition words are common sentence connectors, such as moreover, however, thus, meanwhile, therefore, etc.

These transition words were presented through feedback in order that students in experimental group learn how to use connectives effectively and try to use them in writing assignments. During the treatment the researcher instructs transition words and provide them feedback and examples through sentences. Then learners presented this transition words activities in that learners presented sentences without transition words that they were supposed to add transition words in (if errors happen by the learners the teacher can help them through feedback) as follows:

- The trip through the desert was extremely tiring for the crew. In the distance they saw civilization. (without transition words)
- The trip through the desert was extremely tiring for the crew. Finally, in the distance, they saw civilization. (with transition words)
- Paul did not run for the ice cream truck with the other children. He doesn't like ice cream. (without transition words)


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- Paul did not run for the ice cream truck with the other children. Besides, he doesn't like ice cream. (with transition words)
The whole project took for 10 sessions, and each session for 40 minutes. And the last step was the posttest of writing fluency in which the subjects' ability in both groups on the specific treatment program was assessed.


## Results

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT (Oxford Placement Test) test. The results are shown in Table (4-1).

Table (1): Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

| N | Mean | SD |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 100 | 32 | 10.32 |

This table shows the result obtained from the proficiency test, OPT. The mean and standard deviation are presented.

Table (2) shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one excluded.

Table 2: Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test Cases

| Included |  |  | Excluded |  | Total |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| N | Percent N | Percent N | Percent |  |  |  |
| Pre-test*group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |
| Pre-test*group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |

Forty participants were selected for this study. They were divided into two groups, experimental and control.

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in table (3).

Table 3: Descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test

| Group |  | Pre-test | Post-test |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Experimental | Mean | 59.9 | 68.4 |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |
|  | SD | 4.8 | 4.7 |
| Control | Mean | 58.45 | 58.1 |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |
|  | SD | 5.64 | 5.2 |
| Total | Mean | 59.15 | 63.25 |


| N | 40 | 40 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| SD | 5.216 | 7.121 |

## Interpretive Statistics

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is particularly appropriate when subjects in two or more groups are found to differ on a pre-test or other initial variable. In this case the effects of the pretest and/or other relevant variables are partialled out, and the resulting adjusted means of the post-test scores are compared. Through ANCOVA differences in the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared as though their initial status had been equated. In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis " transition words through teachers' feedback does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' improvement of writing fluency", the differences between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA. Before running ANCOVA, the following hypotheses were examined:

1. Linear relationship between variables (pre-test and post-test)
2. Equality of Variances
3. Homogeneity of regression

The linear relationship between pre-test and post-test was examined through spread plot, graph (4-1):

Graph 1: The linear relationship between pre-test and post-test


As graph (1) shows, because the regression lines are parallel, so there is a linear relationship between the two variables, pre-test and post-test. It means that the relationship between the two variables in both groups is the same.

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In order to examine the equality of variances, Levines Test of Equality of Error Variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Table 4: Levine's Test of Equality of Error Variance

| F | df1 | df2 | Sig |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| .26 | 1 | 3 | .61 |

According to table (4) the calculated $F$ is not significant. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.

The data in table (5) are related to test of homogeneity of regression. Before running covariance, between-subjects effects of pre-test-group should be investigated.

Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Type lll Sum of Square | df | Mean Score | F | Sig |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected Model | 1879.82 |  | 3 | 626.61 | 230.93 | .00 |
| Group (a) | 17.86 | 1 |  | 17.86 | 6.6 | .015 |
| Pretest (b) | 802.97 |  | 1 | 802 | 295.95 | .00 |
| Group*pretest(a*b) | .41 |  | 1 | .41 | .15 | .7 |
| Error | 97.68 | 36 | 2.71 |  |  |  |
| Total | 46200 | 40 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

As table (5) shows, between -subjects effect (a*b) is not significance ( $\mathrm{F}=0.15, \mathrm{Sig}=0.7$ ). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between - subjects effect of post-test and group to show whether mean scores of two groups are the same or not. The results of this analysis are demonstrated in table (6).

Table 6: Mean and Corrected Mean of writing fluency

| Source | Posttest |  | Corrected Mean |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | M | SD | M | SE |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Experimental | 38.4 | 4.7 | 37.77 | .36 |
| Control | 28.1 | 5.11 | 28.72 | .36 |

Table (6) shows the corrected means of dependent variable quality of writing fluency. The data demonstrate that the means of experimental group are upper than control group.

Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of quality of writing fluency in experimental and control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table (7):

Table 7: Sum of analysis of covariance
Source Type 111 Sum of Square df Mean Score F Sig Partial Eta Squared

| Corrected Model | 1879.415 | 2 | 939.71 | 354.48 | .00 | .95 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pretest | 818.52 | 1 | 818.52 | 308.76 | .00 | .89 |
| Group | 805.42 | 1 | 805.48 | 303.84 | .00 | .89 |
| Error | 98.08 | 37 | 2.65 |  |  |  |
| Total | 46200 | 40 |  |  |  |  |

As it can be seen, the corrected model ( $\mathrm{f}=00, \mathrm{~F}=354.48$ ) is statistically significant. The results ( $\mathrm{F}=303.84, \mathrm{Sig}=.00, \mathrm{Eta}=.89$ ) shows that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is significance difference between experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis "transition words through teachers' feedback does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' improvement of writing fluency" was rejected, so it can be concluded that the quality of students' writing fluency can be improved by using transition words through teachers' feedback.

To clarify the result, the data will be demonstrated in graph (2). The vertical axis represents the post-test and the horizontal axis represent experimental and control group.


The graph shows that there is a significant difference between the quality of writing fluency in experimental and control group. It clearly shows that the experimental group who received treatment on the basis of transition words had better scores on post-test.

## Hypothesis Analysis

Based on the results obtained from the study, using SPSS software and ANCOVA analysis, the hypothesis is analyzed here.

The hypothesis of this study was that transition words through teachers' feedback does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' improvement of writing fluency.

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Based on the findings of this study, the results of ANCOVA analysis revealed that transition words through teachers' feedback had significant impact on learners' improvement of writing fluency. Those participants received treatment in the experimental group perform better than the control group, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

## Discussion and conclusion

The results of the 10 session's period indicate that teachers' comments on the use of connectives were helpful and useful feedback, and resulted in significantly greater use of transition words. However, the effect on the amount of writing was marginally significant and it can be presumed that students need a certain experimental period for the acquisition of transition words, so that they will succeed in more significantly increasing the number of words. At present, the assumption that learning to use transition words enhances students' fluency in writing is nearly verified.
The main findings also suggest that writing teachers should provide feedback on the use of transition words and teach students the effectiveness of using sentence connectors. This also helps to improve students' fluency in EFL writing classes. However, this study only partly confirms the effectiveness of teaching transition words in terms of writing fluency. In order to be able to investigate the tendency for learners to add logical information in their writing and observe patterns of consistent improvement, there could be a need for research to longitudinally examine the effects of such instruction. Therefore, a further direction of this study will be to provide more evidence for these findings and to improve the effectiveness of teachers' written feedback on the use of transition words.

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# IRANIAN MEDICAL LEARNERS AND THEIR ERRORS 

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#### Abstract

THIS RESEARCH PAPER IS INTENDED TO INVESTIGATE A STUDY OF ESSAY WRITING ERRORS OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS AT UNDER-GRADUATE LEVEL AT BUSHEHR UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES IN BUSHEHR CITY, IRAN .ERROR ANALYSIS ALWAYS PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING. ERROR ANALYSIS AS AN OUTPUT OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS HAS SHOWED TO TEACHERS, SYLLABUS DESIGNERS AND LEARNERS SHOULD MORE FOCUSES ON THEIR WORKS IN TEACHING, DESIGNING AND LEARNING LANGUAGE. WRITING SKILL AS ONE OF THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS USED IN EFL SETTING FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS. A TOTAL OF 160 IRANIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS IN THE AGE RANGE OF 18 TO 23 AT UNDER GRADUATE LEVEL AT BUSHEHR UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY. OUTCOME OF THIS RESEARCH PAPER SHOWED THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KINDS OF ESSAY WRITING ERRORS COMMITTED BY IRANIAN MEDICAL LEARNERS AT UNDER-GRADUATE LEVEL. IN ADDITION, THE HYPOTHESIS OF THIS PAPER WAS ACCEPTED. THE RESULTS OF THIS ARTICLE SHOWED THAT THE IRANIAN LEARNERS HAVE NOT MASTERED ON ESSAY WRITING AND STRUCTURE OF PARAGRAPH WRITING IN THEIR RESPONSES IN THIS RESEARCH WORK.


KEY WORDS: ERROR ANALYSIS, CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS, ESSAY WRITING, ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research paper is to investigate essay writing of Iranian learners. Writing skill as one of the four language skills used in EFL setting for foreign language learners. Khansir (2012b, p. 281) indicated that "writing plays an essential role in language learning". Writing is defined as art of a writer. Today, the role of written communication is used extensively by government, business and industry as well as in professions, such as science, engineering, medicine, etc. In addition, written communication can be used as a link between the writer and the reader and thus it determines the readers' attitude towards the writer. According to Mohan\& Banerji (2001), when the writer leaves his writing work, he has no control over it. Therefore, he cannot clarify or amplify what he has written, neither can he add nor delete. Further, in written communication there is no effective substitute for gestures, facial expressions, and modulation of
voice which make oral communication vibrant. Byrne (1988, p. 1) mentioned that "writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind: we translate our thoughts into language". He added that reading involves the decoding or interpretation of this message.
"Essay is (in composition) a longer piece of writing, particularly one that is written by a student as part of a course of study or by a writer writing for publication which expresses the writer's viewpoint on a topic". (Richards, 1992, p.203). In a particular, essay may be a piece of writing fall under four categories as follows:

1. Expository: a piece of writing on the rules and regulations of games like football, cricket, volleyball etc. Explanation and interpretation of some theory.
2. Descriptive: Description of a historical building/ monument in full details. Depiction of an event such as a street quarrel or a sports event. If you had witnessed a village cycle race and describe it in the order of importance as per your own assessment and without adding any imaginary points about it, it would amount to a Descriptive writing.
3. Narrative: One that deals with the details of a long train journey or a holiday or an excursion or the complete proceedings of a meeting of any kind. The details given must be in the same sequence as the happenings without any frills or imaginary additions to it.
4. Argumentative: Many subjects have two sides to them -for and against. And the writer gives equal importance to both. He is expected to give a verdict in favour of either but supported by strong arguments (Jayakaran, 2005). Traditionally, an essay is divided into three parts: a) the first part consists of an introduction that it has two parts: general statement and a main idea. The general statements give the reader background information about the topic of the essay. These statements should get the reader interested in the topic. The main idea is just like a topic sentence in a paragraph. It states the main topic and tells what will be said in the body paragraphs. The second part of an essay, the body, can contain any number of paragraphs, all of which explain and support the thesis in various ways. Finally, the conclusion is the last paragraph of the essay. It summarizes the main points discussed in the body or restates the idea in different words. It also leaves the reader with a final comment or thought about the topic.
In this paragraph, a brief history of error analysis hypothesis is considered. The hypothesis of Error analysis coined by Corder (1967), therefore; for more than 40 years in the actual researches of second and foreign language learning has been carried out and many main articles have been issued in journals and have reported research studies of error analysis in order to identify learners' problems in target language. As 'Error Analysis', a branch of 'Applied Linguistics' appeared in the sixties to show that learner errors were not only because of the learner's native language but also they reflected some universal strategies. Thus, error analysis hypothesis stayed against as reaction to 'Contrastive Analysis Theory' which considered native language interference as the major source of errors in second language learning what behavioristic theory suggested (Khansir, 2012a). This theory revealed that errors are systematic; they can be used in order to give information to text book writers, teachers, and even learners in learning languages. In other words, the role of learner's errors in learning target language has always been as an integral part of language learning. Error analysis has been supported by many great researchers and linguists are of the view that error analysis hypothesis related competence of learners, as seen as part of a second or foreign language system has been referred to "inter-language" appeared by Selinker (1972), this theory indicated that a foreign language learner, once, he/she wants to learn his/her target language (foreign or second language) the foreign language learner make a system for his/herself which is different from his/her mother tuning and the target language; another theory is "approximate system" coined by Nemser (1971), he emphasized the developmental nature of the learner's language since with the addition of new elements the learner's linguistic system is continually being modified and developed and ; learner's transitional
competence produced by(Corder 1974) . According to Corder (1981, p. 24), error analysis focuses on two main objects: the first is theoretical and the second is applied. "The theoretical object serves to elucidate what and how a learner learns when he studies a second language." The second is the applied object serves to enable the learner to "learn more efficiency by exploiting our knowledge of his dialect for pedagogical purposes"(cited in khansir 2008).
In discussion of statement of problem, the Iranian medical learners has not mastered on English writing and they face problems in writing essay or paragraph in their classrooms. For the researchers always question arises that why the Iranian medical students have problems in writing English essay or paragraphs and they cannot use these items in their written communication in or out of their classrooms. The researchers believed that this paper is intended to help the Iranian medical students learn how to write an essay or paragraph in English language as their foreign language. Therefore, in order to enable the Iranian medical students in writing of essay in English language, we followed the objectives and question of the study in order to reach the main point of this project as follows:
1) To examine kinds of errors in English language;
2) To compare kinds of essay writing errors;
3) To suggest remedial measure to overcome the committed errors. Thus, the question is mentioned: Is there a significant difference between kinds of essay writing errors committed by Iranian EFL learners at under-graduate level at Bushehr University of Medical Sciences? The following hypothesis is formulated:
1. There is a significant difference between types of essay writing errors committed by Iranian students at under-graduate level at Bushehr University of Medical Sciences.

## 2. Literature Review

Writing along with error analysis should help the learners to understand some of difficulties they experience when they write. Error analysis is regarded as one of the most essential issues in second and foreign language learning. Many research papers related to error analysis by some scholars in this field are discussed below:
Al-kahtybeh (1992) studied the syntactic errors in the essays of Jordanian tenth grade students. The sample of the study consisted of 243 male and female students selected from 8 schools in Irbid district. The results of the study showed that the predominant errors among male students were tense, auxiliary verbs and prepositions while the least predominant were pronouns and concord. The most predominant error types for females were tense, article and prepositions while the least predominant were subject - verb agreement and concord. The researcher attributed various syntactic errors to: mother tongue interference, overgeneralization and ignorance of rules of usage. Khansir and Hozhabri (2014) examined the effect of error correction on 38 Iranian intermediate students from Navid English Institute in Bushehr city. In this study, they divided the learners into experimental and control groups. The experimental group of the study received half an hour of explicit instruction on writing activities in every session; then, the students were requested to write their essay. The results of the research paper showed that, the experimental groups improved their writing skill significantly at the end of the five-week writing instruction. The finding of this research indicated that errors correction had significantly impact on the writing skill of the Iranian students. Khansir, Ahrami and Hajivandi (2013) analyzed types of errors of paragraph writing of Iranian EFL students at Bushehr University of Medical Sciences and Health Services in Iran. In this article, they selected ninety first year medical students at under-graduate level for the data collection of the article. They examined pre-test and post-test of paragraph writing of the learners in order to measure knowledge of their learners' English paragraph writing in their university. The outcome of the article showed that the total number of errors made by the students was 290 . Based on the classification, it was found that the total number of errors committed by the students was 209 in pre-test of the study and in the post-test of the study was 81 . The result of the article indicated significant difference between pre-test and
post-test in paragraph writing of Iranian EFL learners. Sarfraz (2011) examined the errors made by 50 Pakistani undergraduate students in written essays. He found that the greater part of committed errors related to learners' interlanguage process and some errors was resulted from their mother tongue interference. Murad and Sawalmeh (2013) studied essay writing errors committed by a group of Saudi EFL learners at university level. They found that the Arabic speakers in their essay writing committed ten common errors: viz., verb tense, word order, subject/verb agreement, pronouns, spellings, capitalization, prepositions, articles, double negatives and sentence fragments.

## 3. Material \& Methods

### 3.1 Participants

A total of 160 Iranian students in the age range of 18 to 23 at under graduate level in Bushehr Medical Science University as foreign language learners participated in this study. To control the variable of gender, the present researchers invited both male and female students to take part in this study. They were selected after they taken a General English Proficiency Test and an Essay Writing Test.

### 3.2 Instrument

The instruments were used in this research are as follows
A. A General English Proficiency Test (Transparent) used in order to show the proficiency level in English of the participants.
B. A Background Questionnaire was used to elicit information on students' age, gender, and level of education.
C. Essay writing test was used to get information about the knowledge of the learners in English language in general and in Essay writing in particular

### 3.3 Procedure

The procedures that were adopted in this study in order to achieve the objectives of the article are such as: Development of the Background Questionnaire; Administration of the General English Proficiency Test; Development of Essay Writing Test, and Analysis of collected data. Before concentration on the Essay Writing Test that plays the significant role in this study, the researchers developed and administered the Background Questionnaire and General English Proficiency Test in order to elicit data and information. The Background Questionnaire was designed to collect information from the learners. The questionnaire developed by the present researchers involved some questions related to the learners' age, sex, education and learners' information about their parents, details about siblings, language attitudes, etc. The second test was used in this project was General English Proficiency Test. This test was administered to the learners in order to determine the proficiency level in English of the participants. The Essay Writing Test was selected to examine the ability of the subjects in order to distinguish various parts of an essay. The test was used to identify the types of essay writing errors produced by the learners of this study. In order to analyze the data of the aforementioned tests, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used in this study. In the process of the collecting data, three analyses were used: the first analysis including before making any effort to examine the hypothesis of this research, (essay writing errors), the General English Proficiency Test was administered to the learners. After this analysis, the students were selected for the purpose of collecting data. In second analysis, the Background Questionnaire was applied in order to collect

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information from the selected learners on the learners' age, sex, education and learners' information about their parents, details about siblings, language, etc. in the last analysis, the Essay Writing Test was used to investigate the hypothesis of the research and committed errors in essay writing of the subjects. The analysis of this part focused on these following processes:

- Classification of errors; Comparison of errors, and Suggestion for remedial measures.


## 4. Results

The main purpose of this work is to help the Iranian medical students to develop their writing skill in academic space and improve their essay writing in ELT classroom.

### 4.1 Essay Writing Test

In this research, the essay writing test was particularly selected to examine the participants' ability in distinguishing different parts of English essay. This test divided into three different parts: 1. the structure of paragraph writing; 2. the main idea of essay; 3. the grammatical structure of the essay are discussed as follows:

The structure of paragraph writing is classified in these categories: 1. topic sentence; 2. supporting sentence; 3 . supporting detail, and 4 . closing sentence. After analyzing the structure of paragraph writing of the essay writing test, 386 errors committed by the learners which were used in the structure of paragraph writing for this study were classified into four major categories are presented in table and figure1.

Table 1. Errors in different parts of the structure of paragraph writing

| Test items | Correct responses |  | Error responses |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Numbers of students | Percent | Numbers of students | percent |
| Topic sentence | 68 | $47.5 \%$ | $\mathbf{9 2}$ | $52.5 \%$ |
| Supporting sentence | $\mathbf{6 2}$ | $38.5 \%$ | $\mathbf{9 8}$ | $61.5 \%$ |
| Supporting detail | $\mathbf{6 2}$ | $38.5 \%$ | $\mathbf{9 8}$ | $61.5 \%$ |
| Closing sentence | $\mathbf{6 2}$ | $38.5 \%$ | $\mathbf{9 8}$ | $61.5 \%$ |



Figure 1: Errors in different parts of the structure of paragraph writing
This table and its figure indicated that the Iranian students committed errors in their recognition about different parts of the structure of paragraph writing. The table and its figure showed that the minimum number of errors made by the Iranian learners was from topic sentence 92 which came to $52.5 \%$. Moreover, this table and figure revealed that the undergraduate students' errors in their recognition of supporting sentence and supporting detail were 98 and 98 that came to $61.5 \%$ and $61.5 \%$ respectively. The errors of closing sentence were 98 which came to $61.5 \%$. One of the reasons that the learners committed errors in this part of essay writing could be lack of knowledge about the structure of paragraph writing. They need more practice in this part in order to improve their paragraph writing. The learners should be familiar with the structure of paragraph writing in order to learn knowledge of paragraph and essay writing.

### 4.2 Main idea of the Essay Writing Test

In this part of this essay writing test, the participants were requested to underline the main idea of the essay writing test. After analyzing the essay writing test, the subjects committed 96 errors in recognition of the main idea of the essay writing test. The errors are presented in table and figure 2.

Table 2. Errors in the main idea of the essay writing test

| Test item | Correct responses |  |  | Error responses |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Numbers of student | percent | Numbers of students | percent |

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| Main idea | $\mathbf{6 4}$ | $40 \%$ | $\mathbf{9 6}$ | $60 \%$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |



Figure 2: Errors in the main idea of the essay writing test
In this part of the essay test, the participants were asked to underline the main idea of essay. In this category, the Iranian students committed 96 errors which came to $60 \%$. In order to avoid errors of recognition main idea, the subjects must be familiar with main idea. Teachers also should do more practice in their classroom and they should try to increase the knowledge of their students.

### 4.3 Grammatical Errors

In this study, the essay writing test included some fill in the blank parts and the subjects were requested to choose one option. This test is classified into four major categories: 1. Article; 2. Tense; 3. Spelling; 4. Proposition. Based on analyzing of the grammatical test, 398 errors are committed by the Iranian learners in their responses.

Table 3: Grammatical Errors

| Test items | Correct responses | percent | Error responses | percent |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Articles | $\mathbf{3 6}$ | 22.5 | $\mathbf{1 2 4}$ | 77.5 |
| Tense | $\mathbf{6 0}$ | 27.5 | $\mathbf{1 0 0}$ | 72.5 |


| Spelling | 70 | 43.5 | $\mathbf{9 0}$ | 56.5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| proposition | 76 | 47.5 | $\mathbf{8 4}$ | 52.5 |



Figure 3: Grammatical Errors
The table 2 and its figure indicated that the total numbers of grammatical errors in article, tense, spelling, and proposition were 398. The number of errors made by the Iranian students in the use of article was 124 which came to $77.5 \%$. The students committed 100 tense errors which came to $72.5 \%$. The number of errors committed by the Iranian EFL learners in the use of spelling was 90 which came to $56.5 \%$. The number of proposition errors was 84 which came to $52.5 \%$. Thus, the researchers believes that one of the most important reasons behind this fact that the students committed errors in grammatical items can be said that they did not pay attention to English grammar as one of basic English. One of the major works is to familiarize the learners with the system of essay writing and teach them the English grammar properly.

## 5. Discussion

A question arises that why we write a writing paper in our life. The researchers believe that writing is one of the most powerful communication tools, we use today and for the rest of our life. In fact, we use it to share our thoughts and ideas with others and even to communicate with ourselves. A paragraph is a group of sentences that shares a common topic or purpose. An essay is made by many paragraphs and many of the paragraphs are written organized around a topic sentence. The topic sentence is supported or explained by the other sentences in the paragraph. The sentences supported the topic sentence are called supporting sentences. The purpose of the supporting sentences is to develop, support, or explain the key idea expressed in a topic sentence. The closing sentence is last part of a paragraph. It is used for two purposes. First, it restates the topic sentence in different words. Second, it should leave readers with a memorable statement, a call to action, or a thought.

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Many scholars suggest that the best way to improve writing is to write often and practice it. Another skills can be used in order to improve writing of EFL learners is that they read newspapers or short story books, and try to communicate with the native speakers of English language. Mastery of the writing system includes the ability to spell words, use of punctuation needs, aware of paragraph rules, and supplying the correct grammatical rules of sentences and composition in English. According to these points, English writing always plays a crucial role in teaching English as foreign or second language for English language learners.

Once you write essay writing, you should write the three parts clearly: the introduction, the central paragraphs (body), and the conclusion. In teaching of the essay writing, the teacher should identify those parts of the essay writing to their students. He tries to identify the topic sentences in each of the paragraphs (body) of the essay writing and shows the learners supporting sentences along with their supporting details, and finally, defines closing sentence.

In this research paper, the type of errors revealed that the Iranian medical students did not have the ability in using the correct grammatical rules of sentences and essay writing in English. In order to eradicate the learner's errors; they need more practice in the area. In order to enable them to write an essay, they should be required to do sufficient exercises in order to increase their knowledge of English essay writing and reduce their errors. In order to avoid errors in the use of the articles, the Iranian EFL learners should be made familiar with the rules governing the use of the definite and the indefinite articles. The teacher should do sufficient exercises for both class work and home work. In order to avoid errors in the use of spelling, teacher should teach the learners the correct way of spelling and inform them to practice more. The learners should be given some exercises on spelling. The exercises should contain the words with missing letter. And the students should be asked to write these words correctly. In order to avoid errors in the use of tense, the learner should be made familiar with the rules of tense in English sentences. English language teachers should conduct sufficient exercises in the classrooms till their students attain mastery over the difference between the forms of tense in their productive skills.

## Conclusion

In the history of applied linguistics, error analysis hypothesis has a vital place in learning and teaching of target language. In other words, this hypothesis is known as the simple procedure of recognizing the second and foreign language learners' errors in the target language. However, in this paper, commit errors in the use of English essay writing, enable the teachers more focus on the learning strategies to teach better writing skill in their classroom.

The result of this article indicated that there is a significant difference between types of essay writing errors committed by Iranian medical students at under-graduate level. In addition, the hypothesis of this paper was accepted. The outcome of this article showed that the Iranian medical learners have not mastered on essay writing and structure of paragraph writing in their responses in this research work. Finally, the investigators believed that learning strategies as source of errors in this area can be responsible for making of the errors in this paper.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL LEARNERS' LEVEL OF READING ENGAGEMENT AND THEIR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 

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#### Abstract

THIS PAPER INVESTIGATES THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EFL LEARNERS' LEVEL OF READING ENGAGEMENT AND THEIR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. TO DO SO, THE QUESTIONNAIRE OF MOTIVATING READING INSTRUCTION (QMRI) WAS GIVEN TO 34 PARTICIPANTS WHO WERE STUDYING ENGLISH AT JAHAN-E-ELM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE AND THEY WERE ASKED TO FILL IT. THE PURPOSE OF GIVING THE QMRI QUESTIONNAIRE WAS TO ESTIMATE THE LEVEL OF STUDENTS' READING ENGAGEMENT. TO FIND OUT THE LEVEL OF STUDENTS' READING ENGAGEMENT FROM THE TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE, REI QUESTIONNAIRE WAS GIVEN TO THE TEACHER. NEXT, THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE'S QUESTIONNAIRE WAS ADMINISTERED. HAVING FIGURED OUT THE LEVEL OF READING ENGAGEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS FROM BOTH PERSPECTIVES, THE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AND REGRESSION ANALYSIS BETWEEN QMRI AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WAS DONE. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT THERE WAS A POSITIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE TWO VARIABLES OF THE STUDY, SHOWING A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF READING ENGAGEMENT AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.


KEYWORDS: CONCEPTUAL PRESS, AUTONOMY SUPPORT, ENGAGED READING, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI), EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT (EQ).

## 1. Introduction

Most researchers believe that engaged readers approach reading with eagerness (see Pintrich \& DeGroot, 1990; Schiefele \& Rheinberg, 1997). Pursuing clear reading goals, readers focus their attention purposefully and demonstrate well-established habits of concentration. They take pleasure in using their skills to understand a text and invest special effort in what they care about most (Meyer and Rose, 2002). Students become deeply engaged in reading for many reasons: the subject or the author's handling of words fascinates them; they are challenged to just the right

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degree and feel themselves progressing and learning; they enjoy doing what they do well; or working hard at reading serves a broader goal of doing well in school (Chall \& Onofrey, 2002).

Engagement is essential to successful reading. Based on Meyer and Rose (2002), the students who are beginning to read must be engaged in the material they are trying to read and in the process of learning. Excellent readers learning advanced comprehension skills read more effectively if they are interested and confident of their ability to succeed. Every teacher knows that engaging students in reading includes building their confidence and arousing their interest, and desire. Successful teachers help students think of themselves as readers. How do we conclude if a reader is engaged or unengaged? Sabine \& Sabine (1983, p. 29 as cited in M.O. Tunnell \& J.S. Jacobs, 2009) argued that an engaged reader is not aware of the reading process, s/he even doesn't even see words after the first sentence or two. They are unaware of how many pages they have read or how long they have been reading. When engaged readers come to a word they can't pronounce or define, they skip right over it without hesitation. A real reader engaged in a book is not cognizant of reading skills (M.O. Tunnell \& J.S. Jacobs, 2009).
Some research indicate that the emotional competencies which affect reading include: stress management (stress tolerance and impulse control), adaptability (problem solving, reality testing, and flexibility), and general mood(happiness and optimism). To be a good reader, one must know how to cope with and manage stressful situations, how to define problems and generate potentially effective solutions, how to evaluate the correspondence between objective and subjective reality in a realistic and well-grounded fashion, and how to adjust emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to changing conditions. Being satisfied with life, enjoying being with others, and maintaining a positive attitude even in face of adversity is true requirements of successful reading.

### 1.2. Rationale for the Study

A great deal of research on reading in particular has focused on the cognitive aspects of reading (see for example Adams, 1990; Mosenthal, \& Pearson, 1991; Ruddell, \& Singer, 1994, as cited in Robert Rueda, Laurie MacGillivray and Lilia Monzó, 2001). However, Robert Rueda, Laurie MacGillivray and Lilia Monzó (2001) argued that many researchers and theoreticians have begun to reconsider the balance between cognitive and affective (specifically motivational) aspects of reading (Guthrie \& Wigfield, 2000; McCombs, 1989 as cited in Robert Rueda, Laurie MacGillivray and Lilia Monzó, 2001).

No doubt that engaged reading is an affective procedure through which the reader is engaged in the process of reading. Engagement depends upon a complex mixture of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Also, based on what Kathleen C. Perencevich (2004) mentioned, as students perceived their instruction to be motivating, their reading engagement would increase. Autonomy support and conceptual press are considered as the major components of reading engagement (Kathleen C. Perencevich, 2004). Reading engagement also includes cognitive, motivational and behavioral characteristics. The main purpose of the current, therefore, is to investigate the relationship between the engaged reading and emotional intelligence.

## 2. Theoretical and Imperial Background

### 2.1. The Engagement Perspective of Reading and EI

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been identified as an important part of an individual's ability to successfully cope with environmental demands. Because of the constantly changing environments in which we live, individuals often require more than just task competencies or
technical know-how to be successful. People who possess a particular blend of skills, competencies and traits may be more suitable for functioning in various roles that bring with them an assortment of challenges.
Emotional intelligence is best defined as the ability to identify and manage emotional information in oneself and others and to focus energy on required behaviors. Also known as "Social Intelligence", the skill and competencies that comprise emotional intelligence complement a person's cognitive and technical skills. However, the concept of engagement is rather new and researchers are now investigating the best ways to describe and measure this many-sided construct (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, \& Paris, 2004). In the domain of reading, engagement has referred to the functioning of motivation, and Golemn, identified five domains of EQ: a) knowing one's emotion, b) managing emotion, c) motivating oneself, d) recognizing emotions in others, and e) handling relationships. To him, a person with higher emotional intelligence should become happier, more optimistic, motivated and outgoing!!
Emotional intelligence can be improved through training and, thus, provide an excellent means of identifying strengths and potential growth edges, as well as measuring the effectiveness of individual and organization development initiatives. Many studies demonstrated that those with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to perform at higher levels and it ensures their success in life and education.

### 2.2. Constituents of Engaged Reading

Affective part of engaged reading consists of reading motivation. As Deci, E., \& Ryan, R.(1987) stated, "People are said to be motivated to the extent that they intend to accomplish something...An intention involves a desire to attain some future state along with a means to attain the desired end" (p.3). Reading is an activity that individuals do for various reasons and those reasons mirror intentions, beliefs, and personal attitudes. For example, students who are inquisitive read extensively to learn about the world around them. Students who try to find involvement and the experience of getting lost in a book read for the experience of enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, M., \& Rathunde, K.1993). At a given time and in a particular context, a reader's intentions can show a discrepancy and include numerous reasons for pursuing reading activities. This idea has been empirically long-established in multiple studies (Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, \& Perencevich, 2004). For example, in a study of primary school children, Wigfield et al. (2004) found that motivation for reading, science, math, and social studies were discernible and relatively specific to their domains.

Recent research in reading motivation has begun to focus on multiple trajectories to reading achievement and the situational determinants that may affect motivation (Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, \& Perencevich, 2004). It is reasonable that there are multiple motivational aspects of reading behavior, such as interest in reading, reading efficacy, involvement in reading, and preference for reading challenge (Guthrie, J. T. \& Wigfield, A. 2000).

## 3. Research Question and Hypothesis

The present study will address the following research question:
Q1. Is there any relationship between EFL learners' level of reading engagement and their emotional intelligence?

To come up with reasonable results on the basis of the aforementioned research questions, the following null hypothesis were proposed:

H01: There is no relationship between EFL learners' engaged reading level and their emotional intelligence.

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Participants

The target population for the present study, to which the results of the study are going to be generalized, consisted of Iranian EFL learners who are studying English as a Foreign Language in colleges, universities, or private English Language Institutes across Mashhad, Iran.

The sample of this study includes 34 EFL learners studying English at Jahan-e-Elm Higher Education Institute, Mashhad, Iran and their teachers respectively. The students' age range was between 20 and 25 . Based on the prior completion of the course and placement test of the institute all participants were selected from upper-intermediate level. Therefore, all had the same background knowledge.

### 4.2. Instruments

A series of data collection instruments were employed for the purpose of this study:
(A). Questionnaire of Motivating Reading Instruction (QMRI). This is a self-report instrument to rate students' perceptions of instruction with regard to their teachers' support for conceptual press and support for autonomy.
(B). Reading Engagement Indicator (REI). This questionnaire was completed by the teacher. Teachers also rated their students in the context of classroom based on cognitive, motivational and behavioral characteristics (Guthrie \& Wigfield, 2000).
(C). Bar-On's Emotional Quotient-Inventory (EQ-i):

The instrument of this research is a Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory which includes 90 questions in 5 composite scale scores which are Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Adaptability, and General Mood EQ. Each question was designed based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 to 1 (completely agree $=5$ to completely disagree $=1$ ). And in some questions with negative content ranging from 1 to 5 (completely agree $=1$ to completely disagree $=5$ ).

This questionnaire was standardized to be used in Iran; its content validity was reported to be acceptable and its reliability was 0.93 by Cronbach's alpha and mean score of student were used for accessing of academic achievement.

### 4.3 Procedures

At the beginning of the study the Questionnaire of Motivating Reading Instruction (QMRI) was given to 34 participants who were studying English at Jahan-e-Elm Higher Education Institute and they were asked to fill it and submit it to the researcher during a week. Next, the emotional intelligence's questionnaire was administered.

The purpose of giving the QMRI questionnaire was to estimate the level of students' reading engagement. To find out the level of students' reading engagement from the teacher's perspective, REI questionnaire was given to the teacher and he was asked to complete the form and submitted to the researcher. Having figured out the level of reading engagement of participants from both perspectives, the correlation coefficient and regression analysis between QMRI and emotional intelligence was done.

## 5. Discussion and Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the necessary data for the present study was collected through two Questionnaires of QMRI and EQ( Emotional Quotient).

The descriptive statistics of QMRI as the independent (predictor) variable and EQ as the dependent (predicted) variables are illustrated in the following Tables (see Table 1):

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for QMRI and EQ

|  | N | Minimu m | Maximu m | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Emotional intelligence 2.45549 |  | 34 | 11.00 | 20.00 | 16.0294 |
| Valid N (listwise) |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\begin{aligned} & \text { EQ } \\ & 2.72900 \end{aligned}$ |  | 34 | 11.00 | 20.00 | 15.6471 |
| $\begin{aligned} & \hline \text { QMRI } \\ & 23.1627 \end{aligned}$ |  |  |  | 224.0 | 129.823 |

In order to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the QMRI and EQ, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to find the relationship between the two variables. The results of the correlation coefficients between QMRI and EQ are reported in Table. 2.

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation between QMRI \& emotional intelligence

|  | QMRI | EQ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| QMRI | 1.00 |  |
| EQ | $.66(* *)$ | 1.00 |

** Correlation is significant at the . 01 level (2-tailed)
As the results in Table 2 indicate, there is a positive correlation between the two instruments ( $r=$ $.66, p<.05$ ), showing a significant relationship between the level of reading engagement and emotional intelligence.

### 5.1.1. Regression Analysis for QMRI and emotional intelligence

To analyze the data further, regression analysis was conducted. The results indicated that QMRI is a positive predictor of the dependent variable (EQ). The results of regression analysis for QMRI and CKE are reported in Table 3. As the results of Table 3 reveal, the model containing scores of QMRI can predict $71 \%$ of the EQ scores. The R value is .84 indicating a correlation between students' reading engagement level and their emotional intelligence.

Table 3. R square for Reading Engagement as the Predictor of emotional intelligence!

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| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted <br> Square | R | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | $.661(\mathrm{a})$ | .717 | .713 | 11.05734 |  |
| Predictors: (Constant), QMRI |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 3 shows the contribution of the independent variable (QMRI) on the dependent variable (emotional intelligence) equals .661. The square value is .71 showing that about $71 \%$ of the variation in emotional intelligence can be explained by taking their reading engagement into account. Therefore; reading engagement is making a significant contribution to the prediction of emotional intelligence!

Table 4. Coefficients Between Students' Reading Engagement and Emotional Intelligence.

| Sig. | T | Standardized <br> Coefficients | Unstandardized <br> Coefficients | Model |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | B | Beta | Std. Error | B | Std. Error |
| .000 | 15.502 |  | 7.256 | 112.486 | (Constant) 1 |
| .000 | 12.810 | .661 | .168 | 2.155 | QMRI |

* a: Dependent Variable: EQ

As the results, it is demonstrated that there is a significant correlation between students' level of reading engagement and their emotional intelligence (Table 4).

## 6. Conclusions

As the data in this study indicated, the Iranian EFL learners' level of reading engagement is positively related to their emotional intelligence. It is concluded, therefore, that the Questionnaire of Motivating Reading Instruction (QMRI) can be a positive predictor of the participants' emotional intelligence. Meanwhile, the results of this study demonstrated a significant correlation between Iranian's level of reading engagement and their performance in a reading proficiency test. This confirms results found by Meyer and Rose (2002) that students who are beginning to read must be engaged in the material they are trying to read and in the process of learning to achieve success in reading. Moreover, the findings revealed a significant relationship between the perspectives of Iranian teachers and students on the students' level of reading engagement. Accordingly, it can be concluded that reading engagement can affect observable motivational and behavioral patterns of the learners in the context of classroom.

Reading engagement, as illustrated through the results of this study, can be viewed as a strong motivational and affective aspect of reading behavior. Furthermore, the results of this study can suggest teachers of L2 reading skills develop students' intrinsic motivation through interesting topics or themes practiced as classroom reading tasks which may lead to long term reading engagement as well as deeper learning and reading efficacy. An implication of the findings of the current study is that if reading instruction in reality improves EFL learners' achievement through increasing engaged reading during instruction, then it is vital to consider more closely the

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diversity of instructional practices that affect students' motivation to read during instruction. A further practical implication of the findings in this study is that EFL teachers can attempt to enhance students' reading engagement in the classroom with a sensible belief that this engagement will boost students' reading comprehension. At the same time, if teachers recognize that their comprehension instruction is not highly engaging, they should be doubtful that it will increase students' final reading comprehension levels.

As Carmeli (2003) noted, emotionally intelligent individuals are expected to recognize, manage, and use their emotions to manipulate the ensuing obstacles and prevent their negative effects on attitudes towards their profession. This is particularly true when it comes to professions such as teaching, with its high levels of complexity and constant interaction. Study of EI in the educational setting is a relatively new endeavor and, as such, few studies have focused on the overall effects of EI on second or foreign language learning. These few studies have been limited to certain dimensions as management, self-esteem, anxiety, strategy use, or motivation only. In ESL/EFL context, different studies examined the relationship between EQ and second language success (Chao, 2003; Clement, Dornyei, \& Noels, 1994; Nelson \& Low, 1999). For instance Aghasafari (2006) found a positive relationship between overall EQ and language learning strategies.

Furthermore, according to a revised version of Oxford's strategy Inventory for language learning, the relation between EQ and English language learning were also examined among the Iranian students which the results indicated that there was a positive relationship between overall EQ and language learning strategies. Also if teachers are concerned with helping students develop their second language abilities, they might want not only to improve their EQ skills but also reduce foreign language anxiety which considered as effective factor in language performance.

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# THE EFFICACY OF SELF-REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT ON LANGUAGE LEARNERS' METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THIS RESEARCH STUDIED THE EFFICACY OF SELF-REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT ON LANGUAGE LEARNERS' METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS". THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH WAS TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER LEARNERS WERE ABLE TO RELIABLY REGULATE THEIR OWN READING COMPREHENSION OR NOT. SIXTY PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED BASED ON A SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING FROM THE 75 STUDENTS BY CHOCRAN'S SAMPLE SIZE FORMULA. THE STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPED BY FREDERICK KANFER (KANFER, 1970A, AND 1970B) AND SCHRAW, G. \& DENNISON, R.S. (1994) .THESE QUESTIONNAIRES CONSISTED OF 63 AND 52 ITEMS RESPECTIVELY. THE READING COMPREHENSION TEST WAS RUN TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELFREGULATION AND READING COMPREHENSION. PEARSON CORRELATION WAS 0.303 IN THIS STUDY. THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH REVEALED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING COMPREHENSION AND SELFREGULATION. THE FINDINGS ALSO REVEALED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND READING COMPREHENSION BUT THERE WAS NOT ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELFREGULATION AND METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS. THE STUDY COULD HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND TEXT BOOK WRITERS.


KEY WORDS: SELF-REGULATION, READING COMPREHENSION, METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS.

## Introduction

Good reading ability is the key to success in school and this is one reason why researchers are trying to find significant educational and psychological variables that can explain variations in reading ability and academic achievement. These variables can be strictly cognitive like word recognition (e.g., Guthrie, WigWeld, Metsala, \& Cox, 1999; Lyon, 1993), or they can be more socially cognitive. Reading is

[^6]a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (reading comprehension). Like all language, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated. The reading process requires continuous practice, development, and refinement. In addition, reading requires creativity and critical analysis. Because reading is such a complex process, it cannot be controlled or restricted to one or two interpretations. There are no concrete laws in reading, but rather allows readers an escape to produce their own products introspectively. This promotes deep exploration of texts during interpretation.. Readers use a variety of reading strategies to assist with decoding (to translate symbols into sounds or visual representations of speech) and comprehension. Readers may use context clues to identify the meaning of unknown words. Readers integrate the words they have read into their existing framework of knowledge or schema (schemata theory). Self-Regulated Strategy Development Model (SRSD) is an implementation model for cognitive strategy instruction. According to Read (2005) "The goal of SRSD is to make the use of strategies habitual, flexible, and automatic". The terms metacognition, self-regulation, and selfregulated learning appear frequently in the educational literature and are sometimes used interchangeably. In order to explore the theoretical and empirical boundaries between these three constructs and the perceptions or misperceptions that their broad and often unqualified application may engender, an analysis of their use within contemporary research was undertaken. The current research addresses the topic of self-regulation as a way to bridge the gap between written texts and students' perception of the evaluation process to foster students' autonomy and improve his/her learning. Though most teachers would agree that teaching students to be more self-regulative in the classroom would be ideal, the practice does not come without challenge. Developing lessons that prepare students to engage in SRL practices and provide real support and opportunities for implementation is no small feat (Paris, S. G., \& Paris, A. H., 2001). Many will find that the major obstacle in helping students become self-regulative is the time required to teach students how to use specific strategies (Boekaerts \& Cascallar, 2006). Although teachers in K-12 settings often are pressed to accomplish many tasks in limited time spans, it is important to remember that SRL strategies can help students learn new information and effectively prepare for those very tasks. Fundamental changes at the school level may need to occur for teachers to be able to allocate the time and resources necessary for preparing students to be self-regulated learners. Most importantly, classroom curriculum and accompanying assessment systems must be organized in ways that support and value autonomous inquiry and strategic problem-solving.

## Review of the related literature

In a study of high school students, Labuhn et al. (2010) found that learners who were taught SRL skills through monitoring and imitation were more likely to elicit higher levels of academic self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) and perform higher on measures of academic achievement compared to students who did not receive SRL instruction. It seems as though SRL can make the difference between academic success and failure for many students (Harris, K. R., \& Graham, S., 1996). Zimmerman (2002) explains that self-regulated learning is not only a simple personal trait that learners either possess or lack, but it consists of the selective use of specific processes personally adapted to each learning task. He adds that self-regulated component skills are as follows: (a) setting specific proximal goals for oneself, (b) adopting powerful strategies for attaining the goals, (c) monitoring one's performance selectively for signs of progress, (d) restructuring one's physical and social context to make it compatible with one's goals, (e) managing one's time use efficiently, (f) self-evaluating one's methods, (g) attributing causation to results, and (h) adapting future methods. Baumeister and Vohs (2008) state that selfregulation refers to a person's ability to change his/her behavior. The quality and existence of these actions would alter in relation to some goals, ideals and norms no matter whether their stem would have public or internal anticipation. In general, human behavior flexibility and
adaptability will increase during self-regulation process. This flexibility enables learners to regulate their performance to a broad range of situational or public requirements they encounter in their daily life experience.

## Methods of Research

This study investigated the efficacy of self-regulatory development on language learners' metacognitive awareness and its possible impact on the Reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners. This investigative research is undertaken by two questionnaires and one reading comprehension test served to complement the objectives of the present study. So this research method is applied by descriptive and correlation method. To do this at first about 30 learners participated in the tests from different levels. The instruction was given to make sure that learners understand the procedure. EFL learners Comprehension test administrated by the researcher. All students answered the reading test in one session spending 55 minutes for the test. In the second phase, Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) questionnaire was carried out spending 60 minutes. And then the Self-regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) was carried out by students. The classroom procedure was divided into three phases. The first phase was comprehension test, the second phase was Metacognitive Awareness Inventory test and the third phase was Self-Regulation Questionnaire. To find out the reliability of tests the Cronbach's Alpha was used, and for validity a table of specification was designed and two EFL Ph.D. instructors calculated the validity of questionnaires in the present study. The obtained chronbach's alpha for MAL and SRQ were 0.85 and 0.92 respectively. So the validity and reliability were confirmed. The students who took part in the study consisted of 60 ( 8 males and 52 females), 18-30 year-old EFL learners at Omid language institution in shahrekord. Selection of the participants for the study was based on a simple random sampling from the 75 students by Chocran's Sample size formula. So the sample size is 60 student. This study is quantitative. The data gathered through reading test was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows version 20.0. Descriptive statistical procedures and analysis of Pearson correlation coefficient, variance (ANOVA) were used to ascertain the extent to which metacognitive strategy instruction influenced the learners' reading comprehension.

## Research Questions and Hypothesis

Considering the purpose of this study and in an attempt to trigger more research in the field of L2 reading in Iran, the research question for this study has been formulated as follows:

1. Does SRSD instruction improve reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners?
2. To what extent can the application of SRSD enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill?
Based on the research questions mentioned above the following research hypotheses will be investigated in the current study:
3. There is no relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension.
4. The application of SRSD does not enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill.

## Results

## Research Questions

1. Does SRSD instruction improve reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners?

The mean of SRSD was 2.96 and SD was 0.42 .So we compare these scales by One-Sample T test. Result Showed that mean of Self-Regulation Strategy Development score was more than 189(standardize

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mean) and the difference was significant. ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). We stated that SRSD instruction improve reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. In this regard, Self-regulated learning is a process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences. Self-regulation is essential to the learning process (Zimmerman, 2002). It can help students create better learning habits and strengthen their study skills (Wolters, 1999), apply learning strategies to enhance academic outcomes (Harris, and Graham, 1996), monitor their performance (Harris, 1986), and evaluate their academic progress.

Table 1: One-Sample Statistics

|  | Number | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of SRSD | 60 | 2.96 | .42 |

Table 2: One-Sample Test
$\begin{array}{|ccccccc|}\hline & & & & & \\$\cline { 5 - 7 } \& \& \& \& Test Value$\left.=2.5\end{array}\right)$
$(t=8.52 \& p=0.001)$
2. To what extent can the application of SRSD enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill?
One-Sample Statistics Showed that mean of metacognitive awareness and reading skill was 37.18 that was upper than standardize mean. One-Sample Statistics Showed that mean of metacognitive awareness marks more than 30 (standard mean) and the difference was significant. ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). It is explained that self-regulated learners are able to set short- and long-term goals for their learning, plan ahead to accomplish their goals, self-motivate themselves, and focus their attention on their goals and progress. They also are able to employ multiple learning strategies and adjust those strategies as needed, self-monitor their progress, seek help from others as needed, and self-evaluate their learning goals and progress based upon their learning outcomes. Teachers at the primary and secondary levels can use the aforementioned strategies to promote self-regulation in their classrooms. However, teachers should understand that learners develop at various paces, and strategies that work best for one learner may not always work with the next. Research has found self-efficacy and the use of self-regulation strategies to have reflexive positive impacts on one another. Higher self-efficacy beliefs increase the use of self-regulation strategies (Pajares, 2000). The use of self-regulation strategies can lead to increases in self-efficacy beliefs and academic achievement (Schunk, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000). When students are motivated to learn, they are more likely to invest the necessary time and energy needed to learn and apply appropriate SRL skills, and when students are able to successfully employ self-regulation strategies, they are often more motivated to complete learning tasks (Zimmerman, 2000). In the present study we find this result.

Table 3: One-Sample Statistics

|  | Number | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of MAI | 60 | 37.18 | 8.16 |

Table 4: One-Sample Test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Test Value $=30$ |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | T | df | Sig. (2- | Mean |  |  |


|  | tailed | Difference | of the Difference |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Lower | Upper |  |
| Sum of MAI | 6.81 | 59 | .000 | 7.18 | 5.07 |

## Research Hypothesis

1. There is no relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension.
In this Study the Pearson Correlation test with $(r=0.303 \& p=0.019)$ shows that there is positive significant relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension. $\mathrm{p}>0.05$ ). So we accepted the opposite Hypothesis. In this regard the research showed that selfregulated students are more engaged in their learning and voluntarily offer answers to questions and also perform higher on measures of academic achievement. It seems as though SRL can make the difference between academic success and failure for many students.
Pintrich (2000) defines self-regulation (or self-regulated learning) as "an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempted to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment" .Since 1985, more than 30 studies have been conducted using SRSD, primarily in the area of writing, with students from elementary through high school (Wong, Harris, Graham \& Butler, 2003). While SRSD encompasses teaching multiple skills and strategies, it also incorporates current beliefs regarding expertise in subject matter domains (Alexander, 1997). The results of this study are consistent with present study.

Table 5: Correlations

|  |  | Sum of COMPR | Sum of SRQ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of COMPR | Pearson <br> Correlation | 1 | $.303^{*}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .019 |
|  | N | 60 | 60 |
| Sum of SRQ | Pearson <br> Correlation | $.303^{*}$ | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .019 | 60 |
|  | N | 60 | 6 |

2. The application of SRSD does not enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill.
The Pearson Correlation test with ( $\mathrm{r}=0.157 \& \mathrm{p}=0.231$ ) shows that there is no significant relationship between SRSD and metacognitive awareness in the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' but there is a significant relationship between SRSD and reading skill.(r= 0.303 $\& p=0.019)$. Or ( $\mathrm{p}>0.05$ ). So we accepted the opposite Hypothesis. In this regard it is explained that the application of SRSD does not enhance metacognitive awareness in Iranian EFL Learners, but it can enhance reading skill. About relationship between SRSD and metacognitive awareness, Baumeister and Vohs (2008) state that self-regulation refers to a person's ability to change his/her behavior. The quality and existence of these actions would alter in relation to some goals, ideals and norms no matter whether their stem would have public or internal anticipation. In general, human behavior flexibility and adaptability will be increased during self-regulation process. This flexibility enables learners to regulate their performance to a broad range of situational or public

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requirements they encounter in their daily life experience. But in this study we have not obtained this result perhaps the sample size is one reason.
About the relationship between SRSD and reading skill Zimmerman (2002) explains that selfregulated learning is not only a simple personal trait that learners either possess or lack, but it consists of the selective use of specific processes personally adapted to each learning task. He defines self-regulated learning strategies as "actions and processes directed at acquisition of information or skills that involve agency, purpose, and instrumentality perceptions by learners. Our result is in agreement with Zimmerman.

Table 6: Correlations

|  |  | Sum of MAI | Sum of COMPR | Sum of SRSD |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Sum of MAI | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.371^{* *}$ | .157 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .004 | .231 |
|  | N | 60 | 60 | 60 |
| Sum of COMPR | Pearson Correlation | $.371^{* *}$ | 1 | $.303^{*}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .004 | .019 |  |
|  | N | 60 | 60 | 60 |
|  | Pearson Correlation | .157 | $.303^{*}$ | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .231 | .019 | 60 |

## Other findings of this research

1-There is no relationship between metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension.
The Correlation shows that there is a positive significant relationship between metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension. ( $r=0.37 \& p=0.004$ ). Or ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). In this regard studies demonstrate that successful comprehension does not occur automatically. Rather, it depends on directed cognitive effort, referred to as metacognitive processing, which consists of knowledge about regulation of cognitive processing. During reading, metacognitive processing is expressed through strategies, which are "procedural, purposeful, effortful, willful, essential, and facilitative in nature" (Alexander \& Jetton 2000: 295). Also Pressley (Pressley, M., \& Afflerbach, P.1995) explained that through metacognitive strategies, a reader allocates significant attention to controlling, monitoring, and evaluating the reading process.

Table 7: Correlations

|  | Correlations |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Sum of MAI |  |  |  | Sum of COMPR |
| Sum of MAI | Pearson <br> Correlation | 1 | $.371^{* *}$ |  |  |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .004 |  |  |
|  | Pearson <br> Correlation | 60 | 60 |  |  |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | $.371^{* *}$ | 1 |  |  |

2- There is a significant difference between SRSD, metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension with participants' genders.

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Independent Samples Test shows that there is a significant difference between improvement of reading comprehension with participant's genders ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ), but no difference between SRSD and metacognitive awareness with participant's genders ( $p>0 / 05$ ).

Table 8: Group Statistics

|  | Gender | Number | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of SRDS | Male | 8 | 36.00 | 9.19 |
|  | Female | 52 | 37.36 | 8.08 |
| Sum of MAI | Male | 8 | 193.87 | 24.05 |
|  | Female | 52 | 188.61 | 30.18 |
| Sum of COMPR | Male | 8 | 2.25 | 1.16 |
|  | Female | 52 | 1.50 | .75 |

Table 9: Independent Samples Test

|  | t -test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
| Sum of SRDS | -.437 | 58 | .664 | 1.36 |
|  |  |  |  | 1.36 |
| Sum of MAI | .469 |  |  | .641 |
| Sum of COMPR | 2.424 | 58 | .018 | 5.25 |
|  |  |  |  | .75 |

3- There is a significant difference between SRSD, metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension with participants' ages.
One-way ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference between metacognitive awareness with participant's ages ( $p>0 / 05$ ), but no difference between SRSD and improvement of reading comprehension with participant's ages ( $p>0 / 05$ ).

Table 10: ANOVA Test

|  |  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of SRDS | Between |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Groups | 471.346 | 7 | 67.335 | 1.443 | . 241 |
|  | Within groups | 979.689 | 21 | 46.652 |  |  |
|  | Total | 1451.034 | 28 |  |  |  |
| Sum of MAI | Between Groups | $14422.735$ | 7 | 2060.391 | 2.635 | . 040 |
|  | Within Groups | 16423.472 | 21 | 782.070 |  |  |
|  | Total | 30846.207 | 28 |  |  |  |
| Sum of COMPR | Between Groups | 5.479 | 7 | . 783 | 1.422 | . 249 |
|  | Within Groups | 11.556 | 21 | . 550 |  |  |
|  | Total | 17.034 | 28 |  |  |  |

## Discussion

The present study made an attempt to investigate the relationship between self-regulation development on language learners' metacognitive awareness and its possible impact on the Reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners.

In this study sixty Iranian EFL language learners ( $13.3 \%$ male, and $86.7 \%$ Female) completed three instruments Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI), the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) and reading comprehension.
The participants ages were not equal .15\% Lower than 20, 68.3\% between 20-25 and16.7\% Higher than 25 years old average of their age were 23.7 years old.
Metacognitive Awareness Frequency in the participants scored in 3 level. Low level was not observed. Moderate was $45 \%$ and high level $55 \%$. The Self-Regulation score was ( $78.3 \%$ high, $18.3 \%$ moderate and $3.3 \%$ low).
The results of the research revealed that there was considerable relationship between reading comprehension and self-regulation. The findings also revealed that there was considerable relationship between metacognitive awareness and reading comprehension but there was not any relationship between self-regulation and metacognitive awareness. The study could have implications for English language teachers, learners and text book writers.
Many studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between how one regulates himself and his success in academic studies. The main concern of this research was to study if such a relationship could be detected among intermediate Iranian EFL learners' achievements. Concerning the first question, One-Sample T test was run. Tables 4.5 and 4.6 show the results. The findings show that SRSD instruction improves reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). This is consistent with findings of (Zimmerman, 2002), and (Wolters, 1999). Concerning the second question, one sample T test was run. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show the results. The findings show that application of SRSD can enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill. ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). It is consistent with findings of (Pajares, 2008), and (Zimmerman, 2000) Researches. With regard to first hypothesis, Pearson Correlation $(\mathrm{p}<0.05)$ Show that there is positive significant relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension. So we accept the hypothesis. Table 4.9 shows this result. So this is consistent with (Pintrich, 2000), (Wong, Harris, Graham \& Butler, 2003) and (Alexander, 1997) results.
With regard to the second hypothesis the Pearson Correlation ( $p>0.05$ ) Show that there is no significant relationship between SRSD and metacognitive awareness in the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners', but there is significant relationship between SRSD and reading skill ( $\mathrm{p}<0.05$ ). So we accept the hypothesis. Table 4.10 shows this result. This result confirms the Vohs (2008) and (Zimmerman, 2002) investigations. Also during this study we concluded that there is positive significant relationship between metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). It is consistent with (Alexander \& Jetton 2000: 295), (Pressley, M., \& Afflerbach, P.1995) researches.
In this study independent Samples test Show there is significant difference between improvement of reading comprehension with participants genders ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ), but no significant difference between SRSD \& metacognitive awareness with participants genders ( $\mathrm{p}>0 / 05$ ). Oneway ANOVA Shows that there is significant difference between metacognitive awareness with participant's ages ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ), but no significant different between SRSD \&improvement of reading comprehension with participant's ages ( $\mathrm{p}>0 / 05$ ).

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# APPLYING RESEARCHER-MADE CHECKLIST TO ASSESS IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' ORAL REPRODUCTION 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT RESEARCH STUDIED DIFFERENT METHODS OF SCORING ORAL PERFORMANCE. IT AIMED TO DETERMINE WHETHER USING CHECKLIST, ESPECIALLY ANALYTIC CHECKLIST, HAD ANY EFFECT ON PROVIDING MORE PRECISE AND MORE OBJECTIVE SCORES FOR LEARNERS' ORAL SKILLS OR NOT. TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, 44 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS FROM ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY OF TONEKABON AND ALLAMAH MOHADDESE NOURI UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY. THE SUBJECTS WERE IN THE FIRST SECTION OF THE COURSE 'ORAL REPRODUCTION OF SHORT STORIES' AND WERE SELECTED BASED ON THEIR AVAILABILITY. THEY SHOWED THEIR ORAL REPRODUCTION ABILITY BY TELLING A SHORT STORY. THESE SUBJECTS WERE PARTICIPATED BOTH IN THE CONTROL GROUP AND THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP. THE CONTROL GROUP'S ORAL PERFORMANCES WERE RATED BY THE TEACHER ONE TIME, WHILE THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP'S ORAL PERFORMANCES WERE ASSESSED TWICE. THE FIRST TIME, THEY WERE SCORED THROUGH USING AN ALREADY-RELIABLE CHECKLIST. THE SECOND TIME, SCORING WAS DONE BY THE RESEARCHER-MADE CHECKLIST. THE DATA WERE ANALYZED USING PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT THERE WAS POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP AMONG 3 SETS OF SCORES. HOWEVER, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 2 SETS OF SCORES WHICH WERE OBTAINED FROM AN ALREADY-RELIABLE CHECKLIST AND THE RESEARCHER-MADE CHECKLIST WAS STRONGER.


KEY WORDS: CHECKLIST, OBJECTIVE SCORING, SUBJECTIVE SCORING, ASSESSMENT, EFL LEARNERS

## 1. Introduction

Oral proficiency in a second language is without question an important asset for students (Pan \& Pan, 2011). As Bilash (2009) mentions, speaking or oral production is one of the skills students are to learn in their language development.

However, speaking is a complex process which is not readily known to the learners and learners are not familiar with the skills and strategies they can use to develop their speaking ability (Mazdayasna, 2012). It is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Burns \& Joyce, 1997; Kayi, 2006; Richards \& Renandya, 2002).

Evaluation of oral skills is an important part in the area of speaking. Depending on the purpose and the defined criteria, two approaches can be used for the evaluation of performance on oral skills, known as holistic and analytic scoring (Pan \& Pan, 2011). Of course, each of these approaches provides different kind of feedback about learners' oral performance.

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According to Amjadian et al. (2011), holistic or subjective scoring is a scoring procedure in which the interviewee receives excellent, good, fair, and poor or pass/fail according to the rater's overall impression. Hughes (1989) also believes that holistic scoring involves the assignment of a single score to oral performance on the basis of an overall impression of it.

Holistic scoring is based on two major assumptions: (1) the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; (2) teachers who are experienced with speaking recognize good speaking when they talk to the students, even if they can't come to an agreement on how to describe it (Terry, 1986).This kind of scoring is usually selected when the teacher is inclined toward evaluating a wide variety of criteria simultaneously (Madsen, 1983).

According to Riihimäki (2009), analytic way of assessing is related to looking at certain, predetermined points. In an analytical or objective scoring, the rater rates the interviewee's performance separately on scales that pertain to accent, structure, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. These ratings are then weighed and added up to determine a final score (Farhady et al., 2007). Omaggio (1986) agrees and mentions that analytic scoring focuses on specific aspects such as grammar, fluency, strategies, sociolinguistic competence and pronunciation. Analytic scoring is used when diagnostic information is required (Hughes, 1989).

One of the controversial issues in the assessment of oral skills is how to score or rank learners' performance in a consistent and reliable way. Checklist and rubric can be used as academic solutions to this problem.

Checklists and rubrics have been recognized as effective means to document oral language development and progress (Swanson, 2008). These assessment tools offer systematic ways of collecting data about specific behaviors and allow teachers to gather information and to make judgments about what students know and can do in relation to the outcomes.

Therefore, the researcher conducted the present study in a comparative way to investigate the effects of the existing methods of oral proficiency assessment and to find the more effective method which can ultimately lead to an improvement in the process of evaluating oral skills.

### 1.1. Theoretical framework

The importance of language testing and the development of modern linguistics have made teachers and testers aware of the significance of a need for a detailed analysis of the language. Due to advances in modern linguistics and psychology, teachers are always revisiting their teaching strategies. Testers are also trying to improve their techniques to test language ability more validly and reliably according to advances in teaching.

Language testing has followed the trends in language teaching which have been, in turn, influenced by theories in linguistics and psychology. At first, language testing was characterized by the lack of a well-established theory. There was no concern for objectivity or reliability. Tests were the result of using grammar-translation method in teaching. Since the late 1950s, because of the influence of behaviorism and structuralism, teachers used the audio-lingual approach. This gave testers a framework to base their tests upon (Farhady et al, 2007).

However, with the diversion of attention to generativism and cognition, teachers adopted the cognitive-code learning approach. In addition, since the linguistic theory has focused on pragmatism and psychology on learning theories, the teaching methodologies have concentrated on developing communicative competence.

Therefore, as a result of different views on language and their dependence on approaches to language teaching, there are four coexisting but competing trends in language testing. A brief description of each of the testing theories is presented below.

### 1.1.1. Grammar-Translation Approach

This approach is referred to as the pre-scientific stage of language testing. Tests usually consist of essay writing, passage translation, and grammatical analysis. Tests have a heavy literary or cultural bias, too (Salehi, 2009). Grammar translation method was the offspring of the traditional approach in linguistic analysis which concerned itself with a very shallow, surface analysis of

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language and only focused on correct form in reading and writing. The subjective judgment of the teacher is another feature of this approach (Farhady et al, 2007).

### 1.1.2. Discrete-Point Approach

According to Baker (1989), the roots of this approach can be traced back to two separate academic traditions: psychometric testing and structural linguistics. Farhady et al (2007) also mention that the rational for discrete-point tests originated from the interaction between experts in structural linguistics and behavioral psychology.

Psychologists declared that learning could be attained through habit formation. These helped language teachers in the development of the audio-lingual approach and language testers in the development of short multiple-choice tests. In addition to the psychometric tradition in psychology, which provided the tools for developing this kind of test, a basis for the content of the tests was also required. The analysis, used in structural linguistics, involved breaking the language system into small parts and then describing the ways in which these parts could be put back together to make stretches of speech.

### 1.1.3. Integrative Approach

The integrative approach involves the testing of language in context. Therefore, it is mainly concerned with meaning (Salehi, 2009). Instead of considering language as a set of habits, this approach treats language as a dynamic system whose various sub-skills are assessed all at the same time. As a result, integrative tests make use of testers' ability to dynamically process the information (Farhady et al, 2007). In fact, these tests are designed to assess the learner's ability to use two or more skills simultaneously (Salehi, 2009). Dictation, composition writing, narration and oral interview are examples of integrative testing.

### 1.1.4. Functional Approach

Nowadays, linguists are concerned with the analysis of human discourse and communicative interaction. A similar change of focus has also happened in psychology. Psychologists now consider language as a task the subjects learn to communicate, out of which syntactic structures are developed. Development in these two disciplines has led to a new understanding of the aim of language teaching. Accordingly, language teaching has been redirected towards communicative practice.

Both communicative approach and integrative approach emphasize the importance of the meaning of utterances, rather than their form and structure. However, communicative tests are concerned primarily with how language is used in communication. Communicative testing results in an attempt to obtain different descriptions of a learner's performance in the language (Salehi, 2009).

### 1.2. Research Questions of the Study

RQ1: Is there any relationship between teacher's scores and the scores, given through an alreadyreliable checklist?
RQ2: Is there any relationship between teacher's scores and the scores, given through the researcher-made checklist?
RQ3: Is there any relationship between the scores obtained through an already-reliable checklist and the scores obtained through the researcher-made checklist?

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. Speaking Skill

Jones (1985) and Underhill (1987) believe that language is a tool for communication, so the purpose of all languages is to communicate. To communicate, one person must put something "out" and another person must take something "in". The first one is called "output" and the second one is called "input". Each language consists of four skills. Two of them, i.e. speaking and

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writing are used for producing output and two more, i.e. listening and reading are used for receiving input.

Among all of these skills, speaking is considered to be one of the most important and basic skill. It is one of the key elements in oral communication. It also relates to other language skills, mostly listening; because people react in speaking due to the previous context they participated in (Kombercová, 2006).

In addition, speaking includes both micro-skills and macro-skills. The first one refers to producing the smaller chunks of language such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations and phrasal units. The second one indicates the speakers' focus on the larger elements like fluency, function, discourse, style, cohesion and nonverbal communication (Brown, 2004). Therefore, just having linguistic competence is not enough.

As Chastain (1988, p. 270) mentions, speaking a language involve more than grammatical comprehension and vocabulary memorization. When learners want to speak, they must not only have the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation but also to combine these subskills with skills like listening to the interlocutor, using appropriate language and so on (Kombercová, 2006).

As a result, learners need to be competent both linguistically and socio-linguistically. The first refers to the ability of a person to produce grammatically correct sentences and the latter implies the person's ability to use language properly (Carter \& McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996; Burns \& Joyce, 1997).

### 2.2. Features of Speaking

Oral skill, like any other skill, has its own characteristics. One of the basic features of speaking is that it takes place in real time. This is one of the main reasons why language learners tend to find speaking difficult. Speaking is not writing that we say aloud. It is greatly influenced by the time factor. Crystal and Davy also mention time as "the main factor which distinguishes written from spoken language" (1979:87).

Another feature of speaking is that it is usually less durable or permanent than writing. When we speak, our words live for a few moments (Essberger, 2001). They disappear, leaving no records, but traces in memory (Arnold, 2003).

Speech is highly context-dependent, too. As Hughes (2011) point out, speaking is "fundamentally transient" and words are produced "within the co-ordinates of a particular place and moment" (p. 16). What follows is that spoken texts are not created independently, regardless of the environment, the situation or the listener (Tannen, 2007). In fact, speech production takes place in a shared context between the speaker and the listener.

The next characteristic that distinguishes oral production from written production is structure. Luoma (2004) points out several reasons why spoken language is different from written language, for example the sound of speech, grammar, words and phrases. Similarly, Essberger (2001) states that, we usually speak in a less structured way. We don't always use full sentences and correct grammar. In addition, the vocabulary that we use is more familiar and may include slangs.

Furthermore, speech involves language, which is usually produced in a spontaneous way, without preparation (Essberger, 2001). That's why speech contains numerous examples of imperfect language and instances of disfluency such as hesitations, word repetitions, false starts, unfinished utterances, self-correction and repairs which make speaking look less neat and tidy than writing when transcribed (Thornbury and Slade, 2007).

Style is another important difference between speaking and writing. According to Luoma (2004), spoken language differs greatly in different situations, depending on whether the situation and the speech are planned or unplanned, formal or informal.

The other distinction is that when we speak, we are usually in the same place and time as the other person (Essberger, 2001). In fact, speaking is directed at a specific audience in a face-to-face situation, where the speaker can receive instant feedback from the listener (Arnold, 2003).

### 2.3. Basic Types of Speaking

### 2.3.1. Imitative

Imitative tasks focus on specific phonological or grammatical points. The most important part in which imitative tasks are interested is "pronunciation". In this type of task, no inferences are made about the test-taker's ability to understand or convey meaning or to participate in an interactive conversation (Brown, 2004).

### 2.3.2. Intensive

In the intensive level, test-takers are required to produce short stretches of discourse, through which they show their linguistic ability at a specified level of language (Ur, 1996). The amount of interaction with an interlocutor is minimal in this type of speaking, but the speaker must be aware of semantic properties in order to be able to respond (Brown, 2004).

Intensive tasks may be described as mechanical tasks (Underhill, 1987), limited response tasks (Madsen, 1983), or what classroom instruction would label as controlled response. In these types of tasks, all the information, needed for answering the questions, is usually provided in the task material (Luoma, 2004). Examples include directed response tasks, reading aloud, sentence and dialogue completion, limited picture-cued tasks and translation up to the simple sentence level.

### 2.3.3. Responsive

Brown (2004) characterizes responsive tasks as tasks which involve test of comprehension and brief interactions with an interlocutor. Therefore, the length of utterances is somewhat limited. Short conversation, standard greetings and small talk, simple requests and comments, answer to teacher's questions and the like are examples of responsive tasks.

### 2.3.4. Interactive

The difference between responsive and interactive speaking is in the length and complexity of interaction. Interactive tasks refer to those tasks that involve relatively long stretches of discourse. Interaction can take two forms: 1) interactional/interpersonal 2) transactional (Brown, 2004).

Richards (1990) believes that the primary purpose of communication in interactional language is social. That is, language is used to establish social relationship. In fact, the emphasis is on creating friendly interactions between participants rather than on communicating information. Although information may be communicated in the process, the accurate presentation of information is not the main purpose. Thus, the language used in the interactional form is listeneroriented (Brown and Yule, 1983).

According to Brown (2004), transactional language is primarily used for exchanging specific information. Two important points that must be considered here are correct and coherence communication of the message as well as confirmation that the message has been understood. Explicitness of meaning is also essential in transactional language, as compared with the vagueness of interactional language. Therefore, transactional language is 'message-oriented' rather than 'listener-oriented' (Richards, 1990).

### 2.3.5. Extensive

Extensive tasks, like the previous category, involve tasks of equally long duration. The only difference is the degree of interaction with an interlocutor. As Brown (2004) states, extensive tasks are variations on monologues, but with minimal verbal interaction. Extensive oral production tasks include oral presentations, oral reports or summaries, story-telling and extended explanations, during which the opportunity for oral interaction from listeners is either highly limited or totally absent.

### 2.4. Key Components of Speaking <br> 2.4.1. Verbal Component

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According to Windle et al (1999), the verbal component refers to the content of the message, the choice and arrangement of the words. This is one of the important components in communication, since our use of language can have great influence on the type of atmosphere that is created. In order to send effective messages, the speaker must state his or her point of view as briefly as possible. Lengthy explanations are confusing to the listener and the message loses its concreteness, relevance and effect, too.

### 2.4.2. Paraverbal Component

Windle et al (1999) believe that paraverbal component refers to how we say something, not what we say. According to Mehrabian (1981), the paraverbal component accounts for $38 \%$ of what is communicated to someone. Therefore, the way someone speaks is also important and offers as much information as the words spoken (Hebda, 2013). Paraverbal communication is actually the message that we transmit through the tone, pitch and pacing of our voices (Windle et al, 1999). What follows is that paraverbal component consists of three main elements: the tone, pitch and speed of our words.

### 2.4.3. Nonverbal Component

While speech plays a role in communication, most opinions are based on nonverbal components (Hebda, 2013). Windle et al (1999) point out that nonverbal component refers to the message we send through our body language. According to Mehrabian (1981), nonverbal component accounts for $55 \%$ of what is perceived and understood by others. Therefore, it's important to recognize that it's our nonverbal communication that speaks the loudest.

According to Segal et al (2014), when we interact with others, we give and receive wordless signals all the time. In fact, we are always communicating whether we want or not (Windle et al, 1999). All of our nonverbal behaviors- the gesture we make, the way we sit, how close we stand, how much eye contact we make- send strong messages (Segal et al, 2014). Windle et al (1999) considers postures, gestures, facial expression and spatial distance as the components of nonverbal communication.

### 2.5. Theories and Models of Speech Production

According to Kent et al. (1996) the fact that speech is an extremely complex phenomenon has led speech production being modeled in various ways (p. 26). Linguists, psychologists and neurologists have attempted to shed some light on the process of speech production and perception in this way (Fernandes et al., 2007). In this section, some of the most prominent theories and models of language production are presented.

### 2.5.1. Motor program-based Theory

As Kent et al. (1996) point out a motor program for movement implies that speech movements are available for execution in a pre-assembled form which directs the muscular and articulatory regulation during speech production. However, the concept of motor programming for speech has been criticized as it would not be able to explain the adaptation of movement to the context (Kent et al, 1996).

An approach that can avoid some of the objections to the concept of motor program is schema theory proposed by Schmidt. According to Schmidt (1988), two components are involved in the learning of skills: the GMP and the motor response schema. The GMP controls the general characteristics of a group of actions rather than a specific movement. In fact, invariable features of GMP form the basis of what is stored in memory. While the motor response schema presents the specific rules for an action in a given situation, thus providing parameters to the GMP.

When a person wants to perform a specific action in a specific situation, the appropriate motor program (GMP) needs to be retrieved and movement-specific parameters then need to be added in order to meet the special demands of the context.

Schmidt's theory can also be applied to speech production (Theron, 2003). It explains the performance of novel actions (Magill, 2001). A person can use rules from the motor response schema and add appropriate parameters to the GMP to do a novel action. In addition, the importance of adapting the movements to the context is completely evident in Schmidt's theory, although the context is not the primary determinant of the movements (Theron 2003).

### 2.5.2. Dynamic System Theory

According to this theory, the motor control system can constrain the degrees of freedom by acting as a single unit (Bernstein, 1967; Tuller, Fitch \& Turvey, 1982). This theory proposes that the degrees of freedom of a motor system can be limited by groups of muscles acting as functional units (Tuller et al., 1982).

Proponents of dynamic systems theory assume that the contextual constraints specify the parameters of the motor system. Depending on the movement to be executed, a coalition between the neural and anatomic structure is established (Kelso \& Tuller, 1981; Kelso et al., 1983). In fact, dynamic systems theory prefers the term "temporal pattern" which is the result of the interaction between the person and the features of the task/environment or the mechanical dynamics involved in the body and limb movements themselves (Magill, 2001).

Dynamic systems theory can be used for speech production, too. This theory suggests that a complex system, such as the speech production system, can be simplified when the individual components of the system are functionally connected. The degrees of freedom are reduced by these functional groupings among the muscles which comprise the system. The effective control of the system is carried out by appropriate combination of the groups. These groups are "task specific, context sensitive, and adaptive" (Kent et al., 1996:19).

Furthermore, Kent et al., (1996) maintains that these functional groupings have both essential and nonessential parameters. Essential parameters are qualitative elements of a movement's structure while nonessential parameters are quantitative like different displacements of the lower lip in the bilabial closure movement when variations are introduced in phonetic context, stress or speaking rate.

According to Kent et al. (1996), when this theory is applied to speech production, essential parameters account for phonetically particular characteristics of movements, whereas nonessential parameters account for the effect of stress, rate and other "variables that operate within the phonetic requirements of the movement" (p. 19).

Theron (2003) claims that neither dynamic systems theory nor motor program-based theory, determines how speech production progresses from an intention to communicate to the achievement of perceptually accurate speech. In addition, Apart from the motor processes involved in speech production, it is also necessary to identify the importance of the cognitive and language processes in the brain.

### 2.5.3. Levelt's Model of Language Production

As Levelt's model is a functional model of speech production that incorporates the concept of information processing (Theron, 2003) and is based on information processing theory (IPT), first a description of IPT and its main components is presented.

According to Thadani (2013), IPT is actually an approach to the cognitive development of a human being, which deals with the study and the analysis of events that occur in a person's mind while receiving some new piece of information. This theory states that new piece of information that enters the brain is first analyzed and then put through the test of several criterions before being stored in memory.

The basic assumption of this theory is that a number of cognitive processes are required for correct execution of movement by an individual (Shea et al., 1993; Stelmach, 1982). The IPM consists of three main components: sensory memory, working memory, and long-term memory.

Thadani (2013) declares that sensory memory is a part of the mental processing unit which receives all information and then stores it temporarily or permanently. It receives incoming

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sensory information for very brief periods of time, usually between $1 / 2$ to 3 seconds. Attending to the information in this stage is essential to transfer it to the next one (Thadani, 2013).

Schraw (2013) points out that the main purpose of sensory memory is to examine incoming stimuli and process only those stimuli that are most relevant at the present time. According to Schraw (2013), researchers agree that information processing in sensory memory usually occurs too quickly for people to consciously control what they attend to.

In fact, information that is relevant and familiar to the task at hand and therefore subject to automatic processing is the most likely type of information to be processed in sensory memory and forwarded to the working memory buffer. Information that is highly relevant may receive some degree of controlled, conscious processing if it is crucial to a task.

Working memory is a part of the sensory memory where the information is stored temporarily (Thadani, 2013). This term is used to refer to a multi-component temporary memory system in which information is assigned meaning, connected to other information, and mental processes such as inferences are performed (Shah \& Miyake, 1999). Several terms have been developed to describe effective cognitive processing in working memory. These terms include limited attentional resources, automaticity and selective processing.

Thadani (2013) point out that once the decision has been made about the information, it will either be eliminated or transferred to the long-term memory. This activity will last for 15 to 20 seconds. However, if some type of mental rehearsal occurs, it will lasts for up to 20 minutes.

According to Thadani (2013), long-term memory is the part where all the information is permanently stored. It can also be retrieved later as the need arises. Unlike sensory and working memory, long-term memory is not limited by capacity or duration of attention limitations. The role of long-term memory is to provide an unlimited repository for all the facts and knowledge in memory.

As Schraw (2013) states, short-term and long-term memory are connected by encoding and retrieval processes. First, encoding of information happens in short-term memory by connecting it to the existing knowledge. Then, information is passed on to the long-term memory.

Levelt (1989) proposes that "developing a theory of any complex cognitive skill requires the division of the system into subsystems, or processing components". According to Levelt (1989), a theory of speech production involves different processing components. Levelt (1989) developed a model of human speaking, considering speech production as a staged process in three main components including conceptualizer, formulator, and articulator.

According to Levelt's model (1989), the intention to speak activates the conceptualizer (Tomioka, 2002). The conceptualizer requires the person's conscious attention and includes conceiving of an intention, selecting the relevant information, ordering this information for expression, monitoring of one's own productions and keeping track of what was said before (Levelt, 1989).

Payne \& Whitney (2002) mention that, the job of conceptualizer is to determine the semantic content of the utterance to be spoken, so the product of this stage is a preverbal message (Levelt, 1989). The preverbal message serves as input to the following component, namely, the formulator (Theron, 2003).

The formulator changes the preverbal message into a speech plan and consists of two major processes. The first step is grammatical encoding, a process involve procedures for accessing lemmas -the syntactic and morphological information of lexical items- and the syntactic building procedures (Levelt, 1989). A lexical item's lemma information contains semantic information of the word, too.

The second step is phonological encoding. This entails building a detailed phonetic or articulatory plan for each word and for the whole utterance. It is not yet overt articulation, but an internal representation of how the utterance should be articulated. This plan is sent to the articulator as it is the input for this component.

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Levelt (1989) refers to articulating as "the execution of the phonetic plan through retrieving pieces of internal speech from the articulatory buffer". During execution, sets of muscles are used in a coordinated way in order to achieve overt speech. At this stage, the speaker's internal linguistic knowledge turns into audible sounds.

### 2.5.4. Van der Merwe's Four-level Framework of Speech Sensorimotor Control

According to Van der Merwe (1997), speech production process consists of four stages. The most important difference is the distinction which Van der Marwe (1997) makes between motor programming and motor planning of speech.

### 2.5.4.1. Linguistic-Symbolic Planning

This stage requires the syntactic, lexical, morphological and phonological planning of the intended utterance. During this stage, selection and sequencing of the phonemes take place, influenced by the phonotactic rules of the language. Therefore, it is quite clear that this stage is non-motoric.

### 2.5.4.2. Motor Planning

Van der Merwe (1997) proposes that during motor planning, the motor goals for the actualization of the utterance are specified. That is, the motor goals for each phoneme are determined in terms of spatial and temporal characteristics. The invariant core motor plan is recalled from the sensorimotor memory. Of course, some changes to this plan need to be made during the motor planning of speech, depending on the phonetic context in which it is to be introduced.

At last, different subroutines that constitute the adapted motor plan are specified and temporally organized. These temporally arranged motor plan subordinates are then systematically fed forward to the motor programming system. This step concludes the motor planning phase.

### 2.5.4.3. Motor Programming

Van der Merwe (1997) believe that motor planning relates to the planning of motor goals of the articulators, but motor programming is more specific and refers to the selection and sequencing of motor programs for the movements of the individual muscles of these articulators.

### 2.5.4.4. Execution

Execution refers to the actual realization of speech on the articulatory level. At this stage, the temporal and spatial parameters of speech are realized on the acoustic level.

### 2.6. Measurements of Speaking Proficiency

2.6.1. Indirect Measures of Speaking Ability

Farhady et al. (2007) claim that indirect testing of speaking is carried out through quasi-realistic activities. In fact, subjects are asked to elicit their language knowledge indirectly and through performing different tasks.

### 2.6.1.1. Read-aloud Tasks

This technique is administered by selecting a series of sentences or a passage and recording the test-taker's output. Then, the teacher would rate the test-taker on a number of phonological factors such as vowels, diphthongs, consonant clusters, stress and intonation by completing a checklist which includes all errors or questionable items (Brown, 2004).

### 2.6.1.2. Directed Response Tasks

In this type of task, the test administrator elicits a particular grammatical form or a transformation of a sentence. Such tasks are mechanical and not communicative, but they need minimal processing of meaning in order to produce the correct grammatical output (Brown, 2004).

### 2.6.1.3. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is another type of task that asks the students to hear or read a limited number of sentences and then produce a paraphrase. The advantages of such tasks are that they elicit short stretches of output and make use of test-takers' ability to practice the art of conciseness by reducing the output/input ratio (Brown, 2004).

### 2.6.1.4. Picture-stimuli Procedure

As Madsen (1983) mentions, picture tasks belong to the limited activities which contain guided activities with direct responses. According to Pan and Pan (2011), pictures, maps, and diagrams are some of the possible ways that can be applied in oral language testing. Among these visual stimuli, pictures are the most common means of assessing oral language. Pictures can be used in a number of ways.

One way of using picture-stimuli procedure is to give the student a four-picture card and ask him/her to describe the picture corresponding to the number the teacher calls. A correct description enables the teacher to choose the right picture from among the others. In a variation of this procedure, the student is provided with a four-picture card and told to ask questions to find out which of the four pictures the examiner has (Farhady et al., 2007).

The second way is to use a series of pictures that act as a stimulus for a longer story (Brown, 2004). In this type of task, the examinee sees a panel of pictures representing a chronologically ordered sequence of events (Weir, 1990) and has to tell the story that the pictures seem to convey (Farhady et al., 2007). The examiner can illustrate what the examinee is to say by beginning the story himself (Madsen, 1983).

The third way is to use a single picture and ask questions based on the picture given. The examinee is provided with a picture showing several objects or activities. Then, the examiner asks a number of questions about the content of the picture or he may ask the examinee to describe the activities. The questions may be extended to include the thoughts and attitudes of people in the picture (Weir, 1990).

### 2.6.1.5. Retelling

This type of task requires the examinee to retell a story, an anecdote or an announcement that he has just heard or read (Farhady et al., 2007). Brown (2004) mentions that, this task is different from paraphrasing since it is a longer stretch of discourse and a different genre.

### 2.6.1.6. Short Talks

Weir (1990) refers to this type of task as verbal essay. This task requires the examinee to speak on a specified general topic. The examiner may ask more proficient examinees to talk about a particular topic or to describe their weekend, a movie they have recently seen or an interesting event they have had (Farhady et al., 2007).

### 2.6.1.7. Explanation

As Farhady et al., (2007) states, in this item type, students are asked to explain objects, actions or activities. According to Madsen (1983), the teacher may ask students to explain either a technical issue or a general topic. However, the teacher usually asks students to explain something less technical.

### 2.6.1.8. Role Playing

Ur (1996) suggests that, one way to change the kinds of learners' spoken interaction in the classroom is the use of 'role play'. It is used to refer to all kinds of activities where learners imagine themselves in a situation outside the classroom, playing the role of someone other than themselves and using language appropriate to this new context (Ur, 1996).

Ur (1996) claims that role play is the only way the teacher can give learners the opportunity to practice improvising a range of real-life spoken language and using discourse that might
otherwise be difficult to elicit (Brown, 2004). In fact, role play frees students to be somewhat creative in their linguistic output.

### 2.6.2. Direct Measurements of Speaking Ability

### 2.6.2.1. Group Discussion

The idea underlying this task is to encourage test-takers into a spontaneous discussion of a controversial issue, in which they can express views about topical matters, debate and agree over them, defend their opinions and try to persuade the other participants to accept them (Reves, 1982; Nevo \& Shohamy, 1986). Discussion is an appropriate task, through which the teacher can elicit such abilities as clarifying, questioning, paraphrasing, negotiating meaning, eye contact, body language, etc (Brown, 2004).

### 2.6.2.2. Oral Interview

Oral interview is the most valid direct way for testing speaking (Farhady et al., 2007) and a testing procedure that measures a wide range of speaking abilities in a foreign or second language (Pan and Pan, 2011). It is a situation in which an interviewer and an interviewee sit down in a direct face-to-face exchange and proceed through a series of questions. Then, the interview is scored on parameters such as accuracy in pronunciation and grammar, vocabulary usage, fluency, sociolinguistic appropriateness, task accomplishment and comprehension (Brown, 2004).

Every effective interview contains a number of stages. Clark \& Clifford (1988) mentions that oral interview consists of four phases, all of which have been designed with consideration of psychological, linguistic and evaluative factors. These phases include warm up, level check, probe, and wind-down.

The first stage contains quite easy questions that are intended to put the test-takers at ease (Pan and Pan, 2011). In the next stage, the interviewer stimulates the test-taker to respond by using a series of preplanned questions (Brown, 2004). The tester actually attempts to find the level of language at which the test-taker can maintain a comfortable performance (Pan and Pan, 2011). The purpose of the third stage is to show the maximum proficiency level by indicating the point beyond which the test-takers can not go. In this stage, the test-takers are challenged to go to the heights of their ability. The final phase of the interview, the wind-down, is a short period of time during which the interviewer encourages the test-taker to relax with some easy questions.

### 2.7. Research Review

On a speaking test, getting the student to say something appropriate is only half the job. According to Madsen (1983), scoring the test is equally challenging. Yet there are ways to simplify the scoring. One way to document oral performance of the subjects' is to use holistic grading that evaluates the entire body of student's speech simultaneously. Madsen (1983) and Underhill (1987) support the advantages of using holistic scoring.

However, the most successful way is to use a system of discrete objectified scores. As Weir (1990) states, in assessing productive skills, it is necessary to provide comprehensive descriptions of levels of performance to aid the examiners in making appropriate judgments. Many linguists, such as Knight (1992), Valkonen (2003), Jones (1985), Madsen (1983) and (Hughes, 1989) support the analytic way of assessing, since it helps teachers know what exactly needs to be improved in the learners speech (Knight, 1992) and compels them to consider aspects of performance which they might otherwise ignore (Hughes, 1989).

Some linguists such as Pan and Pan (2011) assert that synthetic scoring (both holistic \& analytic) should be done by teachers. In this way, teachers not only have an idea of students' overall oral language proficiency, but also know students' strong and weak areas.

Checklists and rubrics are effective assessment tools that can be used for assessing oral skills. Hayati \& Askari (2008) conducted a study with the purpose of developing a series of objective criteria for measuring the oral proficiency of 80 EFL students at Masjid Soleiman University. A

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newly-developed and validated checklist was used. Then, the obtained scores were compared with students' scores in their previous conversation courses. The results indicated a low correlation between these 2 sets of scores.

In another study by Mazdayasna (2012), a scale was suggested for assessing EFL learners' oral presentations. The main objective was to examine the effectiveness of this scale on the objective evaluation and improvement of learners' oral performances. The results indicated that the rating scale was effective in both cases.

A study, in which the researchers used both holistic and analytic method of L2 oral proficiency rating, was Dehkordi \& Bagheri's study (2010). This study was done with the aim of revisiting the existing criteria in L2 speaking tests.

Lim (2013) conducted a qualitative study to explore the students' perceived uses of rubrics and their actual use of rubrics in their oral production assessments. The research showed that although students recognized the ability of rubrics, majority of them still didn't use rubrics in their actual use. On the whole, findings of this study offer pedagogical implications on the use of rubric and highlight the important role of teachers to encourage students to engage in a reflection of their performance through self-assessment using the rubric.

Blommel et al. (2007) investigated the use of a rubric for assessing journal article critique presented by pharmacy students. A rubric was developed, tested and revised as needed to guide students in presenting a published study critique and to help faculty members assess students' performance and provide formative feedback.

The results showed that a properly designed and tested rubric can be a useful tool for evaluating students' performance. In addition, a rubric can provide students with clear expectations and a guide for desired performance. However, multiple pilot tests of the rubric are generally needed with subsequent modifications to improve the rubric's utility as an evaluation and learning tool.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study used the quasi-experimental research design. There was one group which served both as the control group and the experimental group. The control group's oral performance was assessed through the usual method of scoring. The experimental group's scoring was first done by using an already-reliable checklist and then by applying a researcher-made checklist.

### 3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were 44 undergraduate EFL students ( 14 male and 30 female) from Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon and Allameh Mohaddese Nouri University who had enrolled in the course "Oral Reproduction of Short Stories (I)". They were studying at fourth semester and their first language was Persian. The subjects were selected based on their availability. Their age ranges were among 18-35.

### 3.3. Instruments

The researcher used two research instruments in the current study to assess the learners' performance in oral reproduction of short stories. The instruments were two different kinds of checklist. The first was an already-reliable and a valid checklist by means of which the researcher could evaluate the learners' oral presentations objectively. The checklist had some general components and included some numerical values and detailed descriptions for various levels of each component. The sum of these numerical values is the students' total score. The second was a checklist developed by the researcher including the necessary components that must be considered when rating the students' oral performance.

### 3.4. Procedure

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The data needed for this study were collected from two classes in Tonekabon and Nour Universities. All the available students, in the course "Oral Reproduction of Short Stories (I), were selected as the participants of the study. 44 Iranian EFL learners of English Translation Major participated in this study. To rate the students' oral performance, a measurement of their oral reproduction ability was conducted.

Each session, the teacher called some of the students to come in front of the class and reproduce their stories. The students were required to read the story at home and pay close attention to the structure (including characters and main events). They were recommended to summarize the story and reproduce it in their own words. In addition, they were to present the story with acceptable fluency and accuracy. They rather knew how to present their story. They also had different opportunities to observe their peers' performance and try to improve their oral presentations.

Their speech was recorded and their performance was observed carefully by the teacher and the researcher. Furthermore, some specific information like mispronunciation, grammatical errors, students' posture and their eye contact was written down by the researcher. Finally, their speech had to be rated.

All students were present both in the control group and in the experimental group, but their performances were assessed in a different way. The control group's score was the same score given by the teacher. However, the experimental group's oral performances were rated by the researcher twice. The first time, the researcher used an already-reliable and a valid checklist. The second time, the researcher-made checklist was used. At last, there were 3 sets of scores for each student.

### 3.5. Methods of Analyzing Data

In order to answer the research questions of the study, the collected data were put into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In order to determine the strength of relationship between different sets of scores, the obtained scores from the measurement of students' oral reproduction were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. All these analyses were presented in detail in chapter 4.

## 4. Result

4.1. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1.1. Descriptive Analysis of the Data

The descriptive analysis of the data was employed to show the number of students, mean, standard deviation, and standard error of measurement for all 3 sets of scores. The results are shown in table 4.1.

|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | St. Deviation | St. Error | Variance |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- |
| Teacher's <br> scores | 38 | 14 | 20 | 17.0263 | 1.54634 | .25085 | 2.391 |
| Reliable <br> scores | 38 | 13 | 20 | 16.1579 | 1.91052 | .30993 | 3.650 |
| Researcher's <br> scores | 38 | 12.5 | 19 | 15.7368 | 2.03595 | .33027 | 4.145 |

Table 4.1. Descriptive analysis of scores in all 3 groups

It can be inferred from table 4.1., that the mean of teacher's score is above 2 other sets of scores and the mean of researcher's score is less than others. This table also shows that researcher's score variance is higher than other sets of scores.


Figure
4.1 shows the variance and frequency of teacher's scores, reliable scores and researcher's scores comparatively.

### 4.1.2. Inferential Analysis of the Data

The first $\mathrm{H}_{0}$ : There is no relationship between teacher's scores and the scores given through an already reliable checklist. To study this hypothesis, the Pearson-product moment formula was used.

Table 4.2. Correlation between teacher's scores and reliable scores

|  |  | Teacher's scores | Reliable scores |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Teacher's | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.854^{* *}$ |
| Scores | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 38 | 38 |
| Reliable | Pearson Correlation | $.854^{* *}$ | 1 |
| Scores | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 38 | 38 |

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 4.2 shows that significant level 0.0001 that is smaller than 0.01 and Pearson correlation coefficient is equal to. 854 . Therefore, it is concluded that there is a relationship between teacher's scores and reliable scores.
The second $\mathrm{H}_{0}$ : There is no relationship between researcher's scores and reliable scores. To study this hypothesis, the Pearson-product moment formula was used.

Table 4.3. Correlation between researcher's scores and reliable scores

|  |  | Researcher's scores | Reliable scores |
| :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Researcher's | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.911^{* *}$ |
| scores | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 38 | 38 |
| Reliable | Pearson Correlation | $911^{* *}$ | 1 |
| scores | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | 4.3 |
|  | N | 38 | 38 |
| **.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |  |  |  | significance level is 0.0001 that is smaller than 0.01 and Pearson correlation coefficient is equal to .911. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a relationship between researcher's scores and reliable scores.

The third $\mathrm{H}_{0}$ : There is no relationship between teacher's scores and researcher's scores. To study this hypothesis, the Pearson-product moment formula was used.

Table 4.3. Correlation between teacher's scores and researcher's scores

|  | Teacher's <br> scores | Researcher's <br> scores |  |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Teacher's | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.698^{* *}$ |
| Scores | Sig. (2-tailed) | 38 | .000 |
|  | N | 38 |  |
| Researcher's | Pearson Correlation | $.698^{* *}$ | 1 |
| Scores | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 38 | 38 |

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 4.4 shows that significance level is 0.0001 that is smaller than 0.01 and Pearson correlation coefficient is equal to .698 . Therefore, it is concluded that there is a relationship between teacher's scores and researcher's scores.

### 4.2. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Based on the data which were attained from the study and by putting them into SPSS software, the hypotheses of the study were analyzed.

In order to test the first null-hypothesis suggesting that there is no relationship between teacher's scores and reliable scores, the Pearson-product moment formula indicated a strong positive correlation between these 2 sets of scores ( $\mathrm{r}=.856, \mathrm{n}=38, \mathrm{p}<.01$ ). Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

In order to test the second null-hypothesis suggesting that there is no relationship between researcher's scores and reliable scores, the Pearson-product moment formula indicated a highly strong correlation between these 2 sets of scores ( $\mathrm{r}=.911, \mathrm{n}=38, \mathrm{p}<.01$ ). Therefore, the second null hypothesis is rejected.

In order to test the third null-hypothesis suggesting that there is no relationship between teacher's scores and researcher's scores, the Pearson-product moment formula indicated a relatively strong correlation between these 2 sets of scores ( $\mathrm{r}=.698, \mathrm{n}=38, \mathrm{p}<.01$ ). Therefore, the third null hypothesis is rejected.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. General Discussion

Speaking a foreign language is one of the essential requirements of today's society (Temerová, 2007) and considered to be very crucial in foreign language learning (Knight 1992:294, Mäkelä 2005:109).

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However, only with the advent of new approaches to English language teaching, speaking skill practice and assessment is to form a considerable part of language education. Therefore, "the theory and practice of testing second language speaking, is the youngest subfield of language testing"(Fulcher, 2003, p.1).

The concept of assessment is a central element in the learning/teaching process. Scholars such as Calderbank \& Awwad (1988), Harlow \& Caminero (1990), Mueller (1987), Omaggio (1986), Pino (1989), and Underhill (1987) all have supported the claim that assessment of oral skills should be an integral part of assessment of any ESL/EFL teaching syllabus.

However, assessment of speaking skills often lags far behind the importance given to teaching those skills in the curriculum (Knight, 1992). The reason is that testing speaking is accompanied by some difficulties.

One of the great difficulties in testing speaking is its scoring. That is, the problem of assessing students in a consistent way. This means that it is difficult to maintain consistency on different occasions, with different testees and between different assessors. According to Jondeya (2011), testing speaking is the most complex task to assess with precision. As Luoma (2004) mentions, speaking is different from other communication skills because it is difficult to assess reliably.

Speaking test is often difficult to be objective and consistent, because oral proficiency test usually uses human raters to judge learners' performance. Therefore, their subjective judgments affect the scores marked. However, it doesn't mean that speaking test can't be measured in a correct way. According to Swanson (2008), the use of evaluation criteria, especially analytic ones, makes the scoring of oral tests more consistent, avoid subjectivity and provide a high extent of reliability of the evaluation process.

Here in this study, a comparison was made between 3 sets of scores, which were given to students' oral performance. As it was reported in chapter 4, findings of data analysis in terms of Pearson correlation discovered that the relationship between the scores obtained from researchermade checklist and an already-reliable checklist was more as compared with teacher's score and the reliable score. Results of this study show the influence of using these assessment tools on scoring oral performance.

This finding supported the study done by Hayati \& Askari (2008) that proved subjective measures were not reliable enough to indicate the students' abilities in terms of oral language proficiency.

### 5.2. Implications of the Study

In spite of the limitations of this study, its findings have some implications for both speaking instruction and assessment of oral proficiency in EFL context. This study clarifies the importance of using these assessment tools on providing more consistent scores. This may encourage teachers of English language to use these tools more, give them an opportunity to begin thinking about more reliable ways of assessing oral skills and help them improve the process of assessing speaking.

Furthermore, students can receive detailed feedback from these assessment tools and their important components. That is, they can obtain details on how and where their performance did or didn't achieve its goal, and even suggestions about how it might have been done better. Therefore, students can develop critical thinking in this way.

Checklist helps faculty members refine their teaching skills. It shows a student's continuing improvements or weaknesses over time, so it can provide a clearer view of teaching blind spots, omissions and strengths. The findings of this study can also have some implications for textbook writers. In addition to including different stories, it is suggested that they insert some explanations about the features of good and weak oral performance, too.

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# ERROR CORRECTION AND CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN EFL CLASSES 

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#### Abstract

SOMETIMES LEARNERS MAKE ERRORS WITHOUT BEING AWARE THAT THEY ARE PRODUCING INCORRECT FORMS. AND IN SOME OTHER CASES, STUDENTS DO NOT KNOW THE CORRECT FORMS, SO THEY PRODUCE ERRORS OUT OF NECESSITY. THIS STUDY REVIEWS OTHER STUDIES TO GATHER SOME INFORMATION ABOUT ERROR CORRECTION AND CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK. IT CAN BE REALIZED THAT ERROR CORRECTION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF LEARNING AND TEACHING; THEREFORE, IT IS NECESSARY FOR TEACHERS TO HAVE RELEVANT ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE. TEACHERS NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE THAT CAN BE PLAYED BY CORRECTIVE FEEDABACK IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESS.


KEY WORDS: ERROR CORRECTION; CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK; EFL CLASSES; TEACHERS

## 1. Introduction

During recent decades, the focus has shifted from teachers to students and their needs. A number of approaches and techniques are being used to meet different needs of the students. Among these needs, error correction should not be ignored. Rather, it is an important part of learning which needs special attention.

According to Brown (2007), "mistakes, misjudgments, miscalculations, and erroneous assumptions form an important aspect of learning virtually any skill or acquiring information." (p. 257) Making error is not only rejected as a learning disability but also shows the process of learning. Some teachers have experienced the correcting of the same learners' errors over and over with gaining little success. "But most teachers and learners feel that it is part of the teacher's responsibility to let learners know if they have made an error and to assist them in not making a similar error again." (Brown and Rodgers, 2004, p. 82)

However, teachers need to be careful when they provide corrective feedback to the learners because error corrections have both negative and positive effects. The positive effects of error correction can make language learning effective since it helps the learners to pay attention to their utterance and hear the correct forms or even learn them by the help of the teacher. On the other hand, the negative effects of error correction may make the development of learners' language difficult. Because learners may forget what they were talking about or even lose their confidence in their classes.

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The main aim of this study is to gathers some significant information about error correction, error classification and types of corrective feedback.

## 2. Literature review

There have always been different attitudes toward error correction. During the past decades, there have been so many changes in language methodologies and materials. Similarly, there has been an important change towards the learners' errors. Keshavarz (2008) also gave some information about teaching methods and their views regarding the changes in attitudes towards learners' errors.

So, in early sixties researchers totally changed their negative views towards learners' errors. "Language learning, like any other learning, is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes." (Brown, 2007, p. 257) In other words, making mistakes can be considered as a sign of learning a language because as we all know, children also make many mistakes while they are acquiring their L1.

## Classification of errors

Researchers usually classify errors in different types. In one classification, errors are divided into two categories: global errors and local errors. According to Keshavarz (2008), "global errors are those that cause a listener or reader to misunderstand a message or to consider a sentence incomprehensible." (p.130) An example of a global error can be wrong word order.
"On the other hand, local errors are those that do not significantly hinder communication of a sentence's message." (Keshavarz, 2008, p. 130) An example of a local error can be wrong use of tense. Hendrickson (1980) pointed out that local errors must not be corrected since the content is clear and the correction by the teacher may interrupt the flow of communication.

Also a distinction should be made between overt errors and covert errors. According to Brown (2007), "overtly erroneous utterances are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level; while covertly erroneous utterances are grammatically well formed at the sentence level but are not interpretable within the context of communication." (p. 260) For example, 'I'm fine' is grammatically correct. But it is a covert error as a response to 'Who are you?' In another type of categorization, all of the errors that learners make can be classified in each of the four parts of a language: phonology, morpho-syntax, lexis, and semantics.

## Types of corrective feedback

Teachers are usually the persons who give corrective feedback to the learners' error. It means teachers try to give reaction in order to help the learners towards their errors. It is worth mentioning to distinguish between implicit and explicit corrective feedback. Teachers can give corrective feedback either without interrupting the learners' conversation (implicit feedback) or overtly with emphasizing on the incorrect form (explicit feedback). "Generally we tend to correct oral mistakes through speech, but the 'how' and 'when' obviously requires a great deal of sensitivity on the part of the teacher." (McDonough and Shaw, 2003, p. 151-152) According to Lyster \& Ranta (1997) corrective feedback can be done in six different ways as follow:

1. Explicit correction usually refers to the explicit provision of the correct forms. As the teacher provides the correct form, he or she clearly indicates that what the learner said is incorrect (e.g., 'Oh, you mean,' 'You should say).

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2. Recasts include the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error (e.g. Learner: I lost my road/ Teacher: Oh, yeah, I see, you lost your way. And then what happened?)
3. Clarification requests indicate to the learners either that their utterance has not been understood by the teacher or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way and that a repetition or a reformulation is required. A clarification request involves phrases such as 'Pardon me?'
4. Metalinguistic feedback involves comments, information, or questions related to the wellformedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form (e.g. 'Can you find your error?')
5. Elicitation refers to a technique that teachers use to directly elicit the correct form from the student. Teachers elicit completion of their own utterance by strategically pausing to allow learners to 'fill in the blanks'.
6. Repetition refers to the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the learner's erroneous utterance. In most cases, teachers adjust their intonation so as to highlight the error. (p. 46-48)

The time when error should be corrected
There are two types error correction regarding the time when error should be corrected. These two types include 'immediate feedback' and 'delayed feedback'. Immediate error correction is believed to interrupt the learners' flow of communication; therefore, it may have negative impact on learners (Vigil \& Oller, 1976). However, delayed error correction can be less powerful since time passes between the error and the correction (Chaudron, 1977, 1988; Long, 1977). Kelly (2006) mentioned that the time of correction is connected to many other factors including learner sensitivities, learning intuition, and learning purpose of task type. Therefore, teachers need to be cautious when giving the corrective feedback.

The one who should correct the errors
Some teachers may get confused to decide who should correct the errors. Generally, there are three types of people who can correct the errors: the student who made the error (i.e. selfcorrection), the teacher and the classmates (i.e. peer correction).

Self-correction is usually the most desirable form which can make the learner understand and correct their own error. The second preference is peer correction. In other words, learners help each other to recognize their error and to correct it. In this way, no affective filter is used for interfering the language skills of the target language (Krashen \& Terrell, 1983). Finally, teacher' error correction can be powerful, but it should be used as the last resort.

## 3. Conclusion

Making error is a part of learning process; therefore, error should not be considered as a sin. Some believe that error treatment is a significant technique for EFL learners while some other believes that error treatment may have negative impacts on the learners. However, it is necessary for teachers to have adequate knowledge regarding error and error correction. In this way, they can deal with error correction more appropriately.

This paper tried to gather some significant information regarding error and error correction. It provides a variety of types of corrective feedback. Teachers should use flexible error treatments by considering the students.

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# AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECT OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION ON LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT OF IRANIAN PRE- INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

BILINGUAL EDUCATION (BE) INVOLVES THE INSTRUCTION OF TWO DIFFERENT LANGUAGES IN A SINGLE CLASSROOM SETTING- BY TEACHERS OR STUDENTS OR BOTH - FOR A VARIETY OF SOCIAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PURPOSES. THE PRESENT STUDY INVESTIGATED THE IMPACT OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION ON LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT OF IRANIAN PRE- INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS. THIS STUDY USED BILINGUAL EDUCATION THROUGH CONTENT- BASED METHODOLOGY OR SUBJECT MATTER SUCH AS MATH, SCIENCE AND READING. FOR DOING THIS RESEARCH THE RESEARCHER USED 40 PRE- INTERMEDIATE EFL PARTICIPANTS WHO WERE STUDYING ENGLISH CONVERSATION AT THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN SARI. THESE LEARNERS WERE CHOSEN RANDOMLY TO CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS. BOTH GROUPS TOOK THE SAME TEST AS A PRE- TEST. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP HAD ACCESS TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION METHODOLOGY THROUGH MATH, SCIENCE AND READING, BUT IN THE CONTROL GROUP, PARTICIPANTS HAD NO SPECIAL TREATMENT JUST, THEY ACCESS TO THE CONVERSATION BY THE USE OF CONVERSATION METHODOLOGY WHICH WAS ASSIGNED BY THE INSTITUTE CURRICULUM. AFTER NINETEEN SESSIONS, THE POSTTEST WAS ADMINISTRATED TO BOTH CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS. BASED ON THE RESULTS, IT COULD BE MENTIONED THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN SCORES OF THE TWO GROUPS ON THE POSTTEST. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PERFORMED SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER ON THE POSTTEST. THUS, IT COULD BE CONCLUDED THAT THE NULL-HYPOTHESIS WHICH WAS "BILINGUAL EDUCATION HAS NO EFFECT ON THE LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT OF IRANIAN PRE- INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS" WAS REJECTED.


## KEY WORDS: BILINGUAL EDUCATION, LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT, CONTENT BASED, SUBJECT MATTER

## 1. Introduction

In many communities around the world, competence in two, or more, languages is an issue of considerable personal, socio-cultural, economic, and political significance. For some, the issues surrounding bilingualism are viewed as "problems" to be overcome; for others, they are viewed as "challenges" that, once mastered, benefit the individual, the community, and even the nation in which they live. The need to know two or more languages is not new (Genesee, F, 2002).

It has been estimated that 60 percent of today's world population is multilingual. From both a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception, and English is the world's most widely studied foreign language (Richards, 2002).

How do children acquire language is at the center of the debate in recent days, and everyone suggest special methodologies for acquiring the foreign language.

The present study will examine the effects of a bilingual education in English-only program on general language achievement of Iranian pre- intermediate ESL learners. In recent years, many countries has applied dramatic efforts to improve student academic achievement by investing in principals and teachers; focusing on literacy, math, and science instruction; strengthening existing schools; and opening new ones. These schools educate students who can speak, read, and write well in Persian and English.

They must develop students who are bilingual critical thinkers, and are prepared for higher education and work in community, in our city, and in the international area. Sought to better understand bilingual education and world language education and to formulate strategies to close the achievement gap between English language learners and other students, the researcher tried to work at this area second language acquisition.

This comprehensive definition provides an innovative approach for using bilingual education as a core strategy for academic achievement, not only for English language learners, but also for all students in the other fields.

The main feature of bilingual education programs is to provide instruction for all subjects in schools or institutes or other areas through two different languages for example Persian and a minority language (e.g. English).

A broad definition of bilingual education would include any educational program that uses two languages for instruction. Unlike foreign language education, in which students study the target language and culture as a subject, bilingual education usually entails the study of literacy or content areas (math, science, and social studies) through two different languages for example Persian and another language, such as English or Spanish. The feasibility for offering bilingual education programs for second language learners depends on several factors, including sufficient numbers of students from the same language group, availability of certified bilingual teachers.

Learners who arrive with a good education in their primary language have already gained two of the three objectives of a good bilingual education program - literacy and subject matter knowledge. Their success is good evidence for bilingual education.

Learning two languages well has significant cognitive, academic, and social benefits that can lead to higher academic achievement for all students.

Teaching academic language across content areas can strengthen language development for English language learners and monolingual English speakers, increasing academic achievement.

Well-designed and carefully implemented language programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive can improve the educational achievement of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and help to reduce the achievement gap between English language learners and other student groups.

Dual language programs are the most effective language programs for developing bilingual students and improving their academic achievement.

When schools value students' home language and culture, it helps language learners develop self-confidence and positive attitudes towards school; as a result, they succeed more often in school.

In addition to advanced cognitive development, bilingual immigrant children are able to maintain their cultural heritage through the use of their native-language (Mouw \& Xie, (1999). Cited in T.K. Bhatia \& W. Ritchie (2004).

Bilingual education models vary in type of program design and subscribe to one of the two linguistic goals (bilingualism or monolingualism), differences in length of implementation (short or long term), variations in amount of use of each language, and distinctions in programmatic composition. Bilingual education models also differ according to whether they are, transitional bilingual education, two- way bilingual education, dual Language, late-exit or developmental bilingual education.

A considerable proportion of students who are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs), although they go to the different language institutes have difficulty in performing ordinary proficiency in English language. There is evidence that students who designated as ELL are not good at their language achievement and oral proficiency. In addition, there is an achievement gap between ELL students who are enrolled in these institutes.

These realities heighten the importance of research that attempts to identify which types of program interventions aimed at ELL students are likely to be the most effective methodology in closing the existing performance gaps.

Also, in the most of the private language institutes in our country, learners feel bored and tired of different language teaching methods, and it causes different problems.

On the other hand, different institutes use different strategies for teaching. Using new program or strategy for learning English is another prominent factor of this study.

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The researcher studies the effects of bilingual and ESL programs on academic achievement of Iranian students. We follow the strategy developed in Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2002) where program effects are identified by following achievement gains of several cohorts of students across grades, using individual and school fixed effects.
The main feature of bilingual education programs is to provide instruction for all subjects in school through two different languages. For example, Persian and a minority language (e.g. English). In contrast, a program of instruction in ESL is intensively in English from teachers trained to recognize and deal with language differences.

The present study aims to answer the following research question:
Does bilingual education have any effect on language achievement of Iranian pre- intermediate EFL learners?
Based on the above research question, the researcher formulated the following null hypothesis: Bilingual education has no effect on language achievement of Iranian pre- intermediate EFL learners.

## 2. Review of the related literature

Bilingualism can be observed everywhere in the world. Among the reasons fostering bilingualism are various kinds of migration, intermarriages and educational/vocational opportunities. It is said that -more than half of the world's population is bilingual and two thirds of the world's children grow up in a bilingual environment (Crystal, 1997).

Bilingualism has a positive effect on the academic achievement of immigrant. Studies have shown that immigrant children whom grow up speaking two languages are at a higher advantage than monolingual children because learning both languages stimulates cognitive development (Malim, 2002. cited in T. K. Behita \& W. Ritchie).

Kassaian and Esmae'li (2011) conducted a research to explore the effect of bilingualism on third language breadth of vocabulary knowledge and word reading skill. 30female Armenian-Persian bilinguals and 30 female Persian monolinguals participated in this study. The Nation's vocabulary levels test and Burt word reading test, respectively, were used to measure subjects' knowledge of vocabulary and their word reading skill. After computations, they concluded that bilingualism is highly correlated with breadth of vocabulary knowledge and reading skill.

The experience of becoming bilingual in a subtractive context is common for young children in Iranian educational institutions. According to Diaz (1995), in some situations, mother languages are gradually replaced by second or dominate languages. In our society, the dominant language in schools is Farsi. Although many minority bilingual children are successful in learning Farsi at school, their bilingualism is often limited because their first (home) language is not supported in the mainstream educational settings. As Cummins (1981) mentioned, children must attain a critical level of proficiency in their native language in order to avoid cognitive deficits associated with bilingualism, and that a critical level of proficiency in L2 must be reached if advantages in cognitive functioning are to develop. As Bialystok (2001) noted, children need a great amount of support from their communities, their families, and above all, support from their school, particularly when they are socio-economically disadvantaged.

It is sometimes claimed that research does not support the efficacy of bilingual education. Its harshest critics, however (e.g., Rossell \& Baker, 1996), do not claim that bilingual education does not work; instead, they claim there is little evidence that it is superior to all-English programs. Nevertheless, the evidence used against bilingual education is not convincing.

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A vast number of studies have shown that bilingual education is effective, with children in welldesigned programs acquiring academic English at least as well and often better than children in all-English programs (Cummins, 1989; Krashen, 1996; Willig, 1985). Willig concluded that the better the experimental design of the study, the more positive were the effects of bilingual education.

## 3. Methodology

For this research, first the researcher had chosen the participants from two pre- intermediate classes from institute in Sari. The institute curriculum offered classes at seven proficiency levels: beginning, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, advanced, and TOEFL preparation. The students were assigned into different levels based on their performance on oxford placement test which had 20 listening items, 30 grammar items, 30 vocabulary items and 20 reading items. The participants were enrolled in English conversation classes at this institute. This institute holds English foreign language classes at a variety of proficiency levels, ranging from beginning to advanced levels. The participants were in pre-intermediate level classes based on oxford placement test at the beginning of term was administrated.

A first, the oxford placement test (OPT) was administrated to the participants to assure the homogeneity of the two groups of the learners, and those whose marks were closer to the mean could be chosen for the experimental and control group. After administrating test to a group of 50 elementary learners to homogenize the participants based on their language proficiency level. For this purpose the researcher calculated the mean, mode, median, and standard deviation, and then the 40 participants whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected for this research. The selected students were randomly divided in to two groups of twenty participants, one as a control group and another as an experimental group.

As we mentioned before the participant's age was ranged from 17 to 22 and only female students participated in this project, and their native language was Farsi.

Because all the administrators should be informed about the project completely, the researcher told them the aims of this project. Therefore the researcher held one introductory session in order to introduce the program and clearing the purpose, and she explained the project, what the project was, why the researcher was doing the project, for the participants, and they showed their tendency for learning English especially through bilingual education.

All the participants enrolled in the conversation class, and it was holding twice a week. Before the treatment, the pre-test which focused on vocabulary, grammar, and reading items was given at the first session of the course by the researcher to measure the entry behavior of the learners. The reliability of the test according the K R- 21 was 76.

The students in the experimental group were taught the bilingual materials (science, math, and reading) during the course ( 19 sessions), while the other group received no special treatment; they passed only their own conversation class.

At the end of the course, a post- test which included vocabulary, grammar and reading items was administrated. Then the researcher employed T- test to compare the results of two groups.

## 4. Results and Conclusion

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In this qusi-experimental study, the collected data from the two groups (one experimental which is bilingual and one control group which is monolingual education ) were analyzed and the difference between the performance of the learners in the pre- test and post- test were compared by using SPSS (statistical package for social science) software version 18.

This study used an independent sample t-test to compare the effect of bilingual education on language achievement of elementary foreign language learners.

### 4.1. Result of the OPT used as homogeneity test

In order to have homogenized participants in terms of their general English language proficiency, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered. Out of sixty-two participants, forty were considered as homogenous members based on one standard deviation above and below the mean (+/_SD).

In order to show that there was no significant difference between the learners in control and experimental groups, the independent $t$-test which shows the mean score differences between two groups was performed. The results are presented below.

Table 4.1 Independent $t$-test for the comparison of control and experimental groups
Independent Samples Test

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean <br> Difference | Std. Error Difference |
| Homogenized Equal variances assumed | . 193 | . 663 | $.087$ | $38$ | $.931$ | $-.10000$ | $1.15565$ |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | . 087 | 37.629 | . 932 | -. 10000 | 1.15565 |

As table 4.1shows, $\mathrm{t}(38)=.087, \mathrm{p}=.931, \mathrm{p}>0.05)$. Based on the results, it could be concluded that there was not a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups and they were homogeneous in terms of language proficiency before the treatment begins.

### 4.2. Pretest/Posttest comparison within groups

Table 4.2 below shows the result of the paired $t$-test for the comparison of pretest and posttest within control and experimental groups.

Table 4.2. Paired t-test for the pretest and posttest comparison within control and experimental groups.

## Paired Samples Test



Table 4.2 above shows the result of the paired $t$-test. As it can be seen, there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the control group ( $\mathrm{t}(19)=8.18, \mathrm{p}<0.05$ ). There was also a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the experimental group (t (19) = 17.29, $\mathrm{p}<0.05$ ).

### 4.3. Analysis of the research question

The research question of this study was as follow:

RQ: Does bilingual education have any effect on language achievement of Iranian elementary EFL learners?

Table 4.3 below shows the actual result of the independent $t$-test comparing the scores of control and experimental groups.

Table 4.3 Result of the Independent t -test

Independent Samples Test

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean <br> Difference | Std. Error Difference |
| ScoresConExp Equal variances assumed | . 012 | . 913 | $15.124$ | $38$ | $.000$ | -18.90000 | $1.24963$ |
| Equal <br> variances <br> not <br> assumed |  |  | 15.124 | 37.883 | . 000 | -18.90000 | 1.24963 |

The independent t -test was run to compare the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on achievement test. As table 4.3 above shows, it can be concluded that there was statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental group participants $(t(38)=15.12, p=.000<0.05)$. Therefore, the null hypothesis "bilingual education has no effect on language achievement of Iranian elementary EFL learners" is rejected.

## 5. Discussion

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The result of the study showed that, participants who were exposed to the bilingual education in the experimental group showed more tendency than the participants in the control group. Thus the more motivated and engaged students are in language, the more effective their learning will be, Bailey and Celce Murcia (cited in Abadikhah, 1998).

The purpose of researcher was to find out any significant impact of bilingual education on language achievement of Iranian pre- intermediate EFL learners. To determine any significant impact of learners, the result of pre-test was compared with the result of performance of post-test. The conclusion proved a significant improvement of performance participants in experimental group.

The result of data also reveals that treatment of experimental group was significant; it means that the participants in the experimental group improved very well due to treatment.

Therefore; the result of data especially the post- test enable the researcher to reject the null hypothesis which was, Bilingual education has no effect on the language achievement of Iranian pre- intermediate EFL learners. Thus the research question was replied correctly.

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# THE MAJOR TENETS OF A PRINCIPLE-BASED APPROACH FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND POLICIES: A TENTATIVE MODEL FOR TEFL IN MODERN IRAN 

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#### Abstract

IN THIS ARTICLE WE INTEND TO INTRODUCE TO THE READERS THE NOTION OF A PRINCIPLE-BASED APPROACH (PBA) FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING ;SPELL OUT THE ENTAILING POLICIES AND PRACTICES THEREIN; AND EXPLICATE ITS GENERAL FRAMEWORK PHILOSOPHY. WE WILL TRY TO ARTICULATE THE NATURE AND COMPONENTS OF SUCH FRAMEWORK AS WELL AS TO ENUMERATE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NOTIONS WHICH QUALIFY SUCH POLICY AND ADVOCATE IT, IN OUR DELIBERATIONS, AS A SUITABLE AND WORKABLE FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL) POLICIES AND PRACTICES URGENTLY NEEDED IN TODAY IRAN AS IT PREPARES ITSELF TO ENTER A NEW ERA OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE WORLD. PBA IDENTIFIES A SET OF SIX(6) PRINCIPLES AIMED AT HELPING POLICYMAKERS, RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS DEVELOP LOCALLYAPPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES WHILE PAVING THE WAY TO IDENTIFYING AND ENGAGING WITH THE CHALLENGES THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PRACTICES MAY PRESENT. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE COLLABORATION, RELEVANCE , EVIDENCE , ALIGNMENT , TRANSPARENCY , AND EMPOWERMENT , SHORTENED AS (CREATE) ${ }^{1}$. IN THIS REVIEW, WE ARE GOING TO DISCUSS HOW THESE PRINCIPLES HAVE EMERGED AS A RESULT OF THE DEMANDS OF "GLOBALIZATION' AND HOW THEY COULD BE , PROVIDED IT IS UNDERSTOOD AND DIGESTED WELL, ADOPTED AND MODIFIED LOCALLY TO BE PUT TO GOOD USE BY THE DECISION MAKERS AT THE MACRO-LEVEL WITH A VIEW TO THE IMPLICIT UNDERTAKINGS TO INTEGRATE IT INTO THE 'OUTLOOK VISION' SET OUT IN THE 'COMPREHENSIVE 20-YEAR NATIONAL STRATEGY ROADMAP' AND APPROPRIATELY IMPLEMENT IT BY RESPECTIVE PRACTITIONERS AT THE VARIOUS STRATA OF THE MICRO-LEVEL.

KEYWORDS: PRINCIPLE-BASED APPROACH, LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING, TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, GLOBALIZATION, MACRO-LEVEL, MICRO-LEVEL, CREATE.


## Introduction

## General Considerations

Previous work on the standards stipulated for language teaching in a variety of contexts has provided a background of knowledge for language policy makers and practitioners to work towards an identification of aspects of quality language teaching and implementation. In

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comparison less effort has been applied to measure the success of the programmes developed. The main reason for this is attributed to the disregard for the policies which are adopted at the macro-level and its mismatch with the micro-level representations implemented in actual practice. Therefore, the development of standards and the application of these standards across varied contexts can be problematic. The application of a set of standards has to be based on assumptions related to the distribution of resources, access to knowledge, and appropriate infrastructure. Moreover, the types of methodologies and assumptions about learning and teaching that underlie standards are also based on notions of language teaching approaches which spouse " a particular view of the world articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships' ( Pennycook, 1989, pp.589).
Language Policy (statements of intent) and Planning ( implementation) is defined as planning undertaken by governments at the macro-level. The discipline emerged after World War II, but came to the fore in the late 1960s ( see, e.g. Fishman,1968; Rubin \& Jernudd, 1971; Fox,1975 and others). The striking point is that despite attempts to theorize the field (Ferguson,1968; Fishman,1974; Haugen,1983; Haarmann,1990; Homberger,1994 and a host of others) there is no generally agreed upon and unified framework for this discipline.( cf., Recento,2000 for an overview of some of the historical and theoretical perspectives related to language planning)

One of the better known frameworks suggested by Baldauf (2005) takes a goal-oriented approach to the four activity types of language planning:
> Status Planning ( about social status of a language)
> Corpus Planning ( about the structure of a language )
> Language-in-Education Planning (learning status) and;
> Prestige Planning ( image status)
The above four types of activity are typically used to define the dimensions of the discipline. They are a forum to be examined across policy and cultivation planning (see Kaplan and Baldauf,2003). Awareness of such goals may be overt/explicit or covert/implicit and occur at several different levels:
$\checkmark$ Macro-level ( the State - the political decision-making level as to which Foreign languages are to be taught, rationalizing the decisions. We do not think this to be a very taxing choice. Indeed English Language as the sole prevailing 'lingua franca' is the Hobson's choice available to us presently.- Italics are the writers' emphasis)
$\checkmark>$ Meso-level (the body of the community entailing myriad and multifaceted concerns and issues of the Educational System. Some of the more important are: the learners, methodologies, curriculum planning, budget specifications, materials development - to name but a few.)
$\checkmark$ Micro-level (The actual application and implementation of the decisions, some of which actually overlaps with the meso-level are placed here)
In practice, however, language policy and planning goals normally are multiple and more complex often cutting across activity types and sometimes coming into conflict with one another. Baldauf (2006) suggests four general developments devised around language policy and planning framework. They are:

- Levels of Language Planning. While much of the research cited in LPP has as its focus polity or macro-level language policy and planning, there is an increasing interest in microplanning. While the former has important implications for agenda setting and the allocation of resources, the latter - although under-represented in the literature- looks more closely at specific practice and is becoming of greater interest ( e.g., Baldauf,2004).
- Covert Language Planning. The failure to make LPP explicit, or even to address some language issues at all (i.e., decision or indecision ) - while it may seem in the context of
language planning to be an oxymoron - effects how languages are learned and taught, and / or how they are contextualized and viewed ( Baldauf, 1994; Eggington,2002).
- Who are the Planners and what are their roles? As LPP has moved from being viewed as a set of scientific procedures to having a focus on context, the role and motivations of planners has taken on greater importance (e.g., Ager, 2001; Baldauf \& Kaplan, 2003).
- Planning for Compulsory Early Foreign Language Planning, especially English in its categorizations as ESL / EFL/EIL. In Many countries around the world there is a move through LPP to increase exposure at an early age to foreign languages (especially English, for the obvious reason aforementioned) in the hope of increasing proficiency to join the knowledge economy. The development and impact of these programmes and their impact on national population and the teaching of other additional languages is a matter for LPP consideration.
( taken from Language Planning and Policy: Recent Trends, future trends; R.B. Baldauf)
The issues aforesaid are illustrated to varying extents in each of the four types of language planning activities (i.e., status planning, corpus planning, language-in education planning, and prestige/image planning; see R.B. Baldauf). There are of course other possible issues. For example, Tollefson (2002b: 423ff) suggests the following eight(8) issues which might receive attention by LPP researchers in the years ahead.

1. A focus on exploitive LPP contexts and failed plans and policies;
2. The role of local legal frameworks in LPP;
3. Linking Political theory and processes to LPP;
4. More direct work with sociology on social issues like migration, state formation or political conflict;
5. The role of discourse and political leaders in shaping LPP;
6. A greater focus on language of social identity and power rather than languages as lingua franca;
7. A move from a state ( macro-level) focus to micro-level issues in the ethnography of communication; and
8. A greater focus on language rights for linguistic minorities.

The present study ,from place to place and where necessary, tries to articulate the importance of realizing that the principles of PBA which we are going to emphasize have emerged as a result of the demands of globalization and are to be firmly based on the framework of a well understood LPP discussions and concerns and how they could be based on educated deliberations and adopted to best suit our local and international needs.
PBA and its six set of principles is a tentative proposition to show policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and other interested sectors recognize challenges faced when developing policy and consider how policy is translated into practice. We will demonstrate through the good works of leading researchers in the field and their counterparts in the field from various associations such as the TQESOL International Association (- which the authors of this article owe a great deal tomany of our basic ideas locked into place when reading their report and completed our prior literature review of many articles and especially the 2013 version of the British Council report on the topic.) that a PBA will assist them to design and deliver more effective policies in a range of contexts. The ultimate goal of any government, organization, or institution involved in developing or using language in education policy ( in the context of ELT) should naturally be to ensure that the students can use the language with the proficiency required to enhance their prospects in assessing better opportunities in education, community membership, and employment within their contexts and/or globally, identifying the impact of social, economic, and political forces on policymaking decisions on a macro-level and the needs of students, teachers, and community
members within particular contexts on a micro-level, can enable policymakers, practitioners and researchers to identify and engage with a range of issues that affect policymaking decisions. Moreover, it can enable policymakers to predict any possible challenges in relation to implementation and to ensure that the process of policy making takes account of these issues when developing ELT initiatives and programmes.

Some of the issues discussed here include the impact and influence of extra-linguistic factors on language policy and planning(LPP), such as the sociopolitical context in which policy is formulated (Cooper,1989). This is related to the political and ideological orientations of LPP and the use of language policy, especially in relation to more dominant and powerful languages, to serve the interests of particular political parties and social hierarchies (Ricento,2000;
Tollefson,1991). Though intrinsically this is a concept that deals within national boundaries of a social community, it has the capacity , in our belief, to be extended to the discussions relating to the dominance of English language imposing itself as the 'Queen of Languages' over all other international languages which are currently , more or less, being utilized. The PBA has the capacity also to identify potential negative effects of policy by highlighting issues that, if not considered, may further diminish the positive impact of the implementation procedures. In the case of English which has been hailed as the unique global lingua franca and the language of globalization, it is increasingly important to identify and acknowledge the power within a contained, controlled status so as to harness the imbalance that it inherently seeks to impose to its benefit. Due caution is to be taken as English language is awarded a privileged position in contexts where policymakers are, deliberately or inadvertently, enhancing the economic and sociopolitical value of English and further disempower local languages and communities.

It is helpful to understand that EFL is motivated foremost by sociopolitical; economic and scientific forces. TEFL research focuses on the nature of the English language learning and teaching and has of a few years back shifted its focus away from mere understanding of the nature and interworking of the language structure itself (i.e., pure linguistics). Continued research on issues of pure linguistics is a fascinating, thought provoking and justifiably academic pursuit of utmost value and necessity, but the extent of its engagement has to stay limited within a select range of academics at the juncture between the ministerial decision makers and the applied linguists ; A select population of intellectually qualified academics who are prepared to take on the arduous task of theoretical research in pure linguistics. What we mean to posit here is an allocation of certain academic pursuits to its appropriate, qualified lot. The rest of the stakeholders, in our view, should engage in practical pursuits and tasks where at least some feedback as to the success or failure of their activities could be critically evaluated and either developed or modified respectively. Training an army of theory-fed degree bearers who are ' Jack of all trades but master of none' will put to waste the valuable resources of the country ,whether man force or financially, which modern Iran cannot and must not afford. Therefore, though EFL uses linguistic theory and knowledge about language for designing and delivering ELT programmes, the focus of language itself has often been marginalized without clear acknowledgement of the fact that certain forms or varieties of a language, for example, can have social, economic and political privilege and currency than others. In addition, access to and proficiency in privileged forms of language can result in better prospects for students and communities (J.Martin, 1999). A further issue which relates to the translation of policy into practice is the limited communication between practitioners and policy makers resulting in conflict in perceptions between the two (Kaplan, 2009). This writing aims and hopes to address some of theses issues by identifying a set of principles that, we emphasize again, can help ensure that the sociopolitical and linguistic factors necessary to be taken into consideration are taken into account when attempting to formulate policy and render it into practice. In the following section, previous approaches to LPP which lays the foundation in identifying how LPP research has
contributed to the understanding of policy and practices and ultimately shaped the development of PBA will be discussed.

## Approaches to LPP

The focus of classical LPP research was on descriptions of policy and planning and goals within varied contexts through the use of frameworks such as Haugen's (1972) ecology of languages, Cooper's (1989) accounting scheme and other frameworks based on understanding the provisions of LPP from macro to micro level of implementation. Hornberger's (2006) six-dimensional framework made up of three LPP types: Status ( about the use of language) ; Acquisition ( about the users of language) ; Corpus (about language) with each dealing with on two levels of Policy and Function provides a useful point of departure for the analysis of LPP from the macroscopic to microscopic level. But this framework is questioned first, for its lack of critical approaches on power relations (Hornberger,2006; Kaplan \& baldauf,1997) and second for its being primarily descriptive in that it does not account for the actual "Process of language planning" (Kaplan \& baldauf,p.87). This framework, however, aims to provide a set of principles that can guide the process to ensure that it is more equitable, effective, and sensitive to the context in which the policy is formulated. In so doing PBA incorporates the notion of "language ecology" in education setting by taking into account the diverse sociopolitical settings " where the processes of language use create, reflect and challenge particular hierarchies and hegemonies" (Creese \& Martin, 2008, p.i). PBA also views schools and classrooms and their interactive practices as part of a bigger and more powerful political state in which ideologies function to reproduce particular balances of power. Since ENGLISH enjoys a hegemonic role and endangers other languages through link with globalization, it is especially important to keep in these factors in mind when considering the sociopolitical influences that language policy and practice have on the local language ( baldauf, Kaplan, \& Kamwangamaalu, 2010). We are well aware that the principles stipulated are advocated for ' within-a-national' community context. What we are suggesting is that the principles are viable enough to be extended to the discussion of teaching and learning of English language in Iran and serve as a point of reference to capitulate national interests and international priorities. We ought to have some parameter, some point of reference to refer to in order to gauge our activities and programmes against. The de facto picture of ELT in Iran needs serious rethinking and re-evaluation. As stated earlier, some good things may also happen in this bewilderment but they are certainly not the result or outcome of the state-adopted planning or practices. Of course, this is a long-listed concern which calls for various discussions from various perspectives which is not the main focus of this study. We just keep making repeated reference to the present situation of ELT in Iran just to reiterate the point that we have taken up the subject which we believe to be an issue - right at the very core of it. We are trying to rationalize a model already advocated by different sources and suggest it as a working model for ELT in Iran today and for near future. Let us now turn our attention to the key factors that contribute to the development of PBA.

## Factors for consideration in a PBA.

PBA builds on the current work on language policy and practice, but instead of providing a set of standards, it identifies a set of principles that can help policymakers in diverse contexts develop locally appropriate language policies and practices. The development of a set of standards has to be based on assumptions related to the distribution of resources, access to knowledge, and appropriate infrastructure. Besides, the types of methodologies and assumptions about learning and teaching that underlie standards are also based on notions of language teaching approaches which espouse "a particular view of the world and [can be] articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships" (Pennycook, 1989, pp. 589-590). Therefore, deciding which methodology is most suitable and determining what standards the delivery of these teaching approaches are

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evaluated against could be an imposition of criteria and benchmarks on local policymakers and practitioners, who may not find these approaches relevant or successful in their contexts. Understanding the limitations that such an imposition might pose in different contexts, with varying capacity for achieving these standards, professional organizations such as the TESOL International Association have attempted to collaborate with local ministries of education to develop contextually relevant standards (e.g., Integrating EFL Standards into Chinese or Malay or Japanese Classroom Settings series; see Gu, Hughes, Murphey, Robbins, Zemach, \& Zhang, 2006). The collaborative development of context-appropriate standards is an important step in developing higher quality language programs in a range of contexts where there is an ever increasing demand for ELT. However, the involvement of TESOL (or other similar entities) in developing these standards in such contexts is limited. In addition, standards developed for one context that are taken at face value in other contexts may achieve variable results. Ultimately, a set of standards developed to enhance ELT in one context cannot be applied to other contexts.

To enhance understanding of how a PBA can contribute to the successful implementation of ELT, it is incumbent to look at some of the major factors that inform LPP. We know that all language learning, teaching and other education practices happen within a broad sociopolitical and economic context. These factors influence the development of ideas, theories, and policies that influence what happens in a classroom, with what resources, and how. Some of the key factors that relate to students' experience of language learning and teaching need to be considered. Figure (1) below depicts some of the major factors in LPP.

Figure 1. Factors influencing PBA
Contextual factors : socio-economic, ideological, political, scientific, etc.

| Abstract $\uparrow$ Concrete | Linguistic Theory <br> Grammar/Description <br> of Language | Theories of Learning and Teaching <br> Teacher Education | Policy and Planning |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Curriculum Development |
|  | Texts, Phonology, Lexico-grammar, etc. |  | Textbooks, Syllabus development, Materials, etc. |

( Adopted from tesol International Association: March, 2012.)
Linguistic Theories are abstract ideas about what language is and how it works. Different linguistic theories explain language in different ways, which result in different types of language descriptions and influence the choices of texts and grammatical components used in pedagogical material that students learn and are taught through. In parallel, various theories of learning and teaching explain how language learning takes place and how this understanding can be used for teaching purposes. These theories are taught to the teachers during their training programmes, and the teachers use them in developing their pedagogical practices. Frameworks of language-ineducation policy also influence the curriculum, which in turn, shapes the syllabi, textbooks, and other teaching and learning resources that the students use in their classes. Thus the three broad theoretical areas are operationalized in different ways to shape the learning-teaching behavior and material that students experience. These different theories and areas are not necessarily independent of each other and may overlap and/or influence the other areas. Traditional approaches to LPP tend to focus on policy and planning factors just described; however, PBA

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builds its framework by integrating not only work on LPP, but also in areas of linguistic theory and theories of learning and teaching.

Students are sit at the core of the total T/EFL programme, who experience, learn from and resist forms of language, material, and pedagogy that they experience. These concrete experiences are themselves shaped by larger discussions and beliefs about education, language, and curriculum that are, in turn, influenced by theoretical positions. The more abstract theoretical positions are not neutral, but are, in turn, shaped by the resources available and the cultural, ideological, and political contexts in which they evolve. What follows is an examination of these factors as we trace their implications for a PBA. In so doing, we shall unfold some aspects of policy and planning. We shall then consider learning and teaching theories and linguistic theory and finally introduce the six principles of PBA.

## Policy and Planning

Kaplan, Baldauf and Kamwangamalu (2011) hold that language-in-education policy is a complex process fraught with diverging issues that must be considered if it is to be successful. English Language policymakers face the difficult task of planning goals and strategies that are ultimately linked to and informed by broader issues of political, social, scientific and ideological frameworks that function in the context in which ELT as a sub-category of LPP may take form. The impact of globalization on LPP has propelled the teaching of English with greater urgency and has major implications for the language teaching contexts in which English is prioritized. Additionally, a lack of communication between policymakers at the macro-level and implementers at the micro-level means that successful practices occurring within the classrooms rarely inform policymaking, and that practitioners have access to policy only as it is filtered down through the curriculum and textbooks in the classrooms. It is here that the incongruity between policy and implementation surfaces. In advocating a PBA, the policymaking decisions should work in two directions: Teachers, syllabus designers, textbook developers and other stakeholders should have the prerequisite knowledge and sensitivity to reflect on effective pedagogical practices and be able to communicate these to policymakers and, in turn, the policymakers to relate, develop, modify and translate those ideas, where applicable, to functionally practical manifestations. There are three major challenges that policymakers face when designing TEFL policy and planning.
i) Shortage of enough base knowledge for the planning of goals;
ii) Non-collaboration between policymakers and implementers;
iii) The problem of lack of explicit, clear-cut specifications between local needs and the demands of globalization.

## a) Planning Goals

In TEFL policy and planning the purpose of the policy strategy needs to be considered with a view to achieving particular goals and outcomes. (This is while only a meagre mention is made concerning TEFL (LPP) in the provisions of the 20-year Outlook Strategy Plan for Iran 2025). As Ricento (2000) points out, language policy is determined by ideological and political agendas of governments and organizations which create LPP strategies. We are advocating an approach where the goal of policymakers moves beyond factors of political and ideological issues and incorporates ELT with a view to the role it is going to assume to serve our national interests in international arenas. At the moment, we are afraid to bitterly confess that there is a gross rift between set goals as it stands in state documents (for example in the curricula for TEFL in higher education ) and the output that is gained. As already mentioned we may have exceptions to the norm but they are not an effectual result of the education they have been exposed to. Transparency
of LPP objectives usually backed by a philosophy of engagement (framework) will enable various stakeholders to engage with ELT practices that policymakers ought to advocate. If executed by the rule, it will also enable researchers and policymakers to capture and critique ELT practices to ensure that LPP decisions are made based on evidence of successful and empowering practices from systematic practices.

## b) Policy and Implementation

A variety of reasons may be accounted for policy not being effectively translated into practice. During the legislative-political processes, however, decisions may be subjected to unwanted transformations (Hornberger \& Recinto, 1996). The roles of the teacher, the learners ( need analysis ) and materials production just to name the most important is currently undermined and underutilized. Teachers themselves often believe that they have little say to effect policy and most of them do not view themselves as implementers of macro-level policies as a natural continuation of the total picture/framework of LPP. ( Ramanathan \& Morgan, 2007 ; Tsui \& Tollefson, 2006 ). Policy is rarely absorbed by practitioners working in classroom situations as an index of a greater philosophy which might serve the national interest. The underlying ideological motivations and global incentives and aspirations of policies tend to be implicit. " Policy is formulated at the level of government, but practitioners responsible for implementation often have access to the implications of policy only through the curriculum and textbooks"(Mahboob, 2012 : Tesol International Association Report). Therefore lack of collaboration or communication between policymakers and practitioners(i.e. teacher trainers and teachers) which is detrimental to the process of policymaking is one of the loopholes in the formulation of a sound policy. Practitioners should find ways to engage in working collaboratively with policymakers to determine policy goals. These goals should be made visible, transparent, and accessible to practitioners and in compatibility with the real aptitude of students and their needs and aligned with the national interests of the country. [ Note : We feel obliged to give a word of caution here. By no means do we intend to undermine the academic diction of the text or 'politicize' the issue. This is our educated conviction and it is for this reason that we are positing PBA as a tentative approach.]

## c) Global vs. Local

English has been referred to as the language of globalization with a strong emphasis on the fact that English is linked to technology, science , economy, culture and most importantly to politics and hence to the notions of development and modernization. Our view of the English language is all that plus notions of 'colonization', 'exploitation', 'hegemony', 'cultural invasion' , and 'cannibalistic attitude', a term borrowed from the field of translation studies.
The complexity of language planning in relation to English is linked to the fact that the demand for ELT comes from several different sources and it makes it all the more challenging for policymakers who are in a difficult position of taking all these factors into account while acting in the promotion of the National interests and representing domestic needs and global requirements.
If ELT is a serious means to equip the local community with an instrument which can ease engaging with globalization and provide for them access to global resources, then it must answer questions about the relevance of teaching English ; what variety of English and for what purpose. Initially, policymakers should determine the purpose of English LPP. In determining the purpose, they should collaborate with local communities, practitioners, industry, and other stakeholders. Policymakers have to make sure that ELT
teaching practices are suited to the needs of the particular context in which they occur. As Rajopalan (2005) states, "global, specialist knowledge" needs to be readjusted "to suit local circumstances" (p.119) in a bid to equip them with the necessary capabilities to carry out their tasks. In addition, evidence of programme outcomes should be monitored to ensure that they achieve the goals determined at the outset of the policymakers process.

## Theories of Language Learning and Teaching

It is important to realize that language teaching and learning theories contribute to the improvement of language training and delivery. Policies should be formed with an understanding of this literature so that they can be translated into more effective practice. Most of the dominant theoretical frameworks are developed in the West with data collected in those contexts. These theories are then, oftentimes uncritically, adopted and promoted in the rest of the world., where local practices may or may not support them. If the policymakers open rooms for the critical analysis of such imported packages in an effort to ,so to speak, ' naturalize' them for local benefits and use, they ought to have a visible and viable, domestic alternative/s to it.

## a) Learning and Teaching Resources and Methodology

This topic mainly deals with contexts with few resources, financial constraints, and lack of infrastructure where little room is left but to resort to the use of language programmes and materials which advocate pedagogies and methods that are largely theorized and developed in the West and then exported without considering whether these pedagogies are appropriate or effective in local contexts. To equip teachers who face a variety of unique context-specific issues in their classrooms with learning and teaching methodologies imported from other countries is not an adequate solution. Chick (1996) states: "a sort of naïve ethnocentricism is to think that what is good for Europe or the USA has to be good for KwaZulu ".

## b) Language Testing and Evaluation

The testing and evaluation ought to be geared to the pragmatics and function of the delivery. If the purpose is properly served, then the ELT material is developed.

## Language Theory

Language theory plays an influential role on LPP and ELT because curriculum and textbooks incorporate knowledge about language in the form of lessons based in most parts on the description of language parts with little focus as to how language creates text and meaning.

## a). Knowledge About Language

This is basically due to the shortcomings of KAL knowledge on the part of the policymakers and implementers alike which filter down to students whose needs nor aptitudes been appropriately discerned and evaluated. There is also the notion of cultural disconnect. Many an instances teachers who have not had the cultural experience themselves make mistakes. The technical aspects of language are also too complex and theoretical that they are minimized or left out in teacher training curricula. The training to teach other subjects, such as science, mathematics, law, history and so on are completely missing from our domestic programmes. Academic knowledge of any discipline is considered critical for their teachers. How is it that in-depth knowledge of language and linguistics and other language-related strings attached to it are often not considered as crucial for language teachers? There is also this native speaker fallacy (Phillipson,1992) that being a native speaker or an expert user of the
language ( whether native or non-native ) provides sufficient understanding of language for them to qualify them as ELT teachers. [Regrettably at the moment, in ELT spheres in Iran good and bad are mixed. Anyone holding an M.A and higher degree in English language is considered to have the qualification of being a teacher. ] .

## b). Visible pedagogy

It is safe practice that policies be made accessible and transparent to practitioners.
Simultaneously, classroom practices and pedagogy should also be made visible and should aim to enable students to create discourse appropriate for communities of practice. In visible pedagogy, the structuring of texts used within specific communities of practice are made visible for students so that they can learn and effectively use these discourses in the relevant context (J. Martin, 1999).

Explicitly and visible teaching discourse strategies and structures through analysis and deconstruction of text through approaches such as genre-based pedagogies can enable students to access powerful genres and reproduce them effectively, empowering them in the process. Visible pedagogy recognizes that texts are produced within contexts of culture and contexts of situation, and that certain texts are more privileged and more powerful than others; thus, mastery of these text types can enable students to access opportunities for employment, education, and research at a local as well as an international level.

## c). Cultural Sensitivity

The manner in which imported textbooks are designed to promote a particular culture, ideology and nationalistic sentiment is to be understood and addressed. It is nothing new that in most international textbooks, the aspirations of the hegemonic Western culture has been reflected under the guise of "We are just reflecting 'a way of life'. There is no cause for concern." . Well, we are not going to comment on this at length because that again calls for another multi-faceted angles of discussion beyond our immediate focus of attention here. As opposed to international textbooks with such ill-fated intentions as mentioned above, the development of materials and production of textbooks by ministries of education or curriculum/textbook boards in countries wishing to safeguard the national identity promote over-extensive national cultural ideas. This too is a grave pitfall. On the one hand, this seems a positive move because it draws on cultural motifs that students are more familiar with and celebrates and protects the national culture from Westernization resulting in a more empowered engagement with globalization. This empowered engagement is evident from examples in certain Iranian textbooks developed by ministry of education. [omissions or altercations does sometimes create funny situations and may even get across the wrong concepts ]. At the same time, however, the promotion of a national culture may sometimes be strongly linked with religious and ideological content which promotes one ideology above others (Maboob, 2009) and this will complicate matters further if the culture of hardline groups is disseminated which will bring about taxing confusion to the students and undue animosity between cultures. We strongly believe that differences in cultures instead of being a departure point for divergence should be celebrated for its variety. The world would be a dull place if all looked alike or thought alike. So, a balance should be struck between teaching language proficiency and the information needed about the delicacies of the culture the student is trying to learn their language. Therefore, while remaining respectful of all cultures at all times, it is important that the information transferred to the student is aligned with the initial goals of language programmes and does not undermine them.

## The Principles of PBA

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A set of six principles as an initial conceptualization of PBA is introduced hereinafter. These principles are an initial set of tentative proposals for a presumed LPP framework for ELT in Iran to begin a discussion on what PBA might eventually look like to enshroud the stipulations of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan in academic spheres. The ideas expressed in this paper will be strengthened by the undertaking of critical analysis of best practice $\backslash \mathrm{s}$ and cases of ELT programme implementation in a variety of contexts from the perspective of the proposed principles. These principles are always open for regular evaluation; feedback; consultation and revisions needed over time.

## 1) Collaboration

Collaboration should take place at various levels and domains. The stakeholders such as local teachers, experts, students and other related parties should be given voice to positively influence the design of policy, curriculum and textbooks so that the policies adopted are understood, accepted and duly translated into appropriate practice. Three key areas where collaboration could spur further enhancement of ELT policy and practice are:

### 1.1 Policymakers and Local Teachers

A key component in policymaking should be the understanding of the students' and teachers' needs by the sharing of knowledge from the grassroots level. Collaborating with teachers will ensure that policy can be implemented and that it will strengthen and serve our national interest. We must urgently put an end to the waste of time, energy and resources and base our decision makings not on wild notions or guesses but on educated deliberations through teamwork.

### 1.2 Policymakers and Experts

Policy decisions should be informed by an understanding of current theories in a range of disciplines. From a PBA perspective, we believe that consulting with experts in the areas of linguistics, pedagogy, and language development as well as ESP related subjects is as important as consulting with experts.

### 1.3 Policymakers and other parties involved

Policymakers should also consult with other stakeholders other than teachers and experts and publish the results. Dissemination of policies through press and media should encourage public debates about the relevance of the policies. Doing so will enable policymakers to gain the consent of those concerned directly and general public indirectly.
Language -in-education policy has implications for industry in that it informs the training of a population that will join the workforce in various needed capacities. As such policy decisions need to be taken with direct and/or indirect input from domestic market. This can help policymakers to make decisions that will meet industry requirements and result in training a population of expert graduates that can succeed in their future jobs.
In addition to the stakeholders identified above, it is also crucial to engage with and draw on discussion with syllabus designers, local textbook writers, administrators, and others who translate policies into concrete materials and procedures that teachers and students use and experience.
2) Relevance

This principle ensures that the practices, beliefs, and material that the policy encourages attain the goals for which they are developed and accord with the particular context. The principle of relevance is best understood in relation to the key areas of policy, practice, and production of materials.
2.1 Policy

The primary aim of the policy is to increase language proficiency. However, the outcomes of a particular ELT project is more difficult to determine. Identifying the particular goals of policy will enable policymakers to determine the relevance of proposed changes or lead to a more relevant policy. Moreover, it will ensure that the materials chosen or developed to support the policy are more likely to achieve the desired outcomes.

### 2.2 Practice

In creating relevant practice, it is necessary for the government to clearly outline the purpose of the English Language Policy and then create materials that translate this policy into practice. As already stated, it seems that few are fully aware or even willing to view themselves as one small part in a unified, coherent and broader picture (i.e., the National Strategy Plan) where everyone is acting for the national interest. The practices need to be relevant to the needs of the country. When the purpose and practices are determined in collaboration with local ELT professionals, the practices can be designed to better enhance the skills that the policy has prioritized.

### 2.3 Production of materials

The production of materials that translate policy goals into practice must also be relevant to the sociocultural practices with the context. Policymakers should determine the extent to which ELT will have an intra- or international focus and whether the teaching of language should also include the teaching of global cultural practices in addition to engagement with local practices.

## 3) Evidence

Banks (2009) believes that "basing policy on evidence shifts it from being an experimental endeavor to one that is supported by analysis and best practices". But the challenge is that it would be a costly and time-consuming challenge to collect a sizable quantity of quality evidence. Moreover, evidence-based policymaking has been criticized for its quantitative methods of assessment which is focused primarily on accountability (Sanderson, 2002). This will, of course, depend on the resources being available. It is known fact that not all contexts provide the possibility to supply exhaustive evidence to support successful practices. The strength of evidence-based policy in ELT is that it can safeguard against developing policy based on best practices from a variety of contexts and implemented as a one-size-fits-all solution without consulting local practitioners or cultural sensitivity.

## 4) Alignment

Alignment is important in that it ensures the project outcomes integrate and match the goals of ELT policy and that the knowledge drawn from it by policymakers is relevant to the goals of the policy. The outcomes should, however, be set realistically and assurance made that monitoring and evaluation practices take into account the sociopolitical and other intervening impacts. The incorporation of the reliable and valid outcomes into the development of curriculum and textbook materials need to be aligned with classroom practices. These practices are to be assessed according to whether the students demonstrate the required level of language proficiency and skills as delineated by the policy framework.

## 5) Transparency

This principle requires that policy objectives, goals, and outcomes be visible, easily accessible, and justifiable to all beneficiaries within the policy framework. Transparency enables the policymakers to:
(a) Gain support from various beneficiaries to try out the implementation of the policy according to the policy framework.
(b) To be trusted by teacher trainers, administrators, teachers, and researchers to get hold of full access of their findings and evaluative assessments.
(c) Prevent corruption, hidden ideological agendas, and possible political aspirations that may hinder the realization of the program and sabotage all efforts.
6) Empowerment

This principle delivers at its core the notion that the ultimate objective of any ELT project should be the effectiveness of the overall system in a manner that the losses and pitfalls at various levels are reduced to a minimum and this will hopefully lead to the empowerment of the country and the educational system. Every project should provide sustainability with respect to socio-political, economic, and national cultural environment. Empowerment through a PBA towards ELT policies and planning is not easy to achieve because it has to be based on knowledge, expertise, dedication, hard work and a belief that it is possible to be reached.

## Implications of PBA.

The implications of the principles foregone are applicable to a host of various recipients within the framework. Some of them are as follow:

## * Implications for policy makers

- Identify policy that is realistic and viable. The policymaker/s should strike a balance between complex needs of the community and national interests.
- Policy that takes into consideration national interests should take into account the economy of the plan of action as far as possible.
- Policy should be suitable for the context as regards the capacity, training, and expertise of domestic team at various levels and the availability of resources.
- Set reasonable goals and apply suitable tools for measurement of achievements.
- Promote accessibility for quality ELT through specification of national needs and priorities.
- Make sure that ELT issues are incorporated appropriately within the overall National Educational System.


## * Implications for Practitioners

- Incorporate means to make sure that the principles behind the policy are fully understood by those involved. Training plays an important role here.
- Make sure that you fully understand how to translate policy stipulations into curriculum, textbooks, and practice through case studies and other accessible resources.
- Strike a balance between EFL teaching and the culture it brings with itself and the measures required to safeguard the domestic culture.
- Increase understanding of how to measure achievement according to the standards outlined locally.
- Promote KAL, best practices, and understanding of how to adapt methodologies to best suit the objectives of the ELT programme.


## * Implications for Researchers

- Shift your focus of attention from the bulk of theoretical studies to carrying out a reasonable portion of case studies too and identify the best practices that will inform the formulation of macro-level policy and how it is implemented at the micro-level. ( This can be promoted through assigned research projects)
- Produce real time context-informed research and theory that can be used by policymakers and practitioners.
- Distinguish the links between national, regional and international policy frameworks to identify best practices for use by policy developers and practitioners.
- Carry out serious critical evaluation of existing, past and proposed ELT programmes to determine culturally and contextually suitable material and develop methodologies that could yield optimum outcomes through implementers practice.


## Why is important to integrate the concerns of EFL into a working, economic approach?

The story of English language teaching (ELT) in Iran, as one of the most notable anti-imperialistic countries in the world, has experienced a host of extreme ups and downs. English is simultaneously known as the language of enemies (i.e. the United States and the United Kingdom) on the one hand (Borjian, 2013) and as a tool for progress (Riazi, 2005) on the other. While Hayati and Mashhadi (2010) believe that Iran's policy on English stops short of nationwide dissemination of the language, the last decade in particular has witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of Iranians learning English. Davari (2013) points out that the rapidly changing situation in Iranian society is transforming English language learning into a fashionable trend, with the result that ELT is not only a flourishing market in the private sector, but is also playing a major role in the dissemination of English language. The undeniable shortcomings of English learning in centralized public sector English learning, leading to low efficacy and inefficiency with the growth of a new booming private sector ELT market, have been mainly rooted in policy makers' ambivalence towards English education. There are ample examples in the literature to prove the claim. The issue of ELT remains a sensitive and covert unsolved question. Iran has been in the headlines in the recent years and decades for many socio-political reasons. Many of these involve the confrontation between Islamic revolutionary values and the foreign policies and aspirations of Western governments. Among the Iranian state's revolutionary values there are no articulated aspirations to isolate the country from the outside world but progress and globalization are defined within Islamic, revolutionary and nationalistic discourses and therefore the status of English as a foreign language in Iran has been somewhat controversial and confusing. Of course, English language is in high demand in Iran and it is associated with globalization and progress. However, in the dominant official discourses it is often the incorporator of Western values, and could thus be deemed as harmful to local cultures and identities and a potential source of threat. The two paradoxical perspectives on the English language in Iran are among the main reasons for tension and difference between top-down official policies and the bottom-up grass-roots English language learning practices of contemporary Iranian society. The state prescribes mainstream English language teaching (ELT) provision from the age of twelve, but parents who can afford private sector ELT provision encourage their children to learn English outside the limited mainstream education system. Restricted and limited mainstream ELT could therefore be seen as the English language learned by the masses, but private sector ELT remains for the privileged few.
The aim of this article was to make a contribution to studies of language policy and planning in general and to an understanding of English language policies and practices in particular that could best serve the objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In principle, language policy as a sub-discipline of sociolinguistics can be studied in all communities and nation-states, including Iran, but at the same time one of the main aspirations of the paper is the introduction of PBA as a critical field of research to a context to which it has not been sufficiently debated.

## Summary and Conclusion.

This paper introduced a principles-based approach (PBA) for ELT practices and policies. PBA provides a set of six principles that emerge from a consideration of a range of local and global issues that relate to, impact, and influence the ELT policies, practices, and outcomes in diverse contexts. These principles comprised of collaboration, relevance, evidence, alignment, transparency, and empowerment (CREATE). The six principles outlined above are not mutually exclusive but relate to each other in a variety of ways. These principles were shown to be applicable in a range of contexts with their implications. By considering these principles, various stakeholders will be able mold their own ELT practices and policies in ways that suit their needs and reflect local conditions and practices. As such, PBA moves away from a prescriptive approach to language practice and policy and refrains from setting any standards or universal measures across diverse contexts. Instead, PBA recognizes the need for using different approaches to ensure effective delivery and successful outcomes of ELT practices and policies. To achieve this goal, stakeholders can use the PBA principles to identify relevant issues, and, by doing so, they can develop local practices and policies that can be easily implemented and that can result in achievable outcomes. The principles have the potential to be operationalized in different ways which may yield different answers and lead to different positions. This heterogeneity of responses or positions is, in our belief, healthy as long as they are dealt with ethically in a judicious manner and not accepted at face value. Also note that these tentative principles will need regular reevaluation and updating to meet the needs of the time and ensure their relevance, validity, and applicability across a variety of contexts. This paper which is a gross reflection ,mainly of Baldauf and his suggestions reflected by Mahboob \& Tilakaranta (2012) in a report for tesol International Association, was respectively taken up by us and its ideas expanded and developed to elaborate our (Iran's) main areas of concern in LPP and its relation to TEFL planning and policy. We hope that, within the scope of an article, due attention was paid to clarify the subject and enough reasoning put forward as to why the need for a PBA to TEFL is calling. Follow-up papers will hopefully discuss the implementation of this approach.

The unique sociocultural, political, economic, and historical aspects of each individual country or setting need to be taken into account when developing language policies and ELT programs and standards appropriate to these contexts. In this respect, local consultants working and developing research in these countries are best suited to determine what constitutes effective practices within those countries. Therefore, this paper recommends the development of a principles-based approach to influencing and enhancing successful and effective ELT practices and policies.

This paper is a reminder to help policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders recognize challenges faced when developing policy and consider how policy is translated into practice. In doing so, it demonstrated that a PBA would help them design and deliver more effective policies and practices in a range of contexts. For the purposes of this paper, we have assumed that the ultimate goal of any government, organization, or institution involved in developing or using language in education policy (in the context of ELT) is to ensure that students can use the language with the proficiency required to enhance their prospects within an overall national framework.

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# THE EFFECT OF TEACHING PROSODIC FEATURES ON PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY ATTEMPTED TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF TEACHING PROSODIC FEATURES ON PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION. THE PARTICIPANTS WERE 50 FEMALE PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL STUDENTS STUDYING AT IRAN MEHR INSTITUTE IN ALESHTAR CITY IN LORESTAN PROVINCE CONVENIENTLY SAMPLED. THEY ASSIGNED INTO AN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND A CONTROL GROUP 25 PEOPLE FOR EACH. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STUDY, THE TWO GROUPS WERE ADMINISTERED A PRE TEST TO TAKE UP THE INITIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS. AFTER THE PRE-TEST, THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED THE TREATMENT INVOLVING PROSODIC FEATURES AS STRESS, RHYTHM, AND INTONATION, WHILE THE CONTROL GROUP CONTINUED THEIR REGULAR CLASSES. AT THE END OF THE 12-WEEK PERIOD, THE TWO GROUPS WERE GIVEN A POST TEST TO SEE HOW THEIR LISTENING HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY THE TREATMENT. AFTER THE DATA WAS COLLECTED, ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE (ANCOVA) WAS USED TO COMPARE THE MEAN SCORES OF THE TWO GROUPS BEFORE AND AFTER THE TREATMENT. THE FINDINGS SHOWED THAT, THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP HAD PERFORMED SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN THE CONTROL GROUP. THIS CAN HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL TEACHERS, LEARNERS, AND MATERIALS DESIGNERS.


KEYWORDS: PROSODIC FEATURES, LISTENING COMPREHENSION

## Introduction

Listening is one of the most problematic skills for foreign language learners (FLLs) since it does not develop easily (Sevil, 2012). In order to develop this skill, teachers have sought ways to teach foreign language learners strategies to adopt. In addition to applying strategies, researchers and teachers have designed and tried to follow different techniques such as using visual aids and

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particular computer programs. With the help of technology, opportunities for classroom instruction arise and teachers try to take advantage of these opportunities. Nevertheless, listening has remained one of the most difficult skills due to certain reasons. For instance, no matter how different the techniques that the teachers employ in classrooms, the materials lack the strength to cover how the real listening process occurs (Brown \& Yule, 1983; Rosa, 2002). The listening texts used in classrooms are usually modified according to the levels of the foreign language learners such that even advanced learners are exposed to reduced language. This causes the FLLs to have problems in comprehending "real speech". Learners may understand what has been uttered in taped recordings, but may miss some important details when they encounter real life communication (Brown, 1977; Brown, 2006).

Pronunciation is one of the elements which affects listening comprehension (Brown, G. 1995 ). It contains segmental and suprasegmental features. Research in the teaching of English pronunciation as a second and foreign language (ESL/EFL) over the last decade or so (e.g. Anderson-Hsieh et al., 1992; Munro \& Derwing, 1995) has made evident the significance of prosodic features (i.e., stress, rhythm and intonation) in the comprehension and production of the language.

Over the last two decades, pronunciation experts have emphasized suprasegmentals over segmentals in promoting oral communication (Avery \& Ehrlich, 1992; Morley, 1991). A common claim of second language (L2) pronunciation researchers is that giving priority to the prosodic features of English not only improves learners' comprehension skills but is also less frustrating for students because greater change in listening comprehension can occure (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; McNerney \& Mendelsohn, 1992). McNerney and Mendelsohn (1992) claim that " it is the suprasegmentals that control the structure of information", and that they are "far more important in communication" (p.185).

Furthermore, from a pedagogical point of view, it has also been found that speakers who have received instruction emphasizing suprasegmental features could apparently transfer their learning to a spontaneous production more effectively than those who have received instruction with only segmental content (i.e., vowels and consonants) (Derwing, Munro, \& Wieber 1998). More recently, there are numbers of studies which have also considered the importance of nonnative speakers' (NNSs) prosody in instructional speech and in listeners' judgments, and have provided support for the superiority of suprasegmental instruction in ESL contexts ( e.g. Derwing \& Rossiter, 2003).

However, prosodic features as a component of pronunciation have been neglected in English language teaching. The neglect in teaching prosodic features does not seem to be due to those extensive gaps that generally exist between theoretical investigations and pedagogical materials based on some investigations (Sevil, 2012). This neglect may be because the teachers at language schools do not think pronunciation and its components are important, or they do not feel competent enough to teach these skills (Hanson \& Whally, n.d.). In addition, the lack of attention seems more to be due to the difficulty found in teaching some features of rhythm and intonation (Gilbert 1993 ; Morley 1987).

Both teachers and material designers have in fact highlighted the need to concentrate more on rhythm and intonation than any other aspect of pronunciation because of their importance to communicate meaning (Gilbert 1993 ; Morley 1987). Roach (1991) warns us that "the complexity of the total set of sequential and prosodic components of intonation ... makes it a very difficult thing to teach"(p.73).

In order to facilitate the instruction of prosodic features, pedagogical priorities should be established mainly through the choice of features that are more relevant for the learners' intelligibility in spoken English (Chela-Flores, n.d.). As Roach (1996) has stated, "we need to distinguish between what English speakers do and what learners of English need to learn (p.47). The purpose of this study was to examine, in the light of relevant research, and pedagogical experience the basic issues of English stress, rhythm and intonation which are important to

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communicate meaning. Learning and comprehending these features provide a way to benefit and interest the listening skill.

## Statement of the problem

The EFL learners of English usually have problems in listening to English native speakers. utterances. They are not able to catch words correctly when listening to them, and this probably leads to failure in communication. As Yang, Lin, and Chung (2009) state roughly $40 \%$ to $50 \%$ of people's communication is taken up by listening. Therefore, listening is an essential skill that students need to develop firstly when studying English as a second or foreign language.

Pronunciation and its components as segmental and particularly suprasegmental are important in listening comprehension and over the last two decades, pronunciation experts have emphasized suprasegmentals rather than segmentals in promoting oral communication (Avery \& (Ehrlich, 1992; Morley, 1991).

Since, pronunciation and mainly prosodic features awareness have been neglected in English language classes of foreign countries (Chela-Flores, n.d.); therefore, this study aimed at investigating the effect of teaching prosodic features on listening comprehension to show if prosodic features have any main effect on listening comprehension.

## Related studies

Chapanit (2012) in an experimental study examined teaching prosodic (suprasegmental) features of spoken English through films is focused in the research to develop listening achievement of learners. The research aimed at investigating the efficiency of the lessons designed for teaching prosodic through films, to compare learners' achievement in listening before and after the treatment, to find out the correlation between learners' competence in suprasegmentals and listening achievement, and to evaluate learners' attitudes towards teaching suprasegmentals of spoken English through films. The subjects were 34 first-year students from various faculties of Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, involved by purposive sampling. Teaching experiment was conducted for 5 weeks in April-May 2012. The research instruments were score profiles of the tests taken at the end of each lesson, a pre and post listening test, a test on suprasegmentals, and questionnaire. The result of the study showed that the mean of post-test score was higher than that of the pre-test score and the students' attitudes towards teaching suprasegmental features of spoken English through films were positively rated

In another study, the effect of prosodic reading on listening comprehension was investigated byYildrim et al., ( 2009). In this reaserch, two classes of an elementary school were randomly selected.Then, an appropriate narrative was shosen for use with fifth graders. This text was read to the experimental group who pay attention to prosodic features but not to the control group. This was followed by both group answering a comprehension test about the text. Findings showed that the group which experienced prosodic reading was better at listening comprehension than the other group.

A further study, Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, and Koehler (1992) compared the relative contributions made to intelligibility by prosody, segmentals, and syllable structure. Within 11 different language groups, they found that the score for prosody was most significantly associated with the overall score for pronunciation. A similar finding was reported by AndersonHsieh and Koehler (1988), who concluded that "prosodic deviance may affect comprehension more adversely than segmental deviance" (p. 562). In a related finding, Derwing, Munro, and Wiebe (1998) studied the effects of both segmental and suprasegmental instruction on learners' comprehensibility ratings and concluded that the latter had a greater effect on performance in communicative contexts. Usually learners benefit from attention to both aspects, and some learners may need help in some areas more than in others. One considerable practical advantage

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of focusing on suprasegmentals is that learners from mixed L1 backgrounds in the same class will benefit, and will often find that their segmental difficulties improve at the same time.

Okim (2010) did an investigation as relative salience of suprasegmental features on judgements L2 comprehensibility and accentedness. Using the PRAAT computer program, 5 minutes of continuous in-class lectures from11 inter- national teaching assistants (ITAs) were acoustically analyzed for measures of speech rate, pauses, stress, and pitch range. Fifty eight US undergraduate students evaluated the ITAs oral performance and commented on their ratings. The results revealed that suprasegmental features independently contributed to listeners' perceptual judgments. Accent ratings were best predicted by pitch range and word stress measures whereas comprehensibility scores were mostly associated with speaking rates $n$ hearing in the stream of speech and to make them use those signals.

Therefore in line with studies of the type described above, the present study was designed to teach suprasegmental features through theoretical and practical instruction as a suitable way to learn and comprehend these features in listening skill and then use them in spoken language.

## Methodology

## Participants

The participants included 50 female pre-intermediate EFL learners in two intact classes at Iran Mehr Institute in Aleshtar city of Lorestan province conveniently sampled out of 65 students in this study. They were in age range of 15-18 years. The participants were randomly assigned into two groups: the experimental and the control groups.

## Instruments

To collect the data for the present study, two parallel forms of the listening section of the Cambridge preliminary English Test (PET) were used. These were used to determine the students' level of listening comprehension before and after the treatment. Each sample contained 25 multiple choice questions requiring the participants to choose the best response from the options according to the statement they heard in the recording. The test had four parts. The first part contained seven questions. Each question had three options. For each question there were three pictures and a short recording. Participants had to choose the correct picture after listening to the recording. The second part contained six multiple-choice questions that had three options too. In this part students heard someone speak about a special topic and students had to answer by choosing a correct option. The third part included six questions in which the learners were required to fill in the missing information in the numbered space after listening to the recording. The last part contained six Yes-No items where students heard a conversation about a topic and decided if each sentence is correct or incorrect.

Before administering the test, it was piloted with 25 students. The test was administered to 25 participants who were part of statistical population but not of statistical sample. The Cronbach's alpha value obtained for the pre test was 0.87 and for the post test it was 0.89 .

## Procedure

First, the researcher asked for the permission of the institution management of Iran Mehr, the permissions having been granted and participants were assigned into two groups, the experimental and the control groups. Then, all participants were administered a pre-test to determine the initial difference between two groups. The pre-test was a $25-$ multiple- choice test adapted from listening section of Cambridge's PET. Then the treatment started with the researcher teacher teaching the experimental group the prosodic features. This involved

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introducing the prosodic features to the experimental group. In this phase, some examples of these features as the word, phrase, and sentence level were introduced and taught to students one feature in every session by the teacher in the classroom and the audio CDs were played back for repeating. The teacher pinpointed each of them during the listening and asked subjects to repeat them. As the class activity, at the end of each session, students were asked to do some exercises about what they had been taught and learned. The treatment lasted for 12 sessions and each session took 1.5 hours. In the control group, such features were not taught and they had a regular listening class of course book of 'Tactics Expanding for listening'. They had a normal course of teaching of this book. At the end of the treatment, the two groups were given a post-test to measure the possible differences between the groups after the treatment.

## Design

As the present study included an experimental and a control group conveniently sampled plus
a pre-test and a post test, it reflected a quasi-experimental design. This can be schematically shown as EG T1 x T2
CG $\quad$ T1 $\quad$ T2

## Data analysis

Data Analysis was done quantitatively through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Then, the means of the experimental and the control group performances in the pre-and posttests were compared to determine whether there was a significant difference in their listening performance. At the end, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to compare the mean scores of the groups before and after the treatment.

## Normality of Distribution of Test Scores

To check this assumption Kolmogrov- Smirnov test was run the results of which for both the pre-test and the post-test of two groups ( $0.20 \mathrm{p}>0.05$ ) indicated normal distribution of test scores.
Table 1
Kolmogrov-Smirnov Test

Test of Normality

|  |  | Kolmogorov-Smirnov |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | control | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| pretest | experimental | 0.14 | 25 | 0.20 |
| Post-test | control | 0.10 | 25 | 0.20 |
|  | experimental | 0.10 | 25 | 0.20 |
|  |  |  | 0.20 |  |

The Homogeneity of Slops of Regression Lines
This assumption was checked by measuring the interaction between group and the covariate ( pre-test). The results showed that the homogeneity of regression slopes had been observed. $(\mathrm{f}=0.09, \mathrm{Sig}=0.77 \mathrm{p}>0.05$ )
Table 2
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | 0.11 | 1 | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.77 |

## The Linearity of Regression Line

Figure 1 below shows the linear relationship between pre-test and post-test scores. As it is seen in the figure, although the lines do not show a complete linear relationship especially in the pre-test, what is notable is that there seems to be no interaction between the lines; therefore, it might be argued that the assumption of linearity of regression lines is also held. This assumption was checked by drawing the scattered graphs, and checking the standard regression which showed there was no deviation of linearity.


Figure 1 linearity of variance

## The Equality of Error Variances

This assumption denotes that variances of the dependent variable for each combination of levels of independent variables must be equal. In another words, Leven's statistic tests the assumption that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. As the
values obtained for the test of Leven were larger than the Sig value of .05, the equality or homogeneity of variances of two groups was assumed. (Pretest: $\mathrm{Sig}=0.79, \mathrm{p}>0.05$; Posttest: $\mathrm{Sig}=$ $0.85, \mathrm{p}>0.05$ )

Table 3
Leven's Test of Equality of Error Variances
Test of Homogeneity of Variances

|  |  | Leven Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| (pretest) | Based on Mean | 0.07 | 1 | 48 | 0.79 |
| (post-test) | Based on Mean | 0.03 | 1 | 48 | 0.85 |

## Inferential Statistics

After checking normality assumptions, in order to investigate the research hypotheses and for the purpose of eliminating the effect of pre-test on students' performance in the post-test, as analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run, the results of which are reflected in Table 4. The presented descriptive statistics in previous section showed that there is a difference between the scores of listening comprehension of control and experimental groups. To check if this observed difference between scores of the two groups is not produced by chance and analysis of covariance was used the results of which are presented in table 4.

Table 4
Analysis of Covariance ( ANCOVA)
Table 4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Corrected <br> Model | 829.59 | 2 | 414.80 | 343.71 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 52.44 | 1 | 52.44 | 43.45 | 0.000 |
| Pre-test | 569.68 | 1 | 569.68 | 472.05 | 0.000 |
| group | 225.20 | 1 | 225.20 | 186.60 | 0.000 |
| Error | 56.72 | 50 | 1.21 |  |  |
| Total | 9918.00 | 49 |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 886.32 |  |  |  |  |

Table 4 summarizes the results of analysis of covariance of the post-test after considering the effect of the covariate (the pre-test). According to the results in the table, based on the value obtained for the groups, it can be concluded that there is a meaningful difference between the means scores of listening comprehension of participants of two groups. ( $\mathrm{F}=186.60, \mathrm{p}<0.05$ ). In
other words, it can be deduced that teaching prosodic features had a meaningful effect on listening comprehension of the learners.

## Findings and Discussion

This study investigated the effect of teaching prosodic features on pre-intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension. As the results of this study showed teaching prosodic features had a meaningful effect on listening comprehension considering the significant development of experimental group over the control group. Based on the descriptive statistics, there was a great difference between the performances of the groups in the post test. To check the significance of this difference Analysis of Covariance was run, the results of which at $\mathrm{P}>0.05$ indicated a significant difference between the mean score of groups in the post-test after the effect of pre-test was considered. This finding is in line with some investigations already reviewed in the literature such as Chapanit (2012), Yildrim et al., (2009), Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, Koehler (1992), and Okim (2010) whose findings are discussed below:

The findings of the study are in line with Chapanits' study in 2012. Chapanit (2012) in an experimental study examined teaching prosodic (suprasegmental) features of spoken English through films on developing listening achievement of learners. His study aimed at investigating the efficiency of the lessons designed for teaching prosodic features through films, learners' achievement in listening before and after the treatment, examining the correlation between learners' competence in suprasegmentals and listening achievement evaluating learners' attitudes towards teaching suprasegmentals of spoken English through films showed that the performance of the experimental group was significantly better than that of the control group and that the students' attitudes towards teaching suprasegmental features of spoken English through films were positively rated.

Another study the findings of which lend support to the findings of the present study was the study by Yildrim et al., (2009) which investigated the effect of prosodic reading on listening comprehension. Findings showed that the group which experienced prosodic reading was better at listening comprehension than the other group.

The studies by Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, and Koehler (1992) agree with this study by comparing the relative contributions made to intelligibility by prosody, segmentals, and syllable structure. They found that the score for prosody was most significantly associated with the overall score for pronunciation. A similar finding was reported by Anderson-Hsieh and Koehler (1988), who concluded that "prosodic deviance may affect comprehension more adversely than segmental deviance" (p. 562). In a related finding, Derwing, Munro,and Wiebe (1998) studied the effects of both segmental and suprasegmental instruction on learners' comprehensibility ratings and concluded that the latter had a greater effect on performance in communicative contexts.

Finally, an investigation by Okim (2010) also lends support to the findings of the present study. Okim investigated the relative salience of suprasegmental features on judgements L2 comprehensibility and accentedness". The results revealed that suprasegmental features independently contributed to listeners' perceptual judgments.

All this indicates that teaching, learning, and comprehending the prosodic (suprasegmental) features as a component of pronunciation provides a way to increase ability of comprehending and judging learners' listening comprehension.

## Conclusion

This study provided some evidence that teaching prosodic features is effective in developing listening comprehension skills of pre-intermediate EFL students. Even though both groups had made progress in their listening skills at the end of the treatment, the experimental group development was statistically much higher than that of the control group.

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This finding is in accordance with many other studies in the literature which highlights the relationship between prosodic features and listening. This relationship has been proposed by several scholars (Brown, 1977; Gilbert, 1995; Morley, 1991; Nunan \& Miller, 1995; ).In conclusion, by considering the studies mentioned in literature review and results of this study, it can be concluded that the teaching prosodic features has a meaningful effect on listening comprehension.

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# THE EFFECT OF ADOPTING GENRE APPROACH ON IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE ON IELTS TASK ONE WRITING 

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#### Abstract

WRITING IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT SKILLS TO MASTER FOR SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE(SL/FL) LEARNERS, AND IN THE LAST FEW DECADES, A NUMBER OF THEORIES AND APPROACHES HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED TO DEVELOP SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS. AMONG THESE, GENRE-BASED APPROACHES TO TEACHING WRITING HAVE RECEIVED MUCH ATTENTION IN THE RECENT YEARS. THEREFORE, IN THE PRESENT STUDY ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO EXPLORE THE EXTENT TO WHICH A GENRE BASED WRITING INSTRUCTION IS EFFECTIVE IN HELPING FL LEARNERS DEVELOP THEIR WRITING PERFORMANCE IN IELTS TASK ONE ESSAYS. TO THIS END, A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN WAS ADOPTED IN WHICH A GROUP OF 40 INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS WERE CONVENIENTLY SAMPLED AND ASSIGNED TO TWO GROUPS: ONE EXPERIMENTAL AND ONE CONTROL. THEN AFTER A PRE-TEST, AND FOR A PERIOD OF EIGHT WEEKS A GENRE-BASED INSTRUCTION WAS APPLIED TO THE CLASS DESIGNATED AS THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP. FOR THE OTHER CLASS (CONTROL GROUP) THE TRADITIONAL PROCESS ORIENTED WRITING INSTRUCTION WAS USED, AND ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE GIVEN A POST TEST. THE DATA COLLECTED FROM THE TWO TESTS WERE THEN ANALYZED AND COMPARED THROUGH ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE (ANCOVA). THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE TWO GROUPS AND THAT THE STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP HAD OUTPERFORMED THOSE IN THE CONTROL GROUP. THIS FINDING CAN HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR ESL/EFL TEACHERS AND MATERIALS WRITERS.


KEYWORDS: GENRE, IELTS, TASK ONE WRITING

## Introduction

It is generally agreed that writing is the most difficult skill to master for foreign or second language learners (Chaisiri, 2010). In addition, as Chaisiri noted providing writing instruction in L2 contexts particularly to those English as a foreign language (EFL) learners who are rarely exposed to English is considered difficult. A number of theories and approaches that intend to assist English language learners to develop their writing skills have been proposed, and implemented at different times. Among these approaches, product and process approaches have

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been widely used to teach second language (L2) writing. As Badger and White (2000) confirm the two approaches have dominated much of the teaching of writing that happens in the EFL classroom over the last 20 years. In the last ten years, however, a variety of genre-based methodologies, have been proposed as alternative approaches to teach writing (Badger \& White, 2000; Chaisiri, 2010).

Howatt and Widdowson (2004) believe that over the past ten years or so, there have been two developments in language description that allow for a much more precise account of language of different domains of use, and so provide for a more exact specification of ESP course objectives. One of these is genre analysis.

The value of focusing on genres in various areas of the profession has been convincingly demonstrated by scholars such as Swales (1990), Bhatia (1991), Paltridge (2001), Hyland (2003, 2004,2007 ), and others. Paltridge (2001), citing Swales (1990) points to the benefits of giving genre a more central classroom role when we teach language: a genre-based perspective focuses on language at the level of the whole text while at the same time taking into account the social and cultural context in which it is used (Paltridge, 2001).

In foreign or second-language writing, Hyland (2003) has argued that genre-based approaches provide L2 learners with explicit instructions on how they can make use of language patterns to write coherent and purposeful compositions. She especially focuses on teaching particular genres that students need to gain control of in order to succeed in particular settings (Paltridge, 2004). A teacher who employs genre-based approaches is, therefore, required to get learners to produce texts (usually- academic essays) on the basis of purpose, organization and audience (Paltridge, 2001).

Although there exist many studies in the area of EFL writing, only few deal with genre approaches to teaching L2 writing. This may be because genre approaches are relatively newcomers to the field of English language teaching (ELT) profession (Badger \& White, 2000). The majority of these studies are qualitative studies concerned with the implementation of genre based pedagogies in EFL classroom settings.

Based on the positive results found in these qualitative studies (e.g. Chaisiri, 2010; Gebhard \& Harman, 2011 ; Walker, 1999), it could be stated that genre-based approaches have been demonstrated to be good instructional instruments to teach L2 students the skills necessary to write in ways that reflect particular genres within particular contexts. However, empirical research on the potential of genre-based approaches, as effective pedagogies for teaching L2 writing, has not been adequately carried out so far. Moreover, the idea of using genre-based writing instruction in the second language classroom in a non-native speaking country is yet to be explored in any satisfactory way.

In Iran like many non-English speaking countries, academic writing has remained a problem for students (Martin,1998; Mynt, 1997). It is often seen that Iranian EFL students fail to write a coherent and fluent English composition although sometimes they show high performance on grammar tests. Therefore, when they are asked to write academic papers, most Iranian students either turn to writing handbooks for direction or imitate the format of published articles. Even if some language teachers devote class time to instruct the students on academic writing, what they normally do is to provide students with the format of academic paper without further elaboration on the reasons behind the moves of academic papers. Therefore, Iranian students may have some knowledge of the structure of an academic paper but little idea about why academic papers should be written the way they are. These all hold true about IELTS candidates in Iran as well. It seems that these difficulties encountered by in academic writing can be partly solved by the application of the generic analysis of academic papers in English teaching.

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Hence, this empirical study has attempted to explore the effectiveness of a genre-based approach to improving EFL learners' writing skills by investigating how adopting such a approach may affect IELTS candidates performance in task one writing.

## Related Studies

Although many works in the area of EFL writing have been carried out, only few studies deal with genre approaches to teaching L2 writing. In a study by Chaisiri (2010) for instance, attempts were made to investigate how writing teachers perceive their current approach and the consequences of implementing genre-based pedagogy in one writing classroom. After analyzing sample texts produced by 40 Thai students participated in the study, he concluded that the genrebased writing instruction employed lead to clear improvement in students' writing. He further stated that both the teachers and students have positive attitudes towards the implemented writing pedagogy. Walker (1999) also designed a lesson that made use of genre theory to teach engineering students about the genre of engineering lab report writing. At the end of his paper, he pointed out that by integrating genre theory in one of the lab courses that the students took, it was possible to alleviate problems that students had previously encountered in learning and writing the genre of engineering lab reports.

Another qualitative research article that is relevant to this research is the study conducted by Kamberelis's (1999) study entitled "Genre development and learning: Children writing stories, science reports and poems". In his study he investigated the performance of fifty-four children in three genres: narrative, scientific and poetic. He checked the children's text for the presence or absence of a variety of textual and structural features which are typically distributed across the three genres. Results of the empirical analysis revealed that the children had significantly more experience with narrative genres than the other two genres. In other words, this implied that the participants had more working knowledge of narrative genres than poetic and scientific genres.

The last quantitative study, which is reviewed here, is the work of Ho (2009), where she designed a lesson by combining the genre-based theory and Systematic Functional Linguistics and implemented it. Having compared the pre- and post-instruction pieces of review writing produced by an ESL undergraduate in the English class, she found out that the genre-based instruction that she applied "appears to have resulted in the student's improvement in her written texts, particularly with regards to the overall schematic structure and the patterns of clause construction" (p.351).

As has been indicated, genre approach to teaching writing is a new approach and most of the studies that have been conducted concerning this approach are qualitative. As far as the review of the literature shows, few studies have ever tried to conduct an experimental study to compare genre based writing pedagogy with other approaches of teaching L2 writing. This research attempts to explore how much genre based writing instruction is effective in helping EFL students develop their writing by focusing on the genre of IELTS writing task one. Specifically the study aims at finding the answer to the following question:

- Does adopting genre approach significantly affect Iranian EFL Student's performance on IELTS task one writing?


## Methodology

## Participants

To derive the sample for the study, first two intact classes including 60 students at Tehran IELTS Center were conveniently selected. To ensure the homogeneity of the participants, before the actual phase of the study a Nelson English Language Proficiency Test was administered to the students, and 40 students ( 8 males and 32 females) whose scores fell between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were chosen as the participants to the study. These then were
randomly assigned to control and experimental groups, 20 people each. The participants were in the age range of 18 to 31 .

## Instruments

To collect the data for the study the following instruments were used:

1. Nelson English Language Test which is a battery including 40 separate tests for ten levels of language proficiency which range from beginner to advanced.
The levels are numbered from 50, 100, ..., to 500. Each test consists of 50 items. For the purpose of the present study a test in intermediate level, number 300, was used. The reliability of the test is reported by test developers to be 0.89 .
2. Two IELTS task one writing tests. One of these was administered prior to the treatment as the pre-test to take up the initial differences between the groups, and the second one was used as the post-test at the end of the treatment period. The Writing Task 1 of the IELTS Academic test is a test which requires candidates to write a summary of at least 150 words in response to a particular graph (bar, line or pie graph), table, chart, or process (how something works, how something is done). This task tests candidates' ability to select and report the main features, to describe and compare data, identify significance and trends in factual information, or describe a process. These tests were both adopted from Cambridge ESOL Examination website as actual samples of IELTS task one writing, so their reliability was ensured.

## Design of the Study

A quasi-experimental research method with a pretest-post-test, control group design was used which is schematically shown as:


The aim of the present study was to investigate how the knowledge of a cetain genre could affect students' performance in producing related texts. Thus IELTS task one writing was selected for the study because of two reasons: (a) IELTS task one writing was selected because, it clearly conforms to the definition of genre given by Swales (1990) and its genre characteristics are known, and (b) it seems that the literature on genre studies has not included such writings.

The writing instructions lasted for eight weeks, for both classes during which the classes met twice a week, with one-hour period for each session. To start with, a Nelson proficiency test was administered to find out if the subjects were homogeneous. Then the structure and requirements of the IELTS writing task one were explained to all the participants in both the experimental and control group.

During the instructional period, genre-based approach to teaching writing was applied in the experimental class. According to Tarnopolsky (2000), much of the materials in the genre-based instruction (GBI) approach to teaching L2 writing include steps such as reading a teachersupplied sample text, discussing it, defining its genre peculiarities, getting an assignment to write a text of a similar type, and so on.

Therefore, and in line with the descriptions above, the experimental group was explicitly taught about the different features of IELTS task one writing. For this purpose, eight model writings of IELTS task one writing were given to the students. Then, in the classroom the teacher discussed the basic genre features of this type of writing, and explained the genre moves involved, their functions, and the linguistic forms used in writing the task.

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Afterwards, the students, with the help of the teacher, tried to analyze other samples in the classroom. After that, participants wrote their first draft which was followed by classroom discussion where students got feedback from their peers and the teacher. Finally, they wrote their final draft. The control group was given explicit instruction on the features of IELTS task one writing based on some model texts. After they wrote their first draft, the teacher gave them feedback on the errors that were observed in their texts. Finally, they wrote their final drafts.

At the end of the treatment period all participants took part in a writing exam adopted from the official site for the IELTS.

## Scoring Procedure

According to Paltridge (2000) genre knowledge includes both content and form. Therefore, the features selected for evaluation in this study indicated the participants' knowledge of the content as well as form of the genre under study. Measurements of genre knowledge used by Kamberelis (1999) were used in this study. These features include textual features (types of sentences: simple, compound or complex, verb tenses, conjunctions), register features (specialized, appropriate vocabulary) and structural features (introduction and its parts, the organization of body paragraphs and conclusion). While textual features operate at sentence or inter-sentential level, register features operate at word or phrase level, and the structural features operate at the level of the whole text. Each of these was assigned 10 points so the maximum score possible for every written task was 30 .

## Data Analysis

As the study aimed at examining the effect of genre analysis as the independent variable on students' performance on IELTS task one writing, as the dependent variable, and as there were a pre-test and a post-test administered in two groups: one experimental and one control, the comparison of the relative efficiency of independent variable could be best measured through ANCOVA statistical procedure which assumes the normality of the data.

## Data Analysis

## Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Group

The descriptive statistics of the participants' pre-test and post-test scores in experimental group are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
The Results of the Participants' Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Experimental Group

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pre-Test in Experimental Group | 20 | 13 | 19 | 16.47 | 1.87 |
| Post-Test in Experimental Group | 20 | 17 | 25 | 20.94 | 2.08 |
| Valid N | 20 |  |  |  |  |

As Table 1 indicates, the mean score for the experimental group in pre-test was 17 with a standard deviation of 1.87 , while for the post-test, these were 20.94 and 2.08 respectively.

## Descriptive Statistics for Control Group

The descriptive statistics of the participants' pre-test and post-test scores in experimental group are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
The Results of the Participants' Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Control Group

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pre-Test in Control Group | 20 | 14 | 20 | 16.76 | 1.85 |
| Post-Test in Control Group | 20 | 16 | 22 | 18.53 | 2.00 |
| Valid N | 20 |  |  |  |  |

As Table 2 indicates, the mean score for the control group in pre-test was 16.76 with a standard deviation of 1.85 , while for the post-test, these were 18.53 and 2 respectively.

## 4. 4 One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

To ensure normal distribution of the scores in both control and experimental groups, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was run the results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

|  |  | Pre-Test of <br> Control <br> Group | $c$ <br> Pre-Test of <br> Experiment <br> al Group | Post-Test of <br> Control <br> Group | Post-Test of <br> Experiment <br> al Group |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| N |  | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Normal Parametersa,,b | Mean | 16.76 | 16.47 | 18.53 | 20.94 |
|  | Std. Deviation | 1.855 | 1.875 | 2.004 | 2.076 |
| Most Extreme Differences | Absolute | .182 | .141 | .192 | .166 |
|  | Positive | .182 | .095 | .192 | .145 |
|  | Negative | -.159 | -.141 | -.121 | -.166 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z |  | .751 | .580 | .793 | .683 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .625 | .890 | .555 | .740 |

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.

As it is indicated in Table 3, P-value for each set of scores was higher than 0.05 which shows the normal distributions of scores.

Homogeneity of the slope of regression lines
Table 4
Homogeneity of Regression
Dependent Variable: Post-Test

| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected Model | $130.503^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 3 | 43.501 | 25.042 | .000 |
| Intercept | 12.428 | 1 | 12.428 | 7.154 | .012 |
| Groups | 2.738 | 1 | 2.738 | 1.576 | .219 |
| Pre-Test | 80.536 | 1 | 80.536 | 46.361 | .000 |
| Groups * Pre-Test | .672 | 1 | .672 | .387 | .539 |
| Error | 52.115 | 36 | 1.737 |  |  |
| Total | 13425.000 | 40 |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 182.618 | 336 |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.715$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.686$ )

As it is shown in Table 4, in the row for Groups, the P-value was equal to 0.539 which was higher than 0.05 , so interaction between the independent variable and covariate was not significant and the assumption of the homogeneity of the slope of regression lines is also held.

Therefore, the ANCOVA can be run. Figure 1 below shows the linear relationship betweenpretest

and post test scores.

Figure 1 Linear relationship between pretest and post test scores.

## 1 Testing the Research Hypothesis

In order to investigate the research hypothesis and for the purpose of eliminating the effect of pre-test on students' performance in the post-test, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run, the results of which are reflected in Table 5.

## Table 5.

## Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

Dependent Variable: Post-Test

| Source | Type III Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta <br> Squared |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Corrected Model | $129.831^{\text {a }}$ | 2 | 64.916 | 38.123 | .000 | .711 |
| Intercept | 12.545 | 1 | 12.545 | 7.367 | .011 | .192 |
| Pre-Test | 80.390 | 1 | 80.390 | 47.211 | .000 | .604 |
| Groups | 59.826 | 1 | 59.826 | 35.134 | .000 | .531 |
| Error | 52.786 | 37 | 1.703 |  |  |  |
| Total | 13425.000 | 40 |  |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 182.618 | 39 |  |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.711$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.692$ )

As it is shown in Table 5, the row for the pre-test shows that the pre-test was significantly related to the post-test (P-value $<0.05$ ) with the magnitude of 0.604 . The row for Groups is the

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indicator of the main effect of adopting a genre-based instruction on the dependent variable. After adjusting for pretest scores, there was a significant effect of the group ( $\mathrm{F}=35.134, \mathrm{p}<0.05$, partial $\eta^{2}=0.531$ ). As P -value was less than 0.05 , the difference between two groups was significant and the effect of genre-based instruction approach on students' performance in IELTS task one writing was verified.

## Discussion

The results of ANCOVA showed that the mean of writing quality was significantly higher in the experimental group than that of the control group, which received no instruction. After genrebased instruction, participants in the experimental group wrote IELTS task one essays with much better quality than their counterparts in the control group and the mean differences between these two groups were significant.

As a result, based on the findings of this study, the explicit teaching of genre moves helps EFL learners to write texts of better quality. The effectiveness of genre-based instruction of IELTS task one essays which was confirmed in this study indicates that EFL learners can learn to write significantly better through familiarizing themselves with the genre conventions of the task at hand (Flowerdew, 2000; Kim \& Kim, 2005). Davies (1988) believes that the process of working out a genre-based syllabus for ESL students can benefit from the collaboration between teachers and students. "In such a syllabus" he states, "ESL students' needs are accounted for in terms of the discourse requirements of their respective fields" (p.163). Similarly, Gavigan (1999) asserts that "having an explicit knowledge of genres enables teacher to have a much deeper idea of the skills students need to possess in order to accomplish adequately the tasks they assign to the students when they ask them to write" ( p. 13). And Haas (1996) maintains that

Only when teachers enter with interest and real understanding into discourse
patterns (which give distinctive characters to the genres of composition
studies in particular), will they be able to guide their students in reading and
writing the various disciplinary genres available to them. (p.9)

## Conclusions

The study reported here aimed at examining whether adopting a genre approach to writing IELTS task one essays would significantly affect EFL students writing performance. The results of the study indicated that in the
experimental group, in contrast to the control group, there was a considerable improvement in writing performance of the participants on the task at hand. As the results of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) indicated, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected, and it can be concluded that adopting a genre approach can significantly contribute to learners' performance on IELTS task one writing.
The results of this study seemed to indicate that compared to the traditional writing approach, the genre-based writing instruction, if implemented properly, can potentially be a good tool for teaching L2 writing. However, further research, probably with similar design and large sample size, must be conducted to confirm these findings and further explore the full potential of the approach. It will also be interesting to explore whether adopting a genre approach will contribute to learners' performance in other skills and different tasks under those skills.

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# THE EFFECT OF TEACHING SPEECH ACTS ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC) 

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#### Abstract

WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC) IS THE DEGREE THAT A PERSON IS EAGER TO TAKE PART IN INTERACTION WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS. THIS STUDY INTENDED TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF TEACHING SPEECH ACTS ON THEIR WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC). TO THIS END, 60 EFL STUDENTS WHOSE AGE RANGED FROM 18 TO 25 WERE SELECTED FROM A LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN KARAJ THROUGH CONVENIENCE SAMPLING. ONE KIND OF INSTRUMENTS, NAMELY TINIO (2009) HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (HSSSE) WAS ADMINISTERED TO THE PARTICIPANTS. THE TIME LIMIT FOR DOING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WAS 60 MINUTES. HAVING COLLECTED THE DATA, THE RESEARCHER WORKED ON DATA ANALYSIS TO FIND OUT THE EFFECT OF TEACHING SPEECH ACTS ON WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC). THE COLLECTED DATA WERE ANALYZED THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE (ANCOVA). THE RESULTS OF ANCOVA ( $\mathrm{F}=70.93, \mathrm{P}<.05$, PARTIAL H2 $=.77$ ) INDICATED THAT THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MEAN SCORES OF THE GROUPS ON THE POSTTEST OF WTC AFTER REMOVING THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF THEIR ENTRY KNOWLEDGE AS TESTED THROUGH THE PRETEST. IN OTHER WORDS, THE RESULT OF THIS STUDY INDICATED THAT THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MEAN SCORES OF THE GROUPS ON THE PRETEST OF WTC AND POSTTEST OF WTC. IT MEANS THE STUDENTS' SPEECH ACTS KNOWLEDGE CAN AFFECT ON THEIR WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC).


## INDEX TERMS_ COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE- PRAGMATIC KNOWLEDGE- SPEECH ACTS - WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC)

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world having conversation through an international language is a necessity for most of the people. The reason that today people have to be well informed and well-connected is in the age of information revolution. So communication has gained a prominent status. In compliance with these circumstances, scholars in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) have tried to accommodate the field of language teaching with the spirits of the time. To achieve this purpose, they introduced communicative approach. By the advent of this approach in language teaching, language teachers and syllabus designers paid more attention to teaching speaking as a communicative skill.

A common observation among second language teachers is that despite their students' having an acceptable knowledge of grammar including knowledge of syntactic, semantic, and phonological rules, they often fail to use language appropriately in different contexts and registers. This observation triggered the first attempts to broaden the area of TEFL beyond microlinguistics level (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

For this purpose, scholars extended the concept of language competence into communicative competence (Backman, 1996) which according to Canale and Swain (1983) communicative competence can be defined in terms of four components, including knowledge of word and grammatical rules; knowledge of appropriate use of language; knowledge of appropriate use of communicative structure; and knowledge of discourse. To these, one may add the knowledge of language as act which is called by Bachman (1990) pragmatics.

According to Crystal (1997), pragmatics is "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (p. 301).

According to MacIntyre et al (2001) most of the classrooms' lack of knowledge of pragmatics is the causal factor in EFL learners' failure in authentic communications or their lack of willingness to communicate, that is, while there is a controversy whether pragmatics can be taught in the language classrooms or not. In line with such concerns the present work was designed to investigate willingness to communicate (WTC) through teaching speech acts of apologizing and requesting.

## II. BACKGROUND STUDIES

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is defined as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with specific person or persons using an L2" (MacIntyre et al. 1998, p. 547).In other words it is the degree that a person is eager to take part in interaction with other people in different situations.

WTC takes into consideration the effect of all social, cognitive, affective, and situational variables on a person's willingness to communicate in the L2. Although this is a recent model, many studies have been conducted to test its efficacy (Çetinkaya, 2007; Clément, Baker, \&MacIntyre, 2003; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, \& Conrod, 2001). Some of such studies have demonstrated that if L2 students have a high opinion of their language competency - perceived but not actual - and if they have low communication anxiety, their WTC in L2 soars (Clément, Baker, \& MacIntyre, 2003; Yashima, 2002).

Recent studies by Clément, Baker, and MacIntyre (2003) and Yashima (2002) using the combined notions of perceived language competence and lack of communication anxiety demonstrated the linguistic self-confidence concept. Moreover, many other studies indicate that learners' motivation can be indirectly (MacIntyre \& Charos, 1996) or directly (Baker \& MacIntyre, 2000; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002) related to their WTC.

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Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) is a new field within second language acquisition research. It has received considerable attention in L2 education in the past three decades (Ishihara \& Cohen, 2010). A common observation among second language learners is that despite having an acceptable knowledge of grammatical knowledge including knowledge of syntactic, semantic, and phonological rules, they often fail to use language appropriately in different contexts and registers (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper \& Blum-Kulka, 1993, Kasper \& Schmidt, 1996).Pragmatic failures which refer to 'the inability to understand "what is misunderstanding among speakers of different cultures.

Inter language pragmatics is defined as "The study of nonnative speakers' comprehension, production and acquisition of linguistic action in L2" (Kasper, 1996, p.1), or "The study of nonnative speaker' use and acquisition of L2pragmatic knowledge" (Kasper \&Rose, 2001, p.81). Kasper \& Blum-kulka (1993) define ILP as "the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic patterns in a second language" (p.3).

Kasper and Rose (2001) pointed out as the study of L2 use, ILP examines how nonnative speakers (NNSs) comprehend and produce action in the target language. According to AlcónSoler \& Martínez-Flor (2008), ILP research has focused on describing and explaining learners' use, perception, and acquisition of second language (L2) pragmatic ability both in L2 and FL contexts.
Interlanguage pragmatics is believed to be the "nonnative speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, and how their L2 (second language)-related speech act knowledge is acquired" (Kasper \& Dahl 1991, p. 1). In other words, interlanguage pragmatics is the study of the use and acquisition of various speech acts in the target language by second or foreign language learners.
Interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatic studies have provided many evidence that L2 learners'L1 pragmatic knowledge significantly influences their comprehension and production of pragmatic performance in the L2 (Kasper,1996). So negative pragmatic transfer may occur in using L2 speech acts.

Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) say as a branch of second language acquisition research, ILP is one of several fields in inter language studies, contrasting with inter language phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. As a subset of pragmatics, ILP is a sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, or simply linguistic enterprise, depending on how one defines the scope of pragmatics.

Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) have a distinct view in pragmatic domain. The perspective on pragmatics they adopt is an action-theoretical one, viewing pragmatics as the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context. They have also defined Interlanguage pragmatics as the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language. They, then complete their definition of ILP, saying ILP predominantly refers to the comprehension and production of linguistic action, including discourse regulation. As the definition implies, the linguistic action or linguistic knowledge is an important factor in general pragmatics knowledge.

The importance of pragmatic competence in communication has been widely acknowledged in various models of language ability (Bachman, 1990; Canale, 1983; Canale \& Swain, 1980).

Takahashi (2001, cited in Kasper, 2001) inspected the request speech act in the EFL context and found out that the request speech act is teachable and is helpful for the EFL students' willingness to communication (WTC).

House (1996, cited in Kasper, 2001) studies the role of pragmatic instruction on the EFL students' fluency in communication. Like Takahashi's (2001) study, this study showed that there is a direct relation between EFL students 'speech acts instruction and their willingness to communicate (WTC).
Tateyama and Kasper (2008) studied an intact second-year class in Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Their view of how pragmatics is learned in the classroom builds on theories of learning as a social interactional process. In this study, they

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demonstrated how interactions and communication between participants in different social roles (student, teacher, and classroom guest) may heighten the participants' pragmatic knowledge.

Kondo (2008) showed Japanese learners' choice of refusal strategies changed after explicit instruction of speech acts. After instruction, their choice of refusal strategies changed and became more similar to the American pattern. After the instruction the participants were more communicative than before the instruction.

Speech acts are one of the most important aspects of pragmatics. Olshtain and Cohen (1991) believe "speech acts are often but not always the patterned, routinized language that native and pragmatically nonnative speakers and writers in a given speech community use to perform functions such as thanking, complimenting, requesting, refusing, apologizing and complaining" (p.19).

Cohen (2008) says: "speech acts are attractive aspect of pragmatics, because of the possible misconception between what one does or does not say or write in a language in the given speech act and what is meet by it". Austin and Sear (1962) define speech acts as:

1. Categorized utterances according to functions.
2. The way of expressing and performing acts through speech of its own language
3. No speech cannot be said to be context free about meaning or function and cannot be said it is different from cultures and languages.

Kasper (1996) pointed out speech acts seek to describe learners' development and learners' use of pragmatic knowledge. Cohen (2008) has mentioned two terms: "propositional meaning" and "intended illocutionary meaning" for some speech acts, such as request. in explaining that two terms, Cohen mentions an example:" Do you have a watch?" the propositional meaning of this question is whether the other person posses a watch and has it with him/her; and the intended illocutionary meaning of this question is a request that the other person say what time it is.
Austin (1962) has divided speech acts to three parts:
1): locutionary act: the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference.
2): illocutionary act: making of a statement, offer, promise, etc.
3): perlocutionary act: the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstance of utterance.

Levinson (1983) pointed out that the term "speech act" is generally used to refer to "illocutionary act". Thomas (1983) distinguished two factors of examining illocutionary acts in SLA. Sociopragmatic factors and pragmalinguistic factors. When the learner fails to perform appropriate illocutionary act in appropriate situation (i.e. when he/she fails to perceive the appropriate meaning) he/she faces with sociopragmatic failure. On the other hand, when the learner fails to perform appropriate illocutionary act in appropriate linguistic form (i.e. when he/she fails to perceive the appropriate form) he/she faces with pragmalinguistic failure. There are different kinds of speech acts, such as compliments, refusals, complaints, apologizing, and requesting.

## III. METHODS

A. Participants

In this study a total of sixty Iranian EFL learners whose age ranged from 18 to 25 years old were selected from among one hundred EFL learners. The subjects were all chosen through convenience sampling. All of the participants are selected from a Language Institute in Karaj who all were at the intermediate level. They have studied New Headway Elementary Book levels 1-3 in the institute. In order to make sure that the participants are homogenized, Longman Proficiency Test was administered to the participants. Based on the results they had been divided to two groups, control and experimental group.

## B. Instruments

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In order to collect the data, three data collection instruments were utilized in this study. The first one was Longman Proficiency Test to determine the participants' proficiency level and make the participants homogenized. This proficiency test was published by Pearson Long man Publication in 2006 as a valid source for placement purposes.

The second instrument was Tinio (2009) High School Survey on Student Engagement (HSSSE). The High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) is the most comprehensive survey on student engagement and school climate issues available to schools. HSSSE works closely with individual schools, districts, state departments of education, state and national organizations, and foundations to investigate deeply the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs that students have about their work, the school learning environment, and their interaction with the school community.

Tinio (2009) HSSSE questionnaire including 120 items on likert scales, from "always" to " never", available in Persian version was easy to answer for Iranian students. Fooladvand, Soltani, FathiAshtiani and Shoae (2012) investigated psychometric properties (Cronbach's alpha $=0.96$ ) of Tinio students' engagement in the task and translated it into Persian.

## C. Procedure

First of all, to homogenize the participants, a Longman Proficiency Test of English language was administered. As a result, 20 participants, who had scored more than one standard deviation away from (above or below) the mean, were excluded from subsequent statistical analyses, and there remained 60 approximately homogenous participants to take part in this study. The participants were divided into two groups. Each group was randomly assigned to one of the two conditions, control and experimental.

The next step was administering the HSSSE questionnaire as pretest. Most of the participants were unfamiliar with this kind of questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher explained the manner of doing the HSSSE questionnaire. The time limit for doing this questionnaire was 60 minutes.

During the treatment every session different tasks were taught for teaching speech acts through New Headway Book. After teaching speech acts, the participants were asked to imagine themselves in each of the situations, not think too much, and try to answer the questions in DCT questionnaire as soon as possible. This was done to ensure that the subjects would understand the aim of teaching speech acts.

According to Varghese \& Billmyer (1996), "DCT is a questionnaire containing a set of very briefly described situations designed to elicit a particular speech act" (p. 40). The participants were asked to complete a DCT, designed by Jalilafar (2009), which took 20 minutes to answer. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire was substantiated through a pilot study done on 10 students by Jalilafar (2009).

The DCT questionnaire was administered to the participants each sessions of treatment and the participants were asked to put themselves in each situation and respond to 20 items. In the first 10 situations, the subjects were asked to use an apology strategy in order to apologize, while in the last 10 situations, the subjects were asked to use a request strategy in order to request.

In the last session of the treatment the Tinio (2009) High School Survey on Student Engagement (HSSSE) was administered to the participants. This questionnaire was translated to pension in advance by Fooladvand, Soltani, FathiAshtiani and Shoae (2012). The time limit for doing this questionnaire was 60 minutes.

In control group the routine procedure of "New Headway Book" series were followed in which the students have been taught through a set of tasks for teaching speech acts included in the last part of each unit called 'Everyday English". Having collected the data, the researcher worked on data analysis to find out the effect of teaching speech acts on Willingness TO Communicate (WTC) or not.

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## IV. RESULTS

In the present study, we run the ANCOVA to check whether teaching speech acts could have had any significant effects on the EFL learners' WTC?

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics Posttest of WTC by Groups with Pretest of WTC

| Group | Mean | Std. Error | $95 \%$ Confidence Interval |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Experimental | 27.700 | .186 | 27.324 | 28.076 |
| Control | 24.650 | .186 | 24.275 | 25.025 |

The table 1 displays the mean scores for the Experimental group ( $\mathrm{M}=27.70, \mathrm{SE}=.18$ ), and the control group ( $\mathrm{M}=24.65, \mathrm{SE}=.18$ ).

## Table 2

Test of between Subjects Effect

| Source | Type III Sum <br> of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta <br> Squared |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pretest | 903.277 | 1 | 903.277 | 1753.289 | .000 | .977 |
| Group | 73.092 | 1 | 36.546 | 70.937 | .000 | .776 |
| Error | 21.123 | 58 | .515 |  |  |  |
| Total | 31388.000 | 60 |  |  |  |  |

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run to probe the research question. The results of ANCOVA summarized in Table 2 ( $\mathrm{F}=70.93, \mathrm{P}<.05$, Partial $\eta^{2}=.77$ (representing a large effect size) indicated that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on the posttest of WTC after removing the possible effect of their entry knowledge as tested through the pretest.

A factor analysis through the Varimax Rotation was also carried out to probe the underlying constructs of the pretest and posttest. The SPSS extracted only one factor which accounted for 92.63 percent of the total variance.

Table 3
Total Variance Explained pretest and Posttest of WTC

|  | Initial Eigenvalues |  |  | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Factor | Total | \% of Variance | Cumulative $\%$ | Total | \% of Variance | Cumulative \% |
| 1 | 1.955 | 95.752 | 95.752 | 1.909 | 92.637 | 92.637 |

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$\begin{array}{llll}2 & .045 & 4.248 & 100.000\end{array}$

As displayed in Table 3 both pretest and posttest of WTC loaded on the same factor. These results suggested that both of these tests tapped on the same underlying construct, i.e. WTC.

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The importance of pragmatic competence in communication has been widely acknowledged in various models of language ability (Bachman, 1990; Canale, 1983; Canale\& Swain, 1980). The analysis of the results of this study subscribe to this point in a way that teaching speech acts have positive effects on L2 WTC. Another implication of this study is teachability of speech acts which the present study could add some evidence for.

For example, Takahashi (2001, cited in Kasper, 2001) inspected the request speech act in the EFL context and found out that the request speech act is teachable and can positively for the EFL students' willingness to communication (WTC).

The findings of the present study are also in line with the one conducted by House (1996, cited in Kasper, 2001) in which she studied the role of pragmatic instruction on the EFL students' fluency in communication. Like Takahashi's (2001) study, this study showed that there is a direct relation between EFL students 'speech acts instruction and their willingness to communicate (WTC).

Tateyama and Kasper (2008) also studied an intact second-year class in Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Their view of how pragmatics is learned in the classroom builds on theories of learning as a social interactional process. In this study, they demonstrated how interactions and communication between participants in different social roles (student, teacher, and classroom guest) may heighten the participants' pragmatic knowledge.

Beside these, Kondo (2008) showed Japanese learners' choice of refusal strategies changed after explicit instruction of speech acts. After instruction, their choice of refusal strategies changed and became more similar to the American pattern. After the instruction the participants were more communicative than before the instruction.

The present study was an attempt to assess the effect of teaching speech acts on improving learners' willingness to communicate. Throughout the history of language teaching a lot of techniques and procedures have been proposed for communicative language teaching. One of the key factors in language teaching is willingness to communicate.

This factor cannot be motivated directly with especial techniques because it is categorized as an affective factor. As the results of this study show teaching speech acts have positive effects on improving willingness to communicate. These findings can help teachers and syllabus designers to design classroom activities including pair work and group work based on speech acts which can arise willingness to communicate among the students.

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# WEB-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING PERCEPTION \& PERSONALIY CHARACTERISTICS 

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#### Abstract

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LEARNERS' PERSONALITY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING/TEACHING CONTEXTS HAS OFTEN BEEN CITED IN LITERATURE BUT FEW STUDIES HAVE SCRUTINIZED THE ROLE IT CAN PLAY IN TECHNOLOGY-ORIENTED LANGUAGE CLASSES. THAT IS WHY IN MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING/LEARNING CONTEXTS, THE STUDENTS' DIFFERENCES ARE OF SIGNIFICANCE AND SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. THIS STUDY HAS MADE AN ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' INTROVERT/EXTROVERT PERSONALITY TYPES AND THEIR PERCEPTION/ ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WEB-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING. THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY WHO WERE SELECTED THROUGH THE PURPOSIVE SAMPLING WERE 40 BA STUDENTS OF EFL, 22 FEMALE AND 18 MALE. THE PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED THEIR BLENDED CLASSES WITH THE INCORPORATION OF THE INTERNET (EDUBLOGS).THE QUANTITATIVE DATA WERE COLLECTED VIA EYSENK PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRE (EPQ) (1975) AND TWO MODIFIED WEB-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING ATTITUDE/PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRES (GILMORE, 1998; SLATE, MANUEL, \& BRINSON, 2002). BY RUNNING THE T-TEST ANALYSES, THE RESULTS DIDN'T SHOW SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO TYPES OF PERSONALITY TYPES' ATTITUDES. BESIDES, THE QUALITATIVE PART OF THE STUDY WAS DONE THROUGH INTERVIEW FOR HAVING RICHER AND SENSITIVE INSIGHT INTO THE ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF INTERNET FROM THE PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES. THE STUDY BEARS SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND PRACTITIONERS IN TAKING THE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND PERSONALITY FEATURES INTO CONSIDERATION PARTICULARLY IN BLENDED CLASSROOMS.


KEYWORDS: WEB-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING, PERSONALITY TYPES, ATTITUDE, INTROVERT/EXTROVERT.

## 1. Introduction

In recent context of education utilizing technology is growing and most of the literate and college students are familiar with technology and internet use. Ease of access is another factor in the implementation of technology in educational contexts, in recent years most of students and universities have decent internet at their disposal that triggers using internet for education. One
of the application of internet is utilization of it for language teaching and learning because it can cater original context for language learners, students can have multilateral relationship with each other at every corner of the world, especially with native and indigenous language speakers. Utilization of internet at language teaching and learning can change traditional teaching toward contemporary teaching, at traditional language teaching most students are obliged to follow a general method even though they had different learning styles but web based learning assists students to follow their own styles and strategies in learning a skill or doing a language related task. So, personality types and attitudes of language learners may play very significant role in the implementation of internet at language pedagogy.

There are some studies that report language learners' positive attitudes towards the use of computer and internet in their language learning process (Levine, Ferenz, \& Reves, 2000). Students become motivated when they have classes which are held with the integration of traditional and computerized classes, there are chances of interactivities, and opportunities for learning some computer skills (Warschauer, 1996). In another report Jones (1992) states that familiarity of the students with computer and internet skills were one of the sources having positive attitudes towards technology. Autonomy of language learners is an important factor in the literature of applied linguistics and language teaching. Therefore, language learners may have the chance of developing this valuable feature in themselves via the implementation of internet and technologies in their learning and interactions with their teachers and classmates. Brajcich (2000) also enunciates the importance of autonomy and believes that students can develop this worthwhile and beneficial feature through web-based learning whether individually or cooperatively.

Many students are involved in the learning process, but the degree of achievement varies across them. This problem can be attributed to many factors, chief among which may be those of personality types and attitudes of students. Incompatibility of their personality types with the implemented methods may be the cause of the differences in language learners' achievement. Personality types have obsessed the researchers and trainers mind from decades ago. Early attention to individual differences was motivated by the need to identify which learners should be taught English language by devising tests such as the Modern Language Aptitude Battery by Carrol and Sapon, (1959). The test was expected to predict the versatile and successful language learners. In recent studies most of the focuses have been on the explanation of differences in the language learners' success and they targeted to explain why some language learners are more successful than the others and this area of research has been considered as complementary to the field of SLA (Ellis, 2008). Personality theory assumes that everyone is different and individuals are characterized by a unique and basically unchanging pattern of traits, disposition or treatments. Personality type has been discussed from different vantage points. It has been viewed as pertaining to different forms of information processing or learning styles (Messick, 1994). The effect of individual differences and studies related to the role of individual differences (IDs) has long tradition in second language studies/teaching and everybody would certainly accept the crucial influence of IDs like aptitude, motivation, or learning styles on the success and mastering of language learning especially foreign language learning (Dornyei, 2005). In spite of effective role of individual differences in SLA, as Ellis (2008) noted, its role has been marginalized in the realm of language learning and teaching, this can in part be attributed to the overriding concerns of the language researchers' and practitioners' with universalistic facet of language acquisition, and also, as Segalowitz, (1997), put it, individual differences have received scant heed from language researchers, especially its effect on the cognitive processes in charge of acquisition.

Personality can be considered as those characteristics of a person that "account for a consistent patterns of feelings, thinking and behaving" (Pervin and John, 2001, p. 4, as cited in Dornyei, 2005). It is generally perceived of as made up of a series of traits such as INTROVERSION/EXTRAVERSION and stability/neuroticism (Ellis, 2008). The personality types like INTROVERSION/EXTRAVERSION have been paid more attention than the other personality types in the sphere of language teaching and learning. Extraversion-introversion

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dimension is one of the mostly focused personality facet in language studies. It is to some extent easy to have reliable measurement of this trait and there are some clear commonsense relationship between this trait and language use (Furnham, 1990). This study aims to investigate the relationship between the two personality types, Introversion/ Extraversion, and web-based language learning. The focus is on the two personality types' attitudes towards web-based language learning. In Post-method area, Kumaravadivelu (2001) noted the capability of World Wide Web as a way which caters to learners ample opportunities in order to experiment liberatory autonomy. He maintains that teachers can foster liberatory autonomy meaningfully by:
encouraging learners to assume, with the help of their teachers, the role of miniethnographers so that they can investigate and understand how language rules and language use are socially structured, and also explore whose interests these rules serve
asking learners to write diaries or journal entries about issues that directly engage their sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world, and continually reflect on their observations and the observations of their peers
helping them form learning communities where learners develop into unified, socially cohesive, mutually supportive groups seeking self-awareness and self-improvement
providing opportunities for learners to explore the unlimited possibilities offered by on-line services on the World Wide Web and bringing back to the class their own topics for discussion and their own perspectives on those topics
As it is obvious in the aforementioned ways, on-line services on the World Wide Web is perceived to make contribution to the development of language learners' autonomy. As BuenoAlastuey and Lopez Pérez (2013) put:

Research on blended learning has mainly focused on outlining the advantages and disadvantages of some blended courses. However, the perceptions of students on different courses, regarding the usefulness of technologies for the development of the different skills and areas of language, have hardly been explored. Knowing students' opinions and perceptions of the potential of particular blended learning experiences and their contribution to the development of the different skills and areas of language (and whether those perceptions vary depending on the technologies used) can provide valuable information for blended learning design and implementation.
According to some previously conducted studies there are some advantages for web-based and computer-mediated language learning. In a study by Schoepp and Erogul (2001), the findings revealed the effectiveness of computer technology on the development of learners' independence and autonomy and also the development of self-access language learning. Working in an interactive environment by "learning-by-doing" leads to the students' confidence. According to Pow (1999), the learners appreciated group work when they experienced online interactive activities. However, few studies have made an attempt to investigate the potential differences between different personality variables and their attitudes towards web-based language learning. The current study seeks to examine the difference between the two personality variables' (Introvert \& Extrovert) attitudes towards blended language teaching classes and the second phase of the study tries to obtain the participants 'attitudes towards the blended classes qualitatively.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

The study was conducted at Allame Tabatabe'I University at Iran and the participants of the study who were selected through the purposive sampling were 40 B.A students of EFL, 22 female and 18 male. There were two classes each of them included 20 students and they were taught and handled by one teacher. One of the classes was held in the morning at 8:00 AM and the other one was held at 3: 00 PM . They were at their fourth term of undergraduate course and the proficiency level of the students was pre-advanced level. Regarding the familiarity with internet and
computer, the participants were familiar with the use of internet and computer because they were expected to do their assignments via internet. The ability to use computer and internet was necessary for the participants in order to be included in the study. The teacher was seasoned language teacher and he was also familiar with internet/computer and their use in language teaching and learning.

### 2.2. Instruments and Materials

In order to identify the personality type of the participants Eysenk Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) (1975) was employed. The questionnaire was made up of 90 items with Yes or No answers. The questionnaire was in English and translated Persian form was also attached to make some difficult English items understandable. Two modified web-based language learning attitude/perception questionnaires (Gilmore, 1998; Slate, et al., 2002) were employed. Therefore, the participants experienced blended language learning course. The course included traditional classes and internet based classes. Edublogs were used in order to send questions and answers for the previously queried questions.

### 2.3. Procedure

Before collecting the desired data the participants were provided conditions in which they could experience language learning through internet. From the beginning of the terms the teacher cooperated with the researcher by incorporating Edublogs in his classes. The teacher instructed the students in the classes and assigned them to do some assignments but they were expected to do the assignment through internet. During the term they had ten sessions of work with internet. At the end of the term the teacher asked the students to fill in the questionnaires. As mentioned above, the main instruments for collecting the data were Eysenk Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) (1975) and two modified web-based language learning attitude/perception questionnaires (Gilmore, 1998; Slate, et al., 2002). In order to avoid having mixed data we attached the attitude/perception questionnaires to Eysenk Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), so it would be easy to identify each personality type's attitudes towards web-based language learning. The obtained data was submitted to SPSS to do the intended statistical analysis to find the descriptive data and also T-test was applied to see if there was significant difference between the two groups' attitudes toward web-based language learning.

With the purpose of obtaining richer and sensitive data in mind, the researchers selected $10(\mathrm{~N}=10)$ of the participants randomly to take part in qualitative part of the study, five introvert and five extrovert. Predetermined and structured interview was applied at this phase of the study in which 6 items regarding the role of language teachers and internet and also psychological effect of internet, if any, on the participants were included. The interview procedure took approximately 30 minutes for each participant. The whole interview procedure was audio-taped for transcription and maximizing our understanding of the participants' perception regarding the role of internet in their language learning.

## 3. Results

After collecting the data the researchers used $t$-test to compare the difference between the two groups' attitudes towards the target feature of the study. The computed and analyzed data revealed that both of the groups' perception towards the use of web in their classes was positive. The descriptive statistics show both of the groups have to some extend same mean of perception towards the web.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the groups' attitudes towards web-based language learning $\begin{array}{llll}\text { personality } & \mathrm{N} & \text { Mean } & \text { Std. deviation }\end{array}$
$\begin{array}{lllll}\text { attitude } & \text { Introvert } & 17 & 3.23 & 17\end{array}$

Extrovert
22
3.25
.17
.41

As the table 1 reveals, the mean of the groups, $\mathrm{M}=3.23$ and 3.25 , is to some extent similar. However, in order to examine none/significance of the difference between the mean of the groups we need to analyze the computed data through t-test. The following table (2) presents the result of the $t$-test.

Table 2. t-test results comparing extroverts' and extroverts' attitudes towards web-based language learning
$\begin{array}{lllll}\mathrm{F} & \text { Sig. } \mathrm{t} & \mathrm{df} & \text { Sig. (2-tailed) }\end{array}$

| Equal variances assumed | 1.48 | .23 | -.27 | 37 | .78 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

The results of the groups' attitudes appear in table 2, indicating that there isn't significant difference between introverts' $(M=3.23, \mathrm{SD}=.17)$ and extroverts' $(\mathrm{M}=3.25, \mathrm{SD}=.41)$ attitudes ( t $(37)=-.27, \mathrm{p}=.23)$ towards the role of internet and web in language learning. According to the obtained data both of the groups have positive attitude towards the role of internet in their classes. The two personality types, introvert and extrovert, appreciate and perceive the role of internet/web in blended language classes. In other words, the mean of the groups is not significantly different.

The above mentioned data and results can have encouraging and inspiring message to language practitioners and teachers because teachers encounter language learners with considerably different individual differences and personality types which add to the complexity of the language pedagogy. Individual differences and variables may play influential role in language learners' acquisition of their target language. As mentioned at the previous parts, personality types like introversion and extroversion have been examined by applied linguists more than other types. Extroverts are perceived to be more sociable and more concerned with what is happening around them but introverts are less sociable and are too reserved to join social activities. So, language teachers can use internet and computer in their classes to make all of the language learners to have access to their favorite learning, cooperation conditions, and criteria. Language teachers face students that rarely take part in classroom activities, computer and internet can be used to make them participate in the activities and interactions.
At this phase of the study the data related to qualitative section of the study is represented. This section did an attempt to elicit data of the complex granularity of the relationship between individual variables and web/internet based language learning. Some of the participants were selected randomly to do the interview for this section.

### 3.1. Qualitative analysis

At this phase of the study, ten $(\mathrm{N}=10)$ of the participants were selected randomly to be interviewed. Five of them were introvert and five extroverts. The questions which were asked in the interview were extracted from the questionnaire that was used in quantitative part of the study. But some parts of the questions were modified in order to elicit richer and sensitive data from the participants. The interview procedure took about thirty minutes for each of the participants. The interview was audio-recorded and transcribed for detailed analysis of the attitudes of the participants and the role of internet in their learning process. The following part represents the qualitatively obtained data.

## 1. Is internet easy to use than library? Which one do you prefer?

Participant: I personally use internet when I search some topics or I want to write about something I prefer modern technology rather than traditional one. I think using library is difficult for me maybe it's time consuming I cannot find any suitable source and there is no one to help us to find suitable source in library. We can have a lot of source and they are more available than searching in library among many books.
There seems to be a consensus that most of the participants prefer to use internet than library. Most of the factors which the participants stated to be encouraging in favoring internet over library were: difficulty in the use and access to library, time consuming feature of library, lack of suitable sources and lack of enough guides in library, inadequate library in the vicinity of the participants, and lack of time of the students. The aforementioned factors were identified as demerits of using library from the participants' point of view. On the other hand, two of the participants acknowledged the reliability of sources in the library.

## 2. Do you find internet as informative as language teachers? Why?

Participant: I think internet is in some ways is more helpful than language teachers. Maybe you have something in your mind that you want to search about that points in the internet maybe you cannot transfer what you mean to language teachers and not expect them to help you because of psychological barriers. But if you know that what you want to search what do you want to get from this part, so you should know and search better and you should find better through the internet rather than language teachers. But in other ways it's absolutely that language teachers can help too. But I think I can get more results from internet rather than language teachers.
The above excerpt indicates the participant's positive attitude towards informative role of internet as well teachers'. According to some of the participants, they are hindered by some psychological barriers in eliciting the needed information from their teachers. On the other hand, some of them said that in referring to teachers they can be more specific than internet i.e. teachers pinpoint the confusing issue that students face. Encouraging points like Access to varieties of information and being up to date were attributed to internet. All in all, the participants seemed to have similar attitudes towards the effectiveness of the teachers and internet.
3. Do you like to take blended English classes? Why?

Participant: nowadays I think if we go through the new technology and if we will adopt ourselves with this world so we know that most of the world, most of the classes will help with technology and using internet than the traditional one. But maybe some teachers or depending on each student's situation or talent maybe some traditional ways help students.
Majority of the students showed positive intention in having blended classes. One of the participant's perceptions of blended classes, the above excerpt, shows the growing influence of technology on her. This idea implies that language learners and teachers need to keep abreast of the latest development in technology and their use in education. Motivational effect of internet was also highlighted. Few of the participants disagreed with the blended classes. The role of language teachers in improving conversation was highlighted by two of the participants.
4. Do you think that working with internet would be enjoyable and stimulating? Can you elaborate your answer?

Participant: I like to learn English with internet. Whenever for example we search something in internet and you are not satisfied you search more and more but when you ask a teacher and you are not satisfied you can't ask again and again. It is a limitation. When I look for information in the internet I feel easy and not under pressure or stress.
Regarding the enjoyableness of the implementation of the internet, majority of the participants acknowledged that in comparison to language teachers in traditional classes, internet doesn't restrict the options at their disposal for seeking answer to problematic language point. Another stimulating factor from the participants' perspective in using internet included: provision of stress
free and low pressure atmosphere, up-to-date and new information. One of the participants was averse to using internet in language classes.

## 5. Does internet motivate you in learning English? How do you find it motivating/demotivating?

Participant: Yes. It is motivating because it explains very small points I think. For example I see a sentence in net and I don't know about the grammatical structure, then it motivates me to go and learn about it and I feel stress free. Nowadays I believe that we can have interaction and connection with native speakers.
The participant viewed factors like, access to native speakers, real data, varieties of sources, getting very subtle and informative points about lexical improvement and grammatical structure, and law pressure as motivational features of internet. Conversely, some of the participants were averse to the use of internet by stating that in sheer teacher-based classes they experience improving competition in the classes. Advocates of sheer teacher-based language classes believe that provision of reward and positive response from language teachers take priority over internet based language learning.
6. Does internet help you to work with your classmates?

Participant: Not at all. I don't like to have any connection with my friends through internet. I prefer the face to face interactions and cooperation.
Due to the fact that most of the internet cooperation done in written manner and there is a concept of misunderstanding, some of the participants favor face to face interaction. One of the participants explicitly asserted that she confines her interactions to the classmates who are more knowledgeable than her because most of her classmates are not proficient enough to promote her linguistic development. On the other hand, some of them referred to the influential effects of peer correction and feedback that they receive through the internet.

## 4. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the role of individual differences (ID) in EFL learners' perception regarding the use of internet in their language learning process. The quantitative data analysis didn't show significant difference between the two groups' (Introverts \& Extroverts) attitude towards the implementation of internet in their language classes. In other word, the used Edublogs seemed to affect the participants' perception regarding the efficacy of internet for language learning.

The qualitative part of the study provided richer insight into the participants' attitudes towards the target variable. Based on the elicited data we categorized driving factors in perceiving internet as a useful tool in the language classes of this study; the categorization included: internal, external, and psychological factors. It is worth to note that there is not cutting border between the aforementioned factors, that is, some of the subcategories of these factors overlap. However, Internal factors are concerned with inherently driven desire of learners for doing something, on the other hand external factors refer to ecological and external factors which drive learners to do something and psychological factors refer to functions of human mind which are affected by the ways of thinking, feeling, and other cognitive traits.

In this study, internal factors from the participants' point of view included: enjoyable, exciting, and motivating features of internet. In this regard, sub-factors like ease of access to unlimited information, access to native speakers, real data, getting very subtle and informative points about lexical acquisition and grammatical structures, were considered to be enjoyable, exciting and motivating features of internet from the students' perspective. In contrast to the most of the participants, one of them, who was also an extrovert, viewed access to native speakers to be demotivating which stemmed from the lack of the self-confidence of the participant, as was highlighted by the interviewee.

Components of external factors in this study like, access to varieties of sources, being up to date, growing influence of technology, cooperation with other classmates, and time saving qualities of internet were considered to be influential in applying internet in their classes. From
the psychological point of view factors like low pressure, feeling unstressed, and individual differences were stressed by the interviewees.

All in all, both of the personality types had positive attitudes towards the role of internet in language learning and the qualitative analysis of the study reveals how different internet based factors can be influential in language learning. However, some of the participants downgraded the facilitative and pedagogical role of internet in their classes. This dichotomous attitude of some participants can be attributed to being accustomed to the traditional way of language education. If language learners are exposed to prolonged blended classes, they may find the potential usefulness of internet and technology in acquisition of a foreign language. Moreover, blended classes can provide conditions in which language learners with different personality types can have autonomy in doing language related tasks as they favor.

In language teaching classes, we encounter some students who are too reserved to take part in class activities and discussions. In such cases, language teachers complain about their inability in spurring the students to participate in the classroom activities. In such conditions the internet sounds to be an ideal tool for catering convenient condition for these kinds of language learners to participate in the class activities with less psychological barriers. In this study, the importance of the internet in minimizing the psychological barriers like decreasing stress and low pressure was highlighted.

As Kumaraviadlu (2001) pointed out, World Wide Web can provide opportunities for maximizing liberatory autonomy of the language learners in postmethod era. Liberatory autonomy of language learners is germane to language learners' critical thinking abilities. Therefore, language teachers and syllabus designers are advised to integrate internet in their classes in order to create equal conditions for language learners with different personality types and even for students with different learning strategies and cognitive styles to take benefits of World Wide Web in increasing their liberatory autonomy.

Findings of this study are in line with some previously conducted studies in which Lin (2002) found that technologically based language teaching enhanced the learners' motivation on doing their tasks and created a senesce of excitement on the learners in working with technological machines in laboratories. In a study by Bueno-Alastuey and Lopez Pe'rez (2013), the usefulness of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) from the perception of two groups of learners in EFL and ESL settings was investigated. The EFL group experienced full integration of ICT in their classes while the ESL group used lower level of integration. The researchers reported that ESL group found ICT more useful in some skills (grammar and vocabulary) and receptive skills but EFL group highlighted the role of ICT in influencing their pronunciation and productive skills. It may be construed that, even, the learners' personality types may influence their attitudes in learning different skills of language through internet.

## 5. Conclusion

Nowadays, technology and internet gather momentum in education, and language pedagogy cannot be an exception. Most of the language learners and teachers have decent internet and computer based technology at their disposal which makes them to feel compelled to integrate internet and computer in their language classes. The current study explored the relationship between personality types (introverts and extroverts) and EFL learners' attitudes towards the web-based language learning.

This study applied quantitative and quantitative method for collecting and analyzing the data. The analyzed data shed light on the extroverts and introverts' attitudes towards the use of internet in their blended language learning classes. The quantitative based analysis of the study revealed that there weren't significant differences between introverts and extroverts' attitudes and the qualitative part of this study indicated that most of the participants viewed the existing internal, external, and psychological factors in internet to be motivating, exciting, and stimulating. They also acknowledged that internet put low pressure and establish less stressful atmosphere. On the other hand, some of the participants preferred to pursue their language

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learning in traditional way of learning with less level of internet integration in their classes and this may be attributed to the accepted authority of language teachers in some educational context.

Further studies need to investigate the other individual variables and even learning and cognitive strategies role in applying and using internet and computer in language classes. Furthermore, researchers are recommended to examine facilitative or impeding role of internal, ecological, and psychological factors in implementing World Wide Web in education and language pedagogy. The aforementioned factors role from language teachers' perspective worth being investigated. In addition, Internet based language testing is another area of research that needs to be investigated from language tests takers' perspective and individual variables of test takers' affecting their performance on internet based language tests.

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# THE EFFECT OF INTEGRATED AND 

 INDEPENDENT TASKS ON ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS' WRITING ABILITYRamin Rahmani, PhD in TEFL, Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch<br>Email: raminrahmany2007@gmail.com

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING THE DIFFERENCE OF INTEGRATED WRITING TASK OF THE TOFEL IBT CANDIDATES IN COMPARISON WITH INDEPENDENT WRITING TASK ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS WRITING PERFORMANCE. THE INITIAL POPULATION FOR THE STUDY WAS 50 JUNIOR EFL STUDENTS. TO GET MORE HOMOGENEITY, PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED AMONG THOSE WHO WERE STUDYING IN THE THIRD YEAR OF UNIVERSITY IN EFL MAJOR. THEY WERE MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS. THEY WERE ALL FROM AZAD UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN-, CENTRAL BRANCH WITH THE AGE RANGE OF 20-22. THIRTY THREE STUDENTS WERE RECOGNIZED AS BEING AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY. THREE STUDENTS QUITTED COLLABORATING WITH THE RESEARCHER. SO, THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS DECREASED AND OUT OF THEM 30 WAS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO TWO GROUPS. THE RESEARCHER GROUPED THE LEARNERS INTO TWO FIFTEEN GROUPS. THE FIRST GROUP WHO HAS RECEIVED THE INTEGRATED TYPE OF WRITING AS THE METHOD OF WRITING PRACTICE DURING THE COURSE OF ADVANCED WRITING AT THE UNIVERSITY CONTROL GROUP AND THE SECOND GROUP WHO HAS BEEN TAUGHT THE INDEPENDENT TYPE OF WRITING AS THE METHOD OF LEARNING HOW TO WRITE. IN THE FIRST GROUP, THE LEARNERS WERE GIVEN THE WRITING THAT ACCOMPANIED WITH GRAPHIC INTERPRETATION AND DESCRIPTION WHEREAS THE SECOND GROUP WAS GIVEN ONLY A TOPIC FOR ESSAY WRITING. THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT THE INTEGRATED-TASK GROUP OUTPERFORMED THE INDEPENDENT-TASK GROUP IN WRITING SCORES.


KEY TERM: INTEGRATED TASK, INDEPENDENT TASK, TOFEL IBT, COLLABORATING, INTERMEDIATE

## 1. Introduction

Writing is considered as the most difficult skill for language learners because they need to have a certain amount of L2 background knowledge about the rhetorical organizations, appropriate language use or specific lexicon with which they want to communicate to their readers. Beside, writing is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language the nature of which has become clearer nowadays. It involves the development of an idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects (Casanave \& Hubbard, 1992).

In fact, the field of second language writing is an area affecting the lives of many people at institutions around the world where they must submit high quality written work in a language they did not learn as native speakers. However, measuring writing ability, especially writing ability in a second language (L2), is never an easy task. Considering the role of writing in higher education, the writing ability of L2 writers is very likely to be evaluated in large-scale tests to make decisions as to their preparedness for postsecondary study. In order to be able to write effectively one should have sufficient knowledge of what to write and how to organize the language. Nunan (2001) considers that being able to produce a piece of writing which is coherent, fluent and extended is the most difficult thing to do in language. Writing is a special skill that even native speakers may not master it.

## 2. Review of the related literature

### 2.1. The definition of the task

In teaching, it is an activity which is designed to help achieve a particular learning goal. A number of dimensions of tasks influence their use in language teaching. These include:

Goals - the kind of goals teachers and learners identify for a task procedures - the operations or procedures learners use to complete a task

Order - the location of a task within a sequence of other tasks pacing - the amount of time that is spent on a task

Product - the outcome or outcomes students produce, such as a set of questions, an essay, or a summary as the outcome of a reading task

Learning strategy - the kind of strategy a student uses when completing a task
Assessment - how success on the task will be determined participation - whether the task is completed individually, with a partner, or with a group of other learners

The concept of task is central to many theories of classroom teaching and learning, and the school curriculum is sometimes described as a collection of tasks. From this viewpoint, school work is defined by a core of basic tasks that recur across different subjects in the curriculum. The teacher's choice of tasks determines learning goals, how learning is to take place, and how the results of learning will be demonstrated. In second language teaching, the use of a variety of different kinds of tasks is said to make teaching more communicative (see communicative approach) since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake (Richards \& Schmidt, 2010).

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### 2.2. Independent writing task

Independent writing tasks are believed to offer a more valid demonstration of underlying writing ability in comparison to indirect writing assessment (e.g., multiple choice items) as they elicit actual writing performance rather than working on morphological and syntactic aspects of the target language (Camp, 1993) similar to what is expected in most of the indirect methods. Nevertheless, independent tasks have been criticized by many researchers (Gebril \& Plakans, 2009; Plakans, 2008; Gebril, 2006; Weigle, 2002, 2004; Cho, 2003; Cumming, Kantor, Powers, Santos, \& Taylor, 2000; Leki \& Carson, 1997; Hamp-Lyons \& Kroll,1996). Given this criticism, integrated tasks have been regarded as an alternative component in writing tests.

### 2.3. Integrated writing task

Integrated writing tasks put forward an authentic measure for the writing skill (Cumming et al., 2000; Feak\& Dobson,1996; Guo, 2011;Read, 1990; Weigle, 2002, 2004; Yang, 2009) and as such have increasingly become a popular component in both large-scale writing and academic writing assessments (Gebril, 2009; Gebril \& Plakans, 2009, Plakans \& Gebril, 2012, Weigle \& Parker, 2012). In recent years, the TOFEL iBT has included these tasks along with independent writing tasks in its writing section (Educational Testing Service, 2005). As Cumming, Kantor, Powers, Santos, and Taylor (2000) claim, authenticity is the most important justification for inclusion of integrated writing tasks in the new Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL).These tasks measure the test takers 'writing ability in academic settings and require test takers to exemplify "real-life English-language usage in university lectures, classes, and laboratories" (Educational Testing Service, 2007, p.6).

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In typical academic contexts, language writing tasks often combine language skills including reading, listening, and writing. In activities such as summarizing, for instance, students work on reading material(s), interact with ideas expressed by the author, and write the summary (Delaney, 2008). Thus, the motivation for inclusion of integrated writing tasks in the new generations of writing tests, according to Yang (2009), is that these tasks are "reflective of the real use of language that occurs in academic contexts" (p. 3). Lewkowicz (1997) believes that integrated tasks are intended to intimately resemble the language situations that students often experience in academic contexts (as cited in Gebril, 2009). Yang (2009) verifies that in academic contexts students in most of their writing tasks work with source material(s) to identify, synthesize, connect, and manipulate data in their writing. She adds that the integrated writing tasks are similar to real-life academic writing tasks in that both require test takers to combine multiple language skills.

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In terms of potential consequences, it has been agreed that the authentic nature of integrated writing tasks leads to a positive washback effect (Cumming, Grant, Mulcahy-Ernt, \& Powers, 2004; Cumming et al., 2000; Esmaeili, 2002; Feak\& Dobson, 1996; Weigle, 2004). That is, integrated writing tasks by asking test takers to produce authentic language similar to what they experience in real academic contexts encourage similarly authentic content in language curricula and teaching (Guo, 2011). Weigle (2004) believes that including such tasks in high stakes exams might make teachers and learners feel the need for skills that represent language usage in real academic writing contexts rather than relying solely on strategies for five paragraph writing.

Yang (2009) cites researchers (Lewkowicz, 1997; Wesche, 1987) who assume that authenticity of integrated writing tasks may improve predictive validity of writing assessment. Researchers have regarded fairness or accessibility as another advantage of integrated writing tasks (Yang, 2009). Source material(s) in integrated writing tasks are intended to support fairness of writing tests by minimizing topic effect (Read, 1990; Weir, 1993, as cited in Yang, 2009). In the writing or testing literature, topic effect is considered as one of the well-defined factors affecting writers 'performance (Clapham, 1996). In independent writing tasks, the assigned topics may be unknown to some test takers and thus negatively affect their performance due to their lack of background knowledge (Guo, 2011). In contrast, integrated writing tasks by providing source material(s) can support test takers who may lack related knowledge or experience on the assigned topic (Reid, 1990; Wallace, 1997; Weigle, 2004; Weir, 1983, as cited in Guo, 2011). So this study was an attempt to investigate the answer the following research question:

Q: Is there any significant difference between foreign language learners writing ability who acquire the writing skill through integrated and independent method of teaching writing?

## 3. Method <br> 3.1. Participants

The initial population for the study was 50 junior EFL students. To get more homogeneity, participants were selected among those who were studying in the third year of university in EFL major. They were male and female students. They were all from Azad university of Tehran-, central branch with the age range of 20-22. Thirty three students were recognized as being at the intermediate level of proficiency. Three students quitted to collaborate with the researcher. So, the number of participants decreased and out of them 30 was randomly assigned to two groups. The rest were excluded.

### 3.2. Instrumentation

### 3.2.1. Homogeneity Test

Samples were selected among the population of 76 students. The sampling process was performed on a continuum (from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate). In order to have homogeneous groups and real-intermediate level students, the first part of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) containing 40 questions was performed. The test helped the researcher to make sure if all of the participants were at the intermediate level of proficiency. The test has been developed by Oxford University Press in 2001, after consultation with many teachers to assess the subject's knowledge of the key language as well as their receptive and productive skills (see appendix A).

### 3.2.2. TOFEL iBT

In the current study, the writing sections of TOFEL iBT test were selected to measure writing performance in the form of a pretest and posttest.

### 3.3. Procedure

The present study applies the TOFEL iBT integrated and independent writing test as an independent variable and EFL learners' writing grades as a dependent variable which has a relation with the effect of writing type. The researcher grouped the learners into two fifteen groups. The first group who has received the integrated type of writing as the method of writing practice during the course of advanced writing at the university control group and the second group who has been taught the independent type of writing as the method of learning how to write. In the first group, the learners were given the writing that accompanied with graphic interpretation and description whereas the second group was given only a topic for argumentative writing. All of the tasks were regarded standard tasks in which were drawn from TOFEL iBT tests.

### 3.4. Data collection

### 3.4.1. Procedure for eliciting OPT data

OPT was administered among the total of 76 junior and senior translation students a week before the main experiment starts. The results of the OPT revealed that $30(63.15 \%)$ of the participants were qualified for the study including 20 women and 10 men. The administration of the test took about 60 minutes. The placement test was administered in a single session. Students, whose scores on the test were between 161 and 197 according to OPT testing scale were known as advanced language learners.

### 3.4.2. Procedure for integrated writing tasks

In this phase, the writing tasks that were involved the description and interpretation of graphs and pie charts were given to students in order to describe and interpret them. This phase was continued 15 sessions and in every session a new task was given to students to write. At the end of the session the writings were gathered by researcher. Then the writing tasks were rated by two different raters.

### 3.4.3. Procedure for independent writing tasks

In this phase, the writing tasks were involved the essay writing tasks in which some topics were given to students to write essays. This phase was continued 15 sessions and in every session a new task was given to students to write five paragraphs at least 300 words. At the end of the session, the essays were gathered by researcher. The essays were scored based on the Evaluative Criteria Checklist for Essay Writing by two raters.

### 3.5. Pilot study

As Mackey and Gass (2005) claim, pilot testing is conducted to revise the materials and methods. They argue that a pilot study indicates the feasibility and usefulness of the data collection methods and instruments. In order to find the possible deficiencies and problems of the process
of data collection and to prevent possible failures and to gain replicable results, prior to the main study, the instruments were piloted.

### 3.5.1. Participants and data collection

Ten advanced students, including 5 male and 5 female EFL junior students participated in the pilot study. The procedure was conducted in a single session. Instruments and procedure of the main study were applied as well.

## 4. Results

First the descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum scores related to the performance of the students on the tasks are provided in the following table.

4-4: Descriptive statistics of the students' mean score

| Task | N | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Independent | 15 | 13.5247 | .71243 | 12.35 | 14.50 |
| Integrated | 15 | 14.8333 | 1.14143 | 13.02 | 16.44 |

Table 4-5: Results of independent-samples test

|  | T-test for Equality of Means |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| T | Df | Sig. (2- <br> tailed) | Mean <br> Difference |
| -3.767 | 28 | .001 | -1.30867 |

Eta squared $=-3.767^{2} /-3.767^{2}+(28)=0.33$
The results in tables 4-4 and 4-5 are interpreted as follows: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the writing tasks scores for the experimental groups. There was a significant difference in scores for the independent-task group ( $M=13.52, S D=.71$ ) and integratedtasks group $[\mathrm{M}=14.83, \mathrm{SD}=1.14 ; t(28)=-3.767, p=.0 .01$, two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference $=-1.30,95 \%$ CI: -1.30867 to 1.30867 ) was very large (eta squared $=.33$ ). This rejects the research hypothesis and there is a significant difference between the writing performance of EFL learners' who acquire the writing skill through integrated and independent method of writing. The results revealed that the integrated-task group outperformed the independent-task group in writing scores.

## 5. Discussion of findings

The aim of this study is investigating the effect of integrated and independent writing tasks on writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. The results of this study are in line with Cumming et al., 2000; Feak\& Dobson,1996; Guo, 2011;Read, 1990; Weigle, 2002, 2004; Yang, 2009 who supported the integrated tasks in language learning. This study confirmed that integrated writing tasks put forward an authentic measure for the writing skill as cited by Cumming et al., 2000; Feak\& Dobson, 1996; Guo, 2011; Read, 1990; Weigle, 2002, 2004; Yang, 2009. Integrated tasks have increasingly become a popular component in both large-scale writing and academic writing assessments (Gebril, 2009; Gebril \& Plakans, 2009, Plakans \& Gebril, 2012, Weigle \& Parker, 2012). As Cumming, Kantor, Powers, Santos, and Taylor (2000) claim, authenticity is the most important
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## 6. Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, the present study was supposed to answer a question regarding the effect of integrated and independent tasks on writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. To be specific, this study focuses on exploring the test performance elicited by the text-based writing tasks, especially in comparison with that in the more traditional independent writing tasks. The results of the study showed that integrated tasks were more effective than the independent tasks and it enhanced the authenticity of learners' writings. Although the advantages of integrated writing tasks are often affirmed, it is worth noting that the majority of the related research has mainly looked at thematically-related integrated writing tasks while little is known about the other type of integrated writing tasks that is also integral to academic writing: text-based writing tasks.

Considering the impact of authenticity in language learning and language instruction in both ESL and English as foreign language (EFL) contexts, research on its test items is greatly needed. The rationale for the concurrent use of the integrated and independent writing tasks is that the two task types would elicit different writing performance. However, this argument is theory driven. Whether this statement holds still remains unclear and needs empirical data to verify. One proposition that underlies the proposed test score interpretation and uses is that academic writing proficiency includes writing products and writing processes test takers use to respond to the writing tasks (Educational Testing Service, 2008). If this proposition holds true, the linguistic features of the resultant written products and the writing processes that test takers generate are expected to vary with score levels. Again, due to scarcity of research, little is known about whether and how linguistic features and writing processes vary with score levels within textbased integrated writing and how they compare with those of independent writing. If writing tasks tap into academic writing ability, test performance (linguistic knowledge and cognitive operations) are expected to vary along with test takers' exposure to and practice of the target language use. If this is true, it is reasonable to speculate that test takers with more academic experience at the tertiary level of education should outperform those with no or less such experience. This statement should apply even more to the integrated writing if such tasks are better reflective of academic writing tasks assigned in English medium institutions of higher education.

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# J.KRISHNAMURTI AND ALAN WATTS' PHILOSOPHICAL SPEECHES: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS 

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#### Abstract

THE AIM OF THIS PAPER IS TO REVEAL THE INCLUSION/EXCLUSION PATTERNS IN THE REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN THE LECTURES OF TWO RENOWNED PHILOSOPHERS, NAMELY J. KRISHNAMURTI AND ALAN WATTS, THROUGH THE LENS OF THEO VAN LEEUWEN'S CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS MODEL. THE FORMER PHILOSOPHER'S GOAL IN LIFE WAS TO SET MAN FREE, AND THE LATTER TO DECIPHER EASTERN PHILOSOPHY FOR THE WESTERN AUDIENCE. IN A PHILOSOPHICAL LECTURE, THERE ARE FOUR SOCIAL ACTORS: THE SPEAKER, THE AUDIENCE, THE COLLECTIVE 'WE', AND A TYPICAL HUMAN BEING (REFERRED TO AS 'ONE' OR ‘HUMAN BEINGS'). THE RESULT OF THIS QUALITATIVE/QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE TRANSCRIBED LECTURES OF THE SELECTED PHILOSOPHERS SHOWED THE FOLLOWING: KRISHNAMURTI, IN HIS LECTURE(S), ADDRESSED A WIDER RANGE OF AUDIENCE, BEYOND THOSE PEOPLE WHO WERE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN FRONT OF HIM. HE DELIBERATELY AVOIDED TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF A TEACHER, AND SPOKE AS A 'WE' TO A 'ONE.' ALAN WATTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS MORE INVOLVED WITH 'I' AND 'YOU', PRESENT HERE AND NOW IN THE LECTURE ROOM.


KEYWORDS: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA), INCLUSION/EXCLUSION PATTERN, REPRESENTATION, SOCIAL ACTORS

## 1. Introduction

A lecture is a social practice; "social practices are socially regulated ways of doing things," as defined by van Leeuwen (Leeuwen, 2008, p. 6). The best way to understand this concept is to think of a lecture as a genre, which is defined as "a linguistically realized activity type" (Martin, 1984a). A lecture is a social practice, which is "regulated to different degrees in different ways" (Leeuwen, 2008, p. 7). For instance, a lecture on the philosophy of life, given to a group of people generally interested in philosophy is regulated differently than one given on biology in a university auditorium. The elements of social practice in these two are not the same. The focus of this paper is the former type under the microscope of van Leeuwen's CDA model. The lecturers, selected for analysis, are Krishnamurti and Alan Watts. They gave many a lecture on the philosophy of life to many an individual. Each had his own purpose of doing so.

### 1.1 Krishnamurti

J. Krishnamurti is regarded as one of the greatest spiritual teachers of the twentieth century. His only concern was "to set man absolutely unconditionally free" (Krishnamurti J. , 1974). To do so, through a large number of recorded (and unrecorded) speeches, he put forth his radical views towards life 'with a disarming simplicity,' according to the back cover of his book, The Flight of the Eagle. Part of Krishna's teaching is about self, or more accurately, 'no self.' In one of his lectures, he states that "Our relationship is a process of self- isolation; each one is building a wall of selfenclosure, which excludes love, only breeding ill will and misery" (Krishnamurti online, 2014). The reason this paper is written is the curiosity of the researcher about Krishna's obsessive and explicit attempts to deemphasize his self; he deliberately censors the pronoun, "I" in his speeches, and constantly refers to himself as "the speaker" or "he." This obsession led to a critical discourse analysis of one of his speeches in comparison with another philosopher who was influenced by Krishna: Allan Watts.

### 1.2 Allan Watts

Alan Watts or Alan Wilson Watts was a British philosopher, writer, and speaker who popularized and interpreted Eastern Philosophy for the Western audience. The choice of one of his lectures came, again, out of the curiosity of the researcher, as explained above. The content of his lectures were similar in many ways to those of Krishna. For instance, in the selected lecture of the current paper, he says, "...your personality is your idea of your self, your image of yourself, and that's made up of how you feel [about] yourself, how you think about yourself thrown in with what all your friends and relations have told you about yourself. So your image of yourself obviously isn't you any more than your photograph is you or any more than the image of anything is it" (Watts, 1977).

### 1.3 CDA

As a research framework, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an ideology detector. Its practitioners employ different theoretical orientations in uncovering the creeping ideologies and asymmetry in texts they wish to approach. "What unites critical discourse analysis is neither methodology nor theoretical orthodoxy, but a common goal: the critique of the hegemonic discourses and genres that effect inequities, injustices, and oppression in contemporary society" (Leeuwen, 2009). This paper is not meant to uncover any of the items mentioned above because it is dealing with two philosophers, who dedicated their lives to teaching people the right ways of life. This paper is set to see how social actors of a lecture are represented in Krishnamurti and Watts' speeches. In the present study, Theo van Leeuwen's framework of the representation of social actors was adopted (and adapted) to analyze the selected speeches. This modified model will be explained in more details later in this paper.

## 2. Literature Review

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The representation of social actors has been the focal point of numerous studies in the literature. These studies make use of van Leeuwen's model to uncover injustice of many kinds in the deep layers of different types of discourse. That is why the closest ones to the present paper will reviewed below. However, a comparable study, which aims to see how social actors are represented in philosophers' talks, may not have been done because no article of the kind was found at the time of writing this paper.

Nasser Rashidi and Alireza Rasti (2012) adopted and adapted Theo van Leeuwen's model of the representation of social actors to expose the morpho-syntactic modes through which social actors ( $5+1$ and some other countries) involved in Iran's nuclear activities discourse. The probed social actors were represented in news reports of four Western quality papers. These news media, each to some or great extent, dealt with the issue of imposing or tightening sanctions on Iran. The following newspapers were the source of data in the study: The Economist, Express, The Washington Post, and The New York Times. Using the five sets of categories explained above, they showed "the possible asymmetrical patterns in representing a variety of social actors involved, in particular the actors associated with the Western camp and the Iranian government on the issue of the sanctions" (ibid). The conclusion drawn from this paper revealed that there was an ideological bias in full force against Iran.

In another study, Bustam, Heriyanto, \& Citraresman( 2013) aimed to discover the exclusion strategies used by one of English language newspapers in Indonesia, The Jakarta Post Newspaper, in representing the social actors in the case of FPI's rejection to Lady Gaga's performance in Indonesia. Their model, exactly like the previous study and the current paper, belonged to van Leeuwen. However, they adapted it differently from the previous study. They only focused on exclusion strategies and their subcategories: suppression and backgrounding. The results of the study showed that "the exclusion strategies mostly used are suppressions; there are $95 \%$ of suppressions. The suppressions are linguistically realized by passive agent deletion, which is $10 \%, 80 \%$ by nominalization and process nouns, and $5 \%$ by non-finite clauses. The Jakarta Post Newspaper only used 5\% of backgrounding in the news. Almost $90 \%$ of exclusion strategies go to the pro social actors of this case. The pro group is excluded because The Jakarta Post Newspaper wants to drive the readers' attention to the other actor (the victim) which here is Lady Gaga and her supporters as the Con group (ibid).

Kabgani (2013) embarked upon another similar journey to unravel the hidden ideologies and biases in texts. In his paper, the van Leeuwen's (1996) CDA framework was used to examine an article from a British broadsheet newspaper, the Guardian. His adaptation of the model was rather different from the previous studies, mentioned. He chose eleven elements from the comprehensive framework. The focus of his study was on the representation of Muslim women in non-Islamic media. He chose Guardian, a British newspaper because he believed that "usually European countries have been accused of undemocratic behavior towards other ethnics and nationalities, and the reflection of this behavior is more observable in their media" (ibid).

What he found was that Muslim women are verbally displayed as active actors of their community. They are shown as remarkably determined in what they believe, and as independent people searching for the revival of women's identity. Although this seems a positive reflection of Muslim women in a British newspaper, the newspaper article finalizes the article by the statement that the prevalence of the lack of critical thinking among them is the clearest drawback of all Muslim women. This last comment indicates, according to Kabgani, that although western media by the means of strategic tools try to depict minorities positively, in adopting such strategies they are not completely neutral (ibid).

## 3. Objectives/Significance of the Study

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This paper looks critically at the textual channel (transcriptions) through which Krishnamurti and Alan Watts communicate; the aim is to see comparatively how the social actors of a philosophical lecture are represented in the discourses of the two philosophers.

Given the objective, the following research questions were advanced.

1) Are the social actors in the two speeches more included or excluded?
2) Are the morpho-syntactic mechanisms employed by these great teachers to exclude social actors, especially their own selves, similar?

Generally, this study is important in that it aims to see if one can consciously manipulate the representation of one's own self in discourse. Many a study has looked upon this through newspapers where inclusion and exclusion of social actors are done rather subconsciously or without the control of the discourse makers. A journalist can exclude a whole country from its active presence in a matter without knowing he/she is doing so because what a journalist writes is a reflection of a deep-seated belief. Here, with Krishnamurti and Alan Watts, what we deal with is not the same; they talk about the state of no self in different ways and it is worth a probe to see how they deal with the pronoun, "I" as well as other typical social actors of a lecture. Specially, Krishnamurti's lecture is of more significance here since this work is primarily based on his explicit and deliberate attempts to avoid referring to himself, as ' I '.

## 4. Procedures for Data Collection

The materials used in this paper for analysis is taken from two sources. The first one is the book, the Flight of the Eagle, which comprises Krishnamurti's lectures. The first chapter of this book, titled Freedom, is chosen. It is his second public talk given by him in London in 1969. Of course, since it was a rather long lecture and its analysis would not be technically easy, one thousand words of his transcribed speech, starting from the beginning were selected. The choice made here is based on no particular reason. This book in general and this talk in particular are chosen randomly out of his many other books and recorded talks. In this way, the researcher bias in his sample selection is controlled.

The second source is from the book, The Essence of Alan Watts Volume 4. This book is a collection of Watts' speeches on different philosophical matters. A one-thousand-word excerpt was selected in exactly the same manner described above.

The data then was analyzed using Theo van Leeuwen's powerful socio-semantic categories of the representation of social actors. Also, since van Leeuwen's framework, in its entirety, can be applied only to a huge corpus dealing with diverse issues and social groups, only one set of categories, related to the representation of social actors, from his model was found to be of relevance to analyzing the data here. This category includes inclusion/exclusion, which is delineated in the following.

### 4.1 The van Leeuwen's Morpho-Syntactic Inventory of Representational Choices

This paper, in dealing with the discourse of Krishnamurti and Watts, capitalizes on a mainly linguistically-oriented conceptual framework proposed by Theo van Leeuwen. In the words of van Leeuwen (Leeuwen, 1996), "There is no neat fit between sociological and linguistic categories, and if Critical Discourse Analysis, in investigating for instance the representation of agency, ties itself in too closely to specific linguistic operations or categories, many relevant instances of agency might be overlooked." In his influential article on the representation of social actors, van Leeuwen (Leeuwen, 1996) introduces "a sociosemantic inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented". His model allows the critical enquirer to "bring to light

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... systematic omissions and distortions in representations" (Leeuwen, 1993). To this end, one morpho-syntactic category of his inventory was used in this study to scrutinize the data. This category will be briefly explained below.

The adopted and adapted model used in this paper deals entirely with van Leeuwen's dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion. Exclusion is divided into two subcategories: radical and less radical (partial) exclusion. The first subcategory "leave[s] no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities" (Leeuwen, 1996). For this reason, it can become discoverable in comparative studies; hence, its absence in this article.

Partial exclusion falls further into two subclasses: suppression in which "there is no reference to the social actor(s) in question anywhere in the text" (Leeuwen, 1996), and backgrounding in which the excluded social actors in a specific activity comes up later in another part of the discourse. In backgrounding, the social actors "are not so much excluded as de-emphasized, pushed into the back-ground" (Leeuwen, 1996).

Suppression can be detected in different ways e.g. through agentless passive voice, non-finite clauses, nominalizations and process nouns, and finally via certain adjectives. Backgrounding can be identified in the same way as suppression, "but with respect to social actors who are [italics in the original] included elsewhere in the text" (Leeuwen, 2008). It can also be realized through the following three ways: ellipses in nonfinite clauses with -ing and -ed principles, in infinitival clauses with to, and in paratactic clauses.

Furthermore, the researcher identified the following major social actors in these public talks. They included:
I. The speaker himself (I, my, mine,...)
II. The audience (you, yours, your...)
III. Both I and II collectively or the audience or all human beings and the speaker, together (we, us, our...)
IV. A typical individual (one, oneself, person, somebody, another...)

The existence of the first and second social actors in a lecture is axiomatic. However, the third and the forth ones are usually detectable in the genre of talking about life. The speaker of a lecture creates the third type. It is the 'you' and ' I ', which equals 'we.' The forth type of social actor is passively present in philosophical lectures. It is an individual or a human being that is addressed all the time as if it were present and sitting right in front of the speaker among the audience. Without this social actor, the speaker would not be able to deliver the full form of the philosophical lecture, social practice or genre.

## 5. Procedures for Data Analysis

To gain optimal result, this paper employs mixed method of QUAL+quan nature. As for the most prominent side of this paper, the qualitative side, one thousand words of each speech were selected(see appendices A and B). Then each one was divided by its sentences. That is each sentence was typed in one separate line. Then van Leeuwen's adapted model was applied to every sentence attentively and meticulously. Every sentence was probed with a high degree of magnification so no designated social actor would be missed.

As for the quantitative aspect of the paper, all the counts were summarized in the tables 1 and table 2 in the form of frequency and percentage. These tables then helped the process of comparing the two philosophers' speeches and answering the research questions.

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| Table 1 Exclusion/inclusion in J. Krishnamurti's lecture |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Total | Inclusion | Exclusion | Suppression | Backgrounding |
| The speaker himself |  | $(100 \%)$ | $(0 \%)$ | $(0 \%)$ | $(0 \%)$ |
|  | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The audience | 8 | $(25 \%)$ | $(75 \%)$ | $(66.5 \%)$ | $(33.5 \%)$ |
|  |  | 2 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| A typical individual | 45 | $(51 \%)$ | $(49 \%)$ | $(45.5 \%)$ | $(54.5 \%)$ |
|  |  | 23 | 22 | 10 | 12 |
| The speaker and <br> everybody | 26 | $(69 \%)$ | $(31 \%)$ | $(37 \%)$ | $(63 \%)$ |


| Table 2 Exclusion/inclusion in Alan Watts's lecture |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | N | Inclusion | Exclusion | Suppression | Backgrounding |  |
| The speaker himself | 57 | $(94 \%)$ | $(6 \%)$ | $(0 \%)$ | $(100 \%)$ |  |
|  |  | 54 | 3 | 0 | 3 |  |
| The audience | 26 | $(77 \%)$ | $(23 \%)$ | $(33 \%)$ | $(67 \%)$ |  |
|  |  | 20 | 6 | 2 | 4 |  |
| A typical individual | 16 | $(87.5 \%)$ | $(12.5 \%)$ | $(100 \%)$ | $(0 \%)$ |  |
|  |  | 14 | 2 | 2 | 0 |  |
| The speaker and <br> everybody | 14 | $(78.5 \%)$ | $(21.5 \%)$ | $(0 \%)$ | $(100 \%)$ |  |

## 5. Findings

On close analysis, the underlying inclusion/exclusion pattern yielded some interesting results. To demonstrate these results, the following quote from Krishnamurti's speech (Krishnamurti J. , 1969) is going to serve an important purpose:
"...Don't accept, if I may suggest, what the speaker is saying; the speaker has no authority whatsoever, he is not a teacher, he is not a guru; because if he is a teacher then you are the follower and if you are the follower you destroy yourself as well as the teacher..."

In all most all his addresses, Krishnamurti stated similar words, as above. He referred to himself as 'the speaker' or 'he.' He also encouraged his audience not to 'accept what the speaker is saying.' In fact, the frequency of the latter statement is considerably high. This was the reason that the enquirer began writing this paper. As can be seen in table 1, unlike Allan Watts, who included himself 54 times ( $94 \%$ ), Krishnamurti was not eager to include himself as a social actor in this excerpt from the selected lecture. Unlike Krishnamurti, Allan Watts excluded himself at times (only $6 \%$ ). However, this exclusion was in the form of backgrounding. That is he only deemphasized himself, and there was no suppression, in which finding a social actor becomes rather difficult.

In terms of representing the audience as the social actors in their lectures, both philosophers followed the same pattern as described above. Krishnamurti appeared as unwilling to include his audience as he was to include himself. He seems not to accept the role of a teacher, which was statistically proven above. He also does not appear to approve of the role of a learner from his audience. He referred to people in front of him only eight times, and he included them only $25 \%$; he excluded his present listeners $75 \%$, which was $66.5 \%$, suppressed and hard to recognize and only $33.5 \%$, backgrounded and traceable in the discourse. On the other hand, Alan Watts referred

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to his audience 26 times (almost over three times more than Krishnamurti). Out of this, he included them $77 \%$; he more backgrounded his audience ( $67 \%$ ) than suppressed those ( $33 \%$ ). Statistically speaking, in Allan Watts' lecture, his self and his audience are highlighted social actors.

When it comes to referring to an individual or a human being in general, as is customary in the social practice of a philosophical lecture, Krishnamurti appears to be occupying a higher ground as can be seen in tables 1 and 2 . The same conclusion seems to be true as one looks at the statistics on the collective reference to the speaker and the audience in the form of the pronoun, 'we' and alike.

In line with his meticulous attention to exclude himself and his audience rather consciously in his lectures, Krishnamurti includes more often the typical 'one' and the collective, 'we.' He included these social actors $51 \%$ and $69 \%$ out of 45 and 26 times of referring to both, respectively. He tends to background these more than he suppresses them. Allan Watts shows a lower number of tallies in this regard: 16 and 14 times respectively. As mentioned before, in his lectures his self and his audience are represented more colorfully.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study tried to track down the ideological attitudes two prominent philosophers attach to the social actors of their lectures. The van Leeuwen's model provided the enquirer with a good framework for analyzing the data. Overall, the patterns emerging from the one selected category of van Leeuwen's model seem to point out that Unlike Allan Watts, Krishnamurti is not willing to include his self and his direct audience in his lectures. He seems to be speaking to a wider range of listeners than those sitting in front of him. He seems to be more universally oriented than Alan Watts appears to be. Experiments with more data, which allow the use of more relevant morpho-syntactic categories, will be bound to shed new light on the differential representation of the social actors in the lectures of these two philosophers.

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## Appendix A

## Krishnamurti's lecture

For most of us, freedom is an idea and not an actuality.
When we talk about freedom, we want to be free outwardly, to do what we like, to travel, to be free to express ourselves in different ways, free to think what we like.

The outward expression of freedom seems to be extraordinarily important, especially in countries where there is tyranny, dictatorship;
and in those countries where outward freedom is possible one seeks more and more pleasure, more and more possessions.

If we are to inquire deeply into what freedom implies, to be inwardly, completely and totally free - which then expresses itself outwardly in society, in relationship - then we must ask, it seems to me, whether the human mind, heavily conditioned as it is, can ever be free at all.

Must it always live and function within the frontiers of its own conditioning, so that there is no possibility of freedom at all?

One sees that the mind, verbally understanding that there is no freedom here on this earth, inwardly or outwardly, then begins to invent freedom in another world, a future liberation, heaven and so on.

Put aside all theoretical, ideological, concepts of freedom so that we can inquire whether our minds, yours and mine, can ever be actually free, free from dependence, free from fear, anxiety, and free from the innumerable problems, both the conscious as well as those at the deeper layers of the unconscious.

Can there be complete psychological freedom, so that the human mind can come upon something which is not of time, which is not put together by thought, yet which is not an escape from the actual realities of daily existence?

Unless the human mind is inwardly, psychologically, totally free it is not possible to see what is true, to see if there is a reality not invented by fear, not shaped by the society or the culture in which we live, and which is not an escape from the daily monotony, with its boredom, loneliness, despair and anxiety.

To find out if there is actually such freedom one must be aware of one's own conditioning, of the problems, of the monotonous shallowness, emptiness, insufficiency of one's daily life, and above all one must be aware of fear.

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One must be aware of oneself neither introspectively nor analytically, but actually be aware of oneself as one is and see if it is at all possible to be entirely free of all those issues that seem to clog the mind.

To explore, as we are going to do, there must be freedom, not at the end, but right at the beginning.

Unless one is free one cannot explore, investigate or examine.
To look deeply there needs to be, not only freedom, but the discipline that is necessary to observe;
freedom and discipline go together ( not that one must be disciplined in order to be free).
We are using the word 'discipline' not in the accepted, traditional sense, which is to conform, imitate, suppress, follow a set pattern;
but rather as the root meaning of that word, which is 'to learn.'
Learning and freedom go together, freedom bringing its own discipline;
not a discipline imposed by the mind in order to achieve a certain result.
These two things are essential: freedom and the act of learning.
One cannot learn about oneself unless one is free, free so that one can observe, not according to any pattern, formula or concept, but actually observe oneself as one is.

That observation, that perception, that seeing, brings about its own discipline and learning;
in that there is no conforming, imitation, suppression or control whatsoever - and in that there is great beauty.

Our minds are conditioned - that is an obvious fact - conditioned by a particular culture or society, influenced by various impressions, by the strains and stresses of relation- ships, by economic, climatic, educational factors, by religious conformity and so on.

Our minds are trained to accept fear and to escape, if we can, from that fear, never being able to resolve, totally and completely, the whole nature and structure of fear.

So our first question is: can the mind, so heavily burdened, resolve completely, not only its conditioning, but also its fears?

Because it is fear that makes us accept conditioning.
Do not merely hear a lot of words and ideas - which are really of no value at all -
but through the act of listening, observing your own states of mind, both verbally and nonverbally, simply inquire whether the mind can ever be free - not accepting fear, not escaping, not saying, 'I must develop courage, resistance,' but actually being fully aware of the fear in which one is trapped.

Unless one is free from this quality of fear one cannot see very clearly, deeply;
and obviously, when there is fear there is no love.

So, can the mind actually ever be free of fear?
That seems to me to be - for any person who is at all serious - one of the most primary and essential questions which must be asked and which must be resolved.

There are physical fears and psychological fears.
The physical fears of pain and the psychological fears as memory of having had pain in the past, and the idea of the repetition of that pain in the future;
also, the fears of old age, death, the fears of physical insecurity, the fears of the uncertainty of tomorrow, the fears of not being able to be a great success, not being able to achieve - of not being somebody in this rather ugly world;
the fears of destruction, the fears of loneliness, not being able to love or be loved, and so on;
the conscious fears as well as the unconscious fears.
Can the mind be free, totally, of all this?
If the mind says it cannot, then it has made itself incapable, it has distorted itself and is incapable of perception, of understanding;

## Appendix B

I've always been fascinated with the idea of death as far back as I can remember, from earliest childhood.

You may think that's kind of morbid, but when a child at night says the phrase If I should die before I wake, there's something about it that's absolutely weird.

What would it be like to go to sleep and never wake up?
Most reasonable people just dismiss the thought.
They say, "You can't imagine that";
they shrug their shoulders and say, "Well, that will be that."
But I'm one of those ordinary people who aren't content with an answer like that.
Not that I'm trying to find something else beyond that, but I am absolutely fascinated with what it would be like to go to sleep and never wake up.

Many people think it would be like going into the dark forever or being buried alive.
Obviously it wouldn't be like that at all!
Because we know darkness by contrast, and only by contrast, with light.
I have a friend, a girl, who is very intelligent and articulate, who was born blind and hasn't the faintest idea what darkness is.

The word means as little to her as the word light.
So it is the same for you:
you are not aware of darkness when you are asleep.

If you went to sleep, into unconsciousness for always and always, it wouldn't be at all like going into the dark;
it wouldn't be at all like being buried alive.
As a matter of fact, it would be as if you had never existed at all!
Not only you, but everything else as well.
You would be in that state, as if you had never been.
And, of course, there would be no problems, there would be no one to regret the loss of anything.
You couldn't even call it a tragedy because there would be no one to experience it as a tragedy.
It would be a simple - nothing at all.
Forever and for never.
Because, not only would you have no future, you would also have no past and no present.
At this point you are probably thinking, "Let's talk about something else."
But I'm not content with that, because this makes me think of two other things.
First of all, the state of nothingness makes me think that the only thing in my experience close to nothingness is the way my head looks to my eye, and then behind my eye there isn't a black spot, there isn't even a hazy spot.

There's nothing at all!
I'm not aware of my head, as it were, as a black hole in the middle of all this luminous experience.

It doesn't even have very clear edges.
The field of vision is an oval, and because this oval of vision there is nothing at all.
Of course, if I use my fingers and touch I can feel something behind my eyes;
if I use the sense of sight alone there is just nothing there at all.
Nevertheless, out of that blankness, I see.
The second thing it makes me think of is when I'm dead I am as if I never had been born, and that's the way I was before I was born.

Just as I try to go back behind my eyes and find what is there I come to a blank, if I try to remember back and back and back to my earliest memories and behind that - nothing, total blank.

But just as I know there's something behind my eyes by using my fingers on my head, so I know through other sources of information that before I was born there was something going on.

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There were my father and my mother, and their fathers and mothers, and the whole material environment of the Earth and its life out of which they came, and behind that the solar system, and behind that the galaxy, and behind that all the galaxies, and behind that another blank space.

I reason that if I go back when I'm dead to the state where I was before I was born, couldn't I happen again?

What has happened once can very well happen again.
If it happened once it's extraordinary, and it's not really very much more extraordinary if it happened all over again.

I do know I've seen people die and I've seen people born after them.
So after I die not only somebody but myriads of other beings will be born.
We all know that;
there's no doubt about it.
What worries us is that when we're dead there could be nothing at all forever, as if that were something to worry about.

Before you were born there was this same nothing at all forever, and yet you happened.
If you happened once you can happen again.

Now what does that mean?
To look at it in its very simplest way and to properly explain myself, I must invent a new verb.
This is the verb to $I$.
We'll spell it with the letter I but instead of having it as a pronoun we will call it a verb.
The universe I's.
It has I'd in me it I's in you.
Now let's respell the word eye.
When I talk about to eye, it means to look at something, to be aware of something.
So we will change the spelling, and will say the universe I's.
It becomes aware of itself in each one of us, and it keeps the I'ing, and every time it I's every one of us in whom it I's feels that he is the center of the whole thing.

I know that you feel that you are I in just the same way that I feel that I am I.
We all have the same background of nothing, we don't remember having done it before, and yet it has been done before again and again and again, not only before in time but all around us everywhere else in space is everybody, is the universel'ing.

# IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT). THE THREE MAIN PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY INCLUDED, FIRST, INVESTIGATING EFL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CLT. SECOND, EXPLORING TEACHERS' UNDERLYING REASONS FOR THEIR ATTITUDES. THIRD, INVESTIGATING IF THERE IS ANY CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN TEACHERS' BELIEFS TOWARD CLT AND THEIR PRACTICE IN CLASSROOM. A MIXED METHOD APPROACH WAS USED IN THIS STUDY. IT WAS A THREE-PHASE RESEARCH DESIGN, STARTING WITH QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION THROUGH A QUESTIONNAIRE, FOLLOWED BY TWO QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION THROUGH INTERVIEWS AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATION. THE QUALITATIVE PHASE WAS USED TO EXPLAIN THE RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE. THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY INDICATED THAT GENERALLY THE IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS HELD FAVORABLE ATTITUDES TOWARD PRINCIPLES OF CLT AND DISPLAYED CHARACTERISTICS OF CLT IN THEIR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES. NOT MUCH GAP WAS OBSERVED BETWEEN THE TEACHERS' BELIEFS TOWARD CLT AND THEIR REALIZED PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM.


KEY WORDS: APPROACH, ATTITUDES, COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, CLT, EFL

## Introduction

Many researchers believes that the history of formal teaching of English in Iran dates back to 1938-1939 (See for example Foroozandeh 2010). In first English textbook series designed and published by the ministry of culture in academic year of 1938-1939 included six books for six grades of high school education. The Iranian committee of writers of this series and a group of English speaking educators who launched and implemented this joint project under the sponsorship of the ministry of culture had adopted the Direct Method (DM) and Reading Method (RM) and the series course books were not designed based upon any official curriculum. Foroozandeh (2010:68) evaluates that "the 6-book series did not follow the same design and procedure in all the lessons. The 1939 series was not accompanied by any work book or teachers manual, but the "foreword to teachers" provided comprehensive guidelines on classroom managements, student-teacher relationship, the importance and necessity of adopting a humanitarian approach to language teaching and learning, taking account of learner factors, error correction, and dictation."

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This series was taught up until 1964 when it was replaced by a very well-known and widely discussed series called "the Graded English series". Graded English which was also a 6-book series was claimed to adopt the main stream approach of its time (situational language teaching) and the textbooks were designed in a way that get the students acquainted with the basic knowledge and information of English necessary for daily life and future academic studies.

The Graded English series stayed in circulation of formal education system up until the Islamic revolution in 1979. English was simultaneously known as the language of enemies (i.e. the United States and the United Kingdom) on the one hand (Borjian, 2013) and as a tool for progress (Riazi, 2005) on the other. Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task in developing countries in general and in our country in particular (Razmjoo and Riazi, 2006). However, English teaching underwent some consecutive reforms and early after the revolution and it was completely removed from the schools and replaced by other series; the most wellknown one is "Right path to English" which was based on behavioristic theories and AudioLingual Method.

A brief survey of English textbooks taught in formal k-12 education system of Iran shows that they were mostly and generally developed under the influence of structural and formal camps such as RM, DM, GTM, and Audio-Lingual Method has failed in developing learners' communicative ability in real-life situations in the previous Educational system.

Recently the Iranian Ministry of Education has changed the Educational System from K 12 System to what is known as 6-3-3 System. The six-year primary cycle covers grades 1 to 6 for children 6 to 12 years old. This phase is both free and compulsory. Students take exams at the end of each year on which their promotion to the following grade is based. The first three-year secondary cycle titled "Secondary School Stage One" covers grades 7 to 9 for children 12 to 14 years old. Like the preceding cycle, this cycle also provides students with general education. One of the new subjects in the curriculum of this cycle is Foreign Languages. English language has been included as part of the Iranian school curriculum as a compulsory subject taught from grade 7 in junior high schools (age 12-15).

Most of language teaching experts have noticed the failure of the traditional approaches such as Audio-Lingual method, which came to practice after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979. At that time, syllabus designers designed a series of course-books, titled "Right Path to English". As this Method has failed in developing learners' communicative ability in real-life situations in the previous Educational system, the syllabus designers have shifted to adopt new English for School series titled "Prospect".

Publishers of prospect series claimed that this series is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based and English teachers have been encouraged to implement CLT to help develop students' abilities to use English appropriately in context.

A study conducted by Azam Ahmadi and Ali Derakhshan, (2014) revealed that Prospect1 follows the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) principles and fulfills students' needs.

CLT advocates teaching practices that develop communicative competence in authentic contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, the theories and practices of CLT have faced various challenges in many EFL contexts (Anderson, 1993; Ellis, 1996).

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is generally regarded as an approach to language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2001). As such, CLT reflects a certain model or research paradigm, or a theory (Celce- Murcia 2001). It is based on the theory that the primary function of language use is communication. Its primary goal is for learners to develop communicative

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competence (Hymes 1971), or simply put, communicative ability. In other words, its goal is to make use of real-life situations that necessitate communication.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) originated from the changes in the British Situational Language Teaching approach dating from the late 1960s (Richards \& Rodgers, 2001). This method was developed in the 1970s (Richards, 2006) as a result of changes in British language teaching. The development of this method or approach was a reaction to previous methods that had concentrated on form and structure rather than meaning (Richards, 2006). Stemming from the socio-cognitive perspective of the socio-linguistic theory, with an emphasis on meaning and communication, and a goal to develop learners' "communicative competence", Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach evolves as a prominent language teaching method and gradually replaced the previous Grammar-Translation Method and Audio-Lingual Method (Warschauer \& Kern, 2000). That the purpose of language learning is to acquire "communicative competence" with a focus on meaning and communication is among the most salient reasons (Nunan, 1989).

The CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), which is defined as learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communications in real-life situations (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Hymes's theory of communicative competence was a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. In order to do so, learners not only need to acquire the linguistic but pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Hedgcock, 2002).

It is clear that teachers' attitudes are important in their decision to implement CLT because many English teachers have been teaching the traditional methods such as the Audio-Lingual Method for several years. The reason for the mismatch between CLT theory and practice may be teachers' attitudes (Karavas-Doukas, 1995). Since teachers' attitudes reveal teachers' thinking about teaching language, the investigation of teachers' attitudes serves as a starting point to identify the possible contradictions between teachers' beliefs and CLT principles. Littlewood (1981) suggests that the idea of the communicative approach may conflict with EFL teachers' existing thoughts about teachers' roles and teaching methods. Thus, to implement the relatively new communicative approach in Iran, it is important to investigate Iranian junior high school teachers' attitudes toward CLT.
"Educational change depends on what teachers do and think, it's as simple and as complex as that. It would all be so easy if we could legislate changes in thinking." Fullan (2007)

Despite the importance of teachers' attitudes in determining the successful implementation of innovatory ideas and in understanding teachers' classroom behaviour, teacher attitudes have been neglected in second language classroom research (see Grotjahn 1991; Kleinsasser and Savignon 1991; Nunan 1991).

Karavas-Doukas (1996) suggests that the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices may contribute to the neglect of examining teachers' attitudes before implementing any new approach, i.e. only promoting the approach and trying to convince the teachers of the effectiveness of CLT does not successfully change the teachers' existing beliefs about language learning and teaching. The goal of most language teaching methods is to teach learners to communicate in the target language. Being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence, it required communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

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## Review of Related Literature

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) propose a conceptual framework of attitude construct, which consists of four categories: cognition, affect, conation, and behavior. In the framework, attitudes are a function of beliefs. In other words, beliefs have causal effects on attitudes. Typically, a person learns a number of beliefs about an object by direct observation or information from outside sources. People hold a set of beliefs about the object, and these beliefs serve as the basis that determines their attitudes. (Fishbein \& Ajzen, 1975).

In the framework, attitudes are viewed to have influence on behavior. Specifically, a person's attitude toward an object affects the person's intentions to perform behaviors relating to that object (Fishbein \& Ajzen, 1975). However, the relation between attitude and behavior depends on particular conditions. That is, when the person thinks he/she has more resources and fewer obstacles, he/she is more likely to perform the behavior according to his/her intentions (Fishbein \& Ajzen, 1975). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) indicate that behavior can be determined by intentions; intentions are the results of overall attitude, and attitudes are a function of salient beliefs. However, these causal effects not only work in one direction. Performance can provide new information that changes beliefs, attitudes and intentions (Fishbein \& Ajzen ,1975).

Teachers' Attitudes toward CLT Karavas-Doukas (1996) suggests that the mismatch between the beliefs and practices may contribute to the neglect of examining teachers' attitudes before implementing any new approach. That is, only promoting the approach and trying to convince the teachers of the effectiveness of CLT does not successfully change the teachers' existing beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Researchers (Mangubhai et al, 1998) investigated language teachers' attitudes toward CLT in Australia. The results showed that teachers held moderate attitudes towards five factors relating to CLT, role of grammar, group work, error correction, learner role, and teacher role. The highest scores fell in the area of learner role. This suggests that the teachers think that the learners can contribute to their own learning. Similarly, in the study of Razmjoo and Riazi (2006), the teachers as a whole expressed positive attitudes toward the five principles of CLT. The teachers held strong views about CLT in the areas of grammar role and teacher role.

Karim's (2004) survey study examined university-level EFL teacher's attitudes toward CLT in Bangladesh. The findings showed that most teachers displayed positive attitudes toward the basic principles of CLT. In addition, the teachers were aware of the features of CLT and their perceptions of CLT corresponded with their reported CLT practice (Karim, 2004).

In Italy, Hawkey (2006) applied both survey and face-to-face interviews to investigate whether teachers agreed with the advantages of the communicative approach in language teaching. The teachers stated positive views about CLT such as "CLT improving learner motivation and interest", and "CLT improving communicative skills" (p. 247). In addition, teachers' interviews suggested that the teachers were motivated to use pair-work activities to meet the learners' communicative needs (Hawkey, 2006).

Liao (2003) investigated high school English teachers' attitudes toward CLT in China. The first-phase survey study reported most Chinese teachers are supportive of the implementation of CLT. The findings indicated that among 302 participants, $94 \%$ responded favorably toward CLT and were willing to practice it (Liao, 2003). In the second-phase interview study, four interviewees were selected from survey participants who displayed favorable attitudes toward CLT. The teachers expressed their agreement with CLT such as, "the teacher should take into account the students' need", and "the aim of the class is to enable students to communicate easily in real life situations" (p. 125).

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Razmjoo and Riazi (2006) in their study compared the overall attitude of English teachers in high schools and private institutes. The results revealed that both groups of teachers hold a highly positive attitude towards the premises of CLT. They further investigated the extent to which CLT principles are practiced in Iranian public high schools and private language institutes to see which context is closer to CLT tenets. The results of their study indicated that only private language institutes implemented quasi-CLT type of approach in their classes. In other words, while institutes' teachers implement the CLT approach partially in their classes, the high school teachers attach no importance to CLT and its principles in real practice" (p. 167).

In another study, Mowlaie and Rahimi (2010) tried to find the discrepancies between the attitudes of English language teachers in one language school in Iran towards the tenets of CLT and their classroom practice. The results showed that their practice is not in harmony with their attitude. The researchers further interviewed the teachers to pinpoint the reason for those discrepancies to find that the main reason lies in the lack of enough training on the teachers' part on the one hand and expectation of the students from the classroom on the other hand.

Dordinejad et al. (2011) also examined the perceptions of Iranian language teachers in a private language institute by administering an attitude questionnaire. They found that the teachers favor group work activities; however, dialogues, vocabulary, reading, and grammar activities are not interactively integrated. They further concluded that the discrepancy between the teachers' perception and practice is due to their cultural background.

A research by Shahin Vaezi, Ehsan Abbaspour (2014) on 17 EFL teachers, showed that although Iranian EFL teachers have a positive attitude towards principles of CLT they do not materialize their claims in the classroom. Based on the findings of the current study it can be concluded that mere familiarity with an approach and having a positive attitude towards it cannot guarantee it implementation in the classroom as many other factors are there to be considered. In this regard, materials, assessment, and the role attributed to the teacher both by the general EFL teaching context and particularly by the students all affect the extent to which CLT may be adopted. They also claimed 16 EFL classes were observed to measure the state of the practice of language teaching and learning in the classrooms against the principles of CLT. The findings revealed that although teachers held a positive claim towards practicing CLT, the state of the practice of language teaching and learning was not in favor of the premises of CLT.

Chang's (2000) survey study in Taiwan investigated 110 high school English teachers' attitudes toward CLT and their practice of CLT. The results showed that Taiwanese high school English teachers hold positive attitudes toward CLT. Moreover, the teachers who hold positive attitudes toward CLT tend to use activities that are more communicative in their classroom practice. Liao's (2003) case study investigated two high school teachers' attitudes toward CLT and their CLT practice. The results indicated that the teachers held strong beliefs and positive attitudes toward CLT. Their favorable beliefs and attitudes led them to try out CLT in the classrooms and adopt CLT successfully. These research findings indicate that many EFL teachers display favorable attitudes toward CLT and the teachers' views seem to shift to a more communicative paradigm. However, a number of studies point out the teachers' concerns about CLT.

Hawkey (2006) reported that Italian teachers of English think some correction of grammar and lexis errors is necessary.

Li's (2004) study of Chinese teachers' opinions at a tertiary level indicated that the teachers thought that learners must be given feedback when they produce L2 to modify their production. Since the students already knew how to negotiate meaning in their first language, what they needed to learn were words in order to use them in L2 ( $\mathrm{Li}, 2004$ ).

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The interview data in Carless's (2004) study revealed that some students used the simplest linguistic forms to complete the tasks. Burnaby and Sun (1989) reported that Chinese college students learn the knowledge of English for future jobs in China, such as reading technical articles or translation of documents (Burnaby \& Sun, 1989). This view is confirmed by Tsai's (2007) study. Taiwanese teachers also thought that EFL students have no immediate need to communicate in English. On the other hand, they need grammar and reading skills in order to learn content knowledge.

## METHODS

The main purpose of this study is to examine Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT and the rationales underlying their attitudes toward CLT. To achieve this purpose, an explanatory mixed method research was conducted. The first-phase quantitative study investigated teachers' attitudes toward CLT, while the second and third- phase qualitative study explored the reasons underlying the teachers' attitudes toward CLT and the possible contradictions between teachers' attitudes, beliefs and CLT practical implementation and principles in the classroom.

The question guiding the first-phase quantitative study was:
What are Iranian EFL teachers' overall attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching?
The research question in the second-phase qualitative study was:
What are the reasons underlying the teachers' attitudes toward CLT?
And the research question in the third-phase qualitative study was:
Are there any contradictions between teachers' attitudes, beliefs and CLT practical implementation and principles in the classroom?

## Participants

The participants of the current study were 55 EFL teachers who worked in public schools of Khuzestan province, Iran in the academic year 2014-2015. To go through the details, they were 40 female and 15 male EFL teachers. The youngest teacher was a twenty five-year-old woman and the oldest one was a forty seven-year-old man. Their teaching experience ranged from eight to 27 years.

The participants in this study are members of Khuzestan English Language Teachers Association (KELTA). KELTA has at least 2000 members. They are English teachers who are teaching English in junior high schools, high schools and universities all over Khuzestan province. More than 500 members are teaching English to seven and eight graders in junior high schools. Out of this population, participants were selected randomly. The sample was considered to be representative of the whole Iranian EFL teachers.

## Materials

The study had three phases of collecting data including distribution of questionnaire (adopted from Karavas-Doukas, 1996), interview, and observation.

This three-phase study followed a mixed-method research design. The first phase of this study was quantitative since the researcher collected numerical data through distributing questionnaires. The second phase was qualitative: the researcher interviewed some of the participants (who had already taken part in phase 1) to elaborate on their responses to the

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questionnaire. The third phase also was qualitative: the researcher observed the practice of some teachers who were interviewed in the previous phase.

Questionnaire: The main instrument used to elicit data for the study was a written questionnaire. Attitudes towards CLT were measured by Attitudes towards CLT Questionnaire (KaravasDoukas, 1996).

The scale consists of 24 items anchored on a 5-point Likert scale. The items are placed in random order, and next to the items is a grid consisting of five columns: from "strongly agree", "agree", "uncertain", "disagree", "strongly disagree"; each column had a particular value, i.e. 5, 4, 3, 2,1 respectively. (See Appendix).

Respondents were asked to tick the appropriate box, to indicate how far they agree or disagree with each item. It is decided that a high score on the scale would imply a positive attitude. There are 12 favourable items and 12 unfavourable. The favourable items are statements $2,3,6,7,8,9,12,14,16,18,20,24$. The rest are unfavourable.

Thus, favourable statements (i.e. statements based on CLT principles) were scored 5 for "strongly agree" down to 1 for "strongly disagree"; for the scoring of unfavourable items the scoring was reversed (unfavourable items were scored 1 for "strongly agree" up to 5 for "strongly disagree").

The items have been categorized into five subscales including:

1. Group/ pair work (four statements);
2. Quality and quantity of error correction (4 statements);
3. The role and contribution of learners in the learning process (6statements);
4. The role of the teacher in the classroom (4 statements);
5. Place/importance of grammar (6 statements).

The highest possible score that could be obtained in the attitude scale and the one indicative of the most favourable attitude towards the communicative approach was 120 (by scoring 5, the highest mark on all 24 statements), while the lowest and the one indicating the least favourable attitude towards the communicative approach was 24 . Respondents' scores could therefore fall within a continuum from 24 to 120 , the middle (neutral) point of the continuum being 72 (achieved by being uncertain about all 24 items).

The cut off score was 72 . Those who obtained a score higher than 72 were supposed to have positive attitudes, those who obtained a score lower than the cut off score were supposed to have negative attitudes toward CLT and finally the score 72 was taken as the neutral or middle score of this study's attitude scale.


Figure 1. The positive, negative and neutral, attitudes
Interview: Likert-type scale Questionnaires do not explain why a teacher holds a specific attitude; therefore, to complete the gathered data for the study, the researcher employed face-to-face, semi-structure interviews to explore the participants underlying attitudes. During the interviews, the researcher asked the interviewees predetermined, open-ended questions, but allowed flexibility concerning follow-up questions.

Classroom Observation: The last step for collecting data was unstructured observation of classroom practices of the teachers who had previously been interviewed. The purpose of this phase was to know whether the teachers who participated in the interview and clearly explained their reason for being in favor of CLT employed what they said or not. In other words, the researcher wanted to know if there was any contradiction between what they stated about CLT and what they acted in the class.

These three phases of data collection, indeed, are complementary and they complete each other.

## Procedures

For the first-phase of the research, a questionnaire was sent to each participant using the date bank of Khuzestan English Language Teachers Association via his or her e-mail. Meanwhile the selected participants were informed to complete and resend the questionnaire in two months. Two weeks later the first completed questionnaire was received. At the end, 55 questionnaires were sent back. 22 via e-mail and 23 manually.

For the second-phase, the researcher interviewed some of the participants (who had already taken part in phase 1) to elaborate on their responses to the questionnaire. Among those participants who send back their questionnaires, 10 participants were selected randomly to take part in a face-to-face interview. The interview questions were designed based on items of the

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questionnaire and the five main principles of CLT because it was necessary that participants explain in details the reasons behind their responses to items of the questionnaire.

For the third-phase, among 10 interviewee, five participants were selected randomly. They were informed to let the researcher have a classroom observation. Four participants agreed. The purpose of the classroom observation was to see if there was any possible contradictions between teachers' attitudes, beliefs and CLT practical implementation and principles in the classroom.

## RESULTS

As mentioned before, to study Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward communicative language approach, a questionnaire contains 24 items, which were randomly ordered (to prevent any deviation) was considered. These items were categorized into five subscales based on main principles of CLT, which were mentioned earlier including the following factors:

Group/pair work; quality and quantity of error correction; the role and contribution of learners in the learning process; the role of the teacher in the classroom and place/importance of grammar.

Since the number of items allocated to the five dimensions was not equal, to compare these aspects with each other, and extract interval scale for each of the dimensions, the mean of five options had been used. Options were "strongly agree", "agree", "uncertain", "disagree", "strongly disagree"; each had a particular value, i.e. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. In favorable items, the scale ranged from five to one, with five being "strongly agree" and one being "strongly disagree". The unfavorable items were recoded, so the positive end of the scale was five. (Likert scale with scores in the reverse direction). That was, the closer the mean was to the value of five, the more favorable the teachers' attitudes were. Tables 4.32 to 4.4 .36 show teachers' attitudes towards these principles.
Table 1. Descriptive statistics of five subscales in brief

|  | Items based on CLT principles | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Qroup/pair work | 3.8500 | .65546 |  |
| The role and contribution of learners in the learning process | 3.0818 | .53660 |  |
| The role of the teacher in the classroom | 3.5273 | .45306 |  |
| Place/importance of grammar | 3.8061 | .49041 |  |

According to the table 4.37, which is a brief review of the tables 4.32 to 4.36 , participants' responses to the qualitative variables (factors): Group/pair work; quality and quantity of error correction; the role and contribution of learners in the learning process; the role of the teacher in the classroom; place/importance of grammar are changed and calculated to quantitative variables. The mean level of these quantitative variables are $3.85,3.39,3.08,3.52$ and 3.8 for the 5 factors respectively.

Since statistical indicators calculate the quantitative variables, they can be compared to each other easily. Table 4.37 suggests that among the five principles, the principle with highest mean

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was group/ pair work $(M=3.85)$, followed by the role of grammar $(M=3.80)$, the role of the teacher $(M=3.52)$, and error correction $(M=3.39)$. The role of the learners was indicated as the lowest mean among the five principles $(M=3.08)$. What is noteworthy is that teachers did not show any negative attitudes towards CLT. The means of none of all the subscales are above three.

In general, to evaluate and measure the study of EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT variable, five dimensions; Group/pair work; quality and quantity of error correction; the role and contribution of learners in the learning process; the role of the teacher in the classroom; place/importance of grammar, have been analyzed using covering analysis method.

The descriptive statistics to determine these variables is shown in the table below:
Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variable score

|  | N | Range | Minimu <br> m | Maximu <br> m | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Variance |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Score | 55 | 39 | 69 | 108 | 84.42 | 8.623 | 74.359 |
| Valid N (list wise) | 55 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Based on the table 4.38, the obtained mean for the study of EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT is $(M=84.42)$. In fact determining the critical value of 72 is to decide the positive or negative attitudes of the responders, the closer mean to 120 shows participants' positive attitudes toward CLT.

## DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that teachers hold a favorable attitude toward CLT and displayed characteristics of CLT in their beliefs. Based on the teachers' teaching experience, the findings demonstrated that CLT could make English teaching meaningful and interesting. The present study found that the teachers disliked using traditional methods of teaching that requires the students to memorize numerous grammar rules. CLT aims to develop students' communicative competence. To communicate effectively, the students are involved in different kinds of activities that require practicing various skills to understand their peers and make themselves understood by others. Further, CLT creates a non-threatening language environment that lowers the learners' anxiety and make class input comprehensible. In the classroom where CLT is applied, the students can develop their language as well as social skills when they work together with their group members to achieve a common goal. Finally, in CLT, both students and teachers play different roles than those in the traditional classrooms. Instead of waiting for the teacher to make decisions for them, students take the initiative and responsibility for their own learning.

The findings also showed that teachers' favorable and positive attitudes towards CLT were not related to difficulties they experienced in their classes in general. This suggests that teachers' attitude is not the only factor to ensure the implementation of innovation and change in the educational system. Other factors such as the nature of that innovation and socio-organizational context of change should be considered (Rogers, 2003; Carless, 2013).

To answer the second question of the study, i.e., what are the reasons underlying the Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT, an unstructured interview was conducted. The interview questions were designed based on items of the questionnaire and the five main principles of CLT

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because it was necessary that participants explain in details the reasons behind their responses to items of the questionnaire. According to the gathered data from this phase of data collection, the majority of participants agreed with CLT because this approach helps students improve their communicative competence and grammatical knowledge. Their attitudes revealed that grammar is not sufficient as a single factor and does not guarantee learners' success in a communicative context.

The results of the interview for pair work showed that participants agreed with such activities. Although arranging such activities takes more time, learners participate in group/pair activities more eagerly. In terms of quantity and quality of error correction, the interviewed teachers believed that errors are parts of learning. However, paying attention to the condition of errors is important. If errors, for instance, occur while learners have discussions, they are ignored or teachers write them down on a piece of paper in order to correct them at the end of the discussion, or at least when the speaker is done with his/her speech. Based on what the researcher acquired from the interviews, teachers generally hold positive views toward the role of teachers in CLT classes because they consider the teacher as learning facilitator not only transformer of input. It is better for teachers not to teach every item directly, they believed, but to transfer his/her knowledge indirectly through activities and examples and make learners take responsibility for their own learning through interaction with their classmates and exploring the grammatical points together. In this case, they could learn better and improve faster. In other words, teacher is not a mere instructor in the class: rather, he owns some other roles in addition to transferring knowledge.

Class observation was the last phase of data collection. This phase was not only a complementary step for the other two phases of collecting data, but it also seemed crucial to understand how much teachers put their beliefs into action. Class observation was conducted to answer the third question of the study, i.e., is there a gap between teachers' attitudes toward CLT and their actual classroom practices? The researcher wanted to make sure, if teachers' approaches were based on the five principles of CLT and if they practiced what they believed in. In order to achieve this goal, four classes of those participants who participated in the interviews were observed. Briefly, the results of the observations showed that teachers did whatever they believed or expressed in questionnaires and interviews. In other words, they put in to practice whatever they believed in. Teachers, who were familiar with the CLT approach and its principles, were mostly successful in teaching and managing the class and fulfilling the learners' needs. Consequently, in order to answer the third research question one can say not much gap or contrast was observed between participants' beliefs toward CLT and their practical practices in the classroom.

## Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that participants generally hold positive attitudes toward CLT. In other words, it was demonstrated that there was a general agreement among participants about main principles of CLT and they indicated characteristics of CLT in their beliefs. These positive and favorable views were confirmed to be important in translating and delivering the main principles of CLT in to practice.

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Appendix: Attitudes towards CLT Questionnaire (Karavas-Doukas, 1996).

| Age: $\qquad$ Sex: $\qquad$ <br> University Degree: $\qquad$ Years of teaching: |  |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |


| Items | Strongl <br> $\mathbf{y}$ <br> Agree <br> 5 | Agre <br> e | Uncerta <br> in | Disagre <br> e | Strongl <br> y <br> Disagr <br> ee <br> $\mathbf{1}$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. Grammatical correctness is the most <br> important criterion by which language <br> performance should be judged. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Group work activities are essential in <br> providing opportunities for co-operative <br> relationships to emerge and in promoting <br> genuine interaction among students. |  | 3 | 2 |  |  |
| 3. Grammar should be taught only as a means to <br> an end and not as an end in itself. |  |  |  |  |  |


| 4. Since the learner comes to the language <br> classroom with little or no knowledge of the <br> language, he/she is in no position to suggest <br> what the content of the lesson should be or what <br> activities are useful for him/her. |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 5. Training learners to take responsibility for <br> their own learning is futile since learners are not <br> used to such an approach. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. For students to become effective <br> communicators in the foreign language, the <br> teachers' feedback must be focused on the <br> appropriateness and not the linguistic form of <br> the students' responses. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. The teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' is no <br> longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in <br> the language classroom. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. The learner-centred approach to language <br> teaching encourages responsibility and self- <br> discipline and allows each student to develop <br> his/her full potential. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. Group work allows students to explore <br> problems for themselves and thus have some <br> measure of control over their own learning. It is <br> therefore an invaluable means of organizing <br> classroom experiences |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. The teacher should correct all the <br> grammatical errors students make. If errors are <br> ignored, this will result in imperfect learning. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. It is impossible in a large class of students to <br> organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of <br> all. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. Knowledge of the rules of a language does <br> not guarantee ability to use the language. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. Group work activities take too long to <br> organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching <br> time. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. Since errors are a normal part of learning, <br> much correction is wasteful of time. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15. The communicative approach to language <br> teaching produces fluent but inaccurate learners. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16. The teacher as transmitter of knowledge is <br> only one of the many different roles he/she <br> must perform during the course of a lesson. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. By mastering the rules of grammar, students <br> become fully capable of communicating with a <br> native speaker. |  |  |  |  |  |

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| 18. For most students language is acquired most effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something else and not when it is studied in a direct or explicit way. |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 19. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than imposed on them. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21. Students do their best when taught as a whole class by the teacher. Small group work may occasionally be useful to vary the routine, but it can never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22. Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23. Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential if students are to learn to communicate effectively. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24. A textbook alone is not able to cater for all the needs and interests of the students. The teacher must supplement the textbook with other materials and tasks so as to satisfy the widely differing needs of the students |  |  |  |  |  |

# PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND METHODOLOGY CHOICE AMONG EFL TEACHERS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN IRAN 

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#### Abstract

CLT HAS BEEN WIDELY EXPLORED AND STUDIED BY MANY RESEARCHERS IN THE FIELD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY STUDIES CONDUCTED ON THE USE OF CLT IN EFL SETTINGS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE ONLY FEW STUDIES IN NUMBER THAT SPECIFICALLY DEAL WITH CLT AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOLS. HENCE, THIS STUDY WAS DESIGNED TO INVESTIGATE TO WHAT EXTENT THE TENETS OF CLT ARE PRACTICED IN IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSES. TO THIS END, 50 IRANIAN MALE AND FEMALE LANGUAGE TEACHERS, TEACHING AT HIGH SCHOOLS IN ISFAHAN WERE OBSERVED WHILE TEACHING ENGLISH IN THEIR CLASSES. A QUESTIONNAIRE BASED ON KARAVAS- DOUKAS (1996) WAS ALSO USED. IT WAS SHOWN THAT ALTHOUGH THE LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO A GREAT EXTENT AGREED WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF CLT, IN PRACTICE THE LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL WERE OBSERVED NOT TO FOLLOW THESE PRINCIPLES. THIS STUDY HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE TEACHERS.

\section*{Introduction}

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the new approaches to language teaching and learning. Hossen (2008) states that the aim of this approach is to develop learners' four basic languageskills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in English. This approach claims to focus on all of the components of communicative competence, because the language is seen as a means of communication. According to Wilkins (1976, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991) communication requires certain functions such as promising, inviting and declining invitations within a social context, that is knowing when and how to say what to whom, such observations brought communicative Approach. Widdowson (1990, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991) believes that communicative competence is the goal of Communicative Language Teaching. The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) date back to 1960s. Howatt (1984) distinguished between a 'strong' version and a 'weak' version of the CLT: The "weak" version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching... The "strong" version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, claims that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former


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could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it' (p. 279). There are a lot of interpretations of CLT, but the following characteristics are given by Brown (2003) provide a useful overview:

1-The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide
2-Students are provided opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning.
3-Students use language productively and receptively, in a communicative class.
4-Fluency and accuracy are mandatory for communicative class.
5-Learners are engaged in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes rather than aspects of language.
6- Classroom goals are given importance (p. 43).
Classroom activities used in CLT are as follow:
Role play, interviews, information gap, games, language exchange, surveys, pair work, learning by teaching are different types of activities used in CLT language classes. The present study intended to shed light on the issue and find out to what extent the principles of CLT are planted in language classes.

In recent decades, teachers of foreign languages in many countries, including Iran, have been encouraged to use the approach known as CLT. This approach advocates the development of communicative competence as a primary goal via the extensive use of the foreign language as a means of communication during classroom lessons. CLT has been welcomed by English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum and syllabus designers of Iran. Moreover, English teachers and instructors have shown eagerness and enthusiasm to incorporate it in their classes. However, we do not know whether CLT is practiced at all, and if practiced how and to what extent. Understandably, education authorities and teacher educators are keen to know how teachers assimilate CLT and how well they incorporate this approach into their foreign language teaching.

Since the concept of CLT originated in the West, it seems that this approach is not applicable to other contexts and because of misunderstanding surrounding the theory and practice of CLT (Savignon, 2002), this exploratory study seeks to investigate the practicality of CLT in educational domains of Iran as an expanding circle (where English is practiced as a foreign language), namely, public and private institutes. Therefore, the purpose of performing this research is to maneuver on the knowledge of English language teachers in junior high school level in five educational districts in Isfahan.

## Research Question

Research question: To what extent are CLT principles applied in the real ELT context of junior high schools in Iran?

## Literature Review

Karavas-Doukas (1996) investigated teachers' attitudes toward the use of communicative approach in Greece. It was reported that although the English curriculum in Greece was based on the premises of communicative language teaching, teachers showed a tendency to carry on the traditional teacher-oriented instruction style. The findings of this study suggested that teachers either did not understand or were unable to see the practical implications of the CLT principles.

In another significant study, Li (1998) looked into Korean teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CLT. The results of Li's study confirmed that the teachers encountered difficulties in using CLT practices in their classes. The difficulties reported by the Korean teachers were divided into the following four categories:
Difficulties caused by teachers:
Deficiency in spoken English,
Deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence,
Lack of training in CLT,

Few opportunities for retraining in CLT,

Misconceptions about CLT,

Little time for and expertise in material development

Difficulties caused by students:

Low English proficiency,

Little motivation for communicative competence,

Resistance to class participation

Difficulties caused by the educational system:

Large classes,

Grammar-based examinations,

Insufficient funding,

Lack of support

Difficulties caused by CLT itself:

CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching,

Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments. (Li, 1998, p. 687)

According to Li (1998), teachers were reluctant to implement CLT in their language classrooms due to these problems listed above. He claimed that in order for teachers to be willing to make use of CLT in EFL contexts, many adjustments must be made. He further stated that "a conflict apparently exists between what CLT demands and what the EFL situation in many countries, such as South Korea, allows. This conflict must be resolved before EFL teaching in these countries can benefit from CLT" (pp. 695-696).

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Sato and Kleinsasser's (1999) research on the potential problems of teachers in Australia teaching Japanese as a foreign language in using CLT in their classes revealed that there was inconsistency between teachers' perceptions of CLT and their actual classroom practices. Those teachers predominantly employed grammar-based activities in their classes rather than the communicative ones. It was reported that they lacked time to prepare authentic teaching materials for their classes. Moreover, teachers had fragmented knowledge of CLT, and their beliefs about language teaching and learning were mostly anchored in their own second language learning experiences.

In addition, in a study that addressed the issues of CLT use in Taiwan, Liu (2005) found out that despite the prevalent popularity of CLT in Taiwan, it was rather difficult to apply CLT into the actual language classroom. Since the education system is mainly exam-oriented in 52 Taiwan, EFL teachers put a heavy emphasis on preparing their students for the National College Entrance Examination in Taiwan. They essentially teach grammatical structures of English because the exam largely consists of questions that assess that structural forms of the language.

Finally, a case study conducted by Incecay and Incecay (2009) investigated the perceptions of 30 Turkish college students to see the appropriateness and effectiveness of communicative and non-communicative activities in their EFL classes. The results of this study suggested that EFL countries such as Turkey needed to modify their teaching methods in a way that would take students' previous educational habits into consideration. It was reported that students benefited from CLT if communicative and non-communicative activities were combined in English classrooms. That is, aligning CLT with traditional teaching practices seemed to be beneficial for EFL students.

In Iran some studies have addressed this issue. For instance Razmjoo and Riazi(2006)studies the practicing CLT language teachers in shiraz. They concluded that teachers have a positive attitude towards CLT but they do not practice it much. These results are not consistent with the common sense view that the public school teachers might not view CLT positively in EFL contexts, including Iran.

The results of the study indicate the fact that in real practice, the public domain teachers attach the least amount of importance to the tenets representing CLT; that is, "the target language is not used as the medium of communication,"" error correction is done directly and on the spot," the use of idioms, authentic sources and oral skills is the least," and " grammer is taught systematically and in details." This result is in total contrast with the public domain teachers ideas regarding the regarding the CLT principles (Ramzjoo and Riazi, 2006).

The present study, therefore, is intended to check some reasons behind this short coming in order to form a body of research addressing similar issues of concern in EFL in Iran.

## Methodology

In this study, in order to improve the reliability and generalizability of the results, the researcher tried to choose a high number of participants. From among 150 male and female language teachers, teaching at high schools in Isfahan $30 \%$, around 50 were selected on the basis of accessibility. To put it differently, convenience sampling was used to choose 50 teachers, that is the 50 participants were selected from the language teachers teaching in Isfahan city.

## Research instrument

The used instruments for the present thesis included:

1: A questionnaire based on Karavas- Doukas (1996) and modified by the researcher was used in collecting data regarding the principles of CLT.

A questionnaire including the major principles of communicative language teaching, namely group work, quality and quantity of error correction, the place and importance of grammar, the role and contribution of the learners, and the role of the teacher, served as the instrument of the study. This questionnaire, which was originally developed by Karavas- Doukas (1996), consisted of 24 statements (12 favorable and 12 unfavorable) which followed the Likert scale.

## Validity of the Questionnaire

In order to determine the validity of the instrument, in a pilot study, the researcher randomized the 24 items of the questionnaire and distributed them among 104 teachers of high schools and institutes.

## Reliability of the Questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by Karavas-Doukas (1996) utilizing the split-half method. The correlated split-half reliability coefficient was .81 which is a relatively high and acceptable index. Based on the data gathered for the study, the overall internal consistency of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha (CA). It turned out to be 0.7924 pointed.

To find answer for the research question, first, the needed data were gathered questionnaire, then the collected data were coded into and analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20). Then appropriate statistical procedures such as frequency and percentage were applied in analyzing the data.

## Results

The research question of the present thesis sought to find out to what extent the CLT principles are applied in the real ELT context of junior high schools in Iran. The responses of the teachers are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
High School Teacher Attitude in Terms of Frequency (F) and Percentage (P)

| Items | SA+A |  | U |  | D+SD |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | P | F | P | F | P |

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| 1. Grammatical correctness is one of the criteria to judge <br> the learner's performance. | 19 | $38 \%$ | 14 | $28 \%$ | 17 | $34 \%$ |
| :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 2. Group work activities are essential | 42 | $84 \%$ | 5 | $10 \%$ | 3 | $6 \%$ |
| 3. Grammar is as a means not an end | 36 | $72 \%$ | 7 | $14 \%$ | 7 | $14 \%$ |
| 4. Learners can suggest the content of the lesson | 16 | $32 \%$ | 6 | $12 \%$ | 28 | $56 \%$ |
| 5. Training learners to take responsibility for their own <br> learning | 29 | $58 \%$ | 4 | $8 \%$ | 17 | $34 \%$ |
| 6. The teachers' feedback must be focused on the <br> appropriateness | 33 | $66 \%$ | 7 | $14 \%$ | 10 | $20 \%$ |
| 7. The teacher is no longer an "authority" and <br> "instructor" | 28 | $56 \%$ | 6 | $12 \%$ | 16 | $32 \%$ |
| 8. The learner-centered approach to LT encourages <br> responsibility | 42 | $84 \%$ | 1 | $2 \%$ | 7 | $14 \%$ |
| 9. Group work allows students to explore problems | 34 | $64 \%$ | 3 | $6 \%$ | 13 | $26 \%$ |
| 10. Errors are a natural part of learning language | 32 | $64 \%$ | 6 | $12 \%$ | 12 | $24 \%$ |
| 11. Organizing the teaching so as to suit the needs of all <br> is impossible in a large class | 18 | $36 \%$ | 12 | $24 \%$ | 20 | $40 \%$ |
| 12. Knowledge of the rules of a language is not sufficient. | 41 | $82 \%$ | 3 | $6 \%$ | 6 | $12 \%$ |
| 13. Group work activities are practical | 34 | $68 \%$ | 2 | $4 \%$ | 14 | $28 \%$ |
| 14. Much correction is wasteful of time | 36 | $72 \%$ | 2 | $4 \%$ | 12 | $24 \%$ |


| 15. CLT learners are fluent and accurate | 23 | $46 \%$ | 4 | $8 \%$ | 23 | $46 \%$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 16. The teacher has many different roles while | 36 | $72 \%$ | 3 | $6 \%$ | 11 | $22 \%$ |
| Teaching |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. Mastering the rules of grammar is not enough | 41 | $82 \%$ | 4 | $8 \%$ | 5 | $10 \%$ |
| 18. Language is effective as a vehicle for doing something | 44 | $88 \%$ | 3 | $6 \%$ | 3 | $6 \%$ |

19. Activities such as explanations, writing and examples $\begin{array}{lllllll}34 & 68 \% & 5 & 10 \% & 11 & 22 \%\end{array}$ are not the only role of the teachers
20. Tasks and activities should be based on the students' $\begin{array}{llllllll}44 & 88 \% & 2 & 4 \% & 4 & 8 \%\end{array}$ needs

| 21. Small group work can replace whole class and formal | 36 | $72 \%$ | 5 | $10 \%$ | 9 | $18 \%$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | instruction


| 22. Through group work the teacher can monitor the <br> students' performance | 27 | $54 \%$ | 8 | $16 \%$ | 15 | $30 \%$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 23. To communicate effectively, direct instruction in the <br> rules and terminology of grammar is NOT essential | 26 | $52 \%$ | 10 | $20 \%$ | 14 | $28 \%$ |
| 24. The teacher must supplement the textbook with other <br> materials and tasks | 28 | $56 \%$ | 10 | $20 \%$ | 12 | $24 \%$ |

The majority of the high school teachers agree with and appreciate the principles of CLT such as "group work activities are practical and essential" (Items 13 and 9), "To communicate effectively, direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is NOT essential" (Item 23), " The teacher has many different roles while teaching " (Item 16), "Language is effective as a vehicle for doing something " (Item 18), "the leaner-centered approach to language teaching encourages learning" (Item 8) and "errors are a natural part of learning language" (Item 14). However, the majority of the teachers stated that in practice the CLT principles in large classes are impractical if not impossible (Item 11). Overall, regarding the 24 items of the questionnaire, the high school teachers expressed positive attitudes toward the CLT principles with a mean of 81.86 and a standard deviation of 6.74 .

Since the overall mean is almost one standard deviation and a half above the neutral point (72), it can be concluded that high school teachers have a positive attitude toward CLT. To present a clearer picture of the teacher attitude findings, the items of the questionnaire are categorized and summarized under the 5 principles of CLT (see Table 2). Table 4.2 presents the point that the five principles of CLT are appreciated by the teachers of high school.

## Table 2

High School Teacher Attitude Regarding the Five Principles of CLT

| Principles | SA+A |  | U | D+SD |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | F | P | F | P | F | P |
| 1. Grammar role (Items 1, 3, 12, 17 \& 23) | 163 | $65.2 \%$ | 38 | $15.2 \%$ | 49 | $19.6 \%$ |
| 2. Group work task and activities (Items 2,9, 13, <br> 21 \& 22) | 173 | $69.2 \%$ | 23 | $9.2 \%$ | 54 | $21.6 \%$ |


| 3. Error correction (Items 6,10, 14 \& 15) | 124 | $62 \%$ | 19 | $9.5 \%$ | 57 | $28.5 \%$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 4. Learner role (Items 4, 5, 8, 11, 18 \& 20) | 193 | $64.33 \%$ | 28 | 9.33 | 79 | $26.33 \%$ |
| 5. Teacher role (Items 7, 16, 19 \& 24) | 126 | $63 \%$ | 24 | $12 \%$ | 50 | $25 \%$ |

According to the figures given in Table 4.2, more than $60 \%$ of all the participants agree with applying the five principles of CLT; however, to clarify the point the descriptive statistics regarding what the teachers had chosen is presented in Table 4.3.

## Table 3

Descriptive Statistics Of The Five Principles of CLT As Chosen By The participants

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Principles of CLT 5 |  |  | Std. Deviation |  |

Since the overall mean (155.80) is almost one standard deviation and a half above the neutral point (72), it can be concluded that the teachers have a positive attitude toward CLT with a standard deviation of 30.12 . Having found out that the participants have positive belief regarding planting the tenets and principles of CLT in language classroom, in the following section it will be discussed whether the language teachers in Iranian high schools in practice follow what they believe or not. To this end, as it was said earlier, the teacher participants of the study were observed while they were teaching in language classroom. The results are presented below.

## The results of Classroom Observations

The results are presented in Table 4.4. In order to give a clearer picture of the used principles, the first two alternatives (very much and much) and the last two (a little and very little) were combined.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics for the Observation of High schools

| Items | Very much\& Much |  | A |  | A little \& Little |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | P | F | P | F | P |
| 1. Focus on language as a medium of communication | 6 | 12\% | 0 | 0 | 44 | 88\% |
| 2. Classroom activities maximizing communication | 5 | 10\% | 0 | 0 | 45 | 90\% |
| Opportunities |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. More pupil-oriented | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4\% | 48 | 96\% |

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| 4. Tolerating error correction | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | $100 \%$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Rehearsal of real-life situations and for real-life | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | $100 \%$ |

Communication

| 6. More emphasis on pair-work and group-work. | 0 | 0 | 6 | $12 \%$ | 44 | $88 \%$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 7. Emphasis on both oral skills \& written skills | 0 | 0 | 5 | $10 \%$ | 45 | $90 \%$ |
| 8. Teaching grammar but less systematically | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | $100 \%$ |
| 9. Use of idiomatic/everyday language | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | $100 \%$ |
| 10. Use of authentic resources | 0 | 0 | 2 | $4 \%$ | 48 | $96 \%$ |
| 11. Emphasis on Inferential questions | 0 | 0 | 2 | $4 \%$ | 48 | $96 \%$ |
| 12. Emphasis on meaning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | $100 \%$ |
| 13. Use of variety of language structure 0 0 0 0 50 <br> 14. Emphasis on both fluency and accuracy 0 0 2 $4 \%$ 48 |  |  |  |  | $96 \%$ |  |
| 15. The teacher as the facilitator | 0 | 0 | 6 | $12 \%$ | 44 | $88 \%$ |
| 16. Focus on all the components of Communicative <br> Competence (including Grammatical, Discourse, <br> sociolinguistic and Strategic competence) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | $100 \%$ |

According to the descriptive statistics given in Table 4.4, which shows the amount of attention and importance that high school teachers attached to the principles of CLT in public high school, in real practice, the high school teachers considered the least amount of importance to the features of CLT.

This result is in total contrast with what the Iranian high school teachers expressed regarding the CLT principles. There might be two possibilities for such contradictory results. Either the teachers do not practice what they claim or they have some limitations to substantiate their viewpoints in real practice. However, in order to assure the obtained results, the same procedure as with the previous questionnaire was followed to determine the neutral point of the second questionnaire. As the total number of the items in this questionnaire is 16 which are followed by 5 Likert scale, the total score is 80 with the minimum score being 16 . The difference between these two values is 64 , the middle point of which is 32 . Then by adding 16 and 32 the neutral point was calculated to be 48. In fact, his procedure was developed by Karavas- Doukas (1996).

## Table 5

Basic Descriptive Statistics for the Observation of CLT Principles in High Schools

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|  | N | Minimum |  | Maximum | Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  | Std. Deviation |  |  |  |
| VAR00002 | 16 | 44.00 | 50.00 | 42.7500 | 2.48998 |

According to the results presented in Table 4.5, the overall mean of observing the CLT principles in high schools is 42.75 and the standard deviation is 2.48 . Accordingly, the overall mean is around 2.1 standard deviations below the neutral point (48), it can be concluded that the teachers do not practice CLT in Iranian high schools.

In order to assure whether the difference between the teachers' claims regarding application of the principles of CLT and what they do in reality, is significant, the mean score of the two groups of the results- the mean score of the observation and the questionnaire- were compared using an independent samples T-test, the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Independent Samples T-Test for the Results of Observation and The Questionnaire
$\left.\begin{array}{llllllll}\hline & \begin{array}{l}\text { Levene's } \\ \text { Test for } \\ \text { Equality of } \\ \text { Variances }\end{array} & \text { t-test for Equality of Means }\end{array}\right]$

As shown in Table 6, the observed level of significance is 0.000 which is smaller than the identified level of significance. $(0.000<0.05)$. There is a statistically significant difference between what the teachers claim about CLT and what they practice in reality.

## Conclusions

According to the data gained from this study and the statistics presented in the result and based on the treatment administered to the participants, it seems that the claim of using CLT in Iranian high school language classes, does not match with what happens in reality. Differently stated, although the ministry of education claims that CLT is

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practiced in Iranian language classes, what happens in reality has nothing to do with CLT and it is a grammar-based method. This contradiction may be refer back to the fact that either the teachers do not practice what they claim or they have some limitations to substantiate their viewpoints in real practice.

The study was in fact an attempt to shed more light on the point whether communicative language teaching is implemented in Iranian High school English classes or not. the findings of the study revealed that the tenets of CLT as a language teaching methodology are not followed in Iranian EFL high school classes.

Since this study was done among Iranian high school classes; therefore, it can be a starting point to improve language teaching in Iranian high schools. It must be noted that in order for the findings of this study to be pedagogically valid and applicable, first of all, they must be subjected to replication and empirical validation. It is then and only then that the results and findings can be generalized to other populations.

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# THE EFFECT OF METHODOLOGY ON VOCABULARY LEARNING BY IRANIAN FEMALE AND MALE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS: A COMPARISON OF TPR AND DIRECT METHOD 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY INTENDED TO EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF METHODOLOGY ON EFL VOCABULARY LEARNING OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOYS AND GIRLS. TO ACHIEVE THIS END, 40 ELEMENTARY FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS AGED 9-10 WERE SELECTED FROM AMONG 60 STUDENTS STUDYING AT A LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN ESFAHAN, IRAN. THE STUDENTS WERE SELECTED BASED ON THE RESULTS OF AN OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST AS A PLACEMENT TEST THAT HAD BEEN PREPARED BY THE INSTITUTE THAT IDENTIFIED STUDENTS' LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY. THEY WERE FURTHER DIVIDED INTO TWO EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS. NEXT, A PRETEST WAS USED TO IDENTIFY THE NUMBER OF WORDS STUDENTS KNEW BEFORE TREATMENT. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP A LEARNED VOCABULARY THROUGH DIRECT METHOD AND IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP B STUDENTS LEARNED VOCABULARY THROUGH TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE. AFTER 12 WEEKS OF INSTRUCTION A POST-TEST WAS ADMINISTRATED TO MEASURE AND COMPARE THE RESULTS OF VOCABULARY LEARNING OF TWO GROUPS AFTER TREATMENT. THE DATA COLLECTED WERE PUT TO STATISTICAL ANALYSIS USING SPSS. THE RESULTS OF T-TEST SHOWED THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF TPR ON LEARNERS' L2 VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE. WITH REGARD TO THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON LEARNERS' L2 VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE, FINDINGS REVEALED THAT THERE WERE NOT ANY STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS' VOCABULARY SCORE.


KEY WORDS: TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE, DIRECT METHOD, GENDER, SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

## Introduction

Since the English language has become the dominant international language, the importance of learning English has become more evident and hence teaching English has become more important. In the same way, teaching English to young learners (TEYL) has attracted many people in the last decades around the world, and therefore, English education has been increasingly practiced at the primary levels. Learning is among everyday experiences for everyone, but it is most obvious for young learners who acquire new behaviors, facts, languages, ideas and concepts very rapidly (Bartsch, Horvath, \& Estes, 2003).

Therefore, considering the young learners' characteristics and also the language instruction are of utmost importance. Young learners tend to learn language more implicitly rather than
explicitly (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2006; Slatterly \& Willis, 2001). Recognizing meaningful messages is easy for them, but they cannot analyze the language as a system. Thus, presenting the language within 'meaningful contexts' is crucial while teaching English to young learners. In this way, language use will be reflected authentically (Cameron, 2001; Halliwell, 1992).

While the experience of language learning is something interesting and attractive for some learners, for some others it is a boring activity that makes them wish to get away from it. Teacher domination over the classroom, having learners to do what they are told to, lack of creativity, learners not having any room for their saying and being bound by their benches for over an hour, and following a monotonous schedule are some of the factors augmenting this boredom. The problem with traditional monotonous schedule is the assumption that what goes on in the classroom is appropriate for all learners while there are so many varieties among the students in terms of their personal characteristics, learning styles, and foreign language learning needs. Besides that, the activities that learners are engaged in traditional classrooms are not authentic because they are specifically designed for teaching purposes, so they don't have any similarity to their real life situations (Safdarian, 2012).

In contrast, recent research on young learners' course-books and materials used in foreign language classes shows the implementation of a variety of methodologies and teaching strategies that focus specifically on the acquisition of particular grammatical structures and sets of vocabulary items (Cameron, 2003). This goes back in the history to around 50 years ago, from the time that Grammar-translation method was introduced, to Direct method, after that to Audiolingual method, to Cognitive code and a host of variations in each. Other methods have also been introduced to the field such as Silent way, Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, Natural approach, etc. So, the problem is which of these methods is more beneficial in teaching English to young learners and which one motivates the learners more in their learning of English (Rahimi Tehrani, Barati,\& Youhanaee, 2013).

Among many techniques and strategies available for foreign language educators to encourage students and help the acquisition of a language, the enormous benefits and applicability of language literature in foreign language learning have distinguished it from the other techniques that can be used in a language classroom. Literature in the language classroom can change the monotonous schedule, create a much more motivating environment and provide wide variety of language input which is adaptable to every learning style (Safdarian, 2012).

The using of suitable method would make the young learners easier to study. Total Physical Response (TPR) is one of methods commonly used in language learning. Total Physical Response is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action. It attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity. TPR makes learning become enjoyable and less stressful.

The principal feature of the direct method is characterized, above all, by the use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom, and by the avoidance of the use of the first language and of the translation as a technique. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), the principles of Direct Method are: 1. Classroom instructions are conducted exclusively in the target language. 2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences are taught. 3. Oral communication skills are built up in a carefully traded progression organized around question-and answer exchanges between teachers and student in small intensive class. 4. Grammar taught inductively. 5. New teaching points are taught through modeling and practice. 6. Concrete vocabulary is taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught through association of ideas. 7. Both speech and listening comprehension are taught._8. Correct pronunciation and grammar are emphasized.

The present study, therefore, aims to investigate the effect of two methods, namely Direct method and Total Physical Response on the progress of Iranian EFL young learners in learning English vocabulary. The focus here is on the acquisition of English content vocabularies.

## Research Questions

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The present study was interested in determining:

1. Does the application of Total Physical Response Method have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement?
2. Does the application of Direct Method have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement?
3. Is there any significant difference between the effects of TPR and DM on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement?
4. Does gender have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning?

## Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were designed based on research questions:

1. The application of Total Physical Response Method does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement.
2. The application of Direct Method does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement.
3. There is not any significant difference between the effects of TPR and DM on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement.
4. Gender does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning.
5. 

## Methodology

## Participants

Forty elementary female and male students aged 9-10 were selected from among 60 students studying at a language institute in Esfahan, Iran. The students were selected based on the result of the overall proficiency test as a placement test prepared by the institute that classified the students into the same level of proficiency. The selected participants were divided into two groups. Group A (20 students) consisting of ten boys and ten girls who learned vocabularies through Direct method; and group B (20 students) consisting of ten boys and ten girls who learned vocabularies through TPR approach. The researcher taught each group three times a week for thirty minutes a day.

## Instruments and Materials Overall Proficiency Test

The overall proficiency test was administered to the participants for the purpose of determining that they were at the same level of English proficiency and ensuring their homogeneity. The reliability and validity of the test have been established by the institute authorities.

## Pre-test

In order to indicate number of words students knew before and learned after treatment the researcher gave an oral vocabulary test. The actual pictures from the book (Back Pack1) were shown one at a time to each student in order of their appearance in the book. Students were asked to answer the questions of each picture from this book. The questions asked for each picture were, "What is this?", "What is s/he doing?" "What is she wearing?" Then each student's responses were recorded on their own individual recording sheet, one for each unit; and were measured as their prior knowledge of vocabulary.

## Post-test

The post-test was administrated to measure and compare the results of vocabulary learning of two groups after treatment. The students were assessed on the new targeted vocabulary items

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after treatment. For group B, the researcher asked some questions including, "What is this?", "What is s/he doing?" "What is your teacher wearing?" "Is he jumping?" "Can you jump?" and so on. Then the researcher gave commands to students one by one and they acted out the commands and answered the questions. For group A, the researcher asked some questions including, "What are they?", "What is s/he doing?" "What do you have in your bag?" "Is she dancing?" "Can you touch your toes?" and so on . Then each student's responses were recorded on their own individual recording sheet. The students' scores on post tests were used for data analysis and answering the research questions consequently.

## Field note

Field notes were used to record the situation and the activities during the teaching and learning process, such as how the teacher carried out the material and the students' responded (Octavian, 2007). The researcher used field note to know what happens during the process of implementing Total Physical Response and Direct method in improving vocabulary. This field note helped record the students' activities and the researcher could check the progress and consider what to do in the next meeting.

## Book

For the purpose of this study, the researcher taught four units of a book (Back Pack1). These units contain the following sections:

Unit 1. Celebrations
Unit 2. Head to toes
Unit 3. Ready for school
Unit 4. Things I Wear

## Educational aid

Flash card
Flash card can be an excellent learning and teaching tool especially when introducing new vocabulary or drilling familiar words. Besides being used by the teacher, they can also be used in a variety of activities. Flash cards are very versatile teaching resource especially for ESL and language teaching. They can be used virtually in any lesson and at every level of teaching ESL. In fact flash cards are indispensable for the beginner and elementary level as at these stages the learners are engaged in developing their vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher used some flash cards, where she wanted to teach new words or reviewed the vocabularies in both groups. She showed the flash cards to students and asked some questions. In group B when the researcher taught verbs, she showed flash cards to each student and asked her or him to act out. On the other hand, in group B the researcher showed flash cards to each student and asked "what is s/he doing?"

## Picture

Language teachers use different types of teaching materials to explain the meaning of new words. The use of visual materials is useful and it is an important way of vocabulary learning. Visual things make the learning process easier, and they are used by teachers for better learning. English teachers feel that using visual materials such as pictures, real objects, etc. in teaching new words makes the learning process enjoyable and memorable. Teacher also found that visual elements can motivate students for better learning. Therefore, picture was one of the educational aid for researcher to teach vocabularies to both groups. In both groups the researcher hanged the related picture on the board and pointed to picture and simultaneously she repeated the words or she, herself drew new words on the board and repeated.

## Song

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One advantage of using songs in the young learner classroom is their flexibility. Songs can be used for a number of purposes and there are many reasons why songs can be considered a valuable pedagogical tool. Songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills (Murphey, 1992). Songs can also be useful tools in the learning of vocabulary, sentence structures, and sentence patterns, not to mention their reflectivity of mother tongue culture (Murphey, 1992). Perhaps the greatest benefit to using songs in the classroom is that they can be fun. In group B, the researcher sang the song and at the same time all students sang with her and they acted out the commands along with the researcher and pointed to any word or flash card that they had. In group A, the researcher played the related CD of the lesson two or three times then she said the new words and the students repeated after her. Therefore, song was one of the educational aids for researcher to teach vocabularies to both groups.

## Procedure

The present study has a quasi-experimental research design. Based on the result of the Institute placement test 40 students were selected. Students were divided into two groups. All students were similarly at the same level of language proficiency. Group A (20 students) learned vocabularies through Direct method and group B (20 students) learned vocabularies through TPR. Students in the study were assessed on vocabulary knowledge by the pretest, the researcher worked with each student individually to collect the data. The actual pictures from the book were shown one at a time to each student in order of their appearance in the book. Students were asked to name each of pictures from Back Pack1 and answer the questions. . The questions asked for each picture were, "What is this?" "What is s/he doing?" "what are there in this picture?" as the picture in the book was pointed to. Each student's responses were recorded on their own individual recording sheet; one for each story.

For the group taught through TPR the following steps were followed. The topic of first unit was Celebration. The researcher entered the class and she greeted the students. The she arranged the students' seat in a circle without table because the pattern of this method (TPR) is U-shape or circle. She stood up in the middle of the circle. The teacher asked the students whether they were hungry or not? All of them answered in choirs, "yes" "ok, we will go home after we study about food and drinks". They were curious with dinning set brought by the researcher. She played the song and she sung and performed the actions and showed the objects or pointed to them. Then, the researcher showed the students the dinning set and said their names: cake, ice-cream, lemonade, juice, salad, pour the water, drink milk, take some rice. She repeated the words and commands for two or three times and she performed and showed them simultaneously. The researcher asked who wants to be volunteer. Some students raised their hands while standing up. The researcher said that all of students would get their turn in order to be quite. Then, the students sat and the teacher chose some who were less active than others. After that, the volunteers did the researcher's instruction. The next turn, each volunteer gave instructions to the students who were sitting. They might sit after giving all of instructions as the teacher did. Then, the researcher asked more volunteers to come to the front. The researcher said, "drink the water". Then, she encouraged the students to make different sentences. One student, for example replied, "drink the milk". The other students make different sentences using the words given. Then, the researcher said, "eat". One student in the left side answered, "eat rice". Good, "eat the rice", the teacher replied. By this way teacher checked students' pronunciation and using word in the sentences. The researcher gave a summary of the lesson by asking the students to do some instructions in turn. Then, the teacher closed the meeting.

The topic of second unit was Body parts. The researcher entered the class and she greeted the students. The researcher asked them whether they ever heard the song:
Head, shoulder, knees, and toes

Knees and toes

And ears, and eyes, and nose, and cheek,
Head, shoulder, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
All of them answered that they never heard the song before. Then, the researcher asked students to listen to the song while seeing the movement of the researcher. The researcher sang and touched her parts of her body based on the song. Then, she asked volunteers to sing in front with her. The researcher asked all students to sing along with her and the volunteers. They sung twice, and the researcher let the volunteers sing. Then, the researcher asked them to act out each command that she said: touch your ears, close your eyes, bend your knees, wiggle your nose and shake your hand. There were still some mistakes because they did not know the meaning of touch, bend and shake. After the same verbs were given for different parts of the body and researcher herself acted the commands they understood the meaning. In improving the students' ability to pronounce the new words related to parts of the body, the researcher asked a student to be the instructor. Then, the first student who became instructor gave instructions to the second student. From the first student, researcher checked the pronunciation, and from the second student, researcher checked whether the meaning is correct. Then, the researcher asked the students to make new imperative sentences by using words open, close, touch, shake, bend and wiggle and at the same time they performed the actions. The researcher gave a conclusion of the material given. The researcher asked them to practice some instruction and the teacher closed the meeting.

The topic of third unit was Ready for School. In the beginning, the researcher greeted the students. She asked "what objects they can find in the classroom?" The students answered, "board, table, chair". Then, the researcher asked "what they have got in their bag?" All students opened their bag in a hurry and answered, "book, bag, pencil, pen". The researcher asked some volunteers to come in front of the class and they immediately raised their hands when the researcher asked some volunteers. Three volunteers came in front and brought their bags. Then the teacher gave commands, "open your bag", "take your pencil", "take your pen", and "close your bag", "read a book", "sit down", "stand up". At the same time she did the actions with students. After they mastered the vocabularies, then they gave instruction to the other students. Then, the researcher asked a student to be the instructor. The first student who became instructor gave instructions to the second student. From the first student, teacher can check the pronunciation, and from the second student, researcher can check whether the meaning is correct. Then the researcher asked them to make new sentences based on the words given. The researcher asked the students to make new imperative sentences by using words open, close, sit, stand, write and read. The researcher gave a summary of the lesson by asking the students to do some instructions in turn. Then, the teacher closed the meeting.

The topic of forth unit was Things I Wear. In the beginning, the researcher greeted the students. Teacher said, "Good afternoon students". Students replied, "Good afternoon, Ms. How are you today?" I'm fine. Ok, today we will study about clothes you wear. The researcher began to mention the names of clothes: hat, skirt, shirt, pants, dress, sneakers, socks, and shoes. Then, she asked, "what is $i t$ ?" She asked while holding a hat. There was no answer. This is a hat. Ok, now please all of you repeat after me. The researcher asked the students to touch the clothes they wore and said the names along with her. The researcher asked the students to touch the correct name of clothes they were wearing. Then, separately the researcher asked two boys to be volunteers and did instructions along with her, touch your hat, put your hat off, put your hat on, put your left shoe off, and put your right shoe off. When the teacher found out that the instructions were sufficient, she asked the first boy to give commands to the second boy. Next, one girl came to the front and gave instructions to the rest students. The researcher pronounced the words and repeated by the students, they were: put on, put off, shirt, dress, pants, socks, and shoes, sneakers. Then, she asked all of the students to pronounce the words. Then, she asked the students randomly to pronounce
sneakers. By doing so, the researcher and the other students could check whether the pronunciation was correct or incorrect. It was repeated for all words. The researcher gave the students a clue, "touch" and asked them to make new sentence with the vocabularies they had learnt before. The boy in front of the teacher answered, "touch your shirt". Then, the teacher asked one student to give a clue and the other students made different sentences. Most of students made a sentence that was slightly different from the example given. The researcher asked the students to stand up and did her instructions in series. Then, she summarized the lesson by reviewing some instructions and closed the meeting.

The experimental group A was taught through Direct method. The arrangement of the class was the same as regular classes. For the first unit the researcher entered the class and she greeted the students. She stood in front of the class and placed a big picture of the new lesson in the front of the classroom. Then she asked the students to close their books and listened to the song and at the same time she pointed to the part of the picture which song described. Then the researcher started to talk about the picture and she told a short story with new words and simultaneously she repeated new words two or three times. Then, the students asked if they had any questions. For example a boy raised his hand and asked "what is the meaning of drink?" The researcher gave examples. "I'm drinking water, I'm drinking milk". The researcher asked whether he understood the meaning or not. He said "No". The researcher brought verbs flash cards and said "look at the flash card. He is drinking water" and she acted out at the same time. The boy nodded and said that he understand the meaning. Then she asked the students to make a sentence with "drink" and she called on one by one, they read their sentences. After all of the students' questions had been answered, the researcher asked some of her own. The students were required to answer together in harmony. She pointed to the picture and asked "Is he drinking water?" and the class replied in chorus, " $N o$ ". The researcher reminded the class to answer in a full sentence and said "No, he isn' $t$. He is eating rice". Then, the researcher asked, "Is it a cake?" They replied, "No, it isn't. It is salad". The researcher asked, "Is he drinking juice?" and they replied, "No, he isn't. He is eating rice". The question and answer session continued for a few more minutes. Finally, the teacher invited the students to ask questions. Hands raised, and the researcher called on students to pose questions one at a time to which the class replied. The researcher gave flash cards to the students and they started to pose questions. After several questions had been posed, a girl asked, "Is she drinking lemonade?" Before the students had a chance to respond, the researcher worked with the students on the pronunciation of "lemonade", because she pronounced it incorrect. Then, she included the rest of the class in this practice as well and they repeated after her. After she insured that the students' pronunciation was correct, she allowed them to answer the question. By the time that the students posed their questions if they pronounced any words incorrectly the researcher interrupted them and correct their pronunciation. She pointed to the picture or flash card and said the word and students repeated after her. Then, the researcher gave a summary of the lesson by asking the students to play the game Hang Man. This game helped students to memorize the new words.

For the second unit the researcher taught body parts. She entered the class and greeted the students. First she asked some questions, for example, she asked "What color is your hair? " Just two or three students answered her question. Then, she asked the students to listen to the song while looking at the picture of the lesson which the researcher placed on the board and she pointed to every word that song described. Then, she pointed to her body parts and also she acted out the verbs and repeated their names or sentences and the students repeated after her. This way, the researcher worked on students' pronunciation and helped the students to learn more. After that, the researcher asked if they had any question and nobody raised her/his hand. The researcher asked some questions for example, "Are your eyes brown?" and a girl replied "No". The researcher reminded her to answer in a full sentence and she helped her to complete her answer, "No, they aren't. They are black. " Then she asked, "Is your hair yellow?" and a boy replied, "No, it isn't. It's black". Then, she called on their names one by one and every one that she called her name should point to her body parts that the researcher said and repeated after her. This
way, she checked the students' pronunciation and she knew how much they learned the new word. If they pronounced any words incorrect the researcher immediately correct them. Finally, the researcher invited volunteers to come in front of the class and do pantomime and the students should guess which verb was it.

The topic of third unit was Ready for school. In the beginning, the researcher greeted the students and she asked "What objects they can see in the class room?" some of the students answered "book, chair, table". Then, she showed the objects in the class and said their names and the students repeated after her. The researcher opened her book and pointed to the pictures and told some sentences. For example she pointed to the picture and said, "She is reading a book. He is writing on the board". After that the researcher asked the students "open their bags and tell what they have got in their bags". They opened their bags one by one and told the class, name of objects that they had in it. The researcher helped students if they didn't know meaning of the objects or she correct students' pronunciation immediately if they had any problem. At the end of the class, the researcher asked students to look at objects in the class and made some sentences with new words that they learned that day.

The topic of forth unit was Things I Wear. In the beginning, the researcher greeted the students. She brought clothes flash cards and showed each flash card to the students and the researcher began to mention the names of clothes: hat, skirt, shirt, pants, dress, sneakers, and socks. Then, she asked, "What is it?" She asked while holding a flash card. There was no answer. The researcher said, "This is a hat. Ok, now please all of you repeat after me." Then she took another flash card and asked "What is this?" The students answered and the researcher repeated after them and then the students repeated the words two or three times after the researcher. The researcher herself acted out the verbs and showed the flash cards for example she said, look at me I'm putting my hat off, I'm touching my hat, I'm putting off my left shoe. When the researcher found out that the instructions were sufficient, she invited the students to come in front of the class one by one and gave flash card to each student and s/he asked some questions and the other students answered. This way the researcher checked the students' pronunciation and if they have any problem she immediately corrected their pronunciation or if they didn't know the meaning of any word or didn't know the meaning of any word or did not know the name of any word the researcher helped them.

## Data Analysis

After collecting the required data, a number of statistical tests were performed to check the research hypotheses. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Version 22 was used to perform all the statistical analyses in this study.

To examine the first hypothesis, a paired samples t-test was run on the pretest and posttest scores for the TPR group to examine the effect of teaching English vocabularies through TPR approach. Moreover, to investigate the second hypothesis, another paired samples $t$-test was conducted in order to examine the difference between the participants' scores on the pretest and posttest in the direct method group. Additionally, to examine hypothesis three, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was carried out to compare the effects of TPR and DM on EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning. Afterwards, in order to examine the fourth hypothesis, independent samples $t$-tests were carried out on male and female learners' vocabulary scores to study the effect of gender on learners' L2 vocabulary learning.

## Data Analysis and Results

## Analysis of the research questions <br> Does the application of Total Physical Response Method have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement?

## Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)

The first research question tried to examine if teaching English vocabularies through TPR approach had any significant effect on improving Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. Subsequently, the first null hypothesis was made in reply to this question.
Hypothesis 1: The application of Total Physical Response Method does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement.

In order to investigate the first research question, a paired samples t-test was run on the pretest and posttest scores in the TPR group. The minimum alpha for confirmation of the research hypothesis was .05 . At first the descriptive data for L2 vocabulary pretest and posttest are displayed in Table 4.1. Similarly, the results from the paired samples t-tests are reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics for TPR pretest and posttest scores

|  |  |  |  |  | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Pair 1 | Pretest | 10.10 | 20 | Std. Deviation | Mean |
|  | Posttest | 15.30 | 20 | 2.732 | .611 |
|  |  |  | .493 |  |  |

As reported in Table 4.1, the mean score of vocabulary posttest $(M=15.30)$ is higher than the mean score of pretest $(M=10.10)$ in the TPR group. In order to show the differences more clearly findings are also illustrated in Figure 4.1. Although the mean score of the two tests are different, it is not clear whether these differences are significant or not. Therefore, paired samples t-tests were carried out on pretest and posttest scores.

Table 4.2: Paired samples t-test for TPR pretest and posttest scores

|  | Paired Differences |  |  |  |  | t | df | Sig. (2- <br> tailed) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |  |  |  |
| $\begin{array}{ll} \hline \text { Pair } & \text { Pretest - } \\ 1 & \text { Posttest } \end{array}$ | -5.200 | 2.802 | . 627 | -6.511 | -3.889 | -8.299 | 19 | . 000 |

The results of the paired sample t-test in Table 4.2 reveals that the differences between pretest and posttest scores are statistically significant $(P<.05)$ for the TPR group. Therefore, students' L2 vocabulary knowledge has improved significantly after receiving instruction following the TPR approach.

Based on these results, therefore, deductions can be made that EFL learners' vocabulary scores in the TPR group increased significantly from pretest to posttest, suggesting that teaching English vocabularies through TPR approach can lead to L2 vocabulary learning improvement. Consequently, the first null hypothesis predicting that the application of TPR method does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement is rejected.


Figure 4.1: Pretest and posttest scores of the TPR group
Does the application of Direct Method have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement?

The second research question tried to investigate if teaching English vocabularies using the direct method had any effects on EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement. Subsequently, hypothesis two was formulated to answer this question.
Hypothesis 2: The application of Direct Method does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement.

A paired samples t-test was conducted in order to examine the difference between the participants' scores on the pretest and posttest in the direct method group. Table 4.3 shows the descriptive data and t-test results are demonstrated in Table 4.4. In addition, differences between the two sets of scores are illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics for DM pretest and posttest scores

|  |  |  |  |  | Std. Error <br> Mean |  |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | :---: |
| Pair 1 | Pretest | 8.10 | 20 | 3.655 | .817 |  |
|  | Posttest | 11.10 | 20 | 3.508 | .784 |  |

Table 4.3 shows that the mean score of the posttest $(M=11.10)$ is greater than the mean score of pretest $(M=8.10)$ in the direct method group. However, the significance of this difference should be checked in the paired samples t-test table below.

Table 4.4: Paired samples t-test for DM pretest and posttest scores

|  |  | Paired Differences |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |

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The results of the t-test, illustrated in Table 4.4, reveal that there are statistically significant differences $(p<.05)$ between the two sets of scores in the direct method group. That is, the mean score of the posttest is significantly larger than the pretest mean score. This finding indicates that applying the direct method has promoted EFL learners L2 vocabulary learning.

On the whole, these results showed that teaching English vocabularies using the direct method had a positive effect on EFL learners' vocabulary learning improvement. Therefore, the second hypothesis as the application of Direct Method does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement is rejected.


Figure 4.2: Pretest and posttest scores of the DM group

Is there any significant difference between the effects of TPR and DM on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement?

The third research question addressed the difference between L2 vocabulary learning improvement of learners in the TPR and DM groups. As mentioned in chapter one hypothesis three was formulated in response to this research question.
Hypothesis 3: There is not any significant difference between the effects of TPR and DM on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement.

In order to investigate the third hypothesis, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was carried out. Pallant (2011) stated that ANCOVA can be used when there is a two-group pretest/posttest design. The scores on the pretest are treated as a covariate to control for pre-existing differences between the groups. This makes ANCOVA very useful in situations when sample sizes are quite small.

The major assumption associated with ANCOVA is that the relationship between the dependent variable and each of the covariates should be linear (straight-line). One of the reasons for including covariates is to increase the power of the analysis of variance test and violation of this assumption is likely to reduce the power (sensitivity) of the test. Therefore, in the current study scatterplots are used to check for the assumption of linear relationship between the dependent variable (posttests) and the covariates (pretests) for both groups. Figure 4.3 below displayed the distribution of the vocabulary scores for each of the groups.


Figure 4.3: Distribution of the vocabulary scores in TPR and DM groups
As illustrated in Figure 4.3, there was no curvilinear relationship for any of the groups. Owing to the fact that the relationship was clearly linear, the assumption of a linear relationship was not violated and it was acceptable to run the ANCOVA.

Another assumption which was required to be checked before running ANCOVA was the homogeneity of variance. To make sure that vocabulary scores had similar variances across both groups Levene's test of equality of variance was run. Levene's test of equality of error variance checks the assumption that each dependent variable will have similar variances for all groups (all cells in the factor design matrix). The result of the Levene's test for homogeneity of variance is reported in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

| F | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| .396 | 1 | 38 | .533 |

a. Design: Intercept + Pretest + Group

Levene tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. As Table 4.5 depicts, the Levene's statistics is .533 . Thus, the variance is equal and there is no significant difference between the variance of groups. In this case we have not violated the assumption because our Sig. value is larger than the cut-off of . 05 .

All in all, none of the assumptions were violated and it was safe to conduct the ANCOVA. Table 4.6 and 4.7 report the descriptive data of vocabulary pretest and posttest scores with regard to each of the TPR and DM groups. Additionally, ANCOVA results are demonstrated in Table 4.8.

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics of TPR and DM groups

|  |  | N | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error | Minimum | Maximum |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pretest | TPR | 20 | 10.10 | 2.732 | .611 | 5 | 14 |
|  | Direct Method | 20 | 8.10 | 3.655 | .817 | 3 | 14 |
|  | Total | 40 | 9.10 | 3.342 | .528 | 3 | 14 |
| Posttest | TPR | 20 | 15.30 | 2.203 | .493 | 10 | 19 |
|  | Direct Method | 20 | 11.10 | 3.508 | .784 | 5 | 18 |
|  | Total | 40 | 13.20 | 3.589 | .567 | 5 | 19 |

Considering the pretest scores, illustrated in Table 4.6, the mean score of the pretest in the TPR group $(M=10.10)$ is higher than the mean score of the pretest in the DM group $(M=8.10)$. In
order to show the differences more clearly findings are also illustrated in Figure 4.4. Although the mean score of the posttests for the TPR group ( $M=15.30$ ) is larger than the mean score of the posttests for the DM group ( $M=11.10$ ), it is not clear to what extent that difference is because of the pretest score variations. Therefore, ANCOVA is carried out to examine if there was a significant difference between the posttest scores while pretest scores are hold constant. Adjusted means of posttests are reported in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics of adjusted posttests in TPR and DM groups

|  |  |  | $95 \%$ Confidence Interval |  |
| :--- | :---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Group | Mean | Std. Error | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| TPR | $14.652^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .477 | 13.686 | 15.618 |
| Direct | $11.748^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .477 | 10.782 | 12.714 |
| Method |  |  |  |  |

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest $=9.10$.

Table 4.7 shows that the adjusted mean of posttest scores are greater in the TPR group than in the DM group, suggesting that the application of TPR approach resulted in better vocabulary knowledge improvement than the DM. Table 4.8 checks the significance of these differences using the ANCOVA.

Table 4.8: ANCOVA across TPR and DM groups

| Source | Type III Sum <br> of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta <br> Squared |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Corrected | $342.321^{\mathrm{a}}$ |  | 2 | 171.161 | 39.561 | .000 |
| Model | 227.829 | 1 | 227.829 | 52.660 | .000 | .681 |
| Intercept | 165.921 | 1 | 165.921 | 38.350 | .000 | .587 |
| Pretest | 76.628 | 1 | 76.628 | 17.711 | .000 | .509 |
| Group | 160.079 | 37 | 4.326 |  |  | .324 |
| Error | 7472.000 | 40 |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 502.400 | 39 |  |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total |  |  |  |  |  |  |

a. R Squared $=.681$ (Adjusted R Squared $=.664$ )

The results of the ANCOVA in Table 4.8 reveal that, after adjusting for pretest scores, there is a statistically significant difference between the TPR and DM groups regarding the vocabulary posttest scores, $F=17.71, p=.000$. Moreover, Table 4.8 shows that there is a small relationship between the pretest and posttest scores, as indicated by a partial eta squared value of .324 .

All in all, based on these findings, it could be concluded that teaching English vocabularies using the TPR approach led to better L2 vocabulary knowledge ability than did the application of the DM. Thus, the third null hypothesis predicting that there is not any significant difference between the effects of TPR and DM on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement is rejected.


Figure 4.4: Pretest and posttest scores in TPR and DM groups
Does gender have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning?
The last research question examined the difference between vocabulary learning of male and female learners in both groups. As mentioned in chapter one hypothesis four was formulated in response to this research question.
Hypothesis 4: Gender does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning.

In order to examine the last hypothesis, independent samples t-tests were carried out on male and female learners' vocabulary scores. At first the descriptive data are displayed in Table 4.9; similarly, results from the t-tests are displayed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics for male and female learners

| Group |  | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| TPR | Pretest | Female | 10 | 10.50 | 2.550 | . 806 |
|  |  | Male | 10 | 9.70 | 2.983 | . 943 |
|  | Posttest | Female | 10 | 16.10 | 2.025 | . 640 |
|  |  | Male | 10 | 14.50 | 2.173 | . 687 |
| Direct Method | Pretest | Female | 10 | 8.50 | 3.536 | 1.118 |
|  |  | Male | 10 | 7.70 | 3.917 | 1.239 |
|  | Posttest | Female | 10 | 11.50 | 2.799 | . 885 |
|  |  | Male | 10 | 10.70 | 4.218 | 1.334 |

Table 4.9 shows that the mean scores of female learners are slightly higher than the mean scores of male learners in all of the 8 sets of scores (see Figure 4.5). As for the posttests in the TPR group, the difference between the mean score of female $(M=16.10)$ and male $(M=14.50)$ leaners is the largest.


Figure 4.5: Pretest and posttest scores across gender and groups

However, as for the other 6 sets of scores, differences between female and male learners are smaller than 1. Although the mean scores are different, it is not clear whether these differences are significant or not. Therefore, independent samples $t$-tests were carried out (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Independent samples $t$-tests across gender

| Group |  | Levene's <br> Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. <br> (2- <br> taile <br> d) | Mean Diff. | Std. <br> Error <br> Diff. | 95\%Confiden ce Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  | Lowe <br> r |  |  |  |  |  |  | Uppe <br> r |
| TPR Pretest | Equal variances assumed |  | . 407 | . 532 | . 645 | $18$ | . 527 | . 800 | 1.241 | -1.807 | 3.407 |
|  | Equal variances not assumed |  |  | . 645 | 17.573 | . 527 | . 800 | 1.241 | -1.812 | 3.412 |
| Posttes t | Equal variances assumed | . 159 | . 694 | 1.703 | 18 | . 106 | 1.600 | . 939 | -. 373 | 3.573 |
|  | Equal variances not assumed |  |  | $1.703$ | $17.911$ | . 106 | 1.600 | . 939 | -. 374 | 3.574 |
| Direct Pretest Metho d | Equal variances assumed | . 355 | . 559 | . 479 | 18 | . 637 | . 800 | 1.669 | -2.706 | 4.306 |


|  |  |  | .479 | 17.814 | .637 | .800 | 1.669 | -2.708 | 4.308 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Equal <br> variances not <br> assumed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PosttesEqual <br> variances <br> assumed <br> Equal <br> variances not <br> assumed | 1.560 | .228 | .500 | 18 | .623 | .800 | 1.601 | -2.563 | 4.163 |

The results of independent samples $t$-tests, reported in Table 4.10, show that there is not any statistically significant differences ( $p>.05$ ) between the male and female learners regarding their L2 vocabulary scores in any of the TPR and DM groups. Therefore, the differences in Table 4.9 are found to be not statistically significant after conducting independent samples $t$-tests.
Base on the observed results deductions could be made that gender did not play any role in learners' L2 vocabulary learning. Thus, the fourth null hypothesis stating that gender does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning is confirmed.

## DISCUSSION

## The effect of Total Physical Response method on learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement

The first research question tried to examine if teaching English vocabularies through TPR approach had any significant effect on improving Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. Subsequently, the first null hypothesis was made in reply to this question. Findings suggested that the implementation of TPR method resulted in better L2 vocabulary learning ability. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings of the present study are in line with those of previous studies (e.g., Hsu \& Lin, 2014; Li, 2010; Machova, 2009; Oktiana, 2013; Pujiningsih, 2010; Sariyati, 2013) in revealing a positive impact of TPR method on improving EFL learners L2 vocabulary learning.

Hsu and Lin (2014) purpose was to investigate the effects of TPR on English vocabulary learning for resource classroom students. A multiple probe design across subjects of singlesubject experimental design was used to evaluate the effects. The data collected from the students during the baseline, intervention, maintenance phases were analyzed by using visual inspection techniques, time-series C statistic. Findings showed that students learned the expressing abilities of English functional vocabulary immediately through TPR.

The issue of vocabulary understanding through TPR was also highlighted by Li (2010) who found that students demonstrate their understanding through actions. Children associate the vocabulary with the actions; $\mathrm{Li}(2010)$ argues that "students can establish the connection between the target language with the action and understand the target language by themselves; consequently, students will remember the meaning of the vocabulary unconsciously" (p 1-2). As for the current study, therefore, it was indispensable to support the words with actions, to facilitate the children's understanding of the vocabulary. In addition, Machova (2009) stated that TPR is a good method for teaching English vocabulary to young language learners because TPR would make the long term recall easier for learners.

The data of Oktiana (2013) was collected by giving the pretest and posttest to the second grade students of Bandungkulon. The collected data was analyzed by conducting t-tests. The results of data analysis showed that teaching vocabulary to young learners using TPR was effective to improve student's vocabulary mastery.

In an action research, Pujiningsih (2010) aimed to know whether TPR can improve students' English vocabulary. The subject of research was the students of the sixth grade. In collecting the
data the researcher used observation notes, diaries, video recording, interview, and tests. Findings showed that TPR can improve the students' English vocabulary including the meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and using of words and the most significant improvement was the aspect of meaning and spelling.

In addition, Sariyati's (2013) findings revealed that after conducting the experimental research to investigate whether TPR method was effective in vocabulary mastery of elementary school children, Total Physical Response method had high effect in improving vocabulary mastery of the students.

Levine (2005) stated that the characteristics of young learners are physically moving about while acquiring and learning languages and they engage in enjoyable activities with language. In addition, Hewitt and Linares (1999) found that the activities involving physical movement in English language teaching are fun and stimulating for younger students. Therefore, this method is best used with children or beginners. Moreover, according to Li (2010) TPR is best suited for beginning language learners. Overall, from the findings gained on this research regarding the first research question, it can be inferred that the TPR is effective and suitable to be used for children to learn English vocabulary.

## The effect of Direct Method on learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement

The second research question addressed the effect of implementing the DM on learners' L2 vocabulary development. As mentioned in chapter one, null hypothesis two was formulated in response to this research question. Null hypothesis two mentioned that the application of DM does not have any significant effect on learners' L2 vocabulary learning improvement. Results revealed that this method played a significant role in improving learners' L2 vocabulary and therefore the second null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings of the present study mentioned above were in congruence with Wanzek (2014), Coyne, et al. (2009), Coyne, et al. (2010), Handayani's (2012), Silverman and Hines (2009), Silverman (2007), and Crevecoeur, Coyne and Mccoach (2014) who came to the point that students' L2 vocabulary learning would improve when it was thought using the DM.

There is comparatively little research to report on methods of presenting and practicing vocabulary in the classroom. According to Wanzek (2014), Direct vocabulary instruction, in which the teacher intentionally focuses instruction on developing students' knowledge of word meanings by targeting specific words, has been recommended as one important means of improving vocabulary learning (e.g., Biemiller, 2001; Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, \& Watts-Taffe, 2006; Robbins \& Ehri, 1994). In fact, increasing the amount of direct vocabulary instruction results in more word meanings being acquired by students (Beck \& McKeown, 2007; Biemiller \& Boote, 2006).

Coyne, et al. (2009) found that there were statistically significant differences at posttest favoring words taught with direct method over words receiving through only incidental exposure. These findings are consistent with a growing body of research documenting the efficacy of directly teaching word meanings to young students within oral language activities such as storybook readings (Justice, Meier \& Walpole, 2005; Penno, Wilkinson \& Moore, 2002; Walsh \& Blewitt, 2006). Moderate to large effect sizes for these comparisons indicate that direct instruction of vocabulary results in reliably greater word learning in kindergarten students than does incidental exposure by itself.

In another study, Coyne, et al.'s (2010) findings indicated that kindergarten students who received direct vocabulary instruction demonstrated greater knowledge of target words at posttest compared with students who did not receive vocabulary instruction. Differences in target word learning between treatment and control students were characterized by large effect sizes. This finding is consistent with a growing body of research that suggests that young students can learn the meanings of sophisticated vocabulary through instruction that is direct (e.g., Beck \& McKeown, 2007; Biemiller \& Boote, 2006).

## Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)

The objective of Handayani's (2012) study was to find out whether or not DM can improve students' vocabulary mastery. This research applied a quantitative method and one group pretest-posttest design. The result of data analysis showed that teaching English vocabulary using DM was effective to increase student's teaching English vocabulary mastery.

Some other studies that explored the rate of vocabulary learning indicated that teaching English vocabulary through direct instruction can be effective across participants (Silverman, 2007) and that augmenting an English vocabulary intervention with multimedia enhancements in direct teaching can increase English language learners' word learning (Silverman \& Hines, 2009). The findings from the Crevecoeur, Coyne and Mccoach's (2014) study provided additional support for the efficacy of directly teaching English vocabularies to children.

## Difference between the effects of Total Physical Response and Direct Methods

The third research question tried to investigate the difference between L2 vocabulary learning improvement of learners in the TPR and DM groups. Based on this question, null hypothesis 3 was formulated. Findings related to the third research question suggested that learners' L2 vocabulary scores were significantly larger when the TPR approach was used than when the DM was employed. Thus, null hypothesis three was rejected.

No other studied has been done so far to compare the differences between the efficacy of these two methods for L2 vocabulary development. Concerning L2 vocabulary teaching, there are two studies which compared these methods of teaching with Grammar Translation method. Abdullah (2013) conducted a contrastive study of the Grammar Translation and the DM. He mentioned that the direct method sought to immerse the learner in the same way as when a first language is learnt.

In another study, Castro (2010) evaluated the effectiveness of TPR compared to the Grammar-Translation approach for acquiring and retaining new vocabulary in an ESL class. All participants took two written pretests that examined their knowledge of common words. Following each pretest, the instructor taught three classes using the Grammar-Translation approach and three classes using TPR. Following the treatments, all adults took the written vocabulary test. Results indicated that both Grammar-Translation and TPR approaches made an important difference in student retention of vocabulary. The improvements in vocabulary acquisition and retention were $49 \%$ using Grammar-Translation and $45 \%$ using TPR.

One explanation for the results of the current study might be that TPR could develop a high stimulus in children when they start to achieve the goals of the lessons, as a consequence the children generate a good attitude and motivation towards English language learning; in other words, when children are integrated to the activities, and when they are becoming active part of the class through their physical representation of verbal commands, their attitude and motivation increases as their outcomes are successful.

Another reason for the superiority of TPR over DM might be related to the issue of children's integration and attention in a free-stress class environment. When children are learning in a friendly atmosphere in which the opportunities to be involved in the activities are plentiful, children can be better integrated to the class. Similarly, Li (2010) reported Asher (1997) when he states that the TPR method is stress-free because it is brain compatible. Therefore, children's attention is improved as they become the center of the class and their performance is not predetermined by a dominant guider. This way the students can take part in the teaching activity but generally they experience less stress because children are involved in fun activities at the time (Li, 2010).

The current study found that the TPR is different from DM in that TPR did not include explicit instruction, and the children learned at their own pace. Li (2010) reported Asher (1997) when he states that the TPR method goes in contradiction to traditional approaches which start with production memorization or explicit instructions. Overall, results with regard to the third research question demonstrated that children can develop better L2 vocabulary knowledge when they are involved in physical movement than when they are taught via the DM.

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## The effect of gender on learners' L2 vocabulary knowledge

The fourth research question sought to investigate if gender had any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' L2 vocabulary learning. Therefore, null hypothesis four was formulated to answer this question. Results indicated that there was not any statistically significant differences between male and female learners regarding their L2 vocabulary scores in any of the TPR and DM groups.

This study runs counter to previous research which demonstrate gender differences in several areas of vocabulary acquisition (e.g., Jiménez, 1992, 1997; Jiménez \& Moreno, 2004; Jiménez \& Ojeda, 2008, 2009; Meara \& Fitzpatrick, 2000; Nyikos, 1990). Nonetheless, other studies on vocabulary learning concluded that there were no gender differences (Llach \& Gallego, 2012; Grace, 2000; Jiménez \& Terrazas, 2008).

One may reasonably argue that the uniform teaching methods and materials, the formal context of language acquisition, and the age and language level of the respondents account for the lack of significant gender differences. The participants in the present study make up a very homogeneous sample of students regarding their individual characteristics and those of their learning context. Sunderland (2010) claims that the FL context, in which the FL is just another school subject, and identity issues are not salient, waters down any possible gender differences.

As Sunderland (2010) indicates, this type of quantitative study is prone to show inter-group similarities (between girls and boys) and intra-group differences (among girls and among boys). This point suggests that these are tendencies rather than straightforward, definitive conclusions.

It is widely accepted that promoting right to equality between sexes is very positive because this affects students' learning results directly. This aspect of language learning should be very carefully supervised, just in case practical constraints imposed on L2 students end up preventing either males or females or both from accelerating their natural EFL learning process.

Results are inconclusive within this area, with variability depending on the aspect examined. Boyle (1987) determined that, exceptionally, boys are superior to girls in the comprehension of heard vocabulary. Similarly, Scarcella and Zimmerman (1998) found that men performed significantly better than women in a test of academic vocabulary recognition, understanding, and use. In Lin and Wu (2003), Lynn, Fergusson and Horwood (2005), and Edelen-bos and Vinjé (2000), males also outperformed females in vocabulary knowledge in the foreign language. Nevertheless, Jiménez and Terrazas (2008) discovered no significant gender differences in performance in a receptive vocabulary test. Meara and Fitzpatrick (2000) and Jiménez and Moreno (2004) also pointed out that female learners performed better than males in productive vocabulary. Additionally, highly significant differences were found in favor of females in the mean number of words produced in response to the 15 cues of a lexical availability test (Jiménez \& Ojeda, 2009). Based on these inconclusive results with regard to gender differences, the nonsignificant finding of the current study is hardly surprising. Therefore, future research needs to be done with regard to this point.

## Conclusions

Based on the reported results and the discussion conducted in the previous sections, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, it can be concluded that EFL learners' vocabulary scores in the TPR group increased significantly from pretest to posttest, suggesting that teaching English vocabularies through TPR approach can lead to L2 vocabulary learning improvement. Therefore, TPR offers advantages in teaching and learning English vocabularies, especially for children and beginning learners. TPR involves children actively in the classroom activities. It can be effective in introducing English vocabulary and delivering instruction and the usefulness of this method has been proved by many experts in several countries and it has given significant benefits to students' achievement in learning English vocabulary. As children are physically active by nature, the TPR will make English vocabulary learning more effective since children will feel fun and excitement during the learning process.

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Second, consistent with the previous literature, deductions can be made that students' L2 vocabulary knowledge would improve when they were thought using the DM. Findings from this study contribute to the evidence on directly teaching vocabulary to English language learners and provide support for additional research on these students' response to intervention.

Third, considering the difference between the effects of TPR and DM on learners' L2 vocabulary learning development, results of this study suggested that teaching English vocabularies using the TPR approach led to better L2 vocabulary learning ability than did the application of the DM. One aspect in which the present study agrees with previous studies is in the enthusiasm that the instruction using the TPR approach creates in the students. Most of the participants in the present study enjoyed the TPR approach over the DM.

Finally, with regard to the impact of gender on learners' L2 vocabulary learning, deductions can be made that male and female learners display similar behaviors in L2 vocabulary learning. A lack of gender differences might be the result of homogeneous EFL instruction or the type of task accomplished.

## Implications of the Study

The results of the current study can be beneficial for EFL learners and teachers in number of ways.

First, the findings obtained have significant implications in designing and implementing TPR activities for children that get involved in physical activity performance. This study proposes the incorporation of TPR activities to introduce English vocabulary to children at early stages of their English language learning process, in order to stimulate children's foreign language awareness and to activate their involvement in the learning process.

Second, TPR is a language teaching method which can help to improve classroom environment in terms of interaction and engagement; and it can also help to improve language and L2 vocabulary development. For that reason it is suggested that children's English teachers often implement this method on their lessons in order to generate good results in teaching and learning.

Third, even though this study has revealed no significant differences in male and female vocabulary learning, these have called for a strong awareness of this matter. For instance, information of male and female learners' vocabulary at different stages of instruction can show how realistic the expectations of a given lexical syllabus are, or what would constitute an optimal syllabus for each gender group. In this respect, therefore, this finding can have implications for language teachers.

Fourth, another point from this study is that children can learn new vocabularies if they were taught as part of playful and purposeful physical activities i.e., TPR. These strategies must be easily used by all educators, especially those in settings serving children, who have long been considered to be at the highest risk of failure due to a limited vocabulary.

Finally, the findings have not only shown several pedagogical implications for the education of primary EFL students, but have also provided information of importance that may be taken into consideration by educational policy-makers. Education should focus on monitoring achievement levels at different learning stages and on vocabulary development, since the level of English of FL learners at Iranian schools are insufficient for the professional requirements that students should fulfill in future. It would be advisable that these results in vocabulary learning and vocabulary growth were not only reflected upon by instructors, researchers and text designers in the short run, but also converted into effective training and learning.

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# FROM BELIEFS TO ACTIONS: BELIEFS AND ACTIONS OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS TOWARD DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT 

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#### Abstract

IN CONTRAST TO OTHER TOOLS OF ASSESSMENT, DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT HAS GAIN PROMINENCE RECENTLY. YET, THERE HAVE BEEN LITTLE STUDIES AS TO HOW INSTRUCTORS UNDERSTAND DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT, HOW THEY ACTUALLY IMPLEMENT THEM, AND WHAT IMPACT DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT HAS ON TEACHER AND STUDENT LEARNING. IN ORDER TO SHED LIGHT ON THIS ISSUE, THIS PAPER FOCUSED ON THE TEACHERS' VIEWS AND ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT. TO THIS END, THE RESEARCHER, THROUGH CONSULTING THE RELEVANT EXTANT LITERATURE, DEVELOPED A WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE COMPRISED OF 10 QUESTIONS WHICH WERE INTENDED TO EMBRACE ISSUES RELATED TO BOTH THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT. THE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS ADMINISTERED TO FIFTY ENGLISH TEACHERS WHO WERE SELECTED BASED ON THE CONVENIENCE SAMPLING PROCEDURE. THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT MOST OF THE TEACHERS WERE POSITIVE ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT IN THEIR CLASSROOMS. IN ADDITION, THEY MENTIONED THAT THE FEASIBILITY OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT IN IRANIAN EFL CLASSROOMS, WHERE TEACHERS ARE DEPRIVED OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT TRAINING, GUIDELINE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES, IS QUESTIONED SERIOUSLY DUE TO THE FACTORS SUCH AS TIME-CONSTRAINED NATURE OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES, LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EFL CLASSROOMS, AND THE COMMON PRACTICE OF STATIC TESTS AS THE MAINSTREAM. HOWEVER, IT WAS REVEALED THAT DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT IS ONE OF THE KEY STRATEGIES THAT, IF USED CORRECTLY, CAN EFFECTIVELY ENHANCE STUDENTS' LEARNING.


KEY WORDS: DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT, STATIC ASSESSMENT, LANGUAGE TESTING, ATTITUDES, LEARNING.

## 1. Introduction

During the last decades, research in language testing has been attempting not only to equip learners with essential knowledge and skills but also to assist them in becoming more and more autonomous (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Nassaji \& Cumming, 2000). ELT researchers along with teachers have been making an all-out effort to educate competent learners enabled to, at least partly, tackle their learning problems and need on their own. One way through which learners can achieve such autonomy is by evaluating and assessing one's own performance as related to one's needs (Elliott, 2003; Sternberg \& Grigorenko, 2002).

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There has been a shift from traditional assessment tools toward less formal quantitative tests, i.e. dynamic assessment (Hasson \& Joffe, 2007; Resing, 2009; Vygotsky, 1986). One of the reasons behind this shift is the significance of process rather than product. Traditional assessment is merely concerned with the product of learning while dynamic assessment concerns itself with the very process of learning and the way learners gain autonomy during this process. Another reason is traditional assessment failure to address the issue of learner's responsiveness to instruction (Haywood \& Lidz, 2007; Lidz, 1995). In addition, a significant advantage of dynamic assessment is making recommendations based on developmental potential which is not revealed by traditional non-dynamic tests (Davin, 2011). As cited in Baek and Kim (2003), Jitendra and Kameenui (1993) argued that the major incentive for researchers to turn their attention to dynamic assessment which is believed to be more sensitive to an individual learner's strengths and weaknesses is the failure of more traditional assessment tools.

There has been growing body of research and interest on large-scale standardized tests such as dynamic assessment since they have larger impact on test takers lives and future (Baek \& Kim, 2003; Leung, 2007; Poehner, 2008; Sternberg \& Grigorenko, 2002). Despite its current popularity, almost no studies have been carried out to explore EFL teachers' perceptions toward dynamic assessment, and to investigate to what extent teachers have knowledge over and use dynamic assessment in their classes. Since there isn't sufficient and applicable evidence regarding the way teachers understand or implement dynamic assessment in their classes and to how they influence students' learning there is much room for this kind of research in EFL context. The current study aims at discovering EFL teachers' attitudes toward dynamic assessment, and the way they implement it in their classrooms. In addition it aims at exploring whether teachers think of dynamic assessment as an effective tool of assessment and instruction or not with the hope of shedding more light on this area.

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

Dynamic Assessment has become a significant trend for most of the theorists, researchers, and instructors over the previous years. Dynamic assessment is described as an approach which identifies individual differences and their implications for instruction. By including appropriate forms of mediation, it embeds intervention within the assessment and it is sensitive to the individual's current abilities and subsequent performance with the purpose of promoting learner's development (Lidz \& Gindis, 2003). In addition, dynamic assessment contrasts with traditional assessment in terms of the assessment methods employed, the theoretical orientation, and the interpretation of results (Carney \& Cioffi, 1992). The relationship between assessment and instruction is remarkable in dynamic assessment. Particularly, dynamic assessment concentrates on both the evaluation process and the final product. It aims at modifying the learner's performance during testing by providing instructions or extra materials to elicit higher achievement levels (Embretson, 1987).

Pierce and O'Malley (1992) defines dynamic assessment as "any method of finding out what a student knows or can do that is intended to show growth and inform instruction and is not a standardized or traditional test". Moreover, according to Lunt's definition (1993):
"Dynamic assessment (or mediated or assisted assessment as it is sometimes named) involves a dynamic interaction between tester and learner (testee) with a focus on the process rather than the product of learning. Common to all forms of dynamic assessment is a notion of prospective rather than retrospective assessment and an emphasis on an understanding of how the child learns rather than on what the child has already learned (p. 155)".

Since in dynamic assessment, unlike static psychometric approach, the examiner is supposed to intervene in the evaluation process, the relationship between the examinee and the examiner has been significantly altered (Poehner, 2008). There is today little question that teaching and assessment have a tendency to develop learners who are self-regulated and can, to a large extent, take control of and responsibility for their own learning. That being said, dynamic assessment can, owing to its underlying principles which cultivate autonomy and self-regularity, assume an overriding role in assessment as well as instruction.

Moreover, dynamic assessment, which has its roots in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of mind, incorporates both assessment and instruction much further by empowering the teachers to promote learners' skills by persistently adapting their mediation to the learners' changing needs (Poehner, 2008). Lidz (1991) declared that dynamic assessment has some main characteristics. First of all, this test is administered according to a test-intervention-retest format. Secondly, the test-intervention-retest aspect of dynamic assessment is closely related to the learner's modification. And finally, it generates information for developing interventions. Dynamic assessment uses teaching as part of the assessment; it supplies useful information for developing interventions (Poehner, 2007).

### 2.1. Dynamic vs. Static Assessment

For evaluation purposes in EFL context, a vast variety of approaches and plethora of different kinds of assessment tools are used. There should be some distinguishing criteria to differentiate these types of assessment. One of the principal distinctions in this regard has been drawn between static and dynamic assessment. In static assessment, to put it plainly, the examiner or teacher presents items, either one at a time or all at once, and each examinee is asked to respond to these items successively, without receiving feedback or intervention of any kind (Tzuriel, 2001). At some point in time after the administration of the test is over, each examinee typically receives the only feedback he or she will get; a report on a score or set of scores. By that time, the examinee is most likely studying for one or more future tests. "It assesses the skills and knowledge the individual has gained from his/her prior experience. It doesn't assess the individual's ability to acquire skills and knowledge since that would have happened before the assessment was completed" (Leung, 2007). This kind of assessment may include true/false, matching, and multiple choice items, to name a few. The main reason for the popularity and dominance of these types of assessment in EFL context seems to be their objectivity and ease of scoring. Nonetheless, upon the arrival of communicative language teaching in the scene, this wasn't any longer the case (Lantolf \& Poehner, 2004).

Alternative assessments including self-assessment, authentic assessment, portfolio, and performance based tests have gained popularity and begun to be widely employed in EFL classes (Brown, 2003). Alternative assessment has also been called dynamic assessment in the area of general educational research. Tzuriel (2001) provides a comprehensive definition of dynamic assessment. He expressed that dynamic assessment is an assessment of, perception, learning, thinking, and problem solving by an active teaching procedure intended for modifying cognitive functioning.

Although static and dynamic assessments seem to be complementary, they have fundamental methodological differences. Since static types of assessment consider the students' skills and abilities as already matured i.e., fixed and "stable across time" (Leung, 2007), in dynamic assessment, such abilities are "malleable and flexible" (Sternberg \& Grigorenko, 2002). Besides, while scores in static assessment may be commended for their objectivity, they still fail to infer much about the students' cognitive processes. Practitioners of dynamic assessment emphasize that such an assessment mode should not lead to failure; rather it should be conducive to better
linguistic attainment. Most studies on dynamic assessment (e.g., Ableeva, 2008; Gibbons, 2003; Lidz \& Gindis, 2003) have revealed that after mediation takes place, students can achieve higher levels of much scaffolding and learning.

### 2.2. Why Dynamic Assessment?

Bransford et al., (1987), as cited in Baek and Kim (2003), put forward three main reasons for moving away from traditional assessing tools toward dynamic ones. First, in traditional assessment the process of learning is not taken into consideration and it is only the product which is of main concern. Second, the assumption underlying traditional assessment is that prior learning sufficiently predicts future performance; hence, it fails to attend to "each child's responsiveness to instruction". "Third, it does not provide prescriptive information for designing potentially effective instruction." The major concern of traditional or more static assessment is the product of learning rather than a focus on the process itself. Unlike traditional assessments, dynamic assessment raises concern over learners' potentiality and their state of development. It takes account of environmental support in learners' success. Dynamic assessment allows an individual to exhibit their progress by gaining mastery of skills and materials they were taught. Through the application of dynamic assessment teachers, students, and parents will be able to build up and identify their strengths and weaknesses (Bransford et al., 1987; Leung, 2007).

Dynamic assessment proponents have long asserted that dynamic assessment increases validity since it provides information about learners' skills and abilities that non-dynamic procedures usually do not (Lidz \& Elliot, 2000). For instance, Anton (2003) argued strongly in favor of the validity of dynamic assessment by revealing that dynamic assessment measures are in fact superior to the non-dynamic assessment procedures by representing significant differences between learners. Therefore, while the scope of non-dynamic assessment is just constrained to the learners' past learning experiences, dynamic assessment offers a broader scope of past to present skills and experiences and future capabilities, and is therefore capable of providing prescriptive information about language learning methodology. Dynamic assessment involves different theories such as modern cognitive theories about assessment and the abilities being evaluated which considers individuals' abilities and competence as changeable and sensitive to instruction. It assumes that abilities are not static but are unstable and are in transactional connections with the world (Haywood \& Lidz, 2007).

Dynamic assessment provides learners with an opportunity to learn and also presents significant information about learners' abilities, strategies, and processes of learning. In other words, dynamic assessment enhances our understanding of individuals' abilities and views development process as a predictor of the test-takers' future performance and offers potentially constructive suggestions about teaching and learning, because it evaluates the processes of knowledge acquisition at the time of the test administration. It sees language learning as knowledge construction and the outcome of interaction between the learners and instructors (Birjandi, Daftarifard, \& Lange, 2011).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

For the purpose of this study, 50 Iranian EFL teachers were selected. The selection was based on the availability of the teachers i.e. convenience sampling. Their teaching experience ranged from 6 to 14 years. The great majority of the participants were teaching in different language institutes and universities in Tehran. Concerning their education, 11 of the participants held a Ph.D.'s degree, 22 of them held a Master's degree, 15 of them were doing their Ph.D., and 12 of them
were doing their M.A. at the time the current research was under way. The participants' major included TEFL, English Literature, and linguistics.

### 3.2. Instrumentation

The data were acquired through the administration of a written interview to the participants. A written interview was conducted instead of oral interview because the teachers who agreed to participate in the study were not all available to meet in person. Throughout the process of forming the interview questions, the researcher consulted the extant literature on dynamic assessment to find out the most appropriate questions which would yield deep insights into teachers' perceptions as relating to dynamic assessment. 10 questions were singled out to constitute the final version of the questionnaire which was sent out to the participants. The devised questionnaire was intended to embrace issues related to both theory and practice of dynamic assessment.

### 3.3. Procedure

In order to gather data for the current study, dynamic assessment questionnaire was administered to fifty English teachers in Tehran institutes. Afterwards, all the data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed qualitatively with regard to theoretical roots of dynamic assessment in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of mind.

## 4. Results

In contrast to other tools of assessment, like peer-assessment, self-assessment, and static assessment, dynamic assessment has gain prominence recently. Yet, there has been little documentation as to how instructors understand dynamic assessments, how they actually implement them, and what impact dynamic assessment has on students' learning. In order to shed light on these issues, this paper focused on the teachers' view and actions with regard to dynamic assessment.

With regard to the first question (on the definition of dynamic assessment), results show that a majority of respondents ( $76 \%$ ) were familiar with the concept of dynamic assessment. They provided different definitions for dynamic assessment. Some of the teachers defined dynamic assessment in a very brief and simple way, and stating that "dynamic assessment is a process of assessment in which the teacher helps learners to do the task". Another teacher stated that dynamic assessment happens when "teachers assess or evaluate their students".

On the other hand one of the participants, however, offered an extensive definition for dynamic assessment as follows:
"Dynamic assessment is a novel technique by which, unlike the traditional assessment techniques, the students are assessed after they have been aided by a more knowledgeable person i.e. teacher or peers. In this kind of assessment the focus is on the development fostered by the assistance provided".

Some of the teachers further defined dynamic assessment by linking it to the assessment of learners' cognitive processes. For example, some stated that dynamic assessment concerned learners' modes of thinking, problem solving, and strategies.

When it came to putting dynamic assessment into practice, about $54 \%$ ( 27 teachers) of the participants stated that they implemented dynamic assessment in their classes. Some of them
reported that they used dynamic assessment on a regular basis (every four or five sessions). Others indicated that they carried it out once or twice in each course. Still, from among the participants, one teacher declared that she made use of dynamic assessment "quite often" and attempted to make it an integral part of her teaching practice.

On the other hand, those instructors to whom dynamic assessment was novel not only had never used it but had never even thought about it. Some of the teachers wrote that they had never put it to use or had carried it out once or twice in their entire teaching experience.

Concerning the purpose of implementing this type of assessment, the teachers under study held that they had learning purposes in mind. They explained that the primary purpose of assessment is to improve the students' learning. Also they reported that they use the information gained from assessment to determine their next teaching and learning steps, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to develop remedial materials. Below is a teacher's response to this question:
"The aim of the dynamic-assessment process is neither to render a score or rating nor to label an individual or a learner. Rather, it is intended to provide a snapshot as to where an individual is at a particular point in time. Results should be used to strategically plan long-term and short-term objectives (decision-making), to enhance services, to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses, to improve learning, and to give comprehensive feedback to the learners."

Interestingly, a number of respondents indicated that dynamic assessment is implemented with the hope of increasing learners' autonomous and motivation. They mentioned that by using dynamic assessment, they increase opportunities for student engagement, which then helps everyone more successfully achieve the course's learning objectives, and promote learners' responsibility and independence. They stated that engaging students in the assessment process increases their attention and focus, motivates them to practice higher-level critical thinking skills, and promotes meaningful learning experiences.

Question four in the questionnaire inquired about the benefits of implementing dynamic assessment in the classrooms. Some of the respondents saw dynamic assessment as enhancing the learners' self-esteem and autonomous by enabling them to see themselves as people who could rather than could not learn, as looking for strengths rather than weaknesses and for maximal rather than average performance. Dynamic assessment was perceived as 'a studentfriendly approach'. It was seen as showing 'positive directions for future development rather than a deficit model'.

Most of the participants mentioned that one of the significant advantages of dynamic assessment is obtaining rich information about learners' knowledge which will not be easily obtained in other ways. They believed that by using dynamic assessment, they can easily diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses and understand what they need to improve learning. Others stated that the outcome of dynamic assessment for teachers is that it will contribute to higher student motivation, confidence and achievement by giving feedback to learners, and asking them what they think, what helped them, and how they deal with challenges.

When asked if dynamic assessment can be used as a reliable tool for assessing learners' knowledge, most of the teachers (74 \%) firmly stated that dynamic assessment is a reliable measurement tool, but it must be accompanied with other forms of assessment such as peerassessment, static-assessment, self-assessment, and etc. They asserted that multiple assessment
methods are needed in order to have a reliable assessment. Following is a rather comprehensive response made by one of the teachers:
"Of course dynamic assessment is a reliable tool, but there is no sole testing method that yields a quite reliable result. Plus, teachers' evaluation is very critical and necessary."

Regarding the sixth and the seventh questions in the questionnaire, most of the respondents believed that dynamic assessment can be used for all proficiency levels and all the main language skills and sub-skills. Only three teachers remarked that dynamic assessment can be applied merely to advanced learners, although all of them agreed that it is more suitable for students with highest language levels. Below are some of the participants' responses:
"It can be employed for all levels, but I think it is more suited for higher levels."
"It is suitable for students with highest language levels for two reasons: the first reason, obviously, is the better one's language level, the more articulate one can be. The second and the subtle reason is that with age comes modernity and wisdom (usually better speaking language learners are young and middle-aged students). Moderate and wise language learners can diminish their subjectivity better."
"I think dynamic assessment can be used for all language learning skills which students will need for professional competence; for both receptive and productive skills."

When asked about the usage of dynamic assessment grades and scores (diagnosis purposes, providing feedback to the learners, course grade determination, placement, and program evaluation), almost all of the participants claimed that dynamic assessment grades can be used for all the above-mentioned purposes with the exception of placement. The instructors believed that the use of dynamic assessment for placement purposes cannot be vouched for since learners are often unwilling to project a true image of their abilities. The prime purpose, however, in teachers' views, can be diagnostic and feedback to the learner through which learners are offered the opportunity to identify their own strengths and weaknesses so that they can work on them. It is worth mentioning that one of the participants answered this question critically and claimed that:

> "The aim of the dynamic-assessment process is neither to render a score or rating nor to label an individual or a learner. Rather, it is intended to provide a snapshot as to where an individual is at a particular point in time. So I don't assign score to the results of this assessment."

Concerning dynamic assessment training need, all the teachers stated that dynamic assessment must be introduced as part of every teacher training course programs. They explained that "being trained about the dynamic assessment developing and evaluating techniques and strategies is a must before implementing dynamic assessment in the class. This way both teachers and students stick to a standard and know where they are moving. Later on in higher levels, learners can develop their own additional techniques and strategies." Lack of instruction, supervision, and ongoing support was also very frequently stated as a reason or failure to begin or to maintain practice of dynamic assessment. So the teachers opined that clear comprehensive instructions must be given on how to carry out dynamic assessment and based on what criteria or rubrics.

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Finally, the last question was related to commonality of using dynamic assessment in Iran. Here, based on the responses, it was rather clear that most of the teachers believed implementing dynamic assessment is not common due to some restrictions. They asserted that because it requires high experience and expertise, and as there are now training courses on how to implement dynamic assessment, it's not practiced that much in our country. In contrast, respondents mentioned that static assessment is more common in Iran. Below are some of the participants' responses:
"No, in Iran's education system the focus is on static assessment, since they claim it is fair to keep the situation fixed and formal rather than interactive in order to present students from having the opportunity to cheat."
"No, because Iranian educational context is still more teacher frontal and the judgment is mostly done by static assessment."
"No it's not; because of numerous reasons such as teachers' lack of knowledge and experience, large sized classes, incompatibility with educational system goals, limitation of time, and etc."

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was undertaken with the intention of investigating teachers' perceptions towards dynamic assessment. To this end, the researcher, through consulting the relevant extant literature, devised a questionnaire comprised of 10 questions which were intended to embrace issues related to both the theory and practice of dynamic assessment. The theoretical roots of dynamic assessment lie in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of child development (Vygotsky, 1986) in which the role of the parent, teacher, sibling, or peer, in interacting with the individual child, is seen as fundamental to the formation and growth of cognitive skills (stated in Deutsch \& Reynolds, 2000).

In contrast to other tools of assessment, dynamic assessment has gain prominence recently. Yet, there has been little documentation as to how instructors understand dynamic assessments, how they actually implement them, and what impact dynamic assessment has on teacher and student learning. In order to shed light on this issue, this paper focused on the teacher's view and actions with regard to dynamic assessment.

Despite the fact that some of the participants did not seem to have a clear grasp of what dynamic assessment looks like i.e. they simply described it as a process of assessment in which the teacher helps learners to do the task. Many teachers explicitly mentioned "teacher help" in their statements for defining dynamic assessment, often emphasizing "testing to learn" over formal "testing". One teacher captured this perspective succinctly in stating that ALP involves the awareness that one can be "free to commit errors, learn from their errors, and still participate and not be judged based on their scores" in the activity at hand.

It is important to point out that, regardless of how teachers understood the construct of dynamic assessment, there was general agreement among respondents as to applicability of dynamic assessment for all proficiency levels and all main language skills. Although some of the participants believed that dynamic assessment is more suitable for advanced learners. According to some respondents, the dynamic assessment instruction itself must be considered during discussions of proficiency level, which is in line with Baek and Kim's study (2003).

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In their study on the effect of dynamic assessment based instruction on children's learning (Baek \& Kim, 2003), it is confirmed that dynamic assessment based instruction has a more effective and more powerful influence upon children's learning than static assessment based instruction. Therefore, the researcher approved that dynamic assessment based instruction should be used widely for children's cognitive learning.

Enhancing leaners' motivation, autonomy, confidence, self-esteem, awareness, and metacognitive abilities were among the advantages to which teachers, regardless of their teaching experience, referred when asked about the benefits of dynamic assessment. This seems to be in line with many of the researches on the effectiveness of dynamic assessment (Baek \& Kim, 2003; Brown, 2003; Deutsch \& Reynolds, 2000; Jitendra \& Kameenui, 1993).

Furthermore, the results of the study indicated that the concern expressed by most of the teachers was the need to be equipped with necessary skills to implement dynamic assessment. The obtained data demonstrated that teachers must first be educated how to correctly carry out dynamic assessment. In other words, teachers' lack of knowledge or training concerning practical and effect implementation of dynamic assessment may seriously endanger the validity of the results obtained.

This finding also can stand as testimony to Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) findings. Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) noted that teachers who have not had any training in dynamic assessment are not able to carry it out and make sound judgments about it. Their findings demonstrated that there is also a strong interest in learning more about dynamic assessment, in being given time to use it if it is felt to be appropriate, and in being supported in so doing.

Therefore, the present study was undertaken with the intention of investigating teachers' perceptions towards dynamic assessment, and exploring to what extent teachers have knowledge over and use dynamic assessment in their classes. The findings indicated that most of the teachers have positive attitudes toward the practice of dynamic assessment in their classrooms, although they expressed that a full-fledged implementation of dynamic assessment in Iranian EFL classrooms is too demanding.

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## Appendix

## Teachers' perception toward implementing dynamic assessment

Gender: Female $\square$ Male $\square$ Age: ........... Teaching experience: ......years

Last Degree: $\qquad$
Current level teaching: $\qquad$

## Dear respondents:

The current study aims to gather some information about your perception and practice of dynamic assessment. Your contribution is appreciated in advance.

1. How do you define Dynamic Assessment?
2. Do you implement dynamic assessment in your classes? If yes how often?
3. For what purposes do you use dynamic assessment?
4. How do you think we can benefit from implementing dynamic assessment in our classes?
5. Do you think using dynamic assessment is a reliable tool for assessing learners' knowledge?
6. Considering your own experience, which proficiency level benefits mostly from dynamic assessment?
7. Considering your own experience, which skill benefits mostly from dynamic assessment?
8. How do you make use of dynamic assessment grades and scores? ( diagnosis purposes, providing feedback to learners, course grade determination, placement)
9. Should teachers' be instructed as how to practice dynamic assessment? Please explain.
10. Do you think application of dynamic assessment process is common in Iran? Why?

# INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE AND WRITING PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY WAS AN ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE, MEASURED BY MBTI QUESTIONNAIRE AND WRITING PERFORMANCE IN THREE DIFFERENT GENRES: ARGUMENTATIVE, DESCRIPTIVE AND NARRATIVE. A TOTAL NUMBER OF 60 HIGH-INTERMEDIATE PARTICIPANTS FROM BOTH GENDERS TOOK PART IN THIS STUDY AT POOYA JAMAE INSTITUTE IN TABRIZ. THE AIMS OF THIS STUDY WERE TO EXPLORE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE AND DIFFERENT GENRES OF WRITING: ARGUMENTATIVE, DESCRIPTIVE AND NARRATIVE. SOME PARTS OF THE DATA WERE COLLECTED BY MBTI QUESTIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE THE PARTICIPANTS' PERSONALITY TYPE. ANOTHER PART OF THE DATA WHICH WAS THE PARTICIPANTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE WAS GATHERED BY THREE DIFFERENT WRITINGS ADMINISTERED TWICE EACH. THE COLLECTED DATA WENT THROUGH PROPER STATISTICAL TESTS AND THE RESULTS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS REVEALED THAT THERE WAS A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE AND ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING PERFORMANCE. ALSO SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP WAS SHOWN BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE AND DESCRIPTIVE WRITING PERFORMANCE. BUT THERE WASN’T ANY STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE AND NARRATIVE WRITING. FINALLY THE DATA ANALYSIS INDICATED THAT GENDER IS NOT A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN WRITING PERFORMANCE.


KEYWORDS: PERSONALITY, INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR (MBTI), SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.

## 1. Introduction

Adapting a similar syllabus design to teach language skills at different contexts is more likely to fail. Although the learners of English language have nearly the same objectives; their methods and learning strategies are remarkably different from each other. Teachers are expected to be aware of differences among learners; moreover, they must be able to tailor the teaching materials such as the textbooks so as to fit the target teaching context (Harmer, 2007). Introverts and
extroverts have different priorities in choosing their favorite activity to learn the language skills. While extroverts are interested in having more social interactions with others, introverts prefer concentration and self-sufficiency. These examples confirm the notion that instructors of language should know the answer to 'Does personality type affect the quality of learning language skills or no'?

Teachers usually complain that some students show little interest to the topics of their writing assignments. Also they grumble about the learners' little care and attention to syntactic, semantic or pragmatic aspects of language (Gebhard, 2006). Experienced teachers have a pile of examples stating that some learners write as if they do not like the topic and have tried to whitewash the task; while some others spent enough time to deal with the issue patiently and discuss it with suitable examples and facts. These are only a few examples indicating that instructors of writing courses come across some difficulties in choosing the better or even best methods of teaching how to write. Therefore, the researchers should investigate individual differences in general and personality in specific alongside with the language skills to check if there is any relationship between personality background and language performance. Findings of these kinds of researchers will equip the teachers with useful information and techniques about how to interact with every individual learner (Miller, 2005).

## 2. Literature Review

During 1950s, teaching English to foreign students was not regarded as a serious and significant academic discipline and writing may be sadly confessed to be the last skill of language which came under academic investigation in the second half of the twentieth century. The reason is quite obvious; the central teaching method during the 1950s put emphasis on oral rather than written proficiency.

Audio Lingual Method (ALM) is an outstanding example that paid little attention to literacy education. But by the 1960s, the number of international students had rapidly increased (Zhang, 2008). Therefore a large number of foreign students entered higher education in English speaking countries. Language teachers of that time felt the need for ways to teach second language writing to the nonnative students but they had not been able to clarify the task.

First language composition was a common practice for L1 students and teachers but the story was a bit different for nonnative speakers of English who needed to improve their writing skill in order to survive in academic world. Pincas (1962) was one of the pioneers who presented her own idea on how to teach L2 writing. Since the dominant language teaching methodology was ALM, her method applied the behaviorism approach to writing instruction and encouraged controlled pattern practice. Various progressive practices were recognized afterwards. Teachers showed great interest in practical application of syntactic structure to paragraph creations which consequently led to emergence of Contrastive Rhetoric (CR).

It did not take a lot of time for L2 teachers to realize that in multicultural classes, students transfer their native language patterns into L2 writing. Kaplan (1966) found the origins of such diversity in ESL students' native language and cultural impact. According to his study about learners' cultural thought patterns, he came across noticeable findings. For example, Englishspeaking writers employed a linear structure with specific details to support the theme. Arabic learners utilized a considerable number of coordination words compared to English writers' compositions. After Kaplan contrastive rhetoric research more and more empirical studies about CR features were conducted across many languages. Kaplan's (1966) research is said to sparkle the field of second language writing research. CR research which was later on followed by other

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valuable researches had a great influence on L2 writing issues. It showed the nature of L2 writers' texts and highlighted the impact of the writers' cultural context on the text (Hinkel, 2002).

Another significant research done on CR was Kobayashi's (1985) study about the differences of writing organizations between English and Japanese. She found that American students as native speakers of English utilized general-specific patterns. These groups of writers initially mentioned a general statement and followed it with details, whereas Japanese students of English language, as nonnative speakers used specific-general patterns in which they implied the details first that reflected a general description. If the third research on CR which was again conducted in the US with the participation of both Japanese and American students is mentioned, it may seem suspicious or ambiguous that why again the same setting?! The answer is pretty obvious. Thousands and thousands of Japanese students entered the USA in 1970s and 1980s. More important than any other problem that any typical immigrant may have in the destination country, language competence definitely plays a vital role in immigrants' quality of life. That is why researchers found it academically interesting to investigate the English language use of these immigrants and that's why Japanese immigrants were the main participants of the researchers of CR. Hinds (1984) examined the structures of argumentative writings between Japanese and English.

In an English piece of writing, the Introduction section of the writing included the entire content and thesis statement with specific points such as background of the topic, problem, reason, result, etc. On the other hand, the Introduction in Japanese puts a concise topical sentence without any explicit statements and the thesis statement is expected to come in the final section. Moreover the Japanese sentences were difficult to comprehend because they expressed their ideas ambiguously and the reader had to make his own inference from the text.

As for future researchers about $C R$, Connor (2001) points out that coming researches should not view the writers as people who belong to separate, identifiable cultural groups. In his terms, researchers should consider the writers as individuals who may differ from each other, though sharing the same culture or community. Connor's perspective leads this area of research more into individual characteristics features than cultural or any other kind of similarity or unity.

Research in L2 writing field entered a new realm in 1980s. This change in research can be referred to as a transition from product-oriented research into process-oriented. The process approach emphasized how learners manage to follow a process through writing; while in product approach of earlier time, the emphasis was on the ruled structure pattern practices. In the early 1990s, researchers recognized that the process approach differ completely from the product approach. Process-oriented research 'came to emanate the issues of institution which emphasize a particular purpose such as EAP ( English for Academic Purposes) and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) to value the audience in writing rather than the writer'(Kaplan, 1988).

Hirose and Sasaki (1994) attempted to investigate the traits of process writing between experienced and inexperienced L2 writers. The results clearly showed that the experienced writers favored the macro (planning, coherence, and revising) and micro (cohesion, vocabulary use and texts) levels. On the other hand, the inexperienced writers dealt with the process to a limited extent because of few writing experiences and motivations.

Callahan (1997, as cited in Marefat, 2006), analyzed the relationship between reflective writing and character types of the learners and found that those participants who preferred extraversion, best respond to reflect about the outer world. Extroverts like to talk more than write. On the other hand for introverts, setting goals and standards is an interesting task. The written product of

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students with sensing type preference is lengthy and detailed. Such individuals regard reflective writing as a way to go back and see if they have missed anything? In contrast, the intuitive types, 'read between the lines'. Regarding the thinking /feeling dichotomy, thinking group like to describe their strengths and weaknesses in writing. For thinking group some elements of successful writing are organizational patterns and rhetorical features. It is not surprising that if the feeling group is asked to choose the elements of successful writing, they would be excited by a piece of writing that evokes a strong feeling. With judging / perceiving preferences in mind, it was revealed that the judging personality type usually sets goals for future improvement and they offer tidy and organized projects. But for perceiving group exploration on the future plans is not desired and they have difficulties in drawing conclusions.

Marefat (2006) attempted to discover if there was any relationship between learner personality type and his writing ability. She used the MBTI questionnaire to realize the personality type of the learners. With the participation of eighty-six male and female graduate and undergraduate EFL students, she concluded that the learners who had preferred sensing and intuition types were significantly more successful than other types.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions and hypothesis posed in this study are as the following:
Research Question 1) Is there any statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the argumentative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners?

Null hypothesis 1) There is no statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the argumentative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners.

Research Question 2) Is there any statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the descriptive writing performance of Iranian EFL learners?

Null hypothesis 2) There is no statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the descriptive writing performance of Iranian EFL learners.

Research Question 3) Is there any statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the narrative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners?

Null hypothesis 3) There is no statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the narrative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners.

Research Question 4) Is there any statistically significant difference in the writing score of male and female language learners across different personality types?

Null hypothesis 4) There is no statistically significant difference in the writing score of male and female language learners across different personality types.

## 3. Methodology:

### 3.1 Design of the study

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Relying on quantitative approach based on correlation research to collect data, this study attempted to investigate the relationship between personality type and writing performance. Personality type was the independent and writing score was the dependent variable of this study. Participants of this study were high-intermediate learners of English as Foreign Language at Pooya Elme Jamae Institute in Tabriz. They were explained that their responses to the questionnaire, etc. will be used only for research purposes. Then by using a language proficiency test (adopted from TOEFL questions), topics to write on three different genres and a questionnaire measuring the personality type the data were collected. The achieved data went through statistical analysis so that all four research questions were answered.

### 3.2 Participants

A total of 90 language learners with the age range of $17-22$ were given the instruments needed to collect data. Among them, 18 learners returned the questionnaire, language proficiency test, etc. blank so that the researcher had to remove them. Moreover, 12 learners couldn't be placed at the same level of language proficiency as other participants. It means that the language proficiency level of these 12 learners belong to very low levels of language proficiency, though, they have been placed by the institute. At last 60 learners could meet the requirements of this research study who included both males and females at high-intermediate level.
3.3 Materials The materials used in this study were a modified language proficiency test, MBTI personality type indicator, and 6 topics of writing which are explained in depth below.

### 3.3.1 Modified Language Proficiency Test

In spite of the institute's placement of the learners, the researcher ran a modified language proficiency test to be sure that all the participants belonged to the same language proficiency level. The test was a modification and collection of TOEFL tests. There is no doubt that the more skills are included in the placement test, the better but the fact was that there were not enough time, space and facilities in hand to administer a full version of TOEFL test.

The test includes 40 questions: 20 vocabulary, 10 grammar and 10 reading comprehension questions. Questions 1-20 tested the learners' vocabulary knowledge.

### 3.3.2 MBTI Personality Type Indicator

The other instrument was a questionnaire (MBTI) to determine personality type known as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. It totally included four parts and each part was composed of six questions with 5 choices. The first part determines the participant['s preference of Extroversion/Introversion. After all 6 questions were answered, the numbers of the answers were added up. If the number is less than 19, the person is Extrovert ( $\mathbf{E}$ ); and if it is more than 19, s/he is Introvert (I). The second part of the questionnaire determines the participant's preference of Sensing /iNtuition. Also in this part the participants answered 6 questions. Then the numbers of each answer were added up. If the total score of an individual on the second part of the questionnaire is less than 18 , then $\mathrm{s} /$ he is a Sensing ( $\mathbf{S}$ ) individual, and if it is more than 18, an iNtuitive ( $\mathbf{N}$ ) individual. The third part of the questionnaire determines the participant's preference of Feeling/Thinking. Like the previous parts, after answering 6 questions, the total number of answers will show the Feeling ( $\mathbf{F}$ ) or Thinking ( $\mathbf{T}$ ) preference. If the number is less than 20, the individual is Thinking type; if it is more than $20, \mathrm{~s} / \mathrm{he}$ is Feeling type. The last part of the questionnaire determines the person's preference of Judging/Perceiving. If the total score of the participant is less than $21, \mathrm{~s} /$ he prefers Judging

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(J) type and if it is more than 21, s/he prefers Perception ( $\mathbf{P}$ ). The reason why these scores have been set as the criteria is that they are the observed value for the local standard of the questionnaire-based on percentile ranks.

Criteria for classifying the participants into personality types based on percentile ranks(Myers-Briggs)

|  | MBTI Questionnaire | If the total number of the scores is |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Form 1 | Extroversion / Introversion | less than $19=\mathrm{E}$ | more than $19=\mathrm{I}$ |
| Form 2 | Sensing / iNtuition | less than $18=\mathrm{S}$ | more than $18=\mathrm{N}$ |
| Form 3 | Thinking / Feeling | less than $20=\mathrm{T}$ | more than $20=\mathrm{F}$ |
| Form 4 | Judging / Perceiving | less than $21=\mathrm{J}$ | more than $21=\mathrm{P}$ |

The final outcome of this questionnaire is a personality type for each participant which is shown by four letters such as ESFP which stands for Extroverted, Sensing, Feeling and Perceiving personality type. All 16 possible types that can be elicited from the questionnaire are shown in the following table and each participant was supposed to be labeled as one of these types (MBTI handout).

| All sixteen types of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator |  |
| :--- | :--- |
| ESTJ: | Extroversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judgment |
| INFP: | Introversion, iNtuition, Feeling, Perception |
| ESFP: | Extroversion, Sensing, Feeling, Perception |
| INTJ: | Introversion, iNtuition, Thinking, Judgment |
| ESFJ: | Extroversion, Sensing, Feeling, Judgment |
| INTP: | Introversion, iNtuition, Thinking, Perception |
| ENFP: | Extroversion, iNtuition, Feeling, Perception |
| ISTJ: | Introversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judgment |
| ESTP: | Extroversion, Sensing, Thinking, Perception |
| INFJ: | Introversion, iNtuition, Feeling, Judgment |
| ENFJ: | Extroversion, iNtuition, Feeling, Judgment |
| ENTJ: | Extroversion, iNtuition, Thinking, Judgment |
| ISTP: | Introversion, Sensing, Thinking, Perception |
| ISFP: | Introversion, Sensing, Feeling, Perception |
| ENTP: | Extroversion, iNtuition, Thinking, Perception |
| ISFJ: | Introversion, Sensing, Feeling, Judgment |

3.3.3 Six Topics of Writing

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In addition to the previously mentioned instruments the researcher used two topics for argumentative writing; two topics for descriptive writing and two topics for narrative writing.
Argumentative topics of writing: 1) What are the negative aspects of technology in our lives? 2) Discuss the dangers of air pollution to the human health and environment?
Descriptive topics of writing: 1) Do you remember the worst news you have ever heard in your life? Describe it. 2) Who is your life hero? Describe his/her outstanding characteristics.
Narrative topics of writing: 1) How have you changed within the last five years? (Physically and personality). 2) Do you remember the first day of your school? Narrate it.

### 3.4 Procedures

As explained previously, three sets of data were needed to conduct the present study: a test of language proficiency, a questionnaire to determine personality type and compositions to measure writing performance.

Arrangements were made with the officials of the Pooya Elme Jamae Institute to collect data from their high-intermediate classes. The researcher explained both to the officials and the learners that their responses would be used only for research purposes. Then each participant was given the pack of instruments. It should be mentioned that all the participants were told NOT to write their names on the instruments, because it may affect their honesty in responding. Each pack of data had a code, 1,2,3,4, etc. For completing the MBTI questionnaire, the allocated time was 10 minutes. 60 minutes were given to write an argumentative, a descriptive and a narrative writings ( 20 minutes for each). And finally the participants had 20 minutes to answer the language proficiency test. So the collection of data took around an hour and half. They were told that in a second session, a few days later they would receive three more topics to write about. This was done simply because the researcher wanted to retest the learners writing performance. A few days later, they were given other topics for argumentative, descriptive and narrative writings. Therefore, for each participant the following raw data was collected.

| Participant code: |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Personality type |  |  |  |
| Language proficiency score |  |  |  |
| Argumentative writing score | $1^{\text {st }}$ score | $2^{\text {nd }}$ score | Mean score |
| Descriptive writing score | $1^{\text {st }}$ score | $2^{\text {nd }}$ score | Mean score |
| Narrative writing score | $1^{\text {st }}$ score | $2^{\text {nd }}$ score | Mean score |
|  |  |  |  |

Fortunately, the institute's placement test was accurate enough because our language test also showed that all the participants belonged to the same language proficiency test. The participant's writings were rated by two raters according to the scoring standards of TOEFL (taking cohesion and coherence, grammatical accuracy, appropriate word choice into account). So for each participant there was a number (ranging from 0 to 100) which showed his or her argumentative, descriptive and narrative writing performance. Since each participant had written two essays for each style of writing, the more additionally the writing, were rated by two raters, the scores would enjoy a very high level of reliability.

Since scoring writing tasks has a subjective nature, therefore the mean score of two writings were recorded as the final writing score.

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Data then were entered into SPSS statistical software. The first three research questions went through Pearson Correlation test and for the last research question independent sample $t$-test was run.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Testing the first hypothesis

Table4.1. shows the frequency of different personality types. ISTJ type is the most common personality type among 60 participants including 27.9 percent of all participants ( $\mathrm{N}=17$ ). Two personality types (ESFP and ISFJ) were not observed in the data analysis process. That is why there are 14 types mentioned in the table.

Table 4.1 Frequency of different personality types

| Descriptive statistics |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | ESTJ | 15 | 24.6 | 25.0 | 25.0 |
|  | INFP | 4 | 6.6 | 6.7 | 31.7 |
|  | INTJ | 6 | 9.8 | 10.0 | 41.7 |
|  | ESFJ | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 43.3 |
|  | INTP | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 45.0 |
|  | ENFP | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 46.7 |
|  | ISTJ | 17 | 27.9 | 28.3 | 75.0 |
|  | ESTP | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 78.3 |
|  | INFJ | 5 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 86.7 |
|  | ENFJ | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 88.3 |
|  | ENTJ | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 90.0 |
|  | ISTP | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 93.3 |
|  | ISFP | 3 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 98.3 |
|  | ENTP | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 60 | 98.4 | 100.0 |  |

According to the descriptive statistics presented in table 4.2 below, a total number of 60 participants took part in the study. The minimum and maximum argumentative writing scores were respectively 35 and 95 out of 100 and the mean score is 71.25 .

Table 4.2. Argumentative writing Mean score Descriptive Statistics

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Argumentative Writing | 60 | 35.00 | 95.00 | 71.2500 | 15.88158 |
| Score | 60 | 1.00 | 14.00 | 5.5667 | 3.86364 |
| Personality Type | 60 |  |  |  |  |
| Valid N (listwise) |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 4.3 shows the frequency of each personality type and the mean score of their writing performance. The highest argumentative score belongs to ENFP personality type and the lowest belongs to ENTJ. According to table 4.3, two personality types are more common than the others. They are ESTJ with the frequency of 15 and mean score of 56.66 and ISTJ with the frequency of 17 and mean score of 78.23.

Table 4.3 Argumentative writing score and personality type
Descriptive
statistics

| Personality <br> Type | Mean | N | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ESTJ | 56.6667 | 15 | 14.71960 |
| INFP | 80.0000 | 4 | 13.54006 |
| INTJ | 72.5000 | 6 | 16.35543 |
| ESFJ | 65.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| INTP | 92.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ENFP | 95.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ISTJ | 78.2353 | 17 | 12.49264 |
| ESTP | 67.5000 | 2 | 10.60660 |
| INFJ | 76.0000 | 5 | 8.94427 |
| ENFJ | 75.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ENTJ | 50.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ISTP | 82.5000 | 2 | 17.67767 |
| ISFP | 71.6667 | 3 | 12.58306 |
| ENTP | 65.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| Total | 71.2500 | 60 | 15.88158 |

The results of Pearson correlation test as shown in table 4.4 indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship ( P value is smaller than .05) between the personality type and argumentative writing performance of learners ( $\mathrm{r}=.00$ ). Therefore the first null hypothesis "There is no statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the argumentative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners" was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was confirmed.

Table 4.4 Pearson Correlation between personality type and argumentative writing performance
Correlations

|  |  | Total of Personality <br> Type Questionnaire | Argumentative Writing <br> Score |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Total of Personality Type | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.436^{* *}$ |
| Questionnaire | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 60 | 60 |
| Argumentative Writing | Pearson Correlation | $.436^{* *}$ | 1 |
| Score | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 60 | 60 |

Correlations

|  |  | Total of Personality <br> Type Questionnaire | Argumentative Writing <br> Score |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Total of Personality Type  <br> Questionnaire Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.436^{* *}$ |  |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 60 | 60 |
| Argumentative Writing | Pearson Correlation | $.436^{* *}$ | 1 |
| Score | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | 60 |
|  | N | 60 | 60 |

### 4.2 Testing the second hypothesis

Table 4.5 shows the frequency of each personality type and the mean score of their descriptive writing performance. The highest descriptive writing score belongs to INTP personality type and the lowest belongs to ENTP. According to table 4.5, two personality types are more common than the others. They are ESTJ with the frequency of 15 and a mean score of 55.33 and ISTJ with the frequency of 17 and a mean score of 59.41.
4.5 Descriptive writing score and personality type

Descriptive
statistics

| Personality <br> Type | Mean | N |  |
| :--- | :---: | ---: | ---: |
| ESTJ | 55.3333 |  | Std. Deviation |
| INFP | 67.5000 | 15 | 14.57330 |
| INTJ | 60.0000 | 4 | 29.86079 |
| ESFJ | 70.0000 | 6 | 14.14214 |
| INTP | 85.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ENFP | 80.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ISTJ | 59.4118 | 1 | .000 |
| ESTP | 62.5000 | 17 | 14.23929 |
|  | 79.0000 | 2 |  |
| INFJ | 70.0000 | 5 | 12.94218 |
| ENFJ | 70.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ENTJ | 70.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ISTP | 56.6667 | 2 | .000 |
| ISFP | 40.0000 | 3 | 20.81666 |
| ENTP | 61.9167 |  | .000 |
| Total |  | 60 | 16.23690 |

Table 4.6 Descriptive writing mean score

## Descriptive Statistics

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Gender | 60 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.6000 | .49403 |
| Descriptive Writing Score | 60 | 20.00 | 95.00 | 61.9167 | 16.23690 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 60 |  |  |  |  |

The mean score of descriptive writing (61.91) is less than the argumentative writing score (as shown in table 4.5) and the difference between minimum and maximum score is 75 . To explore the relationship between personality type and descriptive writing performance, once more Pearson Correlation test was run (table 4.6). For the second research hypothesis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It means that a statistically significant relationship was found between personality type and descriptive writing performance of Iranian EFL learners (.018).

Table 4.7 Pearson Correlation between personality type and descriptive writing performance
Correlations

|  |  | Total of Personality <br> Type Questionnaire | Descriptive Writing <br> Score |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | ---: | :---: |
| Total of Personality | Pearson | 1 |  |  |
| Type Questionnaire | Correlation |  | $.304^{*}$ |  |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .018 |  |
|  | N | 60 | 60 |  |
| Descriptive Writing | Pearson | $.304^{*}$ | 1 |  |
| Score | Correlation | .018 |  |  |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | 60 |  |  |
|  | N |  | 60 |  |

### 4.3 Testing the third hypothesis

Relying on the descriptive statistics presented in table 4.7, the average narrative writing score is 60.41 which is very similar to descriptive score but moderately different from argumentative score.

Table 4.8 Narrative writing Mean score
Descriptive Statistics

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Gender | 60 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.6000 | .49403 |
| Narrative Writing | 60 | 35.00 | 90.00 | 60.4167 | 16.18986 |
| Score | 60 |  |  |  |  |
| Valid N (listwise) |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 4.8 , shows the frequency of each personality type and the mean score of their narrative writing performance. The highest narrative writing score belongs to ESFJ personality type and
the lowest belongs to ENTJ. According to table 4.8, two personality types are more common than the others. They are ESTJ with the frequency of 15 and a mean score of 54.33 and ISTJ with the frequency of 17 and a mean score of 63.82.

Table 4.9 Narrative writing score and personality type
Descriptive
statistics

| Personality <br> Type | Mean | N | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | :---: |
| ESTJ | 54.3333 | 15 | 12.37317 |
| INFP | 66.2500 | 4 | 11.08678 |
| INTJ | 61.6667 | 6 | 20.65591 |
| ESFJ | 85.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| INTP | 80.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ENFP | 70.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ISTJ | 63.8235 | 17 | 18.41615 |
| ESTP | 47.5000 | 2 | 3.53553 |
| INFJ | 64.0000 | 5 | 17.81853 |
| ENFJ | 40.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ENTJ | 35.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| ISTP | 70.0000 | 2 | 14.14214 |
| ISFP | 56.6667 | 3 | 10.40833 |
| ENTP | 55.0000 | 1 | .000 |
| Total | 60.4167 | 60 | 16.18986 |

To find out if there is any statistically significant relationship between narrative writing and personality type, again Person Correlation test is used. But table 4.9 showed that contrary to the previous two research hypotheses, the third null hypothesis was shown to be true because the P value is .16 which is more than .05 . So there is no statistically significant relationship between the personality type and the narrative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners.

Table 4.10 Pearson Correlation between personality type and narrative writing performance
Correlations

|  |  | Total of <br> Personality Tarit <br> Questionnaire | Narrative Writing <br> Score |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Total of Personality Tarit <br> Questionnaire | Pearson Correlation <br>  <br>  <br>  <br>  <br> Sig. (2-tailed) <br> N | 1 | .182 |
| Narrative Writing Score | Pearson Correlation | 60 | .163 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .182 | 60 |
|  | N | .163 | 1 |
|  | 60 | 60 |  |

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Using Pearson correlation test revealed that personality type has a statistically significant relationship with argumentative and descriptive writing performance, but no significant relationship with narrative writing.

### 4.4 Testing the fourth hypothesis

According to statistical rules, when it is supposed to investigate the role of gender (either male or female), independent sample t-test must be used. The last research question of this study attempts to investigate the difference between writing score of male and female language learners across different personality types. Table 4.11 indicated no statistically significant difference between the writing performance of males and females. Therefore the null hypothesis comes true that there is no statistically significant difference in the writing score of male and female language learners across different personality types.

Table 4.11 Independent Sample T- Test

Independent Sample T- Test

|  | Levene's <br> Test for <br> Equality of <br> Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { Sig. } \\ (2- \\ \text { tailed }) \\ \hline \end{array}$ | Mean <br> Difference | Std. Error <br> Difference |
| Total of Equal <br> Personality variances <br> Type assumed <br> Questionnaire Equal <br>  variances <br>  not <br>  assumed | 1.392 | . 243 | $\begin{array}{\|r\|} \hline- \\ 3.082 \\ \\ 2.919 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 58 \\ \\ 40.274 \end{array}$ | $\begin{aligned} & .003 \\ & .006 \end{aligned}$ | $-7.73611$ $-7.73611$ | $2.51018$ $2.64986$ |

## 5. Discussion

The first research question of the current study concerned with the relationship between personality type and argumentative writing performance. Apparently the higher language proficiency level leads to better performance in writing skill. But it cannot be always true, simply because in this study all the participants belonged to the same language proficiency level but there were remarkable differences in their writing scores (minimum 35 and maximum 95). Where does such difference originate from? Murray (1990) has explained that individual differences play an important role in the language achievement of language learners and Terveen (2001) believed that some personality types dramatically perform better than other types in writing skill. Data of this study showed that ENFP (Extrovert, iNtuition, Feeling, Perception) type has a significantly better argumentative performance. According to MBTI handbook, ENFPs are social people who are generally good at communicating. They are enthusiastic and can persuade other people to join in. They adapt to changes as they go. Three terms are shown to be outstanding characteristics of this personality type:
$\checkmark$ good at communicating
can persuade
$\checkmark$ adapt to changes
Considering the theoretical structure of argumentative writings, Freedman (1985) believes that purpose of argument is to persuade the other party and this is what ENFPs are good at. Also it is necessary to be able to establish effective communicative channels while arguing. As MBTI handbook has said, ENFPs can adapt to changes and it means that they are realistic people who see the changes and adapt themselves. To conclude, it is reasonable and logical to claim that realistic, persuasive and skilled communicative people can be better argumentative writers.

The second research question of this research was related to the relationship between personality type and descriptive writing performance. Data analysis revealed that INTPs have better performance in descriptive writing. INTPs prefer Introversion, iNtuition, Thinking and Perception. In order to discuss the relationship between all four aspects of INTP and descriptive writing, it is necessary to investigate this personality type in more depth. INTPs are creative and use logical ideas when they need to respond. They can be very analytic and their natural curiosity enables them to find discrepancies in logical situations.

Therefore among the outstanding features of INTPs are creativity and being logical. These features are closely related to one's ability to describe something. In other words, creative and logical individuals are like photographers who take a photo without any change in the size, quality or physical aspect of the subject. For a photographer it is not important what the subject is like. Whatever or whoever the subject is, the photographer takes the photo. This is so similar to what a descriptive writer does. Descriptive writing requires the writer to describe whatever/whoever $\mathrm{s} / \mathrm{he}$ sees and for doing so, creativity and logic plays an important role.
The third research question explores the relationship between personality type and another genre of writing, narrative writing. No significant relationship was found between personality type and narrative writing performance. It seems that when it comes to narrative writing, not personality type, but most probably language proficiency level marks the failure or success of a learner. In other words, no specific personality type performs better in narrative writing.

The last research question investigates the role of gender in writing. It was shown that gender plays no important role in writing. This is not far from reality to expect same levels of performance from both males and females in language learning. One reason to justify this is that these days both males and females have access to the same facilities. It means that the learning conditions are nearly identical for both genders and language learning and teaching policies show no bias toward one specific gender. Therefore when the learning conditions are the same for males and females, it is reasonable to expect the same level of language performance such as writing.

## 6. Conclusion

As mentioned before, the main concern of this study was to investigate the relationship between personality type and writing performance of different genres. In In order to obtain evident proof for this relationship, the collected data were analyzed through Pearson Correlation test and independent sample t-test the results of statistical analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between personality type and argumentative writing performance. Also significant relationship was shown between personality type and descriptive writing performance. But there wasn't any statistically significant relationship between personality type and narrative writing. Finally the data analysis indicated that gender is not a significant factor in writing performance.

The findings of this study can be initially useful for teacher of writing skill. Knowing this fact

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that some specific personality types perform better than other types in language performance, enables teachers to pay more attention to individual characteristics of language learners. For example if a learner is more introvert thinking type and intuitive then the teacher can predict that $\mathrm{s} / \mathrm{he}$ is more capable of being a better descriptive writer. Also material developers can find the results of this study beneficial in terms of this fact that text books can be designed and developed to be more suitable for specific personality types.

Obviously, no research study seems to be perfect and without any limitations, and this study is not an exception and it has its own limitations that need to be acknowledged. The first limitation was that relatively little number of participants attended this study. The bigger the number of participants, the more reliable and generalizable the findings will be. The second limitation was lack of accessibility to different institutes. The data needed for this study were collected from one context. Finally the third limitation was that there was no control on the participants" honesty in completing the MBTI questionnaire.

This study investigated the relationship between personality type and writing performance. Other studies can be done to study the relationship between other language skills such as reading, speaking or listening. Also other instruments such as Eysenck's Introversion/Extroversion scale can be used to determine personality type. The participants of this study were young adults. Other studies can be done with the participation of children or teenagers.

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## AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF NOPLANNING, GUIDED AND NON-GUIDED PRE-TASK PLANNING ON INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY, COMPLEXITY AND FLUENCY

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#### Abstract

THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION OF TWO TYPES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING (GUIDED VS. NON-GUIDED PRE-TASK PLANNING) AS A POTENTIAL PSYCHOLINGUISTIC IMPLEMENTATION VARIABLE IN L2 TASK PERFORMANCE. A TOTAL OF 60 INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS FROM THREE INTACT GROUPS WERE SELECTED AS THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY. WHEREAS NO PRE-TASK PLANNING WAS ALLOWED IN THE FIRST GROUP, UNGUIDED PRE-TASK PLANNING WAS OPERATIONALIZED IN THE SECOND INDEPENDENT GROUP AND GUIDED PLANNING WAS MANIPULATED IN THE THIRD INDEPENDENT GROUP. IN GUIDED PRE-TASK PLANNING GROUP, THE TEACHER DIRECTED LEARNERS' ATTENTION ON THE CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF LANGUAGE PRODUCTION ON THE GIVEN TASK TYPE. THE IMPACT OF THE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLANNING WAS EXAMINED ON THREE ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE PRODUCTION, NAMELY FLUENCY, ACCURACY AND COMPLEXITY. THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT BOTH GUIDED AND UNGUIDED PRE-TASK PLANNING GROUPS OUTPERFORMED THE GROUP IN WHICH NO PRE-TASK PLANNING WAS ALLOWED. THE HIGHEST PERFORMANCE WAS RELATED TO THE GUIDED PLANNING WHERE THE PARTICIPANTS HAD THE HIGHEST GRAMMATICAL COMPLEXITY AND FLUENCY IN LANGUAGE PRODUCTION. UNGUIDED PRE-TASK PLANNING GROUP OUTPERFORMED NO-PLANNING GROUP. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS OBSERVED THAT BOTH GUIDED AND UNGUIDED PRE-TASK PLANNING RESULTED IN MORE FLUENT LANGUAGE PRODUCTION IN WRITTEN PICTURE NARRATIVE TASKS.


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### 1.0. Introduction

One cutting-edge research issue related to planning and not examined by researchers is the role of teacher in planning language production. In other words, researchers have not examined the facilitating or debilitating role and contribution of teacher's direction and guiding in L2 learners' language production. Whether researchers can guide learners to better plan language production or not is the principal research problem which is examined in this study. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, very few studies have examined the role of teachers in learners' planning of task-based language production. Thus, the present study is designed to study the impact of teacher's guide and direction for planning written language production. Very few researchers have made a distinction between guided and unguided pre-task planning. The present study is aimed at examining this unexplored and under-researched issue.

In research studies on planning, it is assumed that the quality of task performance and language production depends in part on effective planning. Furthermore, in most research studies, the impact of planning and other task-related variables such task type, cognitive difficulty, etc. have been analyzed on the accuracy, complexity and fluency (Robinson, 2001, p. 295; Skehan \& Foster, 1999, p. 97; Wigglesworth, 1997, p. 87). The majority of studies conducted on task planning came to the overall conclusion task planning does have a significant effect on the quality of language production and written or oral task performance (Foster \& Skehan, 1996, p. 306; Yuan \& Ellis, 2003, p. 3). Wigglesworth (1997, p. 85) studied the impact of planning on EFL learners in a spoken test. The results of his study indicated that planning significantly helped high proficiency learners to produce complex and fluent language but it had no effect on accuracy.

Yuan \& Ellis (2003, p. 1) investigated the effect of both pre-task planning and on-line planning on oral narrative discourse. They asked EFL learners to orally narrate a story according to a picture. There were three task groups in that study: no-planning, pre-task planning (10 minutes) and online planning where they had unlimited time to narrate a story. They found that whereas pre-task planning affected grammatical complexity, fluency and lexical variety, on-line planning promoted accuracy. Based on the study reviewed above, it can be maintained that different types of planning, namely pre-task planning and online-planning direct L2 learners' attention to different dimensions of language production. In other words, it might be argued that online and offline planning engage learners with different attentional resources. Strong empirical support for the efficacy of planning was also given by Foster and Skehan (1996, p. 304). They showed that giving learners time to plan before they begin a task has a notable impact on all linguistic measures of complexity, fluency and accuracy. The reason for this relationship can be found in information-processing theory which contends that since learners' attention capacity is limited, they can devote their attention to one aspect of task at a time. In another study, Skehan and Foster (1999, p. 100) manipulated pre-task planning into four conditions: teacher-fronted planning, group-based planning, solitary planning and no planning. In brief, they found the best effect for teacher-fronted planning; that is, the teacher-fronted planning group had the highest grammatical accuracy; the second best result was related to the solitary planning group. Ortega (1999, p. 109) investigated the effect of pre-task planning with focus on form and found that form-focused planning reduced cognitive load and communicative pressure and facilitated online planning. That is, Ortega (ibid) came to the conclusion that for-focused pre-task planning improved syntactic complexity and fluency but it did not have systematic impact on accuracy.

Ellis (2009, p. 124) investigated the differential impact of three different types of planning on the linguistic accuracy, fluency and complexity of task performance. He claimed that all task types have remarkable and undeniable impact on the fluency of language production; he argued that the effects of different planning types might have differential and at time contradictory

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impact on accuracy and complexity. Hence, claiming a systematic impact of task planning on accuracy and complexity would be immature. In another study, Foster and Skehan (1996, p. 310) investigated the impact of guided planning. As defined above, guided planning refers to planning where learners are given specific advice on what to plan and how to plan. They compared guided and unguided planning with each other and found that guided planning resulted in more fluent performance of narrative tasks than unguided planning. However, they found a significant difference only in fluency measure of the narrative task but not on personal and decision-making tasks. The review of the related studies on planning reveals that very few studies have been conducted on guided vs. unguided planning. Hence, this issue is considered to be a research gap which has been addressed in the present study.

## 2. Methodology

The present study was carried out to investigate the impact of guided vs. unguided pre-task planning on intermediate EFL learners' narrative task performance. The impetus behind this study was to identify the relationship, namely the causal relationship between two types of planning which is the independent variable of the study and narrative task performance which is the dependent variable.

### 2.1. Research Question

The present study was intended to answer the following research question:
Is there a significant difference between intermediate EFL learners' guided and non-guided pre-task planning of written narrative task in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity?

The independent variable of the study had two levels or conditions, i.e. guided vs. unguided planning. Planning which is the independent variable of the study was operationalized on the following two task types:

### 2.2. Unguided Planning

Under the first level of the independent variable, the sample EFL learners were given 10 minutes to plan the task. However, the researcher did not guide the participants in how to plan or focus on what aspect of language.

### 2.3. Unguided Planning

Under the second level of the independent variable, the researcher guided them how to do the planning. In both of the above-mentioned conditions, the participants were asked to write a narration for the story illustrated in a set of pictures. Performing this task was based on visual images which were given to the participants. The participants were required to sequentially organize the information reflected in the pictures. The impact of the above-mentioned planning conditions was investigated on the following dependent variables (CAF):

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    > Accuracy
    Fluency
    > Complexity
2.4. Participants of the Study
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A total of 60 intermediate EFL learners were selected as the sample participants of the study. All the participants were freshmen university students who studied management at PNU (Payam Nour University) in Tabriz, Eastern Azerbaijan, Iran. The participants were selected from three intact groups. All the participants were adult EFL learners. Both male and female participants were included in the three intact groups. Those EFL learners whose proficiency scores on the
proficiency test were more than one score above and below the obtained mean score were eliminated from the participant groups. The age range of the participants varied from a minimum of 18 to a maximum of 32 . The first language of the participants was Azerbaijani Turkish.

### 2.5. Testing instruments

Paper-based version of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) selected from TOEFL Preparation Kit (2003) was selected as the instrument for screening and homogenizing the proficiency level of the participants.

### 2.6. Teaching instruments

To investigate the impact of pre-task planning operationalized as no-planning and guided vs. non-guided pre-task planning on accuracy, fluency and complexity of language production, the researcher used a written picture-based monologic narrative task. a series of cartoon strips were given to the participants and were asked to narrate the story demonstrated in the picture strips.

### 2.7. Procedures of the Study

As mentioned earlier, the objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of guided and unguided planning on narrative task performance in terms of language fluency, accuracy and complexity. Using the above-mentioned materials, the researcher conducted certain operational procedures. At the outset of the study, a critical procedure was related to the selection of the participants for the study. In other words, paper-based TOEFL test extracted from the TOEFL Preparation Kit was administered on three intact groups to check their proficiency level.

Data were collected from two general English classes at PN University in Tabriz, Eastern Azerbaijan, Iran. Having screened the proficiency level of the participants in the first session, the researcher gave the task on subsequent sessions. The distinguishing feature of the three intact groups was related to the type of pre-task planning which was given to each of the independent groups. Indeed, pre-task planning as the independent variable of the study was manipulated and categorized into no planning, guided and unguided planning. The three independent groups were labeled as no-planning group, guided planning group and unguided planning group.

No-planning group: in this group, no planning time was given to the participants. They were given the task and were immediately asked to perform the task. That is, neither pre-task planning nor within task planning time was given to this group. Picture narrative task was implemented following this condition.

Unguided planning group: in the second independent group, the same picture narrative task was given. In this group, the participants were asked to pre-plan the task but they were left to their own in planning the task (unguided pre-planning). The task was performed individually by each of the participants within the group. The Unlimited planning time was given to this group. However, the teacher did not provide advice about what and how to plan.

Guided planning: in the third independent group, the researcher gave the same task as one used for the first and second groups. Nevertheless, the participants within the third group were given guided pre-planning before they perform the task. In this group, the participants were directed by the teacher to attend to linguistic form and meaning. Planning was undertaken individually by each participant. However, the distinguishing feature of the third group was that planning was guided by the teacher.

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Measuring Written Task Performance: accuracy, fluency and complexity were used as three measures for analyzing participants' task performance. Hence, the participants' picture narrative tasks were analyzed with respect to fluency, accuracy and complexity. These measures are based on information-processing framework (Skehan, 1996, p. 47). These measures were practically defined and calculated in the following way:

Complexity: complexity is concerned with the elaboration of language which is produced and reflects learners' preparedness to take risks (Skehan, 1996, p. 43). There are different formula for measuring complexity. Nevertheless, in the present study, complexity was measured by calculating the ratio of lexical to grammatical words.

Fluency: indeed, fluency has been given little attention and it may be a term with the most varied definitions in writing research. It refers to the learner's capacity to mobilize his system to communicate meaning in real-time (Ellis, 2003, p. 113). Numerous different definitions have been proposed for measuring fluency in language production. It should pointed out that most fluency measures were aimed at oral language performance; however, some measures of fluency are used for written language performance. Indeed, in the present study, for measuring fluency, a measure of words per T-units was used (Arent, 2003, p. 11). That is to say, the total number of words in the written tasks were divided by the number of T-units in it. T-unit refers to a main clause with all subordinate clauses attached to it.

Accuracy: Accuracy is concerned with the formal and grammatical dimension of language production. L2 learners trying to produce accurate language aim to control those linguistic features which they have already learned. The criterion used in the present study for measuring accuracy was based on Skehan and Foster (1997, p. 197). That is, accuracy was measured by calculating the percentage of the total number of errors to the total number of words in the written tasks. All the participants' errors with respect to the morphosyntactic features were identified and highlighted. It should be noted that mechanical mistakes and non-significant punctuation problems were not regarded as grammatical errors.

## 3. Results of the study

The participants' performances on the written-narrative task within the three different planning groups were analyzed. Their performances were analyzed and compared with each with respect to written fluency, grammatical complexity and accuracy.

### 3.1. Grammatical Complexity

As mentioned earlier, grammatical complexity was measured and operationalized as the ratio of lexical words to grammatical words. The following table shows the performances of the groups on the written narrative task.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the complexity measure on written narrative task

| Task type | Groups | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Written narrative task | No planning | 1.214 | 2.048 |
|  | Guided planning | 1.918 | 2.017 |
|  | Unguided planning | 2.486 | 2.248 |

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As the table indicates, the average score of the guided planning group is higher than those of unguided planning group and no-planning group. For check the significance of differences among the mean scores on the written narrative task, one-way ANOVA was used. The following table shows the results of inferential statistics.

Table 2. One-way ANOVA checking the significance of differences on written narrative task

| Comparison | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Between Groups | 424.0576 | 2 | 199.249 | 4.792 | .000 |

As this table shows, the obtained F ratio for the comparison of the three mean scores with respect to grammatical complexity was (4.792). The alpha level was set at (0.05) and degree of freedom was (2). Significance level was (0.00). Comparing significance level (0.00) with alpha level (0.05) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the grammatical complexity measures of the three groups on the written narrative task. Tukey post-hoc analysis was used to find which groups are significantly different from each other. The results of Tukey post-hoc analysis revealed that all the three groups had significantly different performances on written narrative task. The following figure demonstrates the differences between the independent groups of the study with respect to grammatical complexity.


Figure 1. Grammatical complexity of the three groups on written narrative task

### 3.2. Grammatical Accuracy

After analyzing the performances of the three groups with regard to complexity, their performances were analyzed with regard to grammatical accuracy. As mentioned before, grammatical accuracy was measured as the percentage of error-free clauses. The following table shows the descriptive statistics on the grammatical accuracy of the groups on narrative task.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on written narrative task with regard to grammatical accuracy

| Groups | Task type | Mean | Std Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Group one: (no planning) |  | 0.363 | 1.247 |


| Group two: (unguided pre-task planning) | Narrative task | 0.374 | 1.512 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | 0.376 | 1.426 |

As noted in table 6, the grammatical accuracy of the three groups are very similar. This reduces the probability of the statistical significance of difference between them. Nevertheless, inferential statistics should be used to check the significance of difference among them. The following table shows the results of inferential statistics.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA checking the significance of differences with regard to accuracy


The level of significance was obtained to be (0.256) and $P$ value was (0.05). Inasmuch as significance level is higher than $P$ value, hence, the performances of the groups on the narrative task are not different from each other with regard to grammatical accuracy. Planning type had no significant impact on the grammatical accuracy of the participants. The following figure illustrates the grammatical accuracy of the groups on the narrative task.


Figure 2. Grammatical accuracy of the groups on the written narrative task
The graphical representation of the grammatical accuracy of the groups corroborate the insignificance of the differences in their task performance.

### 3.3. Fluency in Written Narrative Task

The same descriptive and inferential statistics were used to compare the groups with regard to the fluency measure of performance on the written narrative task. Fluency was measured as the ratio of total words to T-units. The following table illustrates descriptive statistics on fluency of the written narrative task.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics on the fluency of the written narrative task

| Groups | Task type | Mean | Std Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Group one: (no planning) |  | 74.482 | 1.921 |
| Group two: (unguided pre-task planning) | narrative task | 79.155 | 1.874 |
|  |  | 82.147 | 2.011 |
| Group three: (guided pre-task planning) |  |  |  |

This table illustrates the mean value and standard deviation on the written fluency of the narrative tasks. Indeed, there seems to be remarkable differences in the mean fluency values of the groups. One-way ANOVA was used to check the significance of differences among the groups.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA on fluency dimension of written narrative task

| Comparison | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Between Groups | 341.248 | 2 | 145.951 | 15.364 | 0.000 |

The significance level in this table is zero, hence, the F ratio is significant with only a 0.05 degree of chance results. A Tukey post-hoc analysis was required to indicate which pairs are significantly different from each other. The conducted post-hoc analysis revealed that the performances of all three groups regarding written fluency are significantly different from each other. The following figure represents the distinction among the groups on the fluency measure of written narrative task.


Figure 3. The comparison of the groups on fluency measure in narrative task
Noting this figure reveals that the guided planning group had the highest fluency value in the narrative task. The in-depth discussion of the results are given in the next section of the study.

## 4. Discussion

Results and data analysis were used to answer the research question of the study. The research question was concerned with the impact of guided and unguided planning on the written narrative task. The three groups of the study were given different treatments with regard to planning in performing the narrative task. The results of the study indicated that the guided pretask planning group outperformed the unguided planning group and no-planning group on the grammatical complexity and fluency aspects of narrative task. In other words, the guided planning led to significantly higher grammatical complexity and fluency in picture-based narrative task. However, there were no significant differences among the groups of the study with respect to the grammatical accuracy of task performance in written narrative task. It can be argued that the answer to the first research question is a partial positive answer. That is to say, although guided pre-task planning had a significant impact on fluency and grammatical complexity of task performance, it did not have a significant impact on the grammatical accuracy of language production in narrative tasks.

In guided pre-task planning group, the teachers guided the participants on how to attend to the meaning but she did not guide the learners on how to focus on form in performing these tasks. That is, in the guided pre-task planning group, the teacher did not help participants in how to attend to syntax and linguistic aspects. Rather, the participants were guided on how to organize content and focus on meaning. Thus, one possible justification for the lack of impact of guided planning on grammatical accuracy is that the teacher did not guide them with respect to the syntactic and grammatical aspects of language production in the narrative task. As a result, since the participants were guided on how to attend to meaning and organize the content of picture scripts in the narrative tasks, the impact of guided planning was manifest in the complexity and fluency of language production.

Moreover, unguided pre-task planning group outperformed the group in which noplanning was allowed. Thus, even non-detailed and unguided planning had significant impact on the complexity and fluency of written language production. However, the mean comparisons of the three groups did not reveal any differences among them with respect to grammatical accuracy. That is, the results of the present study indicate obvious impact of both unguided and guided pre-task planning on fluency and complexity dimensions of language production in narrative tasks but systematic significant results were not observed for the effect of unguided and guided pre-task planning on accuracy.

The group in which planning was not allowed had the weakest performance with respect to fluency and complexity aspects of language production. Thus, it can be argued that both guided planning and unguided planning had significant impact on task performance in written narrative tasks as far as fluency and grammatical complexity were concerned.

As far as accuracy is considered, the results of the present study did not confirm those of Skehan \& Foster $(1997,185)$ since they found that planning improved accuracy in narrative tasks but it was not the case in this study. However, with regard to fluency, the results of the present study confirm those of Foster and Skehan (1996, p. 38) and Skehan and Foster (1997, p. 185). Also, the present study acknowledge those of Wendel (1997, p. 123) and Ortega (1999, p. 134) who found that planning enhanced fluency in narrative tasks.

## 5. Limitations of the Study

In this study, particular limitations and delimitations were taken into consideration. Regarding the limitations of the study, it might be pointed out that full randomization in selecting the participants of the study was not feasible. Hence, three intact groups of intermediate EFL learners were included in the study. Another limitation of the study was the duration and length of the study. Since the present study was a cross-sectional quasi-experimental study, the researcher was
not able to use different measures to examine the impact of planning type (guided vs. nonguided) at different time intervals. Moreover, since the study was conducted on university students whose major was management, it was not possible for the researcher to control and homogenize all the individual variables such as age, motivation level, attitude and aptitude of the participants of the study. In other words, although the researcher controlled the proficiency level of the participants, it was practically impossible to include participants who were identical with respect to age, motivation, interest in learning English, etc.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of an under-researched type of pre-task planning on task-based performance. Indeed, guided vs. unguided pre-task planning were operationalized as planning which was directed by the EFL learners themselves and planning which was directed and guided by the teacher. Planning was manipulated on written picture-based narrative task. The impact of planning was examined on three aspects of language production, namely, complexity, accuracy and fluency. It should be noted that planning in task-based performance is of theoretical significance for SLA researchers and practical significance for L2 teachers. In the present study, the study of pre-task planning shed some light on what L2 learners notice and attend in language learning. Planning was manipulated into three conditions in this study: no planning where participants were not allowed to pre-plan their language production and task performance, unguided planning in which EFL learners were left on their own to focus on whatever aspect of language they want and the guided planning condition in which the teacher directed learners' attention on the meaning and organization of language production. The two types of planning resulted in higher fluency in written narrative tasks. However, it should be highlighted that the researcher failed to obtain significant results for the impact of guided and unguided planning on the grammatical accuracy of language production in the given narrative tasks.

The researcher found that guided pre-task planning group outperformed both the unguided group and the no-planning group with respect to both complexity and accuracy aspects of task performance. Furthermore, it was observed that the unguided pre-planning group significantly outscored the no planning group. That is, although the unguided group had significantly lower complexity and fluency than the guided group but its performance was remarkable better than that of the no-planning group. To sum it up, the findings of the study indicated that strategic planning had a greater impact on macro features of language production, namely meaning and organization than micro features of language, syntactic and morphological aspects of language.

Planning and its different categorizations can be used in pedagogical contexts. Indeed, L2 teachers can consider pre-planning as a device to motivate L2 learners to focus on meaning or form in language production. L2 teachers can usefully use strategic planning for challenging tasks such as narratives and decision-making so as to enhance the complexity and fluency of L2 learners' production. In the present study, the researcher examined the impact pre-task planning on narrative tasks. Alternatively, future researchers can operationalize planning on other task types such as dictogloss, personal tasks, etc. That is, future researchers can study the interaction between planning and task types.

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# PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF IRANIAN ENGLISH TEACHERS AT STATE AND PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS: A CLIL PERSPECTIVE 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY INTENDED TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) APPROACH. IN ADDITION, RESEARCHER WANTED TO ASSESS THE POTENTIAL OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS FOR APPLYING THIS APPROACH IN THEIR TEACHING, AND INVESTIGATION OF EXISTENCE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION WITH TEACHING CONTEXT OF TEACHER. TO THIS END, 50 FE/MALE TEACHERS WERE SELECTED RANDOMLY FROM STATE AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN ISFAHAN TO ANSWER THREE KINDS OF QUESTIONNAIRE. THE DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL CALCULATIONS REVEALED NO SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FACTORS OF TEACHING CONTEXT AND KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHERS WITH USING CLIL APPROACH. BESIDE THE RESULT SHOWED THAT THE IRANIAN ENGLISH TEACHERS HAVE HIGH POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING CLIL APPROACH IN TEACHING ENGLISH.


KEY WORDS: PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, CLIL APPROACH, ENGLISH TEACHERS

## I.Introduction

Everyone would probably agree that knowing more languages than only one's mother tongue is a must nowadays. This necessity can be replied in language teaching by many ways, one of which is the approach of content and language integrated learning. One of the aims of content and language integrated learning is to encourage people's positive attitudes towards different languages.

The term teacher cognition refers to "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching- what teachers know, believe and think" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Interest in teachers' mental lives and cognition started with the investigation of the decisions teachers make in their classes (Shavelson \& Stern, 1981). Different terms are used for the description of teachers' knowledge base; pedagogical content knowledge or PCK, regarded teacher knowledge as going beyond what the

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training or the disciplinary content has offered and comprised of a qualitatively different body of knowledge which also includes experience (Grossman, 1990).

The particular interest to the present paper, however, are the studies done on teachers' pedagogical knowledge base (Gatbonton, 1999). Teacher's pedagogical knowledge base is defined by Mullock (2006) as the "accumulated knowledge about the act of teaching, including goals, procedures, and strategies that form the basis for what teachers do in classroom" (p. 48). Fradd and Lee (1998) present a definition of teacher knowledge as "the repertoire of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers require to effectively carry out classroom practices" (pp.761-762). Teacher knowledge appears as a multidimensional concept. As Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer (2001) conclude, "in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably interwined" (p.446).

Evidence is mounting that teaching a subject requires content knowledge that goes substantially beyond what is typically taught and learned in college and university classes. This special form of content knowledge is most commonly referred to as pedagogical content knowledge or simply PCK (Ball, 1988, 1991; Ball, Lubienski \&Mewborn, 2001; Gess Newsome \& Lederman, 1995; Grossman, 1990, 1991; Leinhardt\& Smith, 1985; Magnusson, Krajcik, \&Borko, 1999; Shulman, 1986, 1987; Wilson, Shulman, \&Richert, 1987; Wilson \&Wineburg, 1988; Wineburg\& Wilson, 1991). The term PCK was original coined by Lee Shulman and was defined as "the most useful forms of representation ... the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations - in a word, the most useful ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others... Pedagogical content knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult" (Shulman, 1986, p. 7).

Coyle (2010) emphasises that learning foreign language is not about learning and drilling into student's grammar and vocabulary. Today, the aim is to create a classroom with natural situations for language learning. The use of a foreign language in natural situations can enhance learners' motivation and interest towards foreign languages. It is the naturalness of integrating learning both a language and other subjects simultaneously, which is the strongest attribute of CLIL.

Luprichova (2012) also mentions that the CLIL method is an efficient way of improving learners' communicative competences and their ability to use language in different cultural and linguistic environments. She states, that CLIL is a "two in one" method, which can enhance motivation towards foreign language learning as well as the attitude towards other subjects. And through learning various school subjects in a foreign language, learners can develop the ability to start thinking in that foreign language.

Scholars in the field of CLIL have offered various definitions for CLIL. The following are some of them:
'CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language'. (Marsh, 1994)
'CLIL is a generic term and refers to any educational situation in which an additional language, and therefore not the most widely used language of the environment, is used for the teaching and learning of subjects other than the language itself '. (Marsh \& Lange, 2000)
'CLIL is an educational approach in which non-language subjects are taught through a foreign, second or other additional language'. (Marsh et al, 2001)

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'Integrating language with non-language content, in a dual-focused learning environment'. (Marsh, 2002)

For years every language in the curriculum was learnt in isolation from the other tongues and the shift from the TL to the L1 in language classes was not generally allowed, because it was thought to weaken the learning of the TL. However, nowadays the validity of code-switching is increasingly being recognized (Costa 2009; Cenoz 2011), since it has been regarded as a strategy adopted by all multilingual speakers, who choose between one code or another according to the interlocutor, the situation, the topic or the goal of the interaction (Centro Virtual Cervantes 2009). GuaschBoyé and MilianGubern (1999) consider that the use of the L1 by the students when confronting problems posed by the TL creates favorable conditions for language acquisition and linguistic reflection. Nevertheless, CLIL teachers still promote the TL in the classroom, by attaching great value to the pupils' attempts to use the TL with communicative purposes (PérezVidal 2002).

Gierlinger (2007) observes that the use of the L1 in CLIL settings varies considerably and depends on teachers' assessment of the classroom context. According to this author, the mother tongue is used by CLIL teachers mainly to give instructions or for disciplinary measures, to avoid misunderstandings and to gain a fuller comprehension of content topics. The L1 is an important supportive means especially in CLIL beginners' classes.

## II. Literature Review

## A. Pedagogical knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge is the knowledge of how to teach. Education courses offered in undergraduate, graduate, and re-certification courses are meant to help develop teacher knowledge about teaching just as content classes develop content knowledge.

The studies in the previous sections have shown that content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are helpful in teaching.

In addition to teachers' subject matter (content) knowledge and their general knowledge of instructional methods (pedagogical knowledge), pedagogical content knowledge was originally suggested as a third major component of teaching expertise, by Lee Shulman $(1986 ; 1987)$ and his colleagues and students (e.g. Carlsen, 1987; Grossman, Wilson, \& Shulman, 1989; Gudmundsdottir, 1987a, 1987b; Gudmundsdottir\& Shulman, 1987; Marks, 1990). This idea represents a new, broader perspective in our understanding of teaching and learning, and a special issue of the Journal of Teacher Education (Ashton, 1990) was devoted to this topic.

## B. The concept of knowledge

As reflected in the literature the concept of "knowledge" pertinent to research programs exploring teachers and teaching can generally be divided into two main categories, "teachergenerated knowledge", as a result of their personal experience, as opposed to "teacher education research oriented teacher knowledge"(carter,1990).

However, epistemologically, it is intended to elaborate on knowledge in general and teacher's knowledge in particular i.e. considering the research features which focus on or imply the very nature of knowledge comprising its forms, its justification reasons, its differentiation from belief and opinion. Fenstermacher (1993) further holds that the following questions are required to be answered to facilitate the epistemological scrutiny:

1. What is known about effective teaching?

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2. What do teachers know?
3. What knowledge is essential for teaching?
4. Who produces knowledge about teaching?

Before going through a deeper exploration of the questions, a brief overview needs to be presented. The first question intends to address the concept of knowledge in as it is perceived in the conventional behavioral science -called formal knowledge. To exemplify this form of knowledge one can recall the process-product studies of teaching. The second question points to teacher knowledge acquired as a result of their personal professional experience which includes practical, personal practical, situated, local, rational, and tacit. The first two questions shed light on the epistemological types of knowledge proposed in the research literature- formal knowledge and practical knowledge. The third question on the other hand leads us to the knowledge which is quintessential for teaching. To elaborate on this question one can refer to the research program conducted by Lee Shulman and his colleagues. Nevertheless, Shulman's work does not tend to introduce a different type of knowledge in contrast to those introduced in the two first questions. In fact the study aims at presenting the forms and types of knowledge essential to a competent teaching. And finally the fourth question directs us to investigate the difference between knowledge generated by university-based researchers and that generated by participating teachers. To serve as the exemplar in addressing the fourth question the work of Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle is quite prominent.

## C. What is pedagogy?

Although pedagogy is sometimes seen as a nebulous concept, it is essentially a combination of knowledge and skills required for effective teaching. The more traditional definitions describe pedagogy as either the science/theory or art/practice of teaching that makes a difference in the intellectual and social development of students.

More specifically, new research is defining pedagogy as "a highly complex blend of theoretical understanding and practical skill" (Lovat, ACDE, p. 11 2003). This research is highlighting the vast complexity of teachers' work and specifying just what the nature of that work truly is. As Lovat further emphasises: a teacher is "a highly developed autonomous professional, with a requisite professional knowledge base and practitioner skills which could stand alongside the equivalent in medicine, law and engineering" (ACDE, p.11).

Different research and theories may underpin different models of pedagogy but it is the contention of Freebody and Luke that within a certain range of procedures, differing teaching approaches work differentially with different communities of students; and effective teachers know that" (A Map of Possible Practices, Luke \& Freebody, June, 1999).

Effective teachers "have a rich understanding of the subjects they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organised, linked to other disciplines and applied to realworld settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students" (NBPTS 1999, 3-4 in Lovat, ACDE p12).

## D.EFL Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge:

According to Zhang's study another salient theme about Chinese EFL teacher knowledge is EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge can be subsumed into two categories: management of learning and management of resources (Tsui, 2003). In this section, the

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participants' conceptions of EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge will be reported, focusing on these two dimensions.

The term 'management of learning' is employed in a wider sense than the term 'classroom management' (Tsui, 2003). Although management of learning primarily involves classroom management, it is also concerned with out-of-classroom management. Classroom management refers to aspects of classroom organization, for example, using pair or group work, maintaining discipline, and dealing with daily business (e.g., collecting assignments). Out-of-class management refers to what teachers do before or after class to facilitate students' learning. The data shows that most of the findings are concerned with classroom management.

For classroom management, previous studies indicate that the ability to conduct effective classroom management is an important quality of an effective language teacher (Arends, 1998; Gray, 2001). All of the seven teacher-participants also perceived effective classroom management to be an essential quality of a Chinese EFL teacher.

## E. Theoretical background of CLIL

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a rapidly growing approach across Europe and throughout the world (Marsh 2006, p.33). Supporters of CLIL base their argument on evidence from theories such as Vygotsky's (1986) Social Constructivist theory, Krashen's (1982) Input Theory and Piaget's (1963) Cognitive Constructivist Theory. To them CLIL offers a comprehensive input and authentic material that "can become the object of 'real communication' where natural use of the target language is possible," (Dalton-Puffer 2007, p.3). It also forms a meaning-focused learning method (van de Craen \& Mondt 2003).

Naves (2009, p.25) argues that most of the arguments in favor of CLIL come from SLA research and show that CLIL (1) creates conditions for naturalistic language learning; (2) provides a purpose for language use in the classroom; (3) has a positive effect on language learning by putting the emphasis on meaning rather than form; and (4) drastically increases the amount of exposure to the target language that learners have.

Opponents of CLIL, on the other hand, argue that teaching more than one language at a time hampers the learning process. Others believe that it would negatively influence the students' first language that would fall behind. Evidence from different European countries, though, did not support that claim (Marsh 2003; De Graaff et al. 2007; Mehisto \& Asser 2007; Swain 1985). It is worth mentioning here that those studies were conducted in contexts where the exposure to the target language occurred at an early age and did not exceed 50 percent of the material to which the students were exposed. In Iran, my context, students attend university at the age of 18. They are adults who have full mastery of their mother tongue (L1) which rules out the possibility of any negative effect of CLIL on the students' L1.

## III. Statement of the problem

Coyle (2010) emphasizes that learning foreign language is not about learning and drilling into students grammar and vocabulary. Today, the aim is to create a classroom with natural situations for language learning. The use of a foreign language in natural situations can enhance learners' motivation and interest towards foreign languages. It is the naturalness of integrating learning both a language and other subjects simultaneously, which is the strongest attribute of CLIL. As education throughout the world becomes increasingly multilingual and multicultural, we must look beyond the individual learning the language system and consider language as a medium of learning, the coordination of language learning and content learning, language socialization as

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the learning of language and culture... and discourse in the context of social practice (Mohan 2002).

According to Marsh \& Lange (2000), though language classroom as an environment within which instruction is provided, is an essential part of the language learning process, in most cases based on the confinements of the classroom either in terms of time and resources, the teachers are not able to go beyond the classroom limits and manage to provide situations in which students really use language.

According to Ghorbani (2009) local educational authorities in Iran have less power in decisionmaking as the educational policies are almost entirely decided by the central government and passed down to the local organization to be employed in schools. In this system the provincial schools are bound with the textbooks and methodologies determined by the superior Ministry of Education.

Based on the definitions and the potential advantages of incorporating CLIL approach into the national educational policies and the inefficiencies of Iranian educational system in providing an effective foreign language learning and acquisition context which have been here in before mentioned, the author would like to propose that, based on the following reasons, establishing a movement toward incorporating CLIL approach in Iranian educational system is of evident benefits:

Most youngsters spend at least 12 years in this educational system before entering academic environments this can be increased if we take into account the preschool courses, which potentially provides the students with an invaluable opportunity to acquire a foreign language.
$\square$ CLIL approach perfectly works within the national educational system since it integrates the subject matters taught at schools and language.

It may perfectly compensate for the lack of authentic opportunities of foreign language use which is an inherent quality of any EFL context.
$\square$ It necessarily leads to nurturing students with higher international academic skills and better cross-cultural understanding.

Because of the importance of this approach and the role of English teachers to use of this approach the current study will consider the CLIL knowledge of English teachers in Iran. In this study an attempt is made to figure out to what extent Iranian English teachers use the CLIL approach in their teaching and investigation of the possible differences between the locations of teaching in order to use of CLIL approach. The result of this study can enable us to evaluate English teacher's knowledge and abilities in using of CLIL approach for CLIL implementation in pedagogical curriculum in Iran.

## IV. Research Questions

With regard to what was mentioned above, this study tried to seek answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent is CLIL approach used by Iranian state and private English teachers?
2. Is there any difference between Iranian state schools and private institute's English teachers considering the application of CLIL approach?

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3. Is there any significant relationship between teacher's beliefs and knowledge about CLIL approach and their amount of use of this approach?

## V. Methodology

## A. Participants

The participants of this study were 50 teachers, who teach in state schools and private institutes that were selected randomly in Isfahan. They were from different age groups and with different years of teaching experience.

## B. Instruments

The researcher decided to collect the data by using a questionnaire. This questionnaire had three parts. The first part had five background questions for the teachers. The second and third parts include: questions of CLIL awareness and Teacher questions of CLIL use. She chose this method because she thought it would be the most efficient way to gather information. The researcher also thought that this format would make analyzing the data easier and more accurate

## VI. Results

## A. Descriptive Statistics of the Study

The following tables and figures show the basic information about teacher's age, level of education, teaching experience, and their place of teaching. This information includes mean, minimum and maximum numbers in each investigation.

The mean of teacher's age is 33.8 , the minimum age of participants is 21 , and the maximum age of them is 60 as shown in table1.

Table1. Descriptive Statistics of Age Factor

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Age | 50 | 21.00 | 60.00 | 33.8800 |

As can be clearly seen in the table blow the mean of teaching experience the sample of this study is 11.98 years, the minimum teaching experience is 6 months and the maximum is 36 years.

Table2. Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Experience Factor

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum Mean |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Teaching experience | 50 | .5 | 36.0 | 11.980 |

The following figure shows clearly the frequency of the different educational level among teachers in this research.


Figure1. Educational level of samples
Researcher attends to show frequency of places that participants work in. So she brings figure 2.


Figure2. School types of sample

## B. Analysis of the Questionnaires

 . Results for Research Question 1To what extent is CLIL approach used by Iranian state and private English teachers?
First of all, in order to summarize the data such statistical techniques as drawing different types of tables and a number of descriptive statistics such as mean, median, variance and standard deviation were conducted. In fact, before going through inferential statistics, some descriptive measures were incorporated in Table 4.8.

Table3. Descriptive Statistics

| Valid | 50 |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $\mathrm{~N} \quad$ Missing | 0 |  |
|  |  |  |
| Mean |  | 94.60 |
| Median | 95.50 |  |
| Std. Deviation | 19.132 |  |
| Range | 85 |  |
| Minimum | 50 |  |
| Maximum | 135 |  |

As it can clearly be seen in the above table the mean of scores that derived from questionnaire is 94.60 , the minimum score is 50 and the maximum score is 135 .

The mean of scores is high and it indicates that the amount of use of CLIL approach by Iranian English teachers is high.

As can be clearly seen in the table below, the maximum obtained score is related to Assessment, Review, Feedback subsection and the minimum score is belong to Focus on writing part.

Table4. Descriptive Statistics of Subsections

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Activating | 50 | 7 | 23 | 15.62 | 3.630 |
| Guiding Understanding | 50 | 10 | 22 | 17.22 | 3.222 |
| Focus on Language | 50 | 3 | 24 | 15.24 | 4.307 |
| Focus on Speaking | 50 | 3 | 23 | 16.04 | 4.504 |
| Focus on Writing | 50 | 5 | 24 | 14.50 | 5.092 |
| Assessment, feedback |  | 0 | 28 | 18.32 | 5.117 |

These findings can be shown in figure 3.


Figure3. Means of Subsections

## . Results for Research Question 2

Is there any difference between Iranian state schools and private institutes' English teachers considering the application of CLIL approach?

To answer this question the one-way ANOVA test was used. With regard to the p-value, there is no significant difference between the means of the participants.

Table5. ANOVA Descriptive Statistics
Score

|  | Sum of Squares df |  | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Between Groups | 86.896 | 2 | 43.448 | .114 | .892 |
| Within Groups | 17849.104 | 47 | 379.768 |  |  |
| Total | 17936.000 | 49 |  |  |  |

To compare the pair means of sores, the two by two comparisons were run. For this she used LSD test. Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference between two groups.

Table6. Multiple Comparisons
Dependent Variable: Score LSD

| (I) School Type (J) School Type |  | Mean <br> Difference (I-J) | Std. Error |  | Sig. | 95\% Confidence Interval |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | Lower Bound Upper Bound |  |  |
| Private | State | 1.726 | 5.958 | .773 | -10.26 | 13.71 |  |
|  | Both P/S | 3.826 | 8.412 | .651 | -13.10 | 20.75 |  |
| State | Private | -1.726 | 5.958 | .773 | -13.71 | 10.26 |  |
|  | Both P/S | 2.100 | 8.558 | .807 | -15.12 | 19.32 |  |


| Both P/S | Private | -3.826 | 8.412 | .651 | -20.75 | 13.10 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | State | -2.100 | 8.558 | .807 | -19.32 | 15.12 |

The result of this part can be shown with figure 4.


Figure4. Multiple Comparisons

## . Assessing questionnaire dimensions based on school type

As can be seen obviously in table 7, below, the minimum and maximum mean of scores that obtained in private schools are respectively 14.43 in Focus on Writing and 17.74 in Guiding Understanding. Also this table shows that the minimum mean in state schools is 15 in activating subsection and maximum mean is 19.40 in Assessing, Review, feedback. Considering both private and state schools, the maximum mean is 17.57 in Guiding Understanding part and the obtained minimum mean in this study is 12.29 in Focus on Writing.

Table7.Descriptive Statistics Base on School Type

| School Type | N | Mean |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Activating | 23 | 16.13 |  |
| Guiding Understanding | 23 | 17.74 |  |
| Private | Focus on Language | 23 | 15.04 |
|  | Focus on Speaking | 23 | 16.74 |
|  | Focus on Writing | 23 | 14.43 |
| Assessment, <br> feedback | Review, 23 | 17.65 |  |

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| State | Activating | 20 | 15.00 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Guiding Understanding | 20 | 16.50 |
|  | Focus on Language | 20 | 15.45 |
|  | Focus on Speaking | 20 | 15.20 |
|  | Focus on Writing | 20 | 15.35 |
|  | Assessment, Review feedback |  | 19.40 |
| Both P/S | Activating | 7 | 15.71 |
|  | Guiding Understanding | 7 | 17.57 |
|  | Focus on Language | 7 | 15.29 |
|  | Focus on Speaking | 7 | 16.14 |
|  | Focus on Writing | 7 | 12.29 |
|  | Assessment, Review feedback |  | 17.43 |

In order to show better, the researcher brings these results in figure 5, as it can be seen below.


Figure5. Mean score of questionnaire's subsections based on school type

## Results for Research Question 3

Is there any significant relationship between teacher's beliefs and knowledge about CLIL approach and their amount of use of this approach?

In order to see the probable relationship between the teacher's knowledge (ordinal data) and the amount of use of CLIL approach (numeral data) the Pearson correlation test was performed.

According to table 8 the amount of relationship between those variables is very low and positive and statistically there is no relationship between two variables. It means that the teacher's knowledge does not have effect on the amount of use of CLIL approach.

Table8. Correlations

|  |  |  | Score | Knowledge |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .127 |  |
| Spearman's rho |  | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .379 |
|  |  | N | 50 | 50 |
|  | Knowledge | Correlation Coefficient | .127 | 1.000 |
|  |  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .379 | . |


|  | N | 50 | 50 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

## VII. Discussion

The attained results and findings of the current study possess the ability to lead to the conclusions which might be of some importance. To this end, the present study aimed to answer four questions. Regarding the research questions of the study, the collected data were presented in the result section of this study. Here those results are discussed in details. The first one was to what extent is the CLIL approach used by Iranian state and private English teachers. Most English teachers might have utilized this approach in their English classes even without knowing its procedures or knowing that they are applying it. Many times language teachers use a particular content to illustrate lexical and/or grammatical issues. One of the reasons for applying such method is the lack of authentic language of textbooks. The language in course books, particularly at beginner and elementary levels, make use of an oversimplified and as a result artificial language. The difference between CLIL and these short sequences of integrated learning is the length of the content material and the content material itself. To answer the first question, the researcher prepared the second questionnaire and gathered the data from teachers who works in both state and private schools as mentioned before. Then the researcher analyzed the answers, and as it was shown in chapter four the mean of scores is high and it indicates that the amount of use of this approach by Iranian teachers is in high level, and more assessing the details shows that the maximum obtained score is related to Assessment, Review, Feedback subsection by Iranian English teachers and the minimum score is related to Focus on writing part. This finding adds to a growing body of research that has investigated the effect of CLIL approach in teaching English (e.g. Masoud KhaliliSabet \&Nima Sadeh, 2012) with representing the potential of Iranian English teachers in using this approach. In other word, target language mastery and subject matter learning in CLIL and bilingual education have been studied elsewhere in the world (e.g. Genesee 1987; Baker 2006), but there are few recent studies to be found on CLIL teachers teaching in English in Iran. So this result can show that although Iran is not a bilingual country, it has the opportunity to use this approach by Iranian English teachers. This is in line with contrary to common belief: native English speakers are not automatically better CLIL teachers. Since it is important for teachers to adapt their language to the students' level of competence, non-native speakers are often considered more suitable than those native speakers who would not understand the students' mother tongue (Mustaparta \&Tella 1999, p.36). Many experts (e.g. Nikula \& Marsh 1997; Coonan 2007; de Graaffet al. 2007), however, question whether qualifications for teaching a certain subject and competent language skills are enough: training as a specialized CLIL teacher is considered to be important so that teachers can develop students' ability to learn content matter in a language other than their mother tongue with less than nativelevel skills.

In recent years, English has been included in the programs of most private kindergartens and preschools in Iran. Growing interest in Iranian parents to send their children to these institutes despite of their relatively high expenses might be considered as a sign of understanding the position of English as an international language among Iranian parents. Subsequently, schools and institutes offering these kinds of courses are likely to find a higher prestige in the market. Further, regardless of social prestige, introducing CLIL courses in such institutes means entering more English proficient teachers which in turn means a possible higher understanding of international trends in education. (Masoud Khalili Sabet \& Nima Sadeh, 2012) So comparing the results of the third research question confirm that if there is any difference between state schools and private institutes Iranian English teachers considering the application of CLIL approach or not. To find the answer of this question, the one-way ANOVA test was used. With regard to the p-value, there is no significant difference between the means of the participants. So it shows that
the factor of place of teaching has no significant effect in using CLIL approach in teaching English by English teachers in context of Iran. As the researcher focused on details in the area of place factor, results obtained from this study represented that there are differences in applying this approach for different subsections. As mentioned before the minimum and maximum mean of scores that obtained in private schools are respectively 14.43 in Focus on Writing and 17.74 in Guiding Understanding. Also this table shows that the minimum mean in state schools is 15 in activating subsection and maximum mean is 19.40 in Assessing, Review, feedback. Considering both private and state schools, the maximum mean is 17.57 in Guiding Understanding part and the obtained minimum mean in this study is 12.29 in Focus on Writing. The present study shows any significant relationship between two factors of place of teaching and using CLIL approach by English teachers and is not in line with something that Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe (2008, p.13) reveals: In very few countries do education authorities oblige teachers to have special qualifications to contribute to CLIL-type provision. As a result, it is the schools offering provision of this kind which determine the recruitment criteria required to ensure that competent teachers will be employed for this purpose.

In reply to the fourth research question of this study, which concerned whether is there any significant relationship between teacher's beliefs and knowledge about CLIL approach and their amount of use of this approach or not, the statistical results were calculated by gathering the answers of participants. In order to see the probable relationship between the teacher's knowledge (ordinal data) and the amount of use of CLIL approach (numeral data) the Pearson correlation test was performed. The amount of relationship between those variables is very low and positive so statistically there is no significant relationship between two variables. It means that the teacher's knowledge does not have effect on the amount of use of CLIL approach in the context of Iran.

Marsland (1997, p.36) argues that teachers need a high level of linguistic awareness so that foreign language acquisition can be actively encouraged during CLIL education. An important aspect of teachers' professional development is self-reflection where teachers examine their own teaching and justify the pedagogical choices they make in their teaching (Harjanne \&Tella 2008, p.742). Teachers should be conscious of their personal didactics, i.e. the reasons that impact their decisions on using certain features or emphasis in their own teaching. Teachers also need to realize that their own attitudes and skills reflect their actions which in turn form the learning environment for students (CEF 2001, p.144). Teachers should also be prepared to explain their choices (Harjanne \&Tella 2008, p.743). Teachers need to be conscious of their own beliefs and their world of values and reflect on their experiences on teaching so that they can capitalize on those experiences (Borg 2006, p.283). As can be seen the results of this study did not confirm the findings came above. But as this research shows that Iranian teachers use this approach in their process of teaching despite of their low or high level of knowledge about this approach, the interactive thinking is important. So this study is in line with Clark and Peterson (1986) have developed a model of teachers' thought processes and actions, with which they sum up and specify the several research results into teacher thinking and give an overview of achievements of the research area. In the model, the research studies into teacher thinking are divided into three categories. There are studies concerning teacher planning, where the focus is on pre-active or post-active thinking. Also teachers' interactive thinking and decision-making have been studied. It has been found that the quality of interactive thinking differs from pre-and post-active thinking. This categorization is based on Jackson's (1968) classification of the pre-active, interactive and post-active phases of instructional process. There are also studies into teachers' implicit theories and beliefs, which underlie teachers' actions. Through them, the wide knowledge base which teachers possess and use in planning, in interactive thinking and decisionmaking, can be perceived. (Clark \& Peterson, 1986, pp. 256-258)

## VIII. Conclusion

CLIL is of evident potentiality for Iranian context. Since internationalization is becoming an emerging trend all over the globe, each nation need to be equipped with the right tools to be prepared to deal with this global orientation. Moreover, if the right approaches to teaching and learning are used and if the teacher shows his/ her enthusiasm, then CLIL must be a success. As Mackenzie (10.10.2011) states, CLIL produces life-long learners and students are sent out with real-world skills and enhanced motivation and self-confidence.

To sum up, this study is an initial attempt to assess the potential ability of EFL teachers in the field of CLIL in the Iranian context .Teacher's ability to employ different teaching approaches would play a significant role in improving learner's knowledge, success and motivation. It was found in this study that Iranian English teachers have this ability in an acceptable way.

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# THE IMPACT OF USING GUIDED WRITING TECHNIQUES ON CHILEAN ADULTS' EFL WRITING PRODUCTION 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY ADDRESSES THE IMPACT OF PICTURES IN CHILEAN EFL LEARNERS' GUIDED WRITING PRODUCTION. THIS ACTION RESEARCH USED QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE INSTRUMENTS TO GATHER DATA AND SHOW STATISTIC ANALYSIS. THIS STUDY EXAMINED THE IMPACT OF IMAGES AND PICTURES ON ONE PARTICULAR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP DURING AN INTERVENTION PERIOD. TO THAT END, 20 SUBJECTS PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY; 9 IN AN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND 11 IN A CONTROL GROUP. RESULTS OF THE STUDY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE USE OF IMAGES AND PICTURES IN GUIDED WRITING ACTIVITIES PRODUCED LITTLE IMPROVEMENT IN BOTH GROUPS. HOWEVER, STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP EXPRESSED POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THIS NEW METHODOLOGY. RESULTS SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT PICTURES AND IMAGES SERVED AS A MOTIVATING AND AN ENGAGING TOOL IN GUIDED WRITING AND TEACHERS SHOULD ENCOURAGE LEARNERS TO USE THEM FOR L2 WRITING ACTIVITIES.


KEY WORDS: EFL LEARNERS, GUIDED WRITING, L2 WRITING, PERCEPTIONS.

## 1. Introduction

Writing has been addressed as a challenging task since it requires the production of the language. Research on teaching writing to EFL learners over the past few decades has focused attention on several complex issues. Brown (2004) indicates that writing is difficult because of its productive nature. Correa, Tapia, Neira, and Ortiz (2013) discovered that many EFL teachers find writing in English difficult because learners need to follow many rules and have to have a wide range of vocabulary. Latta and Crovitz (2013) express that writing is challenging for both teachers and learners. Some other aspects that may hinder the teaching of writing are related to culture, and assessment. Schmid and Steer (2007) argue that some topics can be inappropriate or difficult for EFL learners because of different cultural aspects. Regarding assessment, Diaz, Alarcon and Ortiz (2001) concluded that some EFL teachers assess learners using traditional measurements instruments that assess only linguistic skills in isolation.

Despite all the complexities of teaching writing to EFL learners, teachers need to come up with powerful techniques to motivate students, and to give them the opportunity to express themselves in a foreign language. Yet, there is a necessity to explore and investigate other techniques to work on writing and minimize negativism towards this skill.

In the view of this, guided writing with images seems to fill in some gaps in writing because the teacher assists the process, controls critical incidents, and brings visual materials to stimulate and
motivate learners. In guided writing, learners have freedom in the selection of topics, vocabulary, and they may make use of templates/models as a foundation to begin the writing process. The present study aims at examining the impact of using images and pictures on Chilean EFL guided writing production.

## 2. Literature Review

This study is based on EFL writing production, some theoretical justification and framework for writing, guided writing, and roles of pictures and images are described.

### 2.1 Writing

Hancock and McDonald (2012) define writing as a process that learners take to produce a piece of writing. Latta and Cravitz (2013) point out that writing is an act of creation, which makes teaching how to write in L2 an important skill to develop. Bashyal (2009) points out that writing is a productive ability that makes use of visual symbols in order to represent the sounds people use in speaking. Ur (2008) indicates that a good piece of writing is logical, cohesive, and coherent. Moreover, Ur states that writing has to be grammatically accurate in spelling and punctuation.

### 2.2. Guided writing in L2

Gibson (2010) states that guided writing is the nature of the support given by teachers as students are learning to write. Englert, Mariage, \& Dunsmore (2006) confirm this point indicating that writing is collaborative where effective writing teachers work alongside students. Fountas and Pinnel (2001) propose that guided writing should work with small groups of students who share similar needs. Furthermore, Oczkus (2007) proposes that lessons focused on guided writing should have a clear purpose and lessons may last more than one session. Oczkus (2007) asserts that guided writing provides steps towards independent writing.

### 2.3 Steps for guided writing

Kieft, Rijalaarsdam, and Van de Bergh (2008) affirm that writing is a complex task that consists in the organization of abstract ideas. The work of these authors reveals evidence showing teachers struggle to develop writing strategies for assisting learners. Silva (1990) states that teachers play an important role in helping learners develop strategies for getting started, drafting and revising. Galbraith and Torrance (2004) identify two strategies; the planning strategy and the revising strategy. These authors suggest that teachers may utilize any media available at school. Gibson (2008) provides a framework for a guided writing lesson that includes some steps. First of all, teachers should engage students in free and small talk, second they have to make students think of a strategy for writing, third teachers must accompany students in the process, and finally share it with an audience.

### 2.4 The role of pictures in language learning.

Munadi (2008) argues that pictures make it easy to come up with ideas or information conveyed in them. When the students observe pictures, they are able to speak more, interact with the pictures and their friends, make good relationships among paradoxes and build new ideas. In line with this, Harmer (2004) adds that pictures are often used to present situations to help students work with grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, there is some extra evidence given by Youra (2009) who developed a writing and photography project. The investigation demonstrated that photography was an encouraging tool to explore possibilities in writing. Youra also noted that students' comments reflected insight so as to see the analogies between photographic and verbal expression. Kellner (2009) encourages teachers to use photographs because photographs help learners overcome their reluctance to write. Kellner argues that photographs are powerful teaching aids that can inspire students at all levels to create several compositions.

### 2.5 Similar studies on the use of images in writing

There are some other researchers who have worked on teaching writing through images to describe either students' perceptions or improvements on this skill. For instance, Nganjuk (2009) concluded in his research that using pictures is more effective than translation for teaching writing. Sa'diyah (2010) had good results in both writing with images and students' attitudes towards this methodology. Ariningsih (2010) indicated that there is a positive interaction between teaching techniques and motivation.

In light of the knowledge gaps discovered after this extensive review of the literature, and some benefits presented in certain techniques, the following research question were posed:

- What is the impact of using pictures/images on students' guided writing performance?
- What are the effects of a methodology that include pictures on EFL students' perceptions when carrying out guided writing?


## 3. Method

As has been mention in the abstract of this action research, the aim of this study was to examine Chilean EFL students' guided writing production through the use of images. To best answer the research questions, this study followed a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative research instruments. Action research was selected as a more suitable methodology to bring together action, reflection, theory and practice.

### 3.1. Participants

This study was conducted in the south of Chile. The sample group involved 20 students, 11 in a control group and 9 in an experimental group. These participants were part of an accelerated high school program for adults who did not complete their courses in a traditional setting. The average age was 30 years old both male and female. Both groups shared the same characteristics in terms of background and level of English B1 according to the CEFR. This study administered a pretest to both groups. Comparison of mean differences among them was not significant.

### 3.2. Instruments

## Pre and Post test

The pre and post tests were designed for the purpose of this investigation, which was to examine results on students' writing performance. These instruments were validated by university TEFL professors and were in line with Brown's work (2001) on language assessment. Pre a post tests were considered ideal to this study due to their design measures improvements during an intervention period. The test consisted of four items; item one intended to measure students' ability to select and apply vocabulary correctly, item two dealt with the ability to write short sentences in English. Item three focused on creating a dialogue using a logical and coherent sequence, and the last item had a focus on correct use of third person singular. This instrument had a potential maximum score of 68 points. The post test purpose was to examine students' guided writing performance after the intervention period.

## Interviews

Interviews were designed in order to obtain more information about students' perspectives regarding their own performance in guided writing activities. These interviews were validated by university TEFL professors and were designed to fulfill the objectives of this study. The interviews were open-ended so students felt free to comment on the methodology used during this intervention period. In detail, questions intended to examine perceptions when doing guided writing activities, in students' own level of English, perceptions on the methodology

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applied, effects of images on their writing process, importance of the teacher in class, difficulties regarding working with writing, and suggestions that would improve the way the teacher teaches writing. Furthermore, participants were informed that there were no correct answers, and an external teacher would be in charge of conducting the interviews to avoid any bias.

## Surveys

A third instrument selected for this action research was a survey. This instrument was selected for obtaining quantitative information about perceptions. This survey was based on questions proposed by Sa'diyah (2001). This author assessed students' perceptions and opinions on a specific methodology applied. These questions intended students to indicate if: Lessons were joyful, pictures were interesting, pictures helped to generate ideas, pictures helped to improve writing, if learners remained engaged when using pictures, and if they had fun in lessons.
The survey was validated by university TEFL professors and was designed to fulfill the objectives of this study. These questions were classified into five categories; vocabulary selection, activity engagement, word memorization, positive attitude towards methodology, and stimulation of imagination using a likert scale.

## 4. Procedure

This study required 20 EFL Chilean students who were completing an accelerated high school program. First, the researcher randomly divided the group into one experimental and one control group. Then, the researcher administered the pre test to all participants to obtain an overview in writing performance. In the pre test students were asked to select vocabulary based on images, write short sentences, and write a short paragraph coherently and cohesively. This instrument took approximately 80 minutes. To evaluate the writing proficiency, the researcher used a rubric for guided writing taken from Brown (2011) in Language Assessment. The rubric gave 2 points if the writing was grammatically and lexically correct; 1 point if either the grammar or vocabulary were right, but not both; and 0 point if both grammar and vocabulary were incorrect.

Therefore, a conclusion could be drawn that all students were at the same level of writing proficiency. Learners in the experimental group were given writing prompts, and samples to follow. In order to select vocabulary, expressions and grammar and to stimulate imagination, learners were exposed to series of images and pictures. The treatment used in the experimental group lasted 20 sessions of 90 minutes each. On the other hand, the control group received traditional English lessons with no particular focus. After the twenty sessions, both groups were asked to take the post test. Finally, students in the experimental group were asked to answer a survey and an interview. The survey aimed at examining perceptions towards the methodology of using images in writing. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about students' perception towards their own progress in writing.

## 5. Results and discussions.

### 5.1. Pre and post test results

To examine the effectiveness of the techniques used to develop guided writing, the results of the pre and post tests in both groups were calculated in a quantitative manner.
Initially the experimental group obtained an average score of 34.89 points, and the control group 27.27 points. The standard deviation of the control group indicated that the distribution of the scores was narrower among learners compared to the experimental group whose standard deviation was broader. One conclusion that can be drawn is that the results between the two groups were quite similar as displayed in table 1.

Table 1: Results of the pre test between the two groups.

| Group | Number | Mean | SD | Minimum | Maximum |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

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| Experimental | 9 | 34.89 | 13.42 | 8 | 53 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Control | 11 | 27.27 | 10.84 | 10 | 44 |

The comparison of the post test in table 2 represents the average of students' writing scores. It is clear that the experimental group obtained a mean higher than the control one. In addition, the standard deviation posed slight differences as well. In the case of the experimental group, the standard deviation of the pre test contracted from 13.42 to 10.9 in the Post test. This drop shows an improvement in students' writing performance. On the other hand, the standard deviation of the control group in the pre test increased from 10.84 to 11.73 in the post test. This rise indicates that the range among the scores expanded. It is well known that, if the SD increases, the difference between the highest and the lowest scores become wider.

Table 2: Statistic Analysis of the post test

| Group | Number | Mean | SD | Minimum | Maximum |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Experimental | 9 | 43.38 | 10.90 | 13 | 60 |
| Control | 11 | 30.82 | 11.73 | 14 | 50 |

Table 3: Correlation between the pre and post test of the experimental group.

| Group | Pre test | Post test |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Mean | 34.89 | 43.38 |
| SD | 13.42 | 10.90 |

To more specifically examine the impact of images, pictures on students' guided writing performance in the experimental group, a comparison between scores and standard deviation was analyzed. Table 3 displays the results of the pre and post test along with the standard deviation. The $t$ test analysis in the pre and post test of the experimental group presents a P value that equals 0.1764 , from a conventional criteria this difference is not considered to be statistically significant. The same occurred with the control group where the P value was 0.4700 . In order to correlate both groups, the means were considered and the results to this study proved not to be statistically significant. ( $p=0.1326$ ).

### 5.2. Survey analysis

In order to analyze students' perceptions about the use of pictures and images when doing guided writing, a survey was conducted at the end of the period.


Graph 1: Students' perceptions on the use of images in guided writing.
The perceptions shown by students on the use of pictures and images in guided writing activities were favorable. Stimulation of imagination, positive attitude towards methodology, and word memorization were the categories where $100 \%$ of students fully agreed. Engagement of activities was the other category where there was partial agreement as well. A percentage of $55.5 \%$ students stated to be neutral about the use of images in the selection of vocabulary, and $44.4 \%$ agreed on the fact that images were helpful tools to select vocabulary.

### 5.3. Interview analysis on students' own progress

The interview purpose was to examine students' perceptions towards their own progress in guided writing. One teacher, who was not part of the study, was asked to administer the interview. Initially, many students were enthusiast about using a new methodology to work on a skill that was perceived as difficult. Secondly, students noted major changes regarding vocabulary recall, yet insignificant changes on their own writing process. Thirdly, the interview showed favorable perceptions towards the use of images to engage learners in the lessons. Fourth, images positively influenced students' creativity. Then, students recommended this new methodology and encouraged teachers to explore new teaching methods in the other language skills. Finally, some students indicated that they needed constant teacher's supervision, help, support and monitoring to keep moving forward. Extracts with different perceptions that were mainly repeated in students' opinions are included below.

## Extract 1

"I don't really think that I've improved my writing, I believe I need more grammar and vocabulary in order to write well..."

## Extract 2

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"Honestly, writing tires me a bit, I don't know why, but there is so much work before writing. The very pre work to start writing is demanding...."

## Extract 3

"I wish I had the teacher by my side all the time, there were moments when I did not feel that what I was writing was completely correct or not...."

## Extract 4

"Some of topics were so out of my world, there are some themes I am not that familiar with, and I don't know what vocabulary to use even in my own mother tongue".

As shown in extract 1, this perception describes students' limited capacity to write short sentences in English, the necessity to have knowledge in grammar structures, and master spelling and punctuation. This perception is in accordance with Manchon (2009) who indicates that in order to formulate a message learners need linguistic skills and knowledge in grammar. When learners want to write, they transform the propositional content of the message into language, but it is during this writing process where more knowledge is needed.
A second major perception, as stated in extract 2 , describes the difficulty students see in writing. Some participants described this skill as a hard ability to develop; writing appeared to be hard, often exhausting and boring.
The third analysis seen showed that some learners needed a constant supervision from the teacher. Incidentally, during this supervision was where students did not feel completely free enough to write.
A fourth perception discussed is about topics. A couple of students indicated that some topics were not interesting; this topic analysis is in line with Trzeciak and Mackay (1994) who state that topic selection for writing is a challenging task. These authors even claimed that topics may not be of learners' interest or are an unknown area to them; this could be a possible reason for this negative perception.

### 5.4. Discussion

Statistically speaking, results of pictures in guided writing production were not completely significant, but in terms of perceptions these results varied quite significantly. Vocabulary memorization received a positive response from the experimental group. This perception is in line with Stokes (2002), who describes the positive effects of using pictures in teaching vocabulary. This author discovered that students associate new words with pictures, and it is easier to remember them later on. Additionally, pictures and images appeared to be engaging and motivating tools for many students. To support this, Sarabi and Ahoori (2012) demonstrated in their study that pictorial aids attract learners' attention and increase motivation. A different perception can be observed regarding vocabulary selection, where most learners remained indifferent.

In the interview analysis, students stated that they did not have a sense of progression throughout the intervention period. Yet students regarded the use of images as engaging, decisive tools for remembering lexical items. As adults, learners had high expectations and ambitious outcomes. Hancock and McDonald (2012) indicate that the improvement in writing could be based on two aspects, either content or form. Perhaps students were expected to perform well on grammatical accurate writing, and not necessarily on meaning.

## 6. Conclusion

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The use of images and pictures in Chilean learners' guided writing production brought about little improvement. Both the control and the experimental group increased their scores on a small scale. However, most students in the experimental group claimed that the use of images somehow stimulated their imagination. The present study shows the importance of images in teaching, and the benefits of incorporating them when learning a foreign language. The substantial part of this action research shows positive attitudes towards the use of images in guided writing. The most important point is that the retention and recalling of vocabulary improved through the use of visual materials and students agreed with this matter, enjoying the lessons and remaining engaged.

In contrast, some learners did not regard images in guided writing as a tool for improving writing. As a pedagogical implication of this study, EFL language teachers may benefit from the use of pictures on a skill that entails complexities. Educators can modify the stifling students' perceptions about writing, and turn it into a more positive asset. Furthermore, since writing is regarded as a challenging activity, alternation among lessons is suggested to avoid weariness. Another consideration to bear in mind is the nature of guided writing. It demands some guidance on behalf of the teacher and some learners may never feel free enough to write.

Finally, the results of this study underscore a need for more follow up study considering longer periods in order to produce more significant results. Further research on the impact of images on other types of writings, and on the selection of the vocabulary need to be conducted.

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# THE EFFECT OF MNEMONIC STRATEGIES ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY LEARNING 

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#### Abstract

. THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION WAS AN ATTEMPT TO STUDY THE EFFECT OF MNEMONIC STRATEGIES ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY LEARNING. TO THAT END, AN OPT TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO 100 EFL STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INSTITUTES. LEARNERS WHO SCORED BETWEEN ONE ABOVE AND BELOW THE STANDARD DEVIATION WERE SELECTED FOR THE STUDY, BECAUSE THIS STUDY FOCUSED ON INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS. SO 40 LEARNERS WERE SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY AND THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP, EACH GROUP CONTAINED 20 LEARNERS. THEN A VOCABULARY TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS AS A PRE-TEST TO TAKE THEIR INITIAL KNOWLEDGE OF VOCABULARY. THE WORDLIST OF THE PET TEST WAS SELECTED TO TEST THE VOCABULARY OF THE PARTICIPANTS. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED TREATMENT IN SIX WEEKS .THE CONTROL GROUP DID NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT. FINALLY BOTH GROUPS SAT FOR THE POST-TEST FOR VOCABULARY TEST. AN INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST WAS CONDUCTED TO SEE IF MALES AND FEMALES HAD DIFFERENT PERFORMANCES. THE RESULTS WERE COMPUTED AND ANALYZED THROUGH SPSS AND IT WAS EXPLORED THAT MNEMONIC STRATEGIES HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY LEARNING. THE RESULTS ALSO INDICATED THAT THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES IN THIS RESEARCH.


KEY WORDS: MNEMONIC, VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE, REHEARSAL,

## INTRODUCTION

Mnemonics as proposed originally by Simonides around 500 B.C.E. reemerged in the modern era as part of the general movement away from behaviorism and, more specifically, as a reaction against the verbal emphasis that continued to dominate the Ebbinghaus tradition, even in its mediational forms. According to Merriam Webster's dictionary (2004), the term mnemonic derives from the ancient Greek mnemonikos, from mnemon that means "mindful", This term is related to the term mnemosyne, the Greek goddess of memory and mother of the Muses by Zeus. Mnemonics are techniques or devices such as a rhyme or an image that serve to enhance the storage and the recall of information contained in memory (Solso, 1995; cited in Pillai, 2007). Children who are primarily visual or verbal learners are able to create a picture, word, rhyme, or sentence that is attached to an idea they already have. By using mnemonics, a learner can develop better ways to take in information so that it will be much easier to remember and retrieve (Mastropieri, Scruggs, \& Fulk, 1990; cited in Pillai, 2007). Mnemonic techniques include peg words (words associated with numbers used to remember lists of items), keywords
(associating a similar-sounding word with a targeted word), acronyms (using the first letter of each word in a list to construct a word), acrostics that is creating a sentence where the first letter of each word is the targeted information, and loci (storing information you want to remember in carefully visualized locations) (Mastropieri et al., 1990; cited in Pillai, 2007; Cook, 2001)
According to Cohen and Aphek (1980) association is a mnemonic link to some element or elements that would help in recall of the word, including a link to meaning, sound, sound and meaning together, structure, context, mental image, letter(s) in the word, proper names, signs and so forth. The most common method in this area is mnemonic key word method developed by Atkinson and his collaborators (e.g. Atkinson, 1975; Atkinson \& Raugh, 1975; Raugh, Schupbach, \& Atkinson, 1977). The method, at the first stage, requires students to associate the spoken foreign word to a native word (the keyword) that sounds approximately like some part of the foreign word. At the second stage, it requires students to form a mental image of the keyword "interacting" with the English translation (Atkinson \& Raugh, 1975).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teaching vocabulary in the primary school grades has been proven to be essential; in actuality, little vocabulary instruction occurs during the primary years (Biemiller \& Boote 2006). Vocabulary directly impacts learning for students in multiple areas of education. There is a high correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. "Vocabulary... is a powerful predictor of reading comprehension" (Biemiller \& Boote 2006, p. 44). According to Biemiller (2005), "For adequate reading comprehension from grade three on, children require both fluent word recognition skills, and an average or greater vocabulary" (p. 1). The research represented by Biemiller (2005) points to a direct need for vocabulary instruction for children in the primary grades. The research contributes to the present research taking place, on the third grade class. The findings of Biemiller (2005) suggest that it is imperative for students to have at least an average vocabulary to be successful in reading comprehension past grade three.
In the book, The Reading Crisis: Why poor children fall behind, Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin (1990) researched the development of reading, writing, and language for elementary school children from low-income families. Chall et al., (1990) discovered children who have restricted vocabulary by grade three, later turn out to have declining comprehension scores in the later elementary school years. These findings have direct implications to the present research questions regarding fostering vocabulary development.
In The Read-Aloud Handbook, Trelease (2006) states, "when children are read aloud to we are also conditioning the child's brain to associate reading with pleasure, creating background knowledge, building vocabulary, and providing a reading role model" (p.1). Reading aloud to children can literally help pave the way for students' academic success. Reading aloud provides the perfect opportunity to develop vocabulary with children. Goldenberg (1992) describes that the purpose of instructional conversations is to, "engage students in interactions to promote analysis, reflection, and critical thinking" (p.317). Instructional conversations can be used to teach vocabulary instruction during teacher read-aloud, by using instructional conversations to discuss the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple meaning vocabulary.
The combination of these theoretical bases support the present research question, which is attempting to prove that mnemonic strategies used to teach vocabulary would be beneficial to EFL language learners causing one to believe that they would benefit all students. It examines many educational practices for teaching English language learners, vocabulary development.
Regardless of the strategies used or learning needs that are addressed, students need to be engaged and motivated to take part in a lesson in order to learn or obtain the information presented.

## Significance of the study

There is no doubt that vocabulary along with grammar represent a basis of language learning and much attention should be paid to their learning and teaching. Thornbury (2006) emphasizes
the importance of vocabulary teaching: "[...] a heavy concentration on vocabulary acquisition, especially in the early stages of learning, is a prerequisite for later proficiency in the language" (2002: 159-160). Many other linguists and methodologists agree with this idea, which was, however, not always considered so in the past. "During much of the twentieth century vocabulary was neglected in programs for teachers, however, in the 1950s, many people began to notice that vocabulary learning is not a simple matter" (Allen 1983: 1-2). Since that time the issue of how to teach vocabulary has attracted experts' attention and many books and articles have been published concerning various techniques in teaching vocabulary which help learners acquire words more easily and effectively.

## Review of the Related Literature

In the 1980s, Mastropieri and Scruggs conducted a lengthy research engaging 24 separate studies with 938 students in grade 3 through 12. Among these 24 studies, twenty one studies were conducted primarily with students with learning disabilities, two involved with mild mental disabilities, and one involved students with behavior disorder (Scruggs \& Mastropieri, 1990b). The researchers applied a variety of mnemonic strategies and made comparison between control group and experimental group, such as free study, teacher-led normalized instruction, and rehearsal variations (Scruggs \& Mastropieri, 1990b). The result showed that mnemonic instruction tenaciously produced positive effects on the retention of information over time by the mildly special needed students who were involved in their research (Scruggs \& Mastropieri, 1990a, 1990b). Bolich and McLaughlin (2001) stated that Mastropieri and Scruggs conducted their study under three basic assumptions: (a) meaningfulness increases the learning of new things, (b)
students who self generate strategies for learning and remembering increase meaningfulness, and thereby remember better than students who do not, and (c) students with learning disabilities are deficient in generating effective memory strategies.
Mnemonics instruction has also been shown to be effective in students' language comprehension. However, it is important to understand that mnemonic instruction is a memory-enhancing strategy and it is not a strategy specially designed to enhance comprehension. Some researchers, such as Mastropieri, Scruggs, \& Fulk (1990), suggested the reason students using mnemonic strategies obtained higher comprehension scores is that the strategy increases their ability to recall the factual information needed to answer a topical comprehension question. For example, a student could understand the meaning of lake, but could not remember the names of the five great lakes in the USA. Then he or she can be taught to use "Acronyms" (words whose individual letters can represent elements in lists of information), such as the word "HOMES" to represent the five great lakes: $H$ for Huron, $\begin{aligned} & \text { Ontario, }\end{aligned}$ M for Michigan, E for Erie, and S for Superior. Through the use of mnemonic strategies, it is more likely that the students will be able to remember this factual information, answer the question, and demonstrate comprehension. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1990b) suggested that, comprehension in and of, itself does not ensure remembering. They clarified that the actual purpose of mnemonic strategies is its reinforcement and meaningfulness, which indirectly enhance comprehension.

Mastropieri and Scruggs (1991) pointed out that students who have the knowledge of mnemonic theory will be able to employ mnemonic strategies in other content areas in ESL/ EFL learning. There are also many studies indicating that the uses of mnemonics in curriculum subjects, such as math, English vocabulary, capitals of different countries, history, spellings, phonics and others (Scruggs \& Mastropeiri, 1990a; 1990b). All these have shown significant results.

Mnemonics has been a vital topic of study in memory techniques, as well as education, in recent decades. In Music Enhances Learning (Campabello, De Carlo, O'Neil, \& Vacek, 2002) a Master's Action plan, three school sites, and students in three grades (Kindergarten, $2^{\text {nd }}$ and $5^{\text {th }}$ ) were taught six grade level appropriate songs. Students were tested for prior knowledge before learning the songs and grasp of information after. In addition, questionnaires were given to parents and students concerning the importance of music in the classroom, students kept journals

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of their learning and researchers observed the students. Across the grades there was a jump in information learned and retained after learning the six songs.

Authors noted in their conclusion that, "it is apparent that music is a powerful force that makes difficult material easier to learn and remember within a short period of time" (Campabello, De Carlo, O'Neil, \& Vacek, 2002, p. 66). It was clear, not only by test scores, but also student reactions that the music was making a strong impact on learning. "They [students] sang during the entire bus ride on a recent field trip... They now expect to learn a song for any unit we study" (Campabello, De Carlo, O'Neil, \& Vacek, 2002, p. 53). Students were excited about their learning and with the introduction of music they were literally asking for more songs. Researchers also noted, what they called "interesting facts" during their classroom observations. Some of these include: "all children appear to be interested...quietest students are beginning to sing with enjoyment...even Spanish-speaking students are engaged" (Campabello, De Carlo, O'Neil, \& Vacek, 2002, p. 51). The mnemonics used in this study boosted student knowledge of the subjects, increased student attention, but also the perceived importance of music in school.

In another study conducted by a graduate student/teacher, Orla Hayes, mnemonics were taught to various age groups of students. These songs focused on what the students were learning and consistently struggled with (Hayes, 2009). In this study students were taught songs about information that had previously given them trouble; $5^{\text {th }}$ graders learned the parts of the brain, $3^{\text {rd }}$ graders learned multiples of seven and $1^{\text {st }}$ graders learned parts of a plant. From this study there was almost a $100 \%$ positive feedback of retained information learned from the songs. In $1^{\text {st }}$ grade. 11 out of 12 randomly selected students answered questions about the parts of a plant accurately. In $3^{\text {rd }}$ grade, eight out of ten randomly selected students answered all of their multiples of sevens correctly. $5^{\text {th }}$ graders had $100 \%$ recall of the parts of the brain (Hayes, 2009). The students in the study not only learned the knowledge presented to them, but also showed enthusiasm and interested in the previously tedious and difficult lessons. "Uniformly they [5 $5^{\text {th }}$ graders] commented on how easy it was to learn the parts of the brain this way. One student mentioned how hard it was sometimes to learn scientific terms when she just reads them but this made it so much easier for her" (Hayes, 2009).

Sayede Zahra Nowzan and Toba Baryaji (2013) attempted to investigate the effect of retrieval activity on learning vocabulary. To fulfill the purpose of this study, 40 female and male students of Parto Institute in Sardasht were selected from among a total number of 60 based on their performance on the Preliminary English Test (PET) and randomly put into two experimental and control groups. The same content was taught by the teacher/researcher to both groups throughout the treatment. The only difference was that the experimental group was taught the vocabulary through retrieval activities, which consisted of the four-step including Learning Phase, Retrieval Activity Phase, Retrieval Interval Test Phase and Post Test Phase while the students in the control group were taught the vocabularies without any retrieval processes. Finally, a posttest within the content taught was given to the students in both groups at the end of the instruction and the mean scores of both groups on the test were compared through an independent samples t-test. The result showed that retrieval activity had a significant effect on the vocabularies learning of Iranian EFL learners.

## Materials and Methods

The study was conducted with 40 Iranian sophomore students who are studying English at different institutes in Iran. Researcher tried to have the same number of female and male participants in both experimental and control group.

## Data Analysis Procedure

The results of post test were analyzed for further discussion via ANCOVA on the scores obtained from experimental and control group to see whether teaching mnemonic strategies had any effects on EFL learners' vocabulary developent.

## Results

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT (Oxford Placement Test) test. The results are shown in Table (4-1).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

| $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | SD |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 100 | 22 | 10.32 |

This table shows the result obtained from the proficiency test, OPT. The mean and standard deviation are presented.
Table (4-2) shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one excluded.

Table 2: Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test Cases

| Included | Excluded <br> Percent |  |  |  |  |  |  | N | Total <br> Percent | N | Percent |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pre-test ${ }^{*}$ group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Post-test ${ }^{*}$ group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Forty participants were selected for this study. They were divided into two groups, experimental and control.
The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in table (4-3).

Table 3: Descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test

| Group |  | Pre-test | Post-test |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Experimental | Mean |  | 59.9 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 20 |  |
| Control | SD | 4.8 | 68.4 |
|  | Mean | 58.45 | 20 |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 20 | 58.1 |
| Total | SD | 5.64 |  |
|  | Mean | 59.15 | 20 |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 40 | 5.2 |
|  | SD | 5.216 | 40.25 |
|  |  |  | 7.121 |

## Interpretive Statistics

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is particularly appropriate when subjects in two or more groups are found to differ on a pre-test or other initial variable. In this case, the effects of the pretest and/or other relevant variables are partialled out, and the resulting adjusted means of the post-test scores are compared. Through ANCOVA differences in the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared as though their initial status had been equated. In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis" Mnemonic strategies have no significant effects on Iranian elementary learners' vocabulary learning" , the differences
between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA.

In order to examine the equality of variances, Levines Test of Equality of Error Variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Table 4: Levine's Test of Equality of Error Variance

| F | df1 |  | df2 | Sig |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| .26 |  | 1 | 38 | .61 |

According to table (4.) the calculated $F$ is not meaningful. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.
The data in table (4.6) are related to test of homogeneity of regression. Before running covariance, between-subjects effects of pre-test-group should be investigated.

Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Type lll Sum of Square | df | Mean Score | F | Sig |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- |
| Corrected Model | 1879.82 |  | 3 | 626.61 | 230.9 | .00 |  |
| Group (a) | 17.86 | 1 | 17.86 | 6.6 | .015 |  |  |
| Pretest (b) | 802.97 | 1 | 802 | 295.95 | .00 |  |  |
| Group $^{*}$ pretest(a*b) | .41 | 1 | .41 | .15 | .7 |  |  |
| Error | 97.68 | 36 | 2.71 |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 46200 | 40 |  |  |  |  |  |

As table (4.6) shows, between -subjects effect ( $\mathrm{a} * \mathrm{~b}$ ) is not significant ( $\mathrm{F}=0.15, \mathrm{Sig}=0.7$ ). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between - subjects effect of post-test and group to show whether mean scores of two groups are the same or not. The results of this analysis are demonstrated in table (6).

Table 6: Mean and Corrected Mean of vocabulary test

| Source | Posttest | Corrected Mean |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: |
|  | M |  |  | SD | M |  | SE |
| Experimental | 38.4 | 4.7 | 37.77 | .36 |  |  |  |
| Control | 28.1 | 5.11 | 28.72 | .36 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table (6) shows the corrected means of dependent variable vocabulary learning. The data demonstrate that the means of the experimental group are upper than the control group.
Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of vocabulary learning in the experimental and the control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table (7):

Table 7: Sum of analysis of covariance

| Source | Type lll Sum of Square | df | Mean Score | F |  | Sig | Partial Eta Squared |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Corrected Model | 1879.415 | 2 | 939.71 | 354.48 | .00 | .95 |  |
| Pretest | 818.52 | 1 | 818.52 | 308.76 | .00 | .89 |  |

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| Group | 805.42 | 1 | 805.48 | 303.84 | .00 | .89 |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Error | 98.08 | 37 | 2.65 |  |  |  |
| Total | 46200 | 40 |  |  |  |  |

As it can be seen, the corrected model ( $\mathrm{f}=00, \mathrm{~F}=354.48$ ) is statistically significant. The results $(\mathrm{F}=303.84, \mathrm{Sig}=.00, \mathrm{Eta}=.89)$ shows that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is significant difference between experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis "Mnemonic strategies has no significant effect on Iranian elementary learners' vocabulary learning" will be rejected, so it can be concluded that the students' vocabulary learning can be improved by using mnemonic strategies.

## Conclusion

Based upon the results yielded in the study several conclusions are drawn. The overall aim of the present study was to assess whether using mnemonic strategies were effective in classroom setting and whether it was suitable for practical use by students as a learning strategy. The data analyzed revealed that using mnemonic strategies led to significantly better performance of the adult students when comparison was made with respect to the control group. Furthermore, the higher performance of mnemonic groups who frequently reported using initial associations revealed that initial associations had a significant role at vocabulary recall of students. According to these findings the mnemonic-based methods may turn out to be useful for different age groups.
As it was noted earlier, the most common method of associative mnemonic links is mnemonic keyword method coined by Atkinson (1975). It is used to make meaningful auditory and imagery links to remember a word. Since the keyword method is typically thought of as an imagery technique, one might expect that some kind of individual imagery ability and the quality of keyword image would be quite important for better performance of the students. Individual differences in visual imagery are predicted within dual coding theory in which people are seen to vary in their tendency and capacity to use imagery (Clark \& Paivio, 1991). Regarding the quality of keyword image, Pressly and Levin (1981) identified degree of keyword overlap (the degree to which the keyword overlaps phonemically with the foreign word to be recalled) as one factor influencing retention. Thus, good images are likely to have high degrees of phonemic overlap with the target words. We admit that it may not be easy to find good associative mnemonic links for all words in a language. In sum, there are some words and some individuals for whom the keyword method will work less well than for others. It is obviously important to know for what specific items and learners the keyword method is best suited.

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# DISCOVERING DYSLEXICS' MINDS PROCESSES DURING READING TASK 

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#### Abstract

IT IS POSSIBLE FOR EVERY ENGLISH CLASS INCLUDES DYSLEXIC STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECOGNIZING AND HELPING THEM. THIS RESEARCH WAS DONE TO SPECIFY WHAT THE DYSLEXIC STUDENTS THINK OF DURING THEIR READING TASK. THE WHOLE POPULATION COULD BE ALL THE DYSLEXIC STUDENTS. I RANDOMLY SELECTED TWO CLASSES FROM AN ENGLISH INSTITUTE IN SHIRAZ WHICH WERE CONDUCTED BY A SAME TEACHER IN THE MORNING BUT IN TWO DIFFERENT DAYS. I CHOSE TWO TYPES OF SPECIFIC STANDARD TESTS TO DISTINGUISH DYSLEXIC STUDENTS FROM THE NORMAL ONES. THESE TESTS WERE MISSPELLED HOMOPHONES AND TACTILE LOCALIZATION. AFTER EXECUTING THE TWO MENTIONED TESTS, SIX STUDENTS WERE RECOGNIZED AS DYSLEXIC STUDENTS AND THEY CLEARLY SHOWED THE SYMPTOMS OF THE DYSLEXIA. BASED ON THE RANDOM ASSIGNMENT I CHOSE FOUR OF THEM AND DID MY SURVEY ON THEM. I AIMED TO FOLLOW THE THINK ALOUD APPROACH TOWARDS MY RESEARCH. ONE OF THE READING TEXTS IN THEIR BOOK WAS CHOSEN TO BE WORKED ON. THE STUDENTS HAD TO DO THE READING TASK AND THEY WERE ASKED TO VERBALIZE WHAT PASSED THROUGH THEIR MINDS WHILE READING. IN ADDITION THEY WERE ASKED TO IMAGINE THAT THEY ARE READING FOR ALL THEIR CLASSMATES AND THINK OF ME AS THEIR REAL TEACHER. I WROTE DOWN EVERY WORDS OF WHAT THEY VERBALIZED. FINALLY I DESCRIBED ALL OF THEIR THOUGHTS AND SPECIFY WHAT THEIR PROBLEMS WERE. THESE FINDINGS CAN BE HELPFUL FOR TEACHERS OR EITHER THE PARENTS TO HELP THE STUDENTS BY RECOGNIZING THEIR PROBLEMS AND FIND THE BEST SOLUTIONS TO REMOVE THE STUDENTS' PROBLEMS AND IMPROVE THEIR READING SKILL. THE DESIGN OF THIS STUDY WAS THE CASE STUDY IN WHICH THE STUDENTS HAD TO BE SURVEYED INDIVIDUALLY AND EACH STUDENT EXPRESS HER THOUGHT THROUGH THINK ALOUD PROCESS DURING DOING HER READING TASK.


KEY WORDS: DYSLEXIA, CASE STUDY, THINK ALOUD, READING TASK, DISABILITY, CONFIDENCE, SYMPTOMS, STANDARD TEST

## 1. Introduction

All students in the classrooms are not surely equal in their learning and reading comprehension while they receive equal and appropriate teaching method. Students are different in their
learning process. This may be due to their different proficiency level but we as a teacher can witness some students who suffer from a disability in their learning. Although these students may struggle to read, have trouble in matching verb with subject, organizing and memorizing the information they should not be considered as unintelligent persons. Because it is believed that they are excel at problem solving, reasoning, seeing the big picture and thinking out of the box (Shaywltz, S. 2003). These kinds of students are the dyslexic persons. Crie (2005) stated that dyslexia is a neurological disorder that results in problems with letter-sound associations. It is worthwhile to mention that dyslexic students want to learn to read and they do their best to be successful in their learning process. So it is not fair to think of them as someone without any try and working hard or any motivation to improve their reading skill.

According to Davis and Hailey dyslexics tend to develop very strong imaginations, they develop many unique abilities and talents such as spatial awareness, reading people, strategic planning, engineering, manual skills, artistic ability, building, designing, drama and role playing, inventing and storytelling.

Dyslexics may become disoriented in comprehending two-dimensional objects or symbols. Substitutions, reversals, transpositions, or omissions in reading or writing letters, words and numerals are the symptoms that have been shown by dyslexic students. The challenges of the dyslexia have a big impact on the students' self-esteem (Davis, R. \& Hailey, S. 2001).

Students with dyslexia generally need more time to practice new skills than other students. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to be enough patients to help the dyslexics with their disorganization and poor time management.

The dyslexics focus on whole. Spelling whole words, thinking in whole words, whole chapters and stories, whole lessons, whole assignments and whole concepts are the dyslexics' remarks. They need a preliminary overview or big picture before learning skills or information.

It is not rational to consider all people with the disability in reversing letters and words as dyslexic person, because the dyslexics experience only mild trouble with reversal of letters and words. What's more they are not intellectually impaired or dumb. Dyslexic students who are intellectually bright often do not perform badly enough for a teacher to identify that they have a learning disability. So, recognizing dyslexic students is very difficult.

Dyslexic students often react to their learning difficulties with frustration and a lack of confidence or motivation. Therefore, teachers easily confuse attitude problems towards learning with the students having an actual disability towards learning.

Dyslexic students learn best through hands-on experience, demonstrations, experimentation, observation, and visual aids. They have poor memory for sequences facts and information that has not been experienced. They may not be able to tell the difference between letters that have similar shape but different orientation, or the letters that look similar in shape. They look at the letters and words as bunched together, they cannot recognize words they have seen before, no matters how many times they have seen them they need to comeback to read the same passage over and over again to remember what they read.

### 1.1. Literature Review

One of the related studies to dyslexia is surveying and comparing the syntactic knowledge of normal students and dyslexic ones who were in the second and third grade of elementary school (Nabifar, 2014). 20 dyslexic students and 40 normal students were evaluated by an exam in syntactic knowledge. The findings showed that the dyslexic students had trouble in matching

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verb with its subject and they did weaker than the normal students. This study was done on the students working on syntactic knowledge of their first language. But I aim to survey the processes of the dyslexics' minds during working on a text in second language learning.

Helping dyslexics is one of the important issues which was been worked on by authors. Several solutions has been recognized to help the dyslexics such as practicing subtracting in groups with objects and then starting to introduce the bracket, practicing division problems with real objects and the brackets over a series of days, completing a lesson of one sitting, providing an overview explanation of what long division is or what it is used for the sequence or set of steps of a long division problem becomes very abstract, designing questions and assignments around a given conclusion or fact, not giving them open-ended questions that involve abstract or incomplete instructions, answering the students' questions as often as possible and so on (Reid \& Green, 2007). In this study there is no cue of what passing in a right-brained thinker or so-called the dyslexic person.

Another study is about the strategies which should be applied by teachers in their teaching reading to their dyslexic students. According to Malcolm Alexander before reading the teachers should preview the title, pictures, chapter names, and bold-faced words in order to make a prediction. The students should connect new information to the previously learned information. During reading the teacher should provide a set of textbooks for the students to take name and to highlight, assign class reading a week ahead of time for students to preview, provide audio recordings for the students to use while reading the text, model active engagement with the text through visualization of the scene, teach prefixes, suffixes, and root words to improve spelling, decoding, and comprehension of the students. In after reading tasks the students can verbalize and write the answers to the pre-reading questions and share the answers with a friend or family member, compose an alternative ending for the story or write a sequel, act out key scenes from a text or give "How to" demonstrations for kinesthetic learners, challenge students to draw inferences from the text. Although this study regards the dyslexic students towards reading, it did not survey the students' thoughts during learning and working on reading.

Davis did a survey and device a method that can both help the dysphonetic and dyseitic persons. His methods provide the means for the students to quickly master new concepts. It is good for dyslexics who receive substantial instruction in phonics, but still experience difficulties with reading. His methods remove barriers to understanding and allow dyslexics to make use of their previous instruction. This study also helps students in their reading and can be considered as a strategy towards dyslexia, but it cannot help us to read the dyslexics minds and become aware of what passing through their minds.

The purpose of another study which was case study was to find out how many pupils, who were underachievers and had reading difficulties were dyslexics (Sahari, S. H. \& Johari, A. 2010). 20 pupils with 1 teacher were involved in this study. Questionnaires were used to find out the number of pupils who displayed the symptoms of dyslexia as well as a sample of handwriting of each student which portray some of the symptoms. After the pupils and the teachers answered the questionnaires, these are the results. Based on the 30 symptoms, all the pupils indicated that they had more than 10 symptoms, of which the least was 11 and the most were 29 symptoms. The symptoms are divided into 5 criteria: reading and writing, vision and speech writing and motor skills, mathematics and time management personality and general features. Problems in vision are most probably the main factor that caused these pupils to have reading problems. They also experienced problems in mathematics and time management. Some of them have very poor handwriting and are very slow in writing. One respondent 'Pupil 4 ' is an ambidextrous where she can write using both sides of the hands. Being ambidextrous is a unique feature of a dyslexic. Through case study it was revealed that they did not like to mix well with everybody and they

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were also introvert. They felt inferior and sensitive about their inabilities to achieve the acquired level. This case study does not focus on finding the causes of dyslexia, as all this while, no concrete evidence of the factors can be identified.

The related studies mostly concern the symptoms and solutions towards dyslexia as whole. By the case study I aim to specify what a dyslexic person thinks during doing a reading task in second language learning. As the dynamics of any person is different from another one, every dyslexic's thought procedure is different from each other.

### 1.2. Research Question

What do the dyslexic students think of at the moment of their reading and which strategy they think of to apply in doing a reading task?

### 1.3. Purpose of the Study

Being aware of what pass in the dyslexics' minds during doing their reading task can be a helpful tool to help them in order to overcome their disability in their reading and also improve their self-confidence which is one of the most important element in everyone's learning process.

The main aim of this paper is to make clear what the dyslexic students think of as soon as they start to read a passage. By reading the dyslexics' minds, we can identify their main problems and disabilities. Thus, they can be taken as granted to help the dyslexic students and present them the most appropriate teaching method in order to prevent them to be left behind the other members of the class.

### 1.4. Research Context

This research was done in Shiraz one of the major city of Iran. The participants were selected from one of the private language institutions. All the students of the two chosen classes had a same gender. The two chosen classes were handled in two different days at morning. They were conducted by a same teacher. The students were at intermediate level of that institution. As a researcher I preferred to do this survey in a classroom like situation. Each student had to come to the classroom and be worked on as a case study separately. The purpose of this decision was avoiding the participants to be aware of others' thoughts. What's more it was a good way to make every student to express only her real thoughts without any imitation of others' thoughts. However, every student was made to verbalize her thoughts without presence of any of the participants, I asked all the participants to imagine that they are reading in presence of all their classmates and the teacher. One of the reading texts in their textbook was chosen by me as a researcher to be worked on. I acted as their teacher in this survey.

## 2. Methodology

2.1. Sampling procedure and participants

The first stage of my study was to distinguish dyslexic students from the normal ones. My whole population could be any EFL students but the accessible population was all girl students of schools or private institutes who were learning English. I randomly selected two English classes from a private institute in Shiraz city of Iran. Each of the two classes included twenty students at intermediate level with equal proficiency level in English and was conducted by a same teacher in the morning but in two different days. The reason for what I chose two classes was that each class consisted of twenty students and it was small samples to be worked on. After determining my subjects, I had to set down the two types of standard tests to identify dyslexic students. Six students were recognized as dyslexic after the tests being done and due to lack of time I randomly chose four of them as my participants to cooperate with me.

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### 2.2. Instrument

All the 40 students had to take the two types of standard tests which were misspelled homophones and tactile localization respectively. In misspelled homophones I told the pupil that some of the "words" she sees in the following bunch actually sound like real words, although they would be spelled differently. I had her look down a column - without reading them aloud and had her point to any she thinks would sound like real words if she pronounced them. When she points to one, then I had her pronounce what she thinks it would be. For instance, if she looks at "sed" and says that would be a real word, you will think she has it right. But if she tells you that it would say "seed" you know it is a mistake. Then I went on to the next column until she has done them all. She should be able to do this without more than one mistake.

Zam, lep, crope, bete, mord
Sed, rool, peze, taer, blone
Baik, calp, hib, masp, croe
Vust, praid, blut, mern, crasp
Each student had to identify sed and baik (said and bake) in the first column, rool and praid (rule and prayed) in the second, peze (peas) in the third, bete and taer (beat and tear) in the fourth, and blone and croe (blown and crow) in the last column. This is a killer test for dyslectics. In doing this test I did not mention whether the subject did right or not, because other students were listening to me and it could be a cue for them to do the task in the way I mentioned not in their own way.

Tactile localization is a test for the corpus callosum. If you touch someone lightly on the inside of his fingers with his hand behind his back where he can't see what you did, and then you ask him to show you on the other hand where he was touched, that information has to go through our old friend, the CC. Imagine the finger broken into three sections called "pads" separated by the joints. The three sections are the fleshy parts of the finger. You will touch either the far pad (fingerprint area) or the near pad next to his palm (never the middle one.) I had the pupil hold out both her hands, palms up, fingers spread out, one in front of her and one behind. I explained that I would be touching the fingers on the hand behind her where she could not see it. She is to point with his thumb on her front hand to where I touched her. If she identified it right, I made a 0 , if he pointed to the wrong spot, I made an X. If she made two or more errors, her CC was not transferring information from one hemisphere to the other quickly and accurately. So, she was recognized as dyslexic person.

### 2.3. Operational Definition

Proficiency level: the knowledge of the students in English generally which was identified by their scores reported by their teachers in their midterm exam.

Disability: the mild problems that dyslexic students suffer from in their learning process.
Unintelligent: the students whose minds are dumb that prevent them to learn anything.
Disorganization: bearing no association between letters and sounds and containing reversals in spelling the words.

Motivation: being interested in reading a text.

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Confidence: being enough brave to speak and read a text loudly for all the class members and not fear of being teased by others.

Symptoms: the main characteristics of the dyslexia problem.
Case study: doing the survey on each dyslexic student one by one.
Reading task: selected reading text from the students' textbook which was supposed to be read by the dyslexic students.

Standard tests: the two prepared tests by other authors which were used to identify dyslexic students from the non-dyslexic students.

### 2.4. Procedure

Think aloud is a kind of qualitative research which I applied in my study. In this type of research the participants have to verbalize what they think of during doing a specific task. After applying the "misspelled homophones" 18 students failed in this exam. As it was probable that some of them failed because of their lack of knowledge in homophones, then I decided to test them with "Tactile Localization" test to identify the real dyslexic students. After identifying the dyslexic students by applying the two standard tests, every student had to read the passage that I had prepared for them. The passage was selected from their textbook. Each student was to do the reading task in a separate room without existence of any other student. It was done because of preventing the participants to get the others' ideas and verbalized thoughts. Before starting the reading, the student had to discuss around the topic and make some prediction about it. The purpose of this process was to make sure that the student suffer only from her dyslexic problem and not from any other disabilities which are the evidence of having low IQ rate or low level of proficiency, since it is believed that the dyslexics make themselves understood by using their background knowledge and providing big picture of the text content by their creativity skill.

After registering the student's prediction of the text, I asked her to start reading and verbalize whatever passed in her mind during reading. The detailed description of their verbalized thoughts which were gathered through thinks aloud approach was the last stage of this study that can be used by teachers to help their dyslexic students.

The design of this study was case study in which each participant acted as a single unit and attempted to answer what happened in a dyslexic's mind. It is worthwhile to mention that the findings cannot be generalized to other cases because the dynamics of one individual bear little relationship to the dynamics of others.

## 3. Data Analysis

In this study I gathered all the necessary data through interviewing the dyslexic students. Whatever they talked about in their interview was through the think aloud procedure. All the accessed data through the interview were analyzed in detail by the researcher who organized them to be comprehensible.

## 4. Results

Every participant expressed her thought in different way from others. The first dyslexic student started to read. She discussed about the topic in a clear way that was the evidence of her background knowledge about the topic. During her discussion I asked her to verbalize her thought and whatever passes through her mind during discussion. She talked about what the content would be like and made some prediction as a whole. From her starting to read on she
paused a lot and had problem in pronouncing a word. Sometimes she did not return to correct her wrong pronunciation of a word and sometimes she did. Her expressions as a think aloud was that "I am worry if I can pronounce the next word correctly", "if I return to make correct the wrong pronunciation of the word, can I pronounce it correctly?", "this word is like what I pronounced, but why the researcher told that I did not pronounce it correctly?". After finishing about the half of the passage, she talked about her feeling regards doing this task. She said how interesting the text content was for her and how she could apply it in her real life. Her another expression during reading was "I do not see it as an essential fact to pronounce every words correctly, to what extent I comprehend and get the gist of the text can be enough for me. In spite of all my own idea about not being necessary to pronounce every words of the text correctly and clearly, I tried and will try to improve my reading skill and pay enough energy and time on pronouncing and spelling words correctly". The last expression of the participant showed that she was trying to describe the images of the text content in her mind and attempting to describe what it would be look like and visualize it in her mind. This is one of the eminent characteristics of the dyslexic persons.

Then it was the second participant's turn. Her prediction of the text was not as good as the first participant. Her verbalized thought during the reading process showed her difficulty in deciding the exact word and it was a challenge for her to prefer the most approximate word from the other words in her mind in accordance to the text context and content. In pronouncing every word of the passage she scared to have problem in reading and she taught if she makes any mistake, she would be teased or laughed by others who were listening to her. As she only focused on the reading as clear as possible and tried a lot on pronouncing every word correctly, she could not understand the content of the text and it really made her worried and upset. Some words seemed to her very similar to each other and as she pronounced them in a same way, she could not find any semantic relationship between the pronounced word and its neighbors. That's why she lost the content of the text. It was really hard to her to find any difference between the words that she thought they are the same. And whenever I made her aware of the mistaken words she could hardly accepted it as her mistake. During all the reading section, she thought of that if someone else read it to her and she just listened to another person reading the text, it would be more helpful for her to have control over the text content and manage her thoughts over the events sequence of the text.

These two students had problem in distinguishing the similar words from each other. These two dyslexics were worried about their self-confidence. Both of them thought of their pronounced words as the most probable correct words.

The third student came to the field. First she talked about the topic and she said that it may not be interesting for me. She stated "I am not eager to understand about this issue; however I can describe it in my mind clearly and predict about what it would be". It was really interesting for me that she could predict it to some extent correctly in spite of her not being interested in that specific issue. That is the evidence of dyslexics being intellectual persons. During her reading, I noticed her struggle in pronouncing the words. According to her expression through thinking aloud process she pronounced each letter of the word in her mind at first and then decided what the most matched word would be. The main thought passing through her mind while she was reading the text was that she was confused by the names of characters and places. Furthermore she worried a lot about remembering the sequence of events and she could not manage them in her mind. When she finished about half of the text she verbalized her thought as making a big picture of the events and she could not talk about any events in detail. She expressed "I have a whole imagination of these issues in my mind and if someone asks me about the detail, I will surely have nothing to present her, however I completely understand what happened in the text content". The most important thing that made her upset was her disability in remembering the
details and to be considered as a stupid person by others. At last when she finished the reading task, she said that all the time she wished to finish the reading as soon as possible and get rid of it. I was wondered if her feeling was due to her knowledge that she is doing the reading process for a research and she may be not in the mood of doing this. But she replied that "no matter when and for whom I am reading, I always wish to finish the reading as soon as possible and I am always satisfied with only getting the gist of the text without trying a lot to work on the words and their spelling".

The last participant was given her reading text. First she looked at the topic and she said "neither I know about it nor can I guess or predict about what it would be". Then she started to read. Although her pronunciation and knowledge of words was better than the other three ones, she was confused by some words and pronounced other words instead of some other ones. After she finished reading about three sentences she asked me to explain what it is about as a whole. She said "if the text was accompanied by pictures like the children story books, I would comprehend it better". It really made her bored without any pre-explanation and pictures. I asked her to continue. As she made mistake in pronouncing a word instead of the correct one, I stopped and asked her what caused her to think that her pronounced word was correct. She replied "first I had a glance on the first few letters of the word and the last few letters, then according to the context I decided that this word would be what I pronounced". It was really interesting for me because based on her method of recognizing words; she could pronounce more than half of the words correctly. Whenever she had to pronounce unfamiliar or new words, she repeated it twice. Based on her statement it was due to her need to be sure of her pronounced word. Whenever she had reversals in letters, I corrected her but she again repeated the word in her own way. At this time I asked her to verbalize her thought and what passed through her mind exactly at that moment. She wrote a word and said "in my mind the word that you are pronouncing look likes this". It was common among all the four participants that they only accepted the word they had in their mind. When she finished the reading I asked about her feeling towards reading. She replied "I did not understand the content of the text. Always I put all my energy on recognizing, pronouncing and distinguishing the words. This prevents me from comprehending and understanding the text content". If I gave a brief explanation at first to her or the text was accompanied by some pictures or illustrations they could be used as guidance for her. However during the reading she tried a lot to describe and draw a picture of it in her mind, she lost the cues and had difficulty in remembering the previous events.

## 5. Discussion

The description of the participants' statements through think aloud process showed that many characteristics were common among them. All of them had problem in distinguishing and recognizing the correct word. Despite their struggles and trying a lot in deciding what the most matched word would be fit in a specific phrase or sentence, they pronounced some of the words wrongly. All of them were enough intellect and knowledgeable that they could describe the events however they did it as a whole. Being as a dyslexic person has much to do with the selfesteem of students. The dyslexics have active minds that help them during their reading process to think about applying the text content in their real life.

As the dyslexic students wished to finish the reading as soon as possible, they jumped over the new words and preferred to guess the words rather than having complete look over every letters of the words.

They preferred to listen to someone else's reading for them so that they do not have to encounter to the writing format of the words especially the unfamiliar ones.

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They had problem in organizing the events of the text in their minds. They could not also keep details in their minds and talk about them. Furthermore, supporting sentences with visuals was another need of the dyslexics.

Every participant complained about high level of anxiety they experienced at any moment of their reading and it was due to their fear of being teased by others when they had trouble in distinguishing the right words and pronouncing it correctly.

Since they had problem in remembering the previous events and they usually lost the sequence of the events, they made many pause during their reading, both for remembering the previous events and for concentrating on the letters of the unfamiliar words to pronounce the most probable correct ones.

## 6. Implication

Therefore it is essential for every teacher to recognize the students' abilities and disabilities in the classroom. Without specifying the individual differences, a teacher cannot help her/his students. It is might be effective if teachers are able to read their students' minds and become aware of the problems that students encounter during their learning process. It is highly effective for dyslexic students. So, recognizing and taking dyslexics' problems in to consideration can lead to elevation of their understanding and progress.

## 7. Application

By taking into account the dyslexics' needs it is advised to teachers or even the parents to provide pre-explanations and big picture of the text to the dyslexic learner before starting the task. It can also be helpful for non-dyslexic students. Another way that teachers can help the dyslexics is providing a situation that decreases their anxiety or better to say providing mood elevation condition which is effective not only for the dyslexic students but also for every students in the classroom. As the dyslexic students have difficulty with short term and working memory and they struggle to hold more than one or two points in their head at one time, it is advised to the teachers to make the tasks and instruction short. It would be much better if the tasks be broken into small steps. Providing pre-task or pre-topic discussion and accompanying the text with visuals are other ways to improve the dyslexics' comprehension speed.

## 8. Suggestions for Further Research

Discovering the dyslexic students' problems is one important issue and finding appropriate ways to help them is another important issues. Different kinds of works have been done to introduce solutions to the problems dyslexics suffer from. It is obvious that dyslexics have different attitudes and reactions towards different kinds of exercises and real tasks in their books. So, a question has been remained unanswered that which type of tasks and exercises can help dyslexics to master their knowledge?

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# WHAT'S HIDDEN IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS? 

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#### Abstract

TEXTBOOKS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE BASIC ELEMENT OF MOST CURRICULA. WHAT MUST BE BORN IN MIND IS THAT THESE TEXTBOOKS ARE NOT ONLY A MEDIUM OF TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE, BUT THEY ALSO INCULCATE AN IDEOLOGY. THIS IS IN PARTICULAR TRUE ABOUT LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS SINCE LANGUAGE IS THE MEANS OF TRANSFERRING IDEOLOGY. WHAT'S MORE, APART FROM LANGUAGE, THEY REFLECT CULTURE. LANGUAGE TEACHERS SHOULD NOT TAKE THE ISSUE OF IDEOLOGY FOR GRANTED. BEING AWARE OF THE HIDDEN PART OF THE BOOKS AIDS TEACHING LANGUAGE MORE EFFECTIVELY. THIS ARTICLE IS AN ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF A NUMBER OF STUDIES IN THIS FIELD.


KEY WORDS: LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS, IDEOLOGY, CULTURE

## 1.Introduction

Recently, there has been a growing interest in learning English in non-English-speaking countries. That is because English enables people from all over the world to communicate with one another. By learning English, not only people learn the language, but also they learn social behavior and the attitude of those who speak it. There are numerous ways to express one's intention, however, people use the language based on what they want to say. The language used is also affected by the speaker's attitude. This means that textbook producers can inculcate their ideology through the language used in textbooks. In addition to verbal language, nonverbal elements of textbooks can be ideologically loaded. As culture is an indispensable component of language, it forms part of the ideology in language textbooks. Regarding the influence of ideology and in particular culture, there are several views which will be discussed in the

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following sections presenting studies on ideology and culture presentation in language textbooks taught locally and internationally.

## 2. Language and Ideology

Ideology is defined as "a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view" (Kress\& Hodge, 1979, p.6). Language and ideology are closely related. Fairclaugh (2010, p.59) claims that "language is a material form of ideology and it is invested by ideology." He believes that language use is affected by social relations and processes which in turn influence its properties, including linguistic forms that appear in texts. According to Kress and Hodge (1979), language is not only a means of communication, but also an instrument for manipulation. Meaning the hearer is both manipulated and informed. They also believe that language can be distorted in the service of a particular social class of people. They introduced the term language ideology associated with control and power.

Language ideology has been defined in different ways. Silverstein (1979, p. 193) defined it as "a set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use." As Irvine (1998, p.56) put it, language ideology is "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests." As is implied, Irvine emphasizes the fact that beliefs and ideas are transferable through language but hidden under a masque. Rumsy (1990, p. 346; cited in Woolard, 1994) gives a broad definition and considers language ideology as "shared bodies of common sense notions about the nature of language in the world." Johnson (2008, p. 66) specifies some aspects of language ideology. According to her, language ideology is " beliefs about how communication works, beliefs about linguistic correctness, goodness and badness, articulation and inarticulation, beliefs about the role of language in a person's identity, how languages are learned, what the functions of language should be, who authorities on language are, and whether and how usage should be legislated."

Language ideology has gained recognition in the field of language teaching because, as mentioned above ideas, beliefs, and culture can all be transmitted through language and influence language learners.

## 3. Discourse and CDA

Discourse in Bloor \& Bloor's (2007, p.6) view, refers to "all the phenomena of symbolic interaction and communication between people, usually through spoken or written language and visual representation." According to Woods(2006, p.x), discourse is "language plus context that we bring with us when we use language; the context that includes our experience, assumptions and expectations; the context that we change in our relationships with others, as we both construct and negotiate our way through the social practice of the world we live in."

Fairclaugh (2010) believes that discourse consists of three elements: social practice, discoursal practice (text production, distribution and consumption), and text. He hypothesizes that different features of a text, ways in which texts are put together and interpreted, and the nature of the social practice are all connected to each other. If a text is to be analyzed, all the three elements should be considered.

One of the methods of discourse analysis is called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It is "the analysis of the relations between discourse and other objects as well as the analysis of the internal relations of discourse" (Fairclaugh, 2010, p. 4). It includes not only linguistics but also areas such as sociology and politics; that's why CDA is called an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary form of analysis (Fairclaugh, 2010). Apart from being transdisciplinary, Fairclaugh (2010) considers two other properties for CDA: being relational and dialectical.
The primary focus of CDA is on social relations which are complex and layered. Only if different sets of relations are analyzed, discourse is understood. What's more, these relations are dialectical and between objects that are different from each other but not discrete. In fact, they flow into each other (e.g discourse and power).

Why is it called critical? It is critical as it deals with values of a good society and of human well-being. It emphasizes the wrong aspects of society as well as on how they should be corrected (Fairclaugh, 2010).

One of the main aims of CDA is studying the effect of power relations in producing the wrong aspects of society and how they affect other relations in social life (Fairclaugh, 2010).This paper tries to review the CDA studies on language textbooks to show how ideology and power are expressed implicitly in these books.

## 4. Textbooks and Ideology

When studying a textbook, particularly a language textbook, one may superficially think that they are learning only words and structures. However, it is not actually the case. Textbooks are never neutral. Behind every word, structure, and even picture are hidden concepts and meanings picked up by the readers consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, textbooks are in fact means of shaping readers ideas, attitudes and identities.
"Identity does not exist naturally, it is something always constructed in relation to identity of groups other than our own" (Da Silva, 1999, p.17). Schools are places where "cultural ideologies are recreated, maintained and continuously built" (Brown, 2011, p.9). This happens both through talk in class as well as through the textbooks being studied. According to Da Silva (1999), knowledge expressed in a curriculum is realistic in nature, but this does not mean that curriculum is only means of knowledge transmission, rather it is a representation carrying a kind of policy. In sum, Da Silva (1999, p.7) states "the text that constitute curriculum is not simply a text, it is a text of power." The concept of ideology has always been associated with power. Fairclaugh (2010) suggests that discourse is endowed with ideology as it either supports or diminish power. He goes on to say that even in scientific and theoretical discourse power relations can be affected by discourse practices. Language textbooks are not an exception. In order to identify the hidden ideology in language textbooks, researchers have done several CDA studies. A review of some related research will be discussed here.

Hosseini Saadabadi and Bagherzadeh Kasmani (2014) investigated the representation of male and female social actors in Summit Series. They found out that male and female social actors are represented differently with regard to both their characteristics and their social roles which they represent. Males are depicted as more active, successful, independent and assertive comparing to females. What's more, female actors are shown to be engaged in less critical social functions than do males. Interestingly, as the researchers assert, a surface view of the book indicates that females are considered as active social actors, which is contrary to the results of CDA. On the whole, females are subordinated in Summit Series. In terms of a differential representation of male and female social actors, Abdollahzade and Baniasad (2009) reached the same results. Through analyzing Spectrum and True to Life textbooks, they found three sorts of ideologies: consumerism, sexism, and superiority of English. Entertainments, fashion, shopping, and technology are the means through which consumerism is presented. In addition, superiority of English is reflected through cultural stereotypes and superiority of English-speaking countries. Nofal and Qawar (2015) investigated gender representation in a textbook called Action Pack 10 taught in Jordan. Linguistic and visual analysis were done. As the authors state, Action Pack 10 was an attempt to mirror modern Jordanian society. However, the results of their study showed that the efforts were failed. Though, in modern Jordan society women have excellent positions, in this book their role is not prominent. It was indicated that linguistically, visually, and socially male characters are overpresented. Giaschi (2000) analyzed the images in the $4^{\text {th }}$ Dimension of Headway series in terms of activity of the image, the active and passive person in the image, the status of the persons, the body language, the clothing, and the direction of the participants' gaze. As the results revealed, work environment was emphasized the most frequently in the photos followed by fashion and entertainment respectively. The active roles and high status were given to men. Women were shown to be weak and submissive. Regarding clothing, men were represented in three modes: casual, professional, and power-dressed. However, women were
depicted in baroque period dresses, futuristic lame', and fun clothing. Even women's eye direction was in a way that implies their dependence on men whereas for men it created a sense of strength and determination. On the whole, males and females were presented quite differently. Nakamura (2002) investigated stories of Japanese Senior High School textbooks to probe the images of women. To do so, quantitative and qualitative analysis were done. The results from quantitative analysis showed that men were portrayed in the stories significantly more than women. Gender relationships were analyzed qualitatively. It was indicated that in these stories men are connected with friendship, adventure, self-control, warm-heartedness, and achievement while women are depicted to be emotional, unreliable, seducing, cunning, and guilty.

However, it was found in some other studies that a number of ELT textbooks either favor females or represent the two genders equally. Mineshima (2008) also did a study on uppersecondary English classes in Japan. The results were different from Nakamura's. Gender visibility, character attributes, and picture representations were examined. It was found that both genders were presented equally in the number of male and female characters, their utterances, school subjects, occupations, interests and family roles. Parham (2013), concerning the belief that reading materials affect children's gender identity, studied gender representation in conversations, illustrations, and graphic design of the cover in nine packages developed to teach English to young children. The results indicated that in conversations, females were represented equally as men. Furthermore, in $30 \%$ of the conversations females were the initiator of the conversation. However, the analysis of the conversations revealed under-presentation of females. In terms of the graphic design of the cover no differential representation of the two genders was observed. This shows an attempt to give the idea of equality of the two sexes to children. Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2014) have also probed the representation of social actors. In order to do so they analyzed Interchange textbooks. Interestingly, in these books females are manifested as more successful, active, assertive and expressive in comparison with males. Furthermore, prestigious jobs have been assigned to women. As the authors point out, this form of representation aims at emphasizing that women are as important as men in society and tries to highlight women's role. Tahriri and Moradpour (2014) investigated gender representation in Top Notch series. They considered three aspects of gender: relations, positions, and content. It was indicated that stereotypical norms established in learners' minds are almost removed. Nevertheless, Tajeddin and JanebiEnayat (2010) studied the images in Top Notch series and two other books, New Headway and Iran Language Institute textbooks (published locally). The results showed that in the images of the three books men appear to be more active, socially important, breadwinners, and powerful in comparison with women. However, the authors emphasize that the Iran Language Institute textbooks showed more gender equality. They go on to say that in spite of all the feminist movements worldwide, locally developed books demonstrate less gender bias comparing to the international ones. Amerian and Amerian (2014) also analyzed Top Notch series but in terms of E-life style in this book. The results indicated that the books mainly include using technology for E-shopping, E-reservation, online communication, and using technology and electronic resources for research. He concluded that ELT course book authors consider E-lifestyle as an important and necessary part of textbooks.

Based on the findings of research, it seems that textbooks still need more attention from the authorities in terms of the ideology they represent.

## 5. Culture

Kramsch (1998, p.10) defines culture as "membership in a discourse community that shares a common space and history and common imagining." From Linton 's (1945) point of view, it is " a configuration of learned behaviors whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society" (p.32). Some scholars have defined different types of culture. Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p.204-5) consider three types of culture: source culture, target culture, and international culture. Source culture is native culture of the learner while target culture is the culture of the countries where English is spoken as first language. However, international culture
is the culture amalgamation of English and non-English countries. Researchers assign different levels of importance to different types of culture. Byram et al. (1991), highlight the necessity of presenting target culture when teaching a foreign language, they believe that learning the target culture helps the learners use language in its original setting more effectively. Cortazzi and Jin (1999), are in favor of source culture as it enables the students to talk about their own culture in English. Nevertheless, Wesch (2004) thinks exposure to foreign culture may result in alienation from one's own culture. Therefore, native culture must also be presented in text books.

Adaskou, Bitten, and Fashi (1990, p.3-4) categorize different types of culture in another way:
i. The aesthetic sense culture or culture with capital " C ". It includes media, cinema, music and literature.
ii.The sociological sense culture or culture with small "c". It includes the nature and organization of family, home life, interpersonal relations, material conditions, customs and institutions.
iii.The semantic sense culture (occupations and thought processes).
iv.The pragmatic sense culture (social skills, communication functions, appropriacy, etc).

Culture and language are believed to be inter-related and inter-dependent. Therefore, teaching a second or foreign language is always accompanied by culture. It is notable that representation of culture is a delicate issue which must be considered by both textbook authors and teachers.

### 5.1 Culture in Textbooks

Textbooks comprise the most reliable source for students and teachers, and are central to most language teaching curricula. As language and culture are inseparable, naturally language textbooks contain various forms of culture representations. Different books seem to manifest different types of culture as defined above. Some focus on target culture, some on source culture, and others on international culture. Scholars such as Prodromou (1992) insist on a cross-cultural approach to language teaching with the belief that it makes the students aware of different cultures around the world, and as a result they care more about other nations. Learning culture of different nations assist learners in communicating with them in an authentic context. Although raising students' cultural awareness is crucial, care must be taken by the teachers to avoid valuing a particular culture. Teachers can introduce other cultures to the students and meanwhile teach them not to compare their own culture with others and keep respecting their own cultural norms. Many researchers have investigated culture representation in the books currently taught all over the world. What follows is a review of a number of such studies.

Farzaneh, Kohandani, and Nejadansari (2014) evaluated the cultural content of Top Notch series by giving a questionnaire to teachers and supervisors. The results showed that teachers and supervisors found the intercultural content of the book satisfying. The study manifested that developing intercultural communication is emphasized in the series. Regarding cultural awareness, the book seems to be neutral. The researchers suggest that cultural diversities be presented in a way that promotes students' sensitivity. Concerning teaching culture, no value should be assigned to a particular culture; furthermore, students' tolerance of other cultures must be strengthen, as the researchers remind. In a more in-depth study, Tajeddin and Teimournejad (2015) analyzed an internationally well-known series, Top Notch: English for today's world and a locally published book, the Iran Language Institute books. For this purpose they used two frameworks: Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Adaskon, Britten and Fahsi (1990). As English is a lingua franka, it can be attributed to different cultures (Baker, 2011; Cogo, 2012; Kachru, 2011 cited in Tajeddin and Teimournejad, 2015). Therefore, cultures of a variety of countries must be included in ELT textbooks. The findings of Tajeddin and Teimournejad's (2015) study indicated that the localized textbooks represented culturally neutral elements because they didn't refer to any particular culture and even only a few elements of the target culture exist. In addition, in the localized textbooks the sociological aspect of culture was emphasized more than the aesthetic ones. However, Top Notch series contained intercultural elements most of which emphasized
aesthetic aspect of culture. Culture of English speaking countries was more prominent in Top Notch series while just a few culturally neutral elements were found. Bahrami (2015) studied the representation of culture in Total English book series taught in Iran. She studied teachers' perception using a questionnaire adopted from Kilickaya (2004). It was found that the book presents western culture and appreciates it more than other ones. Furthermore, the culture included in Total English series is not in harmony with Iranian culture. Using the model proposed by Ramirez and Halls (1990), Aliakbari (2004) studied four high school textbooks taught in Iran. The results revealed that these books do not promote students' intercultural knowledge. The books seem to distract attention from cultural points as the focus is on science rather than on areas such as art and literature. What's more, the books do not contain information about other countries. Only $20 \%$ of the content covers information of this type. The researcher believes that if the goal is to prepare students to communicate in multicultural world of English, making a change in Iranian English textbooks is necessary. To analyze the behavior of culture in the ELT textbooks adopted in high school level in China, Jamalvandi (2013) used the model proposed by Ramirez and Hall (1999), the findings indicated a differential representation of culture aspects. That is to say, some elements such as literature, art, humanities, and history were presented more than some others like family relationships, religion, government, law and justice. $40 \%$ of the references were made to the target culture and $35 \%$ to the source culture. It is notable that only $6 \%$ of the references are made to eastern countries. Overall, an unequal representation of different culture dimensions was found which, according to the researcher, suggests the inadequacy of the book with regard to cultural knowledge. The study of the book Oxford Progressive English, taught in Pakistan, by Shah, Ahmed, and Mahmood (2014) focusing on the sociocultural sense of culture showed that the book manifests American and British culture and society and source culture is ignored. Furthermore, the presented culture is not relevant to learners' needs. With regard to different aspects of culture, it was found that "organization and nature of family" of the target culture was emphasized. The researchers assert that the book aims to impart the western culture, religion, and beliefs to the learners. Mahmood, Asghar, and Hussain (2012) studied one of the textbooks taught in Pakistan called Step Ahead 1. The study was aimed at investigating whether source culture, target culture, or both are presented in the book. Bayram et al. model was used to probe the cultural content of the book. Culture aspects such as social identity, beliefs and behaviors, sociopolitical institutes, socialization and life style, national history, geography, and stereotypes were studied. Findings indicated that the book does not contain ample information about the target culture, nor does it present source culture. In fact the book presents Singaporean culture. The researchers believe that Step Ahead must be revised in terms of target and source culture. An investigation aimed at identifying the representation of foreign cultures in Longman Elect and Treasure Plus series taught in Hong-Kong was done by Yuen (2011). Four aspects of culture were studied: products (e.g food, travel, film), perspectives (e.g inspiration, world-view, etc), practices (e.g customs, daily life, etc), and persons (famous people). Results showed that products from other countries appeared more than Englishspeaking countries, content on practices was limited, content on perspectives was even less than that of products and practices, and persons were from English -speaking countries. On the whole, the emphasis is on the cultures of English-speaking countries, and other cultures mainly African culture are under-presented. Hillard (2014) studied four textbooks taught to adults around the world. The framework used was a combination of Risager's (1991), Sercu's (in Grag, 2010), and Grag (2010) to focus on multiple levels, and the analysis of accents and varieties of English in audio material. The results revealed that the textbooks under-present a number of different people, they contain unrealistic and superficial views of other cultures, and do not provide the students with enough activities for developing their intercultural awareness.

As one of the purposes of learning English is to communicate with people from all over the world, and due to the positively influential role of culture in easing communication, it is recommended that international culture rather than source and target culture be presented in
language textbooks. Therefore, students will learn about other nations and how to communicate with them.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

According to the studies reviewed, language learning goes far beyond learning structure, vocabulary, and phonology. In fact, language can be applied to impose control and power, in general, ideology. People who study language course books may not be aware of the hidden ideology in the books, but they can be affected by it unconsciously. Therefore, when choosing a textbook, educators should consider the implicit ideology in the book to avoid engaging students in contradictory ideas and beliefs. In terms of culture as a form of ideology which is closely related to language and impossible to be ignored, teachers should be careful not to value a particular culture so that students' respect for their own culture will not be harmed.

Results of the studies indicate that the stakeholders need to work more on the content of language course books with regard to ideology. Books should reflect what is wise and moral if they are to shape learners' thoughts.

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# THE IMPACT OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF LEXICOGRAMMATICAL DEVICES ON EFL LEARNERS' WRITING FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY 

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#### Abstract

UNDOUBTEDLY, WRITING IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT SECOND LANGUAGE SKILLS. AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF COHESION IN ENGLISH BY HALLIDAY AND HASAN (1976), THE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF COHESION AND COHERENCE IN THE ENGLISH WRITING HAS BEEN INCREASED. TO THIS END, THIS STUDY INVESTIGATED THE EXTENT TO WHICH INSTRUCTION OF COHESIVE DEVICES BASED ON HALLIDAY AND HASAN'S (1976) TAXONOMY IMPROVED INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNER'S WRITING FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY. BY MEANS OF THE ILI PLACEMENT TEST ADMINISTERED IN THE BEGINNING OF EACH TERM, TWO HOMOGENOUS INTACT INTERMEDIATE FEMALE CLASSES ( $\mathrm{N}=20$ IN EACH CLASS) OUT OF 5 CLASSES WERE SELECTED RANDOMLY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ASSIGNED INTO EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS AT IRAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, URMIA BRANCH, URMIA, WEST AZARBAYJAN, IRAN. THE RESEARCHER SELECTED A TOPIC WHICH SERVED THE PURPOSE OF PRE-TEST FOR BOTH GROUPS TO WRITE ABOUT. THE WRITTEN DATA OF THE LEARNERS IN BOTH GROUPS WERE ANALYZED FOR FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY ACCORDING TO THE METHOD APPLIED BY WIGGLESWORTH AND STORCH (2009). FLUENCY INCLUDED THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS, T-UNITS AND CLAUSES PER TEXT AND COMPLEXITY WAS ANALYZED IN TERMS OF THE PROPORTION OF CLAUSES TO T-UNITS AND PERCENTAGE OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES TO TOTAL CLAUSES. DURING THE TREATMENT, THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WAS EXPOSED TO EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF CDS FOR 10 SESSIONS. IN EACH SESSION, THEY GOT FAMILIARIZED WITH DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES OF SOME TYPES OF CDS PROPOSED BY HALLIDAY AND HASAN (1976). THE LEARNERS WERE ASKED TO USE CDS IN THEIR SENTENCES. SINCE THIS STUDY AIMED AT DETERMINING THE EFFECTS OF CDS INSTRUCTION ON THE LEARNER'S WRITING FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY IMPROVEMENT, THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON CDS. AFTER THE TREATMENT, THE RESEARCHER ADMINISTERED THE POST-TEST OF WRITING TEST ON THE TOPIC LEARNERS WROTE ABOUT IN PRE-TEST TO SEE WHETHER ANY CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS HAD OCCURRED AFTER THE TREATMENT IN THEIR WRITINGS OR NOT. ALSO, AN INTER-RATER RELIABILITY IN POST-TEST WAS ESTABLISHED THROUGH DOUBLE RATING SOME OF THE WRITTEN DATA BY ANOTHER RESEARCH ASSISTANT WHICH WAS 0.84. THE RESULTS OF AN INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST REVEALED THAT THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP OUTPERFORMED THE CONTROL GROUP


REGARDING THEIR WRITING ACCURACY AND COMPLEXITY. THE IMPLICATIONS ARE DISCUSSED IN TERMS OF THE ADVANTAGES OF CD INSTRUCTION IN EFL CONTEXTS.

## KEY WORDS: COHESIVE DEVICES, FLUENCY, COMPLEXITY

## 1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, writing is one of the most difficult second language skills. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that the difficulty in writing lies both in expressing and organizing ideas and presenting those ideas into readable text. Halliday and Hasan $(1976,1989)$ believed that cohesion and coherence are two important parts and features of a good writing. Therefore, if language learners want to be good English writers, whether they are EFL or ESL learners, they are in need of writing coherent and cohesive texts.

In our personal and professional lives, writing plays an important role. Writing is considered an act of communication and a useful way of addressing an audience. However, in an academic area, writing is regarded more than just a means of communication. Therefore, the ability to express meaning clearly in written texts is an important skill for academic success. In fact, college students' writing skills are the best indicators of their academic success (Geiser \& Studley, 2001), and also outside the academic context, writing skills are important predictors of professional competence (Light, 2001). However, for many students writing activities are among the least enjoyable or interesting ones. Thus, understanding the characteristics of good writing is an important purpose, both for theoretical and applied reasons (Barkhuizen, 1998; Spratt, 2001).

After the publication of cohesion in English by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the research in the field of cohesion and coherence in the English texts has been increased. According to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory, cohesion provides a sequence of interrelated sentences in a text. Cohesion happens when the interpretation and understanding of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another (Halliday \& Hasan, 1976). Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. vii) pointed out that cohesion is one of the main elements for text construction. In fact, cohesion refers to the explicit cues in the text that help readers/listeners to understand the semantic relations in a text.

When elements in the text are related to each other, a text gets meaningful and that relation can occur through Cohesive Devices (CDs) including reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction as grammatical and lexical cohesion. Thus, the grammar and lexicon are two forms of cohesion. These CDs used by speakers and writers in order to express meaning provide semantic relations for the elements and facilitate the interpretations (Rassouli \& Abbasvandi, 2013).

The mastery of CDs is a crucial element of effective academic writing and essential for academic success in any academic context where English is taught. Consequently, the application of CDs in academic writing has attracted the attention of many researchers who are interested in addressing the issue of lack of cohesion in students' writing, especially in a foreign context (Hesamy \& Hamedi, 2013).

## 2. Review of the Literature

Since writing is a complicated process even in our first language, learning this skill is more difficult for EFL/ESL learners. According to many English teachers learning writing skill seems to be more demanding compared to learning any other language skill. There are a lot of researches which have aimed at finding out different factors that influence writing skill and lead to problems for language learners. Some of the factors influencing learners' writing have been mentioned in Angelova's study (as cited in Rassouli \& Abbasvandi, 2013) including "L1 writing competence, meta-cognitive knowledge about writing task, use of cohesive devices, writers personal characteristics and writing strategies" (p. 15).

Among the factors which can affect writing tasks, cohesion and coherence, seem to be two most problematic area for EFL learners (Shokrpour \& Fallahzadeh, 2007). Cohesion is considered to be one of the important factors which needs special attention in writing since it connects
different parts of the text. Text is considered to be a text by means of cohesion, without which sentences would not be united and it would result in some unrelated sentences. In other words, cohesion is a quality which distinguishes a text from non-text (Halliday \& Hasan, 1976).

Though closely related concepts, cohesion and coherence are also distinctive (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010). Both cohesion and coherence are means of providing connectivity in a text or a discourse and facilitating understanding; however, cohesion involves the syntactic and semantic connectivity existing between linguistic forms at a surface-structure level (Connor \& Johns, 1990; Halliday \& Hasan, 1976) while coherence refers to the "principle of organization postulated to account for the underlying functional connectedness or identity of a piece of spoken or written language (text, discourse)" (Crystal, 1991, p. 60). In other words, while cohesion is a facilitator of textual flow in the surface structure, coherence involves the connectedness in content and organization.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), there are various ways to held ideas together in a text, and "cohesion" refers to the structure of meaning the writer creates in connected sentences or utterances. Cohesion, in these linguists' view, is a factor which determines if a group of sentences form a unified text or they are solely a set of unrelated sentences. However, though cohesion has something to do with semantic relations, it is not concerned with content (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010). Halliday and Hasan (1976) indicated that "cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text is constructed as a semantic edifice" (p.26). In other words, although cohesion is a determining factor in connecting ideas between sentences in a paragraph, it does not necessarily play an important role in the global flow of a text across paragraphs.

In Kolln's (1999) view, cohesion and coherence differ noticeably. Whereas cohesion mainly refers to the semantic relations that exist between sentences, coherence is defined as "cohesion on a global scale" (p. 94). In other words, coherence primarily involves the overall connectedness of the ideas existing in a piece of writing rather than relationships between sentences. Coherence in a broader scope includes discourse-level relations and is "the internal set of consistent relationships perceived in any stretch of discourse" (Winterowd, 1975, p. 225).

Halliday and Hassan (1976) refer to the basic categories of grammatical cohesion and state that this concept can be systematized by being classified into a small number of distinct categories, namely, reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. Reference is one option that the grammar of English offers to create surface links between sentences. Halliday and Hassan (1976) believe that without referring to some other features in the text, reference features cannot be semantically interpreted. Substitution occurs when a previous word or expression is replaced by another one (Halliday \& Hassan, 1976). It is vital to mention that substitution and reference are distinct based on what and where they operate, thus substitution involves the relations related with wording, while reference is concerned with relations related with meaning. Moreover, whereas substitution is a way to avoid repetition in the text itself, reference requires to retrieve its meaning from the situational textual occurrence (Azzouz, 2009).

There is a close relation between substitution and ellipsis because one can say that ellipsis is "substitution" by zero (0). The essential point in ellipsis is that although some elements are deleted from the surface text, but they are still comprehended. Thus, by referring to an element in the preceding text, omission of these elements can be recovered. Harmer (2004) points out that "words are deliberately left out of a sentence when the meaning is still clear" (p. 24). Conjunctions are used to create grammatical cohesion in texts which show the relationship between sentences. They differ from other cohesive ties in that they employ other features in the discourse to convey the meaning. As Nunan (1993) points out, they use some features to refer to the other parts of the text and by so doing, they make relationship between sentences extremely understood. Halliday and Hassan's description of lexical cohesion is the recent attempt at studying vocabulary above sentences? Lexical cohesion is created to have the choice of a given vocabulary and the role played by particular major semantic relations between words to create textuality (Halliday \& Hassan, 1976).

In the past many years, interest in research on cohesion has grown greatly. Some researchers have investigated the relationship between the usage of cohesive devices and the quality of writing. The results have been somewhat contradictory. In other words, some studies have shown a positive relationship between the use of cohesive devices and good writing (Ferris, 1994). By contrast, there are some other studies which have not shown a meaningful relationship between the number of cohesive features employed and the quality of writing (Jafarpur, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000). Also, according to some researchers lexical devices formed the highest percentage of the total number of cohesive device in students' writings, followed by references and conjunctions (Liu \& Braine, 2005; Zhang, 2000).

Beside, these early studies, other linguists examining this issue have focused on coherence or on the relationships which exist between cohesion and coherence (e.g. Fitzgerald \& Spiegel, 1986). With regard to specific language skills, various studies have been performed on the role of coherence in reading (e.g. Allison, 1989; Slatin, 1990). Furthermore, another significant area that has been extensively studied is coherence and writing (e.g. Vande Kopple, 1983). Zhang's (2000) study investigating the importance of various grammatical and discourse features in the evaluation of second language writings indicated that raters strongly depended on cohesion when evaluating the overall quality of the essays. This point was a further support for the idea of considering CDs as important devices in evaluating the quality of essays. Yang and Sun (2012) explored the cohesive devices in argumentative writing of 2 nd- and 3rd-year undergraduate Chinese EFL (English as a foreign language) learners at different levels of proficiency. The researchers emphasized that regardless of their EFL proficiency levels, the writing quality of the students estimated the appropriate use of cohesive devices.

In Behforouz's (2014) study, 60 Iranian intermediate EFL learners participated. Prior to the treatment, a pretest was also administered to find out the writing ability of participants. After the instruction, a post-test was given. The results revealed that there was no significant relationship between the instruction of reference as a cohesive device and the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing quality after the instruction.

Moreover, Hessamy and Hamedi (2013) compared and contrasted the frequency of using cohesive devices in independent and integrated essays which were written by 95 upperintermediate Iranian EFL students. According to the results, considering textual cohesion, the participants employed more anaphoric references compared to cataphoric references while in both independent and integrated sample writings, substitution and ellipsis were scarcely employed. Furthermore, the students were more proficient at using references and lexical cohesion when writing integrated essays than in writing independent essays.

Research findings in this area seem contradictory and since no single study was conducted to analyze the effectiveness of explicit instruction of CDs on Iranian EFL learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement, it seems that more investigation into this issue is needed. Moreover, in EFL contexts such as Iran where there is much little direct exposure to English, L2 writers should always keep in their mind that readers cannot understand and connect the ideas in any written text if they do not interconnect the preceding and following ideas through contextual clues.

Recently, how EFL/ESL learners write and what problems they usually face in their writing have attracted the researchers' attention to a large extent (Ghasemi, 2013). One of the most common problems in students' writing is that their writing is full of gaps of meaning or that there is no clear logical development between sentences or paragraphs. They write according to their mind without realizing that no one can read their mind unless it is clearly expressed in words. Some of the weak writers try to use more explicit links such as connectives to impose surface logicality in their writing where no deep logicality exists (Crewe, 1990). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which instruction of cohesive devices based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy can improve intermediate EFL learner's writing fluency. To this end, the researchers formulated the following research questions.

1. Does explicit instruction of CDs significantly affect EFL learners' writing fluency?
2. Does explicit instruction of CDs significantly affect EFL learners' writing complexity?

## 3. Method

## Participants

By means of the ILI placement test administered in the beginning of each term, two homogenous intact intermediate female classes ( $\mathrm{N}=20$ in each class) out of 5 classes were selected randomly for data collection and assigned into experimental and control groups at Iran Language Institute, Urmia Branch, Urmia, West Azarbayjan, Iran. The participants were females between 16 and 22 years of age speaking different languages such as Turkish, Kurdish and Farsi as their native languages.

## Instruments

In the current study, the researchers used some instruments, namely, Iran Language Institute Placement Test, Pre-test, and Post-test for data collection and moving toward achieving the goals of the study.

## Design of the study

First of all, the researcher attempted to homogenize the participants. To this end, the researcher randomly selected 2 intact intermediate female classes (including 20 learners in each class) from among 5 classes based on the Iran Language Placement Test (ILI) which is administered in the beginning of each term and assigned them to control and experimental groups. Thus, the current study followed an intact group design which is considered quasiexperimental. The study consisted of 2 groups (i.e., 1 experimental and 1 control) at intermediate level. In the beginning of the treatment, the researcher asked the learners to write a composition which was used as pre-test before the treatment. Then, the experimental group went through the intervention in comparison to the control group with no treatment. At the end of the treatment, both groups were exposed to post-test to see if the treatment had any significant effect on the experimental group. It is worth noting that this study was quantitative which included pre-test and post-test and statistically analyzing the result of the data gathered by means of those instruments.

## Procedures

Before the treatment, by means of the ILI placement test at the beginning of the term, the researcher selected 2 intact intermediate female classes (including 20 learners in each class) from among 5 classes. During the study, the participants were randomly assigned into 2 groups, namely experimental and control group. Then, before the treatment, a topic which served the purpose of pre-test was selected and given to both the experimental and the control groups to write. Learners were asked to write at least 120 words in their compositions. The written data of the learners in both groups were analyzed for fluency and complexity according to the method applied by Wigglesworth and Storch (2009). Fluency included the average number of words, Tunits and clauses per text and complexity was analyzed in terms of the proportion of clauses to Tunits and percentage of dependent clauses to total clauses. More importantly, in order to increase the reliability of the writing scores, rating activities were carried out first by the researcher herself and then by another teacher and later the mean score of two raters for writing pre-test was calculated.

During the treatment, the experimental group (EG) was exposed to explicit instruction of CDs for 10 sessions. In each session, they got familiarized with definitions and examples of some types of CDs proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) who classified them into five domains, four of

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which were grammatical text features and one of which was a lexical text feature. The grammatical and lexical cohesive tie domains were distinguished and described by Halliday and Hasan (1976) are (a) reference, (b) substitution, (c) ellipsis, (d) conjunction, and (e) lexical ties. The learners were asked to use CDs in their sentences. The treatment was conducted two days a week which included roughly thirty minutes of CDs instruction at the end of each session. Since this study aimed at determining the effects of CDs instruction on the learner's writing fluency and complexity improvement, the control group (CG) received no specific instructions on CDs.

After the treatment, in order to see the effect of CDs awareness on the learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement, the researcher administered the post-test of writing test on the topic learners wrote about in pre-test to see whether any changes and improvements had occurred after the treatment in their writings or not. Also, an inter-rater reliability in post-test was established through double rating some of the written data by another research assistant, that is, the researcher and her co-worker corrected the written data together to establish interrater reliability.

## Data Analysis

By means of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software, the researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare the writing fluency and complexity scores of experimental and control groups in pretest and make sure that they were homogeneous. Then, in order to see whether the treatment procedure implemented to the experimental group had any significant effect on this group and to see whether the experimental groups' mean was significantly different from that of the control group, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare their mean scores in post-test.

## 4. Result

Table 4.1 shows descriptive statistics for differences between the experimental and control groups regarding word number in post-test.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics Regarding Word Number in Post-test (Fluency)

| Fluency | Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Word <br> Number | Control group | Experimental group | 18 | 66.38 | 13.08 |

According to the mean scores, there was a difference between two groups and an independentsamples $t$-test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: T-test for Word Number in Post-test (Fluency)

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for quality of means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sig. } \\ (2- \\ \text { tailed) } \end{gathered}$ | Mean Differences | Std. Error Difference | $\begin{array}{r} 95 \\ \text { Confi } \\ \text { Interva } \\ \text { Diffe } \end{array}$ | \% dence of the rence |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances | 6.09 | . 01 | $5.70$ | 34 | . 000 | -47.944 | 8.404 | $65.024$ | -30.86 |

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assumed

| Equal <br> variances <br> not assumed | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of experimental and control group. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group ( $M=114.33$, $S D=33.16$ ) and control group $[M=66.38, S D=13.08 ; t(34)=-5.70 p=.00<.05]$, that is, the word number of experimental group was more than control group.

Table 4.3 shows descriptive statistics for the differences between the experimental and control groups regarding t-unit number in post-test. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented, accordingly, in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics Regarding T-unit Number in Post-test (Fluency)

| Fluency | Group | N | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| T-unit <br> Number | Control group | 18 | 5.61 | 1.53 | .362 |
|  | Experimental group | 18 | 9.83 | 4.44 | 1.048 |

According to the mean scores, there was a difference between two groups in regarding t-unit number in post-test and an independent-samples t-test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: T-test for T-unit Number in Post-test (Fluency)

|  | Levene's <br> Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for quality of means |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F Sig. |  | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean Differenc es | Std. <br> Error Differen | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | $8.33 \quad .00$ |  | . 001 | -4.22 | 1.10 | -6.477 | -1.967 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  | 21.0 | . 001 | -4.22 | 1.10 | -6.529 | -1.914 |

An independent-samples t -test was conducted to compare the scores of experimental and control groups regarding t-unit number. There was a significant difference in scores among experimental group ( $M=9.83, S D=4.44$ ) and control group $[M=5.61, S D=1.53 ; t(34)=-3.80, p=.00<$ $.05]$, that is, the T-unit number of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group in post-test.

An independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to compare the mean score of the experimental and control groups regarding clause number. The results of the descriptive statistics are as follows (see Tables 4.5).

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Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics Regarding Clause Number in Post-test (Fluency)

| Fluency | Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Clause <br> Number | Control group | 18 | 8.11 | 2.34 | .553 |
|  | Experimental group | 18 | 13.55 | 5.52 | 1.301 |

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between two groups in post-test and an independent t -test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: T-test for Clause Number in Post-test (Fluency)

|  | Levene's <br> Test for <br> Equality of Variances |  | t-test for quality of means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2tailed ) | Mean Differences | Std. <br> Error <br> Differe <br> nce | 95\% C Interv Diff | idence of the ence |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 8.43 | . 00 | -3.84 | 34 | . 000 | -5.444 | 1.414 | -8.318 | -2.56 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | -3.84 | 22.9 | . 001 | $-5.444$ | 1.414 | -8.370 | -2.518 |

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the experimental and control group regarding clause number. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group ( $M=13.55, S D=5.52$ ) and control group $[M=8.11, S D=2.34 ; t(34)=-3.84, p=.00<.05$ ], that is, the clause number of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean score of the experimental and control groups regarding the proportion of clauses to T-units in post-test. The results of the descriptive statistics are as follows (see Tables 4.7).

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Proportion of Clauses to T-Units in Post-test (Complexity)

| Complexity | Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Proportion of <br> Clauses to T- | Control group | 18 | 1.46 | .316 | .074 |
| Units in Pre- <br> test | Experimental group | 18 | 2.58 | .498 | .117 |

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between two groups in post-test and an independent t -test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: T-test for the Proportion of Clauses to T-Units in Post-test (Complexity)

| Levene's | t-test for quality of means |
| :---: | :---: |
| Test for |  |
| Equality of |  |

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| Variances |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | $\mathbf{t}$ | df | Sig. <br> (2- | Mean <br> Differences | Std. <br> Error <br> Differe <br> nce | 95\% Confidence <br> Interval of the <br> Difference |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |  |
| Equal <br> variances <br> assumed | 3.73 | .06 | -7.9 | 34 | .00 | -1.113 | .139 | -1.396 |
| Equal <br> variances not <br> assumed |  |  | -7.9 | 28.7 | .00 | -1.113 | .830 |  |

An independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to compare the experimental and control group regarding the proportion of clauses to t -units in post-test in post-test. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group ( $M=2.58, S D=.49$ ) and control group [ $M=1.46, S D=.31$; $t(34)=-7.99, p=.00<.05]$, that is, the proportion of clauses to $t$-units of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group.

An independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to compare the mean score of the experimental and control groups regarding the percentage of dependent clauses of total clauses in post-test. The results of the descriptive statistics are as follows (see Tables 4.9).

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Percentage of Dependent Clauses of Total Clauses in Post-test (Complexity)

| Complexity | Group | N | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Percentage of <br> Dependent <br> Clauses of | Control group | 18 | 20.48 | 7.23 | 1.704 |
| Total Clauses <br> in Post-test | Experimental group | 18 | 49.44 | 9.24 | 2.178 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between two groups in post-test and an independent $t$-test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: T-test for the Percentage of Dependent Clauses of Total Clauses in Post-test (Complexity)

|  | Levene's <br> Test for <br> Equality of <br> Variances |  | t-test for quality of means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean Differenc es | Std. Error Differenc e | 95\% C Interv Diff | idence of the nce |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 3.97 | . 05 | -10.4 | 34 | . 00 | -28.960 | 2.766 | -34.58 | -23.33 |

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| Equal <br> variances not <br> assumed | -10.4 | 32.1 | .00 | -28.960 | 2.766 | -34.59 | -23.32 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

An independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to compare the experimental and control group in post-test. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group ( $M=49.44$, $S D=9.24$ ) and control group $[M=20.48, S D=7.23 ; t(34)=-10.47, p=.00<.05]$, that is, the percentage of dependent clauses of total clauses of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group.

## 5. Discussion

The present study investigated the effect of explicit CDs instruction on EFL learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement. The results of the study revealed that the experimental groups receiving explicit CDs instruction outperformed the control group. In other words, the writing fluency (i.e., word number, T-unit number, and clause number) and complexity (proportion of clauses to T-units and the percentage of dependent clauses of total clauses) of the learners' writing in the experimental group improved due to the explicit instruction of CDs.

These findings lend support to Lee's (2002) results regarding the positive effect of explicit instruction of cohesion, that is, the students improved their writing skills in the areas of cohesion and directed their attention to the discourse level of texts during revisions. Moreover, the findings can support Majdeddin's (2010) idea about the effectiveness of instruction on increasing use of cohesive ties in writing. Tangkiengsirisin (2010) also reached at the same conclusion.

Also, the results are in line with Mohseni and Behforouz's (2013) and Rassouli and Abbasvandi's (2013) studies investigating the impact of explicit teaching of cohesive devices on Iranian EFL learners' use of these features. The findings of their studies, in accordance with this study, indicated that the instruction could promote the learners' use of cohesive devices. Thus, explicit instruction of CDs is very important since the effectiveness of writers' efforts to prepare a written text appropriately depends mostly on how they manage to use language that best helps the readers move smoothly in the text, understand pragmatics and the writers' ideas and social relations. Therefore, explicit instruction of CDs is undoubtedly a step forward in enhancing students' knowledge of such elements. Explicit instruction can equip learners with ways of making their essays and compositions comprehensible.

Regarding the quality of the learners' writings, the findings indicated that explicit instruction of CDs enhanced learners' writing fluency and complexity and this also implies that the less cohesive knowledge the EFL student has, the lower the quality of composition is. Thus, from the statistical point of view, the cohesive knowledge has a highly significant relationship with the quality of writing. The students who had better background about using cohesive ties appropriately could write more coherent, fluent, complex, and well-organized texts. These findings match Wahby's (2014) study indicating that the use of CDs is related to differences in the quality of students' writing. This may be resulted from the exposure to instruction and feedback, which in turn lead to more knowledge of how language users connect sentences to create textuality. So, instruction increased the competence in producing linguistically well-formed written material and helped learners create meaningful texts that conveyed the information appropriately, fluently and accurately as well as coherently.

However, these results are in contrast with that of Liu and Brain's (2005), Rassouli and Abbasvandi's (2013) and Dastjerdi and Samian's (2011) studies which indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the writing scores and the number of cohesive devices used in the written pieces. It can related to teaching methods or the students' not receiving sufficient training in writing in English.

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In sum, according to the results of this study, students should become familiarized with CDs in writing classes and teacher should not rely on the deductive teaching of writing mechanics and practice at the sentence level (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010). As the findings showed, teachers should go beyond structure-level analysis and focus on whole texts which can shift the learners' attention to discourse features that are fundamental in achieving unity. According to Heller (1995) and Hirvela (2004), students should become familiar with the crucial role cohesive devices can play in the logical development of the topic.

## 6. Conclusion

Researchers have paid a lot of attention to learners' writings and studied their problems in writing a text. Cohesion is one of the most important concepts in second language writing. By the application of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, myriad studies on cohesion and coherence in ESL/EFL writing have been conducted (Jafarpur, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000, as cited in Ghasemi, 2013).

According to Salehi (2005, as cited in Behforouz, 2014), cohesion indicates the grammatical and lexical relationship among parts of a text. Different parts of sentences are related to each other through cohesion (Behforouz, 2014). Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that coherence depends on both external factors such as the background of the reader and context as well as textual cohesion. A text is coherent when a reader understands the function and role of each part of the text in the overall meaning development of it (Alarcon \& Molares, 2011).

Empirical studies demonstrate that cohesion is an important component of any written text and that L1 and L2 learners of English have considerable difficulty in using cohesive devices. In this respect, the present study aimed at examining the effect of explicit CDs instruction on EFL learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers arrived at the following conclusions, that is, CDs instruction has a positive effect on the fluency and complexity of ELF learners' writings. In general, the results of this study lend supplementary support to the idea that awareness of CDS can have a positive effect on learners' writings. In other words, it was shown that the more the learners become aware of CDs , the more their writing fluency and complexity will be improved.

The findings of this study could also be beneficial for language teachers to benefit from the explicit CDs instruction introduced to the experimental group as a part of their own strategies to enhance learners' writing fluency and complexity. Writing instructors, especially EFL teachers, are encouraged to incorporate into their classes the instruction of CDs and their functions in different contexts and different text types. They should design activities to motivate English learners to approach a writing course by sensitizing them to different types of CDs and their applications. Moreover, language learners may be considered as the ones who benefit more than other people from the teaching CDs explicitly. Students are more likely to use CDs as a writing strategy with greater awareness of its contributive role in text organization.

What is more, the issue of CDs instruction and awareness may be useful for policy makers, language planners, curriculum designers and text book developers who are concerned with how learners' writing should be enhanced. Finally, the results also suggest that material developers include sections for introducing and practicing CDs and their different types in various contexts. They should develop suitable texts that contain CDs for learners of various language proficiency levels. The findings help them design more coherent texts to enhance EFL learners' ability to write comprehensible texts. What is more, the explicit CDs instruction identified in this study can be used in teacher training courses, especially for novice teachers.
As any human production, this study has some limitations, thus the findings of the study need to be interpreted after the due considerations of this drawback. The limitations are as follows:

A serious limitation of this study was that it did not take into account the proficiency level, that is, the researcher addressed just one proficiency level, that is, intermediate. In order to make generalizations in a more confident manner, other studies with learners at various proficiency

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levels could be done to ensure the external validity of these findings. In addition, it seems that researchers can reach better interpretations provided that they consider the effect of explicit CDs instruction on learners' writing fluency and complexity for several sessions before the immediate post-test then be given a delayed post-test. Furthermore, due to learners' linguistic background as well as time limitations, the results of the study must be cautiously interpreted. Last but not least is the scope of the research in conducting the study with only female learners which leaves the results with other gender in an aura of ambiguity.

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# THE EVALUATION OF CONSTRUCT VALIDITY OF IRANIAN FINAL NATIONAL TEST OF ENGLISH AT HIGH SCHOOL 

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#### Abstract

The main purpose of the current study was to investigate the construct validity of the national final tests of English for grade three senior high school students in Iran. For this purpose, a total number of forty students and forty EFL teachers in Iran were selected. A quantitative method was adopted to analyze how this test has changed over fourteen years time span based on item analysis and correlation coefficients. Results revealed that there was a significant difference between 2000 and 2014 versions of final national tests of English for grade three high schools students in Iran in terms of test items, item facility, item difficulty, and item discrimination. The second finding showed that total score of the 2014 test correlated with every subtest. Similarly, different subtests of the 2000 correlated with each other. Finally, it was found that EFL teachers believe that the final national test of English for grade three high school do not support the construct validity.


Key words: construct validity, correlation coefficient, item analysis.

## Introduction

Construct validity is required to use performance to infer the possession of certain psychological traits or qualities. These are all hypothetical qualities, called constructs, which are assumed to exist in order to account for behavior in many different specific situations. To describe a person as being highly intelligent, for example, is useful because the term suggests it a series of associated meaning which indicate what his behavior is likely to be under various conditions (Birjandi, 2010).

Before interpreting test scores in terms of these broad behavioral descriptions, however, language teachers and test developers must first establish the constructs which are presumed to be reflected in the test scores actually do account for differences in test performance. This process is called construct validation. In determining construct validity, the aim is to identify all factors which influence test performance and to determine the degree of influence of each. The process includes the following steps: 1) identifying the construct which might possibly account for test

[^8]performance, 2) formulating testable hypotheses from the theory surrounding each construct, and 3) gathering data to test these hypotheses (Brown, 1997).

The English language is a required subject which is taught in Iranian high schools and as a result, English text books are naturally developed by Iranian text book developers in which reading skills and grammar are emphasized. The students are evaluated on these text books by teacher made tests. These students must take teacher- made tests twice before sitting for the national final test (Website of MoE. Iran).

The national final exams are administered centrally. To come up with a standardized test, a few competent and qualified teachers are invited to design the test in the Ministry of Education. In addition, there is an office inside the Ministry of Education responsible to plan, design, copy, and distribute the papers ( Website of MoE, Iran).

However, the problems which are frequently reported in relation to the final national test of English for third graders in Iran are (1) inadequacy of number of item numbers, (2) poor item wording, and most importantly lack of (3) piloting, item analysis, reliability, and validity studies. These are the concerns that are commonly addressed in the validation process. In order to make a comparison between two national final exams belonging to different school years, four characteristics of these tests i.e. item facility, item difficulty, item discrimination and construct validity were studied (Brown, 1997).

As one way of assessing the construct validity of a test is to correlate its different test components (Alderson \& Clapham, 2000), the present study attempted to focus on correlation item analysis of the 2000 and 2014 versions of final national grade 3 in Iranian senior high schools in order to see how it has changed over time. The study, therefore, addresses the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do the test item types, descriptive statistics, item facilities, item discriminations of the 2000 and 2014 versions of Iranian final national tests differ?

RQ 2: How well do the 2000 and 2014 versions of Iranian final national tests correlate?
RQ 3: How well does the total score of the 2014 versions of Iranian final national tests correlate with every subtest?

RQ 4: How well do the different subtests of the 2000 version of Iranian final national test correlate with each other?

## Review of the Related Literature

Construct validation is the process of gathering evidence to support the contention that a given test indeed measure the psychological construct the markers intend it to measure. The goal is to determine the measuring of scores from the test, to assure that the scores mean what we expect them to mean (Bachman, 1990). According to Ebel and Frisble (1991), construct validation is the process of gathering evidence to support the contention that a given test indeed measures the psychological construct the makers intend it to measure. The goal is to determine the meaning of scores from the test, to assure that the scores mean what we expect them to mean.

Therefore, construct validity cannot be determined by a single type of evidence. Language teachers should make predictions which are in harmony with the theory underlying the construct and test them one by one. Where the data are in harmony with our predictions, they provide support for the validity of our interpretations of the scores as a measure of the particular construct. Where the data are contrary to our predictions, the language teachers revise the test interpretation, reformulate the theory underlying the construct, or improve the experimental designs used to obtain the data (Birjandi, 2010).

Since test scores cannot be interpreted as a measure of only one construct, the process of construct validation typically includes a study of the influence of several factors. We might, for example, ask to what extent the scores on our reasoning test are influenced by reading comprehension, proficiency skills, and speed (Birjandi, 2010) .

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The key element in construct validity, then, is the experimental verification of the test interpretations we propose to make. This involves a wide variety of procedures and many different types of evidence. As evidence accumulates concerning the meaning of the test scores, our interpretations are enriched and we are able to make them with greater confidence (Brown, 1997).

In short, the construct validity of a test should be demonstrated by collecting evidence. For example, taking the unified definition of construct validity, we could demonstrate it using content analysis, correlation coefficients, factor analysis. Naturally, all of the above would be a tremendous amount of work, so a group of Iranian test developers is willing to put in to demonstrating the construct validity of their test .Competent test developers will stop when they feel they have provided a convincing set of validity arguments (Brown,1996).

## Empirical Studies

A number of researchers have been studied and analyzed different aspect of construct validity in different construct. In this part, some of this studied will be presented.

Bachman (1995) investigated the construct validity of an examinations including FCE and TOFEL. He examined pattern of relationship in examinee's performance on the tests, both at the level of total test scores and where appropriate, at the item level.

Cronbach (1995) examined the construct validity of psychological tests. Personality tests and some tests of ability, are interpreted in terms of attributes for which there is no adequate criterion. This paper indicates what sorts of evidence can substantiate such an interpretation, and how such evidence is to be interpreted.

Yujie (2007) examined the construct validity of an EFL test for Ph.D. candidates from a quantitative perspective with two versions of the English entrance examination for doctoral candidates at an institution in China as a case study. A quantitative method is adopted to analyze how this test has changed over a nineteen years times based on item analysis and correlation coefficients.

Hye Pae, Daphne Greenberg and Robin D Morris (2007) examined construct validity and measurement Invariance of the Peabody picture vocabulary Test-III from A in the performance of struggling an adult readers .

Tavakoli (2011) carried out a study which try to investigate skills assessed by the items in the tests, hence, the construct validity of the test, the study was conducted to find out the construct validity of reading paper of the first certificate in English (FCE) in Iranian EFL context .

Yarmohamadi and Sadighi (2014) investigated the construct validity of a nationwide large-scale English proficiency test, finding of the study indicated that the structure and expression section of TOLIMO early measures what is supposed to measure and the scores of this section can be interpreted as real indicators of examinee's ability level in structure and writing. The finding implies that the test demonstrated construct validity .

## Method

## Participants

A total of 40 Iranian high school students in grade three participated in this study. All the students were female, with the average age of 18 .

## Instruments / Materials

Two research instruments were used in this study. Paper - tests and two questionnaires. The 2000 and 2014 versions tests were selected to study to measure how much this test has changed over 14 years. The compositions of two versions with the rubrics are provide in table 1 and 2. The full version of each test are provided in Appendix A and B.

Tables 1 and 2 outline the basic structure of both versions. Structurally, the 2014 test varies from the 2000 test in the increase of: a) the overall test time from 90 minutes to 120

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minutes, b) the weight of the cloze test, c) the grammar test, d) the reading test, e) the pronunciation section, and e) the dictation section.

| Section | Sub - section | Item types | point | Item number |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. Dictation | $\begin{gathered} \text { A-B-C-D-E-F- } \\ \text { G-H } \end{gathered}$ | Blank Filling | 3 | 12 |
| 2. Vocabulary | A,B | Blank - Filling | 6 | 12 |
| 3. Reading | A,B | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{MCQ} \\ \text { T.F } \end{gathered}$ | 6 | 7 |
| 4. Conversation | A | Matching | 3 | 6 |
| 5. Pronunciation | A | MCQ | 1 | 2 |
| 6. Picture | A | Full Answer | 1 | 1 |
| 7. Structure | A,B,C,D | MCQ <br> Put in correct order Correct word |  | 10 |
| TOTAL: |  |  | 30 | 50 |

Table 2. A Structural overview of the 2014 of the FNTEHSSL

| 1. | Section | Sub - section | Item types | point | Item number |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 2. | Dictation | A-B-C-D-E-F <br> G.H.I.O | Blank filling | 4 | 12 |
| 3. | Vocabulary | A,B | Blank filling | 6 | 12 |
| 4. | Reading | MCQ <br> Open - end <br> T.F | 10 | 14 |  |
| 5. Cloze | A | MCQ | 4 | 8 |  |
| 6. Structure | A,B,C,D | MCQ <br> Correct form <br> Put in correct <br> order | 8 | 8 |  |


| 7. Conversation | A | Matching | 4 | 8 |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 8. | Pronunciation | A | MCQ | 2 |
| 9. | Picture | A | Full- answer | 2 |
|  |  |  | 2 |  |
| TOTAL : |  | 40 | 60 |  |

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The second instrument was two questionnaire surveys distributed among Iranian English language teachers $(\mathrm{N}=40)$. The first one consisted of 8 questions and the second questionnaire included 11 questions based on Likert scale, which EFL teachers were asked to compare the 2000 and 2014 versions of final national tests of English for grade 3 senior high school students in Iran.

## Data collection

On July 20, 2015, the 2000 test was distributed to participants. The examinees were given 90 minutes to finish that test and one week later they received the 2014 test papers and were given 120 minutes to finish the exam. After two weeks, two questionnaires were distributed among English language teachers in high schools in Iran. The two tests, 2000 and 2014, appendixed with questionnaires.

## Data analysis

for analyzing the data this study, Pearson Test and descriptive statistics were used.

## Results

Descriptive statistics of two versions
Answering question 1. The descriptive statistics for both tests are presented in Table 3. Table 3 shows that the 2000 test was easier than the 2014 test. Moreover , 2000 test had somewhat smaller standard variation, nearly twice as much as the 2014 test.Though the majority of students performed within a fairly tight score band in the 2000 test, the 2000 test also had a great range of overall score distribution.

Table3. Descriptive statistics of the 2000 and 2014 tests.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 2000 | 2014 |  | 2000 | 2014 |  | 2014 | 2000 |
| Overall correct answer rate | 68.6\% | 48\% | Mode: | 14.0 | 10.5 | Standard Deviation | 6.40 | 2.58 |
| High score : | 84.5\% | 77.5\% | Median: | 15.5 | 13.0 | Range | 36.5 <br> Points | $\begin{gathered} \hline 33 \\ \text { Points } \end{gathered}$ |
| Low score | 47.8\% | 43.5\% | mean | 16.0 | 12 | Variance | 43.7 | 39.9 |

Figure 1 display the total score distributions of the two tests graphically in terms of histographic curve. The 2014 test had a much higher standard deviation and variance than 2000.

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Figure 1.Frequency histogram of 2000 and 2014 FNTEG3HSI total test scores

## Item facility and item discrimination

Sequentially, item discrimination and difficulty indices were employed. Item discrimination (ID) ascertains where a test taker's performance shows uniformity across the examined items and item difficulty or facility (IF) investigates the properties of individual test item appropriateness for the target group's level. Items should be rejected if the IF is <. 33 or $>.67$.To calculated the ID, first a high group and low group must be established. As suggested by Brown (1995) it should be between \% 25-35\% of the total group. For this study, $30 \%(\mathrm{n}=20)$ was used. If ID of item was>.67. It was rejected as this is the lowest acceptable cut-off point. All calculations are summarized in table 4 and 5.

Table 4.Acceptable item for final National Test grade 3 with this survey sample ( $\mathbf{N}=40$ )

| Grammar <br> $(10$ items <br> total $)$ | Dictation <br> $(12$ items <br> total $)$ | Vocabulary (12 <br> items total) | Reading <br> (7 items total) | Conversation <br> (6 items total) | Pronunciation <br> $(2$ items total $)$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 12 items total <br>  <br>  <br>  <br> acceptable | 5 items <br> acceptable | 5 items <br> acceptable | 5 item <br> acceptable | No items <br> Acceptable |

Table 5. Acceptable items for the 2014 Final National Tests grade 3 with this survey sample ( $\mathrm{N}=40$ )

| Dictation <br> $(12$ items $)$ | Vocabulary <br> $(12$ items <br> total $)$ | Reading <br> $(14$ items $)$ | Close - <br> test <br> $(8$ items <br> total $)$ | Grammar <br> $(8$ items <br> total $)$ | Conversation <br> $(8$ items <br> total $)$ | Pronunciation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 items items total $)$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Acceptable | 4 item <br> acceptable | 8 items <br> acceptable | 1 item <br> acceptable | 3 items <br> acceptable | 4 items <br> acceptable | No items <br> acceptable |

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Table 4 and 5 reveal that only $15 \%$ of overall items from the 2000 test were acceptable and only $3 / 2 \%$ those in 2014 test were acceptable for this surrey Sample. This indicates that the final national test of grade 3 in Iranian High schools may need significant revision.

## Correlations

Answering question 2\&3. As suggested by Alderson, Clapham and Wall (2000) one way of assessing the construct validity of a test is to correlate its various test components with each other. These correlations are generally low - possibly in the order to $3-$ to .0 .5 . On the other hands Alderson, Clapham and Well suggested that in a Wall - designed test, the correlation between each subtest and whole test can be expected to be higher - possibly around +0.7 or more .

Since the overall score is taken to be a more general measure of language ability than each individual component score.

Tables 6 and 7 list the various correlations for the 2000 test. Those with a single asterisk were statistically significant at the $\mathrm{P}<.05$ level and those with double asterisks were significant at the $\mathrm{P}<.05$ level and those with double asterisks significant at the $\mathrm{p}<.01$ level.

Table 6. Correlation coefficients of the score of the 2000 test with each subtest and the various subtest with each other

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | List wise Correlatio n $(\mathrm{n}=44)$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Total } \\ & \text { Scor } \\ & \text { e } \end{aligned}$ | Dictatio <br> n | vocabular y | Structur e | $\begin{gathered} \text { Readin } \\ \mathrm{g} \end{gathered}$ | pronunciatio <br> n |
| Total score | Pearson Correlatio $\qquad$ n | 1 | 0.338 | 0.32 | 0.386 | 0.336 | 0.521 |
|  | Sigc 2 tailed | 3 | 0.005 | 0.0008 | 0.001 | 0.005 | 0.00 |
| Dictation | Pearson Correlatio n | 0.338 | 0.216 | 0.288 | 1 | 0.80 | 0.292 |
| Vocabulary | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sigl (2- } \\ \text { tailed) } \\ \hline \end{gathered}$ | 0.001 | 0.80 | 0.18 |  | 0.521 | 0.017 |
|  | Pearson Correlatio n | 0.325 | 0.186 | 1 | 0.288 | 0.175 | -0.032 |
| Structure <br> Reading <br> Pronunciatio <br> n | Sig.(2tailed) | 0.008 | 0.136 |  | 0.19 | 0.156 | 0.755 |
|  | Pearson Correlatio n | 0.386 | 0.306 | 0.38 | 0.293 | 0.0807 | 1 |
|  | Sig.(2tailed) | 0.001 | 0.12 | 0.754 | 0.016 | 0.980 |  |
|  | Pearson Correlatio n | 0.336 | 0.93 | 0.75 | 0.0805 | 1 | 0.88 |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \hline \text { Sig(2- } \\ & \text { tailed) } \end{aligned}$ | 0.006 | 0.455 | 0.156 | 0.521 |  | 0.480 |
|  | Pearson Correlatio n | 0.338 | 1 | 0.0185 | 0.216 | 0.092 | 0.306 |


|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sig (2- <br> tailed $)$ | 0.005 | 0.136 | 0.079 | 0.455 | 0.012 |

Correlation significant at the $\% 1$ level (2- tailed) correlation significant at $\% 5$ level (2 - tailed).

Table 7. Correlation coefficients of the total score of the 2005 test with each subset and the various subsets with each other


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Correlation significant at the $\% 1$ level ( 2 - tailed). Correlation significant at the $\% 5$ level (2tailed). Correlation of both tests corresponding sections are an effective way comparing their construct and seeing how consistent they are with each other.

The correlation for the 2000 and 2014 tests are summarized in Table 8. The overall correlation coefficient was $0.315 \mathrm{P}<.05$ ), suggesting only a moderate correlation between the two tests. According to Morgan. Griego and Gloeckner (2001) the effect size was medium. The correlation of the 2000 and 2014 vocabulary sections was 0.166 but the P was 0.179 - which was considerably higher than . 05 . The correlation of the 2000 and 2014 close sections was 0.145 about this was not statistically significant ( $\mathrm{P}=.0242$ ). The correlation of the 2000 and 2014 reading section was .059 , yet this too was not statistically $(\mathrm{P}=637)$. The correlation of the dictation parts of these two exams was the highest (.0356) and it was statistically significant. Possible reason for these figures will be discussed in the next section of this paper.

Table8. Correlations of corresponding sections of the 2000 and 2014 tests


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|  | $\operatorname{Sig}(2$-tailed) | 0.160 |
| :---: | :--- | :--- |
| 2000 | Pearson | 0.145 |
| pronunciation | Correlation |  |
|  | Sig(2-tailed) | 0.242 |

## Quantitative analysis of questionnaires

Answering questions 4. Now let us consider how the teachers felt about two different test examining the questionnaires which were administered after two weeks. Respondents were given a 5 point liker Scale to answer 8 questions in the first questionnaire and 11 questions in the second questionnaire.

Table 9. Survey responses for 2000 final national test in Iranian high schools

| Note : $1=$ very easy and $5=$ very difficult For Q 1-4 <br> And $1=$ strongly disagree and $=$ strongly agree For Q 5-8 |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Survey Item | Number <br> of <br> responses | Mean | Std <br> Deviation |  |
| Q1. How difficult was the structure section of this test? | 44 | 3030 | 0.840 |  |
| Q2. How difficult was the vocabulary section of this test? | 44 | 3.70 | 0.875 |  |
| Q3. How difficult was the dictation section of the test? | 44 | 3.51 | 0.910 |  |
| Q4. How difficult was the close section of the test? | 44 | 3.21 | 0.910 |  |
| Q5. The grammar section reflect students' English proficiency? | 41 | 3.27 | 0.009 |  |
| Q6. The vocabulary <br> proficiency? | section | reflect students' | English | 41 |

Q7. The cloze section reflect students' English proficiency?


Table 10. Survey responses for the 2014 final National test in Iranian high schools
Note 1 = very easy and 5 = very difficult For Q. 1 - 5
$1=$ strongly disagree $5=$ strongly agree for Q. 6-11

| Survey Item | Number Of <br> Responses | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Q1. How difficult was the dictation section of this test? | 44 | 2.76 | 0.818 |
| Q2. How difficult was the vocabulary section of this test? | 44 | 3.61 | 0.873 |
| Q3. How difficult was the close section of the test? | 44 | 3.36 | 0.670 |
| Q4. How difficult was the Reading section of this test? | 44 | 3.64 | 0.743 |
| Q5. The grammar section reflects students' English proficiency? | 43 | 3.30 | 0.827 |
| Q6. The dictation section reflects students' English proficiency? | 44 | 3.72 | 0.832 |

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| Q7. The vocabulary <br> proficiency? | section reflects | students' | English | 44 | $3 / 38$ | 0.925 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Q8. The cloze section reflects students' English proficiency? | 44 | 3.70 | 0.843 |  |  |  |
| Q9. The Reading <br> proficiency? | section reflects students' | English | 43 | 3.67 | 0.826 |  |
| Q10. The pronunciation section reflect students' English <br> proficiency? | 43 | 3.61 | 0830 |  |  |  |
| Q11 The conversation section reflect students <br> proficiency? | English | 44 | 3.62 | 0.874 |  |  |

As for question 11 in the second surrey about $42 \%(n=44)$ respondents felt that the 2014 test was more difficult than 2000 Test.

Since the scores for the 2000 Test tended to be higher than in 2014 test. The quantitative data supports this. Interestingly $78 / 2 \%(n=44)$ of the respondents felt that 2000 test was more indicative of their English abilities than the 2014.

## Discussion and conclusion

Three research finding were significant. The first research finding concerned differences of the test format, item facility, item discrimination and some descriptive statistics between the 2000 and 2014 tests. As for the response format and item types, it is fair to say that 2014 test differed significantly from the 2000 test. The 2000 exam attempted to measure dictation, vocabulary, grammar, reading, conversation and pronunciation while the 2014 test purported to measure dictation, vocabulary, grammar, cloze ,reading, conversation ,stress and pronunciation. The number of items increased from 50 items to 60 items in 2014 version. Points of items increased in 2014 version from 30 to 40 points. Tables 5 and 6 suggested that 2014 tests had many items which were performing poorly in terms of ID and IF. One possible reason for this was due to the tests format whereas vocabulary and dictation sections were fill in the blank in 2000 test ,in 2014 test Some sections in the 2014 exam were all in multiple - choice format .

The second research finding concerned the correlation between 2000 total score and its subtests. It is curious that reading part has lowest correlation coefficient because in the 2014 examination this section had the lowest correlation with the total scores. This suggested that the topic of the reading passage may have an important role in shaping performance since the examinees draw upon their background knowledge when writing (Clapham, 1996),so the text familiarity and task type has significant differences in subject overall and differential test and task performances (Salmani-Nadoushan,2003).

The 2000 reading passage was very simple rather than the passage was in the 2014 test. It contained open- end and true - false questions .By contrast 2014 reading passage which was about scientific topic, the reading passage included open -end, true - false and multiple-choice questions. The reading passage for the 2000 test were probably more familiar to the examinee rather than 2014 reading passage.

The number of questions in reading section were increased rather than 2000 reading passage questions. . Grammar section in 2000 versions was more easily than 2014 versions because numbers of items, format of items were changed. In dictation part, the number of items was increased than 2000 version. The close test items were added to the items in 2014 versions whereas this item was not in 2000 version. So this reasons makes students' scores be less rather than the 2000 test.

As Suggested by Alderson, Calpham and Wall (200) the correlation of subtests should be possibly in the order of $+0.3-+0.05$. In the 2000 test only sections $1,2,3,4$ and 5 had such correlations.

This suggests that the 2000 test measured constructs which were quite easy. The 2005 test had only four section which correlated within the parameters suggested by Calpham and Wall. Section 2 and 5 correlated moderately, as did as section 1 and 6.

The fact that many of the sub - tests didn't correlated should encourage to pause and reflect on what this test is actually measuring. (The dictation section, cloze test section, reading section and pronunciation section).

The third research finding stated that listening and speaking skills did not measure by 2000 and 2014 tests. The 2000 and 2014 tests try to focus on reading, vocabulary and grammar. According to the questionnaires which were analyzed, ID of 2014 is more than ID of 2000 version, so the teachers agree with it, the results show that the validity of final exam of grade 3 in Iranian high schools needs to be investigated further. The tests takers should be make a test which measure student's ability in every skill because skills like writing, listening and speaking don't measure student's ability perfectly. The numbers of items, test types, time of test seem not suitable with student's ability.

The results of our study indicated that final national test of English for grade 3 in Iranian high schools cannot measure what it supposed to measure and scores cannot be interpreted as real indicators of examinee's ability level in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. The findings imply that the test cannot demonstrate construct validity in this section but in dictation, vocabulary and grammar findings demonstrate construct validity to some extent.

## Application and implications

Although this research is preliminary, it has four practical implications. First of all, it points out the need to enhance the item discrimination and item facility ratings for the final national tests of English for grade 3 high schools in Iran. The 2014 had low percentage of acceptable items in regard to ID and If. In particular, cloze, reading, structure and pronunciation sections need improvement. Second, this study points out the need for a closer examination of conversation section of the 2000 and 2014 tests. The average mean score for this section was $12 / 2$ so this section was too easy. Third the cloze section wasn't in the 2000 test but this section in added in the 2014 tests which it had a lower correlation in 2014 tests.

Fourth, this study also highlights the need for qualitative Feedback on the exam. In particular a well - triangulated analysis by students, teachers and test developers of what construct they believe this exam taps into and what they consider to be some of the biases inherent in the exam would shed valuable light on not only the way the exam is structured, but also the exam content.

## Suggestion for Further Researcher

Test development is cyclical, not linear (McNamara 2000, P.23). That is, once a test is designed, constructed, trailed and operationalized its actual use generates evidence about its qualities (McNamara, P.32).

There are still some weaknesses with 2014 test. In that light, the Following three proposals are offered.

1) The cloze section need to have wider response format which include integrated and interactive test items rather than solely multiple - choice items. By incorporating a wider range of tasks and response Formats, more skills can be tested and hence the score can measure what it is supposed to measure.
2) Since 2014 test has a quite low percentage of appropriate items, by conducting piloting and /or pre - testing the ID and IF levels could be raised. That is, by having a system by which the right statistical procedures are followed. Items which misfit or perform poorly would automatically be deleted. A Rasch analysis could be employed to do this.

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3) Listening, speaking and writing in both 2000 and 2014 test needs to be improved. The validity needs to be investigated further.

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# CULTURAL SCHEMAS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS EVIDENCE FROM PERSIAN 

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#### Abstract

IT IS AN INDISPUTABLE FACT THAT LANGUAGE INTERRELATES CLOSELY WITH CULTURE. LANGUAGE IS A MEANS OF VERBAL EXPRESSION OF CULTURE THAT EMBODIES CULTURAL SCHEMAS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS. AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF COMMUNICATION, THESE CULTURAL SCHEMAS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS EMERGE OUT OF INDIVIDUALS' EXPERIENCES THROUGH INTERACTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN CULTURAL COMMUNITIES. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IS HENCE, CONCERNED WITH COMMUNICATION ACROSS CULTURES WHERE INDIVIDUALS' PERCEPTIONS, BELIEFS ARE DISTINCT. OWING TO THE DIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES, INDIVIDUALS CONCEPTUALIZE THE WORLD AROUND THEM IN DIFFERENT WAYS. THESE CULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS FORM PART OF THE COLLECTIVE COGNITION OF A SPEECH COMMUNITY .THIS PAPER IS AN ATTEMPT TO DELINEATE SOME CULTURAL SCHEMAS IN PERSIAN CONCEPTUALIZATION PREVALENT IN THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. TO THIS END, CULTURAL SCHEMAS OF 'MARAM', 'MAREFAT', ‘GHEYRAT' AND ‘HAYA' ALONG WITH THEIR FREQUENT COLLOCATIONS ARE EXPLICATED IN THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. THE EQUIVALENTS OF SUCH WORDS IN ENGLISH FAIL TO CAPTURE THE INTENDED MEANINGS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS INSTANTIATED IN PERSIAN SINCE THEY ARE CULTURALLY CONSTRUCTED. FINALLY, WITH REGARD TO THE VARIATION IN SCHEMAS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS ACROSS CULTURES, SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING ARE SUGGESTED.


## KEYWORDS: LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CONCEPTUALIZATION, SCHEMA, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

## Introduction

Language and culture are indispensable to each other and their relationship is deeply ingrained. Language is a cultural activity embedded in cultural models and values. Every linguistic or discourse event is structured in a way by the culture that surrounds the speech event and speech community. This nexus of language and culture is referred to as linguaculture and languaculture by Paul Freidrich (1989) and Michael Agar (1994) respectively. According to the prominent figure Ronald Langacker (1999) language is an essential instrument and component of culture, whose reflection in linguistic structure is pervasive and quite significant.
The reciprocal effect of language and culture is studied in cultural linguistics which takes a considerable interest in language and culture; it views language as a cultural form, the conceptualizations of which are largely culturally driven. Furthermore, language is studied in its social and cultural context, where cultural schemas and models form language evolution and govern language use (Palmer 1996, Sharifian, 2003).
Language is shaped by a wide spectrum of factors such as power relations, economic and political forces, socio-historical events and socio-cultural experiences to name just a few. It is this cultural aspect of language which the present paper sets out to study. In what follows, the concepts of cultural schema and conceptualization are explicated. Moreover, some Persian cultural conceptualizations will be outlined.

## Language and culture

Language is an integral part of culture which serves as a medium for transmitting and developing culture. Similarly, language in the context of communication is deeply rooted in culture in the sense that it symbolizes, expresses and embodies cultural reality (Kramsch, 1998). Moreover, it acts as a memory bank in that it helps us store culturally constructed meanings as well as experiences. Kramsch (1998) holds that language is not culture free; it is therefore concerned with how members of a cultural community think and behave.
Learning a new language involves developing a new culture and a second identity as language is deeply bound up with culture. Fundamental to language learning, is the fact that individuals learn to communicate through culture. In addition, cultural differences reflected by language may give rise to misunderstanding and miscommunication. Thus, an awareness of such differences is required in the context of language teaching to resolve communication problems and to facilitate interactions more effectively.

## Cultural Schemas

According to Rumerlhart (1980), schemas as building blocks of cognition refer to units within which knowledge is organized and stored. He likened schemas to plays which can be performed by various actors over and over without changing the basic parts. Schemas are mental representations picturing general and prior knowledge of a given subject which serve as facilitator in that they direct our learning, behaviors and interactions. However, Nishida (1999) asserts that schemas refer to familiar and pre-acquainted knowledge of different situations.
What's more, cultural schemas are culturally established on the basis of collective knowledge as well as communal experiences of a community of identical culture whose members communicate their cultural meanings through cultural schemas (Sharifian, 2014). Likewise, cultural schemas organize and determine the relationships between concepts based on previous experiences and serve as a guide for individuals to behave appropriately and to relieve their anxiety upon encountering a new culture (Abbe, Rentsch et al. 2007). In this regard, Rentsch(2007) states that cultural schemas are of great benefit to newcomers or beginners to learn a totally new culture. Cultural schemas are resulted from constant interactions or negotiations between members of a cultural community who internalize the cultural schemas over time (Sharifian, 2014). This is in
line with Nishida's cultural schema theory holding that cultural schemas are formulated and stored in the memory by means of interactions/negotiations between individuals. In other words, cultural schemas are constructed based on individuals' experiences within their cultural environment (Nishida, 1999). It is to be noted that the internalization or acquisition of cultural schemas by every single individual is party collective and in part idiosyncratic (Sharifian, 2014). Cultural schemas along these lines, according to Sharifian (2008a), are not equally stored in the minds of people and are "heterogeneously distributed". However, if individuals are not armed with cultural schemas, they fail to make an understanding of culturally unfamiliar situations (Malcolm and Sharifian, 2002).
Cultural schemas are integral to semantic and pragmatic meanings. The former is culturally established for some lexical items while the latter is concerned with inference and shared assumption common to the cultural group making their interactions intelligible. Accordingly, lexical items are labels for culturally constructed schemas. A word and its translation may have contrasting or overlapping schemas for individuals of different cultures and languages (Sharifian, 2013).

## Cultural Conceptualizations

Language and conceptualization have recently gained in popularity within cognitive linguistics where meanings are composed of conceptualization of experiences reflected by grammar (Sharifian, 2012). Cultural conceptualization is defined as conceptualizing experiences in a culturally constructed manner entrenched in thought and behavior of cultural group encompassing values, traditions and customs (Sharifian, 2008b). Likewise, Palmer (1996) believes that languages are systems through which people express different conceptualizations of a wide range of experiences. These conceptualizations, however, do not represent a one-to-one relationship with the entities in the real world rather they are often negotiated and re-negotiated with other members of the cultural community who share the same collective cultural cognition (Sharifian, 2008b). Furthermore, Sharifian(2003) maintains that cultural conceptualizations and language are two inherent aspects of cultural cognition. Cultural conceptualizations refer to the ways by which people of different cultural groups understand and interpret the world and their experiences (Sharifian, 2008b). For instance, people from different cultures may view and conceptualize the world, nature, time, space, love, hate, etc. differently. The conceptualization of heart 'Del' in Persian may be different from that in Chinese, African languages or western ones. These conceptualizations are culture-specific which may result in cultural misunderstandings in intercultural communications.
Language as an integral component of cultural cognition serves as a collective memory bank (Fran, 2005) for cultural conceptualizations prevalent at different stages across a speech community (Sharifian, 2009). Accordingly, the lexicon of a language stands in a direct relationship with cultural conceptualizations in the sense that lexical items act as labels, and "memory banks", for culturally constructed conceptualizations. Language in this view is considered to be an underlying mechanism associated with storing and communicating cultural conceptualizations (Sharifian, 2009).
This bears considerable relevance to L2 learning contexts where there are cultural differences that learners have to resolve. Since learners are from a wide variety of cultures with different cultural conceptualizations, misunderstandings and miscommunications may arise. Gudykunst and Kim (1992) argue that intercultural interactions are associated with external and internal contexts. However, misunderstandings are inevitable and inherent in intercultural communication as a result of internal context in the sense that the interlocutors conceptualize and perceive the situations, the world, and each other differently from one culture to another (Hinkel, 2011).

## Persian language and culture

Persian is a branch of Indio European family of languages. It is the language most widely spoken by the Iranians. There is a wide range of languages and dialects spoken across the country, yet, the official language is Persian. Despite the diversity of ethnic groups namely Kurds, Lors and Turks, Persian is the dominant culture across the country which is distinctive from that of neighboring countries (Assadi, 1980; Eslami Rasekh, 2004; Keshavarz, 2001). As Sharifian (2007) holds, the distinctiveness of Persian culture is heavily ingrained in the social and conceptual basis of the Persian language. Falling under the overwhelming influence of the Arabic language and culture for three centuries, Persian went into a modest decline. To extend their sovereignty, Arabs assigned Iranians skilled positions including government officials as Iranians proved to hold good qualifications. Thus, Persian as a medium of correspondence maintained its status. Needless to say that, the identity of Iranian culture is manifested in the Persian language which is a priceless treasure of historical, cultural and moral values. Furthermore, Persian has an exceptionally rich heritage of art, civilization and literature in the world and consequently, is of considerable importance from the culture viewpoint.

## The cultural schema of 'Maram'

One of the social schemas in Persian collective cognition is the concept of 'maram'. Aryanpour progressive dictionary (2010) lists up the equivalents of 'maram' in English as follows: doctrine, ideology, platform, plank, tenet, precept, dogma, persuasion, and creed. All of these equivalents resonate with the meaning of belief or way of thinking in political or religious sense. Surprisingly enough, none of these equivalents captures the cultural conceptualization of the concept 'maram' as used in Iranian socio-cultural interactions. Maram is culturally conceptualized in the Persian culture and consequently, transferring its meaning to the target language seems to be exceedingly difficult. In every day parlance 'maram' carries the meaning of caring for others or helping people in difficult conditions as in the following expressions:
Ba maram (with maram) caring for others
Khosh maram (good maram) ready to help others
Maram dashtan (maram having) to have the quality of maram
Maram terekundan (maram burst) to have a lot of maram when you least expect it (informal use)
On the contrary, if one does not exhibit this trait, he or she is referred to as
Bi maram (without maram) not caring for others
Bad maram (with bad or negative maram) not having this quality
Maram nadashtan (maram not having) not having this quality
As shown, the socio-cultural shades of meaning attached to this culture-specific concept are completely different from those equivalents listed in a well-trusted dictionary. As this concept is deeply embedded in Iranian culture, it is difficult to make sense of maram or to manage the situations associated with this schema for those unfamiliar with the cultural conceptualization of maram. Furthermore, translating it into the L2 as shown in the following sentences is quite impossible:
I wonder how 'bi maram' he is in his behavior towards his parents
I really like your 'maram' sir
You are really 'ba maram' to give me such a grade
Donyaye 'bi maram' (a world bi maram)
Akhare 'maram' (having maram to the greatest extent possible)
Rafighe 'ba maram' (a ba maram friend)

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These examples bring forth the notion of untranslatability of this cultural schema. Even lexical items such as nice and cool do not capture the meaning of 'maram' in Iranian culture. In English, if you are nice, you are friendly, kind and polite whereas in Iranian culture you can be 'ba maram' even towards your enemy or even display some levels of discourtesy but still show your maram.

## The culural schema of 'Marefat'

The schema of 'marefat' is closely bound up with the schema of 'maram' in Iranian culture. It is variously translated as understanding, insight, politeness, etc. but in social interactions, it instantiates substantially the same conceptualizations as that of 'maram'. Consider the following examples:
Bacheye ba marefatiye: He is a 'ba marefat' guy
Kheyli tazegiya bi marefat shodi ke dige ye sari be maa nemizani: You have become so 'bi marefat' that you don't even drop by
Enghadr ma'refat dasht ke ye zang bezane soraghe baabaa ro begire: He had enough 'marefat' to call and ask about dad
It should be noted that 'marefat' is sometimes paired with 'maram' in the same context as lexical collocations, accentuating the meaning as in the examples given below:
Ba maram o marefat 'meaning with maram and marefat
Bi maram o marefat meaning without maram and marefat
It is abundantly clear that the translation of marefat into English may not completely render the precise meaning intended in Persian. This is due to the fact that the cultural aspects may get lost in the translation into target language.
The cultural schema of 'Gheyrat'
Another cultural schema heavily ingrained in Persian cultural conceptualization is the schema of gheyrat. Aryanpour progressive dictionary (2010) has roughly translated this term as zeal, ardor, backbone, sense of honor, etc. but gheyrat is a concept whose meaning is beyond expression in English. It refers to an extreme sense of honor that a man bestows upon his family members especially females. Accordingly, a man is expected to devote a lot of attention to how their sister(s) behave in public, that is, to care about the way they dress, talk, etc. In Iranian culture a man has to show a tremendous amount of gheyrat in order to save the family's aberu (face). If an Iranian girl does not observe the codes of conduct set by society or family and makes her family disgraceful, her father or brother may become gheyrati .Similarly, if she is misbehaved or greatly offended by a man, her father or brother may be gheyrati and even scolds the man. The gheyrat schema often surfaces in Persian in the form of expressions such as the following:
Ba gheyrat with geyrat
Bi gheyrat without gheyrat
Gheyrati 'with gheyrat
Gheyrat be kharj dadan to show gheyrat
Gheyrati shodan to become gheyrati
Gheyrat dashtan 'to have gheyrat
This schema pertains to the care one should give to harfe mardom (people's talk). If you are not gheyrati then you may lose your aberu (face) and consequently, you have to take notice of harfe mardom. According to Sharifian (2008b) the notion of mardom may imply an anonymous social force rather than a particular group of people. In fact, the concepts of aberu and harfe mardom force one to show gheyrat towards their family members.

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The meaning of gheyrat is also associated with one's religious beliefs and orientations. If one holds strong religious ideas they may show greater degrees of gheyrat. Such people believe that if they show gheyrat towards their family members, they cherish the Islamic values. In western cultures, people are not bound to care a lot about'harfe mardom' (people's talk) as do men in Iranian culture.

## The cultural schema of 'Haya'

The cultural schema of haya is mainly attributed to females in Persian culture and language. It is generally translated as modesty, pudency, decency and shyness. Based on Persian communities' values and expectations, haya is beyond feelings of shyness or shame come flooding over to females upon encountering unusual situations where their personal privacy and face are violated. It is an inborn feature culturally instantiated through experience precluding them from disgraceful conducts. Interestingly, the English equivalents of the schema in question fail to bear the meaning intended in Persian. Thus, the cultural schema of haya in Persian is almost distinct from that of English as the attitudes and conceptualizations represented in the minds of cultural group differ widely in English and Persian.
Consider the following examples:
Bi haya (without haya)
Ba haya (with haya)
haya dashtan( having haya)
It is to be noted that haya sometimes collocates with sharm and hojb as in sharm va haya or hojb va haya to intensify the meaning of this schema. As illustrated, it is abundantly clear that, such words do not survive the translation into English.
Concluding remarks
Speaking a language is more than linguistic tools in the service of speakers. Rather, it is cultural tools and values which shape and dictate the way speakers in a language conceptualize and view the world. When it comes to intercultural communication, cultural conceptualization occupies a significant role in the success or failure of communication. In this paper, we elaborated on the cultural schemas of maram, marefat, gheyrat and haya in the Persian language and culture. There may be equivalents to such terms in English, but the conceptualizations instantiated are culturally driven. It was delineated that, foreign cultures are devoid of such schemas. The study demonstrates how some cultural schemas can be differently conceptualized from one culture to another. On this account, preserving the original meanings of culture bound words in the target language is next to impossible. In cases where there may seem to be some degrees of overlap between the two languages, the cultural schemas and categories do not have a one-to-one correspondence. As a consequence, to provide effective avenues of interaction in intercultural communication, it is crucially important to take these cultural conceptualizations into account. This review, by and large can be helpful to curriculum and syllabus designers in the challenges they may encounter with respect to teaching culture. Likewise, it provides teachers with valuable insights into their teaching namely, creating opportunities for language learners to voice their cultural differences. Language educators also need to incorporate their cultural biases into their educational materials to foster intercultural communication. Finally an awareness of cultural differences of learners helps ELT policy makers and language educators make right decisions in planning and designing language teaching courses.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READABILITY OF IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH BOOKS, STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AND THEIR MOTIVATION ACROSS GENDERS 

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#### Abstract

THIS THESIS INTENDED TO INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE READABILITY OF IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH BOOKS AND THE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION. THE SECOND PURPOSE OF THIS THESIS WAS TO DISCOVER THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE READABILITY OF IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH BOOKS AND THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION. FINALLY, THE THIRD AIM FOR WHICH THIS THESIS WAS WRITTEN WAS TO COMPARE FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION LEVEL, AS FAR AS THE RELATION BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND READABILITY LEVEL IS CONCERNED. ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY GRADE 1, 2, AND 3 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY. THE PARTICIPANTS AGED WITHIN THE RANGE OF 16-19. IN ORDER TO COME UP WITH SATISFACTORY ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS, MOTIVATED STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE (MSLQ) BY PINTRICH AND DEGROOT (1990), FOG READABILITY FORMULA FOR EVALUATING THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF THE READING MATERIALS, AND READING CLOZE TEST TO EVALUATE THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION LEVEL, WERE USED. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY SHOWED THAT THERE WAS NO CORRELATION BETWEEN THE READABILITY OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH COURSE-BOOKS AND THE LEVEL OF MOTIVATION OF FIRST, SECOND AND THE THIRD GRADE STUDENTS. ACCORDING TO THE STATISTICAL ANALYSES, THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY SHOWED THAT THERE WAS NO POSITIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF STUDENTS AND THE READABILITY INDEX OF ENGLISH COURSE- BOOKS. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT THE EXISTING CORRELATION BETWEEN THE MOTIVATION LEVEL OF MALE STUDENTS AND THE SCORES OF READABILITY WAS STRONGER THAN THE FEMALE ONES. THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY CAN HELP MATERIAL DEVELOPERS AND COURSE DESIGNERS DEVELOP SUITABLE MATERIALS FOR SUITABLE COURSE. IT WILL ALSO ENABLE TEACHERS TO HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF READING INTEREST AND TASTES OF STUDENTS. TEACHERS WOULD IN ADDITION, BE ABLE TO DETERMINE THE READABILITY LEVEL OF JUNIOR SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS AND IDENTIFY THE READING


## PROBLEMS AND SKILLS OF THEIR STUDENTS. THE FINDINGS MAY HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEFL AND MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL.

## KEY WORDS: READING, READABILITY, MOTIVATION, READING COMPREHENSION, CLOZE TEST, HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH BOOKS

## 1. Introduction

Understanding the written word is one of the most essential of all academic skills. It is an ability as vital to the student in first grade as to the high school senior. Comprehending the reading material is applicable in almost every subject area at every grade level and is one of the life-long skills needed for success. Since reading has always permeated the curriculum to such an extent, improving reading comprehension has long been a goal of many educators. Indeed, since high achieving students are generally good readers, and poor achievers are generally poor readers, any approach towards improving school achievement must focus in a substantial part on increased reading comprehension (Wallace, 1995).
Matching students' reading level to appropriate reading material is a difficult problem for many teachers. This is because the principle that students read most successfully if the reading material they are given matches their reading level is easy to accept but hard to use (Bloor, 1995). The importance of reading materials, especially prescribed textbooks in the school system need not to be overemphasized. This is because textbooks are a vital instrument for teaching and learning. Since one of the drawbacks of the readability formulas is that they do not consider the motivational factors of the students who deal with the reading material as a reader and just typically, look at things like word and sentence length, and the frequency of longer words and generally the quantification of the reading materials, the present study considers the motivational factors of the students in reading comprehension in addition to the difficulty level of the reading materials. The specific objective of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the Readability of Iranian High School English Books, students' motivation and reading comprehension performance.
One of the most important issues in the realm of ESL/EFL research has been the match between the materials and the proficiency level of those who receive or use them. This plays a crucial role in material sequencing and gradation. Some methods have been developed to create a match between learners" proficiency and the difficulty level of written materials. This issue acquires even greater momentum with regard to the fact that, in many cases, written material comprises the main source for most language learners, most prominently in academic and higher educational fields. Subjective methods such as teacher or reader judgments have been inadequate due to their very nature. In order to overcome the subjectivity of these methods and its consequences, objective ways have been designed to measure the difficulty level of written materials for the purpose of matching them to suitable level of the readers" proficiency. The dependability of these objective methods has in turn been rightly subject to criticism and research both theoretically and empirically.

Reading serves a wide range of purposes in the lives of different categories of people who are literate. In school, it is the basis for learning different subjects. Whatever, the aspect of life one is considering, one discovers that the ability to read efficiently enhances individual ability to function in an effective manner. According to Ituen (1998), a reader does not approach text merely for the purpose of reading the language itself but for a purpose other than reading the words on the page.
Given the importance of reading, one understands why Macauley (1982) cited in Ituen (1998) considers as very unfortunate the failure of developing countries to give reading its rightful place in schools' programs, unlike what obtains in many developed countries.

The present study attempts to investigate whether readers" comprehension is correlated with the difficulty of texts determined by readability formulas. Moreover, it aims to investigate
whether readability is correlated with the student's motivation level. This study therefore, investigated the readability of English Language Course-books prescribed for High Schools and Students' Performance in Reading Comprehension.

### 1.2. Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the readability of Iranian High school English Books and the students' motivation?
2. What is the relationship between the readability of Iranian High school English Books and the students' reading comprehension?
3. Is the gender of the learners correlated with their motivation level and readability level of the High school English Books?

## 2. Literature Review

Nowadays there are a lot of people throughout the world using English as a second or foreign language. The reason why these people try to acquire English is mostly due to the fact that their success in education is, for the most part, related to their ability to read the latest scientific and technical pieces of reading in English. Reading is an important language skill that is now more necessary than in any time in our history. The invention of Internet to humanity in the world, require students to develop their reading skill in order to understand the massive information the world offers to them.

Reading involves a number of factors, which may influence learners' target language reading ability. Some of these factors are learners' lack of target language proficiency and vocabulary, unfamiliarity with the content and/or formal schemata of the texts to be read and inefficient reading strategies (Carrell, 1989).

Many factors affect success or failure during comprehension of texts. Reader characteristics, text properties, and the instructional context in which reading takes place are just a few of them (van den Broek \& Kremer, 1999). Although these factors have often been studied in isolation, it is their interactions that provide important information about naturalistic text comprehension (Rapp\& van den Broek, 2005). There is much evidence that the quantity or amount of readers' prior knowledge influences comprehension of scientific texts (see, e.g. Chi, Feltovich, \& Glaser,1981). Indeed, there is a well-documented advantage in comprehension of texts for readers with high knowledge on the topics described by the texts over readers with low knowledge (e.g. Means \& Voss, 1985). A second factor that influences comprehension of information in scientific texts is the structure of the text. There are different ways for an author to organize the ideas in texts in general or in scientific texts in particular, resulting in different structures (Graesser, Leon, \& Otero,2002). Meyer and colleagues (Meyer, 1999) demonstrated that readers' comprehension is influenced by the text structure used to convey the information.

The attempts to devise the first readability formula goes to Lively and Pressey in 1923. They were concerned with the practical problem of selecting science textbooks for junior high school. The books were so overlaid with technical words that teachers spent all class time teaching vocabulary. Lively and Pressey (1923) argued that it would be helpful to have a way to measure the vocabulary burden of textbooks. They related the difficulty of a word to its frequency and attempted to develop a method for measuring vocabulary in textbooks as well as other reading materials to be used for school. Lively and Pressey assumed that the more common the word, the easier it is to understand. The lively and Pressey (1923) method was not a suitable instrument for measuring readability because they could not provide a scale to interpret the scores; but, their

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study marked the beginning of work on readability formulas that would continue unabated until the present time.

Readability formula is an analytical way to predict readability (Kondru, 2006). There are many readability formulas used to measure the readability level of the written materials, but some of them are better known and more popular. Popular readability formulas are based on extensive research and as Kondru (2006) implied, "their predictions correlate very well with the results of the actual readability measurements of expert judgments, comprehension tests, and the cloze procedures" (p.9).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

Through random sampling, from among high school students in Izeh, 180 males and females, were chosen. Ninety students were males and ninety were females. At first from the 8 high schools, 4 were randomly chosen, then from these, 2 high schools were selected, then the students in General English classes including first, second and third grade students of the two high schools were selected. The participants' age range was between16-19. The subjects were considered homogenous since they were all foreign language learners and none of them had experience of living in an English speaking country.

### 3.2. Instrumentation

In order to come up with satisfactory answers to research questions, Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) by Pintrich and DeGroot (1990), Fog readability formula for evaluating the difficulty level of the reading materials, and reading close test to evaluate the students' reading comprehension level, were used. What follows is the detailed explanations of the used instruments.

### 3.3. Procedure

As mentioned earlier, the participants of the study were 180 male and female high school Iranian EFL learners. At the outset of the study, in order to choose the participants consent was taken from the ministry of education, Izeh office and the officials accepted to cooperate.

The researcher attended the English classes and then the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was distributed among the students through which their motivation level was measured. It should be said that before administering each questionnaire or running each test, the participants were given enough information about the topic of the questionnaires or tests and also enough procedures on how to complete them. In addition before administering questionnaires, participants were asked whether they were willing to complete the questionnaires or not and they were assured that their information would remain confidential. The students also were told that there was no right or wrong answer for the items in questionnaire, and the items just asked about their personal views. Both the questionnaire and the reading tests were administered on those who agreed to answer. They were instructed to answer the items in the questionnaires at their own pace.

This study was carried out during three successive phases. As the topic of this study suggests, this research was going to study any possible relationship between the readability level of high school English books and the motivation level and also the reading comprehension ability of the students; therefore, each instrument was administered at different time. As the first phase of this study, through the Fog readability formula, the readability level of high school books at three grades were calculated. The readability grades for each passage are presented in appendix D. Cloze tests prepared according to the easiness and hardness of the passages as one of the aims of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the reading comprehension and readability. For each grade of high school one cloze test was prepared for the easy passage and one for the hard ones. As it is clear from readability grades in appendix $d$, for each grade of high
school books there is the highest grade level and the lowest grade level .Cloze tests were prepared according to the highest and the lowest grade leve so that one test was made for the highest grade and one for the lowest grade. The highest grade level represented the hardness of the passages and lowest grade represented the easiness of the passages. Both easy and hard cloze tests were administrated at the same time. At the second phase, the motivation level of the participants was evaluated through the MSLQ, as it was stated earlier. Then as the last phase, during the next week, the researcher again attended the general English classes and the cloze tests were given to the students through which their reading level was investigated.

In order to answer research question one, the obtained scores from readability of the passages will be compared with the obtained results from Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) through which it will be identified that whether there is a relationship between the readability level and the motivation. In order to answer the second research question, the students' reading comprehension scores were compared with the readability scores to investigate the relationship between readability level and reading comprehension performance of Iranian high school students. Finally in order to answer research question three, the motivation scores between female and male students and the readability scores were compered in order to investigate whether the gender of the learners correlated with their motivation level and readability level of the High school English Books.

### 3.4 Data analysis

For the statistical analysis of the gathered data, the data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS version 19). Statistical analysis of this study included the descriptive statistics (such as the frequency distribution, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (parson product moment). In this study, the reliability of the instruments was measured using Cronbach Alpha. The researcher also used Pearson Product -Moment Correlation for inferential statistics in order to test research hypotheses and describe the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. For this study, a five percent ( $a=0.05$ ) level will be determined as the accepted level of significance for statistical analysis.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Investigating the first Hypothesis

The first hypothesis of the present study which was formulated based on the first question claimed that readability of Iranian High school English Books is not related with students' motivation. Therefore, the following steps were taken in order to test the hypothesis and find the answer for the first question of the study. At the onset of the study, in order to measure the students' level of motivation a questionnaire titled "Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)" developed by Pintrich and DeGroot (1990) was distributed among the participants. The fog formula then was used to evaluate the readability and difficulty level of the text and the reading comprehension in the text books .Using this formula, the consistency between the English text and the proficiency level of the students can be found. Fog formula is a tool to evaluate and to analyses the writing material and aims to evaluate the extent of the text to be understood and to be read. The readability analysis of the high school text books was conducted by the researcher and gathered data were analyzed. As the first question intended to investigate the relationship between two variables namely readability level of text books and students' level of motivation, correlational analyses were needed; therefore, three sets of Pearson product moment correlation were run between the gained scores through the Fog formula for grade one, two and three of high school English course books and the gained scores of Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) of all the students at three grades.

Table 1
Correlation Between the Motivation level of Students and the Readability of Grade 1, 2 and grade
3 high school books
First-grade $\begin{gathered}\text { Second grade }\end{gathered}$ Third-grade

|  |  | MS | R | MS | R | MS | R |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Motivation scores | Pearson Correlation | 1 | . 259 | 1 | . 100 | 1 | -. 161 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | . 501 |  | . 831 |  | . 760 |
|  | N | 60 | 9 | 60 | 7 | 60 | 6 |
| Readability | Pearson Correlation | . 259 | 1 | . 100 | 1 | -. 161 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | . 501 |  | . 831 |  | . 760 |  |
|  | N | 9 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
|  |  |  |  | 1 | . 100 | 1 | -. 161 |
| MS $=$ Motivation scores |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\mathrm{R}=$ Readability |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

As we can see in table 1, the Pearson correlation coefficient, $r$, for the first grade students and first grade text book is $r=0.259$, which is not statistically significant ( $\mathrm{p}>0.05$ ). Therefore, up to now it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the readability of high school English textbooks and the level of motivation of first grade students. Moreover, the Pearson correlation coefficient, $r$, for the second grade students is $r=0.1$, which again is not considered to be statistically significant. Finally, as the results in table 1 illustrates, the Pearson correlation coefficient, $r$, for the third grade students is -.161 which is not statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be claimed that there is no correlation between the motivation level of high school students and the readability level of high school English text books. The above mentioned statistical analysis, led to proving the first research hypothesis.

### 4.2. Investigating the second Hypothesis

According to the results presented in table 2, the Pearson correlation coefficient, $r$, for grade one high school students which is 0.086 , is not statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that in case of first grade learners, there is a no positive correlation between the reading comprehension ability of students and the readability index of English text books. However, in order to further analyze the situation, the same procedure was conducted for students at level two, and a Pearson correlation coefficient was run between the scores of reading comprehension and the readability index of the English text book of second grade.

As with the first graders, the Pearson correlation coefficient, $r$, for grade two high school students is 0.183 , which is not statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ). In order to investigate the issue comprehensively, the reading comprehension scores of the third grade students were gathered and a Pearson correlation coefficient was run between the reading scores and the readability index. The results, as presented in table 2, show that the Pearson correlation coefficient, $r$, is .163 and; therefore, there is no positive correlation between the reading comprehension scores of the high school students' reading comprehension scores and the readability index of the high school text books. Based on all the discussion in this section, the second null hypothesis according to which readability of Iranian High school English Books is not related to reading comprehension performance, should be accepted.

### 4.3 Investigating the third Hypothesis

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The third hypothesis of the present thesis tried to take the gender differences into account, and stated that there is no difference between motivation level and readability level of male students and motivation level and readability level of female students. To find answer to the third research question and test the third research hypothesis, again two correlational analyses were conducted, one between the female students scores in motivation and the level of readability of high school books, and another between the male scores from the motivation questionnaire and the readability level of the high school books. The results are presented in tables 3 and 4 .

Table 3
Correlation Between the Motivation level of Female Students and the Readability of Grade 1, 2 and grade 3 high school books

First-grade Second grade Third-grade

|  |  | MS | R | MS | R | MS | R |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Motivation scores | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.220 | 1 | -.111 | 1 | .582 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .569 |  | .813 |  | .226 |
|  | N | 30 | 9 | 30 | 7 | 30 | 6 |
| Readability | Pearson Correlation | -.220 | 1 | -.111 | 1 | .582 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .569 |  | .813 |  | .226 |  |
|  | N | 9 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |

MS= Motivation score
$\mathrm{R}=$ readability
Table 4
Correlation Between the Motivation level of Male Students and the Readability of Grade 1, 2 and grade 3 high

|  |  | MS | R | MS | R | MS | R |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Motivation scores | Pearson Correlation | 1 | . 259 | 1 | . 100 | 1 | -. 154 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | . 501 |  | . 831 |  | . 742 |
|  | N | 30 | 9 | 30 | 7 | 30 | 6 |
| Readability | Pearson Correlation | . 259 | 1 | . 100 | 1 | -. 154 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | . 501 |  | . 831 |  | . 742 |  |
|  | N | 9 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |

Tables 3 and 4 compare that the correlation between the female and male students' scores in motivation questionnaire and the readability index of the high school text books. As it can be seen, the Pearson coefficient correlation for first grade female students is -.220 and the Pearson coefficient correlation of males in the first grade is .259 , which is a higher positive correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient for female second graders is -.111 , and that for the male second graders is .1 . In this case, again the male learners outperformed the female ones.

Finally, the Pearson correlation coefficient for females in the third grade in the two sets of scores is .582 and the Pearson correlation coefficient for males is -.154. As these figures illustrate, in the performance of none of these subgroups a strong positive correlation can be
seen. However, generally the correlation of the two sets of scores for males is higher than the females in first and second grades. Among the third graders, the females' correlation coefficient is higher than that of males. The analysis presented above, leads to the rejection of the third null hypothesis. To put it differently, the results show that the existing correlation between the motivation level of male students and the readability of scores is stronger than the female ones, and this led to the rejection of third hypothesis of the study.

## 5. Discussion

According to the data gained from this study and the statistics presented in chapter four and based on the treatment administered to the participants, it seems that there is no correlation between the readability of high school English course-books and the level of motivation of first, second and the third grade students. These findings led to proving the first research hypothesis. To put it differently, it was found that readability of texts, has no significant relationship with the level of motivation of high school students.
The results of this study was in line with the study by Tabatabaei and Mohammad Bagheri (2013) who revealed that there is an insignificant relationship between high school students' interest level and the readability indexes of the passages in books two, three and four, while based on Flesch readability formula there was a significant relationship between these two variables in book one. The issues that were analyzed in their study were the association between students' interest level and their background knowledge level, and the relationship between students' interest- background knowledge levels with the readability indexes of the passages.

The second research question was "What is the relationship between the readability of Iranian High school English course-books and the students' reading comprehension? According to the statistical analyses, the findings of the study showed that there is not a positive correlation between the reading comprehension ability of students and the readability index of English course- books. Based on the discussion in this section, the second null hypothesis according to which readability of Iranian High School English Books is not related to reading comprehension performance, should be accepted.

The findings of the present study are contrary to the study by Rezaee and Norouzi (2011) who investigated the relationship between readability of written materials and the learners' performance at two proficiency levels of intermediate and advanced. To calculate the readability of the material, two prominent readability formulas, Flesch and Fog Index, were employed. The results of their analysis and interpretation indicated a significant correlation between the readability of passages and the learners' performance at both levels. Unlike the findings of the current study, the results showed significantly high correlations between readability grades and the participants" performance at two proficiency levels of intermediate and advanced.

The third research question asked whether the gender of the learners correlated with their motivation level and readability level of the High school English Books. The results showed that the existing correlation between the motivation level of male students and the readability of scores was stronger than the female ones, and this led to the rejection of third hypothesis of the study. However in the performance of none of these subgroups a strong positive correlation can be seen but there is a higher positive correlation between males' motivation and readability in the first and second grade and male learners outperformed the female ones. Among the third graders, the females' correlation coefficient is higher than that of males.

## 6. Conclusion

According to the readability scores obtained from high school English books, it can be argued that readings of the course book used by the first grade students are quiet easy to read as well as the second grade. On the contrary, readings of the course book used by the third grade

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students are quiet difficult to read. Despite the difficulty in third grade English book and the easiness of the reading sections in first and second English books of high school, based on the findings of the present research it can be concluded that readability of the reading sections is not related to motivation and the reading comprehension performance.

The results showed that the existing correlation between the motivation level of male students and the readability of scores was stronger than the female ones, and this led to the rejection of third hypothesis of the study. However in the performance of none of these subgroups a strong positive correlation can be seen but there is a higher positive correlation between males' motivation and readability in the first and second grade and male learners outperformed the female ones. Among the third graders, the females' correlation coefficient is higher than that of males. As mentioned earlier, the findings of the present study led to proving the first and the second research hypothesis but the third research hypothesis was rejected.

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# The impact of Note Taking strategy on Iranian EFL AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF LISTENING ABILITY 

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#### Abstract

LISTENING IN LANGUAGE TEACHING REFERS TO A COMPLEX PROCESS THAT ALLOWS US TO UNDERSTAND SPOKEN LANGUAGE. THE CURRENT STUDY, CONDUCTED IN IRAN WITH AN EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN, INVESTIGATED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING LISTENING STRATEGIES DELIVERED IN L1 (PERSIAN) AND ITS EFFECT ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN L2. ONE LISTENING STRATEGY: NOTE-TAKING WAS TAUGHT OVER 6 SESSIONS DURING A SEMESTER. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS STUDY ARE 100 LEARNERS IN ARIANA'S INSTITUTE IN BANDAR ANZALI. FIRST AN OPT WILL BE ADMINISTERED BETWEEN THEM. THEN 60 LEARNERS ARE CHOSEN. THEIR SCORE IS ONE STANDARD DEVIATION BELOW THE MEAN. AFTER THAT, THE RESEARCHER DIVIDES THEM INTO TWO GROUPS, EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS RANDOMLY. A PRE LISTENING TEST (10 QUESTIONS ARE SELECTED FROM JACK.C. RICHARD'S BOOK, 1986) WAS ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS, AND THEIR SCORES WERE RECORDED. THEN JUST THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WENT UNDER GSESSIONS OF TREATMENT ON LISTENING. AFTER THE TREATMENT, AGAIN BOTH GROUPS SAT FOR THE SAME TEST, but this time as a post-Test. all the recorded scores were evaluated RESULTS GATHERED ON THE POST INTERVENTION LISTENING TEST REVEALED THAT LISTENING STRATEGIES DELIVERED IN L1 LED TO A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR DISCRETE LISTENING SCORES.


KEY WORDS: NOTE TAKING; EFL LEARNER; INTERMEDIATE; LISTENING; TEACHING NOTE TAKING

## INTRODUCTION

Short-term memory alone cannot possibly keep all the necessary details and fulfill the intermediate process of decoding in the act of interpreting (Mahmoodzadeh, 1992). Notes are therefore suggested as a means of an aid to assist the interpreter in retaining and retrieving the information. Note-taking, especially in long interpretation, is a skill employed in the process of conducting consecutive interpreting to better the quality of the interpretation. Note-taking skill has the direct, consequential effect of the interpreter's rendition. Qualified Interpreters are expected to be proficient in taking notes in order to carry out consecutive interpreting efficiently and effectively. As note-taking is a must-have skill for interpreters to acquire in performing consecutive interpreting, it is necessary for an interpreter to be well versed in the skills.

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It is generally believed that note-taking has a facilitative effect on listening comprehension. Note taking is perceived by examinees as a strategy that facilitates remembering the listening content.

## Statement of the problem:

Listening skills are very important in everyday life. One must understand what people are saying and what is happening around them. In order for this to be done effectively, one must be an active listener. This is achieved when the listener is listening for meaning; when the listener checks if the statement has been heard and understood correctly.

According to Farhadi et al listening comprehension is one of the most fundamental language skills and also the most complicated one. Primarily, communication is feasible only when the two parties involved are able to comprehend each other. Though one can make himself understood by various means (e.g., dramatizing).

Many EFL Iranian worry that they pass different courses like speaking and listening ones in the institute; however, they fail to listen in a real situation of a language exam. This claim has the evident support of a pilot study done on a group of Iranian intermediate FEL learners in which their listening ability was tested and traces of failure were proved to exist. Some of the problems in listening ability can are the following

1. They don't have any concentration on listening.
2. Their ears are not attuned to what they hear.
3. They don't have enough time to fix materials in their mind so they forgot them

## 4. They forgot subject easily

The nature of the problem stated makes Iranian English teachers try to utilize various methods with the purpose of facilitating learning the listening skill in the classroom, but such methodologies most often lead to failure. Among the techniques used to improve the listening ability, perhaps, the position of note taking seems to be ignored. It is widely accepted by educators that note taking is valuable tools that can help increase the retention of information (Carrier \& Titus, 1981, p. 385). According to Ornstein (1994), note taking is one of many "cognitive processes that students need in order to facilitate their own learning and to improve their academic performance.

## The statement of Research question and Hypothesis

## This study will answer the following question

RQ: Does Note Taking strategy have an impact on Iranian at intermediate level of EFL listening ability?

H0: Applying Note Taking strategy does not lead to more acceptable listening proficiency.

## METHODOLOGY

At the beginning, a t-test was carried out to identify the two groups' language proficiency levels and to ensure that two groups are comparable. During this test, both groups were allowed

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to take notes and to review their notes. They listened to each passage twice, and were given approximately 5 minutes (more than adequate based on the author's actual experience) to finish all the multiple choice questions. The mean score of the total scores of all subjects in the test was 63.58 (full score 100). Therefore, their proficiency level was measured as lower-intermediate. The $t$-test value was 0.243 , much higher than the critical point of 0.05 , showing that there was no significant difference between the proficiency levels of the two groups. In other words, the test performances of the two groups were comparable. In the following tests, the experimental group was allowed to take notes and review

The experimental group was allowed to take notes and review their own notes during the tests, while the control group was asked not to take notes at all. Right after the t -test that is conducted to determine the subjects' levels, the detail test was administered on the same day. The two groups listened to the passage for the detail test twice and were asked to answer five questions concerning detailed information in the passage. Immediately after that, the two groups listened to the passage for the summary test twice, and then were asked to write down a summary in 15 minutes. The answer sheets and the notes of the experimental group were collected for later analysis after the tests, the subjects were asked to finish a questionnaire, which was designed to investigate the subjects' perception on note-taking, their attitudes towards it as well as their note-taking strategies in general. The questions set in the questionnaire pointed directly to the concerns of this study. The original version of the questionnaire consisted of 10 questions. After a pilot study of ten subjects, it was revised and contained ten key questions. The subjects were instructed to answer the multiple choice questions honestly so as to ensure the validity of the study.

## Subjects:

The subjects of the study are Iranian EFL learners in Ariana's institute in Anzali branch, Iran. First an OPT is administered to 100 learners. Then 60 learners whose scores are one standard deviation below the mean are selected. Next, they are divided into groups, experimental and control group. A pretest of listening is administered to both groups. It is a listening test that learners should answer 10 questions the learner's score are objective.

## Instruments

## OPT test

The students who participated in this study were assigned as intermediate level students, but in order to make sure of the homogeneity of the selected groups, a test of OPT was administered. The Oxford Placement Test measures a test taker's ability to communicate in English. It gives the information needed to find out about a person's language level. The results approved that there was little difference in the performance of the students.

Pre-test Post-test
After assigning the homogenized participants into experimental and control groups, both groups took a pre-test in which each of the students should answer 10 questions from Jack.C. Richard's book (1986). After 6 sessions of the treatment for the experimental group, again both groups sat for the post-test which was the same test that had been used as the pre-test. This time their scores were recorded again.

## Procedures

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Step one the first step was to homogenize a sample of intermediate female Iranian EFL learners. In order to do this, an OPT test was administrated to the students. The participants in the OPT test were 100 male learners, 60 students among those who are scoring are one standard deviation below the mean is selected.

Step two: the selected subjects were randomly assigned to two groups of 30 students as the experimental and control groups, and since this study was based on quasi-experimental design, a pretest was administrated to both groups before the application of instruction.

In the pre-test each of the students in both groups was asked to answer to 10 listening questions from Jack.C. Richard's book (1986).

Step three: the control group went under the usual instruction of ILI, in which they were learning English as a foreign language. The experimental group, in addition to the usual instruction in the institute, received 6 sessions of treatment, each lasting for 20 minutes and twice a week, on how to take Note correctly. In the process of the treatment, they listened to native speakers, they took note, words, and phrases containing listening parts after the teacher or the native speaker on $C D$, trying to take note and keep the key sentences.

Step four: after the treatment, the same test that was used as the pre-test was administrated to both groups, but this time as the post-test. Again the scores were recorded by the teacher.

Step five: the recorded scores both in the pre-test and in the post-test were evaluated by the teacher.

Step six: the results were compared using the SPSS software in order to find the effectiveness of Note taking strategy on Iranian EFL at intermediate level of listening ability.

## RESULT <br> Findings

The findings showed that there was a significant difference in scores for experimental group and control groups ( t value $=10.083$ )

This result implied that note taking strategy on listening for the experimental group has been effective in helping the language learners in the experimental group perform better in the listening test. Practicing note taking strategy improved the listening ability of the participants in the experimental group.

## Data Analysis

The data of the current study were analyzed via applying the following statistical methods: a t value (t-test) was calculated between the posttest scores of listening in the two participant groups to show the effect in the first hypothesis of the study. Two separate ANCOVAs were calculated between the scores of pretest and posttest of the experimental group as well as the pretest and the posttest of the control group.

## Group Statistics

| Note taking | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |


|  | +note <br> taking | 30 | 23.6333 | 1.37674 | .25136 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Listening |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | -note taking | 30 | 21.6000 | 1.65258 | .30172 |



The summary of the descriptive analysis of the data in this study has been illustrated in table (1) below:

TABLE 1. THE SUMMARY OF THE DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS FOR THE DATA RELATED TO THE POSTTEST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND THE CONTROL GROUP OF THE STUDY

| Groups | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | S.D. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Listening + Note taking | 30 | 23.63 | 1.34 |


| Listening | -Note taking | 30 | 21.03 | 1.62 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

As table (1) indicates, the mean of the +role-play group (the experimental group) is higher than that of the -role-play group (the control group). Accordingly, the number of participants in each group was $30\left(\mathrm{~N}_{+\mathrm{RP}}=30\right.$; $\left.\mathrm{N}_{-\mathrm{RP}}=30\right)$; in addition, the amount of the standard deviation was lower in the experimental group as compared to the control group of the study which indicates that the experimental group posttest scores are more homogenous than those of the control group.

The summary of the inferential analysis of the data in this study has been illustrated in tables (2) and (3) below:

TABLE 2. THE SUMMARY OF THE T-TEST BETWEEN THE POSTTEST SCORES
OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND THE CONTROL GROUP OF THE STUDY

| Variance | $\mathbf{t}$ | Mean Difference |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Equal variances |  |  |
| not assumed | 4.64758 | 2.60000 |

According to table (2), the result of applying the t-test of the study was an observed $t$ of $4.64758\left(\mathrm{t}_{\text {obs }}=4.64758\right)$. The obtained t -observed is higher than the critical value of t in the t Student table with the degree of freedom of $56(\mathrm{df}=56)$ and the level of significance of $0.05(\mathrm{Sig} .=$ $0.05)$ for the two-tailed (null) hypothesis as to be $2.000\left(\mathrm{t}_{\text {crit }}=2.000\right)$. Such a result $\left(\mathrm{t}_{\text {obs }}>\mathrm{t}_{\text {crit }}\right)$ rejects the null hypothesis of the current study.

Table (3) below represents the results of two ANCOVA coefficients calculated separately between the pretest and the posttest of the experimental and the control group of the study:

Table 3. The covariance matrix between the pretest and the

| posttest scores of the experimental and the control <br> group of the study |  |
| :--- | :---: |
| Group | Covariance |
| Experimental | 1.13 |
| Control | 2.06 |

Table (3) indicates that the coefficient of ANCOVA for the experimental group is lower than that of the control group. This means that the pretest and the posttest scores in the control group are closer to each other as compared to those in the experimental group, which represents that treating the experimental group with role-play activities has resulted in increasing the range of their speaking scores in the posttest.

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Group Statistics


Independent Samples Test

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sig. } \\ (2- \\ \text { tailed) } \end{gathered}$ | Mean <br> Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95\% <br> Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| ListeningEqual <br> variances <br> assumed | . 049 | . 826 | $-.336$ | $58$ | . 738 | -. 13333 | . 39702 | -. 92805 | . 66139 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | -. 336 | 57.499 | . 738 | -. 13333 | . 39702 | -. 92820 | . 66154 |


|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95\% <br> Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | . 049 | . 826 | -. 336 | 58 | . 738 | -. 13333 | . 39702 | -. 92805 | . 66139 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | $-.336$ | 57.499 | . 738 | -. 13333 | . 39702 | -. 92820 | . 66154 |

## Discussion and Suggestions

The results in tables (2) and (3) indicated that the null hypothesis of the study was rejected. This rejection means that the independent variable of the study affected the dependent variable; thus, it can be concluded that using note- taking strategy as classroom activities enhance, in Iranian EFL learners, a better performance in a test of listening.

Based on the obtained results, certain justifications regarding the effectiveness of using note- taking strategy on Iranian EFL learners' listening ability can be made. Accordingly, the participant experimental group seemed to succeed because they provide the student with a record of information that she may review. From this perspective, notes are valuable because they 1) help the learner rehearse important content, and 2) can serve as a mnemonic device that can help the student to remember parts of the content that were not included in the notes themselves. The second category suggests that the act of taking notes is important because it 1) increases attention and concentration, 2) encourages students to process the material at a deeper level, and 3) provides a means of connecting new learning with prior knowledge (Carrier $\mathcal{E}$ Titus, p. 386). These two categories imply that note taking can boost achievement by acting as a product (the former category) or as a process (the latter category).

As a future perspective regarding the present study, researcher are advised to expand the scope of this research study from 3 limited participant intermediate classes to more classes with different levels of language proficiency. Additionally, the experiment of the study can be replicable to different other geographical areas and different institutes as well as different linguistic situations; English is not the only language to which the experimentation of this study is implementable. The study can be repeated across genders (male and female) in terms of student participants and teacher participants. Also, the sample size in this research study ( $\mathrm{N}=60$ ) may be converted into a larger size of Iranian (non-Iranian) EFL participants to find out whether or not the results can be the same.

## Hypothesis Analysis

As mentioned earlier, there was a noticeable improvement in the performance of participants in the experimental group, who went under the treatment. As a result, the null hypothesis that note taking strategy have an impact on Iranian at intermediate level of EFL listening ability was rejected.

## CONCLUSION

In the present approach to teach a foreign language, Communicative Approach , comprehension is one of the most important areas to teach since the purpose of teaching a language is to make the learners prepared to communicate effectively.

The research findings on whether note-taking promotes encoding have been mixed. Hult et al. (1984), for example, found that note-taking does involve semantic encoding; but Henk and Stahl (1985) found that the process of taking notes in itself does little to enhance recall. They found, however, that reviewing notes clearly results in superior recall. Their conclusions were dramatically different from those of Barnett et al. (1981), who found "strong support" for the encoding function of note-taking but not for the value of using notes to review material.

Good listening skills depend on good comprehension. Demonstrate that you understand by restating what you think you have heard. Then ask if you, in fact, did hear correctly. Ask questions that request specific clarification on points that you are unsure about. Be cognizant of the length of time that you speak, making sure not to dominate or usurp the conversation

One of the cognitive strategies from which students greatly benefit while listening to recordings, especially mini-lectures is note-taking. Taking lecture notes is widely accepted as a useful strategy for augmenting student attention and retention of academic discourse (Carrell, Dunkel\&Mollaun, 2002). They also believe that note taking is intuitively appealing to the lecturelistener and is generally viewed as a way to facilitate the process of learning and remembering lecture material. According to Kiewra (1989, cited in Carrell, 2007, p. 2), note-taking is beneficial for at least two reasons. First, note-taking aids lecture learning by activating attentional mechanisms and engaging the learner's cognitive processes of coding, integrating, synthesizing, and transforming aurally received input into a personally meaningful form. Second, note-taking is seen as beneficial because the notes taken serve as an external repository of information that permits later revision and review to stimulate recall of the information heard. Dunkel (1988, p. 278) maintains that note taking is perceived by examinees as a strategy that facilitates remembering the lecture content.

In conclusion, even in countries like Iran where there is no opportunity for students to have contact with native speakers of English in order to improve their pronunciation, there are quick, simple, and efficient ways to teach pronunciation, and as the results of this present study indicate, the participants in the experimental group who received the instruction showed noticeable improvement

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# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NATIVE AND PERSIAN NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS' SPEECH ACT OF REFUSAL IN SOCIAL NETWORKS 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT STUDY INTENDS TO INVESTIGATE HOW THE SPEECH ACT OF REFUSAL IS SHARED BY PERSIAN AND ENGLISH NATIVE SPEAKERS IN SOCIAL NETWORKS. TO ACHIEVE THIS END, BASED ON THEIR PROFILES 60 MALE AND FEMALE IRANIAN ENGLISH LEARNERS AND NATIVE SPEAKERS AGED BETWEEN 20 TO 30 YEARS WERE RANDOMLY CHOSEN FROM THE POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORKS LIKE FACEBOOK, TWITTER, ETC. FROM EACH GROUP, SOME COMMENTS SHARED BY THEM WERE EXTRACTED. AFTER EXAMINING EACH COMMENT AND EXTRACTING THE INTENDED SPEECH ACT, THE CODING SCHEME OF BEEBE, TAKAHASHI AND ULISS WELTS (1990) WAS USED TO ANALYZE THE DATA WHICH CONSISTS OF THREE MAIN STRATEGIES INCLUDING DIRECT REFUSAL, INDIRECT REFUSAL AND ADJUNCT TO REFUSALS. TO ANALYZE THE DATA, THE RESPONSES FROM THE RESPONDENTS WERE COUNTED AND THEIR FREQUENCIES WERE TAKEN IN ORDER TO MAKE A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE IRANIAN NON NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND AMERICAN NATIVE SPEAKERS. MOREOVER, TO EVALUATE HOW LIKELY IT WAS THAT ANY OBSERVED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SETS WERE ARISEN BY CHANCE CHI-SQUARE TEST WAS ALSO USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY. THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY LED TO THE SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING IN GENERAL AND THEIR PRAGMATIC KNOWLEDGE IN PARTICULAR.

KEY WORDS: REFUSAL STRATEGIES, SOCIAL NETWORKS, IRANIAN EFL USERS, NATIVE USERS

\section*{1. Introduction}

With the introduction of a new concept, communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) as well as the beginning of Communicative Language Teaching in the 1970s the concern with successful language use has become even more significant. In fact, the importance of communicative competence has been broadly recognized in the field of second/foreign language teaching and learning during the last few decades.


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According to Hymes, for second language learners to achieve communicative goals they must not only learn to speak grammatically but also "appropriately" (Hymes ,1972). This concept of "appropriateness" is explained by Novick (2000) who stated that second or foreign language learners must acquire not only linguistic rules such as morphology, syntax, phonology and vocabulary but they must also acquire socio-cultural rules of language use. Indeed, acquisition of socio-cultural rules which is widely known as pragmatic competence is crucial to second language learners' success.

There have been a number of attempts to develop models based on Hymes' concept of communicative competence. A significant and comprehensive review of communicative competence was offered by Canale (1980) who argued that pragmatics is a part of communicative competence and should be noticed by language learners and educators. As a matter of fact, it was recognized that grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence and discourse competence are four significant components which comprises communicative competences.

In fact, by focusing on the appropriateness of language in its social context as well as on the function of language use in actual interaction between interlocutors, pragmatics has added a significant contribution to the concept of communicative competence. So, the use of adequate interaction strategies to communicate the addresser's intended meaning in an actual situational interaction between actual interlocutors is the concern of pragmatic communicative competence.

Given the prevalent cross-cultural communication within and beyond countries in today's world, language instruction is expected to focus on communicative use of the target language. In the same vein, some researchers argue that when we, as teachers, approach the language class as an opportunity for learners to expand their communication across cultural boundaries, we have the responsibility to equip them with not only the structural aspects of the language but also with the pragmatics as well. That is, we must teach them to say the right words at the proper time (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynolds, 1991).

In fact, language learners are often unsuccessful to follow the socio-cultural rules that govern language behavior in the target language. This is referred as pragmatic failure. According to Thomas, there are two reasons for this pragmatic failure a) learner's lack of linguistic means to convey his or her pragmatic knowledge and b) cross-cultural differences as to what constitutes appropriate cultural behavior (Thomas, 1983). Learners often draw on their knowledge of appropriate language behavior from L1 when they lack this socio-pragmatic knowledge of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior in L2. In ESL/EFL curriculum, teaching pragmatics has played an important role (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Meier, 1997; Olshtain \& Cohen, 1991; Tanaka, 1997).

As said by Tanck, speakers who are assumed as "fluent" in a foreign language because of their command of the grammatical rules of that language and its vocabulary may still be deficient in pragmatic competence and as a result they may not be capable of generating language that is socially and culturally proper (Tanck, 2002). As second language learners converse with native speakers, they may experience difficulties due to their lack of mastery of the conversational norms involved in the production of speech acts and such conversational difficulties may in turn cause breakdowns in communication (Gumperz,1990). Consequently, through adequate pedagogical practices language teaching should increase students' pragmatic awareness and competence of the target language in particular in terms of emphasis on one of the most significant pragmatic features namely the speech acts.

Pragmatics is the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society. Moreover, it is believed that a societal window on language acquisition and language use was opened up by pragmatics (Mey , 2007). Consequently, through adequate pedagogical practices language teaching should enhance language learners' pragmatic knowledge and competence in the target language in particular in terms of emphasis on one of the significant pragmatic features namely speech acts. Indeed, if pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and

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the contexts in which they are performed (Stalnaker, 1972), then speech-act theory constitutes a central subdomain.

Speaking a language is performing speech acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, and more abstract acts such as referring and predicating. In addition, that these acts are generally made possible by and are performed in reference to certain rules for the use of linguistic elements. (Searle, 1969).

Speech act theory begins with the work of the two philosophers, John Austin (1962) and John Searle (1976). Austin (1962) first introduced the concept and then it was modified by his former student Searle (1969, 1975 and 1976). Austin stated that a speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. He mentions that in uttering a sentence, we can do things as well as say things. To be exact, a speaker performs an act when making an utterance (Austin, 1962).

Actually, a speech act is defined as an utterance functional unit in communication (Richards, Platt \& Weber, 1985). It is an act that a speaker performs when he makes an utterance. We perform speech acts when we offer an apology, greeting, complaint, invitation, compliment or refusal.

In interactions, learners should have a high level of pragmatic competence in some speech acts (e.g. complaints, requests, disapproval, disagreement, and refusal) more than others because such speech acts would likely risk the interpersonal relationship of the speakers as they are often referred to as face-threatening acts (Brown \& Levinson 1987, Chen, 1996).

Among the speech acts, refusal is considered a face-threatening act for it threatens the face wants of the speaker and the hearer by running contrary to their face wants. When a refusal is called for or carried out, the face of the speaker or listener is risked. As a result, refusals, as sensitive and high-risk, can provide much insight into speaker's pragmatics. To perform refusals is extremely indicative of one's non-native pragmatic competence.

Refusals occurs when speakers say directly or indirectly no to a request or invitation (Chen, 1996). Refusals are categorized as face-threatening acts (FTAs) because they may cause confrontations between the interlocutors. Thus, EFL learners' awareness of the appropriate forms seems to be essential.

As a matter of fact, in performing a refusal, one disagrees with the expectations of the interlocutors. For that reason, a high level of pragmatic knowledge is necessary to perform a refusal felicitously. Nevertheless, such knowledge is mostly difficult for the learners to attain (Chen, 1996, Al-Eryani ,2007). Hence, it is important to study refusal speech act. The refusal speech act and its social elements depend on each group and their cultural-linguistic values.

For ESL students, the speech act of refusal, as a face-threatening act, has been identified as a main cross-cultural problem which can lead to unintentional offense and a failure in communication (Takahashi \& Beebe, 1987). Consequently, because the linguistic obstruction that already exists is further complicated by the face-threatening nature of the speech act, language learners are more likely to offend their interlocutors when performing the act of refusal.

In fact, an act of refusal might offer a helpful source of information on the socio-cultural values of a speech community and as significant insights into the social norms that are embedded in cultures (Al-Shalawi, 1997). Therefore, the speech act of refusal would be an outstanding focus for the study of native and non native participants where the concern is the pragmatics knowledge.

Speech acts and their importance in establishing appropriate communication have arguably given rise to research them in both L1 and L2 learning. Plenty of research has been done on the speech acts of apologies and requests, including studies by Blum-Kulka and House (1989), BlumKulka, House and Kasper (1989), Barlund and Yoshioka (1990), and Bergman and Kasper (1993) (as cited in Kasper and Rose, 2001). Fewer studies have been conducted on refusals; Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), Chen (1996) represent some of this research.

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Besides, according to Morkus(2009) and considering how the speech act of refusal should be appropriately investigated, traditional approaches for the studying refusal such as using DCT ,etc are no longer regarded as adequate. In fact, up to now, there have been no attempts to investigate the performance of the refusal speech act by Iranian EFL users and American users on social networks .Therefore, the present study is the first speech act research that uses naturally occurring data for analyzing how refusal speech acts are realized by Iranian and American users.

Considering all the above, this study is an attempt to investigate how the speech act of refusal is shared by Persian and English Native Speakers in social networks. What's more, this study aims to run a comparison between males and females to see if they have any significant differences in using the given speech act. Moreover, the present study will throw light on the contribution made by Austin (1962) in the field of Speech Acts and Speech Act Theory and it highlights the significant contrasts in the speech act of refusal with regard to sex.

## 2. Materials

To collect the data required for finding out whether there was a difference between native and non-native English speakers and between males and females native/non-native English speakers in the using speech act of refusal, the present study employed some chunks of comments which contain the speech act of refusal shared by each category of participants on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.

The participants of the current study were 30 male and female Iranian English learners aged between 20 to 30 years and who had not visited an English-speaking country before. They were all selected randomly. In addition, there were 30 male and female native speakers who all come from a native English-speaking country namely the United State of America.

After selecting the participants, their comments posted on the events discussed in social networks were gathered and based on their relevant profiles factors such as subjects' age, level of education, etc were taken care of. As mentioned earlier, four groups participated in this investigation. From each group, some comments shared by them were extracted. After examining each comment and extracting the intended speech act, the coding scheme of Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss Welts (1990) was used to analyze the data which consist of three main strategies including direct refusal, indirect refusal and adjunct to refusals. Direct refusal refers to phrases such as no, I can't and I refuse. Indirect refusals are indirect strategies speakers use to minimize the offence on the hearer and they can include phrases such as statement of regret, excuses, alternatives, or conditional acceptance. On the other hand, adjunct to refusals refers to the preliminary remarks that cannot stand alone or function as refusals and these includes for example expression of gratitude or positive opinion of the interlocutor. These strategies also minimize offence to the hearer. Finally, the researcher tried to statistically compare the figures of each group and look for any significant difference.

## 3. Results

The speech act set produced by American native speakers and the non native English users contained certain core components with distinguished difference between native speakers and the non native English users occurring in the refusal element of speech act set. The responses from the respondents were calculated and their frequencies were taken in order to make a comparison between American native speakers and the Iranian non native English users.
Native and Non-native English users' refusals were analyzed for the presence of the speech act components. The frequency of use (by both native and non-native) of the individual components of speech act set can be found in Table 4.1. Different refusal strategies were classified from the lowest level to the highest level of refusing in order to figure out whether there is a difference between native speakers and non native English users' refusal speech act.

Table 4.1: Frequency of the use of refusal strategies by American native speakers and the Iranian non native English users

|  | Refusal Stra |  |  | ative <br> sers |  | native ers |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | N | \% | N | \% |
|  | Performative |  | 1 | 3.34\% | 1 | 3.34\% |
|  |  | Flat No | 2 | 6.67\% | 0 | 0\% |
| Direct | Non Performative | Negating a proposition | 6 | 20\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Statement of R |  | 4 | 13.34\% | 6 | 20\% |
|  | Wish |  | 1 | 3.34\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Excuse, reason | anation | 1 | 3.34\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Statement of al |  | 2 | 6.67\% | 3 | 10\% |
| Indirect | Set condition f | ure or past acceptance | 0 | 0\% | 0 | 0\% |
|  | Promise of futu | ceptance | 2 | 6.67\% | 1 | 3.34\% |
|  | Statement of pr | le | 1 | 3.34\% | 1 | 3.34\% |
|  | Statements of p | ophy | 1 | 3.34\% | 0 | 0\% |
|  | Criticize the re | er | 1 | 3.34\% | 3 | 10\% |
|  | Acceptance fun | ing as a refusal | 1 | 3.34\% | 1 | 3.34\% |
|  | Avoidance: |  | 3 | 10\% | 1 | 3.34\% |
|  | Statement of p | e opinion | 1 | 3.34\% | 0 | 0\% |
|  | Statement of em | y | 2 | 6.67\% | 5 | 16.67 |
| Adjunct | Pause fillers |  | 0 | 0\% | 0 | 0\% |
|  | Gratitude/app | tion | 1 | 3.34\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Total |  | 30 | 100\% | 30 | 100\% |

The native and non native users' differences in use of refusal strategies are presented below:

## Native users:

As can be seen in table 4.1, native speakers used a wide range of strategies. According to table 4.1, the most common strategies employed by native speakers were negating a proposition (20\%) and Statement of Regret (13.34\%).
-I don't know which University you should go.

- No, I don't have that.
- I don't like that.
- I can't.
- Sorry, I deeply regret having hurt you,
- I am so sorry. I know I hurt your feelings and I feel terrible about it.
- I'm sorry. You have every right to be angry with me.

Avoidance was the third most frequently used refusal strategy by American users. Four ANSs out of $30(10 \%)$ used Avoidance strategy to refuse interlocutors' request.

- I forgot that I have a doctor's appointment this afternoon.
- Let's go and grab a sandwich for dinner. I'm hungry.
- My colleague just called. Sorry. I gotta go. Something's going on at work.
- I wanna go shopping this afternoon.

Native users also tended to use promise of future acceptance strategy more than the non native users (about 6.67\%).

- I am not able to do it right now but I'll do it for you.
- I'll do my best, I'll try it.


## Non native users:

Based on table 4.1, non native speakers used a fewer number of strategies. Table 4.1, shows that the most common strategies employed by non native speakers are statement of regret ( $20 \%$ ) and statement of empathy ( $16.67 \%$ ).

- I shouldn't have said those words to you.
- I am very sorry.
-I understand your situation.
- That's very bad. I hope you could have it.

Criticizing the requester appeared more in the Iranian non native speakers' refusal and they tended more to expresses a refusal by criticizing their interlocutor. About (10 \%) of the Iranian users used this strategy.
-It is the stupidest idea I have ever heard.
-You are really crazy.

- You are always absent.
-You are really very clumsy.

In a similar vein, the non native speakers were more likely to use statement of alternative (about $10 \%$ ).

\author{

- Let's play with Sony PlayStation instead <br> - I can't help you but I have an idea <br> -This is not the proper time for this, let's talk about another thing <br> - ok then, let's talk about another topic <br> - If you had asked me a couple of days ago I would had helped you
}

The responses of native respondents and non native respondents have been compared separately for each strategy of complaints in graph 4.1. This visual representation of the data is both an effective and an efficient way of presenting the findings, as well as for comparing and contrasting the participants. As the graph below shows, there is the comparison of strategies used in refusal.


Graph4.1. the Comparison of Refusal Strategies between Native and Non native Users
From Table 4.1 and Graph 4.1, it can be said that statement of principle and Acceptance functioning as a refusal were employed by roughly the same number of both native speakers and non native speakers. Graph 4.1 also shows that the use of "flat no" ,"negating a proposition " statement of regret","criticizing the requester" , "avoidance" and " statement of empathy" are significantly different between native and non native respondents.

In conclusion, native speakers and non native speakers respondents are not balanced in using refusal strategies and unlike non native users, native speakers tend to be more direct in their refusal.

### 4.3. Analysis of the data concerning the second question

As mentioned earlier, another purpose of the present study was to investigate the use of refusal speech act by men and women. Different refusal strategies were classified from the lowest level to the highest level of refusing in order to figure out whether there is a difference between male and female refusal speech act.

The data were collected on popular social networks such as Face book, Tweeter, etc to obtain refusal responses. The responses were calculated and their frequencies were taken in order to make a comparison between male and female. The distribution of the strategies is presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.2: Frequency of the use of refusal strategies by males and females

|  | Strategies |  | Males |  | males |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | N | \% | N | \% |
|  | Performative | 2 | 6.67\% | 0 | 0\% |
| Direct | Flat No | 2 | 6.67\% | 0 | 0\% |
|  | Negating a proposition | 5 | 16.67\% | 3 | 10\% |
|  | Statement of Regret | 4 | 13.34\% | 6 | 20\% |
|  | Wish | 1 | 3.34\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Excuse, reason, explanation | 1 | 3.34\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Statement of alternative | 2 | 6.67\% | 3 | \% |
| Indirect | Set condition for future or past acceptance | 0 | 0\% | 0 | 0\% |
|  | Promise of future acceptance | 1 | 3.34\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Statement of principle | 0 | 0\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Statements of philosophy | 1 | 3.34\% | 0 | 0\% |
|  | Criticize the requester | 2 | 6.67\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Acceptance functioning as a refusal | 0 | 0\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Avoidance | 3 | 10\% | 1 | 3.34\% |
|  | Statement of positive opinion | 0 | 0\% | 1 | 3.34\% |
|  | Statement of empathy | 5 | 16.67\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
| Adjunct | Pause fillers | 0 | 0\% | 0 | 0\% |
| to | Gratitude/appreciation | 1 | 3.34\% | 2 | 6.67\% |
|  | Total | 30 | 100\% | 30 | 100\% |

The male and female differences in use of refusal strategies are presented below:

## Males:

Gender differences appeared significant in some categories of responses, one of which was response in the form of directness in that male users were more direct in stating their refusals than women users and they tended to mention their refusal more explicitly. Actually, male respondents tended to be much more explicit in refusing than female. Explicitness is one linguistic feature of men's speech. Direct strategies were used by $30 \%$ of males whereas only $10 \%$ of females used these strategies.

- No
- No way
- Not at all

According to table 4.2, the most frequently used strategies by male participants were negating a proposition ( $16.67 \%$ ) and Statement of empathy ( $16.67 \%$ ).

- That is impossible
- Not now
- I don't think so
- I realize that you are in trouble

Another strategy that was frequently used by male users was Statement of Regret. As table 4.3 shows, $(13.34 \%)$ of men tended to use the strategy. For example,

## - I deeply regret not being able to help you

As the results show, male respondents tended to use Statement of Regret (13.34), wish (3.4), Excuse, reason, explanation(3.4), Promise of future acceptance(3.34) and Pause fillers(3.34) less often than females.

In addition, table 4.2 reveals that the Criticize the requester strategy was used by almost the same number of both males (6.67) and females (6.67).

## Females:

According to table 4.2, only $10 \%$ of women used direct refusal strategies. Moreover, the most frequent refusal strategy used by Female was Statement of Regret. About $20 \%$ of women used this strategy .For example:

- I'm so sorry. I'm not going to be there tonight. Sorry

As the table 4.2 indicates, $6.67 \%$ of women used statement of philosophy while no male users used such strategy. In other words, it can be concluded that there isn't a very significant difference between males and females in using this strategy.

- I'll never try restaurant's food.
- I don't eat fast food. I want to keep in shape
- I won't talk with strangers.
- I don't drive with others car.
- The rule in our family is that children are not allowed to drink alcohol.
- I never become partner with friends.
- I never drink right after dinner. I don't do it at all.

Another strategy used by women is that wasn't used by men was Acceptance functioning as refusal. About $6.67 \%$ of women used strategy in speech. For example,

- I m not sure whether I can do it for you.
- O.K., maybe another time.
- I'm not interested in that stuff.


## - No difference

Moreover, Female users also tended to use statement of positive opinion while men didn't . According to the table about $3.34 \%$ of women used this strategy.

- It is the best idea I have ever heard.
- Sounds great.

The responses of female and male users have been compared separately for each refusal strategies in graph 4.2. As the graph below shows, there is the comparison of strategies used in refusals.


Graph4.2. the Comparison of Refusal Strategies between Male and Female Users
From Table 4.2 and Graph 4.2, it can be said that criticizing the requester strategy was employed by the same number of both male and female users. Graph 4.2 also shows that the use of " per formative","flat no", "negating a proposition " statement of regret", "avoidance" and " statement of empathy" are significantly different between male and female users. To sum up, male and female subjects are not balanced in using refusal strategies.

Moreover, Chi-Square test results have been presented below.
Chi-Square Tests

|  |  |  | Asymp. Sig. (2- <br> sided) | Exact Sig. (2- <br> sided) | Exact Sig. (1- <br> sided) |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | :---: |
| Pearson Chi-Square | $2.000^{\text {a }}$ | 1 | df | .157 |  |
| Continuity | .000 | 1 | 1.000 |  |  |
| Correction $^{\mathrm{b}}$ |  |  |  |  |  |


| Likelihood Ratio | 2.773 | 1 | .096 | 1.000 | .500 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Fisher's Exact Test <br> N of Valid Cases | 2 |  |  |  |  |

a. 4 cells ( $100.0 \%$ ) have expected count less than 5 . The minimum expected count is .50 .
b. Computed only for a $2 \times 2$ table

According to the Chi-Square value $=2.00$ and $\mathrm{df}=1$, it can be concluded that observed difference between the sets is not arisen by chance.

## 4. Discussion

Regarding the research questions of the study, the collected data were presented in result section of this study. Here those results are discussed in detail. Finally, the research questions are answered on the basis of both groups' performance on using refusal strategies. Actually, in this study an attempt was made to further our understanding of the role of pragmatic competence in increasing Iranian EFL learners knowledge of appropriate use of speech acts in the English language hoping that the findings can bring about a positive change in the English learning and teaching programs at Iranian schools. The findings give emphasis to the potential importance of pragmatic knowledge which in line with a number of other studies as well (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Rose, 1999; Kramsch, 1993).

The results showed that in comparison to Americans, Iranian users were more conservative in their choice of refusals and they used indirect refusal strategies more than indirect ones. Actually, American participants were more direct than Iranians given that in most cases the strategies chosen by Americans were more face threatening than the ones chosen by Iranian and they tended to be more explicit in indicating what they wanted. In fact, nonnative participants who used direct strategies for making complaints were significantly fewer than their American counterparts This is in harmony with Sahragard \& Javanmardi (2011) study that since in the Iranian culture, indirect speech act commonly meant politeness, Iranian EFL learners typically employ indirect strategies to refuse their interlocutors so that they would not hurt their face.

As said by Brown\& Levinson (1987), speakers use indirect refusals strategies to lessen the illocutionary force of their refusals with the intention of minimizing the offense to the interlocutor's positive face. Indeed, the results are also consistent with other studies that eastern cultures including Iran have a collectivistic culture that considers the concept of face as a key issue. Consequently, in these cultures people have a preference to select more indirect strategies in comparison with English natives. On the contrary, western cultures have individualistic cultures that prefer a direct communication style (Shang-chao, 2008, Chang, 2008).

This finding is also supported by a number of other studies that Iranian culture has the hierarchal structure in which social hierarchy is assumed as a natural construction and social order should be maintained among the interlocutors, while in American society speakers share the equal social level and it is believed that they should have equal rights, but in Iranian culture power is a key factor which decides the ways of interactions among people (Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2010).

As a matter of fact, the use of direct strategies to refuse a request is regarded as disrespectful in Iran and hierarchies based on age, gender and experience are central in Iranian society (Begley, 2000).On the contrary, in the American society most people believe in equality and view themselves as members of a democratic middle class (Stewart \& Bennett, 1991).

In addition, adjuncts to refusal strategies were also used more frequently by Iranian users than Americans.This is in agreement with the above mentioned studies that as cultural values are deeply rooted in learners' identities and because Iranian culture is collective one ,Iranians aim at saving interlocutor's face through reducing the illocutionary force of refusal. The most frequently used adjunct to refusal strategies by Iranian users were Statement of empathy and Gratitude/appreciation.

Moreover, unlike the study of Randall et al. (2000) which found that the refusal strategies of direct performative and topic switch were totally avoided by the Americans the present study found that American participants made use of these strategies and they were present in their refusal speech act.
Another difference between the native and nonnative users was in the frequency of usage of refusal strategies: the most frequent strategy employed by native users were negating a proposition ( $20 \%$ ) and Statement of Regret ( $13.34 \%$ ), Avoidance ( $10 \%$ ) followed by Statement of alternative $(6.67 \%$ ), Promise of future acceptance( $6.67 \%$ ) and Statement of empathy( $6.67 \%$ ) whereas the most frequently used strategies by Iranian users were Statement of Regret (20\%), Statement of empathy $(16.67 \%)$ and Criticize the requester $(10 \%)$ followed by Negating a proposition(6/67\%),wish (6/67), Excuse, reason, explanation(6/67) and Gratitude/appreciation(6/67\%).

The findings of the present study are also in contrary to Pishghadam (2012) research that performetives which are regarded as a direct refusal strategy are preferred by Iranian EFL learners' more than native speakers of English. Indeed the current study found that native users used this strategy more frequently than non natives.

Moreover, native users used more types of refusal strategies and the only strategies that they didn't use were pause filers and set condition for future or past acceptance while there were five refusal strategies which weren't used by the non native users. These were flat no, statements of philosophy and statement of positive opinion, set condition for future or past acceptance and pause fillers. This is compatible with Beebe et al.(1990) who stated that refusals are very complex constructions and their form and content have a tendency to differ depending on the variety of speech act that elicits them (request, offer, etc.) and for applying them appropriately a good knowledge of pragmatic is essential. Thus, acquiring those needs high level of language proficiency and pragmatic knowledge.

Furthermore, it was found that pragmatic transfer from the L1 played a significant role in Iranian users' choice of refusals strategies. In fact, although the findings showed that most refusal strategies were shared by two groups, in the choice and content of refusal strategies there were instances of pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 since non native users didn't have the proper pragmatic knowledge. For the most part, Iranian users employed the fixed patterns or expressions including those commonly taught in EFL courses. As a result, in general the findings of the current study support the findings of the researches that reported negative transfer among their Iranian EFL learners and (Jalilifar et al. (2011) \&Yarmohamadi (2003), Ahar\& Eslami-Rasekh (2011), Eslami-Rasekh, 1993).The findings are also in agreement with Allami and Naeimi (2010) who reported a cross-cultural variation between Iranian non-natives and English natives.

In general, the results are in agreement with Felix-Brasdefer's (2002) study that English learners were different from native speakers regarding the frequency, content and perception of refusal strategies. Besides, the current study found that indirect refusal strategy were more frequently used by both groups of participants. The results are also compatible with that of other researches that indirect refusal strategies are used more frequently than the direct ones (Al-Issa, 1998; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal \& El Bakary, 2002; Stevens, 1993).

Another factor investigated in the present study was how males and females were different in using different types of refusal strategies. The differences between men and women are explained by Bonvillan (2007) who mentioned that in general females use more indirect speech act than males. According to Connell (2002), being a man or woman is not a fixed state, and men and women might have different behaviors in dealing with different situations. The reason is that men and women are socialized differently (Eckert, 1998). Such difference can also be explained by different conversational strategies including the speech act of refusal (Lakoff Tolmach, 2004)

The first two strategies performative and non performative can be categorized as direct strategies as they directly reveal the speakers, annoyance and can cause tension with the addressee .The remaining one including Statement of Regret, Wish, Excuse, reason, explanation, Statement of alternative, Set condition for future or past acceptance, Promise of future

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acceptance, Statement of principle, Statements of philosophy, Criticize the requester, Acceptance functioning as a refusal, Avoidance and Adjunct to refusal are indirect refusal strategies since they implicitly express the speaker's refusal.

The current study indicated that the males were more severe and direct in refusing than female speakers. It showed that males had a tendency to concentrate on conveying their refusal directly without much caring for mitigation. Actually, men used more direct ways of refusing than women. It is in accordance with the findings of Brown (1998) that women pay more attention to the face needs of their listeners; as a result, they use speech that is more indirect than that of men. Therefore, the results of the study confirms the findings of Eckert (1998) who asserted that men are more aggressive and competitive and women are more peaceable and cooperative. The results also lend support to the findings that the female language is less forceful and indirect, whereas that of men is assertive and direct (Lakoff, 1973, 1975, as cited in Crosby \& Nyquist, 1997; Crawford, Chaffin, \& Glenn, 1983).

An investigation in to the differences in the use of refusal formulas among men and women revealed that there were important differences in the types of refusals used by these two groups. This finding is in contrary with Rees-Miller (2000) who stated that gender doesn't have an impact on the use of different speech acts.

Women participants tended to use Excuse, reason, explanation strategy more frequently than men. One reason may be the fact that this kind of strategy can mitigate the refusal and hence prevent from hurting interlocular,s face. This is in agreement with Lakoff $(1973,1975)$ that unlike men language ,women language features are more elaborate, polite, and sentimental.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study aimed to compare the use of speech act of refusal by Iranian EFL users and native users in social network. Regarding the refusal strategies, it was found that the native users tended to be more direct than the Iranians. In fact, the present study revealed that both native and nonnative users were not balanced in using refusal speech act strategies and each group showed certain preferences which support Wierzbicka's $(1985,1991)$ position that speech acts are culture-specific communicative routines rather than language-independent natural types.

In addition, gender was found to have a great impact in this respect. The higher level of using direct strategies by male users rather than females could be attributed to the fact that men are more assertive and direct and their language is more forceful and direct than women (Crawford, Chaffin, \& Glenn, 1983).

Furthermore, the results are particularly important in the Iranian context since the proper emphasis on improving learners pragmatic knowledge is not currently part of EFL teaching. Equipping EFL learners with pragmatic knowledge is not only crucial for avoiding communication errors, but also for maintaining a sound interaction between them and native speakers of English .Indeed, the English language classrooms in Iran which either lack or have inadequate pragmatic knowledge instruction is far from being conducive to fostering pragmatic competence.

In the final run, it is suggested that EFL teachers in Iran focus on improving pragmatic knowledge. In fact, in order to enhance language proficiency in general and knowledge of speech acts of Iranian students in particular the teaching of pragmatic knowledge should be an indispensable part of the English language teaching (ELT) program in Iran.

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# Evaluating Prospect 2, the Newly Developed English Book in Iran: Cognitive Processes in Focus 

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#### Abstract

THE AIM OF THIS STUDY WAS TO EVALUATE ENGLISH FOR SCHOOLS, PROSPECT 2, THE NEWLY DEVELOPED (2014) ENGLISH BOOK IN IRAN AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL FOR THE EIGHTH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. THE EVALUATION TOOK PLACE BASED ON THE SIX LEVELS OF THINKING SKILLS: REMEMBERING, UNDERSTANDING, APPLYING, ANALYZING, EVALUATING, AND CREATING. THIS STUDY ALSO, WAS INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT WHICH LEVELS OF COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN BLOOM`S REVISED TAXONOMY ARE PREDOMINANT IN THIS COURSEBOOK. TO THIS END, A CODING SCHEME WHICH WAS BASED ON BLOOM'S REVISED TAXONOMY WAS USED IN THIS STUDY TO CODIFY THE CONTENT OF PROSPECT 2 AND ITS WORKBOOK. AFTER COLLECTING THE DATA, EVALUATION WAS PERFORMED TO LABEL THE CONTENT IN SIX LEVELS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES. THEN, THE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF OCCURRENCE OF SIX LEVELS WERE COMPUTED FOR EACH AND ALSO THE WHOLE LEVELS. THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT THE MAIN FOCUS OF PROSPECT 2 WAS ON LOWER ORDER THINKING SKILLS WHEREAS IN COMPARISON HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS WERE TOTALLY ABSENT IN THIS COURSE BOOK. THE OTHER RESULT OF THIS STUDY WAS THAT APPLYING, UNDERSTANDING, AND REMEMBERING HAD THE HIGHEST FREQUENCY RESPECTIVELY. AND ALSO, THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT OCCURRENCE OF ALL THESE LEARNING OBJECTIVES WERE RELATED TO FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE LEVEL WHICH IS THE LOWEST LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE DIMENSION AND THERE WERE NO EXERCISE AT CONCEPTUAL, PROCEDURAL, AND META-COGNITIVE KNOWLEDGE DIMENSION. THE STUDY CONCLUDED WITH SOME IMPLICATIONS WHICH WOULD BENEFIT STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND MAY BE USEFUL FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGNING EFL MATERIALS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING.


## Introduction

Allwright(1990) emphasizes that materials control learning and teaching. O'Neill(1990) emphasizes that they help learning and teaching. It is true that in many cases teachers and students rely heavily on textbooks, and textbooks determine the components and methods of learning, that is, they control the content, methods, and procedures of learning. Students learn what is presented in the textbook, and the way the textbook presents material is the way students learn it. The educational philosophy of the textbook will influence the class and the learning
process. Therefore, in many cases, materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom.

Cunningsworth (1995) highlights the difficulty of choosing appropriate language teaching textbooks and materials. He states that since there are a great variety of published materials for English language teaching available on the market, it becomes a challenging task to make the right choice of the textbooks. In addition, learners are becoming worldly-wise due to the impact of high technology. Therefore, they expect better textbooks that make learning easier and enjoyable and that appeal to their interests and needs all the way around.

In this context, in order to select an effective and appropriate textbook, materials evaluation becomes a vital process in relation to certain guidelines and main criteria. It is clear that "course book evaluation is fundamentally a subjective activity, and no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick"(Sheldon,1998, p. 245)

Materials Evaluation refers to the process through which the value of a set of learning materials is measured by making judgments about the effect of materials on learners and also Evaluation of Materials involves the analysis of materials.

There are various types of materials evaluation. Based on 'when' evaluation has to be carried out there are three types of evaluation: Pre-use Evaluation: Pre-use evaluation, which is often carried out for selecting appropriate textbooks, will help teachers to find out the potential value of the materials in the textbooks. Its limitation is that it is often impressionistic.

Whilst-use Evaluation: Whilst-use evaluation, in which the value of materials are measured while using them or while observing them being used, is more objective and reliable than pre-use evaluation, though it has its own limitations. It is purely based on observation and so it measures solely what is observable. Post-use Evaluation: According to Tomlinson (2009), post-use evaluation measures the actual effects of the materials on the users. It provides data with which reliable decisions regarding the use, adaptation or replacement of the materials can be made. So it is felt that post-use evaluation should be administered by the teachers to find out whether the textbooks they use meet the learner and learning needs, and to propose suggestions for additions and deletions to enhance the relevance and utility of the textbooks for the targeted group of learners; that is, post-use evaluation will help the teachers to use the English textbooks selectively and will suggest to them the kind of supplementary materials that should be used in an English class.

Kheirabadi and Alavi Moghaddam (2013) summarize the situation of English textbooks in Iran after the Islamic revolution and conclude: " The Graded English series stayed in circulation of formal education system up until the Islamic revolution of 1979, when it was completely removed from the schools and replaced by other series, the most well-known one is "Right path to English" which is still serving the education system and is planned to be replaced by the newly designed "English for School" series in the academic year commencing October 2013.

So the course book using in Iran educational system should be evaluated which is an introduction stage to learning a foreign language to improve the quality of the content of course books based on higher levels of thinking.

## Objectives and research questions of the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate Prospect 2 course book the newly developed English book in Iran, which was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Training of Iran as an
instructional material for the eighth grade students of junior high schools in terms of learning objectives. The evaluation took place based on the six levels of learning objectives in Blooms Revised Taxonomy. The current study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

### 1.4. Research Questions

1 - How are the Levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy represented in prospect 2?
2 - Which levels of cognitive processes in BRT are predominant in prospect 2?

## Review of Literature

There are some evaluating L2 textbooks through BRT or BT with the aim of helping L2 teachers realize their curriculum objectives better. Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) investigated the types of learning objectives represented in Iran senior high school and pre-university English textbooks using Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives. Results of the study indicated that in all grades lower-order cognitive skills were more prevalent than higher-order ones. Furthermore, the difference between the senior high school and the pre-university textbooks in terms of the levels of the taxonomy were significant insofar as the pre-university textbook used some degrees of higher-order learning objectives.

Razmjoo and Kazempourfard(2012)also, intended to evaluate Interchange series in terms of learning objectives in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (2001) to see which levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy were more emphasized in these course books. The results of the study revealed that Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), the three low levels in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, were the most prevalent learning levels in these books. Moreover, a significant difference was also found among the course books in their inclusion of different levels of learning objectives. The other result of this study was the total absence of meta- cognitive knowledge. All in all, it was found that Interchange series cannot make learners critical thinkers.

Roohani,Taheri and Poorzanganeh(2014) evaluated 2 ELT textbooks (Four Corners, Book 2 and Four Corners Book 3 ) drawing on Bloom's revised taxonomy (BRT); it examined the extent to which these ELT textbooks could demonstrate the 6 cognitive categories of the BRT (i.e., remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating) in their activities. Results revealed the prevalence of the processes of remembering and understanding in the textbooks. Also, creating process constituted the lowest percentage of processes in both textbooks. Furthermore, the lower-order categories (i.e., remembering, understanding, and applying) were more frequently represented than the higher-order ones (i.e., analyzing, evaluating, and creating) The results indicate that the above textbooks, much against expectations, fail to engage learners so well in the activities requiring higher levels of cognitive ability, prerequisites of autonomous language learning.

Moreover, Askaripour (2014) evaluated the new version of Top Notch series (2009) in terms of learning objectives in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (2001) to see which levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy were more emphasized in these textbooks. The results of the study revealed that Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), the three low levels in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, were the most prevalent learning levels in these books. Moreover, a significant difference was also found among the textbooks in their inclusion of different levels of learning objectives. The other considerable finding of this study was the weak presence of meta-cognitive knowledge. All in all, it was found that Top Notch series cannot make learners critical thinkers.

Baktash and Talebinejad (2015) aimed at investigating the extent to which the contents and activities of the English for Schools, Prospect one are in line with the learning objectives designed in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. The study tried to find out how the six levels of thinking (remembering, understanding, analyzing, evaluating and creating) are maintained in this course

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book. This study also aimed at specifying which elements of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy is more prevalent in this course book. It should be noted that
Prospect one are included in the work book, this book was also selected as well as the main book which is known as the student book. The results of the study show that the very low learning objectives (Remembering, Understanding, and Applying) have been received more attention in this course book while little heed has been given to higher learning objectives (Analyzing, Evaluating , and Creating) at all.

According to this review of the related literature, there is limitary of research on the cognitive domains in textbook evaluation studies. The current study, therefore, is felt to be necessary as it concerned with the components of the cognitive domain of English course book currently in use in Iranian junior high schools. Moreover Prospect2 course book is the first edition series of this book (2014) in the new educational system of Iran.

## Methodology

The Corpus
The coursebook used for the evaluation purposes in this study is titled English for Schools "prospect 2". It is the new version of Iranian eighth grade of high school English course book. There are workbook, audio CDs accompanying the student's book and also teacher's guide, teacher's specific flash cards and CDs to training teachers. This course book is used in language learning classes. Prospect 2 course book is a fundamental course book in the EFL curriculum that is taught in eighth grade all over Iran from the beginning of Fall 2014.

This book, which is altogether 88 pages, consists of seven lessons with three Reviews and photo dictionary. Each one including in general some activities, exercises and tasks sections which are developed based on the four main language skills, that are, speaking, listening, reading, writing. Every lesson in prospect 2 Consists of the following sections:

1. Theme and function which contain a Conversation and three practices about that theme and function.
2. Spelling and Pronunciation which contain an activity and vocabulary.
3. Listening and Writing part that consist of some tasks.
4. Reading, Speaking and Writing section that are done in pair work or group work. 5. Role Play that is also done by pair work or group work.

## Model of the Study

The model of analysis of the current study is the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy which emerged out of Bloom's Original Taxonomy in 2001. This framework is chosen because evaluation is performed to label the content in six levels of learning objectives. The revision includes some changes which appear to be trivial, yet they are quite significant changes. According to Hanna (2007), there are some changes in terminology. For example, the six categories in the cognitive process have changed from noun to verb forms. It was due to the fact that the authors defined cognition as thinking and since thinking is an active process, they preferred verbs because they believed that verbs can describe the action involved in thinking in a better way. Among the other changes is renaming of some categories.
For instance, knowledge is renamed as remembering, because knowledge is said to be the product of thinking not one type of thinking. Comprehension and synthesis are also renamed as understanding and creating. Additionally, the authors rearranged two of the subcategories in the cognitive process since they wanted to arrange them in the order of increased difficulty. Consequently, they exchanged the order of synthesis which is create in the new taxonomy and evaluation which is evaluate in the new taxonomy because they supposed that creative thinking is more difficult than critical thinking. They accept it as true that you can be critical without
necessarily being creative, but creative production often necessitates critical thinking. All in all, in the new taxonomy creating is shown to be more complex than evaluating. Figure 2 shows the cognitive dimension of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy.

Figure 1.Bloom's revised taxonomy adopted from Churches


There is a significant change in the new taxonomy. The new taxonomy is now two-dimensional, identifying both the kind of knowledge to be learned (knowledge dimension) and the kind of learning expected from students (cognitive processes) to help teachers and administrators improve alignment and rigor in the classroom. The revision of Bloom's taxonomy implies that it is now appropriate to evaluate both learning outcomes and the cognitive process used by learners to complete a task. This taxonomy will certainly aid educators to improve instruction, to ensure that their lessons and assessments are aligned with one another and with the state standards, that their lessons are cognitively rich, and that instructional opportunities are not missed (Cited in Rex, 2008). Figure 2 shows the structure of Bloom's revised taxonomy:

Figure 2.The structure of Bloom's revised taxonomy (2001)

| The Knowledge <br> Dimension | Remember | Understand | Apply | Analyze | Evaluate | Create |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Factual |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conceptual |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Procedural |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Meta cognitive |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The Knowledge Dimension in BRT consists of four types of knowledge: factual, conceptual, procedural, and meta-cognitive. Factual knowledge comprises the discrete facts and basic elements that experts use when communicating about their discipline, understanding it, and organizing it systematically (cited in Pickard, 2007). Conceptual knowledge is said to be more complex than factual knowledge and includes three subtypes: 1) knowledge of classifications and categories, 2) knowledge of principles and generalizations, and 3) knowledge of theories, models, and structure. When students are able to explain the concepts in their own words and transfer information to new situations they have acquired conceptual knowledge.

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Procedural knowledge includes criteria which tell when to use various procedures and reflects knowledge of different processes (cited in Pickard, 2007).

The last dimension of knowledge is called meta- cognitive knowledge which is awareness of and knowledge about one's own thinking. Today making students more conscious of and responsible for their own knowledge and thought is highly emphasized, and this is a shift in the paradigm which is applicable across numerous models such as Piagetian, Vygotskian, and situated learning theories (Anderson \& Krathwohl, 2001; Marzano, Pickering \& Pollock, 2001).

## Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The purpose of this study was to evaluate English for Schools, Prospect 2 course book and also it`s workbook currently in use at high school all over Iran. In order to do so, the following steps were taken. The data for this evaluation which was all parts of eighth grade of high school English course book, Prospect 2 and its workbook were coded in terms of learning objectives by using a coding scheme which was developed by Razmjoo and Kazempourfard(2012) to codify, classify, and analyze the content of Interchange series based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. This coding scheme is shown in Table 3.1.
includes two dimensions: 1. cognitive dimension which consists of six levels from the simple recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels of evaluation and creation. The categories are labeled: A) Remember B)Understand C)Apply D)Analyze E)Evaluate F)Create.
2. Knowledge dimension which is comprised of four types of knowledge:

1) Factual knowledge 2) Conceptual knowledge 3) Procedural knowledge and
2) Meta-cognitive knowledge.

Table 3.1.Coding scheme based on BRT adopted from Razmjoo and Kazempourfard(2012)


The whole of content was codified, and then evaluation was done to label them in six levels of learning objectives based on BRT, so this research was qualitative and also quantitative because the frequencies and percentages of occurrence of different learning objectives were calculated, for each level and also all levels. (Razmjoo and Kazempourfard, 2012) In addition the reliability of the coding scheme was examined through inter-rater and intra-rater reliability. The content analysis was carried out by two raters to find out the frequency and percentages of the cognitive processes based on the cognitive domain in BRT. After an agreement which was made between their codifications of the six levels of the cognitive dimension in BRT, three lessons of the course book were chosen to be codified by the raters. Then, the agreement on codifications

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was calculated. (Roohani, 2014) It was $93 \%$ as an inter-rater reliability. Intra-rater reliability was also estimated in this research. For this purpose, three lessons of the course book (about $28 \%$ of course book) were considered. These three lessons were codified by the researcher in two different times. Ultimately, the consistency in codifications was calculated about $96 \%$ which was considered as the intra-rater reliability.

## Results

The frequencies and percentages of learning objectives of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in Prospect 2 course book are displayed in Table 4.2.These findings are the results were attained of the codification of the whole content of Prospect 2 course book and its workbook.

Table 4. 2. Learning objectives of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in Prospect 2 course book

| Learning Objectives | Codes | Frequency | Percentages |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Remember | A1 | 35 | $19.12 \%$ |
|  | A2 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
|  | A3 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
|  | A4 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
| Understand | B1 | 59 | $32.24 \%$ |
|  | B2 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
|  | B3 | $0 \%$ |  |
|  | B4 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
| Apply | C1 | 0 | $48.63 \%$ |
|  | C2 | 89 | $0 \%$ |
|  | C3 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
|  | C4 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
| Analyze | D2 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
|  | D4 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
| Evaluate | E2 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
|  | E4 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
| Create | F2 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
|  | F4 | 0 | $0 \%$ |
| Total |  | 0 | $100 \%$ |

As depicted in the table, the most predominant learning level in English for schools, Prospect 2, is "Apply Factual Knowledge" (C1) with the frequency of $48.63 \%$. The second most frequent code was related to B1 (Understand Factual Knowledge) with the frequency of $32.24 \%$, while the least prevalent learning level was A1 (Remember Factual Knowledge), with a percentage of 19.12\%. In addition, other learning levels like as: A2 (Remember Conceptual Knowledge), A3 (Remember Procedural Knowledge), A4 (Remember Meta cognitive Knowledge), B2 (Understand Conceptual Knowledge), B3 (Understand Procedural Knowledge),B4 (Understand Meta cognitive knowledge), C2 (Apply Conceptual Knowledge), C3 (Apply Procedural Knowledge), C4 (Apply Meta cognitive Knowledge), D2 (Analyze Conceptual Knowledge), D4 (Analyze Meta cognitive Knowledge), E2 (Evaluate Conceptual Knowledge), E4 (Evaluate Meta cognitive Knowledge), F2 (Create Conceptual Knowledge) and F4 (Create Meta cognitive Knowledge) are wholly absent in the coded data and consequently no percentages are devoted to them. Categorizing the six levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy into "Lower" order thinking skills (LOTS) which refers to (Remember, Understand, and Apply), and also "Higher" order thinking skills (HOTS) which
refers to (Analyze, Evaluate, and Create) help us to display the results of Table 4.2 in another way in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Lower and higher order cognitive skills in Prospect 2 course book

| Learning Objectives | Lower Order Thinking Skills <br> $($ LOTS $)$ | Higher Order Thinking Skills <br> $($ HOTS $)$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Frequency | 183 | 0 |
| Percentage | $(100 \%)$ | $(0 \%)$ |

As shown in Table 4.3, lower order thinking skills are the most frequent cognitive skills in English for Schools, Prospect 2, with 100 percent. It means that, the main focus of prospect 2 is on Remembering, Understanding, and Applying levels, whereas higher order thinking skills which refer to Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating were not considered at all in this book.

To compare the distribution of six levels of learning objectives in terms of BRT in Prospect 2 course book, a chi-square test was accomplished.

Table 4.4: Chi-square test for six levels of objectives in terms of BRT in Prospect 2 course book


As shown in Table 4.4, chi-square test at significant level of $(0.05)$ and the output of the above Table 4.4 represents that the differences between the frequencies of occurrence of different levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy do not have a specific pattern in English for Schools, Prospect 2 course book, because $P$ value is more than 0.05 ( $p=0.05<23.998$ ). It means that the distribution of the learning objectives of BRT is random and occurs by chance.

## Conclusion

The aim of this research study was to investigate and evaluate English for Schools, Prospect 2, to classify the content of the course book based on Bloom`s Revised Taxonomy in six levels of learning objectives. The study attempted to demonstrate how the six levels of thinking (Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating) were represented in this course book. And also, this study investigated which levels of cognitive processes in BRT are predominant in Prospect 2.

The obtained results showed that in English for Schools, Prospect2, C1 (Apply Factual Knowledge) is the most frequent code and the next most frequent code is refer to B1 (Understand Factual Knowledge) and also the third most frequent code is related to (Remember Factual Knowledge) in this course book.

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It was shown in some different studies that unfortunately in the educational system of Iran the major emphasis is on the Lower Order Thinking Skills rather than Higher Order Thinking Skills. In addition, the opportunity was not given students to use language and due to this fact they are not required to analyze and evaluate the content of the course books whereas the questions can be answered just by memorization. But because the high school course books and methods has been revising recently, perhaps in these changes also major emphasis in educational system of Iran moves from Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) to Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).

The results of codification demonstrated that the main focus of Prospect 2 is on Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) while Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) have no frequencies and HOTS are totally absent in this course book. In this course book, Applying, Understanding, and Remembering had the highest frequency respectively.

This evaluation would benefit not only students and teachers, which are always in the forefront of every educational improvement, but also textbook designers and publishers and, ultimately decision makers. And also, such an investigation of the English course book may be useful for curriculum development and design of EFL materials for the responsible departments within the Ministry of Education and Training.

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## Appendix

Table of the Revised Cognitive Domain

| Category | Examples, key words (verbs), and technologies for learning (activities) |
| :---: | :---: |
| Remembering: Recall or retrieve previous learned information. | Examples: Recite a policy. Quote prices from memory to a customer. Recite the safety rules. Key Words: defines, describes, identifies, knows, labels, lists, matches, names, outlines, recalls, recognizes, reproduces, selects, states Technologies: book marking, flash cards, rote learning based on repetition, reading |
| Understanding: <br> Comprehending the meaning, translation, interpolation, and interpretation of instructions and problems. State a problem in one's own words. | Examples: Rewrite the principles of test writing. Explain in one's own words the steps for performing a complex task. Translate an equation into a computer spreadsheet. <br> Key Words: comprehends, converts, defends, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, generalizes, gives an example, infers, interprets, paraphrases, predicts, rewrites, summarizes, translates <br> Technologies: create an analogy, participating in cooperative learning, taking notes, storytelling, Internet search |
| Applying: Use a concept in a new situation or unprompted use of an abstraction. Applies what was learned in the classroom into novel situations in the work place. | Examples: Use a manual to calculate an employee's vacation time. Apply laws of statistics to evaluate the reliability of a written test. <br> Key Words: applies, changes, computes, constructs, demonstrates, discovers, manipulates, modifies, operates, predicts, prepares, produces, relates, shows, solves, uses <br> Technologies: collaborative learning, create a process, blog, practice |
| Analyzing: Separates material or concepts into component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. Distinguishes between facts and inferences. | Examples: Troubleshoot a piece of equipment by using logical deduction. Recognize logical fallacies in reasoning. Gathers information from a department and selects the required tasks for training. <br> Key Words: analyzes, breaks down, compares, contrasts, diagrams, deconstructs, differentiates, discriminates, distinguishes, |


|  | identifies, illustrates, infers, outlines, relates, selects, separates <br> Technologies: Fishbowls, debating, questioning what happened, run a test |
| :---: | :---: |
| Evaluating: Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials. | Examples: Select the most effective solution. Hire the most qualified candidate. Explain and justify a new budget. <br> Key Words: appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, criticizes, critiques, defends, describes, discriminates, evaluates, explains, interprets, justifies, relates, summarizes, supports <br> Technologies: survey, blogging |
| Creating: Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure. | Examples: Write a company operations or process manual. Design a machine to perform a specific task. Integrates training from several sources to solve a problem. Revises and process to improve the outcome. <br> Key Words: categorizes, combines, compiles, composes, creates, devises, designs, explains, generates, modifies, organizes, plans, rearranges, reconstructs, relates, reorganizes, revises, rewrites, summarizes, tells, writes Technologies: Create a new model, write an essay, network with others |

Table of the Knowledge Dimension

| concrete knowledge |  |  | abstract knowledge |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| factual | conceptual | procedural | metacognitive |
| knowledge of terminology <br> knowledge of specific details and elements | knowledge of classifications and categories <br> knowledge of principles and generalizations <br> knowledge of theories, models, and structures | knowledge of subjectspecific skills and algorithms <br> knowledge of subjectspecific techniques and methods <br> knowledge of criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures | strategic knowledge <br> knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge <br> self-knowledge |

# THE EFFICACY OF SELF-REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT ON LANGUAGE LEARNERS' METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THIS RESEARCH STUDIED THE EFFICACY OF SELF-REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT ON LANGUAGE LEARNERS' METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS". THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH WAS TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER LEARNERS WERE ABLE TO RELIABLY REGULATE THEIR OWN READING COMPREHENSION OR NOT. SIXTY PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED BASED ON A SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING FROM THE 75 STUDENTS BY CHOCRAN'S SAMPLE SIZE FORMULA. THE STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPED BY FREDERICK KANFER (KANFER, 1970A, AND 1970B) AND SCHRAW, G. \& DENNISON, R.S. (1994) .THESE QUESTIONNAIRES CONSISTED OF 63 AND 52 ITEMS RESPECTIVELY. THE READING COMPREHENSION TEST WAS RUN TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELFREGULATION AND READING COMPREHENSION. PEARSON CORRELATION WAS 0.303 IN THIS STUDY. THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH REVEALED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING COMPREHENSION AND SELFREGULATION. THE FINDINGS ALSO REVEALED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND READING COMPREHENSION BUT THERE WAS NOT ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELFREGULATION AND METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS. THE STUDY COULD HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND TEXT BOOK WRITERS.


KEY WORDS: SELF-REGULATION, READING COMPREHENSION, METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS.

## Introduction

[^9]Good reading ability is the key to success in school and this is one reason why researchers are trying to find significant educational and psychological variables that can explain variations in reading ability and academic achievement. These variables can be strictly cognitive like word recognition (e.g., Guthrie, WigWeld, Metsala, \& Cox, 1999; Lyon, 1993), or they can be more socially cognitive. Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (reading comprehension). Like all language, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated. The reading process requires continuous practice, development, and refinement. In addition, reading requires creativity and critical analysis. Because reading is such a complex process, it cannot be controlled or restricted to one or two interpretations. There are no concrete laws in reading, but rather allows readers an escape to produce their own products introspectively. This promotes deep exploration of texts during interpretation.. Readers use a variety of reading strategies to assist with decoding (to translate symbols into sounds or visual representations of speech) and comprehension. Readers may use context clues to identify the meaning of unknown words. Readers integrate the words they have read into their existing framework of knowledge or schema (schemata theory). Self-Regulated Strategy Development Model (SRSD) is an implementation model for cognitive strategy instruction. According to Read (2005) "The goal of SRSD is to make the use of strategies habitual, flexible, and automatic". The terms metacognition, self-regulation, and selfregulated learning appear frequently in the educational literature and are sometimes used interchangeably. In order to explore the theoretical and empirical boundaries between these three constructs and the perceptions or misperceptions that their broad and often unqualified application may engender, an analysis of their use within contemporary research was undertaken. The current research addresses the topic of self-regulation as a way to bridge the gap between written texts and students' perception of the evaluation process to foster students' autonomy and improve his/her learning. Though most teachers would agree that teaching students to be more self-regulative in the classroom would be ideal, the practice does not come without challenge. Developing lessons that prepare students to engage in SRL practices and provide real support and opportunities for implementation is no small feat (Paris, S. G., \& Paris, A. H., 2001). Many will find that the major obstacle in helping students become self-regulative is the time required to teach students how to use specific strategies (Boekaerts \& Cascallar, 2006). Although teachers in K-12 settings often are pressed to accomplish many tasks in limited time spans, it is important to remember that SRL strategies can help students learn new information and effectively prepare for those very tasks. Fundamental changes at the school level may need to occur for teachers to be able to allocate the time and resources necessary for preparing students to be self-regulated learners. Most importantly, classroom curriculum and accompanying assessment systems must be organized in ways that support and value autonomous inquiry and strategic problem-solving.

## Review of the related literature

In a study of high school students, Labuhn et al. (2010) found that learners who were taught SRL skills through monitoring and imitation were more likely to elicit higher levels of academic self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) and perform higher on measures of academic achievement compared to students who did not receive SRL instruction. It seems as though SRL can make the difference between academic success and failure for many students (Harris, K. R., \& Graham, S., 1996). Zimmerman (2002) explains that self-regulated learning is not only a simple personal trait that learners either possess or lack, but it consists of the selective use of specific processes personally adapted to each learning task. He adds that self-regulated component skills are as follows: (a) setting specific proximal goals for oneself, (b) adopting powerful strategies for attaining the goals, (c) monitoring one's performance selectively for signs of progress, (d) restructuring one's physical and social context to make it compatible with one's goals, (e) managing one's time use efficiently, (f) self-evaluating one's methods, (g) attributing causation to

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results, and (h) adapting future methods. Baumeister and Vohs (2008) state that selfregulation refers to a person's ability to change his/her behavior. The quality and existence of these actions would alter in relation to some goals, ideals and norms no matter whether their stem would have public or internal anticipation. In general, human behavior flexibility and adaptability will increase during self-regulation process. This flexibility enables learners to regulate their performance to a broad range of situational or public requirements they encounter in their daily life experience.

## Methods of Research

This study investigated the efficacy of self-regulatory development on language learners' metacognitive awareness and its possible impact on the Reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners. This investigative research is undertaken by two questionnaires and one reading comprehension test served to complement the objectives of the present study. So this research method is applied by descriptive and correlation method. To do this at first about 30 learners participated in the tests from different levels. The instruction was given to make sure that learners understand the procedure. EFL learners Comprehension test administrated by the researcher. All students answered the reading test in one session spending 55 minutes for the test. In the second phase, Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) questionnaire was carried out spending 60 minutes. And then the Self-regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) was carried out by students. The classroom procedure was divided into three phases. The first phase was comprehension test, the second phase was Metacognitive Awareness Inventory test and the third phase was Self-Regulation Questionnaire. To find out the reliability of tests the Cronbach's Alpha was used, and for validity a table of specification was designed and two EFL Ph.D. instructors calculated the validity of questionnaires in the present study. The obtained chronbach's alpha for MAL and SRQ were 0.85 and 0.92 respectively. So the validity and reliability were confirmed. The students who took part in the study consisted of 60 ( 8 males and 52 females), 18-30 year-old EFL learners at Omid language institution in shahrekord. Selection of the participants for the study was based on a simple random sampling from the 75 students by Chocran's Sample size formula. So the sample size is 60 student. This study is quantitative. The data gathered through reading test was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows version 20.0. Descriptive statistical procedures and analysis of Pearson correlation coefficient, variance (ANOVA) were used to ascertain the extent to which metacognitive strategy instruction influenced the learners' reading comprehension.

## Research Questions and Hypothesis

Considering the purpose of this study and in an attempt to trigger more research in the field of L2 reading in Iran, the research question for this study has been formulated as follows:

1. Does SRSD instruction improve reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners?
2. To what extent can the application of SRSD enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill?
Based on the research questions mentioned above the following research hypotheses will be investigated in the current study:
3. There is no relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension.
4. The application of SRSD does not enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill.

## Results

## Research Questions

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1. Does SRSD instruction improve reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners?

The mean of SRSD was 2.96 and SD was 0.42 .So we compare these scales by One-Sample T test. Result Showed that mean of Self-Regulation Strategy Development score was more than 189(standardize mean) and the difference was significant. ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). We stated that SRSD instruction improve reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. In this regard, Self-regulated learning is a process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences. Self-regulation is essential to the learning process (Zimmerman, 2002). It can help students create better learning habits and strengthen their study skills (Wolters, 1999), apply learning strategies to enhance academic outcomes (Harris, and Graham, 1996), monitor their performance (Harris, 1986), and evaluate their academic progress.

Table 1: One-Sample Statistics

|  | Number | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of SRSD | 60 | 2.96 | .42 |

Table 2: One-Sample Test

$(\mathrm{t}=8.52 \& \mathrm{p}=0.001)$
2. To what extent can the application of SRSD enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill?
One-Sample Statistics Showed that mean of metacognitive awareness and reading skill was 37.18 that was upper than standardize mean. One-Sample Statistics Showed that mean of metacognitive awareness marks more than 30 (standard mean) and the difference was significant. ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). It is explained that self-regulated learners are able to set short- and long-term goals for their learning, plan ahead to accomplish their goals, self-motivate themselves, and focus their attention on their goals and progress. They also are able to employ multiple learning strategies and adjust those strategies as needed, self-monitor their progress, seek help from others as needed, and self-evaluate their learning goals and progress based upon their learning outcomes. Teachers at the primary and secondary levels can use the aforementioned strategies to promote self-regulation in their classrooms. However, teachers should understand that learners develop at various paces, and strategies that work best for one learner may not always work with the next. Research has found self-efficacy and the use of self-regulation strategies to have reflexive positive impacts on one another. Higher self-efficacy beliefs increase the use of self-regulation strategies (Pajares, 2000). The use of self-regulation strategies can lead to increases in self-efficacy beliefs and academic achievement (Schunk, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000). When students are motivated to learn, they are more likely to invest the necessary time and energy needed to learn and apply appropriate SRL skills, and when students are able to successfully employ self-regulation strategies, they are often more motivated to complete learning tasks (Zimmerman, 2000). In the present study we find this result.

Table 3: One-Sample Statistics

|  | Number | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of MAI | 60 | 37.18 | 8.16 |

Table 4: One-Sample Test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Test Value $=30$ |  |  |  |$)$

## Research Hypothesis

1. There is no relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension.
In this Study the Pearson Correlation test with $(\mathrm{r}=0.303 \& \mathrm{p}=0.019)$ shows that there is positive significant relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension. $p>0.05$ ). So we accepted the opposite Hypothesis. In this regard the research showed that selfregulated students are more engaged in their learning and voluntarily offer answers to questions and also perform higher on measures of academic achievement. It seems as though SRL can make the difference between academic success and failure for many students.
Pintrich (2000) defines self-regulation (or self-regulated learning) as "an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempted to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment" . Since 1985, more than 30 studies have been conducted using SRSD, primarily in the area of writing, with students from elementary through high school (Wong, Harris, Graham \& Butler, 2003). While SRSD encompasses teaching multiple skills and strategies, it also incorporates current beliefs regarding expertise in subject matter domains (Alexander, 1997).The results of this study are consistent with present study.

Table 5: Correlations

|  |  | Sum of COMPR | Sum of SRQ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of COMPR | Pearson <br> Correlation | 1 | $.303^{*}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .019 |
|  | N | Pearson |  |
|  | Correlation | 60 | 60 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | $.303^{*}$ | 1 |

2. The application of SRSD does not enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill.
The Pearson Correlation test with ( $\mathrm{r}=0.157 \& \mathrm{p}=0.231$ ) shows that there is no significant relationship between SRSD and metacognitive awareness in the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' but there is a significant relationship between SRSD and reading skill.(r= 0.303 $\& p=0.019$ ). Or ( $\mathrm{p}>0.05$ ). So we accepted the opposite Hypothesis. In this regard it is explained that the application of SRSD does not enhance metacognitive awareness in Iranian EFL Learners, but it can enhance reading skill. About relationship between SRSD and metacognitive awareness, Baumeister and Vohs (2008) state that self-regulation refers to a person's ability to change his/her

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behavior. The quality and existence of these actions would alter in relation to some goals, ideals and norms no matter whether their stem would have public or internal anticipation. In general, human behavior flexibility and adaptability will be increased during self-regulation process. This flexibility enables learners to regulate their performance to a broad range of situational or public requirements they encounter in their daily life experience. But in this study we have not obtained this result perhaps the sample size is one reason.
About the relationship between SRSD and reading skill Zimmerman (2002) explains that selfregulated learning is not only a simple personal trait that learners either possess or lack, but it consists of the selective use of specific processes personally adapted to each learning task. He defines self-regulated learning strategies as "actions and processes directed at acquisition of information or skills that involve agency, purpose, and instrumentality perceptions by learners. Our result is in agreement with Zimmerman.

Table 6: Correlations

|  |  | Sum of MAI | Sum of COMPR | Sum of SRSD |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Sum of MAI | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.371^{* *}$ | .157 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .004 | .231 |
|  | N | 60 | 60 | 60 |
| Sum of COMPR | Pearson Correlation | $.371^{* *}$ | 1 | $.303^{*}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .004 | .019 |  |
|  | N | 60 | $.303^{*}$ | 60 |
|  | Pearson Correlation | .157 | .019 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .231 | 60 | 60 |

## Other findings of this research

1-There is no relationship between metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension.
The Correlation shows that there is a positive significant relationship between metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension. ( $r=0.37 \& p=0.004$ ). Or ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). In this regard studies demonstrate that successful comprehension does not occur automatically. Rather, it depends on directed cognitive effort, referred to as metacognitive processing, which consists of knowledge about regulation of cognitive processing. During reading, metacognitive processing is expressed through strategies, which are "procedural, purposeful, effortful, willful, essential, and facilitative in nature" (Alexander \& Jetton 2000: 295). Also Pressley (Pressley, M., \& Afflerbach, P.1995) explained that through metacognitive strategies, a reader allocates significant attention to controlling, monitoring, and evaluating the reading process.

Table 7: Correlations

|  | Correlations |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Pearson <br> Sum of MAI MAI |  |  |  | Sorrelation | 1 | $.371^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .004 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sum of <br> COMPR | Pearson <br> Correlation | 60 | 60 |  |  |  |  |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | $.371^{* *}$ | 1 |  |  |  |  |

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| N | 60 | 60 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |

2- There is a significant difference between SRSD, metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension with participants' genders.
Independent Samples Test shows that there is a significant difference between improvement of reading comprehension with participant's genders ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ), but no difference between SRSD and metacognitive awareness with participant's genders ( $p>0 / 05$ ).

Table 8: Group Statistics

|  | Gender | Number | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of SRDS | Male | 8 | 36.00 | 9.19 |
|  | Female | 52 | 37.36 | 8.08 |
| Sum of MAI | Male | 8 | 193.87 | 24.05 |
|  | Female | 52 | 188.61 | 30.18 |
| Sum of COMPR | Male | 8 | 2.25 | 1.16 |
|  | Female | 52 | 1.50 | .75 |

Table 9: Independent Samples Test

|  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | t | t -test for Equality of Means |  |  |
| Sum of SRDS | -.437 | 58 | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|  |  | 58 | .664 | 1.36 |
| Sum of MAI | .469 | 58 | .641 | 5.36 |
|  |  |  | 58 | .018 |
| Sum of COMPR | 2.424 |  |  | .25 |
|  |  |  |  | .75 |

3- There is a significant difference between SRSD, metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading comprehension with participants' ages.
One-way ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference between metacognitive awareness with participant's ages ( $p>0 / 05$ ), but no difference between SRSD and improvement of reading comprehension with participant's ages ( $p>0 / 05$ ).

Table 10: ANOVA Test

|  |  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sum of SRDS | Between Groups | $471.346$ | 7 | 67.335 | 1.443 | . 241 |
|  | Within groups | 979.689 | 21 | 46.652 |  |  |
|  | Total | 1451.034 | 28 |  |  |  |
| Sum of MAI | Between Groups | 14422.735 | 7 | 2060.391 | 2.635 | . 040 |
|  | Within Groups | 16423.472 | 21 | 782.070 |  |  |
|  | Total | 30846.207 | 28 |  |  |  |
| Sum of COMPR | Between Groups | 5.479 | 7 | . 783 | 1.422 | . 249 |
|  | Within Groups | 11.556 | 21 | . 550 |  |  |
|  | Total | 17.034 | 28 |  |  |  |

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## Discussion

The present study made an attempt to investigate the relationship between self-regulation development on language learners' metacognitive awareness and its possible impact on the Reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners.
In this study sixty Iranian EFL language learners ( $13.3 \%$ male, and $86.7 \%$ Female) completed three instruments Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI), the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) and reading comprehension.
The participants ages were not equal .15\% Lower than 20, 68.3 \% between $20-25$ and16.7\% Higher than 25 years old average of their age were 23.7 years old.
Metacognitive Awareness Frequency in the participants scored in 3 level. Low level was not observed. Moderate was $45 \%$ and high level $55 \%$. The Self-Regulation score was ( $78.3 \%$ high, $18.3 \%$ moderate and $3.3 \%$ low).
The results of the research revealed that there was considerable relationship between reading comprehension and self-regulation. The findings also revealed that there was considerable relationship between metacognitive awareness and reading comprehension but there was not any relationship between self-regulation and metacognitive awareness. The study could have implications for English language teachers, learners and text book writers.
Many studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between how one regulates himself and his success in academic studies. The main concern of this research was to study if such a relationship could be detected among intermediate Iranian EFL learners' achievements. Concerning the first question, One-Sample T test was run. Tables 4.5 and 4.6 show the results. The findings show that SRSD instruction improves reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). This is consistent with findings of (Zimmerman, 2002), and (Wolters, 1999). Concerning the second question, one sample T test was run. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show the results. The findings show that application of SRSD can enhance the intermediate Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and reading skill. ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). It is consistent with findings of (Pajares, 2008), and (Zimmerman, 2000) Researches. With regard to first hypothesis, Pearson Correlation $(\mathrm{p}<0.05)$ Show that there is positive significant relationship between SRSD instruction and improvement of reading comprehension. So we accept the hypothesis. Table 4.9 shows this result. So this is consistent with (Pintrich, 2000), (Wong, Harris, Graham \& Butler, 2003) and (Alexander, 1997) results.
With regard to the second hypothesis the Pearson Correlation ( $\mathrm{p}>0.05$ ) Show that there is no significant relationship between SRSD and metacognitive awareness in the intermediate Iranian EFL Learners', but there is significant relationship between SRSD and reading skill ( $\mathrm{p}<0.05$ ). So we accept the hypothesis. Table 4.10 shows this result. This result confirms the Vohs (2008) and (Zimmerman, 2002) investigations. Also during this study we concluded that there is positive significant relationship between metacognitive awareness and improvement of reading ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ). It is consistent with (Alexander \& Jetton 2000: 295), (Pressley, M., \& Afflerbach, P.1995) researches.
In this study independent Samples test Show there is significant difference between improvement of reading comprehension with participants genders ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ), but no significant difference between SRSD \& metacognitive awareness with participants genders ( $\mathrm{p}>0 / 05$ ). Oneway ANOVA Shows that there is significant difference between metacognitive awareness with participant's ages ( $\mathrm{p}<0 / 05$ ), but no significant different between SRSD \&improvement of reading comprehension with participant's ages ( $\mathrm{p}>0 / 05$ ).

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# FROM TEACHER ISOLATION TO TEACHER COLLABORATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY REVIEWED STUDIES RELATED TO TEACHER ISOLATION OR COLLABORATION AND THE EFFECT OF TEACHER'S COLLABORATION IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. THE GOAL OF THIS STUDY WAS TO IDENTIFY TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES IN HELPING SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE A MUTUAL COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT ENSURE TEACHERS CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT. PREVIOUS STUDIES WHICH SUPPORTED THE GOALS OF THIS STUDY WERE COLLECTED AND THEN THEY WERE ANALYZED TO ESTABLISH A SOLID THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY AND THEN THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS WERE PRESENTED AS A SEPARATE RUBRIC TO SUBSTANTIATE THE POINT OF THE STUDY AND THEN THEY WERE DEEPLY EVALUATED TO DRAW IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE. SINCE CREATING CONDITIONS THAT ARE CONDUCIVE TO COLLABORATION LEADS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC SATISFACTION, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT SCHOOLS: (1) BE STRUCTURED IN WAYS THAT PROMOTE TEACHERS COLLABORATION; (2) HOLD SOME COACHING PROGRAMS IN A CONSTRUCTIVE RATHER THAN JUDGMENTAL ATMOSPHERE; (3) GATHER TEACHERS IN STUDY GROUPS TO REFLECT ON THEIR CURRENT BELIEFS AND PRACTICES.


KEYWORDS: ISOLATION, COLLABORATION, COLLEGIALITY, SOCIAL NETWORKS

## Introduction

EFL Teachers who are committed to the teaching profession and are interested in their professional development should be willing to cooperate with their colleagues. As such the Iranian EFL teachers in private institutes and schools need to learn how to cooperate. Typically, collaboration is neither taught nor modeled for teacher students in university course books or TTC classes being held by institutes before hiring new teachers, thus teachers may become isolated at work.

Teachers afraid of being compared with each other and consequently would not collaborate together or talk about each other teaching. To make the situation even worse teachers take their colleague feedback on their teaching as judgmental and threatening, as such no one would dare to comment on their colleagues' way of teaching, even the positive ones. This situation at work brakes teacher's social and professional networks in school and makes them isolated.

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Seeing this situation in schools and private institutes make us to write an article entitled Language Teachers Isolation and Cooperation investigating teacher's isolation at work and methods of collaboration. The purpose of this paper is to consider methods teachers can use as a guide in order to cooperate together.
Cooperation is important for us as teachers because we should constantly develop and learn new techniques of teaching, in other words we are not only teacher but also learner in the field of teaching and learning. Schools and private language institutes should prepare a place that can ensure teacher's constant development, and this could not be achieved through one-shot in-service program (Mclaughlin \& Yee, 1988; Brath, 1990). Teachers learning and development is not a simple process that could be carried out individually and apart from others in isolation.

As such the present study has tried to investigate on the topic of teacher isolation in the literature of teacher education to: 1) establish a theoretical framework in describing the isolation and collaboration methods for teachers in order to no longer teach in isolation; 2) present empirical findings to support thesis statements; and 3) finally present implications for practice.

## Theoretical perspectives

## Teacher Isolation

The theoretical perspectives presented here are classified as follows. First, teacher isolation will be defined. Then the causes of isolation will be explained, which will be followed up by negative effects of teachers isolation, and finally we will discuss different modes of collaboration among teachers.

As noted by Flinder (1988) in defining isolation there are two different orientations. The first one views isolation as the conditions in which teachers teach, that is, the characteristics of the teacher's workplace and the opportunities, or lack of opportunities, the teacher has for interacting with colleagues. The second orientation defines teacher isolation as a psychological state rather than as a condition of work. This orientation locates the workplace inside the individual as it is created and continually recreated through the filtering and processing of information (Flinder, 1988). Thus, isolation depends more on how teachers perceive and experience collegial interaction than it does on the absolute amount of interaction in which they are involved (Hedberg, 1981).

According to the cognitive approach (Peplau, Miceli \& Morasch, 1982) to isolation, loneliness at work and professional isolation are alike in meaning. Based on this approach, professional isolation is the unfriendly experience one feels when his network of social relations at work does not work properly in some significant way, either quantitatively or qualitatively.

Attribution theory (Peplau et al., 1982) explains isolation into internal and stable and external and unstable. According to this theory internal and stable explanations for professional isolation should have a more negative impact on teachers than external and unstable ones. Furthermore, accept as true that loneliness is as a result of unvarying features of the self or of the situation leads to lower expectancies for future social relations and to greater loneliness (Peplau et al., 1982; Weiner, 1986).

Lortie (1975) described three different types of isolation: Egg-crate isolation which is the physical separation of classrooms, is related to the school structure where teachers lack contact with each other. Teachers enter the classroom and simply shot the doors. Psychological isolation refers to the response of teachers to the mutual interactions with each other. Adaptive isolation refers to the overwhelming state of mind when struggling to meet new demands.

David Flinders (1988) seeks to critically examine the nature of teacher isolation. He states that the existence of professional isolation presents two paradoxes. First, classrooms

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are full of students, and there are few opportunities for teachers to discuss their work with their colleagues. The second paradox is that teachers may view their classrooms as both a barrier to interaction and a means of protection from outside interference.

Generally, teaching is characterized by taking place in isolation (Lortie, 1975) which imposes restrictions or limitations on teachers and protect them from being judged (Snow, 2005). Literature has pointed out a number of causes for isolation of teachers in schools. Many authors state that the school structure perpetuates professional isolation, restricting the possibilities for teachers to observe and interact with one another (Calabrese, 1986; Flinders, 1988; Gaikwood \& Brantley, 1992; Lortie, 1975). Others consider scheduling as a cause of professional isolation (Lieberman \& Miller, 1992; Lortie, 1975). Cookson (2005) reports that the "egg crate" structure and the compressed timetables of schools make professional collaboration difficult for teachers. This situation brings teachers to a state that they found themselves alone without being advised by any colleague.

The cognitive approach to loneliness applied to professional isolation leads to the identification of two distinct classes of causes of isolation: precipitating events and predisposing factors (Lau \& Perlman, 1982). Changes in a person's achieved social relations or changes in his anticipated social relations can lead to advanced professional isolation.

The emergence of conflicts is an example of a change that can precipitate the feeling of isolation in the workplace. Personal characteristics such as shyness and unwillingness to take social risk are consistently linked to the feeling of isolation (Peplau \& Perlman, 1982). These feelings can prompt the person to be professionally isolated.

Peplau et al. (1982) state that people usually try to seek explanations and list the possible reasons for their loneliness. They classified personal account of loneliness into three distinct elements:

- Isolated people can usually point out a causing event that led to the beginning of their loneliness.
- People explore the maintaining causes of their isolation which typically include characteristic of the self (e.g., being too shy) or of the situation (e.g., being in a place where it is hard to meet new people).
- Isolated people typically have some idea of the sort of changes in their social relations that would lessen their isolation.

The cognitive approach to loneliness says that the consequences of isolation can be weakened by cognitive processes. Weiner (1986) has classified causative attributions of isolation into three area: locus of causality that refers to the internal or external causes of isolation as are seen by the person. Stability concerns with the duration of the cause of isolation whether it is short-lived or live longer. Controllability refers to the persons control over his behavior.

There are other causes for teacher isolation. First of all, teachers work alone as adults with discrete student groups in separate classrooms. The very little time to engage in dialogue with colleagues about teaching practice could be the second cause. Within a school only one to two experts for each subject are hired (Trower \& Gallagher, 2008), follow-on in imperfect chances to discuss student learning and share problems related to work, achievements and puzzles. And lastly, interaction among faculty is often limited to cordial everyday talk instead of issues about student learning, which strengthen the professional isolation among teachers (Hadar \& Broder, 2010).

Although what has been said is a definition for isolation in literature, it is clear for every one that what one teacher noticed as isolation may be seen as individual autonomy by others. It means that, isolation within classrooms may be interpreted as protection from outsiders in the class by others.

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However, isolation has two negative consequences for both teachers and students. Whenever a teacher is complaining about a feeling of isolation, it is logical to assume a negative impact on his behavior and energy levels. Isolation is likely to result in burnout and feelings of extreme helplessness (Gaikwad \& Brantley, 1992) which consequently affects students' outcomes. As a result of professional isolation, teachers feel that no one cares about what they are going to do (Eisner, 1992); hence, they become frustrated at work and lose their energy. The feeling of burnout that is caused by being isolated will in turn result in disturbing the psychological, mental and physical health of the person (Neveu, 2007). Burnout may lead to negative attitudes associated with the person and thus causing the withdrawal from the job, declined job fulfillment, and quitting the job (Carlson \& Thomas, 2006).

Thus teacher isolation has much negative effect on teachers' professional life. Moreover, it negatively affects classroom atmosphere, learning and learners. What follows aims at reviewing the related literature to find methods and techniques on involving teachers in teaching as a collaborative effort rather than in individual or isolated activity. Collaboration not only leads to professional development, it moves teachers away from the state of being burnout towards satisfaction, which is far more important than academic achievement .

## Teacher Collaboration

In what follows, the researchers will first define teacher collaboration. Then they will explain the necessity of creating conditions that are conducive to collaboration. Finally, they will provide stakeholders with useful techniques that can be used to solve the problem of isolation and replace it with teacher collaboration.

Nowadays teachers are both subject and object of learning (Avalos, 2010). They need to cooperate with each other to develop themselves professionally. What is important here to note is that in collaboration no one is superior to the other, in other words, the outdated "master" role has been changed (Avalos, 2010); teachers can learn from each other reciprocally. Societies of teachers that have gathered together to teach will create a helpful learning atmosphere which will changes their practice. (Fuolger, 2005).

Providing teachers with opportunities to collaborate has a great impact on students learning. Literature has pointed out that in schools where teachers could collaborate on issues related to their teaching (e.g. curriculum, syllabus, teaching methods, etc.), students' achievements is higher. In other words, peers influence instructional practices which consequently influence students' learning (e.g. Goddard \& Goddard, 2007; Supovitz, Sirinides, May, 2010).

Efforts to encourage teachers to collaborate unsurprisingly will collide with this tradition of isolation. Those who are for this tradition argue that professional autonomy gives each teacher the freedom to work in or out of any cooperative progression. Demanding teachers to collaborate disturbs their right as professionals to work in isolation and can result only in "contrived congeniality" rather than a true collaborative culture (Hargreaves 1991). Some critics of systematic collaboration even offer a conspiracy theory (Scholors), arguing that any effort to embed collaborative processes into the school day represents an administrative ploy to compel teachers to do the bidding of others and demonstrates a lack of commitment to empowering teachers. Thus proponents of volunteerism greet any attempt to ensure that educators work together with the addendum, "but only if they want to" (DuFour, 2011).Taking the importance of collaboration into account, what follows aims at describing the efficient techniques through which teachers can cooperate.

One of the methods of collaboration that teachers can use is peer coaching which facilitate teachers' cooperation and allow them to exchange support, feedback, and

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assistance in a reciprocal and nonthreatening acquaintance (Ackland, 1991). Dalton and Moyer (1991) defined peer coaching as a company between teachers in a nonjudgmental atmosphere built on a collaborative and reflective dialogue. Through peer coaching teachers can share their knowledge and provide each other with feedback, support, and assistance. This could help them constantly learn through learning new teaching strategies, refining old ones, and solving each other problems relating to the classroom. Similarly, Robin (1995) indicate that peer coaching allows teachers to reflect upon existing practices and refine and enlarge their instructional abilities.

Cook \& Fine (1997) state that teacher competence development is not a phenomena that occurs on a specific day during the school year. As it was mentioned earlier, instead of relying totally on discrete in-service days, professional development must be closely linked to the just-in-time demands of teaching such as lesson planning and assessment of student work and this could be achieved through peer coaching.

Foulger (2005) stated that peer coaching will provide "communities of practice" where teachers can argue, think, try out, and refine new practices. The significance of peer coaching in responding to emergent teacher needs and inspiring teachers to work and learn in a mutual community makes it popular strategy, particularly to aid teachers in using technology as we will discuss further on.
$\mathrm{Lu}(2010)$ reviewed eight studies selected from the ERIC and Education Complete databases covering the years 1997 through 2007. This review shows the foundation of peer coaching and compares and contrasts the commonalities and differences of this studies. Four similarities of the studies reviewed are identified:

- First, the majority of participants were student teachers.
- Second, the coaching relationship was basically reciprocal.
- Third, the coaching durations coincided with the durations of the programs.
- Finally the basic coaching strategies were the same.

The results also indicate differences:

- First, the purposes of peer coaching were not solely to improve student teachers' professional development.
- In some cases, student teachers were used to strengthen the programs without the support of other professional figures than the course instructor.
- Additionally, peer coaching was applied in various field settings and school levels.
- Lastly, the durations of peer-coaching training in the studies reviewed varied, with one study not providing training.

Some teachers may believe that coaching is a way of evaluation not collaboration. However, coaching is different from evaluation in that coaching is a process in which education professionals assist each other in negotiating the distance between acquiring new skills or teaching strategies and applying them skillfully and effectively for instruction. The Evaluation of teachers typically implies judgment about the adequacy of the person, whereas coaching implies assistance in a learning process (Showers, 1985).

Peers should plane every aspect of the training process carefully. The amount of learned skills should be measured and the effectiveness of teaching skill and strategies with their students should be studied. In This sense, everything is evaluated. However, nothing could be farther from the atmosphere of coaching than is the practice of traditional evaluation.
The Norms of coaching and evaluation practice are antithetical and should be separated in our thinking as well as in practice. By definition, evaluation should not be undertaken
concurrently with coaching, whereas the analysis of skills and their use is an inherent pan of it (Beverly Shower, 1985).

Below is a Comparison of Peer Coaching and Evaluation Excerpted from Peer Coaching, National Staff Development Council (1991).

| Peer coaching | Evaluation |
| :---: | :---: |
| trial and error approach | "best foot forward" |
| give-and-take; sharing both ways | one way learning |
| non-threatening (peers) | sometimes threatening (supervisor) |
| forward-looking: improvement-oriented | looking backward: what has happened |
| coach is invested in teacher's success | administrator may or may not gain if teacher is successful |
| targets specific areas | general review, global |
| Ongoing | often one-shot |
| data: given to teacher | data: personnel file |
| teacher being observed does the evaluation | administrator evaluates |
| Focus is on "What I saw." | focus often on <br> "What I didn't see." |
| FORMATIVE | SUMMATIVE |

How can teachers implement peer coaching? What are major principals of coaching? In spite of the numerous coaching models existing, associates or groups normally work together through a non-judgmental and none-threatening process which includes the following phases:

- Pre-observation planning conference with establishment of observation criteria.
- Classroom observation and collection of data.
- Post-observation reflecting conference with data analysis, and formation of instructional goals with subsequent observation criteria.
Individual peers decides when and how often the observations will occur, they also decides for conditions under which the observations will be directed and what specific instructional data to be recorded by the visiting coach (Kinsella, 1995).

Peer Observation. Teachers can also collaborate together and learn from each other by observing their colleagues classes. Peer observation is the process by which university instructors provide feedback to colleagues on their teaching efforts and practices. The process might include, a review of course planning and design, review of instructional materials (handouts, exercises, readings, lectures, activities), review of learning assessments (tests, graded assignments), review of in-class interaction with students, and of instructor presentations (Bill Roberson, 2006).

Similarly Jack c. Richard has defined peer observation as a phenomena that can supply teachers with opportunities to view each other's teaching in order to expose them to different teaching styles and to provide opportunities for critical reflection on their own teaching.

Cosh (1999) states that peer observation has widely been criticized due to its judgmental and threatening nature. It is hard to say that through peer observation
genuine teacher development can be realized as it has some drawbacks in terms of both objectivity and psychology (Çakir, 2010).

Teacher's role is passive while being observed, here the emphasis is on teachers being observed, and being told what is wrong with their teaching, but there is no a process of active self-development through reflection. It is also true that the peers may not be capable assessing and presenting valuable and beneficial feedback just after the observation. However, almost all teachers believe that this is the teachers themselves that can best evaluate teachers' performance. In contrast, traditional evaluations by school administrators and peers are generally believed to be highly detached and subjective (Çakir, 2010).

Teachers can observes each other classes using Cosh models of observation. Cosh (1999) state that there are two different model in which that use peer observation can be seen:
Mode1 1: Merit assessment in the USA, for example in certain districts in Florida, where teacher accountability through peer observation of teaching was linked to pay. The scheme collapsed because of teacher and union opposition.
Mode1 2: Similar peer observation models in the UK, although linked to appraisal rather than pay. The most common reaction of teachers seems to be that this is a procedure imposed from above, and over which they have no control. For this reason, it is carried out with a minimum of commitment and reflection.
Such models have many flaws, and have been widely criticized, strongly for their judgmental and threatening nature (Wajnryb 1992, Richards and Nunan 1990, and Rawnsley 1993).

Also Rayan (2013), suggested a three stage process for peer observation to be effective: pre POT, during POT, and post POT. During the Pre-POT stage both the observer and the observee agree on that observer is going to observe the observees instruction and then he/she will share his/her observation with the observee and if necessary the observee can also observe the observers teaching and share his/her observation with him. During the observation phase, both of the teachers follow assured procedures including to be arrived in time, to be record what had happened during different stages of the teaching session, the interactions of students to be observed, and observation form to be filled, etc. And lastly during the post-POT, both of the teachers will discuss what had happened during the teaching session.
Literature has pointed out a number of key principles in exploring peer observation of teaching:

- Confidentiality (Gosling, 2005; Carter \& Clark, 2003)
- Departure of POT from other school procedures (Gosling, 2005; Carter \& Clark, 2003)
- Making sure all teachers irrespective of grade or status are involved (Gosling, 2005; Carter \& Clark, 2003)
- Mutuality with a focus on reciprocated benefit to observer and observed (Gosling, 2005)
- Insuring development rather than judgement (Carter \& Clark, 2003)

The argument of whether POT should be a voluntary or required process is a hot debate today. In schools where it's a voluntary process, team are likely to exhibit greater commitment. However, voluntary POT leads to fragmentary implementation of the process and makes it difficult for POT to be used as a School-wide improvement device. Required programs of POT has the risk of staff being unaffected to the process.

Pair mentoring. In pair mentoring two teachers observe each other's lessons, discuss areas of reciprocal interest and design future schemes (Whisker, 1996). This is less threatening; teachers can see their own teaching in the teaching of others, and when teachers observe others to gain self-knowledge, they have the opportunity to recreate their own knowledge (Çakir, 2010).

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In some countries students-teachers are required to join for a certain period of time to experienced teachers classes and observe their classes as a Practice Teaching course. After this period, they are asked to start teaching. Their teaching will be observed by the mentor teacher, who will be responsible for providing feedback later. Through this course, they both progress and develop an optimistic attitude towards the teaching profession (Daloglu, 2001).
Coaching is different from mentoring relationship. Mentoring is guidance, support and advice offered by the experienced mentor to the less experienced mentee for the purpose of developing his/her academic career. In contrast, coaching is characterized by a collaborative relationship between equal teachers for the purpose of facilitating the development through feedback, reflection and self-directed learning (Greene \& Grant, 2003).

Teacher study group. In the educational field, teacher study groups, also known as collaborative groups, are commonly sustained by four to ten teachers who share similar interests, and reach their individual goals through interaction and collaboration with other colleagues. Much research has documented that a teacher study group can be an effective avenue to support modern teachers who need to emphasize their ongoing lifelong professional development and can have a great impact on teaching effectiveness (Clair, 1998).

Aiming at professional development and being up-to-date, teachers in a teacher study group gather together to stimulate trust and honesty, and reduce feeling of isolation that is experienced by most teachers. According to Matlin and Short (1991), "for the teachers, the study group is an opportunity to think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, blend theory and practice, identify professional needs-as well as develop literacy innovation for their classrooms" (p. 68).

Similarly as Short (1992) states, participants in teacher study groups are encouraged to reflect on their current beliefs and practices on subjects such as literacy learning, English language acquisition, and teacher education.

When professional development is examined through a constructivist lens, in contrast to participating in scattered traditional teacher training in-service programs, teachers in teacher study groups are able to construct new knowledge through a process of linking their schemata and valuable experience. In the teacher study group model, knowledge is not meant to be transmitted by experts.

Constructivist notions of collaborative construction, context, and conversation (Jonassen et al, 1995) are crucial components in teacher study group communication. Teacher study groups build up a community in which teachers interact with a small group of people (ideally four to six) to share their hopes and concerns.

In study groups, the teachers bring their specific needs and explore their profession together to identify problems and engage in ongoing professional development dialogue. By doing so, teachers can further comprehend their own experiences and the insights of other teachers, which leads the group to a new vision (Freedman et al., 1999).

This reflects Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin's (1995) professional development model that means providing circumstances for teachers to reflect critically on their experience and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, teaching, and learners.

Teacher study groups are receiving increasing attention as effective tools for professional development at all educational levels. They provide a crucial format for teachers to gain ownership and autonomy over their learning, serving as a forum in community learning and offering possibilities for self-actualization.

Many schools have offered various groups for professional development. However, they are often run by administrators, supervisors or others outside the group. Thus, the
control lies with outsiders and so the teachers in these groups do not have any autonomy, but are just passively completing a predetermined agenda.

In contrast, 'teacher'-initiated study groups are composed of teachers voluntarily joining a collaborative community to meet individual needs as well as to set collective goals as a group. Personal inquiry and exploration are controlled from inside by the membership and collaborative direction of the focus is owned by each member. In essence, each member shares a sense of equality and responsibility.

## Empirical Findings

Even though most of the studies in this area appreciated teachers' autonomy, almost all link teacher's collaboration with student's higher achievements. A study that was exploring school systems in the world found that schools with the best systems focused on providing the "high-quality, collaborative, job-focused professional development" representative of "professional learning communities". In these schools teachers collaborate to improve classroom practice (Barber and Mourshed 2009, p. 30).

In a study done by Rosenhaltz (1989), teachers' professional collaboration was found to be profoundly effective in improving teachers' efficacy and enhancing teachers' effectiveness. And more recently Harries (2009) has shown that shared decision making results in positive changes in teaching outcomes.

In the case of coaching programs many coaching studies have focused on teachers' report of procedural change caused by peer coaching and still many others examine the effect on students' outcome. A study done by Miller, Harris, and Watanabe (1991) which was aiming at determining the effectiveness of using professional coaching to increase positive teacher behaviors and decrease negative teacher behaviors, shows that two coaching sessions in a 5 -week period were effective for improving teacher performance as measured by the FPMS.

The result of the study done by Kohler, MacCulluogh, and Buchan (1995) shows that 3 out of 4 teachers who participated in their program founded more procedural change during coaching phase of their program. In this study they asked about teachers' satisfaction about peer coaching. Some of them suggest that peer coaching recover tension and isolation and raises communication, trust and support among a school faculty. Peer coaching could also create conflict between teachers because it interrupts norms of autonomy, privacy, and equality in school (little, 1990).

In a study by Kohler, Crilley, Shearer and Good (1997) the effect of peer coaching were analyzed. A multiple-baseline design was used to compare three conditions. Four teacher planned and conducted an instructional innovation independently during an initial baseline phase, with a peer coach during second phase and then alone in a final maintenance condition. The study found that teachers who are in coaching relationships are more likely to try new skills or techniques compared to other teachers and areas not routinely discussed with a coach showed little or no refinement.

In a voluntary peer coaching program involved teachers reported that they feedback that was received from peer coaches were meaningful, this gave them motivation to direct their learning, and there was an increased levels of trust and morale amongst them, so this will lead to a justification to do more work (Arnau, Kahrs, \& Kruskamp, 2004).

Still in another study by Bagheridoust \& Jajarmi (2009), the effect of Peer Coaching on teacher Efficacy and professional development was analyzed. All the participants within the study found peer coaching and the collaboration with peers as a non-evaluative and low-stressed means to reflect upon and improve their own teaching.

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Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) were sing teacher survey and student achievement data from a mid-sized urban southeastern school district in the United States in 2006-2007, the study employs multilevel structural equation modeling to examine the structural relationships between student learning and theorized dimensions of principal leadership, teacher peer influence, and change in teachers' instructional practice. Both principal leadership and teacher peer influence were significantly associated with teachers' instructional practices and student learning. A major contribution of this research is the strong and significant indirect relationships which mediate education leadership and student learning. The results indicate the importance of principals' work for student learning because of their indirect influence on teachers' practices through the fostering of collaboration and communication around instruction.

Moreover, there is also good evidence of the value of learning from observing a peer. By POT we can make discussion of teaching - which is often an unseen exercise - a noticeable practice (Blackwell \& McClean, 1996), and can improve the value of teaching (Gosling, 2005). Consequently, discussion of teaching can help staff to learn about their own and their colleagues teaching practices.

The POT process can enhance the sharing of good practice and more personally can enable staff to receive positive feedback on what they do well (Whitlock \& Rumpus, 2004). POT can reassure some staff that their teaching is seen positively by their peers, whilst also being useful in helping to reveal hidden behavior that individuals may not be aware of within their own practice (Blackwell \& McClean, 1996).

Moreover, Bell (2001), reported that observers grew considerably from the chance to observe another teachers teaching. Donnelly (2007) explored observers' insights of a reciprocal peer observation pattern in which they appreciated the pattern and thought that they learned from helpful feedback they received. Another study done by Hendry and Oliver (2012) suggests some benefits for the observer including learning about a new strategy, improving their confidence to try this strategy in their own teaching, and receiving feedback from the peers.

More recently Motallebzadeh and Asa'di (2013), had examined the effectiveness of less experienced teachers' participation in experienced teachers' classes on students' achievements in terms of their proficiency levels. They concluded that experienced teachers' class observation is acceptable for EFL less experienced teaches and its introduction is beneficial for both teachers and students.

## Implication for practice

In this analytical research we have tried to describe the causes and effects of teacher's isolation and to suggest some collaboration methods for teachers in order to improve their social networks in workplace and to be able to collaborate with their colleagues. As such, the findings of this research will be precious for both teachers and stakeholders.

Teachers can use this research as a guide in the schools, to be able to work collaboratively with each other. They can work together without the apprehension of that they are being evaluated by the other teachers. They would use peer coaching to reflect upon existing practices and polish and enlarge their instructional competencies, peer observation to view each other's teaching in order to be provided with different teaching styles and to provide opportunities for critical reflection on their own teaching, pair mentoring to observe each other's lessons, discuss areas of reciprocal interest and design future schemes, teacher study group to reach their individual goals through interaction and collaboration with other colleagues.

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The data can help schools and institute managers too. They can use this study to provide a friendly environment in their schools and institutes where teachers can collaborate together without feeling that they are being judged or evaluated by their colleagues.

In particular studying the driven data from this study we could suggest some implications for teachers to practice:

- Schools must be structured in ways that promote teachers collaboration. Managers and supervisors should schedule the classes in a way that teachers could have enough time for discussion.
- For improving teachers efficacy and enhancing teachers effectiveness, they need to cooperate together, thus schools must ensure that regular meetings are held in which teachers can discuss teaching methodology.
- Schools policy should be discussed by teachers and they all come up with a shared decision.
- Schools should hold some coaching programs in which less experienced teachers can participate in experienced teacher's classes. Peer coaching recover tension and isolation and raises communication, trust and support among a school faculty.
- Peer coaching could also create conflict between teachers, therefore teachers should provide feedback in a way that is not evaluative and judgmental.
- Schools should makes staff to observe each other classes and provide nonjudgmental feedbacks on teaching.
- In pair mentoring teachers can gain self-knowledge by observing other teachers and consequently can recreate their own knowledge.
- Schools should gather teachers in study groups to reflect on their current beliefs and practices regarding literacy learning and to construct new knowledge through a process of linking their schemata and valuable experience.


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# INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY TYPES ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN MA TEFL STUDENTS 

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#### Abstract

: PERSONALITY IS THE ORGANIZED, DEVELOPING SYSTEM WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL THAT REPRESENTS THE COLLECTIVE ACTION OF THAT INDIVIDUAL'S MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SUBSYSTEMS. SEVERAL RECENT STUDIES HAVE STUDIED PERSONALITY TYPES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE (L2) ACQUISITION/LEARNING. THE PRESENT STUDY HAS INVESTIGATED THE EFFECTS OF MA TEFL LEARNERS' PERSONALITY TYPES ON THEIR WRITING PERFORMANCE. FOR THIS PURPOSE, 40 MA TEFL LEARNERS ( 26 FEMALE \& 14 MALE) FROM URMIA BRANCH OF ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY .THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR QUESTIONNAIRE WAS UTILIZED TO IDENTIFY THE SELF-REPORTED PERSONALITY TYPES OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS. THE FINAL WRITING EXAMINATION PAPERS OF MA LEARNERS WERE ALSO USED TO COLLECT THE DATA ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE. IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTS OF THE MA LEARNERS' PERSONALITY TYPES ON THEIR WRITING ABILITY, THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST WAS USED. THE FINDINGS REVEALED THAT THERE WEREN'T SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WRITING PERFORMANCES OF THE PERSONALITY GROUPS. MOREOVER, THE FINDINGS INDICATED THAT THERE WERE SOME AFFECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDING MOTIVATION AND DEGREE OF RISK TAKING AND THAT MUST BE IMPORTANT IN SPECIFYING THE LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE ON ACADEMIC TASKS INCLUDING WRITING TASKS. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND LANGUAGE LEARNING CONTEXT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN COMBINATION WITH THEIR PERSONALITY TYPE TO DETERMINE THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE OF MA TEFL LEARNERS AND THEIR WRITING PERFORMANCE. THE STUDY HAS PROVIDED USEFUL GUIDING PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY TYPES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF EFL LEARNERS THAT MIGHT BE USED BY EFL TEACHERS AND SYLLABUS DESIGNERS.


KEYWORDS: PERSONALITY, PERSONALITY TRAITS, PERSONALITY TYPES, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

## 1. Introduction

The wide recognition of affective factors in the learning process and their inclusion in different learning theories reveals their important place in modern conceptualizations of human learning

[^10](Schmitt, 2002). According to Brown (2007) any theory of second language acquisition which claims to be a thorough and complete definition of the language learning process, should deal with both the cognitive and affective factors of the language learners. According to Schmitt (2002) affective side of human beings is the emotional aspect of their behavior which has a close correlation with their cognitive side and is very significant in determining their responses in various contexts. Among the affective factors of human behavior, human personality has attracted the attention of different psychologists, educationalists, and all the people which deal with human learning in some way (Ellis, 2008). A review of the research regarding the effects of personality on the academic achievement of learners reveals that, most of them have investigated the correlation between personality types and academic achievement of students from a variety of majors (e.g. Garner O'Neale \& Harrison, 2013; Opstad \& Fallan, 2002; Sefcik, Prerost, \& Arbet, 2009). Moreover most of these studies have investigated the effects of personality types on the academic achievement as a whole (e.g. Ahmed, Campell, Jaffar, Alkobais, \& Campell, 2009). According to Hilgard (1963) without the inclusion of affective factors in the study of human behavior, all kinds of conceptualizations about human learning and behavior will be defective and replete with misunderstandings. As Ellis (2008) argues one of the most important aspects of human affection is personality and for this reason its study should be a priority for all of the scientific fields which deal with human learning. A review of the literature regarding human personality reveals that a lot of studies have investigated the correspondence between human personality and success in future occupation related issues (e.g. Anzi, 2005; Eshel \& Kohavi, 2003; Russell, Booth, Reed \& Laughlin, 1997). In addition to these studies, some studies have investigated the correlation between personality types and academic achievement of different learners (e.g. Ahmed, Campell, Jaffar, Alkobais, \& Campell, 2009). A consideration of the studies which have investigated the correlation of personality and academic performance of different learners reveals that, a large number of them have been conducted for students from a variety of majors (e.g. Garner O'Neale \& Harrison, 2013). Moreover almost all of these studies have been conducted in second language contexts (e.g. Shaughnessy, 1993). It is clear that there is a lack of research regarding the effects of personality types on the academic achievement of language learners in EFL settings. Considering this need for research, the present study aims to investigate the effects of learners' personality types on their writing performance, and by doing so tries to give a more thorough understanding of the effects of personality types on a specific aspect of the academic performance of foreign language learners.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:
Q 1: Do MA TEFL students with different personality types perform differently on writing tasks?
Q 2: Do MA TEFL Extrovert/Introvert students perform differently on writing tasks?
Q 3: Do MA TEFL Sensitive/Intuitive students perform differently on writing tasks?
$Q$ 4: Do MA TEFL Thinking/Feeling students perform differently on writing tasks?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Participants

The present study was conducted at Urmia branch of Islamic Azad University. The participants of the study were 40 MA learners of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) including 26 female and 14 male learners. For the objectives of the study they were selected from two intact classes which were enrolled in the MA writing course as a part of their MA studies.
2.2 Materials and Procedures
2.2.1. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Personality Test

According to Steel (2007), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test is a psychometric questionnaire which is designed to evaluate the psychological preferences of people regarding their perceptions of the world and their decisions based on these perceptions (see Appendix A). These preferences were extrapolated by Myers and Briggs in1962, from the typological theories proposed by Carl Jung which were first published in his 1921 book entitled Psychological Types (Digman, 1989). Jung believed that there are four principal psychological functions by which the humans experience the world: sensation, intuition, feeling, and thinking, moreover according to him one of these four functions is dominant most of the time (Myers, 1962).
According to Brown (2007) this test consists of four dichotomous styles including 1) introversion versus extroversion; 2) sensing versus intuition; 3) thinking versus feeling; and 4) judging versus perceiving. According to Myers (1962) their inventory includes 70 items, with each item being followed by 2 choices. In addition as she argues the inventory represents 16 different personality types considering the combination of its four dichotomous divisions. As she further argues based on their different personality types different responses may be elicited from different people in similar situations, and people may reveal different values and interests depending on their specified personality type. In this study the MBTI personality test was administered at the end of the learners" writing course to determine their personality types.
Before the administration of the test, the learners were informed about its purpose and intended use for the researcher. The administration of this test took about 30 minutes.

### 2.2.2. Final Writing Examination Papers of MA Learners

In order to examine the differential effects of personality types on the writing ability of MA learners, the researcher used their final writing examination papers. That is the final writing scores of MA students were used to determine whether their personality type had any effects on their writing performance.
The present study tried to determine the effects of personality types on the writing ability of MA TEFL students. Based on the objectives of the study 40 MA learners ( 26 female \& 14 male) were selected from two intact writing classes from the Urmia branch of Islamic Azad University to take part in this study. At the end of the writing course both of the classes received Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Personality Test to determine their personality types. Before the administration of this test all of the participants were informed about its purpose, moreover they were informed about the use of their answers in the researcher"s study and took part in the study voluntarily. Before answering the items of the personality test the learners were told that there were no right answers to any of the questions and also were told to answer the questions quickly without overanalyzing them. They were told to answer the items based on their feeling of the best answer. Moreover the learners were asked to answer the questions as the way they were, not the way that they would like to be seen by others. The administration of this test took about 30 minutes in both of the classrooms. The learners" answers were analyzed according to the guidelines which accompanied the test and guided its scoring and analysis.
To determine the effects of the MA learners" personality types on their writing ability, the researcher used their scores on the final examination of the writing course. Based on the objectives of the writing course the MA learners took its final examination in which they had to write a certain number of essays about some specific topics. The administration of the final writing examination took about 90 minutes for both of the classrooms. After the administration of the writing examination the examination papers of the MA learners were rated by two raters, that is, the professor of the writing course and the researcher herself. Since there were more than two raters it was essential to determine the inter-rater reliability between the ratings of the two raters. In order to calculate the inter-rater reliability, K-R 21 formula was employed. The result of the statistical data analysis revealed that the inter-rater reliability was 0.81 which can be considered satisfactory.
Finally the scores of the participants in both the MBTI test and final examination of the writing course were fed into the SPSS software to determine the effects of their personality types on their
writing ability. Since the statistical analysis of the learners" scores revealed that they had nonnormal distribution, the researcher employed Kruskal-Wallis test to analyze the learners' answers.

## 3. Data Analysis and Results

The frequency and percentage of the results of MBTI personality Test for MA TEFL learners are presented through the following table.

Table1. Case Processing Summary

| Group | Cases |  |  |  |  | Total |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | :---: |
|  | Valid |  | Missing |  |  |  |  |
|  | N | Percent | N | Percent | N | Percent |  |
| Feeling | 9 | $100.0 \%$ | 0 | $.0 \%$ | 9 | $100.0 \%$ |  |
| Judging | 15 | $100.0 \%$ | 0 | $.0 \%$ | 15 | $100.0 \%$ |  |
| Intuition | 4 | $100.0 \%$ | 0 | $.0 \%$ | 4 | $100.0 \%$ |  |
| Sensing | 6 | $100.0 \%$ | 0 | $.0 \%$ | 6 | $100.0 \%$ |  |
| Introvert | 9 | $100.0 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 9 | $100.0 \%$ |  |
| Extrovert | 24 | $100.0 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 24 | $100.0 \%$ |  |

Based on the statistical data analysis the 'Intuition' group was the smallest group with 4 members and the 'Extrovert' group was the largest group with 24 members. Next the writing papers of the MA learners were corrected by two raters, and the inter-rater reliability coefficient between their ratings was calculated by K-R 21 statistical test. According to Larson-Hall (2010), an acceptable level of K-R-21 is $0.70-0.80$. As the results of the statistical data analysis revealed the K-R-21 inter-rater reliability estimate for this study was 0.81 which can be regarded as satisfactory.

Finally after the determination of the inter-rater reliability coefficient, the scores of the learners' writing examination were fed into the SPSS in order to reach the main goal of the study, that is, the determination of the effects of MA learners' personality types on their writing performance.

The descriptive statistics for the writing scores of all the personality groups of the MA learners are provided, the intuition personality type has the highest average that is, the best performance with the sensing group having the second highest average and the third average being for the judging group. The last group in terms of its performance in writing was the feeling group with the lowest average. The average performances of the four groups in the writing test are graphically depicted in Figure 1.


Figure 1. The Average Score on the Writing Test for the Four Personality Groups
In order to determine the appropriate statistical test for the study it was essential to determine whether the writing scores of the personality groups were normally distributed or not. Table 2 shows Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of normality for the personality groups. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of normality, all the groups have degrees of significance higher than 0.05 and therefore, none of the groups have normal distribution. Therefore, the researcher decided to use non-parametric statistics.

Table 2. Tests of Normality for the Six Groups

|  | Group | Kolmogorov-Smirnov ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |  |  | Shapiro-Wilk |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Statist ic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| test | Feeling | . 160 | 9 | .200* | . 937 | 9 | . 553 |
|  | Judging | . 103 | 15 | .200* | . 984 | 15 | . 990 |
|  | Intuition | . 229 | 4 |  | . 935 | 4 | . 624 |
|  | Sensing | . 212 | 6 | .200* | . 929 | 6 | . 570 |
|  | Introver | . 140 | 4 | .200* | . 944 | 4 | . 583 |
|  | Extrovert | . 127 | 5 | .200* | . 965 | 5 | . 603 |

Table 3 shows the mean ranks for the four groups. As it is clear, the feeling group has the highest rank (15.28), the judging group' rank was (16.33), the intuition group' rank was (21.38) and the sensing group' rank was (21.17). Therefore, according to the table, the feeling group had the best performance on the writing test and the highest average.

Table 3. Ranks for Six Personality Types

|  | Group | N | Mean <br> Rank |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Test | Feeling | 9 | 15.28 |
|  | Judging | 15 | 16.33 |
|  | Intuitio <br> n | 4 | 21.38 |


|  | Sensing | 6 | 21.17 |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
|  | Introver <br> t | 9 | 21.11 |
|  | Extrove <br> rt | 24 | 20.22 |
|  | Total | 69 |  |

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis Test for the Six Personality Types

| Test |  |
| :--- | ---: |
| Chi-Square | 2.082 |
| Df | 3 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .556 |

Table 4 illustrates the Kruskal-Wallis test for the four groups. Since the scores were not normally distributed, the researcher decided to apply non-parametric statistics. The significance level turned out to be higher than 0.05 and therefore, it was concluded that there were no significant differences between the personality groups in terms of their performance on the writing test. The statistical analysis of the study indicated that the four personality groups had a similar performance in their writing test.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study revealed that MA TEFL learners' personality types did not have any effects on their writing performance and there were no significant differences between the writing performances of the personality groups. In what follows the results of the study are discussed and the factors which may have contributed to these findings are explained.

The first research question of the study tried to reveal whether MA learners with different personality types perform differently on writing tasks. Lawrence (1997), after reviewing many empirical studies regarding the effects of personality types on the academic performance of learners argued that the results of these studies are inconsistent, that is they have mixed results. As he further argued some of these studies have claimed to find certain differences in the academic achievement of learners with different personality types, while others have not found any such differences. According to him other affective factors such as motivation may be more important than personality in determining the academic achievement of different learners. Finally as he concludes personality types should be investigated in combination with other affective factors in order to reach more persuasive results.

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) argued that the results of the studies regarding the effects of personality types on the academic achievement of different learners are inconclusive. As they further argued other affective factors are more important than personality and personality types are not a significant predictor of the learners' academic achievement. The results of the present study revealed that MA learners with different personality types do not perform differently on writing tasks. Therefore as Lawrence (1997) and MacIntyre and Charos (1996) argued, other affective factors of MA learners such as their motivation may be more important than their personality types in determining their performance in academic tasks including writing tasks.

The second research question of the study tried to determine whether MA TEFL Extrovert/Introvert students perform differently on writing tasks. According to Ellis (2008), there is a general belief in second/foreign language classrooms that Extrovert learners are more successful in communicative interactions than Introvert learners. However as he further notes the results of many empirical studies have revealed that this assumption may not be true. As he
concludes other personal factors such as language learner's proficiency level, educational background and, language learning contexts should be considered in addition to their personality type.

Mansouri Nejda and Bijami (2012) examined the differences between the writing performances of a sample of Extrovert and Introvert BA EFL learners. According to the researchers the results of the study revealed that there were no significant differences between the writing performances of these groups. As the researchers conclude their findings showed that despite the general belief in the field of language teaching, Extrovert learners may not perform better than the Introvert learners in academic tasks such as writing tasks. The results of the present study revealed that there were no significant differences between the writing performance of Extrovert and Introvert learners. Therefore as Ellis (2008) argued the learners' personal factors may have a significant role in their academic achievement and should be considered in combination with their personality type. Moreover as Mansouri Nejda and Bijami (2012) argued, the general assumption about the better performance of Extrovert learners in academic tasks may not be true in the field of language learning.

The third research question of the study tried to determine whether MA TEFL Sensitive/Intuitive students perform differently on writing tasks. Ackerman and Heggestad (1997) argued that the dichotomy between Sensing and Intuitive personalities may not be a significant predictor of the academic achievement. According to them these personality types may influence the preferences of different people for certain academic fields however the results of most of the empirical studies have not revealed any difference between the academic achievement of learners with these personality types. As the researchers conclude the setting of instruction and the degree to which learners are allowed to take risks during their instruction may be significant factors in the academic performance of different learners. The results of the present study revealed that there were no significant differences between the writing performance of Sensitive and Intuitive learners. Therefore as Ackerman and Heggestad (1997) noted, it can be argued that other affective factors such as learners' degree of risk taking along with the setting of language instruction may be more important than the Sensitive/Intuitive dichotomy in MA TEFL learners' writing performance.

Finally the fourth research question of the study tried to determine whether TEFL Thinking/Feeling students perform differently on writing tasks. Bidjerano and Dai (2007) after reviewing many empirical studies regarding the effects of Thinking and Feeling personality types on the academic achievement of different learners argued that although these styles may have certain effects on the preferences of learners for certain tasks and activities, the results of most of empirical studies regarding this issue are inconclusive. According to them the learners' gender may be an important factor and many studies have revealed certain interactions between the learners' personality type and gender. As they conclude learners' gender should be investigated in combination with their personality type for a better understanding of the correspondence between personality types and academic achievement. The results of the present study revealed that there were no significant differences between the writing performances of Thinking and Feeling MA TEFL learners. Therefore as Bidjerano and Dai (2007) argued MA TEFL learners' gender should be considered together with their personality type to determine the correlation between Thinking and Feeling personality types and MA learners' writing performance.

According to Lawrence (1997), although personality types may not be significant predictors of learners' academic achievement, the results of many studies have revealed that they are important in determining the preferences of people for certain academic tasks and activities. As he further argued many studies have revealed that if learners are provided with certain academic tasks based on their personality type, they will be more successful in completing these tasks.

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Bidjerano and Dai (2007) after reviewing many empirical studies regarding the correspondence between personality types and academic achievement of different learners argued that most of these studies have revealed certain preferences of learners for specific tasks based on their personality type. The results of the present study revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the writing performances of personality groups. However as Lawrence (1997) and Bidjerano and Dai (2007) argued, it is possible to determine the preferences of language learners regarding specific tasks based on their personality types. Therefore syllabus designers are encouraged to design language learning tasks in a way that sufficient attention is paid to every personality type in the language classroom.

The results of the studies regarding the correlation between language learners' personality types and their academic performance can also guide language teachers in dealing with their learners' needs. As Lawrence (1997) argued personality types may be significant predictors of the learners' preferences for certain types of language activities. According to Ellis (2008) useful and interesting activities are among the motivating factors for learners in second/foreign language classrooms. Therefore language teachers are recommended to supplement their course books with an acceptable set of tasks in which sufficient activities which are congruent with different personality types, are involved. In this way language teachers by considering the needs of their learners will be able to motivate them and provide a better context for their language learning.

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# THE EFFECT OF GUIDED-WRITING ACTIVITY ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' WRITING IMPROVEMENT 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY WAS CARRIED OUT TO EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF GUIDED-WRITING ACTIVITY ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' WRITING IMPROVEMENT. TO INVESTIGATE, 100 LEARNERS OF ENGLISH PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY, 40 WERE SELECTED VIA ADMINISTRATING THE OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST (OPT). THEN, THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP (N=20). THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS RECEIVED GUIDED-WRITING ACTIVITY AS THE SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY WHILE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED ONLY THE COMMON TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING WRITING. BEFORE THE CONDUCTION OF THE TREATMENT, A PRETEST OF WRITING WAS ADMINISTERED IN ORDER TO MEASURE THE LEARNERS' INITIAL SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE OF WRITING ABILITY. AFTER THE CONDUCTION OF THE TREATMENT, A WRITING POSTTEST WAS ADMINISTERED AND THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS WERE ANALYZED THROUGH STATISTICAL PROCEDURES. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY INDICATED A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS IN THEIR GUIDED-WRITING ACTIVITY IN FAVOR OF THE FORMER.


KEY WORDS: GUIDED WRITING, WRITING

## Introduction

The development of language skills affects a person's productive ability. Several researchers have demonstrated personal success in disciplines is strongly related to a person's writing ability (Lerstrom, 1990) and depends on good writing skills (Cho \& Schunn, 2007).

Specifically, good writing skills are required training since prior research has proven writing is an important part of the elementary school curriculum (Lidvall, 2008). However, most students are usually apprehensive toward writing activities, and writing instruction remains an area of low interest for those students (Lidvall, 2008; Clark, 2004). Besides, the lack of suitable learning strategies in writing results in low motivation for students (Yang \& Chung, 2005; Lo \& Hyland, 2007). To solve these problems, Lipstein and Renninger (2007) suggested students who are

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interested are more likely to develop a better understanding of writing, set writing goals, make use of various strategies, and seek feedback on their writing.

Therefore, a better understanding of how to develop a suitable learning strategy or authoring tool to enhance students' writing interest and motivation is worth examining.

Many studies have been conducted on the relevant factors related to writing attitudes in terms of pedagogy and learning strategy. For instance, Brindley and Schneider (2002) pointed out writing instruction should evolve into a more effective set of techniques and strategies that include modeling, shared writing, guided writing, and interactive writing (Pinnell \& Fountas, 1998; Routman, 1991).

Regarding the learning strategy to improve writing, Lee (1994) showed how pictures can be used as an effective guided writing strategy to facilitate students' writing process and improve writing proficiency. More specifically, such instruction using pictures in a guided writing environment can assist beginning foreign language students to develop and improve their writing skills as well as lower their anxiety in terms of expressing themselves in the target language.

## Definition of key terms

Guided-writing activity: Guided-writing is defined in this study as an activity presented to small, temporary groups of students who share similar needs at a particular point in time (Fountas \& Pinnell, 2001). Guided-writing activity provides an important context for teachers' "in-the-moment" assessment and guidance of student writing; to observe students during specific writing events and provide immediate instructional scaffolding for writing processes targeted to the needs of a specific group of students.

Writing: is a complex meta-cognitive activity that draws on an individual's knowledge, basic skills, strategies, and ability to coordinate multiple processes (Graham, 1997).

Kay (2003) observes that writing is a highly complex process involving multiple brain mechanisms and specific abilities. The act of writing requires the writer to formulate ideas, organize and sequence points in logical order, select vocabulary, check for grammatical correctness, spell words correctly, punctuate, and write legibly. It requires the simultaneous and sequential integration of attention, language, long-term memory and working memory, motor skills, higher-order thinking, and meta-cognition.

The process usually termed 'transcription' involves converting the thoughts the writer wants to express into written language, correctly arranged and sequenced on the page (Graham \& Harris, 2000b).

## Review of the related literature

Writing is usually thought to be the most difficult skill to acquire and should only be thought after students have learned the other skills .It is a matter of putting together strings of grammatically correct sentences. Among four skills in learning a new language, writing competence is the abstract knowledge that proficient writers have about it .It is one of the least understood of skills and consequential more difficult to teach.

The notion that writing is simply a skill that students learn has been convincingly challenged by research and theory and social practice theory and academic literacy. Learning to write as a basic skill in second language learning and teaching is a fundamental goal in foreign language classroom. It plays in a significant role in L2 learning at any level. The importance and role of writing as a medium to convey ideas and a channel to L2 learning has been acknowledge by several authors (Raimes, 1983; Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel, \&Jacobs, 1983; Eisterhold, 1990).

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It is clear that this ability to write is not easy for them. It is most complex skill. In spite of its value as a communicative skill, it has not attended in the Iranian schools English curriculum.

Therefore they have to know different ways and appropriate strategies, verbal information , motivation and writing knowledge so as to write perfectly(Byrne,1993 ; Harmer,2006; Latif,2007 ; MacIntyre\&Gardner,1989 ; Richards\&Renandya,2002).

Guided writing is defined in this study as instruction presented to small, temporary groups of students who share similar needs at a particular point in time (Fountas \& Pinnell, 2001). Guided writing provides an important context for teachers' "in-the-moment" assessment and guidance of student writing; to observe students during specific writing events and provide immediate instructional scaffolding for writing processes targeted to the needs of a specific group of students.

Kellogg (1988) pointed out proper writing strategies can enhance writing performance and reduce attentional overload. However, several researchers indicated, since writing is a complex task requiring the organization of several abstract ideas, instructors usually face tremendous challenges in developing a suitable writing strategy to assist students (Kieft, Rijlaarsdam, \& Van den Bergh, 2008). Besides, to promote writing performance, the teacher plays an important role in helping students develop viable strategies for getting started, drafting, revising and editing (Silva, 1990).

According to prior research, Galbraith and Torrance (2004, p. 64) described two important views in terms of the practical implications of writing strategies as follows: (1) Planning strategy, in which writers "concentrate on working out what they want to say before setting pen to paper, and only start to produce full text once they have worked out what they want to say". Based on the planning strategy, the teacher could use available media (such as pictures, animations, and video) or instruments to assist writing and guide students who have some ideas to express before actually beginning writing. (2) Revising strategy, in which writers "work out what they want to say in the course of writing and content evolves over a series of drafts". According to this strategy, students can think of what they want to write by observing the media content and simultaneously revising their drafts.

As mentioned above, writing strategies on how to develop and formulate abstract ideas as well as use proper media or tools to assist pre-writing and successive tasks are critical issues. Guided writing is the most important factor in these strategies. Guided writing is an instructional writing context chiefly teaching the writing process through modeling, support, and practice (Tyner, 2004). Holdich and Chung (2003) indicated guided writing offers greater opportunities for young writers to make valuable connections between text, sentence and word level decisions and help children shape and redraft texts with particular criteria in mind. Most importantly, with such a writing strategy, the instructor should think how to guide young students into independent writing and help them discover their own abilities by providing opportunities for choice, peer response and further scaffolding (Oczkus, 2007).

## Method <br> Participants

The participants were 100 people, both male and female, they were all Persian natives. They were selected based on the OPT score, all the participants were at the same level of proficiency. The writing test was provided in order to divide them in two groups, the test was performed as a preTest. At the end of the course another writing test was provided as the Post- Test in order to estimate the learners' progress based on specific treatment program.

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## Materials

The investigation was conducted by the use of different materials. For the sake of data collection, the participants used three types of tests. An OPT test was taken in order to measure their proficiency level, and homogenize the groups. The pre test of writing was taken in order to measure learners' initial subjects' knowledge of writing ability. A posttest of writing, was used to measure the effectiveness of treatment.

## Procedure

The design of the study was conducted based on quasi-experimental, which is pre-post test design. An OPT test was prepared and administered to 100 EFL subjects out of which 40 learners were selected. For the purpose of selecting the homogenous participants those who scored 1 standard deviation above and below the mean took part in the current study. After that, they were randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control. Both groups sat for a pre-test of writing. The purpose of this test was to assess the initial subject knowledge of the learners in writing. Then the control group received no treatment and approached the traditional way for teaching writing and experimental group received treatment based on guided-writing activity.

During the experiment the learners were treated by three types of guided writing activity such as text elicitation, text conversion and text completion. In the text elicitation the learners were presented with a topic of composition and grammatical construction in that the learners were supposed to use grammatical construction in the writing composition. In the text conversion as another guided writing activity, the learners were given a short text or paragraph that they were supposed to rewrite and change its grammatical feature. And in text completion activity a passage with a number of blanks was given to the learners in that the learners were supposed to fill out the blanks with appropriate grammatical feature.

Their classes were held once a week for 45 minutes for eight sessions. And the last step was be the posttest of writing in which the subjects' ability in both groups on the specific treatment program were assessed.

## Results

The data of the current study were mainly quantitative in nature and were subject to a range of statistical analyses with the aid of the SPSS software program. The results will be discussed in detail in the following section.
The descriptive Analysis of the Data
The results for the basic descriptive analysis of the pre-test and post-tests of the experimental group and control group are shown in table (4.1).

Table 4.1. Group Statistics for the Post-test

| Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Experimental | 20 | 7.600 | .502 | .112 |
| Control | 20 | 2.000 | 1.169 | .261 |

As it is shown in table (4.1) the number of participants taking part in the post-test is 20 for each group. There has been no missing value, which marks the point that all participants took part in this part of the research. The mean of the experimental group is 7.600 whilst the mean of the control group is indicated to be 2.000 . As for the standard deviations obtained from the groups $($ Experimental $=.502$ and Control $=1.169)$, there appears to be more variability among the post-

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test scores of the control group than that of experimental group. This statistical analysis is considered as a token of the experimental group's improvement after being exposed to guidedwriting activity.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to measure the relationship or association among the variables of the study. Shown below are the outputs generated from Pearson correlation coefficient analysis.

Table 4.2. Correlations Between the Pretest and Post-test of Experimental Group

|  |  | EXP. Pre | EXP. Del |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| EXP. Pre | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.814^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |
| $* *$. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |  |  |  |

In table (4.2), the relationship between the pretest and the post-test of the experimental group was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. It is observed that the number of the participants for each variable is $20(\mathrm{~N}=20)$; hence, there is no missing value. It is shown that the size of the value of the correlation coefficient is 1 which indicates a perfect positive correlation. The coefficient of determination shows the extent of variance our two variables share. The Pearson correlation is .814 , which when squares indicates 66.26 per cent shared variance. This is a quite respectable amount of variance in social sciences.
The significance (2tailed) which is .000 shows the amount of confidence we can have in the results obtained. The significance (2tailed) is .000 that is less than .05 ( $\mathrm{p}<.05$ ). On the whole, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant correlation between the pre-test and the posttest of the experimental group.

Table 4.3. Correlations Between the Pre and Post-test of Control Group

|  |  | CON. Pre | CON. Del |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
| CON. Pre | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.908^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |
| . |  |  |  |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
The relationship between the pretest and the post-test of the control group was also calculated by Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Table (4.3) indicates that the number of participants is $20(\mathrm{~N}=20)$, the strength of association between the variables is very high ( $\mathrm{r}=.908$ ), and that the correlation coefficient is very highly significantly different from zero ( $\mathrm{P}<.001$ ).

## Inferential Analysis of the Data

Table 4.4. Independent-samples t-test for Post-test
Levene's
t-test for Equality of Means
Equality of
Variances
$\mathrm{f} \quad \operatorname{sig} \quad \mathrm{t} \quad \mathrm{df}$
Sig. 2
tailed $\begin{array}{lll}\text { Mean } & \text { Dif. }\end{array} \begin{aligned} & \text { Std. } \\ & \text { Error } \\ & \text { Dif. }\end{aligned} \quad \begin{array}{lll}\text { Dower upper }\end{array}$

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| Score. | Equal <br> variances <br> Assumed | .174 | .679 | 29.548 | 38 | .000 | 6.350 | .2149 | 5.914 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | 6.785

Likewise, the above-mentioned independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the experimental and control group differ significantly in post-test. First, the Levene's Test for Equal variances yields a p-value of .679 . This means that the homogeneity of variance assumption has been satisfied and the difference between the variances is statistically insignificant. Accordingly, the statistics in the first row of the table, which refers to equal variances assumed should be used for statistical analysis. Second, to find out whether there is a significant difference between our two groups, we refer to the column labelled Sig. (2-tailed), which appears under the section labelled t-test for Equality of Means. The Sig. (2-tailed) value is .000. As this value is less than the required cut-off of .05 , we conclude that there is a significant difference in the means of the two groups. It is axiomatic that guided-writing activity has effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing improvement. That is on the post-test, the participants of the experimental group who were taught through guided-writing activity significantly outperformed the participants of the control group who were taught via traditional methods as the mean of the former was about 6 times higher than that of the latter group $(\mathrm{M}=7.50, \mathrm{SE}=.135$ and $\mathrm{M}=1.15$, $\mathrm{SE}=.166$, respectively, the observed $t$, with 38 df , is 29.5 , and the $p$ value is .000 . Since $p<.05$, this test is statistically significant.
To calculate the effect size of the independent-samples t-test, eta squared was used in this part of our analyses. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference $=6.35,95 \% \mathrm{CI}$ : +5.914 to +6.785 ) was very high (eta squared $=.96$ ). Moreover, since upper and lower bounds of the confidence intervals have the same sign (+5.914 and +6.785) the difference is statistically significant. This means that the null finding of zero difference lies outside of the confidence interval.

## Results of the Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the results of the hypothesis testing of the study has been presented and described. To facilitate a detailed analysis, the results of study were used to support or reject the hypothesis of the study.
$\mathbf{H}_{0}$ : Guided-writing activity does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing improvement.

The hypothesis of the study was rejected here. The evidence for rejecting the hypothesis of the study came from the fact that the two tailed level of significance calculated by the SPSS software program was .000 . This is lower than .05 and indicates that using Guided-writing activity would outweigh traditional methods of teaching writing.

## Discussion and conclusion

The results of the statistical analyses revealed that there was a significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' guided-writing activity and writing proficiency. The participants who received guided-writing activity outperformed the control group with respect to their writing proficiency.

Guided-writing activity is particularly effective in making a difference in student writing, it offers helpful tools, scaffolding, and support to students when writing on their own. Guidedwriting activity provides opportunities to assist students with any step in the writing process, to focus instruction on specific concepts and strategies, and to enhance student learning by teaching

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craft lessons to those who need new skills and challenges. Students experiencing similar writing needs or students who require more practice with a text type are temporarily grouped together for direct instruction.

Guided-writing activity is an opportunity for the teacher to work intensively with a small group of students who share similar learning needs. Guided-writing activity often follows shared writing. The teacher knows what the students have already learned, what their needs and interests are, and what their next learning step will be. The next learning step is explicit in the learning goal for the writing activity. The writing activity generally involves working on a model developed during shared writing.

Guided-writing activity provides students with additional support so that they can achieve their writing purpose and learning goal more effectively.

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# TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING SKILL IN HIGH SCHOOL 

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#### Abstract

IN ORDER TO INVESTIGATE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING, IN A MIXED METHOD DESIGN, DATA WERE COLLECTED FROM ONE HUNDRED TEACHERS THROUGH A QUESTIONNAIRE AND TWENTY FOUR OF THEM WERE ALSO INTERVIEWED TO COLLECT EXHAUSTIVE DATA FOR THIS STUDY. THIS STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN DIFFERENT CITIES OF KHORASAN-E-RAZAVI FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS. THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY SHOW THAT WRITING IS AN IMPORTANT SKILL FROM TEACHERS' POINT OF VIEW AND THEY BELIEVE THAT WRITING SHOULD BE ADDED TO TEXTBOOKS THAT GIVE LITTLE ATTENTION TO THIS SKILL. THE FINDINGS ALSO REVEALED THAT MANY TEACHERS PRESENT THIS SKILL TO THEIR STUDENTS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SPECIFIC SECTION FOR IT IN THE TEXTBOOKS.


KEY TERMS: PERCEPTION, BELIEF, PRACTICE, WRITING, TEACHER, IMPORTANCE OF WRITING, LEARNING, LEARNING TO WRITE, WRITING TO LEARN

## INTRODUCTION

Durst (1989, as cited in Hoover, p.85) explained that writing is a tool of interaction and connection of ideas and thought; and asserted that " the ability to evaluate, regulate, and reflect on one's own thinking processes plays a key role in problem solving and intellectual development". Educators agree that writing can be a valuable tool for learning because when students read and write, they process and use that information to create a product (Kocoglu, 2010).

According to Ferede, Melese, Tefera( 2012, p.31), teachers give little attention to writing skill or they may not teach writing and this is depended to their perceptions of writing and teaching of it. So, the main reason of Students' weak experience of writing in high school could be depended to this problem. They believe that teachers' perception of writing can be impact on their behavior and judgment in teaching of writing. According to Schechter (2014, p. 18). Perception refers to "Viewpoints held by individuals in which they express their opinions about a subject, especially as it relates to opinions concerning writing". So, teachers' perception in writing influence in their students' performance in writing and in their teaching of writing (Ferede \& et.al, 2012).

The main reason of this investigation is that there are a number of essential problems that operate in our schools that obstruct the development of writing skills. Few teachers practice
writing skill with the students at high schools, while writing is a complex skill and through effort and time students can learn to write well. In Iran, there is less emphasis on the teaching of writing, a skill that can be learnt only through practice and teachers often disagree in their perceptions of it. So, there was a need to investigate about the importance of writing skill among EFL teachers at high school. There are several studies have been conducted by Iranian researchers about writing (Khansir, 2012, Khansir \& Abdollahi, 2014; Khansir, Ahrami, \& Hajivand, 2013,Kiani Sheikh Abadi \& Marzban, 2012, Marzban \& Arabahmadi, 2013), but the number of the studies on the topic is still limited. In Iran, according to the objectives stated at the beginning of the high school textbooks, it is claimed that they concentrate on four skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing, to learning English, but in fact in the section of writing the more emphasis is given on the structural exercises for example, fill in the blank, use appropriate word, or complete the sentence, and there is no specific section for writing short passages or paragraphs; also writing lessons are not included in the English text books of high school. To address this gap and respond to the need for additional research about the importance of writing in teachers' views, the present study investigated teachers' beliefs about the importance of writing in order to determine if do teachers accept the method of the textbook about writing or if they believe in teaching of writing, Which one is more important: learning to write or writing to learn? and how writing is important?

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are Iranian high school teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of writing at high schools?
a. How important is it?
b. Is it difficult for high school learners?
c. Do high school students need it?
d. When should it be taught?
e. How should writing be taught?

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATUR

Ghabool (2012) investigated students' writing problems in Malaysia. 30 students and 10 teachers participated in this study. The researcher has used a questionnaire and an essay examination for collecting data. Ghabool (2012, p.132) asserted that students have difficulty in one or more aspects of writing, these problems include "grammar, conventions, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling". Students with low language proficiency have more difficulty in their writing tasks, and first language interference is the basic element for writing problems. In this study, the researcher conclude that students in Malaysia have more problems in grammar and punctuation and "students need more improvement on English language proficiency and language use".

Hyland (2003) asserted that teaching of writing developed with practice, experience, theories and belief about writing, the way of learning to write, teaching styles of writing, tasks of writing, and practical and theoretical knowledge. Hyland believe that teachers should apply "language structure, text functions, themes or topics, creative expression, composing process, content, genre and context of writing" in their classrooms, but few teachers employ these elements in their classrooms, but teachers focus on their teaching and beliefs about the way students can learn to write.

Shi and Cumming (1995) studied teachers' conceptions of second language writing teaching .The participants of the study were five experienced teachers. They used an open-ended

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questions for teachers to express their experiences and beliefs about teaching of writing and describe the aspects of writing on which they had focused in the class. The results revealed that each of the five experienced instructor in the study displayed a unique conceptualization of teaching second language writing.

Kiani Sheikh Abadi and Marzban (2012) searched about the English teachers' beliefs of Iran on the teaching of second language writing as one of the basic tool for teaching English writing to children and adolescent learners in Iran. The participants of the study were 130 EFL teachers teaching English in Isfahan. In this study, questionnaire was used for collecting data. This questionnaire was divided into four sections including meaning of writing, importance of writing, teaching activities and practices, feedback and error correction. The result of the study indicated that teachers' knowledge about the importance of teaching writing is closed to each other and they believed that ways of the teaching writing skill differ in teaching to children and adolescents.

Ferede (2012, \& et.al) investigated about teachers' perceptions of writing and teaching writing. The participants of study were 19 teachers and 295 students of Jimma Zone. For data collection the authors used questionnaires and checklist observation, one questionnaire for students and one for teachers. Questionnaires were used for beliefs, motivation and perceptions and checklist is used for the ways of teaching writing. The findings of study analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of study indicated that although teachers perceive writing is an important skill, but they give little attention to teaching writing and their perceptions was not consistent with their teaching.

In short, these studies stress the teachers' perception about teaching of writing. None of these studies was conducted to investigate the importance of writing from teachers' point of view at high school in Iran and teachers' perception about the importance of writing and how this perception can be influenced in teaching of writing and improvement of students' writing skills so teachers' perspectives on practices that they implement in their lessons are important because they have ability to influence on teaching and learning process.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Participants

The respondents who participated in the present study included 100 EFL teachers (male and female) that teach English at high school, in different cities of Khorasan-e- Razavi from different schools, either public or private. All were high school teachers and the years of their teaching were between 2 to 30 . The mother tongue of all of the teachers was Persian. They were within the age range of 24 to 63 . The male respondents were 37 and female respondents were 63 . All of the teachers answered the questionnaire and 25 of them accepted to be interviewed. They had almost the same experience of learning English at Iranian schools as their students because according to teachers' statements in this study, Iranian EFL school textbooks have not changed since 25 years ago.

## Research Design

The aim of the present study was to determine teachers' perception of the importance of writing skill at high school. For this purpose, a mixed method design, including both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, was employed. A questionnaire as well as some interviews were used to gather information about teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about the importance of writing in high school.

## Instrumentation

To answer the research questions, a Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structure interviews were used in this study. Because there was no specific questionnaire about the importance of writing, the items of the questionnaire were collected from different questionnaires of different articles (Bacha, 2012, Ferede, Melese, \& Tefera, 2012, Shi \& Cumming, 1995). In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaires, a few experts were consulted and their comments were applied in its construction process. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated through Cronbach's alpha and was 70 .

## Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures

Two questionnaires were employed in this study. The first questionnaire was an open-ended survey questionnaire about the teachers' beliefs of the importance of writing and the second questionnaire was a semi-structure interview about the importance of writing from teachers' perspective and each questionnaire included gender, age, and years of teaching experience of teachers. The survey questionnaire was distributed among teachers of high school and the researcher asked them to answer the questions honestly. The language is used in the questionnaires was Persian. The interview with each teacher lasted between 20-30 minutes in their additional time about the importance of writing skill. Then the researcher conducted interviews with teachers to elicit their beliefs and ideas about the importance of writing at high schools. Qualitative and quantitative analysis were used to analyze the data that were collected through the questionnaire and the interviews. In this study, frequency, percentage, and mean is used to analyze quantitative data in order to obtain descriptive statistics. Qualitative analysis was also used to analyze the data elicited through interviews.

## RESULT

The main goal of this study was to gather data about the teachers' attitudes of the importance of writing .In this study teachers expressed different ideas about writing and some of these ideas and the analysis of the data collected through teachers' questionnaires are presented in the following. This study had one main research question and this research question is divided to five sub-questions and each question will be interpreted respectively.
a. How Important Is Writing?

Table 4.1:
Beliefs about the importance of writing


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2 I believe teaching of writing skills such as 39\% 55\% 3\% 2\% $1 \%$ punctuation, coherence, cohesion, and organization in high school can cause students to write better at higher level.

3 I believe that writing is an important form of $37 \% \quad 46 \% \quad 8 \% \quad 9 \% \quad 0 \%$ communication.

For item 1, totally 60 percent of teachers believe that writing is important as grammar and vocabulary for students. The mean of item is 2.70.

For item 2, teachers believe that if students get the chance to learn writing skill, they can improve their writing. Totally, $94 \%$ of teachers admitted this item. The mean of item is 4.29 .

For item 3, teachers believe that writing is a kind of communication because everyone can transfer his or her ideas, thoughts, and information to others by writing. Totally 83 percent of teachers admitted this item. The mean of item is 4.11 .

To answer this question, this present study investigated the importance of writing to learn and learning to write from teachers' view. Teachers believe that writing is an important skill, but this skill dose not receive attention and concentration in high schools textbooks. Teachers asserted that students only use writing to answer examination questions. Teachers believe that practice and repetition are necessary elements for learning a language and this repetition and practice is possible through written word and speech. Writing to learn is important from teachers' views because it is used for learning language. Learning to write is important from teachers' view because many teachers practice primary skills and principles of writing with their students in public and private schools.

According to teachers' view the main principles of writing should be taught to students such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing and also writing skills such as punctuation, conjunction, organization, conclusion, introduction, and so on until they be able to write better. Students can learn more with practice and repetition in writing, but unfortunately, principles and rules of writing is taught to students last year of high school and this is very late to learn writing because students have not enough time for practicing writing. Some teachers believe that both of them (writing to learn and learning to write) are important because they complete each other and if both methods are applied in teaching and learning a language, students can learn better language skills because all of the skills are related to each other like a bridge and language consist of all of these skills.

One of the teachers who teach English in public schools asserted that:
I gave to my students writing activities, tasks, and exercises out of class, throughout educational semester and at the end of semester, I observed the majority of my students have progressed in all of the language skills especially in speaking in addition of writing.

Another teacher who had been teaching for 18 years suggested that:
Writing is important for enhancement and achievement of other skills such as listening, speaking, and reading. If students can improve their writing, they can progress in other skills. So, writing is an important means for learning a language and also it is an important tool for transferring ideas and thought on a page.

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Teachers asserted that teaching principles, rules, strategies, and skills of writing to students is necessary because writing different texts and short passages caused to increase students' selfconfidence, to understand language better, to concentrate on their thoughts and ideas, to gain knowledge, to become familiar with grammatical structures, and so on. These teachers asserted that they teach quotation marks, cohesion among sentences, and everything that is needed for a student to know about writing, but this instruction is based on the time of the class.

According to teachers' views writing is important because it motivates students, has a positive impact on their thoughts, and improves their vocabulary knowledge and grammar. Writing can influence language skills especially reading because reading makes students familiar with various texts and can develop their vocabulary repertoire so they can write better. Writing impacts on learning and it is a form of communication with others. Teachers believe that writing is important because it is used for learning language and it is used to write drills and exercises of textbooks. Writing is not only an essential element for learning a language, but it is an important skill which is related to different fields of jobs and everyone needs writing in his/her job. Everyone in this world uses e-mail for doing different works so writing is an important form of communication with others. As a teacher we must teach the rules and principles of writing to students until they can use this skill in future correctly. With writing, we can transfer our ideas and thoughts to others because many people can transfer their speech by writing. Writing is important for enhancement and achievement of other skills such as listening, speaking, and reading.

Teachers, about the importance of writing believe that writing can influence other language skills especially reading, many teachers believe that reading and writing can influence each other. Teachers believe that when students read more, they can write better. With reading, a person can gain better ideas, acquire more knowledge about subjects and write better and easier about topics. With reading, students involve themselves in different aspects of language such as vocabulary, grammar, idioms, metaphor, irony, and so on. Totally, 77 percent of teachers agree that writing is an important skill.

## b. Is it difficult for high school learners?

Table 4.2:

| Ideas |  | $\begin{gathered} \underset{\sim}{0} \\ \underset{\sim}{0} \\ \hline \end{gathered}$ |  |  | Strongest disagree |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 4 Writing is more inborn than learned. | 7\% | 22\% | 11\% | 53\% | 7\% |
| 5 I believe that teaching writing is time consuming. | 24\% | 46\% | 14\% | 14\% | 2\% |
| 6 Writing is more difficult to teach than other language skills. | 33\% | 35\% | 14\% | 17\% | 1\% |
| 7 Teaching writing in English requires more effort than | 30\% | 51\% | 10\% | 9\% | 0\% |

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teaching grammar and vocabulary.

For item 4 , totally $60 \%$ of the teachers believe that writing must be learned, these teachers believe that writing in mother tongue is inborn but in a foreign language it should be taught to students. The mean of item is 2.69 .

Writing is time consuming because when students write about a subject or topic, they will have errors, problems, and mistakes such as grammatical errors, punctuation, quotation marks, and so on in their writings, so teachers should give requisite feedback to their students because of these difficulties and problems. Totally 70 percent of teachers agree with this item. The mean of item is 3.76 .

For Item 6, 68 percent of teachers believe that teaching writing is more challenging than teaching other skills of language. For item 7, $81 \%$ of teachers accept this item and they believe that teaching writing requires more effort than teaching language forms such as words and grammar.

Generally, teachers believe that writing is difficult for students because students transfer their knowledge ,information, thoughts and ideas through writing, they had to use grammatical structures in their sentences and these things make it difficult to students but another reason for difficulty of writing and maybe the main reason is that most teachers do not present this skill with their students much and it is also difficult for teachers because they do not teach writing so much to their students and for this reason writing is difficult for students and teaching of it, is difficult for teachers too.

Teachers asserted that if writing is taught and practiced to students from primary level of high school, students can learn writing and they will be successful in their writing at higher level. Generally, 69 percent of teachers believe that teaching writing is difficult. Most teachers believe that writing is difficult to teach, but they believe that writing is an important skill that is necessary for students to learn it although it is difficult for them.
c. Do high school students need writing?

Table 4.3:
Beliefs about the students' needs of writing at high school

|  | Ideas |  |  | $\begin{aligned} & \stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{0} \\ & \stackrel{0}{\ddot{0}} \\ & \stackrel{0}{c} \end{aligned}$ |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 8 | At high school level, it is not necessary to work writing because students can learn it at higher level. | 4\% | 10\% | 11\% | 64\% | 11\% |
| 9 | I believe that writing sentence at the high school level is sufficient for students. | 5\% | 22\% | 16\% | 50\% | 7\% |

For item $8,75 \%$ of teachers totally believe that it is necessary for students to learn writing at high school level because if students start to learn writing at high school level, many writing problems which encountered at higher level can be solved, so they believe that learning writing at high school level is very important. The mean of item 8 is 2.32 .

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For item $9,57 \%$ of teachers believe that students must be able to write short texts at the high school era. Teachers believe that students need to learn writing for several reasons:

First: It is necessary for students to learn writing because they require to write English sentences correctly.

Second: They must be able to write their daily needs such as e-mail and formal letters.
Third: They need writing because they had to write essay, project, and composition at higher levels. Teachers asserted that students need to learn writing because writing is used at computer virtual ambiences for communication.

Teachers believe that students need writing because it can be effective in learning a language. They believe that practicing, repeating, writing short and interesting texts, reading short stories, summarizing stories, writing about topics that are related to the subjects of lessons, or writing about favorite subjects caused to increase students' knowledge and information about lesson.

Students can develop vocabulary scope, grammar knowledge, and other skills through writing so writing can be effective in learning a language because when students write about a subject they had to read various texts and books therefore students can improve their learning. Totally, $66 \%$ of teachers believe that students need to learn writing at high school level.
d. When should writing be taught?

Table 4.4:
Beliefs about times of teaching writing at high school


For items 10 and $11,60 \%$ and $50 \%$ of teachers respectively believe that it is not necessary for students to be master in the grammar and vocabulary of English because they can learn grammatical structures and can gain vocabulary knowledge through writing so teaching writing is not depended to the students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge. A few teachers believe that students' grammatical and vocabulary knowledge impact on writing since they believe that grammatical knowledge and word knowledge are very important for a good writing. The means of items are 2.59 and 2.87 .

Teachers believe that writing should be taught alongside other language skills such as listening, reading, speaking and language forms such as grammar and vocabulary. Teachers

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believe that the more students write, the better they learn. They asserted that students should learn writing from primary level until they can develop and progress their writing at higher level so teaching writing to students is not depended to students' vocabulary and grammar knowledge or to a specific time.

Totally, $55 \%$ of teachers believe that students should write at high school until they can develop their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Teachers believe that if students write more, they can write better and they can learn grammatical elements and principles of writing.
e. How should writing be taught?

Table 4.5:
Teachers' attitudes about importance and teaching of writing


For item 12, totally, $96 \%$ of teachers accept writing needs regular practice. According to teachers' view regular practice caused students learn writing and rules of writing better because if students practice writing, they will receive feedback from their teachers and this feedback caused to write better and learn more. Also, teachers can teach principles of writing to their students in this way. The mean of item 12 is 4.41 .

For item $13,53 \%$ of teachers asserted that students require to learn grammar and vocabulary for better writing so teaching grammar and vocabulary is important for learning to write at high school level. The mean of item is 3.22 .

For item 14, 66 \% of participants accept this item and they believe that although high school textbooks do not concentrate to the writing skill, they present and practice this important skill with their students and give them out-of-class writing activities and tasks for better learning and in this way they teach writing to their students.

Generally, teachers asserted that to teach writing to students, it is important to start from making sentences for example, introducing themselves, writing simple sentences, writing short and long sentences, and writing short and long texts such as essay and all of these section must be practiced step by step to students. They asserted that these steps are important for how writing should be taught to students:

First: Teachers should explain the purpose of writing to students.
Second: Teachers should instruct principles, rules, and techniques of writing to students such as introduction, conclusion, cohesion, and coherence.

Third: It is necessary for students to learn punctuation marks and conjunctions in writing.
Fourth: It is necessary for students to write more until they learn writing completely.
Some teachers asserted that principles, rules, strategies, and skills of writing should be taught to students and how these principles and rules should be taught to students are depended to the ways which teach writing in their curriculum. Teachers asserted that through writing different texts, passages, and topics, students can become familiar more with rules and principles of writing.

Teachers asserted that they give students different topics to write and then they give feedback to their students and correct primary principles of writing in a given text and in this way, they instruct and teach principles of writing to their students. They believe that regular practice, out of class activities can help students learn more about writing and rules of it.

## DISCUSSTION

When looking at the results of the research question (What are Iranian high school teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of writing at high schools?) and sub-questions of the research question, a. How important is it? And b. Is it difficult for high school learners? We conclude that teachers have high perceptions about the importance of writing skill.

The findings regarding teachers' perception about the importance and teaching of writing (see table $4.1 \&$ table 4.2 ) we find out that teachers have high perceptions about the importance of writing skill because they believe that writing is an important tool for communication, interaction, and relation among people and results indicate that teachers believe that teaching writing is a difficult and complex job. According to Ferede (2012, \& et.al) writing is important from teachers' opinions and the findings of this study is consistent with it. In this study 77 percent of teachers agree that writing is an important skill, but in Ferede's study 100 percent of teachers believe that writing is important but according to Ferede' research (2012, \& et.al) on students, "teachers give little attention to the writing skill"(p.47) although they believe that writing is an important skill.

When looking at the results of the third and fourth part of research question 1 (Do high school students need writing? and section four When should writing be taught? And section five how should writing be taught?) And the findings of tables 4.3 and 4.4 and 4.5 , the majority of teachers believe that writing can be effective in learning a language, and students need writing. According to Ferede's study (2012, \& et.al) 100 percent of teachers believe that students need to learn writing at high school level. In this study, 75 percent of teachers believe that writing is necessary for high school students. They asserted that students can learn better when they write about subjects which are related to their lessons. Through writing, students can learn grammatical structures and new words that are related to their learnings, and also they can increase their vocabulary. In thus study, $55 \%$ of teachers believe that students should write at high school until they can develop their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and there is no need students to master the grammar and vocabulary of language in order to have capacity to write short passages or paragraphs in English. This result is consistent with the Ferede's study (2012, \& et.al, p.48) which demonstrated that "most of the teachers in focus believe that students do not have to master the grammar of the English language in order to be able to write paragraphs and essays".

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According to Shafiee Nahrkhalaji (2012 as cited in Sadeghi \& Bidel Nikou, 2012, p.177),
"ELT textbooks can be motivating for the learners and can enhance the teachers' effectiveness; nevertheless, they may have some disadvantages. ELT course book is not a panacea for all learning and teaching problems. Teacher begins to use the textbook as a crutch. As a result, the needs of the learners are subjugated to the limitations and framework of the textbook".
Teachers asserted that textbooks give little attention to the writing skill and writing skill does not receive attention like other skills equally. Finally, the findings of this study indicate that teachers have positive attitudes toward writing skill and believe writing is an essential element for learning a language and they are agreeable that writing is an important skill, but we must consider that many of teachers in this study do not teach writing to their students. According to Ferede's study (2012, \& et.al., p.51) about the teachers' perceptions of writing and teaching of writing, conclude that although teachers teach writing, but their perceptions of writing in related to the teaching of writing is not consistent. They asserted that:
"The study identified a weak correlation between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching practices. That is, although the teachers believe that writing is as important as listening, speaking, reading, grammar and vocabulary, and that it needs regular practice, they fail to put their beliefs into practice".

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that writing is important from teachers' perspective and they believe that students must learn writing from high school. If students learn to write in high school era, many problems of writing which students encountered with them may be solved. All of the teachers in this study agree that students need to learn principles, rules, and techniques of writing they believe that writing is important because, it helps students improve language forms such as grammar and vocabulary. The result of the research revealed that some of the teachers work writing with their students out-of-class and they give activities and tasks of writing to their students and students receive feedback from their teachers. Teachers asserted that it is important for students to learn writing at high school Level. Therefore, teachers perceive the importance of writing but they are not satisfied ways of textbooks because, they asserted that these textbooks are very old since 25 years ago and these books are not applicable for students so much because they have a few demerits for teaching.

Finally, teachers believe that writing is important because:

1. Writing is important in applying words and grammar within sentences.
2. Writing can be used in real situations such as writing an e-mail.
3. Writing is important to express opinions and also, to answer examination questions.
4. If students can be able to write, they can improve other language skills.
5. Students can learn and memorize the meanings of words better by writing.
6. Writing is important because, it is a tool for communication.
7. In the process of learning a language all of the skills reading, writing, speaking, and listening are important and writing impact on all of the language skills.
8. Students can master in sentence making and can become familiar with language structures through writing.

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9. Writing can improve students' learnings
10. Writing is one of the language skills and this reason is sufficient for the importance of writing.

These results indicate that writing is important from teachers' point of view.

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# THE IMPACT OF PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY 

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#### Abstract

THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION WAS AN ATTEMPT TO EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY. TO THIS END, A PET TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO 90 STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INSTITUTES. LEARNERS WHO SCORED ONE POINT ABOVE AND BELOW THE STANDARD DEVIATION WERE SELECTED. FORTY LEARNERS WERE SELECTED AND THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO AN EXPERIMENTAL AND A CONTROL GROUP, EACH CONTAINING 20 LEARNERS. A SPEAKING TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO BOTH GROUPS AS A PRE-TEST TO TEST THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF PRONUNCIATION. THE SPEAKING SECTION OF THE PET TEST WAS SELECTED TO TEST THE PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY OF THE PARTICIPANTS. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP RECEIVED 15 SESSIONS OF TREATMENT IN LEARNING HOW TO TRANSCRIBE WORDS. THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED NO TREATMENT. FINALLY BOTH GROUPS SAT FOR THE POST-TEST OF THE SAME SPEAKING TEST. THE RESULTS WERE ANALYZED THROUGH ANCOVA AND IT WAS FOUND OUT THAT PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY.

KEY WORDS: PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION, PRONUNCIATION, ACCURACY


## 1. INTRODUCTION

For most people, the ability to speak a foreign language is synonymous with knowing that language because speech is for them the basic means of human communication. English learners no longer expect the traditional approach of their teachers based on developing mainly the grammatical competence and using methodology popular in the past. Today, teachers are

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expected to provide their students with useful active knowledge of the foreign language, not just theory about the language.
An important goal of many language learners, teachers, and program and material designers is foreign language fluency and accuracy. To communicate clearly and naturally with native speakers of a language is the end that makes the means of studying, memorizing vocabulary, and practicing the language worth the effort. However it is not possible to communicate fluently and accurately without correctly pronouncing the English words.
Pronunciation is one of the most important skills in English Language Teaching. It is an integral part of foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence as well as performance. If speakers have very bad pronunciation, their speech will not be understandable to the listeners. Apparently, the fault which most severely impairs the communication process in EFL/ESL learners is pronunciation, not vocabulary or grammar (Hinofotis and Baily (1980), cited in Okita (1999)). Despite the fact that acquiring pronunciation is so difficult, in many ESL/EFL classrooms, teaching pronunciation is granted the least attention.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Pronunciation is one of the key skills in English Language Teaching. It is an important part of foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence as well as performance. If speakers have very bad pronunciation, their speech will not be understandable to the listeners. Apparently, the fault which most severely impairs the communication process in EFL/ESL learners is pronunciation, not vocabulary or grammar (Hinofotis and Baily (1980), cited in Okita (1999)).

Despite the fact that acquiring pronunciation is so difficult, in many ESL/EFL situations, teaching pronunciation is granted the least attention. Moreover, many researchers have found that there are many English teachers who are not proficient and lack confidence, skill and knowledge in pronunciation teaching (Derwing \& Munro, 2005: 389). Consequently, many learners of English language have major difficulties with English pronunciation even after years of learning the language. Some of the major problems learners faced with pronunciation learning in ESL/EFL classrooms are: the first language interference, age, lack of exposure to the target language, and not well-trained teachers who frequently do not pay enough attention to pronunciation instruction and also have their own pronunciation problems.

## 3. Significance of the study

This study derives its significance from the significance of the errors and the objectives that addresses. Therefore, investigating such pronunciation errors might provide EFL teachers valuable insight into the language learning process. Once the causes of committing such errors are discovered, then it is probable to conclude and decide the remedy. Furthermore, as this study focuses mainly on the interference between Farsi and English, conducting such a study may help the EFL teachers to become more familiar with the concept of pronunciation accuracy.

The findings of this study might provide more insights into the acquisition of English pronunciation by Iranian EFL learners as its main focus on the students' pronunciation errors with respect to the English word pronunciations. It adds to the few studies so far conducted in the area of phonetic transcription of EFL learners in general and Iranian EFL learners, in particular.

## 4. Review of the Related Literature

According to Peters (2010), language students are among the beneficiaries of recent advances in technology, especially those associated with computers and the Internet; millions of them utilize these technological marvels for their educational purposes.

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In this respect Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) noted that recent technology-associated changes and advances have led to the borrowing of a large number of English words by other languages, including Farsi.As Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996) point out, most loan words undergo spelling-associated and pronunciation-related changes when absorbed by and incorporated into other languages. Hence, it can be said that EFL learners and students whose mother languages have absorbed English loan words are likely to find it difficult to adhere to the accurate pronunciation of such words. It can further be said that such learners are likely to commit errors while using English loan words. The available literature illustrates that English loan words pose certain problems for non-native learners and students of English (Bator, 2010; Partington, 1998; Swan \& Smith, 2001). Further, a number of researchers have focused specifically on the area of pronunciation and have reported that English loan words present non-native learners and students from different linguistic backgrounds with a number of pronunciationrelated problems (Daulton, 2008; Oksefjel, 1999; Perfetti, Rieben \& Fayol, 1997; Viereck, Carstensen \& Bald, 1986).
Alireza Hojati (2012) carried out an investigation with the aim of determining the extent to which a group of undergraduate Iranian EFL students studying at Sheikhbahaee University could accurately pronounce ten commonly-used technology-associated loan words with regard to two criteria: the placement of word stress and the pronunciation of words' sounds. 50 students were randomly drawn from among the foregoing university's students. Each student was given the chance to pronounce each of the ten loan words in and out of context. The students' oral performance was recorded and then was subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis revealed that the errors' frequencies were relatively high with respect to most words and very high with regard to two words. The qualitative analysis, which was done utilizing the literature of contrastive phonetics and pronunciation systems of Farsi and English, helped partly explaining many of the students' errors and highlighting the need for the devotion of more pedagogical and research attention to the problems confronting Farsi-speakers in the area of the pronunciation of loan words.

## 5. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted with 40 Iranian students who are studying English at different institutes in Iran. Researcher tried to have the same number of female and male participants in both experimental and control group.

### 5.1 Data Analysis Procedure

The results of post test were analyzed for further discussion via ANCOVA on the scores obtained from experimental and control group to see whether phonetic transcription had any effects on EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy.

## 6. Results

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT (Oxford Placement Test) test. The results are shown in Table (4-1).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

| $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | SD |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 90 | 32 | 10.32 |

This table shows the result obtained from the proficiency test, PET. The mean and standard deviation are presented.
Table (4-2) shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one excluded.

Table 2: Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test Cases

| Included | Excluded <br> Percent | N | Total <br> Percent | N | Percent |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pre-test* ${ }^{*}$ group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |
| Post-test ${ }^{*}$ group | 40 | $100 \%$ | 0 | $0 \%$ | 40 | $100 \%$ |

Forty participants were selected for this study. They were divided into two groups, experimental and control. The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in table (4-3).

Table 3: Descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test

| Group |  | Pre-test | Post-test |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Experimental | Mean | 59.9 | 68.4 |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 20 |  |
| Control | SD | 4.8 | 20 |
|  | Mean | 58.45 | 4.7 |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 20 | 58.1 |
| Total | SD | 5.64 | 20 |
|  | Mean | 59.15 | 5.2 |
|  | $\mathbf{N}$ | 40 | 63.25 |
|  | SD | 5.216 | 40 |
|  |  |  | 7.121 |

## 7. Interpretive Statistics

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is particularly appropriate when subjects in two or more groups are found to differ on a pre-test or other initial variable. In this case the effects of the pretest and/or other relevant variables are partialled out, and the resulting adjusted means of the post-test scores are compared. Through ANCOVA differences in the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared as though their initial status had been equated.
In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis "phonetic transcription does not affect Iranian learners' pronunciation accuracy", the differences between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA.
Before running ANCOVA, the following hypotheses were examined:
$\square$ Linear relationship between variables (pre-test and post -test)
$\square$ Equality of variances
$\square$ Homogeneity of regression
$\square$ The linear relationship between pre-test and post-test was examined through spread


As graph(1) shows, because the regression lines are parallel, there is a linear relationship between the two variables, pre-test and post-test. It means that the relationship between the two variables in both groups is the same. In order to examine the equality of variances, Levines Test of Equality of Error Variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
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Table 4: Levine's Test of Equality of Error Variance

| F | $\mathrm{df1}$ | df 2 | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| .517 | 1 | 18 | .481 |

According to table 4 the calculated $F$ is not significant. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.
The data in table (4.6) are related to test of homogeneity of regression. Before running covariance, between-subjects effects of pre-test-group should be investigated.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

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|  | $\begin{array}{l}\text { Type III Sum of } \\ \text { Squares }\end{array}$ |  | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | \(\left.\begin{array}{l}Partial <br>

Squared\end{array}\right]\) Eta

As table 5 shows, between subjects effect $(a, b)$ is not significant ( $F=0.075, \operatorname{sig}=0.787$ ). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between - subjects effect of post-test and the group to show whether mean scores of the two groups are the same or not. The result of this analysis is demonstrated in table 6 .

Table 4.6: Mean of pronunciation accuracy

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| pretest | 20 | 18.00 | 25.00 | 21.5000 | 1.96013 |
| posttest | 20 | 28.00 | 39.00 | 33.0500 | 2.87411 |

Valid N (listwise) 20

Table 6 shows the means of dependent variable of pronunciation accuracy. The data demonstrate that the means of experimental group are upper than control group. Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of pronunciation accuracy in experimental and control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table 7.

Table 7: Sum of analysis of covariance

| Source | Type lll Sum of Square df | Mean Score | F |  | Sig | Partial Eta Squared |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Corrected Model | 1879.415 | 2 | 939.71 | 354.48 | .00 | .95 |
| Pretest | 818.52 | 1 | 818.52 | 308.76 | .00 | .89 |
| Group | 805.42 | 1 | 805.48 | 303.84 | .00 | .89 |
| Error | 98.08 | 37 | 2.65 |  |  |  |
| Total | 46200 | 40 |  |  |  |  |

As it can be seen, the corrected model ( $\mathrm{f}=00, \mathrm{~F}=354.48$ ) is statistically significant. The results ( $\mathrm{F}=303.84, \mathrm{Sig}=.00, \mathrm{Eta}=.89$ ) shows that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is significance difference between experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis "Phonetic transcription has no effects on Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy" will be rejected, so it can be concluded that e-learning has an effect on Iranian EFL Learners listening comprehension ability.

## 8. Conclusion

The results indicate that there was a significant difference between the performances of the two groups after the special treatment was given to the experimental group. In fact, participants in the experimental group outperformed the control group. Analysis of data gathered revealed that there was a significant progress in the experimental group of the study from the pretest to the

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posttest, whereas there was no significant progress in the control group of the study from the pre-test to the post-test. This led to the rejection of null hypothesis which stated that using phonetic transcription of words does not affect Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy. And it can be concluded that using phonetic transcription of words does have a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation improvement. Thus, the findings suggest that phonetic transcription benefits the participants of the experimental group in pronunciation improvement and help them pronounce the words of English language more accurately. The results of the study showed that this method have facilitated learners' pronunciation learning in the experimental group.
Teachers generally sacrifice teaching pronunciation in order to spend valuable class time on other areas of language so pronunciation practice is very unlikely to occur. Thus, it is important that the students themselves try more to overcome their pronunciation difficulties. Pronunciation can be improved by awareness and repetition and not just repetition of the sounds. If students do not have an opportunity to practice good pronunciation at the beginning of their learning, they may build their habits in the wrong way. By using phonetic transcription instead of audio recordings or time consuming techniques such as "repeat after me", much time can be saved. When we transcribe a word or an utterance, we illustrate a direct specification of its pronunciation. Especially in the case of Iran that students are not exposed to English and the time used for English language instruction is very constrained and also teachers are not perfect and have their own pronunciation problems, using phonetic transcription is very useful and enables the language learners to obtain precise and explicit information on pronunciation. The International Phonetic Alphabet is very easy to learn, and in many situations the use of phonetic transcription can save time and facilitate the teaching of concepts related to the spoken language. Also it takes only a few hours to learn the IPA and use it.

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# WHAT'S HIDDEN IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS? 

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#### Abstract

TEXTBOOKS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE BASIC ELEMENT OF MOST CURRICULA. WHAT MUST BE BORN IN MIND IS THAT THESE TEXTBOOKS ARE NOT ONLY A MEDIUM OF TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE, BUT THEY ALSO INCULCATE AN IDEOLOGY. THIS IS IN PARTICULAR TRUE ABOUT LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS SINCE LANGUAGE IS THE MEANS OF TRANSFERRING IDEOLOGY. WHAT'S MORE, APART FROM LANGUAGE, THEY REFLECT CULTURE. LANGUAGE TEACHERS SHOULD NOT TAKE THE ISSUE OF IDEOLOGY FOR GRANTED. BEING AWARE OF THE HIDDEN PART OF THE BOOKS AIDS TEACHING LANGUAGE MORE EFFECTIVELY. THIS ARTICLE IS AN ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF A NUMBER OF STUDIES IN THIS FIELD.


KEY WORDS: LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS, IDEOLOGY, CULTURE

## 1.Introduction

Recently, there has been a growing interest in learning English in non-English-speaking countries. That is because English enables people from all over the world to communicate with one another. By learning English, not only people learn the language, but also they learn social behavior and the attitude of those who speak it. There are numerous ways to express one's intention, however, people use the language based on what they want to say. The language used is also affected by the speaker's attitude. This means that textbook producers can inculcate their ideology through the language used in textbooks. In addition to verbal language, nonverbal elements of textbooks can be ideologically loaded. As culture is an indispensable component of language, it forms part of the ideology in language textbooks. Regarding the influence of ideology and in particular culture, there are several views which will be discussed in the following sections presenting studies on ideology and culture presentation in language textbooks taught locally and internationally.

## 2. Language and Ideology

Ideology is defined as "a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view" (Kress\& Hodge, 1979, p.6). Language and ideology are closely related. Fairclaugh (2010, p.59) claims that "language is a material form of ideology and it is invested by ideology." He believes that language use is affected by social relations and processes which in turn influence its properties, including linguistic forms that appear in texts. According to Kress and Hodge (1979), language is not only a means of communication, but also an instrument for manipulation. Meaning the hearer is both manipulated and informed. They also believe that language can be distorted in the service of a particular social class of people. They introduced the term language ideology associated with control and power.

Language ideology has been defined in different ways. Silverstein (1979, p. 193) defined it as "a set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use." As Irvine (1998, p.56) put it, language ideology is "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests." As is implied, Irvine emphasizes the fact that beliefs and ideas are transferable through language but hidden under a masque. Rumsy (1990, p. 346; cited in Woolard, 1994) gives a broad definition and considers language ideology as "shared bodies of common sense notions about the nature of language in the world." Johnson (2008, p. 66) specifies some aspects of language ideology. According to her, language ideology is " beliefs about how communication works, beliefs about linguistic correctness, goodness and badness, articulation and inarticulation, beliefs about the role of language in a person's identity, how languages are learned, what the functions of language should be, who authorities on language are, and whether and how usage should be legislated."

Language ideology has gained recognition in the field of language teaching because, as mentioned above ideas, beliefs, and culture can all be transmitted through language and influence language learners.

## 3. Discourse and CDA

Discourse in Bloor \& Bloor's (2007, p.6) view, refers to "all the phenomena of symbolic interaction and communication between people, usually through spoken or written language and visual representation." According to Woods(2006, p.x), discourse is "language plus context that we bring with us when we use language; the context that includes our experience, assumptions and expectations; the context that we change in our relationships with others, as we both construct and negotiate our way through the social practice of the world we live in."

Fairclaugh (2010) believes that discourse consists of three elements: social practice, discoursal practice (text production, distribution and consumption), and text. He hypothesizes that different features of a text, ways in which texts are put together and interpreted, and the nature of the social practice are all connected to each other. If a text is to be analyzed, all the three elements should be considered.

One of the methods of discourse analysis is called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It is "the analysis of the relations between discourse and other objects as well as the analysis of the internal relations of discourse" (Fairclaugh, 2010, p. 4). It includes not only linguistics but also areas such as sociology and politics; that's why CDA is called an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary form of analysis (Fairclaugh, 2010). Apart from being transdisciplinary, Fairclaugh (2010) considers two other properties for CDA: being relational and dialectical.
The primary focus of CDA is on social relations which are complex and layered. Only if different sets of relations are analyzed, discourse is understood. What's more, these relations are dialectical and between objects that are different from each other but not discrete. In fact, they flow into each other (e.g discourse and power).

Why is it called critical? It is critical as it deals with values of a good society and of human well-being. It emphasizes the wrong aspects of society as well as on how they should be corrected (Fairclaugh, 2010).

One of the main aims of CDA is studying the effect of power relations in producing the wrong aspects of society and how they affect other relations in social life (Fairclaugh, 2010).This paper tries to review the CDA studies on language textbooks to show how ideology and power are expressed implicitly in these books.

## 4. Textbooks and Ideology

When studying a textbook, particularly a language textbook, one may superficially think that they are learning only words and structures. However, it is not actually the case. Textbooks are never neutral. Behind every word, structure, and even picture are hidden concepts and meanings picked up by the readers consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, textbooks are in fact means of shaping readers ideas, attitudes and identities.
"Identity does not exist naturally, it is something always constructed in relation to identity of groups other than our own" (Da Silva, 1999, p.17). Schools are places where "cultural ideologies are recreated, maintained and continuously built" (Brown, 2011, p.9). This happens both through talk in class as well as through the textbooks being studied. According to Da Silva (1999), knowledge expressed in a curriculum is realistic in nature, but this does not mean that curriculum is only means of knowledge transmission, rather it is a representation carrying a kind of policy. In sum, Da Silva (1999, p.7) states "the text that constitute curriculum is not simply a text, it is a text of power." The concept of ideology has always been associated with power. Fairclaugh (2010) suggests that discourse is endowed with ideology as it either supports or diminish power. He goes on to say that even in scientific and theoretical discourse power relations can be affected by discourse practices. Language textbooks are not an exception. In order to identify the hidden ideology in language textbooks, researchers have done several CDA studies. A review of some related research will be discussed here.

Hosseini Saadabadi and Bagherzadeh Kasmani (2014) investigated the representation of male and female social actors in Summit Series. They found out that male and female social actors are represented differently with regard to both their characteristics and their social roles which they represent. Males are depicted as more active, successful, independent and assertive comparing to females. What's more, female actors are shown to be engaged in less critical social functions than do males. Interestingly, as the researchers assert, a surface view of the book indicates that females are considered as active social actors, which is contrary to the results of CDA. On the whole, females are subordinated in Summit Series. In terms of a differential representation of male and female social actors, Abdollahzade and Baniasad (2009) reached the same results. Through analyzing Spectrum and True to Life textbooks, they found three sorts of ideologies: consumerism, sexism, and superiority of English. Entertainments, fashion, shopping, and technology are the means through which consumerism is presented. In addition, superiority of English is reflected through cultural stereotypes and superiority of English-speaking countries. Nofal and Qawar (2015) investigated gender representation in a textbook called Action Pack 10 taught in Jordan. Linguistic and visual analysis were done. As the authors state, Action Pack 10 was an attempt to mirror modern Jordanian society. However, the results of their study showed that the efforts were failed. Though, in modern Jordan society women have excellent positions, in this book their role is not prominent. It was indicated that linguistically, visually, and socially male characters are overpresented. Giaschi (2000) analyzed the images in the $4^{\text {th }}$ Dimension of Headway series in terms of activity of the image, the active and passive person in the image, the status of the persons, the body language, the clothing, and the direction of the participants' gaze. As the results revealed, work environment was emphasized the most frequently in the photos followed by fashion and entertainment respectively. The active roles and high status were given to men. Women were shown to be weak and submissive. Regarding clothing, men were represented in three modes: casual, professional, and power-dressed. However, women were depicted in baroque period dresses, futuristic lame', and fun clothing. Even women's eye direction was in a way that implies their dependence on men whereas for men it created a sense of strength and determination. On the whole, males and females were presented quite differently.

Nakamura (2002) investigated stories of Japanese Senior High School textbooks to probe the images of women. To do so, quantitative and qualitative analysis were done. The results from quantitative analysis showed that men were portrayed in the stories significantly more than women. Gender relationships were analyzed qualitatively. It was indicated that in these stories men are connected with friendship, adventure, self-control, warm-heartedness, and achievement while women are depicted to be emotional, unreliable, seducing, cunning, and guilty.

However, it was found in some other studies that a number of ELT textbooks either favor females or represent the two genders equally. Mineshima (2008) also did a study on uppersecondary English classes in Japan. The results were different from Nakamura's. Gender visibility, character attributes, and picture representations were examined. It was found that both genders were presented equally in the number of male and female characters, their utterances, school subjects, occupations, interests and family roles. Parham (2013), concerning the belief that reading materials affect children's gender identity, studied gender representation in conversations, illustrations, and graphic design of the cover in nine packages developed to teach English to young children. The results indicated that in conversations, females were represented equally as men. Furthermore, in $30 \%$ of the conversations females were the initiator of the conversation. However, the analysis of the conversations revealed under-presentation of females. In terms of the graphic design of the cover no differential representation of the two genders was observed. This shows an attempt to give the idea of equality of the two sexes to children. Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2014) have also probed the representation of social actors. In order to do so they analyzed Interchange textbooks. Interestingly, in these books females are manifested as more successful, active, assertive and expressive in comparison with males. Furthermore, prestigious jobs have been assigned to women. As the authors point out, this form of representation aims at emphasizing that women are as important as men in society and tries to highlight women's role. Tahriri and Moradpour (2014) investigated gender representation in Top Notch series. They considered three aspects of gender: relations, positions, and content. It was indicated that stereotypical norms established in learners' minds are almost removed. Nevertheless, Tajeddin and JanebiEnayat (2010) studied the images in Top Notch series and two other books, New Headway and Iran Language Institute textbooks (published locally). The results showed that in the images of the three books men appear to be more active, socially important, breadwinners, and powerful in comparison with women. However, the authors emphasize that the Iran Language Institute textbooks showed more gender equality. They go on to say that in spite of all the feminist movements worldwide, locally developed books demonstrate less gender bias comparing to the international ones. Amerian and Amerian (2014) also analyzed Top Notch series but in terms of E-life style in this book. The results indicated that the books mainly include using technology for E-shopping, E-reservation, online communication, and using technology and electronic resources for research. He concluded that ELT course book authors consider E-lifestyle as an important and necessary part of textbooks.

Based on the findings of research, it seems that textbooks still need more attention from the authorities in terms of the ideology they represent.

## 5. Culture

Kramsch (1998, p.10) defines culture as "membership in a discourse community that shares a common space and history and common imagining." From Linton 's (1945) point of view, it is "a configuration of learned behaviors whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society" (p.32). Some scholars have defined different types of culture. Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p.204-5) consider three types of culture: source culture, target culture, and international culture. Source culture is native culture of the learner while target culture is the culture of the countries where English is spoken as first language. However, international culture is the culture amalgamation of English and non-English countries. Researchers assign different levels of importance to different types of culture. Byram et al. (1991), highlight the necessity of presenting target culture when teaching a foreign language, they believe that learning the target

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culture helps the learners use language in its original setting more effectively. Cortazzi and Jin (1999), are in favor of source culture as it enables the students to talk about their own culture in English. Nevertheless, Wesch (2004) thinks exposure to foreign culture may result in alienation from one's own culture. Therefore, native culture must also be presented in text books.

Adaskou, Bitten, and Fashi (1990, p.3-4) categorize different types of culture in another way:
i. The aesthetic sense culture or culture with capital " C ". It includes media, cinema, music and literature.
ii.The sociological sense culture or culture with small "c". It includes the nature and organization of family, home life, interpersonal relations, material conditions, customs and institutions.
iii.The semantic sense culture (occupations and thought processes).
iv.The pragmatic sense culture (social skills, communication functions, appropriacy, etc).

Culture and language are believed to be inter-related and inter-dependent. Therefore, teaching a second or foreign language is always accompanied by culture. It is notable that representation of culture is a delicate issue which must be considered by both textbook authors and teachers.

### 5.1 Culture in Textbooks

Textbooks comprise the most reliable source for students and teachers, and are central to most language teaching curricula. As language and culture are inseparable, naturally language textbooks contain various forms of culture representations. Different books seem to manifest different types of culture as defined above. Some focus on target culture, some on source culture, and others on international culture. Scholars such as Prodromou (1992) insist on a cross-cultural approach to language teaching with the belief that it makes the students aware of different cultures around the world, and as a result they care more about other nations. Learning culture of different nations assist learners in communicating with them in an authentic context. Although raising students' cultural awareness is crucial, care must be taken by the teachers to avoid valuing a particular culture. Teachers can introduce other cultures to the students and meanwhile teach them not to compare their own culture with others and keep respecting their own cultural norms. Many researchers have investigated culture representation in the books currently taught all over the world. What follows is a review of a number of such studies.

Farzaneh, Kohandani, and Nejadansari (2014) evaluated the cultural content of Top Notch series by giving a questionnaire to teachers and supervisors. The results showed that teachers and supervisors found the intercultural content of the book satisfying. The study manifested that developing intercultural communication is emphasized in the series. Regarding cultural awareness, the book seems to be neutral. The researchers suggest that cultural diversities be presented in a way that promotes students' sensitivity. Concerning teaching culture, no value should be assigned to a particular culture; furthermore, students' tolerance of other cultures must be strengthen, as the researchers remind. In a more in-depth study, Tajeddin and Teimournejad (2015) analyzed an internationally well-known series, Top Notch: English for today's world and a locally published book, the Iran Language Institute books. For this purpose they used two frameworks: Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Adaskon, Britten and Fahsi (1990). As English is a lingua franka, it can be attributed to different cultures (Baker, 2011; Cogo, 2012; Kachru, 2011 cited in Tajeddin and Teimournejad, 2015). Therefore, cultures of a variety of countries must be included in ELT textbooks. The findings of Tajeddin and Teimournejad's (2015) study indicated that the localized textbooks represented culturally neutral elements because they didn't refer to any particular culture and even only a few elements of the target culture exist. In addition, in the localized textbooks the sociological aspect of culture was emphasized more than the aesthetic ones. However, Top Notch series contained intercultural elements most of which emphasized aesthetic aspect of culture. Culture of English speaking countries was more prominent in Top Notch series while just a few culturally neutral elements were found. Bahrami (2015) studied the representation of culture in Total English book series taught in Iran. She studied teachers'
perception using a questionnaire adopted from Kilickaya (2004). It was found that the book presents western culture and appreciates it more than other ones. Furthermore, the culture included in Total English series is not in harmony with Iranian culture. Using the model proposed by Ramirez and Halls (1990), Aliakbari (2004) studied four high school textbooks taught in Iran. The results revealed that these books do not promote students' intercultural knowledge. The books seem to distract attention from cultural points as the focus is on science rather than on areas such as art and literature. What's more, the books do not contain information about other countries. Only $20 \%$ of the content covers information of this type. The researcher believes that if the goal is to prepare students to communicate in multicultural world of English, making a change in Iranian English textbooks is necessary. To analyze the behavior of culture in the ELT textbooks adopted in high school level in China, Jamalvandi (2013) used the model proposed by Ramirez and Hall (1999), the findings indicated a differential representation of culture aspects. That is to say, some elements such as literature, art, humanities, and history were presented more than some others like family relationships, religion, government, law and justice. $40 \%$ of the references were made to the target culture and $35 \%$ to the source culture. It is notable that only $6 \%$ of the references are made to eastern countries. Overall, an unequal representation of different culture dimensions was found which, according to the researcher, suggests the inadequacy of the book with regard to cultural knowledge. The study of the book Oxford Progressive English, taught in Pakistan, by Shah, Ahmed, and Mahmood (2014) focusing on the sociocultural sense of culture showed that the book manifests American and British culture and society and source culture is ignored. Furthermore, the presented culture is not relevant to learners' needs. With regard to different aspects of culture, it was found that "organization and nature of family" of the target culture was emphasized. The researchers assert that the book aims to impart the western culture, religion, and beliefs to the learners. Mahmood, Asghar, and Hussain (2012) studied one of the textbooks taught in Pakistan called Step Ahead 1. The study was aimed at investigating whether source culture, target culture, or both are presented in the book. Bayram et al. model was used to probe the cultural content of the book. Culture aspects such as social identity, beliefs and behaviors, sociopolitical institutes, socialization and life style, national history, geography, and stereotypes were studied. Findings indicated that the book does not contain ample information about the target culture, nor does it present source culture. In fact the book presents Singaporean culture. The researchers believe that Step Ahead must be revised in terms of target and source culture. An investigation aimed at identifying the representation of foreign cultures in Longman Elect and Treasure Plus series taught in Hong-Kong was done by Yuen (2011). Four aspects of culture were studied: products (e.g food, travel, film), perspectives (e.g inspiration, world-view, etc), practices (e.g customs, daily life, etc), and persons (famous people). Results showed that products from other countries appeared more than Englishspeaking countries, content on practices was limited, content on perspectives was even less than that of products and practices, and persons were from English -speaking countries. On the whole, the emphasis is on the cultures of English-speaking countries, and other cultures mainly African culture are under-presented. Hillard (2014) studied four textbooks taught to adults around the world. The framework used was a combination of Risager's (1991), Sercu's (in Grag, 2010), and Grag (2010) to focus on multiple levels, and the analysis of accents and varieties of English in audio material. The results revealed that the textbooks under-present a number of different people, they contain unrealistic and superficial views of other cultures, and do not provide the students with enough activities for developing their intercultural awareness.

As one of the purposes of learning English is to communicate with people from all over the world, and due to the positively influential role of culture in easing communication, it is recommended that international culture rather than source and target culture be presented in language textbooks. Therefore, students will learn about other nations and how to communicate with them.

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## 6. Concluding Remarks

According to the studies reviewed, language learning goes far beyond learning structure, vocabulary, and phonology. In fact, language can be applied to impose control and power, in general, ideology. People who study language course books may not be aware of the hidden ideology in the books, but they can be affected by it unconsciously. Therefore, when choosing a textbook, educators should consider the implicit ideology in the book to avoid engaging students in contradictory ideas and beliefs. In terms of culture as a form of ideology which is closely related to language and impossible to be ignored, teachers should be careful not to value a particular culture so that students' respect for their own culture will not be harmed.

Results of the studies indicate that the stakeholders need to work more on the content of language course books with regard to ideology. Books should reflect what is wise and moral if they are to shape learners' thoughts.

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# APPLICABILITY OF BAKER'S FRAMING STRATEGIES: A CASE STUDY OF MEMRI'S PERSIAN INTO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY SOUGHT TO IDENTIFY DIFFERENT STRATEGIES OF FRAMING IN MEMRI'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PERSIAN NEWS ABOUT IRAN. TO THIS END TWO ENGLISH TEXTS IN MEMRI ABOUT IRAN WERE SELECTED AND DIFFERENT STRATEGIES OF FRAMING WERE IDENTIFIED IN SELECTED CORPUSES. THE SOURCE TEXT OF THIS NEWS WAS A SPEECH BY YOUNESI, ADVISOR TO IRANIAN PRESIDENT ROHANI ON MARCH 8, 2015 ABOUT THE EMPIRE OF IRAN DELIVERED AT THE "IRAN NATIONALISM, HISTORY, AND CLLTURE" CONFERENCE IN IRAN AND JANNATI'S SERMON ON FEBRUARY 21, 2014 ABOUT IRAN'S FIRST OPTION. THE RESULT SHOWED THAT MEMRI USED STRATEGIES OF SELECTION OF TRANSLATED TEXTS FROM THE WORST POSSIBLE EXAMPLES OF IRANIAN DISCOURSE, CHANGING THE TITLE OF A TEXT TO FRAME THE NARRATIVES AS DANGEROUS AND EXTREMIST, INSERTING IMAGES WITH SUITABLE CAPTION AND LINKING TO A VIDEO CLIP IN THESE TWO CORPUSES. SO ALL THESE STRATEGIES HELP MEMRI REPRESENT IRAN AS THREATENING FOR SECURITIES AND BORDERS OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED STATES.


KEYWORDS: NARRATIVE THEORY, MEMRI, SELECTION, CHANGING THE TITLE, INSERTING IMAGES, LINKING TO A VIDEO CLIP.

## Introduction

Communication has an important role in life. This communication happens by the use of language but languages of different countries are not the same over the world. This is where the need for translation and translator emerges. Bell (1991, p. 13) introduced three definitions for translation:
(1) translating: the process (to translate, the activity rather than the tangible object); (2) a translation: the product of the process of translating (i.e. the translated text); (3) translation: the abstract concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process.

Bell (1992, p. 15) stated that "the translator has been defined as a "bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities'". He (1991) explained that the translator decode the transmitted messages in the source text and reencodes them in the target text. So today's translation becomes the subject of attention in which a new discipline called translation studies has been developed which is "related to the study of the theory and phenomena of translation" (Munday, 2001, p.1).Every day new theories and approaches have been introduced by scholars, new areas of study have been entered into the discipline, and new disciplines have emerged such as translation and gender, translation as rewriting and so on.

Narrative theory is one of the recent notions which has entered into translation studies. Baker (2007, p.151) defined narratives as "the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live, and it is our belief in these stories that guides our actions in the real world". "Narrative" and "story" are used interchangeably. According to Fisher, narration is " the context for interpreting and assessing all communication- not a mode of discourse laid on by a creator's deliberate choice but the shape of knowledge as we first apprehend $\mathrm{it}^{\prime \prime}$ ( $1987, \mathrm{p}$. 193). Baker (2006) mentioned that the way of our thinking and acting are guided by the stories we tell ourselves and our actions and behaviours effect on those around us. She (2006) said the stories other people make of us are indispensable for framing of our behaviour and our physical and mental survival. Baker (2006, p.31) noted that "the way others 'story' us can have very concrete implications for our material, professional, social and psychological well-being". She (2006) said the way others story us can have good or bad effects on our physical and mental survival for instance it can make us feel good or bad about ourselves. Naovitz (1997, p.154) said we become "the beneficiaries, victims, or play thing of the narratives that others create and push in our direction". Baker (2006) also mentioned that narrative not only makes reality but also represents it so standing outside any narrative to see it objectively is impossible. However this embededdness does not prevent the ability of reasoning and thinking about individual narratives.

Baker (2007, p.156) stated that:
The notion of framing is closely connected to the question of how narrative theory allows us to consider the immediate narrative turn allows us to see translational choices not merely as local linguistic challenges but as contributing directly to the narratives that shape our social world.

Baker (2007) said for the purpose of elaborated in the text being translated or interpreted and the larger narratives in which the text is embedded, and how this in setting up an interpretive context for the reader and hearer, the process of reframing includes the use of any linguistic or non-linguistic resources. This resources can be linguistic such as tense shifts, dexis, code switching, and the use of euphemisms or paralinguistic and typography and visual resources such as color, image and layout. For setting up a text for reader or hearer, translators or interpreters can use features of narrativity such as temporality, relationality, selective appropriation and causal employment.

This study seeks to identify different strategies of framing around the translation in MEMRI's English translation of some Persian news about Iran. Whitaker (2002) stated that in this site the selection of the source text stories for translation follows a familiar pattern, these stories either promote Israel's political agenda or they show Arabs' character badly. The Mayor of London, Livingstone, describes MEMRI as a 'very well-funded' organization 'which specializes in finding quotes from Arab media for circulation in the West. The translation and selection of quotes tend to portray Islam in a very negative light' (2005,
p.4). Harris (2003) also said for portraying opponents of occupation as religious extremist, MEMRI publishes selective and decontextualized experts of the Arabian press.

MEMRI's own site (httpl:/ /memri.org) describes the organization as follows "The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) explores the Middle East through the region's media. MEMRI bridges the language gap which exists between the West and the Middle East, providing timely translations of Arabic, Farsi, and Hebrew media, as well as original analysis of political, ideological,
intellectual, social, cultural, and religious trends in the Middle East.
Baker's (2007) different strategies of framing around translation has been selected as the theoretical framework of this study. She introduced the strategies of framing around the translation as follow: (a) By selecting translated texts from the worst possible examples of Arabian discourse, MEMRI frames Arab world as threatening (b) by changing the title of a text to frame the narratives as dangerous and extremist (c) inserting images with suitable caption d) by linking to English translation a video clip. (e) By using paratexts. This strategy is a way of framing in book translations. Paratexts include cover images and blurb, introductions, prefaces and footnotes, prefaces and introductions are provided by translators but cover images and blurbs are not

So to in this study, English translated texts in MEMRI about Iran are selected and according to Baker's (2007) different strategies of framing around the text, these strategies are identified in the selected corpuses. The source texts of these news are a speech by Younesi, advisor to Iranian president Rohani on March 8, 2015 about the empire of Iran which was delivered at the "Iran Nationalism, History, and Culture" conference in Iran and Jannati's sermon on February 21, 2014 in Friday sermon.

## Review of Literature

Bennett and Edelman (1985, p.160) noted that "The awareness that every acceptance of a narrative involves a rejection of others makes the issue politically and personally vital. In a critical sense the differences among competing narratives give all of them their meanings".

They (1985) also noted that people's point of view of morality, of objectivity, of rationality are formed by narratives.

Bruner (1991, p.5-6) also said "[t]he central concern is not how narrative as text is constructed, but rather how it operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality".

Blum-Kulka and Liebes (1993) examined different ways of framing the Palestinian Intifida by Israeli soldiers in occupied territories. They conducted 22 interviews with 36 Israeli soldiers in occupied territories and recognized three ways of framing the Palestinian intifada: There are two polar frames: one of them is Law and Order. Law and Order framed the army as a riot police who made themselves responsible for "the repression of disturbances". The second frame is called war by Israeli soldiers. Blum-Kulka and Liebes (1993, p.45) said war frame "preserves the traditional role of the army and framed the intifada as another outbreak of the ongoing conflict..." The third frame is state terror. This way of framing recognizes Israeli actions in the occupied Palestine as violation. This kind of framing leads to thoughts of refusing to serve in the army.

Somers $(1992,1994$, and 1997) and Somers and Gibson (1994) explained types of narratives:
a) Ontological narratives: "Ontological narratives are personal stories we tell ourselves about our place in the world and about our own personal history"
(Baker, 2006, p.5). Narratives have social and interpersonal nature "ontological narratives can only exist interpersonally in the course of social and structural interactions over time" (p. 61).
b) Public narratives: Baker (2006) stated that public narratives are stories which are made and spread among institutional and social groups such as the mass media, the nation, and the political or activist group and so on.
c) Conceptual narratives: Somers \& Gibson (1992-1997, p. 62) defined conceptual narratives as the elaboration of explanations and concepts by social researchers. They(19921997, p.63) go on to argue that " $[t]$ he conceptual challenge that narrativity poses is to develop a social analytic vocabulary that can accommodate the contention that social life, social organizations, social action, and social identities are narratively, that is, temporally and relationally constructed through both ontological and public narratives."
d) Meta-(master) narratives: Somers and Gibson (1994, p. 61) defined meta (or master) narratives as narratives "in which we are embedded as contemporary actors in history ... Our sociological theories and concepts are encoded with aspects of these master-narratives Progress, Decadence, Industrialization, Enlightment, etc.".

Baker (2007) stated that for operativity of features of narrativity and for constitution of a series of events as a narrative with a specific pattern of causal employment, those doing the narration should undertake a considerable amount of discursive work. In sketching some of the ways in which this discursive work is done, the notion of frame and framing can be generative. Baker (2006) said these notions are used in conjunction with the concept of schema or schemata. The concept of schema or schemata, according to Tannen and Wallet (1993, p.60) denote those 'expectations about people, objects, events, and settings in the world' that participants bring with them to the interaction.
Somers (1992, 1994, and 1997) and Somers and Gibson (1994) suggested that narratives are constituted through four features:

Temporality: Baker (2006) stated that temporality means that narratives are placed in time and space and depends on the physical and temporal context for their interpretation.

Relationality :Relationality means that "it is impossible for the human mind to make sense of isolated events or of a patchwork of events that are not constituted as a narrative. Every element in a narrative depends for its interpretation on its place within the network of elements that make up the narrative; it cannot be interpreted in isolation" (Baker, 2006, p.118). Somer (1997, p.82) said "narrativity demands that we discern the meaning of any single event only in temporal and spatial relationship to other events "and Somers and Gibson (1994, p.59) stated that "renders understanding only by connecting (however unstably) parts to a constructed configuration or a social network (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices."

Selective appropriation: Baker (2006) stated that making a coherent story by mentioning every detail of experience is not possible. Narratives are made based on evaluative criteria. Evaluative criteria allow and leads selective appropriation of a series of events that form experience.

Causal employment: causal employment "gives significance to independent instances, and overrides their chronological or categorical order" (Somers 1997.p. 82). It allows us to turn a set of propositions into an intelligible sequence about which we can form an opinion, and thus charges the events depicted with moral and ethical significance (Baker 2006a, p.65).

Moreover, Knellwolf (2001) in explaining framing by labeling stated that Behn, the translator of Fontenelle's Entretiens sur la plaralite des mondes habites, choose A discovery of new world as a title for this book. This changing of title repressed the conversational quality of the text and its uncomfortably provocative idea about the possible existence of many other worlds. Generally the

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conversational quality of the text and its uncomfortably provocative idea about the possible existence of many other worlds challenge Behn's narratives of science and the world

In another work, Kitch (2003) examined the circulation of events of September 11 in 20 issues of American newspapers during October and at the end of 2001.Based on anthropological and narrative theory this study claims that news coverage includes the elements of funeral ritual, creating a forum for national mourning and playing a central role in civil religion. It also portrays that coverage made a cohesive story in which heroism and patriotic pride were substitute for fear and vulnerability. This change provided evident that by situating senseless news event within a broader, cultural grand narrative of resilience and progress, journalists made sense of even senseless news event.

Mason and Serban (2003) also explained different ways of repositioning in English translations of Romanian literature. They examined systematic shifts in deixis of these texts. These shifts resulted in reframing the relationship between reader's and the events and participants described in the source narratives. They noted that these shifts reconfigure the relationship between translator and text. These shifts also caused translators to position themselves toward the ST and allowed them to create distance or closeness between translations and readers.

Baker (2006) explained that there is a continuous of competition among different versions of a narrative for centuries, because of the definition and determination of the present narratives by the past narrative

Baker (2006) has pointed out the story of Holocaust and the story of December 11 and that of Iraq's invasion as the political narratives which are told from many different points of view and sometimes are completely against each other

Baker (2006) focused on five key strategies for mediating the narrative(s) elaborated in a source text or utterance: framing, framing by labelling (including rival place names and titles), temporal and spatial framing, framing through selective appropriation, and repositioning of participants.

## 1. Framing

Baker (2007) stated that for operativity of features of narrativity and for constitution of a series of events as a narrative with a specific pattern of causal employment, those doing the narration should undertake a considerable amount of discursive work. In sketching some of the ways in which this discursive work is done, the notion of frame and framing can be generative. Baker (2006) said these notions are used in conjunction with the concept of schema or schemata.

### 1.1. Frame ambiguity

In order to promote competing narratives, translators can frame series of events in different ways. Chilton(1997) said shapes of violent conflict may be frames as "war", "low intensity conflict", "terrorist acts", :civil war", "guerrilla warfare". Baker (2006, p.108) stated that frame ambiguity is "often experienced by different parties to a conflict as a byproduct of competing attempts to legitimize different versions of the relevant narratives".

### 1.2. Frame space

Different roles are played by participants in any interaction (announcer, author, translator, prosecutor, lecturer, military officer, parent) and the capacities of engagement in the interaction is different (speaker, reader, primary addressee, overhearer, eavesdropper). They also take different positions in relation to the event and other participant (supportive, committed uninformed
outsider, indifferent, disinterested, and critical). All of these possibilities constitute frame space of a participant.
2. Framing by labelling: Baker (2006) said those who are involved in any interaction have various roles (announcer, author, translator, prosecutor, lecturer, military officer, parent), they are also engaged in the interaction in different capacities (speaker, reader, primary addressee, overhearer, eavesdropper) and this participants in the interaction stands in different positions in links with the event and other participants (supportive, critical, disinterested, indifferent, uninformed outsider, committed). All of these elements constitute frame space of a participant.
3. Temporal and spatial framing: Baker (2006) said temporal and spatial framing involves selecting and placing a special text in a temporal and spatial context that highlights the narrative it shows and encourages us to establish relations between it and current narratives that touch our lives. Temporal and spatial framework of the source text and target text may be different.
4. Selective appropriation: Baker (2006) said selective appropriation involves omission and addition that occur for suppressing, highlighting or elaborating particular aspect of a narrative embedded in the source text or utterance. There are two different kinds of selective appropriation: selective appropriation in interpreting and selective appropriation in literature.
5. Repositioning of participants: Baker (2006) said relationality feature concerns how those who are involved in an interaction are positioned or how they situate themselves in relation to other participants and to those outside the immediate event. When the formation of these positions change, the dynamic of the immediate and wider narratives will change too. Repositioning of participants can be done in paratextual commentary and within the text or utterance.
5.1. Repositioning in paratextual commentary: baker (2006) said translators can reposition themselves, target readers and other participants in time and space in introductions, prefaces, footnotes, glossaries. To a lesser extent translators also can reposition themselves in cover design and blurbs because normally blurbs and cover design are not provide by translators.
5.2. Repositioning within the text or utterance: Baker $(2006,135)$ said "much repositioning in translation, and almost all repositioning in interpreting, is realized within the text or utterance. She (2006) said the range of available devices for repositioning is open-ended. Baker (2006) said "almost any textual feature can be renegotiated at the local or global level to reconfigure the relationship between participants within and around the source narrative.
. Baker (2007) identified superiority of narrative theory over norm theory as follow:
Baker (2007) saw the main interrelated strengths of narrative theory as follow:
First of all, narrative theory does not favour essentialist and reductive categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion; but it recognizes the continuously discussable nature of our positioning in relation to social and political reality. As Hall et al (2003, p.38) argued, narrativity "offers a way of conceptualizing identity that is neither universal nor essentialist, but rather temporally and culturally specific."

Second, narrative theory allows us to see translators and interpreters as concrete bit not as theoretical abstractions. Whitebrook (2001) argued that the concreteness of political agent is impossible by theory, he (2001, p.15) said "character is treated as a matter of the variables an observer must assess when trying to understand or predict anyone's behavior"

Third, narrative theory allows us to describe behavior in dynamic terms. So narrativity, according to Somers and Gibson (1994, p.65), "embeds the actor within relationships and stories that shift over time and space and ... precludes categorical stability in action"

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And finally according to Baker (2007, p.154), the last strength of narrative theory, is that it "recognizes the power of social structures and the workings of the 'system' but does not preclude active resistance on a personal or group level". She (2007) noted that narrative theory pays attention equally to dominance and resistance issues, to interaction's ritual nature and the means of questioning and undermining rituals. Baker (2007, p.154) noted that:

Although hardly any of the work on narrativity in social and communication theory pays attention to issues of language, nor indeed translation, narrative theory does lend itself to being applied to both, and in a way that allows us to explain translational choices in relation to wider social and political contexts, but without losing sight of the individual text and event.

However, Bongie's (2005) examined The Slave-king, the English translation of Hugo's novel Bug-Jargal. In this analysis, Bongie gave one example of frame ambiguity. Hugo's text does not have any clear attitude to slavery and its attitude is vague but its English version, as Baker (2006, p.108) said, "Resolves this frame ambiguity and presents the reader with a narrative that is unequivocally anti-slavery. Brownlie (2007) also stated that political neutrality of translators is impossible even if they think they are. The way of understanding and thinking about the world is formed by narratives. Furthermore, Schiff (2012) argued that the most important aspect of narrative is the kinds of actions that can be done with narratives. He also argued that making present life experience and interpretations of life in a specific time and space are initial functions of narrating. Narrating brings experience and interpretations into actions in a specific time and space.

## Results and Discussion

Process of reframing can be done in the body of the translation or around the translation. Baker (2006, p.107) stated that "translation acts as an interpretive frame in many more ways, some of which remain concealed from direct observation by most readers and/or hearers". Also there are different strategies of framing around the translation for setting up an interpretive context for the reader or hearer.

In Younesi's sermon strategies of framing are as follow: Selection of the translated text: by choosing this text for translation, MEMRI sets up an interpretive context for the reader. Simply by choosing this text, this site portrays Iran as threatening, extremist or discursively alien. By choosing this text, MEMRI wants to show that Iran is a threatening factor for securities and borders of neighboring countries and it also wants to show that Iran is thinking about the revival of its empire as it was in the past so it is threatening for borders of neighboring countries.

The main headlines and titles of this translation are as followed;
Advisor to Iranian President Rohani: Iran Is an Empire, Iraq Is Our Capital; We Will Defend All the Peoples of the Region; Iranian Islam Is Pure Islam - Devoid Of Arabism, Racism, and Nationalism
"Every Cultural or Ethnic Group That Arrived From Other Places to the Iranian Plateau Has In Time Become Iranian"
"If We Disregard The Region That Lies Within Our Sphere Of Influence, We Will Be Unable To Protect Our Interests And Security... Since Its Inception, Iran Has [Always] Had a Global [Dimension]; It Was Born an Empire"
"Iraq Is Not Merely A Sphere Of Cultural Influence For Us; It Is Also... Our Capital"

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"We Are Protecting the Interests of [All] the People in the Region -Because They Are All Iran's People"
"When Islam Reached Iran, It Shed Arabism, Racism, and Nationalism"

By using these titles, MEMRI sought the end of framing the narratives as threatening.

By inserting the below image which shows Iran as an empire and with the caption of "PERSIAN EMPIRE" and the use of Arabian sea instead of Persian Gulf, MEMRI seeks its purposes too and sets up an interpretive context for readers to frame the narratives as extremist and threatening. By using the caption of PERSIAN EMPIRE accompany by Arabian Sea, MEMRI portrays that the name of this sea was Arabian Sea in the past.

## PERSIAN EMPIRE



In this text, there is no linking to a video clip.

And finally the last strategy of framing that includes paratexts is a site of framing in book translations not in other texts so it's not the case in this translated text.

Strategies of framing in English translation of Jannati's sermon are as follow:

Selection of the translated text: MEMRI sets up an interpretive context for the reader by choosing this text for translation. Simply by choosing this text, this site portrays Iran as threatening, extremist or discursively alien. By choosing this text, MEMRI wants to show that Iran is a threatening factor for security of the United States.

Changing the title of the text: this site by choosing the title of "Ayatollah Jannati To Iran's Leaders In Friday Sermon: The People Do Not Support Your Efforts To Establish Ties With The U.S.; 'Death To America Is [Our] First Option'" sought to show that Iranian are extremist and are dangerous for existence of The United States.

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Linking to a video clip: MEMRI linked the translation to a video clip which is the sermon of Jannati on Friday. The selection of parts in this clip has been done carefully in order to show Iranian as extremist and dangerous for The United States.

There is no inserting of image or paratext in this corpus.

## Conclusion

Baker (2006) mentioned that the way of our thinking and acting are guided by the stories we tell ourselves and our actions and behaviours effect on those around us. She (2006) said the stories other people make of us are indispensable for framing of our behaviour and our physical and mental survival. Furthermore she (2006) said the way others story us can have good or bad effects on our physical and mental survival for instance it can make us feel good or bad about ourselves. She also said for setting up an interpretive context for reader and hearer, translators use strategies of framing. In this vein this research sought to identify Baker's different strategies of framing around translation for two English translations in MEMRI which their source texts were delivered by Younesi, advisor to Iranian president Rohani on March 8, 2015 at the "Iran Nationalism, History, and Culture" conference in Iran and Jannati on February 21, 2014 in Friday sermon. The result of this study showed that MEMRI used strategies of selection of translated texts from the worst possible examples of Iranian discourse, changing the title of texts, inserting images with suitable captions and linking to a video clip to frame the narratives as dangerous and extremist.

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# EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF USING AUDIOBOOKS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF SOUND RECOGNITION AND SOUND PRODUCTION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

UNDOUBTEDLY, PRONUNCIATION IS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN COMMUNICATION AND IT CAN BE A SOURCE OF UNINTELLIGIBILITY BETWEEN INTERLOCUTORS. SEVERAL MATERIALS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRONUNCIATION SKILL ONE OF WHICH SEEMS TO BE AUDIOBOOKS. THEREFORE, THE PRESENT STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF USING AUDIOBOOKS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRONUNCIATION ABILITY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS. TO THIS END, 90 ELEMENTARY, INTERMEDIATE, AND UPPER-INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS FROM THREE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTES WERE SELECTED IN SHIRAZ, IRAN. IN ORDER TO EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF USING AUDIOBOOKS ON STUDENTS' SOUND RECOGNITION AND SOUND PRODUCTION, TWO TESTS WERE ADMINISTERED TO THE STUDENTS AS PRETEST AND POSTTEST. TO FIND OUT WHETHER AUDIOBOOKS HAD ANY EFFECT ON THE PRONUNCIATION ABILITY OF LEARNERS, THE MEAN AND THE STANDARD DEVIATION OF THE THREE GROUPS OF LEARNERS WERE COMPARED. DATA ANALYSES SHOWED THAT THE SOUND RECOGNITION ABILITY OF INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY IN COMPARISON WITH THE OTHER TWO GROUPS. ALSO, STUDENTS AT UPPER-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL HAD THE HIGHEST GAIN IN PRONUNCIATION PRODUCTION IN COMPARISON WITH THE OTHER TWO GROUPS OF LEARNERS. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AMONG THE THREE GROUPS OF LEARNERS WITH REGARD TO THEIR


[^11]PRODUCTION ABILITY OF ENGLISH PHONEMES. THE STUDY ALSO FOUND THAT FEMALES OUTPERFORMED THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS REGARDING PRONUNCIATION PRODUCTION TESTS AFTER RECEIVING TREATMENT. HOWEVER, MALES PERFORMED BETTER THAN FEMALES IN PRONUNCIATION RECOGNITION TESTS AFTER RECEIVING TREATMENT. THE IMPLICATIONS ARE PROVIDED AT THE END OF THIS STUDY.

## KEYWORDS: AUDIOBOOK, SOUND RECOGNITION, SOUND PRODUCTION, PRONUNCIATION SKILL, GENDER

## INTRODUCTION

Having the ability to utter words properly and clearly is of paramount importance. Correct pronunciation is the fundamental element of language communication to the extent that wrong pronunciation might impede communication. Proper pronunciation can be defined as producing linguistic sounds through which message can be conveyed easily. Since speaking a language needs an interactive ability to perceive and use language elements effectively, it is a difficult task, not least for foreign language learners (Richards \& Renandya, 2002). In order to have communication that does not lead to misunderstandings, language learners should to react in an appropriate way to what people say by using the correct features of the speaking. Among these features, pronunciation is crucial in affecting the conveying of the message in a desired or undesired way. However, as Kelly (1969) mentioned in his extensive study about the history of language teaching, pronunciation was the Cinderella area which had been surpassed by other skills and elements of the language and ignored in foreign language teaching context until the end of the nineteenth century. It started to attract attention with the advent of reform movement in language teaching in the 1890s. The current situation of teaching pronunciation receives support from the communicative approach which plays a significant role in language teaching today. Since this approach puts communication at the center of language learning/teaching processes and accepts pronunciation as one of the core elements which influences communication, teaching pronunciation is of great importance in the field of language teaching (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, \& Goodwin, 1996). Even though pronunciation has become more central to language teaching, the need for more research on this notion remains necessary. Considering the lack of attention paid to pronunciation and the need for teaching it, Hismanoğlu (2009) maintains that because of the important role that sounds play in communication, teaching these sounds is also crucial in language teaching and language teachers should pay additional attention to teaching them.

Although pronunciation has received wider acceptance as a component of language teaching, these studies also show that many foreign language teachers are not sure about how to teach it to different proficiency levels. While some teachers think that there is not enough time to teach pronunciation (Munro \& Derwing, 2007), others believe that teaching pronunciation is not a pleasant activity, they do not know how to teach it, or their students are not so much interested in learning it (Stevick, Morley, \& Wallace Robinett, 1975).

Audiobooks, also called spoken books, talking books or narrated books, are recordings, on either a CD or digital file of a book being read aloud (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2014). They have been used as a popular tool for many years in order to make books accessible for disabled people who are unable to read printed paper (Engelen, 2008). In addition to being used by disadvantaged individuals, they can also be used for some educational purposes and considered as a technical support for improving students' reading comprehension, listening comprehension, critical thinking and pronunciation in particular. Therefore the use of audiobooks and their benefits in language teaching have been the subject of many research studies (Blum, Koskinen, Tennant, Parker, Straub, \& Curry, 1995; Koskinen, et al., 2000; Nalder
\& Elley, 2003). These studies mostly focused on the use of audiobooks as a language tool for teaching reading skill, reading comprehension or reading strategies (Turker, 2010; Whittingham, Huffman, Christensen, \& McAllister, 2012). While one recently conducted study has focused on the effects of listening to spoken reading exercises on pronunciation in English (Takan, 2014), very little research has looked at the influence of audiobooks on the improvement of learners' pronunciation skills.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The teaching of pronunciation in the field of English Language Teaching has attracted more attention over time. There were periods in which pronunciation was accepted as a privileged part of skill instruction and as a basis of language learning. During other periods of times, it was considered less important than other language skills, such as grammar, and broadly neglected by teachers and learners (Lightbown \& Spada, 2006; Richards \& Rodgers, 2001). Though it is possible to see sections presenting pronunciation tips and practice activities in most of the current course books, every teacher may not pay attention to these sections (Brown, 1991; Çekiç, 2007).

With the advent of Audiolingualism, pronunciation gained a crucial importance. It was the center of the classroom instruction, since the main purpose of language learning and teaching moved towards listening and speaking skills (Lightbown \& Spada, 2006). Accuracy was at the center of language learning- teaching practices (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Morley, 1991). As a result of this, students spent most of their time in laboratories, listening to sounds in order to be able to differentiate minimal pairs (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). In the 1960s, teaching pronunciation started to decline, since grammar and vocabulary were the focus of attention. Therefore, pronunciation lost its value in the view of many educators and it was disregarded in many programs (Seidlhofer, 2001). According to Morley (1991), the main reason for disregarding pronunciation instruction in language teaching programs was that educators were dissatisfied with the teaching of pronunciation principles and practices of the time, therefore, they excluded pronunciation from their teaching. The role that pronunciation plays in language teaching-learning settings is non-negligible even if the necessity and importance to teach it has been debated and changed a lot in accordance with the on-again, off-again trends in the field. Whether or not there is a professional intention, learning a language usually includes the aim of being able to communicate and having good pronunciation is an effective factor for good communication (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). What pronunciation is responsible for is intelligibility between the interlocutors, that is to say to ensure an unambiguous message between the speaker and the listener (Setter \& Jenkins, 2005).

In order to perform well in sound recognition and the production processes of communication in the target language, one has to learn both segmental and suprasegmental features of the language (Mei, 2006; Goswami \& Bryant, 1990). Unlike the common belief that pronunciation is only concerned with how separate words in a language are produced, it is also related to the voicing of these words in a sentence. In other words, pronunciation is related not only to individual sounds such as vowels and consonants (segmental components) but also to further characteristics of the language related to articulation such as stress, rhythm and intonation (suprasegmental components) (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996). Though some researchers provide some evidence that the analysis processes of the segmental and suprasegmental features of a language differ from each other (Blumstein \& Cooper, 1974; Wood, Goff, \& Day, 1971), there is very little evidence to show whether these two processes are totally independent from one another or they are somehow integrated by interacting each other (Acton, 1984). Segmental features are the individual sound units such as vowels and consonants which also correspond to phonemes or allophones (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). Learners of a language may have
problems with learning these features because of the difference between their mother tongue and the one they are trying to learn. In some cases, specific segmental features may be completely absent in the mother tongue of the learners. In either situation, acquisition of these segmental features may be challenging for learners.

Unlike segmental features, which only deal with individual sounds, suprasegmental features of pronunciation involve rhythm, intonation, stress and connected speech in a word or sentence. It is claimed by the researchers that suprasegmental features of pronunciation affect the quality of communication to a great extent, so they should have a considerable place in teaching pronunciation (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Trofimovich \& Baker, 2006). As stated above, what current literature asserts as the pedagogical aim of teaching pronunciation is to assure intelligibility in learners' speech, namely smooth communication between interlocutors (Baker, 2014; Kachru, 1997; Smemoe \& Haslam, 2012; Tarone, 2005). As a reflection of this point of view, Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) state that "a learners' command of segmental features is less critical to communicative competence than a command of suprasegmental features, since the suprasegmentals carry more of the overall meaning load than do the segmentals" (p.131). Since suprasegmental features are inclusive of more than individual sounds, they are thought to be more effective in terms of being intelligible in communication. Nevertheless, this does not mean that segmental features are unimportant when they are compared with suprasegmental features (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996: Çekiç, 2007; Pennington \& Richards, 1986). Despite the fact that pronunciation is recognized as one of the crucial elements of language learning and the issue of how to teach it has attracted many researchers since the arrival of the communicative approach, there is no consensus in the literature on how to teach it. One important question is whether pronunciation instruction in a formal setting is effective at improving language learners' pronunciation skills. Studies that addressed this question have suggested that there is a strong positive correlation between instruction and pronunciation skill (Couper, 2003; Lord 2008; Saito, 2007).

The other controversy related to teaching pronunciation stems from which features of pronunciation should be the focus of instruction. Some researchers emphasize the "bottom-up" method to teach pronunciation, which focuses on individual sounds or words (segmental features). Most proponents claim that the "top-down" method, which focuses on the stress, rhythm and intonation of sentences (suprasegmental-prosodic features) as a whole is more effective (Pennington \& Richards, 1986; Pennington, 1989). In the "bottom up" method, students start learning fundamental pronunciation features and keep learning next features of pronunciation that require more knowledge of the language. Whereas, in the "top- down" method, general pronunciation features, which require more language knowledge and use of macro-skills, such as critical thinking and analyzing, are presented and students are expected to deduce language pronunciation rules and improve their pronunciation skills. The reason why teaching suprasegmental features of pronunciation is favored is not only its being more comprehensive than segmental features, in terms of the components it involves, but also its being more contributive to the main purpose of teaching pronunciation: intelligibility (CelceMurcia et al.,1996; McNermey \& Mendelsohn, 1992; Gilbert, 1993).

## The use of audiobooks in language learning

Audiobooks, the audio recorded versions of a printed book, are one of the technological tools used for pedagogical purposes and have been investigated by many researchers. In the literature there are some studies that found audiobooks useful for the language teachinglearning processes (Blum et al., 1995; Koskinen et al., 2000). Among the studies which back up the usefulness of audiobooks for language learning-teaching purposes, O'Day (2002), noted several specific ways that audiobooks help learners, including improving reading

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comprehension level, serving students as a model of fluent text reading and increased vocabulary acquisition and word recognition among students.

In his study, Serafini (2004) discussed how audiobooks could be beneficial in a language classroom in a number of ways: by providing opportunities to read fluently, exposing students to new vocabulary, understanding the content rather without focusing on structures, engaging with literature and enjoying it. Based on these studies, it is possible to claim that audiobooks create additional opportunities for language learners to hear the pronunciation of the words both on segmental and prosodic levels. While these studies suggest possible positive effects, the majority of the studies focused mainly on the relationship between audiobooks and reading skills (Blum et al., 1995; Golonka et al., 2012; Serafini, 2004; Whittingham at al., 2012). Most notably, researchers claim that audiobooks have positive effects on learners' capabilities of reading fluently, comprehending better and feelings more enthusiastic about engaging in reading (Nalder \& Elley, 2003; Carbo, 1996).

Even though audiobooks have been accepted as a fruitful resource for much language learning, its effect on pronunciation has not drawn the attention of many researchers. Some research has recognized the close relationship between listening and pronunciation to examine the effects of listening to audio forms of the texts to boost pronunciation (Couper, 2003). They postulate that listening to the audio version of a text when reading simultaneously may improve learners' awareness of the target language pronunciation features. Moreover, since the audio version of the text represents a good example of correct pronunciation, students should be able to improve their pronunciation skills, both in recognizing and producing correct pronunciation. A study was conducted by Saka (2015) in which she investigated the effect of using audiobooks on the pronunciation skill of Turkish students. She found that listening to audiobooks has significant effect on the pre-intermediate learners of English. She also found that students had positive attitude towards audiobooks and their effects on pronunciation. However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there have not been any studies in Iran that directly investigated the relationship between audiobooks and pronunciation skills. Therefore, conducting such a research study seemed necessary. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1- What is the effect of using audiobooks on the sound recognition and sound production of Iranian EFL learners?
2- Does listening to audiobooks have different effects on males' and females' pronunciation recognition and pronunciation production?

## METHODOLOGY

## Participants

The participants in this study was comprised of 90 students who were learning English at three English language institutes in Shiraz, Iran. The students were studying at elementary, intermediate, and upper-intermediate levels. 32 students were at elementary level, 29 students were at intermediate level, and 29 students were at upper-intermediate level. All the students were between 18 to 30 years of age. Table 1 provides the information about each group.

Table 1. Information about the participants of the study

| Gender | Elementary Group | Intermediate Group | Upper-intermediate <br> Group |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Male | 15 | 13 | 14 |
| Female | 17 | 16 | 15 |

## Instruments

The instruments used in this study were as follows:
Audiobooks: In order to find out whether listening to audiobooks had any influence on the pronunciation ability of learners, some audiobooks were chosen based on the level of the students. Three audiobooks were selected for the students which were as follows:

1-The storms for elementary students
2- The poetical policeman for intermediate students

## 3- The empire of the ants for upper-intermediate students

## Training

The study investigates the impact of audiobooks on pronunciation skills focusing on the specific segmental features of pronunciation ( $/ \theta /, / \delta /, / \eta /, / n /, / \varepsilon /$ and $/ \rho /$ ). Since the sound symbols developed by the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) Association were used in the pronunciation recognition test, students were taught IPA by the researcher using the interactive phonemic chart of British Council official website (See Appendix B for the screenshot of the IPA chart). The training lasted forty five minutes and the participants were tested again by using the chart to explore whether they learned the symbols. The aim of the IPA training was to enable students to differentiate the symbols of the sounds that they would hear during the pronunciation recognition test.

## Pronunciation tests

Pronunciation tests that were repeated before and after the treatment were developed for two purposes: to investigate the recognition capability of the students and to explore the production skills of the students. the researcher decided on the inclusion of the sounds $/ \theta /$, $/ \partial /, / \mathrm{y} /, / \mathrm{n} /, / \varepsilon /$ and $/ ə /$ that are identified among the most common problematic sounds for Persian speakers.

Afterwards, the three selected audiobooks were examined for the words which include these problematic sounds. The words extracted from the audiobooks formed the basis for both the pronunciation recognition and pronunciation production tests. Table 2 shows a list of words selected from the books.

Table 2. Problematic Sounds and Words from Audiobooks

| ð | $\partial$ | $\theta$ | $\varepsilon$ | $\eta$ | n |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Their | Around | Thought | Rent | Singer | Enter |
| With | Clear | Threaten | Select | Hang | Nap |
| There | Ahead | Three | Wear | Think | Blend |
| Those | About | Thinks | Chair | Hungry | Hunter |
| Father | Near | Through | Hair | Length | Sneak |
| That | Along | Things | Spare | Language | Ant |
| They | Aside | Thoroug | Prayer | Finger | Phone |
| Without | Attack | Thick | Weather | Strength | Man |
| Neither | Attention | Both | Leather | Angry | Twin |


| This | Hear | Thank | Friend | Bring | Orange |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

## Pronunciation recognition test

After the examination of the three audiobooks and the 60 selected words, the pronunciation of those words were downloaded from the Oxford University's Online Learners' Dictionary. Then those pronunciations were used as the criteria of a test to assess the recognition ability of the students. In the test, the students were required to listen to the 60 words and choose the IPA symbols which represented the sounds that they heard.

## Pronunciation production test

Students were asked to read a piece of text which contained the selected words mentioned above in order to test their pronunciation ability. Their voice was recorded by the researchers as they read the words aloud.

## Rating

In order to enhance the reliability of scoring, two teachers were asked to rate the pronunciations of the students to minimize scoring bias.

## Data analysis

The researchers used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to analyze the data. First of all, the students' scores were entered onto the software. Then, the standard deviations and mean values of production and pronunciation tests were calculated for the three levels. In order to see whether the data were normally distributed a normality test was conducted. The results of Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data were normally distributed. After that, a paired-samples t-test was run to see the differences between the scores of the first and second recognition and production test. Then, in order to see which group of leaners performed better in terms of recognition and production, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted.

## RESULTS

According to Table 3, the means of the second recognition test score of the three levels of students were higher than the means of the scores obtained from the first recognition test. Therefore, a paired-samples t-test was run to find out whether this increase in means of the recognition test scores before and after listening to audiobooks was statistically significant or not.

Table 3. The mean difference between the first and the second recognition test of all levels

| Scores | $x^{-}$ | SD | $d f$ | $T$ | $P$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| First test | 0.48 | 0.06 | 89 | 7.12 | 0.000 |
| Second test | 0.66 | 0.11 |  |  |  |
| $P<0.001$ level |  |  |  |  |  |

$P<0.001$ level
The results of the paired-samples t-test indicated an increase of 0.18 in the means of the first and second test, $t(98)=7.12, p<0.001$, which suggests that there was a statistically significant difference between the scores of the first and the second test. This suggests that students performed better in pronunciation of the words after listening to the audiobooks.

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Students we then asked to take a second to examine their ability regarding the recognition of problematic phonemes. Firstly, words which contained phonemes were grouped. The phonemes that were examined included $\partial, \partial, n, \eta, \varepsilon, \theta$. Then, the means of the phonemes obtained before and after instruction sessions were calculated. After that, a t-test was run to specify any difference in students' performance before and after instruction. Table 4 shows the results of the $t$-test.

Table 4. The mean difference of all levels between the first and second recognition of the phonemes

| Phonemes | $x^{-}$ | $S D$ | $t$ | $d f$ | $p$ |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $ð$ | -.04 | .32 | -0.91 | 89 | .399 |
| $\partial$ | -.05 | .34 | -0.95 | 89 | .378 |
| $\theta$ | -.09 | .41 | -2.67 | 89 | .212 |
| $\varepsilon$ | -.23 | .48 | -4.12 | 89 | $.003^{*}$ |
| $\eta$ | -.26 | .35 | -3.25 | 89 | $.037^{* *}$ |
| n | -.43 | .53 | -5.41 | 89 | $.000^{*}$ |

$p<.001^{*}, p>.05^{* *}$
According to Table 4, there was a difference between means of phonemes recognition before and after audiobook listening session. However, the means of three phonemes were significantly different from those before the instruction. Those phonemes were $\varepsilon\left(x^{-}=-.23\right), \eta\left(x^{-}=-.26\right)$, and n ( $x^{-}=-.43$ ). The results of the t -test indicate that students' ability in recognizing $/ \varepsilon /, / \mathrm{y} /$, and $/ \mathrm{n} /$ significantly improved after listening to audiobooks.

With regard to the effect of listening to audiobook on the students' pronunciation of problematic phonemes, the researchers analyzed the data using Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p>0.05$ ). The results showed that the means of the production test of problematic phonemes for the three levels increased in the second test comparing with the means of the first test. For elementary level, the mean of the first production test was 0.48 whereas the mean of the second production test was calculated as 0.66 . For intermediate level, the mean of the first production test was 0.58 whereas the mean of the second production test was 0.69 . Finally, the mean of the first production test of upper-intermediate learners was 0.57 whereas the mean of the second production test was 0.68 . Therefore, a paired-samples t-test was run to see whether this difference was statistically significant or not. The results of the $t$-test is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The mean difference between the first and the second production test of all proficiency levels.

| Scores | $x$ | SD | df | $T$ | $P$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| First test | 0.54 | 0.08 | 89 | 14.98 | 0.000 |
| Second test | 0.68 | 0.12 |  |  |  |

$P<0.001$
As Table 5 shows that there is an increase of 0.14 in the mean of the second test score in the production of phonemes comparing with the score of the first production. In other words, students' production of phonemes improved considerably.

In order to examine students' production of each of the problematic phonemes, a paired-samples t -test was conducted. Table 6 provides the result of the t -test.

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Table 6. The mean difference between first and second production test of each phoneme for all proficiency levels.

| Phonemes | $x^{-}$ | SD | $T$ | df | $P$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| д | -0.19 | .17 | -8.76 | 89 | $.000^{*}$ |
| $\partial$ | -.78 | .19 | -28.97 | 89 | $.000^{*}$ |
| $\theta$ | -.05 | .15 | -2.96 | 89 | $.002^{* *}$ |
| $\varepsilon$ | .04 | .31 | 1.92 | 89 | .214 |
| $\mathrm{\eta}$ | .22 | .19 | 8.93 | 89 | $.000^{*}$ |
| n | -.18 | .28 | -5.89 | 89 | $.000^{*}$ |
| $p<.001^{*}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| $p<.01^{* *}$ |  |  |  |  |  |

According to Table 6, students' production of $/ \delta /, / \partial /, / \theta /, / \eta /$, and $/ n /$ improved at a statistically significant level. However, in the case of the phoneme $/ \varepsilon /$, no improvement was observed at a statistically significant level.

In order to see which group of leaners performed better in terms of sound recognition, the researchers first subtracted the mean of the first recognition test score from the mean of the second recognition test score. Then, the descriptive statistics of the recognition test score were calculated. After that, a one-way ANOVA was utilized to determine the relationship between students' pronunciation recognition scores and their levels of proficiency (See Table 8).

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for pronunciation recognition test scores

| Group | N | $x^{-}$ | SD |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Elementary | 32 | .03 | .04 |
| Intermediate | 29 | .12 | .08 |
| Upper-intermediate | 29 | .11 | .07 |

Table 8. Comparison between levels for differences of score means on pre- and postrecognition test

| Proficiency level | $x^{-}$ | $S E$ | $P$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Elementary-Intermediate | -.09 | .02 | $.002^{*}$ |
| Elementary-Upper-intermediate | -.08 | .01 | $.001^{* *}$ |
| Intermediate-Upper-intermediate | .01 | .02 | .698 |

$p<.01^{*}$
$p<.001^{* *}$

Table 8 provides the mean differences of pre-treatment and post-treatment recognition tests among different proficiency levels. As can be seen in Table 8, the mean difference between elementary level and the intermediate level is $\left(x^{-}=-.09, \mathrm{SE}=.02, \mathrm{p}<.01\right)$ which indicates that students at intermediate level had a higher gain in recognition score and this difference is statistically significant ( $p<.01$ ). Also, with regard to comparing the difference in mean of

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elementary and upper-intermediate level the difference was statistically significant ( $x^{-}=-.08, \mathrm{SE}=$ $.01, p<.001$ ). As can be seen in Table 8, the sign is negative which indicates that the increase was greater for the upper-intermediate level. Regarding the differences in means between intermediate and upper-intermediate level, the sign is positive which indicates that the students at the intermediate level had a higher gain in comparison with those at upper-intermediate level and this difference was not statistically significant ( $x^{-}=.01, \mathrm{SE}=.02, p>.05$ ).
In order to investigate whether a difference existed among the three levels of proficiency with regard to their pronunciation production, the differences in the students' scores were calculated through subtracting the mean of the first test on pronunciation production from the mean of the second test on pronunciation production. Then, the descriptive statistics of students' scores on pronunciation production were calculated. After that, a one-way ANOVA was run to determine the relationships among the three groups of learners with regard to their pronunciation production.
Table 9 provides the results of the descriptive statistics.
Table 9. Descriptive statistics of pronunciation production test scores

| Group | N | $x$ | SD |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Elementary | 32 | .18 | .08 |
| Intermediate | 29 | .18 | .07 |
| Upper-intermediate | 29 | .21 | .11 |

The results of ANOVA showed that there was no statistically significant difference among the three levels of proficiency regarding the pronunciation production scores of the learners. Table 10 presents the results of ANOVA.

Table 10. Comparing the means of the three levels of the pronunciation production test scores

| Proficiency level | $x^{-}$ | $S E$ | $P$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Elementary-Intermediate | .02 | .03 | 0.895 |
| Elementary-Upper-intermediate | -.05 | .04 | 0.643 |
| Intermediate-Upper-intermediate | -.07 | .04 | 0.587 |

$p>0.05$
According to Table 10, there was no statistically significant difference among the three proficiency levels with regard to their pronunciation production ability after treatment. However, students at upper-intermediate level had the highest gain in comparison with the other two groups of students $\left(x^{-}=-.07, \mathrm{SE}=.04, \mathrm{P}=.0587\right.$ ), but this difference was not statistically significant.
Regarding gender differences in terms of pronunciation production and pronunciation recognition ability, the results of the t-test indicated that females outperformed their male counterparts on pronunciation production tests (See Table 11). However, males performed better than females on pronunciation recognition tests (See Tables 12).

Table 11. Gender differences with regard to pronunciation production ability

| Gender | N | Mean | Sig |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Female | 48 | 4.639 | $.02^{*}$ |
| Male | 42 | 4.214 | .142 |

${ }^{*} P<.05$
Table 12. Gender differences with regard to pronunciation recognition ability

| Gender | N | Mean | Sig |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Female | 48 | 4.734 | .241 |
| Male | 42 | 5.114 | $.01^{*}$ |

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\({ }^{*} P<.05\)
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## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the effect of listening to audiobooks on the recognition and production of English sounds among three levels of proficiency namely, elementary, intermediate, and upper-intermediate levels. The results showed that students' recognition ability improved after listening to audiobooks. Students at intermediate level benefited most from listening to audiobooks. And students at upper-intermediate level had the highest score on pronunciation production in comparison with the other two groups. However, there was no statistically significant difference among the three levels of proficiency with regard to production ability of English phonemes. This finding is in line with that of Saka (2015).

## Implications and suggestions for further research

The findings of this study can be useful for language teachers and curriculum developers to focus more on the pronunciation activities in the classroom. Teachers should expose learners to the target language input to help them acquire stress and intonation. Audiobooks can be a good source of target language pronunciation. However, the selection of proper audiobooks should be done with caution. Teachers should take the interest and level of learners into account when selecting audiobooks. They should also consider the topic and content of the audiobooks so that they motivate their learners by selecting the topics in which their learners are interested.
This study like any other study had some shortcomings. First of all, the researchers in this study investigated only the segmental features and the suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation were not investigated. Therefore, future research could be done investigating the suprasegmental features of learners. Secondly, this study did not have any control group and since each group of learners had a different teacher, the teachers could have different effects on the learners during the treatment. So, future research can be done using a control group in addition to the experimental group in order to make sure about the reliability of the results.

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# COUNTER-CULTURAL PATTERNS IN IRANIAN EFL TEXTBOOKS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LEVEL INCREASE 

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#### Abstract

TEXTBOOKS SPECIFICALLY EFL ONES PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE NOT ONLY IN STRENGTHENING THE PROCESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING THE SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE BUT ALSO IN REINFORCING OR QUITE THE REVERSE ALTERING THE LEARNERS' MIND IN REGARD TO THEIR OWN CULTURE; IN OTHER WORDS, THE CULTURAL IMPACTS OF EFL COURSEBOOKS ARE SO GREAT THAT CARE MUST BE TAKEN BY TEACHERS TO AVOID TEXTBOOKS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE CULTURE OF THE SOCIETY. THERE ARE CONSIDERABLY VARIOUS TYPES OF EFL TEXTBOOKS STUDIED AT UNIVERSITIES, BUT THE ONES MOST COMMONLY ASSIGNED TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF BOUSHEHR PROVINCE INCLUDE SELECT READINGS AND ACTIVE SKILLS FOR READING. SO THE PRESENT STUDY IS AN ATTEMPT TO PUT THESE TWO TEXTBOOK SERIES UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY IN ORDER TO VERIFY THE FREQUENCY OF ALL THE COUNTER-CULTURAL OR NON-ISLAMIC VALUES EMBEDDED WITHIN THE UNITS. THE RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS REVEALED THAT ACTIVE SKILLS FOR READING SERIES CONTAINED A GREATER NUMBER OF COUNTER-CULTURAL STATEMENTS BUT FEWER COUNTER-CULTURAL READING PASSAGES. IT HAS ALSO BEEN CONCLUDED THAT THERE IS SOME RELATIONSHIP, THOUGH NOT TOO CONSIDERABLE, BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF THE AFOREMENTIONED EFL TEXTBOOKS AND THE FREQUENCY OF THE COUNTER-CULTURAL PATTERNS THEY INCLUDE; THAT IS, THE LEVEL INCREASE HAS A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE NUMBER OF PATTERNS THAT ARE MORALLY NEGATIVE, BUT THIS CAN ONLY BE NOTICED AFTER ALMOST TWO OR THREE LEVELS.


KEY WORDS: EFL TEXTBOOKS, CULTURAL IMPACTS, COUNTER-CULTURAL PATTERNS, NON-ISLAMIC VALUES

## 1. Introduction

Textbooks are of crucial importance in promoting the way second language is taught and learned within the class time. Almost all students appear to be pretty attentive concerning the
concepts they encounter in the textbooks they study each semester so that they cannot help making use of them in their routine lives; that is to say, once they acquire some knowledge of social, religious, cultural and linguistic topics, they cannot avoid their impression (Kafi,et al; 2013). The issue of textbook impacts is so important that has led the researchers to carry out a wide variety of studies on this regard and language teachers to choose the kind of textbook most compatible with the culture of the learners' society.

Language and culture are so interrelated that learning a language is found out by a great number of researchers to be almost impossible without learning about the culture of that language. Language learning as stated by Wilkes (1983) is made up of three closely interlinked parts: linguistic, cultural, and attitudinal. Cultural materials, however, as applied in TESL or TEFL, are mostly constructed in accordance with patterns of American Culture and are hence organized in such a way to generate a greatly restricted, imprecisely described and not essentially suitable kind of cultural consciousness (Fenner 2001). According to Clarke and Clarke (1990) there are a lot of conventional beliefs and prejudices in British EFL texts specifically those concerned with topics such as gender, race, class, and religion. The most typical ideological clue in all the imported EFL books was reported to be consumerism and sexism (Abdollahzadeh and Baniasad, 2010). The cultural values of the target language, therefore, may be regarded as counter-cultural patterns in an Islamic society which may give rise to some problems in TEFL.

EFL learners' attitudes towards a specific culture can be of vital importance in curriculum settings. Negative attitudes contribute to failure in learning the language and positive attitudes overshadow the learners' accomplishments. The significance of culture has led the ministry of education in Iran as an Islamic country to publish, assign, and utilize textbooks compatible with Islamic culture for school students. University teachers, however, seem to have more freedom to choose among a wide variety of textbooks imported from English-speaking countries. As many of these textbooks may be less suited to Iranian Islamic culture, much care and attention is required in order to select and teach a coursebook with the fewest cultural and social shortcomings regarding Iranian cultural values.

The following study aims at exploring the frequency of the counter-cultural patterns found in English EFL textbooks taught to university students taking pre-university and general English courses as a prerequisite for ESP courses. The textbooks under consideration are Active Skills for Reading and Select Readings series most commonly utilized at the universities of Boushehr Province. Between these two types of textbook series, the one with fewer counter-cultural patterns seems to be closer to the objectives of education in Islamic societies and hence priority should be given to it over the next. This study also seeks to explore whether there is any relationship between the level of the EFL textbooks and the frequency of the counter-cultural patterns embedded in them; in other words, whether the number of non-Islamic values increases or decreases with the rise in the textbook level.

## 2. Language and culture relationship

An enormous number of studies carried out on language and culture manifest a close connection between these two notions. This complex and interrelated link (Mitchell \& Myles, 2004) is indicated in such concepts as 'linguaculture' (Friedrich, 1989), 'languaculture' (Risager, 2005), 'language-and-culture' (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, \& Kohler, 2003) and culturelanguage (Papademetre \& Scarino, 2006). Language is also described as the 'mirror of culture' or the observable part of 'iceberg' and culture as the concealed part of it (Jiang, 2000). The interrelationship of culture and language is so extensive that using a language in both mother tongue and target language is impossible without acquiring cultural knowledge of texts; in other words, cultural information acts as a prerequisite for prosperous and efficient use of language

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(Toprak \& Aksoyalp, 2014). Acquaintance with social patterns, principles regarding manners and communication, as well as cultural contexts can be regarded as an essential constituent of comprehensive linguistic knowledge (Thompson, 1993). In the same way, linguistic competence plays a principal role in transferring the information concerning cultural facts.

Numerous studies regarding language-culture relationship restate the conventional belief, still debatable, that language and culture are inseparably linked and that culture is the basis of foreign language teaching (Alptekin, 1993). Despite the fact that nobody has even the least doubt regarding the great interdependence of language and culture, which community or culture should own Standard English is still under discussion (Toprak \& Aksoyalp, 2014). In other words, Standard English as an international language is not possessed by any specific society or specific culture (Widdowson, 1994).

### 2.1. Target, native, or neutral cultural materials

Various kinds of cultural functions can be attributed to English textbooks all over the world making no difference which culture is under consideration: source culture, target culture, or international target culture that is concerned with the different cultures used in English or non-English-speaking countries (Cortazzi \& Jin, 1999). However, a number of studies on the attitudes of EFL learners towards either the target or native culture have indicated their preference for the original English textbooks rather than the localized ones (Ashraf et al, 2013).

## a. Target culture

Giving preference to target over native culture or vice versa has been a controversial issue among scholars for decades. The culture of the target language is given priority over that of the native language in the process of foreign language learning by Stewart (1982) declaring that foreign language teaching is effectively in vain when the focus is on the learners' native culture. Furthermore, according to Valdes (1986: 121) since native culture contributes to a 'gross misfit' or an 'impasse', it is regarded as a 'trap' in foreign language teaching. She also asserts that a language cannot be effectively taught by the exclusion of its culture which would result in the refusal of the implied primary objective of learning a language leading the learners to differently deal with the case (Byram, 1988).

On the other hand, research has indicated that a number of ELT textbooks that concentrate on the foreign culture exert an estranging influence on the learners who are interested in acculturation and hence cease to acquire that language (Gray, 2000). In spite of that, a great number of learners are usually estranged from their own social and cultural situations while they assimilate themselves to the Anglo-American system of value. That's why a wide variety of Asian and African teachers are worried about the position of their native culture and language in terms of the cultural materials constituting the ELT textbooks utilized worldwide (ibid).

## Negative attitudes towards the target culture

Teaching the target language in relation to its culture leads to several advantages nobody can deny. Alptekin (1993), however, points out that in spite of the reasonable benefits resulting from teaching the target language in terms of its culture, a number of disadvantages do occur in this kind of process. Firstly, EFL learners have to communicate a culture with which they have seldom any familiarity though in learning their native language the proficiency to make themselves understood is given prominence. So through teaching the target culture something of the 'strange paradox' is resulted (Brumfit,1980: 95). The second problem is concerned with creating a different personality or 'otherness' (Byram, 1989: 57) arising from a swift and

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unexpected contact with the culture of the target language which may lead to a number of dangerous social and mental disturbances such as abnormality (Alptekin, 1981), retrogression (Green, 1977), and ' schizophrenia' (Clarke, 1976; Meara, 1977). Due to the hindering impacts of these factors on acquiring a new language, they are regarded as the most serious disorders (Alptekin,1993).

The disapproving perspective; that is, observing the world in terms of our own culture and its patterns often appears as a result of conventional or unreasonable racialism. So EFL learners' disapproval towards L2 culture may reduce their incentive and communication which results in L2 acquisition failure (Karimpour, 2000). Lado (1988) has divided L2 learners into two groups in terms of their improper approaches to L2 learning: those with 'pedantic cultural attitude' who view the second language as the only respected and suitable language (Lado, 1988) and those with 'quaint nativism attitude' who regard their native culture as more appropriate, attractive, and preferable to the target culture (Yu-Hsin, 2001: 7). None of these approaches can be considered desirable as they may lead to wrong apprehension of the culture.

## b. Interconnection of native and target culture

Every culture must comply with a system of common concepts and conduct principles in order to have socio-cultural existence. The degree of divergence from the principles of native culture varies according to the person. So ethnocentrism can be of positive and negative features on the basis of personal and social idea. When evaluators criticize ethnocentrism, in fact they mean the narrow ultimate that rejects every perspective except the one related to its own culture (Garcia, 2002).

This native culture dependence can be made use of as a prerequisite for a better understanding of the target culture and hence the target language; in other words, the culture of mother tongue and the culture of foreign language are believed by some researchers to be greatly interconnected to each other. Native culture, for instance, helps learners attain a higher perception and comprehension of the target culture (Kramsch, 1993; Baker, 2003; Valdes, 1986). In order to understand the target culture, learners must interpret the happenings by comparing and contrasting them with their own culture. Understanding the cultural beliefs of both the native and target language as well as establishing and widening the extent of suitability of these ideologies help learners have a connection to the other culture, predict foreign occurrences, and find possibilities for their own cultural paradigms. Thus, in order to have a better interpretation of foreign phenomena EFL learners should get familiar with their own cultural principles and beliefs before getting acquainted with the foreign ones (Kramsch, 1993).

## c. Neutral culture

Due to the negative effect that English has on other communities, an alternative form of English which is considered neutral with regard to ideology, politics, and culture needs to emerge in the field of English language teaching. According to Jenkins (2000) speakers of English as a nonnative language which is used for communication tend to maintain the patterns of their own culture. A cross-cultural procedure in ELT, however, is believed to be more advantageous than total concentration on the target culture since it causes EFL learners to become more responsive towards the cultural approaches of the world and hence interested in their own cultural world (Prodromou, 1992). On the other hand, Alptekin (1993) has pointed out that known-to-unknown movement commonly applied in ELT does not work when cultural concepts are involved; that is, the notion of transition from native culture to target culture is not any more appropriate. Whereas this is a widely believed concept, other possibilities may exist including movement from native culture to the international English which is applied to represent cultures

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related to pop, travel, science, or any of the nativized English varieties such as Indian or Nigerian English. In addition, as an international language that is to be utilized by the people worldwide English is not associated with merely one culture, rather it should be used in a wide variety of texts representing various types of cultures (McKay, 2003). Owing to the fact that English has altered its status in the universe, ELT education should also undergo some changes. That is why one variety of English cannot be regarded as better or of higher position in comparison to the other anymore (Kirkpatrick, 2004).

On the other hand, textbooks as it is usually noticed cannot be completely 'neutral' with regard to their cultural materials (Toprak \& Aksoyalp, 2014). As Cunningsworth (1995) states they will explicitly or implicitly convey a number of social and cultural patterns innately present in their structure in case of including any subject matter. He calls it 'hidden curriculum'(p. 90) which is included in any pedagogical syllabus despite the fact that it is not communicated or expressed. It subconsciously expresses some ideas which affect the perception of the taught material and hence the total educational program. Cunningsworth also claims that since the pedagogical syllabus and the textbooks directly or indirectly communicate the social patterns, they cannot be unbiased.

## 3. Objective of the study

It is crystal clear that culture and language are 'inextricably enterwined' (Kramsch,1993); that is to say, when you teach or learn a language, you teach or learn the culture of that language too. This, however, does not mean that its negative or counter-cultural patterns should be overlooked. As a wide variety of EFL/ESL textbooks have been written for students of different cultures, English teachers should take care to select the textbook that best suits their students' culture and religion. Thus, by identifying the counter-cultural patterns presented in the two English textbook series, Active Skills for Reading and Select Readings, the present study seeks to provide appropriate responses to the following questions:

1. Which EFL textbook series (Active Skills for Reading or Select Readings) includes more and which one fewer counter-cultural patterns?
2. Is there any relationship between the frequency of counter-cultural patterns included in the two textbook series and their educational levels (elementary to upper-intermediate or 1 to 4 ); in other words, does the number of counter-cultural patterns increase or decrease when the levels of the textbooks go up?

## 4. Method and procedure

In order to attain the objective of the present study the contents of the two EFL textbook series: 1.Active Skills for Reading and 2.Select Readings which are most commonly taught to freshman university students of Boushehr Province as a prerequisite for their ESP courses were scrutinized and their counter-cultural patterns were identified. These negative characteristics which deviate Islamic ethics mostly involve boys and girls relations as well as the other youth moral values. Depending on how these non-Islamic patterns are presented and stated they are divided into two parts:

1. A mere statement (e.g. They ate, drank, and danced all night.)
2. An entire reading passage (e.g. Love at first sight)

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Each of the above mentioned textbook series include four levels, so eight EFL textbooks were scrutinized and the frequency of the counter-cultural patterns presented as a mere statement or an entire reading passage was identified, counted, and tabulated as follows:

Table 1: Counter-cultural patterns found in Select Readings series

|  | elementary | Pre- <br> intermediate | intermediate | Upper- <br> intermediate | Total |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- |
| A mere <br> statement | 3 | 13 | 0 | 3 | 19 |
| An entire <br> reading | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 |

Table 2: Counter-cultural patterns found in Active Skills for Reading series

|  | Book 1 | Book 2 | Book 3 | Book 4 | Total |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- |
| A mere <br> statement | 17 | 6 | 10 | 1 | 34 |
| An entire <br> reading | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

As tables 1 and 2 illustrate, 19 counter-cultural statements and 4 counter-cultural reading passages were identified in Select Readings series. However, the frequency of these negative patterns in Active Skills for Reading series was much more; that is, 34 counter-cultural statements but only 2 counter-cultural reading passages. So, Select Reading series should be given priority over Active Skills for Reading series in case mere statements are to be taken into account by the teachers. But those EFL instructors whose attention is mostly on reading passages can assign Active Skills for Reading books to their students and omit or alter the two counter-cultural reading passages embedded only in book 1 since no passage with negative content was identified in books 2,3 , and 4 of this series.

In order to answer the second research question regarding the relationship between the frequency of the counter-cultural patterns found in the textbooks and the levels associated to them (from elementary to upper intermediate or 1 to 4), two types of graphs, a bar graph and a line graph, were portrayed as illustrated in figures 1 and 2. By taking a brief look at these figures, no relationship might be observed between the number of counter- cultural patterns in both Select Reading series and Active Skills for Reading series and the levels associated to them; that is to say, the rise in the levels of the books doesn't seem to have any influence on the number of the counter-cultural values of the books. By observing the bars and the lines more carefully and comparing them with each other in different levels, it could be noticed that level 4 of Active Skills for Reading contains the fewest number of counter-cultural patterns and book 1 the most. But level 3 of Select Readings series include the fewest negative patterns and level 2 the most. As levels 3 and 4 of both textbook series contain fewer counter-cultural statements in comparison with levels 1 and 2 , it can be concluded that there is some negative relationship, although not perfect, between the level increase and the number of the counter-cultural patterns.

Figure 1: The frequency of counter-cultural patterns in Active Skills for Reading and Select Reading series


Figure 2: The frequency of counter-cultural pattern in Active Skills for Reading and Select Readings series


## 4. Results and discussion

The EFL textbooks imported from English-speaking countries definitely present their own cultures and values which are regarded as counter-cultural or non-Islamic in our religious society. The computation of these patterns found in EFL textbook series revealed that they had higher frequency in Active Skills for Reading series (34) in comparison with Select Reading series (19); in other words, Active Skills for Reading books utilize more non-Islamic or morally negative statements than Select Reading Books. This finding can be of great assistance for EFL teachers to make a better choice concerning the most appropriate EFL university coursebook. In this way they can avoid any negative impact on freshman students who encounter cultural values against their society norms for the first time.

A great number of EFL instructors, however, may be more concerned about reading passages than separate statements. For these university teachers reading passages are considered as the main parts of the books and regarded as the criteria by which they could decide upon the most suitable coursebook. Active Skills for Reading books, therefore, will be regarded as superior since the number of the counter-cultural reading passages that they comprise are two; that is, half of those in Select Readings series.

By fully explaining the facts and describing the events in detail, extensive reading passages such as long stories, essays, or discourse can exert a more considerable impact on the learners than a mere statement. Furthermore, deleting or altering an improper reading passage is a big task and sometimes tough in comparison with modifying a problematic statement. So it seems to be reasonable to decide upon the best textbook based on the contents of the reading passages. In this way, the teacher can more easily modify the book by omitting or altering the negative statements presenting counter-cultural values with no need to modify the reading passages in case they are considered morally and culturally appropriate.

With regard to the relationship between the level increase and the number of counter-cultural patterns a short look at the graphs show that the rise in the levels of both textbook series (Active Skills for Reading and Select Reading) from level 1 to 4 or elementary to upper-intermediate does not have any impact on the number of counter-cultural patterns utilized; in other words, there seems to be no relationship between the educational levels of the textbooks and the frequency of the morally negative statements included in the units. The educators, therefore, may encounter any number of non-Islamic values whether they study in elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, or upper-intermediate level. In spite of that, a more careful observation of the graphs shows that the first two levels contain more negative patterns than the second two levels; that is to say, level 1 of Active Skills and level 2 of Select Readings have the highest frequency of non-Islamic values. Furthermore, level 3 of Select Readings and level 4 of Active Skills have the lowest frequency in comparison with the first two levels. Thus, it can be concluded that although no relationship seems to exist, some negative relationship does exist between the level increase and the frequency of counter-cultural patterns; that is to say, as the book levels go up, the number of counter-cultural values is more likely to descend.

It is crystal clear that higher level textbooks are concerned with more scientific and hence more complicated structures and subject matters. The inclusion of technological, biological, chemical, medical, and technical issues results in the exclusion of such simple matters as emotional, moral, or cultural behaviors and attitudes. That's why it seems logical to find fewer counter-cultural patterns in higher level textbooks.

## 5. Conclusion

Many people living in modern societies do not react in the same way against their parents' cultural values; on the other hand, they cannot be completely segregated from their cultural inheritance (McDevitt, 2004). The reason behind this dependence, according to Zaidi (2012) goes back to the inherent and fundamental connection between language and ideology. In the same way, ideology and religion are so connected that can be regarded as a single entity according to Islamic researchers (Fitzgerald, 2003; \& Nasr, 1994). Iran as a religious Islamic country, therefore, pays full attention to import EFL books really suited to their Islamic culture and definitely empty of non-Islamic values.

It is needless to say that such counter-cultural values indicate how the target culture views the world which is certainly different from Iranians' viewpoint about the world around them. The concepts considered as the social and ethical norms of the target culture may be considered

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abnormous and uncommon in our native culture. Almost all parents are attentive enough not to let their children be in contact with such non-Islamic values in order to avoid their negative effects especially when the child is not yet fully grown. They prefer to bring up their children with their own Islamic culture to feel more confident about its moral impact. These parents, therefore, are concerned about what is included in EFL books (Asghari, 2011).

In spite of the fact that university students are considered mature with fully developed personality and emotional behavior, there seems to be no worry on the part of the parents and the society concerning the counter-cultural materials they are supposed to study at the university. However, unlike senior or junior students who are considered more fully grown-up individuals with a strongly shaped personality and ideology hardly altered when confronting counter-cultural texts, freshman university students in Iran are confronted with materials against their Islamic culture for the first time at the university after a long period of studying and encountering textbooks compatible with Islamic culture at school. Mostly as beginners they have difficulty to talk about their own culture being familiar to them. So they certainly have problem in understanding and learning about another culture especially when it is entirely different or better to say against their own culture. The other reason behind the students' failure in language learning is the negative attitudes that they posses towards foreign or western culture.

Considering the fact that nearly all EFL books are imported from English speaking countries reflecting their own culture, teachers teaching English to university students particularly freshman ones have to take care when choosing among them, so the most suitable book is the one with less countercultural or non-Islamic patterns. In order to gain this purpose the two most commonly applied university EFL textbooks taught to students taking pre-university and general English courses at Boushehr universities as prerequisite courses for their ESP course; that is, Active Skills for Reading and Select Readings, were analyzed and the counter-cultural patterns utilized in these textbooks were computed. It was found out that Select Reading series had higher frequency of counter-cultural statements but fewer counter-cultural passages. Concerning the length and the amount of materials included in reading passages and hence the significance and influence of the passages, the finding of the present study can be of valuable assistance for EFL teachers to make up their mind about the most appropriate book suited to their own Islamic values as well as the norms of the society.

This study also aimed at exploring the relationship between the rise in the levels of the EFL textbooks and the frequency of counter-cultural patterns found in these books. Although the research on ideologies in the imported English textbooks has found out that the frequency of the ideologies increases with the increase in the level of the textbook (Abdollahzadeh and Baniasad, 2010), this study revealed that the level increase had quite the opposite effect on the number of counter-cultural patterns; in other words, as the educational level of the textbooks increases, for instance, from elementary to upper-intermediate or from 1 to 4 , the number of morally negative statements is more likely to reduce. But this negative effect is not considerable immediately after each level, rather it can be noticed after two or more levels. Regarding the inclusion of more scientific issues in the books of higher levels as compared with lower levels this finding seems to be logical and acceptable. In order to reach at a more confident conclusion, however, a greater number of EFL textbook series are required to be scrutinized and worked on.

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# EFFECTS OF MALL IN BLENDED LEARNING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF MOBILE DEVICES IN BLENDED LEARNING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION. TO THIS END, A GROUP OF 40 INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS STUDYING ENGLISH AT A PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN ESFAHAN WERE SELECTED. THE NELSON PROFICIENCY TEST WAS THEN ADMINISTERED TO ASCERTAIN THE HOMOGENEITY IN TERMS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY. THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS: CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL. AFTER A WARM UP, THE CONTROL GROUP WAS TAUGHT BASED ON TRADITIONAL METHODS OF READING WITHOUT MOBILE DEVICES WHILE THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WAS ASKED TO DISCUSS TEXTS IN CLASS AND CONTINUE TO DO SO OUTSIDE OF CLASS USING VIBER APPLICATION ON THEIR MOBILE PHONES. THE DATA WERE COLLECTED THROUGH A PRETEST-POSTTEST DESIGN AND THEN STATISTICALLY ANALYZED USING THE T-TEST. THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT USING BLENDED LEARNING HAD A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE LEARNERS' READING PERFORMANCE. TO DETERMINE THE PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION ABOUT BLENDED LEARNING WITH MOBILE PHONES, A QUESTIONNAIRE WAS EMPLOYED, THE RESULTS OF WHICH REVEALED THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WERE HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH THE ACTIVITY THEY EXPERIENCED. THE OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY CAN HELP STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND SYLLABUS DESIGNERS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' LEARNING NEEDS.


KEYWORDS: BLENDED LEARNING, MOBILE LEARNING, READING COMPREHENSION, EFL LEARNERS

## 1. Introduction

The rapid emergence of technological innovations over the past half-century has had a huge impact on the possibilities for learning. The term blended learning (BL) is being used with increased frequency in both academic and corporate circles. In 2003, the American Society for Training and Development identified BL as one of the top ten trends to emerge in the knowledge delivery industry (Rooney, 2003). BL is combining online and face-to-face instruction (Reay, 2001; Rooney, 2003; Ward \& LaBranche, 2003; Young, 2002). There are many reasons that an instructor, trainer, or learner might pick BL over other learning options. Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) identified six reasons that one might choose to design or use a BL system: (1) pedagogical richness, (2) access to knowledge, (3) social interaction, (4) personal agency, (5) cost-effectiveness,
and (6) ease of revision. In the BL literature, the most common reason provided is that BL combines the best of both worlds. Furthermore, with BL, students can stay on top of classwork anytime, anywhere with personalized tools. BL offers the best of online learning while giving teachers the time to work with students on by one and specially in small groups.

Undoubtedly, most of EFL/ESL education happens inside a classroom, and language teachers know that attaining the most ideal situation creates a challenge in most EFL/ESL situations. In such conditions, language learners have few and restricted opportunities to use L2 (Marsh, 2012). One of the biggest complaints that all language teachers have is that time is limited in the classroom, and despite the fact that all teachers are well aware of the need to provide their students with opportunities to practice the language in different and varied contexts, this is sometimes just not possible.

Language teachers strive to provide situations for their learners to meet their learning needs. One such attempt is to stimulate an environment in which actual use of the target language can be practiced. To do so, language teachers have resorted to a number of resources and tools, such as recording devices, video players and projectors, periodicals, and language labs which all provide different and varied access to content (Chapelle, 2001). They can employ a variety of activity types with group work and pair work, collaborative learning and independent learning to engage learners in communicative language practice. In fact, language teachers, in most situations, quite unconsciously try to employ a "blend" of teaching methodologies in order to create a rich learning environment for language learners (Ghahari \& Ameri Golestan, 2013).

What seems to be more recent is the diversity of learning opportunities and environments that have been made possible, simply via using high tech to support language teachers as well as language learners (Marsh, 2012).

The employment of mobile devices for supporting continuous learning is a very powerful ways of helping non-English countries citizens address their need to learn English. In fact, mobilelearning (m-learning) can bridge formal and informal learning experiences (Wanger \& Wilson, 2005) and also can work best when used as part of the blended method of teaching, as a supplementary tool that is used in combination with traditional methods, such as paper-based materials (Brown, 2005; Stead, Sharp, Anderson, \& Philpott, 2006).

With the advent of technology, teachers can place courses online and off-line as blended learning, and communicate with students effectively in a variety of ways. Blended learning, which means integrating the online and face-to-face formats to create a more effective learning experience has become popular in second language learning (Brew, 2008). Under the blended learning environment, teachers should use online resources in their classroom activities to help students become more active and effective learners. Both off-line and online learning environments have their advantages; however, "a mixture of teaching and learning methods will always be the most efficient manner in which to support student learning because only then it is possible to embrace all the activities of discussion, interaction, adaptation and reflection, which are essential for academic learning" (Towndrow \& Cheers, 2003). Thus, blended learning can extend learning beyond the classroom and it enables leaners to facilitate involvement in learning.

Developing learning tools has been a critical issue in the English-language education field. With accelerated growth in technology, MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) has gradually become considered effective for its convenience and mobility, which overcomes the limitations of learning time and space constraining traditional language classes. Mobile learning, thus, has great potential for providing students with rich and authentic experiences both in and outside the classroom (Kim, 2014).

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However, m-learning research has provided fruitful results in relation to the improvement of learner performance and positive attitudes, reading practice using mobile phones in blended learning has not yet to be investigated in an Iranian EFL context. In summary, in accordance with the aforementioned findings of the empirical studies proving beneficial effects on English learning through mobile phones, finding an effective mobile-based reading approach for Iranian English students who do not get enough exposure to English seems to be necessary.

This study attempted to investigate the effects of using mobile devices on reading proficiency in Iranian EFL learners in blended learning environments. To achieve this objective, the following research questions were addressed:

1) To what extent is using mobile devices effective in enhancing Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension in the blended learning approach?
2) Are there any differences between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension, using mobile devices and those without mobile devices?
3) What is the students' perception toward using mobile devices in reading comprehension?

## 2. Literature review

Reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school, and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost (Sheridan, 1985). As (Coady, 1979; Grabe \& Stoller, 2002) mentioned, L2 reading has been viewed as an interactive process, and Rumelhart (1977) declared that the interactive methodologies are defined such that a pattern is synthesized in light of information provided concurrently from the several sources.

As one of the most significant technological revolutions in history, the Internet has become a powerful new means of communication, information retrieval, transaction processing, and problem solving (Friedman, 2005). In the realm of reading, this technology has enormous potential to make fundamental changes in the way we read on a daily basis. Research indicates that the online reading process is not isomorphic with the offline reading process, and thus proficient readers offline are not necessarily proficient readers online (Coiro \& Dobler, 2007; Henry, 2006).

Educational technology, which is the effective use of technological tools in learning, refers to the use of both physical hardware and educational theoretic. It encompasses several domains, including learning theory, computer-based training, online learning and, where mobile technologies are used, m-learning. It includes numerous types of media that deliver text, audio, images, animation, and streaming video, and includes technology applications and processes such as audio or video tape, satellite TV, CD-ROM, and computer-based learning, as well as local intranet/extranet and web-based learning. Information and communication systems, whether free-standing or based on either local networks or the Internet in networked learning, underlie many e-learning processes (Tavangarian, Leypold, Nölting, \& Röser, 2004).

Language education is the teaching and learning of a foreign or second language and it is a branch of applied linguistics. In the eyes of many educational technology specialists, the role of the computer in education has gradually been transformed from that of tutor to that of tool. This is certainly the case in the field of L2 teaching, in which the most dynamic applications of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) involve simulations, electronic communication, and multimedia production rather than simple drill-and-practice tutorials.

E-learning which is Internet-enabled learning, provides faster learning at reduced costs, increased access to learning, and clear accountability for all participants in the learning process (Goodridge, 2001). In today's fast-paced culture, organizations that implement e-learning provide their workforce with the ability to turn change into an advantage. E-learning delivers accountability, accessibility and opportunity. It allows people and organizations to keep up with changes in the global economy that now occur on Internet time. E-learning will be the great equalizer in the new century. By eliminating barriers of time, distance, and socio-economic status, individuals can now take charge of their own lifelong learning.

Each language subject or area has different educational tools that are likely suited with it. The use of several technical tools has a significant effect on the learning process of each area of the language (Sharma, 2009).

Technology and English language education are related to each other (Singhal, 1997). During the sixties and seventies of the last century English language learning laboratories were being used in various educational institutions. The traditional language laboratory was consisted of a number of small cabinets, provided with a cassette deck, a microphone and a headphone for each one. Teachers use a central control panel to monitor their students' interactions. The main advantage of that type of technology was that verbal behavior of students would help them to quickly learn the second language. The students' skills can be enhanced by encountering more practical drill problems. Although the language laboratory was a positive step in linking technology and language education, this technique was actually tedious and boring for learners (Singhal, 1997). Also, there were minimal interactions between the teacher and his students.

Computer assisted language learning (CALL) software has provided another teaching tool for second language education. The use of computers in English language classroom is useful for both teachers and learners. Currently, there are numerous software application programs available such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation programs, spelling check utilities, electronic workbooks, reading and writing programs, and different learning packages to assist instructors in creating tutorial exercises to enhance their English language courses.

Furthermore, computers can simple and easy to understand the interest of reading for learners by using to increase text. Read computer programs can be used to improve the word vocabulary, fluency and understanding of the students. This may include English language learners to enable to increase their interaction with texts, paying attention to the individual needs and improve their skills to texts they read to read otherwise not be able to (Ybarra \& Green, 2003).

Several studies have been conducted on the effects of blended learning and mobile devices on L2 performance. Christensen (2003) designed a blended learning course in introductory lessons. The process of evaluation include the purpose of course, target groups and learning objectives. Two different pilots of the course were conducted and statistics regarding the results and comparison with the same face-to-face courses are included. Results showed that blended learning results exceeded the results of the same face-to-face course. Cottrell and Robinson (2003) examined the possibility of using mixed approaches to faculty time to reduce time and allow students to realign with blended learning as a way to more students at a given academic program. Students reported prefer the blended learning approach and teaching time was reduced. O'Toole and Absalom (2003) examined whether the provision of teaching materials on the Internet has a positive effect on student achievement of course consequences. The authors found that the students who attended 13 lectures and read web materials performed better on the quiz than those students who only attended lecture or only used the Web. Riffell and Sibley (2003) examined the effect of a hybrid learning format to the student perceptions in an environmental biology course. The hybrid teaching format included face-to-face lessons and exercises online homework. The results
showed that students learn more student-teacher interaction in the hybrid course than in a traditional course format. There were also time management and learning supported by online homework. Priluck (2004) examined the effect of two technologically different teaching methods of marketing course on student responses. A traditional, face-to-face method of teaching was compared to a web-assisted method of 14 instruction. Results indicated that students in the traditional course were more satisfied with their learning experience. These students felt that the course helped them develop their skills in critical thinking, team building, and social interaction. Pereira et al (2007) investigated the impact of blended learning strategies on the academic achievement and satisfaction of first year students of the biology degree curriculum at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona. The participants were divided into two groups. Group one ( $\mathrm{n}=69$ ) was taught by blended learning, while group two $(\mathrm{n}=65)$ received traditional teaching. Results showed that the percentage pass rate of the first group ( $87.9 \%$ ) was higher than the second group ( $71.4 \%$ ). It was clear that blended learning was more effective than traditional teaching in developing students' academic achievement in human anatomy. Moreover, there were no differences regarding overall satisfaction with the teaching received. Another study from Cha (2012) investigated the students' perspectives on blended learning and how two reading activities, previewing and reviewing, were able to benefit active student involvement in English classes. 81 university students practiced reading on the online site included in various types of reading activities and exercises for one semester. The results showed that the participants were quite satisfied with the blended learning in the end although they did not show preference toward this learning method at the beginning. There was not a statistically significant difference between two learning methods, but online practice was a facilitating factor for offline classes. Lomine and Buckingham (2009) stated the advantages of employing SMS in the learning environment; SMS is fast, discrete, and not expensive, and improves student retention. Overall, the effect of SMS instruction was significantly positive for language learning since SMS instruction can bring students' interests and motivation into learning due to the portability and immediacy of mobile devices (Norbrook \& Scott, 2003). Furthermore, several research (KukulskaHulme, 2009; Nash, 2007; Sharples, 2000) have investigated student perspectives rather than improvement of language skills. With the seemingly potential of technology, it has affected language learning and teaching environments. Employing technology in a language classroom further improves learner interests and motivation when combined with the active participation of students and authentic activities (Kim, 2011, 2013; Nash, 2007; Norbrook \& Scott, 2003). Other studies related to m-learning focus on vocabulary, (Vahid Dastjerdi \& Khazaei, 2011; Taki \& Khazaei, 2011; Tabatabaei \& Soltani Tehrani, 2012). Vahid Dastjerdi and Khazaei (2011) have the effects of traditional vs. blended teaching seeks to EFL learners Vocabulary Acquisition. After administrating their programs, the results of study show that using SMS as part of the learning content can create to enhance L2 vocabulary a desirable condition for the EFL learners. In another study, Tabatabaei and Soltani Tehrani (2012) studied the effects of blended learning on learners' vocabulary achievement. In this study 60 participates were divided in two groups. Control group $(\mathrm{n}=30)$ learned vocabulary items through traditional techniques while experimental group ( $\mathrm{n}=$ 30) received 20 -session vocabulary instruction in blended on-line environment taking advantage of Nicenet platform. The result of t -test between pre-test and post-test showed that there was a significant difference between experimental and control group regarding their vocabulary knowledge.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 40 intermediate students who were selected from among those who enrolled in pre-TOEFL classes in a private language school in Isfahan. The convenience sampling method was used for selecting the participants who were made

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homogenous using the Nelson Proficiency test. The participants were both male and female and their age ranged from 21 to 29. All the participants had smartphones or tablets and were familiar with Viber, the communication mobile application. Two classes joined in the study, each class consisted of 20 students, one of which was the control group and the other experimental group. The experimental group was exposed to blended learning model whereas the control group studied according to the traditional face-to-face model.

### 3.2. Materials

### 3.2.1. Viber Mobile Application

In this study, Viber application was used to see the effectiveness of using mobile devices in enhancing Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension in the blended learning approach. Viber is an instant messaging and Voice over IP (VoIP) app for smartphones developed by Viber Media. In addition to instant messaging, users can exchange images, video and audio media messages. The client software is available for Mac OS, Android, BlackBerry OS, iOS, Series 40, Symbian, Bada, Windows Phone, and Microsoft Windows. Viber works on both 3G/4G and Wi-Fi networks. It first requires installation on a phone in order to work on desktop operating system environment. Currently, Viber has over 100 million monthly active users from its 280 million global registered users. In text chat, Viber lets you create chat groups of up to 200 participants.

### 3.2.2. Reading Comprehension Tests

The reading comprehension tests constructed for the present study consisted of 50 multiple choice test items. The test items were devised based on five reading passages from Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test: PBT book. The tests were conducted to measure the student's reading comprehension before and after the treatment. They were parallel forms. The students were given 60 minutes in the first week and the 8 th week of class sessions to take the tests. Reading comprehension performance was evaluated by the scores on multiple-choice questions that determined whether the participants comprehended the reading passages. All the participants took the pre-test prior to their first session. The readability of the texts was checked using standard formulae. An attempt was made to select texts at a similar readability level. The reliability of the tests was also computed using the Cronbach's alpha. The calculated value was found to be 0.87 .

### 3.2.3. Reading Comprehension Passages

In this study eight reading comprehension passages were selected for reading and discussion. The topics of reading comprehension passages were about travel, fashion, money, cultural events, health, space, education and art. These passages consisted of about 650 words and were very close to the real TOEFL materials in terms of difficulty level. The reading passages were selected from Active Skills for Reading: Book 3.

### 3.2.4. The Nelson Proficiency Test

The Nelson proficiency test was administered to assess the current level of language proficiency of the participants. In fact, it was used to exclude from the study those learners whose language proficiency level differed significantly from that of the others. The test includes multiple choice questions which assess students' general knowledge of language.

### 3.2.5. The Questionnaire

In this study a questionnaire was used to collect the participants' demographic data including age, gender, major, and participants' perceptions about blended learning. It surveyed the participants' perception of easiness and effectiveness of using mobile devices, comparison between traditional and blended learning class using mobile devices and also intention of mobile use for future learning.

The design of the questionnaire came from previous research on effects of using mobile devices in blended learning for English reading comprehension (Kim, 2014). The 14 item questionnaire was based on five point Likert-scale format with strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; and strongly disagree, ranging from 1 to 5 for each question was used. The time considered to complete the questionnaire was 15 minutes. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the experts in the filed. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated through Cronbach's Alpha and turned out to be 0.82 .

### 3.3. Procedures

The present study was conducted to compare the learners' reading comprehension before and after the treatment and used the two-group experimental design. The participants in the experimental group were taught using traditional teaching methods of reading plus learning via mobile devices. The students discussed texts in class and continued to do so outside of class using their mobile phones. The control group was taught based on traditional methods of reading without mobile devices. In the first session of the course, the teacher met the experimental group and explained to them the nature and the procedures of using blended learning. In the same session, the participants were pre-tested via Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test: PBT book tests, and they were invited by their phone numbers to the Viber mobile application group in the name of "reading and discussion", which was created by the researcher.

The experiment lasted for eight weeks. The participants studied routine classroom contents each session. During that time, the participants of the experimental group were encouraged to use the blended learning source, namely, the Viber application. In addition, they were exposed to the face-to-face learning environment such as live classroom participation and interaction. The participants were asked to carry out specific tasks in the Viber group, reading and discussion. Each week in the Viber group the researcher at first warmed up the students by asking some questions about reading passages and then after a short review exchange put the reading passage in the group for the students. After that, students were encouraged to discuss the topic, exchange their views, interact, and talk about their own experiences. Occasionally, the researcher asked questions related to the stories and stimulated their minds for more participation.

On the other hand, the control group studied the classroom materials with the same teacher during the same time-period through the face-to-face model, as they were not given any access to the online blended material. Having completed the course, the two groups were tested via the post-test. In addition, during the teaching practice time, the participants' reading comprehension was monitored and evaluated by the teacher via the class quizzes. Finally, the participants' scores were calculated, tabulated, and statistically analyzed.

### 3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection period was approximately two months (April-May, 2015). The data were collected in order to investigate the effect of using mobile devices as a blended learning tool in reading comprehension. Pre- and post-tests of reading comprehension were used to collect quantitative data. The total score for each reading test was 50 points considering each question as

1 point. To gather qualitative data a survey of questionnaire for participants' attitudes and perspectives about learning reading through mobile devices was used and carried out including 14, 5-Likert-type scale questions.

For this study, the reading comprehension test scores were used to analyze students' improvement. Using the SPSS, descriptive statistics were used to investigate the means and standard deviations of variables. To determine effects of reading practice and exercises after the course, the results of pre-test and post-test of the participants' reading test scores were analyzed using a paired sample t-test. An independent t-test was used to determine differences between the means of the two groups to understand the effects of using mobile phones on reading comprehension of the students. Furthermore, to investigate the perceptions of students towards using mobile devices in reading comprehension, the participant's answers to the questionnaire computed by measuring standard deviations and mean scores.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

To assure whether there was any significant difference between the two groups before the experiment, an independent t-test was conducted. Table 1 demonstrates that the mean scores of the experimental group $(M=31.40)$ is seemingly similar to the mean scores of the control group ( $M=29.95$ ). This result assures that the students in the two groups did not show any difference in reading proficiency, which in turn assures sample homogeneity.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Pre-test

| Group | N | M | SD |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Control | 20 | 29.95 | 6.17 |
| Experimental | 20 | 31.40 | 5.42 |

Homogeneity of the two groups was tested using Levene's Test of Equality of Variances. Applying Levene's Test of Equality of Variances the significance level was found to be 0.442 , which was greater than the alpha $(\alpha<.05)$. Thus, the groups were not significantly different from each other. In other words, the two groups were homogeneous.

Table 2. Homogeneity of Variances Test

| Pre-test Score | Levene | Sig |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
|  | 0.603 | 0.442 |

### 4.2. Effects of Reading Practice

### 4.2.1. Within -Group Comparison

To investigate whether there was any difference in reading comprehension within the groups, the participants' reading test scores were analyzed using a paired sample t-test. Tables 3 and 4 summarize the results of the $t$-test in the control group and the experimental group, respectively. Based on the results, the students in the control group showed significant improvement on the reading comprehension test. The mean score on the pre-test was $(M=29.95, S D=6.17)$ whereas the means of the post-test was $(M=36.85, S D=5.99), t=-18.00, p=0$.

Table 3. Results of Paired-sample t-Test: Control Group

| $\mathrm{N}=20$ | Test | $M$ | $S D$ | $t$ | $d f$ | $p$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| RC | Pre | 29.95 | 6.17 |  |  |  |
|  | Post | 36.85 | 5.99 | -18.00 | 19 | .000 |

As for the experimental group, the pre-test score, shown in Table 4, was ( $M=34.40, S D=5.42$ ) and the post-test score was $(M=43.15, S D=3.91)$. In other words, the students on the experimental group improved significantly on their reading comprehension, $t=-13.27, p=0$

Table 4. Results of Paired-sample t-Test: Experimental Group

| $\mathrm{N}=20$ | Test | $M$ | $S D$ | $t$ | $d f$ | $p$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| RC | Pre | 31.40 | 5.42 |  |  |  |
|  | Post | 43.15 | 3.91 | -13.27 | 19 | .000 |

In sum, there was a significant difference between pre- and post-reading comprehension tests within the groups after the experiment. The reason that all students produced higher scores on the post-test was certainly due to the weekly reading practice and exercises.

### 4.2.2. Between-Group Comparison

In order to answer the research questions, two independent samples t-tests were conducted for both the pre-test and the post-test. Tables 5 and 6 present the descriptive statistics concerning the results of the pre-test.

Table 4.5.Results of Independent $t$-Test: Pre-test

| Group | $N$ | $M$ | $S D$ | $t$ | $d f$ | $p$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Control | 20 | 29.95 | 6.17 | -0.789 | 38 | 0.435 |

$\begin{array}{llll}\text { Experimental } & 20 & 31.40 & 5.42\end{array}$

As can be seen in Table 5, there was no significant difference in reading comprehension of the participants, in their pre-test $(t=-.789, p=0.435)$.

After taking the course, the mean score of the control group on the post-test was $(M=36.85, S D=$ 5.99 ), and the mean score of the experimental group was $(M=43.15, S D=3.91)$.

Table 4.6.Results of Independent $t$-Test: Post-test

| Group | $N$ | $M$ | $S D$ | $t$ | $d f$ | $p$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Control | 20 | 36.85 | 5.99 |  |  |  |
| Experimental | 20 | 43.15 | 3.91 | -3.937 | 38 | 0.000 |

The results clearly show that there was a highly significant difference between the two groups in terms of their reading performance $(t=-.3 .937, p=0)$.

As displayed in Table 5 and Table 6, the mean score of the experimental group (43.15) is higher than the mean score of the control group (36.85) on the post-test. The difference between the two mean scores is statistically significant where the calculated $t$ value is (3.937) and the $p$ value is (0.006). Accordingly, the first hypothesis was rejected and the alternative one was stated as follows: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group (exposed to face-to-face learning) and the experimental group (exposed to blended learning) as measured by the post-test favoring the experimental group.

### 4.3. Students' Attitudes Toward Using Mobile Devices in Reading Comprehension

To investigate the perceptions of students towards the use of mobile devices in reading comprehension, students in the experimental group were asked to complete a survey after the experiment.

As for the perception on blended learning with mobile phones, it was found that participants with mobile devices on their learning of English showed a positive attitude. As the results are shown in Table 7, the majority of participants considered it appropriate to practice reading in English and easy to interact with others through the application of Viber. Some screenshots of their conversations are presented below followed by the analysis of their responses to the questionnaire.

Table 7.Easiness of Using Mobile Devices in Blended Learning

| Item | $M$ | $S D$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. It is easy to interact with group members to do reading discussion on |  |  |
| mobile phones. |  |  |

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| 2. It is convenient to practice English reading through mobile since you can |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| access it anytime and anywhere. |$\quad 4.20 ~ 0.69$

To show how effective using mobile devices in learning English was, descriptive statistics are given in Table 8. The overall mean score of each item was over 3.70 and it shows that students deemed it effective, useful and helpful to learn English reading through mobile phones.

Table 8. Effectiveness of Using Mobile Devices in Blended Learning

| Item | $M$ | $S D$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 3. I can easily practice English by interacting with my peers through mobile <br> phones. | 3.90 | 0.71 |
| 4. It is effective to communicate with my group members anytime and <br> anywhere due to the features of mobile phones. | 3.80 | 0.89 |
| 5. It is helpful to comprehend English reading by blended learning. | 3.85 | 0.93 |
| 6. I can have opportunities to extend English reading outside the classroom <br> through mobile-based reading discussion. | 3.70 | 1.08 |

As for the mobile-based learning in contrast with traditional classes, the participants believed this new method of learning was positive on reading in English (Table 9). In general, M-Learning provided them opportunities to practice a foreign language anywhere and anytime with their peers in a helpful and convenient way.

Table 9. Comparison between a Traditional Class and a Blended Learning Class Using Mobile Devices

| Item | $M$ | $S D$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| 7. I can express myself more on mobile phones than in classes. | 3.50 | 1.39 |
| 8. It is comfortable to interact with peers for reading discussion in mobile <br> environment compared to in classes since there was no time limit. | 3.90 | 0.78 |
| 9. It is useful to discuss in English on mobile phones compared to <br> traditional classes. | 3.50 | 1.19 |
| 10. It is good to practice English using mobile phones since I do not have <br> time to study out of class. | 4.00 | 0.79 |
| 11. It is effective to improve reading comprehension through M-learning. | 3.85 | 0.93 |
| 12. It is more efficient to communicate in English both, in class and M- <br> learning environment than only in class. | 3.80 | 0.83 |

Items referring to learners' intention to continuously use M-learning in English reading ( $M=$ 3.60) and other skills of English learning $(M=3.70)$ are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Intention of Mobile Use for Future Learning

| Item | $M$ | $S D$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |


| 13. I would you like to continuously, study English reading, through mobile <br> phones. | 3.60 | 0.99 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 14. I am willing to study other skills of English through M-learning. | 3.70 | 1.30 |

The results show that most of the students were interested in blended learning approach and tended to experience this method in the future. In addition, with this new method of learning, students achieved a positive vision toward blended learning and using mobile devices in learning English language.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study set out to examine the effect of blended learning using mobile devices on Iranian EFL learners. The results, all in all, demonstrated a significant gain for the experimental group. Specifically, as regards the first question, that is, "To what extent is using mobile devices effective in enhancing Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension in the blended learning approach?", the results of the study showed that using mobile devices was effective to a considerable extent. The pre-test and post-test results showed a significant improvement in the experimental group. The second question had to do with differences between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension, using mobile devices and those without mobile devices. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups. In other word, using mobile devices had positive effects on reading comprehension of students in experimental group. Based on the results, participants in the experimental group showed statistically significant improvement in reading comprehension in contrast with students in the control group. With regard to using mobile devices having positive effects on participants' reading comprehension, a couple of justifications are possible. According to Hea-Suk Kim (2014), using blended language learning in the mobile environment for EFL learners can significantly improve language skills. The results of this study indicated that students using mobile devices showed significant improvement in reading comprehension compared to those enrolled in traditional face-to-face class. The result of present study also observed similarities to previous studies, which proved the effects of vocabulary learning (Vahid Dastjerdi \& Khazaei, 2011; Taki \& Khazaei, 2011; Tabatabaei \& Soltani Tehrani, 2012; Thornton \& Houser, 2005) or the effects of writing performance (Ghahari \& Ameri Golestan, 2013). Furthermore, according to Chih-cheng Lin (2014), in the context of learning English reading in a mobile-assisted extensive reading program, the results revealed that the participants using mobile tablets outperformed their schoolmates using PCs by a significant margin on all online activities and outscored their counterparts in the reading skills tests.

By analyzing the students' responses to the questionnaire, the researcher found that the participants had positive attitudes towards mobile use in a blended learning environment. It is concluded that mobile-based reading discussion seemed to enhance oral reading confidence and increase students' involvement in discussion. Findings from the present study are similar to many previous research studies which demonstrated the students' positive perspectives toward mobile-assisted English learning (Kiernan \& Aizawa, 2004; Kim, 2011, 2013; Nash, 2007; Thornton \& Houser, 2005). The students strongly agreed that blended learning including their mobile devices made L2 reading convenient in interacting with peers anytime, anywhere, and effective in practicing English, and also helpful in reviewing reading texts. This finding is in congruence with the results reported by (Viberg \& Gronlund, 2013; Sorayyaei Azar \& Nasiri, 2014; Miyazoe \& Terry Anderson, 2010; Mahmoodi Moemen Abadi \& Fahandezh Saadi, 2012) that students had positive attitudes toward using mobile technology in L2 learning.

In the light of the findings of the present study, it could be concluded that blended learning is more effective than face-to-face learning in developing EFL learners' reading comprehension and can improve learners' reading comprehension.

The findings of the present study may be of help to both teachers and students. The findings can provide pedagogical implications and suggestions for using mobile phones as an effective and flexible learning tool. Furthermore, this study has some implications for syllabus designers to incorporate technological and mobile-based learning into the pedagogical language courses. Instructors in the EFL field can benefit from the present study because these implications will help them to develop a clear understanding of the blended learning that occur outside classrooms in order to support students' learning needs. Moreover, Considering that there exists little research about mobile device usage for blended learning, the findings from the present research are to provide valuable insights into the area of EFL reading research and practical implication for Iranian learners. This may encourage researchers and instructors in the related field to develop deeper and broader studies into L2 reading utilizing mobile-based instructional design. Furthermore, the findings of the study can help students discover how blended learning may result in a better learning performance. In addition, the participants in this study seem to engage in deeper language processing and gained great experience in the field of blended learning.

Despite the findings of the current study, limitations were found. First, this study targeted Iranian learners at intermediate levels. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to EFL learners across proficiency levels. Second, this study was conducted with a small sample in an English learning institute in Iran. With a small sample of students, the results of this study may not be generalized. Furthermore, in this study the researcher and the participants faced with some connectivity problems while uploading and downloading of data in Viber mobile application because of poor mobile network signals and internet connection problems. Another problem as the participants mentioned, was distraction while participating in the Viber group through their mobile phones, if the learner gets a call or SMS or social media updates, then they are bound to get distracted.

Several future research directions can be proposed based on the results of this study. First, the results of this study showed that intermediate EFL learners benefited from blended learning approach. More studies are suggested to determine the effect of using mobile devices in blended learning setting on reading comprehension of EFL learners with different proficiency levels. Second, to increase statistical power, the sample size for similar research should be increased to assure a larger number of participants for each group. A larger sample of participants for each learning style group would increase the statistical power and might provide greater insight into the differences between reading methods and learning styles. Furthermore, having a better internet connection may help students to have a better experience in blended learning. To this end, the government should provide better network infrastructure for faster internet connections. In addition, to avoid participants' distraction while accessing mobile reading group, a specific application could be programmed that do not allow the students to access any other application during reading and discussion.

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# RAPPORT AND EFL LEARNERS' MOTIVATION: PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS VS. PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN IRAN 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY AIMED AT HOW RAPPORT WAS MATERIALIZED IN EFL CLASSES IN PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN IRAN AS WELL AS HOW IT WAS RELATED TO STUDENTS' MOTIVATION. TO THIS END, A TOTAL OF 200 PARTICIPANTS, STUDYING IN ESFAHAN, WERE SELECTED. TO COLLECT THE REQUIRED DATA, TWO QUESTIONNAIRES WERE EMPLOYED, THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE ADAPTED FROM WUBBELS AND LEVY'S (1991) AND THE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE ADAPTED FROM GARDNER (2004). THE RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS DEMONSTRATED A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF RAPPORT IN FAVOR OF THE FORMER. ADDITIONALLY, THE LEARNERS IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOL SHOWED A HIGHER LEVEL OF MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH. FINALLY, THE CORRELATION BETWEEN RAPPORT AND MOTIVATION TURNED OUT TO BE STRONGER FOR THE STUDENTS IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOL. THE FINDINGS HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL TEACHERS AND TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS.

KEYWORDS: RAPPORT, MOTIVATION, EFL LEARNERS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\section*{1. Introduction}

The teacher-student relationship or rapport which should be built by the teacher is regarded a necessary factor in the teaching and learning environment. Rapport is warmth, conformity, and affinity (Pianta, 1999). According to these characteristics, as Hasse (2004) defined, a positive teacher-student relationship is a mutual manner which depends on agreement, alliance or on likeness and harmony and partners' qualities and manners or the emotional behaviors of the individuals. In addition, Pianta (1999) adds that rapport is based on open communication characterized by encouraging, caring and supportive emotions amongst teachers and students.


Pigford (2001) argues that teachers should firstly identify the significance of positive teacherstudent rapport before developing methods or strategies that establish a good teacher-student relationship. Particularly positive relationships can help teachers to improve the students' attitudes toward the learning process which in turn leads to the improvement of students' bad behavior.

Teachers serve as a very important model for students who are developing their own methods of communication. Anna (2009) explains that when students feel that they have a positive relationship with teachers and they trust and like them, they are more successful in learning. Thus, teachers should be conscious about students' emotional experiences; teachers should acknowledge students' when they show their eagerness to participate and communicate with them in a suitable situation (Fumoto et al., 2007). It seems that in the Iranian context, EFL teachers are aware of this fact and build a better positive relationship with their students in private schools than that in public schools. To verify the issue, the following questions were specifically raised:

1) How is the teacher-students' rapport in EFL classes different between private language school learners and public school learners in Iran?
2) Is there any significant difference between the EFL learners' motivation in private language schools and public schools in Iran?
3) How is the relationship between teacher-students rapport and their motivation different between private language school learners and public school learners?

## 2. Literature Review

As the core of social interaction, rapport can be created through teachers' techniques in strengthening students' connection to school and promoting their interactions with classmates and engagement in classroom activities. It can be argued that when students perceive that they have a positive relationship with teachers whom they trust and like, they are more likely to succeed (Anna, 2009). In other words, rapport means knowing students and their learning styles and using this relationship with them to teach at a more personal level. Teachers who have good relation with their students are skilled in "ways that encourage involvement, commitment, and interest" (Ramsden, 2003).

According to Pianta, Steinberg and Rollins (1995), the teacher-student relationship can be envisaged as having a closeness dimension which refers to a relationship characterized by agreement and concord and affects students positively and also a conflict relationship which describes passivity or disagreement between students and teachers, which leads to a negative effect on students learning process.

Although most teachers' only communication with students is in classroom, rapport is an interpersonal relationship that can be improved both in the classroom and outside. If the teacher and student do not have the same meta-programs, then, at the conscious and unconscious level, they will not connect and learning may not occur. A mismatch of meta- programs can result in poor perception of high quality teaching even when the teacher is competent (Brown, 2004).

The relationship between teachers' characteristics and teachers' effectiveness has recently been the focus of research; there have been huge efforts to link teacher quality with factors related to his or her rapport with learners (Bouras \& Keskes, 2014). For many researchers, the critical aspect of this relationship concerns with what happens between the teacher and student (Doane, 2002 cited in Giles, 2008). What lies in this relationship is variously described as a space, a gap, or a dialectical opening, which is to be filled with positive interaction between students and the teacher. In some cases these exchanges have been likened to a transmission, indicative of the directionality and nature of the exchange (Metcalfe \& Game, 2006 cited in Giles, 2008). "When good rapport has been established, students and teachers enjoy one another and the class, and students feel more motivated to do well (Paterson, 2005, p. 69).

Granitz, Koernig and Harich (2009) have advanced a model for rapport which includes three antecedents (approach, personality, and homophily) and four outcomes (student benefits, faculty benefits, benefits outside the classroom, and faculty-student benefits). Their research was based on perceptions from business faculty in a variety of private and public schools. Their results indicated that increased rapport can have faculty benefits that include personal enjoyment and satisfaction in teaching, increased appreciation as a teacher, higher teaching evaluations, and an increased reputation within the school (Granitz, et al., 2009). On the other hand, rapport has been shown to have a statistically significant positive effect on a student's attitude toward the teacher and toward the course material when the instructor established rapport with the student (Benson, Cohen \& Buskist, 2005).

All in all, what research has revealed is that there seems to be felt need for teachers to form emotionally warm, supportive relationships with and among their students. Teachers have a crucial role in effective teaching and learning process and can serve as motivators for learners so as to improve students' chances for academic success. In the same line of research, this study sought to examine how this relationship is realized in public and private schools in Iran, which are believed to be governed with different atmospheres.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Participants

The participants were selected from a population of high school students in Esfahan, Iran. For this purpose, as specified by the objectives of the study, both private and public schools were selected. As the nature of rapport as an affective variable is greatly impacted by socio-economic factors, attempts were made to take the sample from both private and public schools located in the same neighborhood. The existing classes were then selected through the purposive sampling method The participants were all female students within an age range falling between 15 and 16 years old. The study was thus conducted with a sample of 100 respondents from a private school and similarly 100 other students from a public school, totaling 200 participants.

### 3.2. Instruments

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between the teacher's rapport and EFL students' motivation to learn English. To this end, questionnaires were utilized to collect the data needed to determine how these two variables correlated.

To collect the data, two questionnaires were used: the Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire (TSRQ), which was adapted from Wubbels and Levy's (1991) version and a questionnaire developed by Gardner (2004) to assess students' motivation in EFL contexts.

### 3.2.1. Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire

The Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire (TSRQ) consists of 35 items each followed by four choices indicating the respondents' degree of agreement on the statements ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. In other words, the participants' responses to the statements are supposed to be measured on the Likert scale. The TSRQ was originally written in English. However, to avoid the language barrier and in order to tap into students' minds so as to find about their opinions as much as possible, the questionnaire was translated into Farsi. To ensure that students could comprehend the statements with ease, it was pilot studied with a group of 15 students, resembling the target group, in a private language school. The resulting responses were then submitted to Cronbach's alpha and an index of .89 was yielded.

### 3.2.2. Motivation Questionnaire

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To learn about students' motivation, the motivation questionnaire developed by Gardner (2004) was used. This questionnaire originally has 104 items on it, but it was reduced to 38 items to suit the purposes of this study. In doing so, those items related to students' motivation to learn a language were selected. For each item on the questionnaire, there are six options beginning with 'Strongly Agree' carrying a point value of 6 and ending with 'Strong Disagree' having a point value of 1 . In other words, students' responses were measured based on a six-point Likert scale. Then, similar to the TSRQ, it was translated into Farsi in order to make sure that there would be no misunderstanding of the statements due to insufficient knowledge of language.

Again, as it was done for the TSRQ, the resulting questionnaire was pilot studied. The Cronbach alpha was then used to check for the internal consistency of the questionnaire, which yielded an index of 0.81 . As for the validity of this questionnaire, the professional judgment of a TEFL professor was sought, and it was deemed content valid.

### 3.3. Procedure

As stated before, this study aimed at deciding the role of rapport in students' motivation. In other words, the design of the study was one of ex post facto. More specifically, the purpose was twofold. First, an efforts were made to determine the nature of the teacher-students relationships in two school settings (i.e., private and public), thus a survey study was conducted. The second purpose was to determine whether teachers' relationship with students in the class correlated with students' motivation to learn English, hence a correlational study.

### 3.3.1. Data Collection

Two instruments were also employed to collect the required data. For the first part of the study, the TSRQ was given to the students in person despite the offer made by the Education Organization to send the questionnaires attached to a formal letter to different schools. The offer was not welcomed since it could be predicted that very few would be returned. Appointments were made and the researcher attended the classes. Students were ascertained that all the data collected would be confidential.

As for the students' motivation, the data were similarly collected through the motivation questionnaire. After making arrangements with the school principals, students were met and a brief explanation about the content of the questionnaire was presented to them; however, the research goals were not revealed so as to avoid the effect of external variables such as subject expectancy.

Finally, a post-study interview was also conducted with a few participants. This was done in order to make sure that inattention and attitude as extraneous variables had not influenced the responses. The interview included the same items in the questionnaire though phrased differently. The elicited responses were then compared with those obtained through the TSRQ and the motivation questionnaire and the agreement percent turned out to be $90 \%$ and $93 \%$, respectively.

### 3.3.2. Data Analysis

The data were obtained through two instruments as described above, namely, the TSRQ for measuring rapport and the motivation questionnaire. The data obtained from the former were collected from the two groups of the participants, those in the public schools and the students in the private schools. To answer the first question concerning the difference between rapports in the two schools, the t-test was utilized. As to the second question dealing with differences between private and public schools with respect to motivation an independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to capture any possible difference between the level of motivation of the learners in the two groups.

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For the third question the difference between the two groups of students in terms of correlations between the two variables (i.e., motivation and rapport), data analysis was done in two steps. First, for each group, the correlation between students' perception of rapport and their motivation was computed using the Pearson Correlation. Then, the correlation coefficients obtained for each group were compared to find out whether the difference was significant. The Fisher Z formula was used for this purpose.

## 4. Results

The first research question of the study was designed to uncover whether teacher-students rapport in EFL classes was different between private language schools and public schools in Iran. Independent-Samples $t$-test was used to compare the two groups of learners' with respect to teacher-student rapport. The results of the $t$ test analysis for the comparison of these two groups of participants are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Comparing Teacher-Student Rapport Scores

| Participants | $N$ | $M$ | $S D$ | Std. Error Mean |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Private Institute Students | 100 | 100.48 | 12.47 | 1.24 |
| Public School Students | 100 | 89.20 | 13.73 | 1.37 |

Such descriptive statistics as mean and standard deviation are shown for both groups of students in Table 1. The mean score of private institute learners $(M=100.48)$ was greater than the mean score of the public school students $(M=89.20)$. The value of $p$ under the Sig. ( 2 -tailed) column in Table 2 determines whether this difference between the two mean scores was statistically significant or not.

According to Table 2., there was a statistically significant difference in teacher-student rapport scores for private institute learners $(M=100.48, S D=12.47)$ and public school learners $(M=$ $89.20, S D=13.73$ ), $t(198)=6.07, p=.000$ (two-tailed). This is so because the $p$ value was less than the specified level of significance (i.e. $.000<.05$ ). If the $p$ value were greater than the alpha level (that is, the level of significance), the conclusion would be that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of teacher-student rapport scores.

Table 2. Independent-Samples t-Test for Comparing the Teacher-Student Rapport of the Two Groups
Levene's
Test for
Equality T-test for Equality of Means of
Variances


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Assumed

| Equal |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Variances <br> not | 6.07 | 196.19 | . 000 | 11.28 | 1.85 | 7.61 | 14.94 |
| Assumed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The items on the questionnaires were then compared between the private language school and the public school learners to further identify the differences. Table 3 demonstrates those items which were the most different.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Prominent Items

| Parameters | Public school | Private school |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| My teacher presents the information in a way <br> that is easy to understand. | $35 \%$ | $67 \%$ |
| My teacher motivates me to give my best effort. | $43 \%$ | $72 \%$ |
| My teacher expectations are high, clear, and fair <br> for all students. | $37 \%$ | $64 \%$ |
| I'm able to take risk in the classroom without <br> feeling embarrassed. | $39 \%$ | $70 \%$ |
| I'm able to ask for assistance without fear of <br> rejection or embarrassment. | $33 \%$ | $59 \%$ |
| My teacher connects emotionally <br> students | with the | $27 \%$ |

As shown in Table 3., the items which best represent the nature of rapport are quite different between the two schools. In Chapter possible reasons will be discussed.
The second research question of the study was an attempt to figure out whether there was a significant difference between private language school learners and public school students in Iran with respect to motivation. Once again, an independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to capture any possible difference between the level of motivation of the learners in the two groups.

Table 4.Descriptive Statistics for Comparing Motivation Scores

| Participants | $N$ | $M$ | $S D$ | Std. Error Mean |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Private Institute Students | 100 | 99.56 | 15.62 | 1.56 |
| Public School Students | 100 | 75.54 | 18.30 | 1.83 |

According to Table 4, the mean score on the motivation questionnaire for private school learners ( $M=99.56$ ) was greater than that of public school students $(M=75.54)$. However, to check the statistical significance of this difference, one needs to consult the value under the Sig. (2-tailed) column in the $t$ test table which follows.

Table 5. Results of the Independent-Samples $t$ Test for Comparing the Motivation Scores
Levene's
Test for
Equality T-test for Equality of Means
of
Variances

|  | $F$. |  | $t$ | $d f$ | Sig. <br> (2tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | $95 \%$ <br> Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal Variances Assumed | 3.93 | . 04 | 9.98 | 198 | . 000 | 24.02 | 2.40 | 19.27 | 28.76 |
| Equal Variances not Assumed |  |  | 9.98 | 193.23 | . 000 | 24.02 | 2.40 | 19.27 | 28.76 |

As seen in Table 5, there was a statistically significant difference between the motivation scores of the learners in private schools ( $M=99.56, S D=15.62$ ) and public school students ( $M=75.54, S D$ $=18.30), t(198)=9.98, p=.000$ (two-tailed). The conclusion could be that motivation scores of the learners in private institutes was significantly higher than the motivation scores of students in public schools. The bar chart below also shows the difference between the motivation scores of the learners in the two groups.

The last research question of the current study was intended to figure out whether there was a significant relationship between teacher-student rapport and motivation for private language school learners and for public school students. Pearson correlation formula was employed in order to find the possible relationship between teacher-student rapport and motivation for the two groups of participants.

Table 6 depicts the results of Pearson correlation coefficient analysis run for the relationship between teacher-student rapport and motivation in private language schools.

Table 6. Relationship between Teacher-Student Rapport and Motivation for Private Language School

|  |  | Teacher-Student <br> Rapport | Motivation |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Teacher-Student Rapport | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .51 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .02 |
|  | $N$ | 100 | 100 |
| Motivation | Pearson Correlation | .51 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .02 |  |
|  | $N$ | 100 | 100 |

According to Pallant (2010), a relationship is weak if it falls between 0 and $\pm .30$, moderate if ranges from $\pm .30$ to $\pm .50$, and strong if it is larger than $\pm .50$. Thus the correlation between teacher-

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student rapport of private school learners and their motivation was found to be a strong positive one due to the fact that Pearson $r$ was .51. This strong positive relationship, unsurprisingly, reached statistical significance because the $p$ value in front of Sig. (2-tailed) was less than the level of significance ( $p=.02<.05$ ). As a result, it could be inferred that private language institute learners' teacher-student rapport was significantly correlated with their motivation.

As for public school students, the relationship between teacher-student rapport and motivation was also calculated through Pearson product moment correlation coefficient formula. Table 7 presents the results of this analysis.

According to Table 7, the correlation between teacher-student rapport of and motivation of public school students, like what was the case with private language institute learners, turned out to be a moderate positive one since Pearson $r$ equalled .39. This moderate positive relationship between public school students' motivation and their teacher-student rapport was a statistically significant relationship owing to the fact that the $p$ value in front of Sig. (2-tailed) was smaller than the level of significance ( $p=.04<.05$ ). Consequently, it could be concluded that public school students' teacher-student rapport was significantly correlated with their motivation.

Table 7. Relationship between Teacher-Student Rapport and Motivation of Public School Students

|  |  | Teacher-Student <br> Rapport | Motivation |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Teacher-Student Rapport | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .39 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .04 |
|  | $N$ | 100 | 100 |
| Motivation | Pearson Correlation | .39 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .04 |  |
|  | $N$ | 100 | 100 |

To compare the correlation coefficients obtained for the relationships between teacher-student rapport and motivation of the two groups of participants in the study, and to find if there was a significant difference between the two correlation coefficients, Fisher r-to-z transformation formula was used (the analysis was made through the online Fisher r-to-z transformation formula available at http://vassarstats.net/rdiff.html). The value of z obtained in this analysis was found to be 1.05, and the $p$ (two-tailed) equalled .29. Hence, it could be construed that the difference between the two correlation coefficients was not a statistically significant one.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Teacher-students rapport in public and private schools

To begin with, the first question dealing with how the teacher-students rapport in EFL classes is different between private language schools and public schools, the results of the study showed that there was a significant difference between two educational settings. More specifically, rapport as perceived by the students seems to be valued more in private language schools and teachers apparently make an effort to establish a positive constructive relationship with their students. As Jahangard (2007) observes, in the state-funded education system, English is as a compulsory school subject on the curriculum, which is taught from the junior high school. Educational policies concerning the school systems, the curriculum standards, the compilation of textbooks, the examination system and so on fall primarily under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. Thus, many Iranian students seek English learning opportunities beyond the formal educational system. Part of this enthusiasm is due to the friendlier atmosphere in private language settings (Mohaghegh, 2014).

A closer examination of the results shows that from among the items which contributed to a positive rapport those which reflect some characteristics of teacher like fairness, being understandable and motivating have the most differences between two schools. According to Pozo-Munos et al. (2000) also argue that students put a high value on the characteristics of skilled teachers' capability that organize a good relation with the students; their willingness and motivation for listening and learning will increase. Another item which showed a significant difference between the two schools is being able to take risks in the classroom. If students are able to take risks and seek more opportunities to use the target language, it can be argued that they will learn more and improve their language proficiency significantly (Yashima, 2002).Still another item which was remarkably different was fear of rejection. As Chang and Shu (2000) believe, there is a positive relationship between the learning environment and students' motivation. Students' motivation is largely affected by their affective filters.

### 5.2. Differences between Private and Public Schools with Respect to Motivation

The second question had to do with the significant differences between private language school learners and public school students in Iran with respect to motivation. The results indicated that the learners' motivation in private schools was significantly higher than that in public schools. This finding is in line with many other research findings. In other words, students from public and private schools typically attain different levels of achievement, with students in private schools outperforming their public school counterparts in different measures of achievement and motivation (Carbonaro \& Covay, 2010; Coulson 2009).

Higher levels of motivation as observed in private language schools can be explained with reference to the friendlier relationship between teachers and students. According to Dörnyei (2001), teachers who share warm, personal interactions with their students, who respond to their concerns in an empathic manner and who succeed in establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect with the learners, are more likely to inspire them in academic matters than those who have no personal ties with the learners. Similarly, Osterman (2000) argues that the positive school environment is a significant factor in determining students' sense of belonging and satisfaction. It is thus expected that students who feel connected with the school are more motivated to achieve academically and less motivated to engage in anti-social behavior than students who feel disconnected from it.

### 5.3. Effects of Rapport on EFL Learners' Motivation

The third question was concerned with the influence of rapport on EFL learner's motivation. Indeed, many researchers have emphasized the teacher relationship with learners as an important factor to establish solid foundations for the teaching and learning process and boost learner's motivation to take an active role in the classroom to demonstrate teacher caring and creating a positive learning environment to support student learning (Bouras \& Keskes, 2014). As a matter of fact, many researchers have noted that establishing a good relationship with students is important for an effective teaching atmosphere.

Another reason why rapport could substantially increase students' motivation in private schools is self-closure. Zardeckaite (2009) believes that the teacher's self-disclosure might be an effective instrument for the teachers to motivate students to learn. Goldstain and Benassi (1994) defines self-closure as the teacher's sharing personal and professional information with students. According to Cayanus, (2004); Goldstain and Benassi, (1994), teacher self-disclosure motivates students because it is a verbal behavior within the social penetration process and is viewed as central to the development of a close relationship.

## 6. Conclusions

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Based on the results of the study, this section presents the conclusion of the study. Rapport or positive teacher-student relationship is an open communication as well as emotional and academic support that exists between students and teachers. This relationship was shown to be different between teachers and students in private language schools and public schools. It can be concluded that teachers in private language schools have a closer relationship with their students, which in turns induces stronger motivation in learning language. Therefore, there is a direct relation between teacher's rapport with their students and their motivation to learn. More specifically, it can be concluded that

1. There are significant differences related to the effect of rapport between the means of students' answers in the public school and students' answers in the private language school due to the way of teaching.
2. EFL teachers in public schools need to be well trained such that they will be dedicated and responsive to their students, and be inspirational. The method or process they use must be inventive, encouraging, interesting, and related to the students' real life.
3. There are significant factors that contribute to building rapport from students' perspective. For example, students preferred the psychological factors such as motivation, reduction of anxiety and students' likeness of the teacher.

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# THE EFFECT OF FAMILY EDUCATION LEVEL AND BACKGROUND ON LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) 

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#### Abstract

THE CURRENT STUDY AIMS TO CONSIDER THE EFFECT OF FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION ON EFL STUDENTS IN IRAN ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE IMPACT OF PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT ON THEIR MOTIVATION AND SUCCESS ON THE OTHER HAND. INITIALLY, 20 PARENTS OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN A LANGUAGE INSTITUTE BELONGING TO IRANIAN NAVY, LOCATED IN THE SOUTHERN PORT CITY OF BANDAR ABBAS, HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AS THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY. THEN, A LOCALIZED FORM OF LOIS ELAINE MCLENDON CANSLER (2008) QUESTIONNAIRE HAS BEEN USED FOR COLLECTING THE DATA. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY SHOW THAT THE MORE EDUCATED PARENTS, THE MORE SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS ARE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE LEVEL OF PARENTS' EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT VARIABLES THAT HAS A GREAT EFFECT ON LEARNERS' MOTIVATION AND LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE.


KEYWORDS: EFL STUDENTS, FAMILY BACKGROUND, EDUCATION, INVOLVEMENT, MOTIVATION

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, second language learning is one of the most important goals of Iranian families and has gained much more attention in recent years. Effective second language learning has been a major focus of applied linguists and other researchers, while some factors have been given little emphasis over the past two decades. Research in second language (L2) education has largely focused on learners centered approaches to second language teaching in an effort to lead learners towards autonomous and independent language learning (Reiss, 1985; Tamada, 1996; Wenden, 1991). At the same time, a shift of attention has taken place in second language acquisition research from the products of language learning to the processes through which learning takes
place (Oxford, 1990). For the past two decades, due to a variety of social and political reasons, Iranian EFL learners have had little or no contact with native speakers of English. In fact, one can rarely find foreign English-speaking nationals teaching English as a second language (ESL) in Iranian schools or universities. Due to this reasons, most Iranian families tend to send their children to private institutes, hiring proficient teachers, to learn English. In Iranian Navy, there are two kinds of employees with different educational levels, diploma (below bachelor), bachelor and upper levels.

## 2. Statement of problem

Our interest is in learning about parents' education and involvement and its beneficial influences on child learning outcomes. Many children may succeed in their learning process in an institute due to a number of reasons such as good teaching, positive relationship with others, personal resilience, and so forth. While the mechanisms that promote success in an institute for children in the absence of meaningful parent involvement are of the substantial interest to educators, our interest in this article lies not in that more general domain (i.e., what does create an institute success for children regardless of parental or familial input?). Whereas, Iranian children spend most of their time at home with their families and do not have enough sources to improve their ability and proficiency in foreign language learning. Parents can help them and make a noble environment of learning at home by communicating with them and using some multimedia sources, if they have sufficient knowledge about foreign languages and the way of transferring the data. Schmidt and Brown (2004) proposed using social media is the combination of online sources and traditional classroom teaching. They believed that this method could increase the teaching and learning environment and technology literacy of both students and teachers. Social networking can create many different environments for students to improve their skills out of schools with sharing up-to-date information and different sources. So, there can be seen lots of differences between educated and none-educated families in learning process of foreign languages in Iran.

## 3. Significant of study

The present research shows the effect of parents' education and involvement on learning process of a foreign language (i.e., English) among several parents with different educational levels. In this research, the authors have examined the positive impact of parents' education on improvement of learners. The current study is beneficial to three groups of people: children, parents, educators, and the institutes.
Benefits for children: 1. Children generally achieve better grades, test scores, and attendance. 2. Children consistently complete their homework. Benefits for parents: 1. Parents increase their interaction and discussion with their children and are more responsive and sensitive to their children's social, emotional, and intellectual developmental needs. 2. Parents are more confident in their parenting and decision-making skills. 3. When parents are aware of what their children are learning, they are more likely to help when they are requested by teachers to become more involved in their children's learning activities at home. Benefits for teachers: Teachers and principals acquire a better understanding of families' cultures and diversity, and they form deeper respect for parents' abilities and time. Benefits for institutes: 1. Institutes that actively involve parents and the community tend to establish better reputations in the community. 2. Institutes also experience better community support.

## 4. Review of literature

A review of the related literature shows that researchers have evidence for the positive effects of parent involvement on children, families, and schools when schools and parents continuously support and encourage the children's learning and development (Eccles, Wigfield, Harold \& Blumenfeld, 1993). The process of learning is quite the same as learning a foreign language in an

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institute. Henderson and Berla (1994) reviewed and analyzed eighty-five studies that documented the comprehensive benefits of parental involvement in children's education. Based on Henderson and Berla (1994), the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status but the extent to which that student's family is able to:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning. 2. Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers. 3. Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community (p. 160).

Many studies have documented the significance of parental/family involvement in homework (Balli, Demo \& Wedman, 1998; Callahan, Rademacher \& Hildreth, 1998; Cooper, Lindsay \& Nye, 2000). In their studies, Balli (1998) and Balli, Demo, and Wedman (1998) indicate that educators need to help parents understand homework concepts and developmentally appropriate practices in order to best help their children. For instance, Fleming (1993, p. 77) stated:

Schools and families can no longer remain "separate but equal" if they are to solve the complex problems facing children today. Schools must become family places where parents are involved in many aspects of school life.

To sum up, all of these researches in addition to a number of other studies showed that home and schools or institutes must be matched.

## 5. Objective of study

The objective of this study is to investigate how much do parents' educational levels effect learning process of a foreign language. Based on this objective of the study, the main research question and its associated hypothesis are:
Q1- Do family and parents' educational level effect on learning a foreign language?
H1- Educational levels will affect parents' attitudes about their children learning foreign languages.

Attitudes may be developed based on parents' knowledge or inexperience with second language teaching (Bartram, 2006). These and similar experiences indicate that educational levels of parents will have an impact on their attitudes about their children learning foreign languages.

## 6. Methodology

This study is in the form of a survey research. It explores the effect of parents' educational level on learning process of a foreign language quantitatively among parents of English language learner of the Iranian Navy Language Institute in Bandar Abbas.

### 6.1. Participants

The subjects involved in this study were 20 parents, who were working in the Iranian Army (Navy), in Bandar Abbas. They were male with the average of 20 years old and in the same social class. The time of this study was in summer, so the children were free to attend to summer classes. In order to examine the effect of their educational level on children learning in an EFL setting, the researchers chose parents from two groups.

### 6.2. Instruments

In this quantitative study, a Likert type questionnaire in two parts has been answered by the parents. Because of low proficiency of some the parents, the questionnaire has been translated into Farsi to the participants. Part A is about some personal information and part B contains 12 questions. The subjects have been asked to read the questions exactly and then answer them patiently. They were allowed to answer in the form of numbers from 1 to 4 (Strongly agree to strongly disagree). The questionnaire was extracted from Lois Elaine McLendon Cansler (2008)'s Parent Attitudes about and Involvement with Foreign Language Programs for Elementary Students (See Appendix 1).

### 6.3. Procedure

Parents were assigned to different educational level groups and based on this categorization the answers were collected from the subjects. As mentioned earlier, the study was done at the first month of summer season.

## Data collection and analysis

Data collection was conducted by one of the authors with the assistance of teachers of the Navy Language Institute. Then the researchers conducted a series of statistical analyses on the collected data by computing and analyzing them.

## 7. Results and Discussion

To test this hypothesis (Educational levels will affect parents' attitudes about their children learning foreign languages), the frequency and percentages of parents' degrees were collected. The categorization of the educational background is shown in Table1.

Table1: Frequency of participant educational background

|  | Less than high <br> school <br> graduate | High school <br> graduate | Some college or <br> associate <br> degree | Bachelor's degree or <br> higher |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Frequency | 3 | 7 | 4 | 6 |
| Percentage | 15 | 35 | 20 | 30 |

Educational background choices originally ranged from less than a high school diploma to a bachelor's or higher degree. The obtained information from the questionnaire have been detailed in Table 2 below.

Table2. Educational Background and Parents' Attitudes

|  | Strongly <br> agree | agree | disagree | Strongly <br> disagree |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. My child talks at home about foreign language <br> class | $\mathbf{1 2}$ | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. My child's comments are positive about foreign <br> language learning | $\mathbf{1 0}$ | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 3. My child feels successful in the foreign language <br> class | 9 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 4. My child likes the foreign language | 9 | 6 | 2 | $\mathbf{4}$ |
| 5. My child likes the foreign language teacher | 7 | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| 6. I am receiving enough information about the <br> foreign language program at our life. | 6 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| 7. I have seen my child performing in a foreign <br> language school program | 8 | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| 8. I have visited my child's foreign language <br> classroom | 12 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. My child brings home foreign language <br> worksheets, song home or information | 10 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 10. My child uses foreign language at home. | 7 | 8 | 4 | $\mathbf{1}$ |
| 11. I am in favor of teaching a foreign language to <br> children | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 |


| 12. I feel that studying foreign language has not <br> jeopardized my child's progress in other subject <br> areas, such as math or reading |
| :--- |

Based on the information above, we see the majority of participants are higher than Bachelor's degree. The attitude of the participants with higher education is more positive than the other participants with lower educational level. It can be concluded that parental educational background effects on involvement.
We can change the categories for this variable from four into only two: less than a bachelor's degree; and a bachelor's degree or higher. These results brought into question how these differences were manifested within families. For instance, perhaps parents with higher levels of education more actively sought information about foreign language programs at school than other parents (Heining-Boynton, 1993). Possibly, some parents had more knowledge and experience than others about how to become involved with foreign language programs (Cooper \& Maloof, 1999). It is plausible that parents with increasing levels of education had themselves taken foreign language classes and became intent on supporting foreign language learning. Another proposition is that parents who sought higher levels of formal education for themselves held different views about the value of formal education for its own sake, resulting in different needs or desires to become involved in foreign language programs and other school programs as reported by Watzke (2003) in his description of different purposes for including foreign language study for certain groups of students at varying points in the history of American education.

## 8. Suggestions for other studies

Other studies are suggested to be done applying more participants with other age groups. Other studies can investigate the concepts and skills parents would consider to be the benefits of learning a foreign language.

## 9. Acknowledgement

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## Appendix A

## A) Personal information

Name: $\qquad$
Age: $\qquad$
Sex: $\qquad$
Number of the children: $\qquad$
Occupation: $\qquad$

What is your educational background?
___ Less than high school graduate
High school graduate (includes GED or other equivalency)
___ Some college or associate degree
___ Bachelor's degree or higher

## B) Questions

Please answer all of the following questions .with the order mentioned in the table.

| Strongly agree | agree | disagree | Strongly disagree | Not applicable |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1. My child talks at home about foreign language class.

1 |  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

2. My child's comments are positive about foreign language learning.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

3. My child feels successful in the foreign language class.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

4. My child likes the foreign language.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

5. My child likes the foreign language teacher.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

6. I am receiving enough information about the foreign language program at our life.
1
2
3
4
5
7. I have seen my child performing in a foreign language school program.

1
23
4
5
8. I have visited my child's foreign language classroom.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

9. My child brings home foreign language worksheets, song handouts, or information.
$\begin{array}{lllll}1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5\end{array}$
10. My child uses foreign language at home.
1
23
4
5
11. I am in favor of teaching a foreign language to children.
1
2
3
4
5
12. I feel that studying foreign language has not jeopardized my child's progress in other subject areas, such as math or reading.
1
2
3
4
5

# AN INVESTIGATION OF PREDICTIVE LINGUISTIC FEATURES (TEXT LENGTH, LEXICAL SOPHISTICATION, SYNTACTIC COMPLEXITY, AND COHESION) IN SCORING TOEFL IBT WRITING TASKS 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY EXPLORED PREDICTIVE LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF THE TOEFL IBT ESSAY SCORES. THEREFORE, THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS ARE WHICH LINGUISTIC FEATURES CAN BE PREDICTIVE IN BOTH INTEGRATED AND INDEPENDENT ESSAYS SCORED BY HUMAN RATERS AND WHAT THE DIFFERENCES ARE BETWEEN HUMAN JUDGMENT OF INTEGRATED AND INDEPENDENT ESSAY QUALITY BASED ON THESE LINGUISTIC FEATURES. TO ADDRESS THESE QUESTIONS, A SET OF INTEGRATED AND INDEPENDENT ESSAYS PROVIDED BY EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE (ETS) WERE SCORED BY TRAINED RATERS. COH-METRIX VERSION 3.0 WAS USED TO GENERATE SCORES FOR THE LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF THE ESSAYS. FIRST, BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE ESSAY SCORES AND EACH COH-METRIX INDEX SCORES WERE CALCULATED. THOSE COH-METRIX INDICES THAT DEMONSTRATED SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS WITH THE HUMAN SCORES WERE RETAINED AS PREDICTORS IN A SUBSEQUENT REGRESSION ANALYSIS. AFTER REMOVING REDUNDANT VARIABLES ANOTHER REGRESSION ANALYSIS WAS CONDUCTED TO FIND THE PREDICTIVE LINGUISTIC FEATURES. THE RESULTS DEMONSTRATED THAT TEXT LENGTH CAN SIGNIFICANTLY PREDICT ESSAY SCORES FOR BOTH TASKS. AS FOR THE DIFFERENCES, TEXTUAL COHESION SEEMS TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PREDICTING ESSAY SCORES FOR THE INTEGRATED TASK WHILE FOR THE INDEPENDENT TASK LEXICAL SOPHISTICATION AND SEMANTIC SIMILARITY CAN SIGNIFICANTLY PREDICT ESSAY SCORES. THE FINDINGS MAY IMPROVE AUTOMATED ESSAY SCORING.


KEYWORDS: WRITING ASSESSMENT, TEXTUAL ANALYSIS TOOLS, COH-METRIX, INTEGRATED WRITING TASKS, INDEPENDENT WRITING TASKS.

## 1. Introduction

Independent writing has been widely used as a measure of second language writing ability. Since, independent writing tasks give the assessment of writing performance beyond morphological and
syntactic manipulation (Camp, 1993), they provide a more valid representation of writing ability compared with indirect writing assessment. Unlike indirect writing assessments, independent writing tasks motivate test takers to produce an extended writing only on their prior knowledge and experience. However, concerns have been raised about writing assessments that only contain independent writing tasks because they risk de-contextualizing the writing activity (Hamp-Lyons \& Kroll, 1996). Therefore, independent writing assessments may under-represent writing proficiency (Weigle, 2002).

To address these concerns, integrated writing tasks have been proposed as a proper alternative for standardized writing tests. Like academic writing, which is stimulated by outside sources (Carson, 2001), integrated writing tasks motivate test-takers to respond to source texts presented in oral or written format. Thus, integrated writing tasks may more authentically resemble the type of writing that is integral to academic contexts in higher education (Cumming et al., 2006).

The use of both independent and integrated writing as a means to assess academic writing abilities has been adopted in the new version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT). The goal of including both writing tasks is to enhance the authenticity and validity of English as a Second Language (ESL) writing tests (Huff et al., 2008). In terms of testing validity, the combined use of integrated writing tasks and independent writing tasks can improve overall measures of writing ability because no single task can be only reliable to predict the writing ability of a test-taker (Cumming et al., 2005).

## 2. Literature review

Text length, lexical sophistication and syntactic complexity, have been investigated to find whether they vary with writing quality. In order to demonstrate similarities and differences between integrated and independent writing tasks, several studies have investigated the link between the textual features and writing proficiency in the two writing tasks.

Gebril and Plakans (2009) investigated on text length in relation to the holistic scores of the integrated essays. This study demonstrated that text length has a significant effect on the holistic score; therefore, they concluded that the longer essays were evaluated more favorably by raters in this writing task. Similar studies have been conducted for independent writing tasks, indicating a strong and direct correlation between text length and writing scores (Grant \& Ginther, 2000).

Cumming et al. $(2005,2006)$ investigated lexical sophistication through type/token ratio (TTR) and average word length in independent writing tasks. They found that higher proficiency level correlates with higher type/token ratio but not with average word length. Gebril and Plakans (2009) investigated the effect of integrated essay scores on average word length as a measure of lexical sophistication. The result illustrated that in this point of view there are no significant differences between independent and integrated writing tasks.

Compared with study on integrated writing, independent writing research has investigated many more features of lexical sophistication and their effect on the essay scores. These features include average word length (Frase et al., 1999), lexical diversity (Crossley \& McNamara, 2012; Grant \& Ginther, 2000), specific lexical categories, and nominalizations (Connor, 1990). They found that higher scored independent essays are related to longer words, greater lexical diversity, more frequent use of nominalizations and certain lexical categories. The researchers concluded that lexical sophistication is an important predictor of the essay scores in independent and integrated writing tasks (Guo et al., 2013).

Cumming et al. $(2005,2006)$ studied the number of words per T-unit and the number of clauses per T-unit as two measures of syntactic complexity. They found that the number of words per T-unit has a significant effect on the essay score when independent and integrated essays were considered at the same time. The proficiency levels did not have a significant effect on the number of clauses per T-unit.

Gebril and Plakans (2009) investigated the link between the numbers of words per T-unit with writing proficiency levels across integrated writing. In contrast to Cumming et al. $(2005,2006)$, they found a slightly different result. In independent writing tasks, several results have been reported about the effect of syntactic complexity on holistic writhing scores. For example, variety of syntactic patterns and mean number of words before the main verb (McNamara,Crossley, \& McCarthy, 2010) were found to be significant predicators of the writing scores. In Song (2007) only a non-significant correlation was found between the holistic scores and syntactic complexity measured by dependent clauses per clause and clauses per T-unit.

According to the reviewed studies, linguistic features can predict second language writing proficiency level. Also theses studies demonstrate that there are differences between integrated and independent writing tasks based on their related textual features. In most studies, these features include text length and lexical and syntactic features. About syntactic complexity in relation to writing proficiency within each task type, mixed results have been reported for both integrated writing and independent writing tasks (Guo et al., 2013). Some recent studies using Coh-Metrix which is an automated textual analysis tool in order to explore the linguistic features of the essays, have explored whether linguistic features can predict second language writing proficiency in TOEFL iBT (Crossley and McNamara, 2012; Guo, L. Crossley, S. A., \& McNamara, D. S., 2013; Crossley et al, 2014) and the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) (YeonJoo Jung, Crossley and McNamara, 2015) writing tasks . Guo et al. (2013) illustrated that which linguistic features among 70 Coh-Metrix indices are the predictors of the essay scores in TOEFL iBT writhing tasks. Considering the importance of TOEFL in language learning, research on its scoring and test items are greatly needed.The purpose of this study is to establish the link between the linguistic features presented in Coh-Metrix version 3 and writing essay quality, in TOEFL iBT. This procedure is useful to assess the degree to which 87 Coh-Metrix indices in essay writing tasks are predictive of scores. Additionally, this study investigates differences between scoring of integrated and independent essay quality based on these linguistic features.

### 2.1 Research questions

Based on the objectives of this study, there are two questions to be concerned as following:

1. Which linguistic features presented in Coh-Metrix version 3 can be predictive in both integrated and independent essay scoring by human raters?
2. What are the differences between human judgment of integrated and independent essay quality based on these linguistic features?

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Design of the study

In order to investigate the research questions, quantitative textual analysis is employed. The quantitative textual analysis examines whether linguistic features of TOEFL iBT essays vary with task type, and essay scores. In this study, linguistic features are as independent variables and the dependent variable is the holistic essay scores.

## 3. 2 Test takers

Fifty test takers responded to the TOEFL iBT integrated and independent writing tasks. The test takers included both ESL and EFL learners. They were from a variety of countries and from different linguistic backgrounds.

### 3.3 Instruments

In this study, TOEFL iBT scoring rubrics are used. The integrated and independent scoring rubrics can be found at the website of http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/Writing Rubrics.pdf. Both rubrics describe six levels of writing performance, scored 0-5. For the integrated task, the scoring rubric principally focuses on accurate and coherent presentation of the extracted information in the essays in addition to grammatical accuracy. In the independent scoring rubric, linguistic sophistication at the lexical and syntactic levels is emphasized in addition to the logic and coherence of the arguments along with grammatical accuracy.

Also in this study, Coh-Metrix version 3.0 is used to generate scores for 87 linguistic feature indices of the TOEFL iBT essays in terms of their Descriptive, Referential cohesion, Situation model, Syntactic pattern density, Latent semantic analysis, Lexical diversity, Connectives, Syntactic complexity, and Word information (see Appendix A ).

### 3.4 Data collection

The essay samples were provided by Educational Testing Service (ETS). The data includes a set of integrated and independent essays which comes from one administration of TOEFL iBT in 2007. A sample of 50 test takers' essays was collected across the two tasks: independent and integrated. The test takers were from a variety of countries and from different linguistic backgrounds. The following sections present detailed description of the tasks.

### 3.4.1 Integrated writing task

The integrated writing task is one of the two components of TOEFL iBT writing section in which test takers first read a text, then listen to a lecture, and finally they should write in response to those materials. The task recommended a response between 150 and 225 words within 20 minutes.

For this particular data set, the integrated writing task contained two source texts on birds' navigational ability. The reading passage focused on presenting several different theories account for the birds' navigational abilities while the listening material argued against each of the points listed in the reading passage. For the integrated writing task, the test takers were required to summarize how the listening passage challenges the reading passage.

### 3.4.2 Independent writing task

The independent writing task is the second component of TOEFL iBT writing section in which the testtakers are given 30 minutes to write an argumentative essay on a topic. The task recommended a minimum of 300 words.

For this particular data set, the test takers were asked to write an argumentative essay on the preference of choosing to study subjects that they are interested in than to choose subjects to prepare for a job or career. The test takers were expected to use specific reasons and examples to argue for the stance that they chose.

### 3.5 Human essay scoring procedure

Each essay using the standardized holistic rubrics was scored by the trained raters. In the conventional scoring process, two raters are employed to score the essays. If the two scores differ by less than two points, the final holistic score of each essay is the average of the human rater scores. Otherwise, a third rater scored the essay, and the final score was the average of the two closest raters.

Three trained rates were appointed to score the essays. The first trained rater scored the set of essays twice about two weeks apart. Pearson correlations between those two sets of scores were calculated by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 20 software. The Pearson correlation provides an estimate of the intra-rater reliability. The Pearson correlations indicated that the two sets of scores were highly correlated at $\mathrm{r}=.798$ ( $\mathrm{p}<.01$ ). The second trained rater scored the set of essays and Pearson correlations between the first and second rates' scores were calculated to estimate the inter-rater reliabilty. The correlation indicated that the two sets of scores were highly correlated at $\mathrm{r}=.762(\mathrm{p}<.01)$. Because the two scores differed by less than two points, third rater was not needed. Therefore, final holistic score of each essay was the average of the first and second raters' scores.

### 3.6 Data analysis procedure

To extract the Coh-Metrix index scores of the essays, all one hundred writing essays are first fed into the program on Coh-Metrix webpage. (http://cohmetrix.com/). These Coh-Metrix indices are chosen from the following categories: Descriptive, Referential cohesion, Latent semantic analysis, Lexical diversity, Connectives, Syntactic complexity, and Word information.

To find the predictive linguistic features of the integrated and independent essays, a series of statistical analyses on the scores generated through Coh-Metrix analysis were performed. First, bivariate correlations between the essay scores and each Coh-Metrix index scores were calculated by SPSS Version 20. Those Coh-Metrix indices that demonstrated significant correlations with the human scores were retained as predictors in a subsequent regression analysis. In order to check outliers and multicollinearity, the correlations between each of the independent variables, Coh-Metrix indices, were considered. Among each pair of indices that are highly correlated with each other ( $r \geq .70$ ), the one with the lower correlation $r$ value with the essay score was removed. After removing redundant variables another regression analysis was conducted to find the predictive linguistic features.

## 4. Results and Discussion

To answer the research questions related to linguistic features of the integrated and independent essays, a series of statistical analyses on the scores generated through Coh-Metrix analysis were performed. First, bivariate correlations between the essay scores and each Coh-Metrix index scores were calculated. Those Coh-Metrix indices that demonstrated significant correlations with the human scores were retained as predictors in a subsequent regression analysis. The regression analysis results for the integrated essays will first be presented followed by those for the independent essays.

### 4.1 Results and discussion for integrated essays

For the set of 50 integrated essays, 10 Coh-Metrix indices that demonstrated significant correlations with the human scores, were entered the regression analysis. In Table 1 the 10 selected indices with their $r$ values and $p$ values are presented.

Table 1. Selected Coh-Metrix indices for regression analysis of the integrated essays

| Coh-Metrix | $r$ value | p value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESPC | .491 | 0.01 |
| DESSC | .547 | 0.01 |
| DESWC | .865 | 0.01 |
| LSAGN | .449 | 0.01 |
| LDTTRC | -.478 | 0.01 |
| LDTTRA | -.684 | 0.01 |
| WRDNOUN | -.298 | 0.05 |
| WRDCNCC | -.334 | 0.05 |


| WRDIMGC | -.350 | 0.05 |
| :---: | :---: | :--- |
| WRDMEAC | -.428 | 0.01 |

In order to check outliers and multi-collinearity, it is necessary to check that the correlation between each of the independent variables is not too high. Two variables with a bivariate correlation of 0.7 or more must not be included. Among each pair of indices that are highly correlated with each other ( $r \geq .70$ ), the one with the lower correlation $r$ value with the essay score was removed. In statistical analysis 6 out of 10 indices were removed and 4 of them remained. All VIF values of the selected indices were found to be smaller than 2.1, and all tolerance values were beyond the threshold level of .476, which indicated that the selected indices do not suffer from multi-collinearity (Menard, 1995).

The 4 indices as the independent variables in a linear regression analysis were entered. The four CohMetrix indices were included as significant predictors of the essay scores. The four indices were: DESPC, DESWC, LDTTRC, and WRDMEAC. Descriptive statistics of the 4 indices are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the four predicative indices for the integrated essay scores

| Index | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| scorsitem1 | 2.4100 | .78695 | 50 |
| DESPC | 4.1600 | 1.59540 | 50 |
| DESWC | 188.7000 | 54.57264 | 50 |
| LDTTRC | .7025 | .06158 | 50 |
| WRDMEAC | 431.8416 | 14.54056 | 50 |

The model demonstrated that the four significant indices together explained $79.7 \%$ of the variance in the evaluation of the 50 integrated essays (see Table 3 for additional information). Please note that in this table SPSS also provided an Adjusted R Square in the output. The Adjusted R Square statistic corrects this value to provide a better estimate of the $R$ Square when a small sample is involved. Table 4 presents detailed information of the 4 indices that retained in the regression model.

Table 3. Model summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the <br> Estimate |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Regression | .893 | .797 | .779 | .37005 |

Table 4. Regression analysis findings to predict the integrated essay scores

| index | r | r 2 | B | Beta | S.E. | t | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESPC | .491 | .241 | .085 | .173 | .037 | 2.310 | .026 |
| DESWC | .865 | .748 | .011 | .764 | .001 | 7.845 | .000 |
| LDTTRC | -.478 | .228 | -2.088 | -.163 | .947 | -2.206 | .033 |
| WRDMEAC | -.428 | .183 | .003 | .064 | .005 | .765 | .448 |

In order to know which of the Coh-Metrix indices have been included in the model contributed to the prediction of the essay scores, we should look in the column labeled Beta provided in Table 4. Please note that the large Beta values, ignoring any positive or negative signs, show that the related indices are strong predictors of the essay scores. Also, we should check the value in column marked Sig., which
demonstrates whether this variable is making a statistically significant unique contribution to the regression analysis. This is very dependent on which variables are included in the regression and how much overlap there is among the independent variables. If the Sig. value is less than .05 , the variable is making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. If greater than .05 we can conclude that, that variable is not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. This may be due to overlap with another independent variable.

As we can observe in Table 4, the largest Beta coefficient is .795. Also, as shown in Table 4, text length has the largest effect size among all the 4 indices that were retained in the regression model and by itself accounts for $74.8 \%$ of the score variance of the integrated essays alone. Similar to previous studies on integrated writing (Gebril \& Plakans, 2009) this study also demonstrated that textual length, number of words (DESWC), has a large effect on the essay scores assigned (defined as Pearson's correlations $\geq .50$, Cohen, 1988). Longer essays were scored higher. This relationship between textual length and the essay scores is not difficult to understand as many of the features of highly scored essays (e.g., details to support a statement) are difficult to embed in a short essay (Chodorow \& Burstein, 2004). Textual length being a strong predictor of essay scores has also been repeatedly verified in independent writing tasks (Chodorow \& Burstein, 2004; Ferris, 1994; Frase et al., 1999; Reid,1990).

The second strongest predictor for the integrated essays is number of paragraphs, DESPC. As we can observe in Table 4, the Beta coefficient and R square is .173 and $24.1 \%$ respectively.

The third strongest predictor for the integrated essays is Lexical diversity, type-token ratio, content word lemmas, LDTTRC. As we can observe in Table 4, the Beta coefficient and R square are -.163 and $22.8 \%$ respectively. Please note that, type-token ratio (TTR) (McNamara et al., 2014) is the number of unique words (called types) divided by the number of tokens of these words. Each unique word in a text is considered a word type. Each instance of a particular word is a token. If the LDTTRC of an essay is high, close to one, the essay is likely to be either very low in cohesion or very short and therefore, the essay is likely to be of low quality. According to the scoring rubrics, textual cohesion, has found to be a significant predictor of the integrated essay scores. The findings of the present study indicated that for the integrated essays, LDTTRC which indicates textual cohesion can significantly predict the scores.

The last Coh-Metrix index seen in Table 4, for the integrated essays is Meaningfulness, Colorado norms, content words, mean, WRDMEAC, whose Beta coefficient and R square are . 064 and $18.3 \%$ respectively. Because the Sig. value is greater than .05 we can conclude that this independent variable is not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the essay scores and this variable may overlap with other independent variables.

### 4.2.2 Results and discussion for independent essays

Correlation analysis demonstrated that the scores of the independent essays in the data set are significantly correlated with the following Coh-Metrix indices: DESPC, DESSC, DESWC, DESPLD, CRFNO1, CRFSO1, LSASS1D, LSAPP1, LSAPP1D, LSAGND, SAGN, LDTTRC, LDTTRA, LDMTLD, LDVOCD, CNCLOGIC, CNCTEMP, DRPP, WRDNOUN, WRDPRP3S, WRDFRQC, WRDFRQA, WRDCNCC, WRDIMGC, WRDMEAC, WRDHYPV, and WRDHYPNV.

As it was mentioned previously, in order to check outliers and multi-collinearity After removing redundant variables, 21 out of 27 indices were removed and 6 of them remained. All VIF values of the selected indices were found to be smaller than 1.67 , and all tolerance values were beyond the threshold level of 0.6 , which indicated that the selected indices do not suffer from multi-collinearity (Menard, 1995).The six indices as the independent variables in a linear regression analysis were entered. The six Coh-Metrix indices were included as significant predictors of the essay scores. The 6 indices were: DESPC, DESSC, DESWC, LSAPP1D, CNCTEMP, WRDPRP3S, and WRDFRQC. Descriptive statistics of the 6 indices are provided in Table 5 .

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the 6 predicative indices for the independent essay

| Index | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Scoresitem2 | 2.4900 | .86005 | 50 |
| DESPC | 4.8800 | 2.12507 | 50 |
| DESWC | 287.1400 | 93.47050 | 50 |
| LSAPP1D | .0999 | .05944 | 50 |
| CNCTEMP | 14.8183 | 9.12394 | 50 |
| WRDPRP3S | 12.7072 | 18.78360 | 50 |
| WRDFRQC | 2.6190 | .14827 | 50 |

The model demonstrated that the four significant indices together explained $85.5 \%$ of the variance in the evaluation of the 50 independent essays (see Table 6 for additional information). As mentioned earlier, SPSS also provided an Adjusted R Square in the output. Table 7 presents detailed information of the 6 indices that were retained in the regression model.

Table 6. Model summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the <br> Estimate |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Regression | .924 | .855 | .834 | .34997 |

Table 7. Regression analysis findings to predict the independent Essay Scores

| index | r | r 2 | B | Beta | S.E. | t | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| DESPC | .334 | .111 | -.033 | -.082 | .030 | -1.090 | .282 |
| DESWC | .838 | .702 | .006 | .678 | .001 | 9.022 | .000 |
| LSAPP1D | .445 | .198 | 3.226 | .223 | .987 | 3.269 | .002 |
| CNCTEMP | .395 | .156 | .017 | .183 | .006 | 2.753 | .009 |
| WRDPRP3S | .339 | .115 | .008 | .181 | .003 | 2.584 | .013 |
| WRDFRQC | -.328 | .107 | -1.427 | -.246 | .341 | -4.185 | .000 |

In accordance with previous studies on the effect of text length, the regression analysis also illustrated that text length, number of words (DESWC), is significant, and it is the most powerful predictor of the independent essay scores, accounting for $70 \%$ of the variance the Beta coefficient is .678 (as shown in Table 7).

The second strongest predictor for the independent essays is CELEX Word frequency for content words, mean, WRDFRQC. As we can observe in Table 7, the Beta coefficient and R square are -. 246 and $10.7 \%$ respectively. Please note that a higher word frequency indicates that the text contains more frequent words and is, thus, less lexically sophisticated. Meanwhile, in the independent scoring rubrics, linguistic sophistication at lexical and syntactic levels is emphasized. The regression analysis demonstrated that the word frequency which is an indicator of lexical sophistication varies with the score levels in the independent writing.

The third strongest predictor for the independent essays is Latent Semantic Analysis overlap, adjacent paragraphs, standard deviation, LSAPP1D. As we can observe in Table 7, the Beta coefficient and R square are .223 and $19.8 \%$ respectively. Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA; Landauer et al., 2007) provides measures of semantic overlap between sentences or between paragraphs. This measure varies from 0 (low
cohesion) to 1 (high cohesion). LSAPP1D computes the standard deviation of the LSA between adjacent paragraphs.

The fourth strongest predictor for the independent essays is Temporal connectives incidence, CNCTMP. As we can observe in Table 7, the Beta coefficient and R square are .183 and $15.6 \%$ respectively. Please note that the temporal connective is an expression which relates an event to a point or an interval in time such as throughout, during, after, before, etc.

The fifth strongest predictor for the independent essays is Third person singular pronoun incidence, WRDPRP3S. As we can observe in Table 7, the Beta coefficient and R square are .181 and $11.5 \%$ respectively.

The last Coh-Metrix index seen in Table 7, for the independent essays is number of paragraphs, DESPC, whose Beta coefficient and R square are -.082 and $11 \%$ respectively. Because the Sig. value is greater than .05 we can conclude that this independent variable is not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the essay scores and this variable may overlap with other independent variables.

### 4.3 Compression of predictors for integrated and independent essay scores

According to the above discussion, the regression analysis were provided empirical evidence to illustrate those linguistic features can significantly predict evaluations of writing quality for the integrated and the independent essays. The following table summarizes the significant linguistic predictors for the integrated and the independent essay quality respectively. As it can be seen in Table 8 for both types of essays the number of words (DESWC) is the significant predictor of essay scores, however, there are several different significant predictive linguistic features for the integrated and the independent essay scores. These significant linguistic predictors are Number of paragraphs (DESPC), Latent Semantic Analysis overlap adjacent paragraphs SD (LSAPP1D), Temporal connectives incidence (CNCTEMP), Third person singular pronoun incidence (WRDPRP3S), Word frequency for content words (WRDFRQC), and Lexical diversity/type-token ratio /content word lemmas (LDTTRC). Therefore, the second research question is answered.

Table 8. Significant predictors for integrated and independent essay scores

| Coh-Metrix indices | Integrated | Independent |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Number of paragraphs (DESPC) | Yes | No |
| Number of words (DESWC) | Yes | Yes |
| Latent Semantic Analysis overlap adjacent paragraphs SD (LSAPP1D) | No | Yes |
| Temporal connectives incidence (CNCTEMP) | No | Yes |
| Third person singular pronoun incidence (WRDPRP3S) | No | Yes |
| Word frequency for content words (WRDFRQC) | No | Yes |
| Lexical diversity, type-token ratio, content word lemmas (LDTTRC) | ) Yes | No |

## 5. Implications

This study demonstrated that Coh-Metrix as a textual analysis tool is a useful instrument in automated scoring of L2 writing. Also the results of this study may suggest a combined use of Coh-Metrix and e-rater
in automated scoring, since the two can provide complementary information. E-rater reports grammatical accuracy such as ill-formed verbs, pronoun errors, fragments, run-ons, and subject-verb agreement (Attali \& Burstein, 2005; Quilan, Higgins, \& Wolff, 2009; Weigle, 2010). Coh-Metrix presents linguistic features that are not provided by e-rater. Focusing on different areas of textual analyses, e-rater and Coh-Metrix, when employed together, can enable more accurate evaluation of textual features in L2 writing. Also, this study illustrated that there are some differences between human scoring of integrated and independent essay quality based on these linguistic features should be investigated. Thus, the results of the study may help to understand whether there is a need for the two writing task types in assessing academic writing ability. In addition, raters may consider the predictive linguistic features in their writing scoring process in order to have more reliable scores.

## 6. Conclusions

In the textual analysis, the study demonstrated that the test takers' linguistic performance varied across score levels for both the integrated and the independent essays. Findings were confirmed that many of proficiency descriptors listed in the rubrics can successfully predict the essays scores. Comparing the significant predictors across the integrated and the independent tasks, both similarities and differences were identified. In terms of the similarities, the study found that text length can significantly predict essay scores for both tasks. As for the differences, textual cohesion seems to play an important role in predicting essay scores for the integrated task while for the independent task lexical sophistication and semantic similarity can significantly predict essay scores. This study demonstrate that the significant predictive linguistic feature, in terms of Coh-Metrix indices, for both types of essays is the number of words (DESWC).Also, findings illustrate that there are several different significant predictive linguistic features for the integrated and the independent essay scores. These significant linguistic predictors are Number of paragraphs (DESPC), Latent Semantic Analysis overlap adjacent paragraphs SD (LSAPP1D), Temporal connectives incidence (CNCTEMP), Third person singular pronoun incidence (WRDPRP3S), Word frequency for content words (WRDFRQC), and Lexical diversity/type-token ratio /content word lemmas (LDTTRC).

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## Appendix: Coh-Metrix indices Table

| No. | Label | Index Description |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | DESPC | Paragraph count, number of paragraphs |
| 2 | DESSC | Sentence count, number of sentences |
| 3 | DESWC | Word count, number of words |
| 4 | DESPL | Paragraph length, number of sentences, mean |
| 5 | DESPLD | Paragraph length, number of sentences, standard deviation |


| 6 | DESSL | Sentence length, number of words, mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 7 | DESSLD | Sentence length, number of words, standard deviation |
| 8 | DESWLsy | Word length, number of syllables, mean |
| 9 | DESWLsyd | Word length, number of syllables, standard deviation |
| 10 | DESWLlt | Word length, number of letters, mean |
| 11 | DESWLltd | Word length, number of letters, standard deviation |
| 12 | CRFNO1 | Noun overlap, adjacent sentences, binary, mean |
| 13 | CRFAO1 | Argument overlap, adjacent sentences, binary, mean |
| 14 | CRFSO1 | Stem overlap, adjacent sentences, binary, mean |
| 15 | CRFNOa | Noun overlap, all sentences, binary, mean |
| 16 | CRFAOa | Argument overlap, all sentences, binary, mean |
| 17 | CRFSOa | Stem overlap, all sentences, binary, mean |
| 18 | CRFCWO1 | Content word overlap, adjacent sentences, proportional, mean |
| 19 | CRFCWO1d deviation | Content word overlap, adjacent sentences, proportional, standard |
| 20 | CRFCWOa | Content word overlap, all sentences, proportional, mean |
| 21 | CRFCWOad | Content word overlap, all sentences, proportional, standard deviation |
| 22 | LSASS1 | LSA overlap, adjacent sentences, mean |
| 23 | LSASS1d | LSA overlap, adjacent sentences, standard deviation |
| 24 | LSASSp | LSA overlap, all sentences in paragraph, mean |
| 25 | LSASSpd | LSApssd LSA overlap, all sentences in paragraph, standard deviation |
| 26 | LSAPP1 | LSA overlap, adjacent paragraphs, mean |
| 27 | LSAPP1d | LSA overlap, adjacent paragraphs, standard deviation |
| 28 | LSAGN | LSA given/new, sentences, mean |
| 29 | LSAGNd | LSA given/new, sentences, standard deviation |
| 30 | LDTTRc | Lexical diversity, type-token ratio, content word lemmas |
| 31 | LDTTRa | Lexical diversity, type-token ratio, all words |
| 32 | LDMTLDa | Lexical diversity, MTLD, all words |
| 33 | LDVOCDa | Lexical diversity, VOCD, all words |
| 34 | CNCAll | All connectives incidence |
| 35 | CNCCaus | Causal connectives incidence |
| 36 | CNCLogic | Logical connectives incidence |
| 37 | CNCADC | Adversative and contrastive connectives incidence |
| 38 | CNCTemp | Temporal connectives incidence |
| 39 | CNCTempx | CONTEMPEXi Expanded temporal connectives incidence |
| 40 | CNCAdd | Additive connectives incidence |
| 41 | CNCPos | Positive connectives incidence |
| 42 | CNCNeg | Negative connectives incidence |
| 43 | SMCAUSv | Causal verb incidence |
| 44 | SMCAUSvp | Causal verbs and causal particles incidence |
| 45 | SMINTEp | Intentional verbs incidence |
| 46 | SMCAUSr | Ratio of casual particles to causal verbs |
| 47 | SMINTEr | Ratio of intentional particles to intentional verbs |
| 48 | SMCAUSlsa | LSA verb overlap |
| 49 | SMCAUSwn | WordNet verb overlap |
| 50 | SMTEMP | Temporal cohesion, tense and aspect repetition, mean |
| 51 | SYNLE | Left embeddedness, words before main verb, mean |
| 52 | SYNNP | Number of modifiers per noun phrase, mean |
| 53 | SYNMEDpos | Minimal Edit Distance, part of speech |
| 54 | SYNMEDwrd | Minimal Edit Distance, all words |
| 55 | SYNMEDlem | Minimal Edit Distance, lemmas |
| 56 | SYNSTRUTa | Sentence syntax similarity, adjacent sentences, mean |
| 57 | SYNSTRUTt | Sentence syntax similarity, all combinations, across paragraphs, mean |


| 58 | DRNP | Noun phrase density, incidence |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 59 | DRVP | Verb phrase density, incidence |
| 60 | DRAP | Adverbial phrase density, incidence |
| 61 | DRPP | Preposition phrase density, incidence |
| 62 | DRPVAL | Agentless passive voice density, incidence |
| 63 | DRNEG | Negation density, incidence |
| 64 | DRGERUND | Gerund density, incidence |
| 65 | DRINF | Infinitive density, incidence |
| 66 | WRDNOUN | Noun incidence |
| 67 | WRDVERB | Verb incidence |
| 68 | WRDADJ | Adjective incidence |
| 69 | WRDADV | Adverb incidence |
| 70 | WRDPRO | Pronoun incidence |
| 71 | WRDPRP1s | First-person singular pronoun incidence |
| 72 | WRDPRP1p | First-person plural pronoun incidence |
| 73 | WRDPRP2 | Second-person pronoun incidence |
| 74 | WRDPRP3s | Third-person singular pronoun incidence |
| 75 | WRDPRP3p | Third-person plural pronoun incidence |
| 76 | WRDFRQc | CELEX word frequency for content words, mean |
| 77 | WRDFRQa | CELEX Log frequency for all words, mean |
| 78 | WRDFRQmc | CELEX Log minimum frequency for content words, mean |
| 79 | WRDAOAc | Age of acquisition for content words, mean |
| 80 | WRDFAMc | Familiarity for content words, mean |
| 81 | WRDCNCc | Concreteness for content words, mean |
| 82 | WRDIMGc | Imagability for content words, mean |
| 83 | WRDMEAc | Meaningfulness, Colorado norms, content words, mean |
| 84 | WRDPOLc | Polysemy for content words, mean |
| 85 | WRDHYPn | Hypernymy for nouns, mean |
| 86 | WRDHYPv | Hypernymy for verbs, mean |
| 87 | WRDHYPnv | Hypernymy for nouns and verbs, mean |

# THE EFFECT OF CORPUS-AIDED APPROACH ON LEARNING SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY WAS CARRIED OUT TO EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF CORPUS-AIDED APPROACH ON LEARNING SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS. TO INVESTIGATE, 80 LEARNERS OF ENGLISH PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY, 40 WERE SELECTED VIA ADMINISTRATING THE OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST (OPT). THEN, THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP ( $\mathrm{N}=20$ ) THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS RECEIVED CORPUS-AIDED APPROACH AS THE SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY WHILE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED ONLY THE COMMON TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY. BEFORE THE CONDUCTION OF THE TREATMENT, A PRETEST OF SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY WAS ADMINISTERED IN ORDER TO MEASURE THE LEARNERS' INITIAL SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE OF SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY. AFTER THE CONDUCTION OF THE TREATMENT, A SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY POSTTEST WAS ADMINISTERED AND THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS WERE ANALYZED THROUGH STATISTICAL PROCEDURES. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY INDICATED A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS IN THEIR CORPUS-AIDED APPROACH IN FAVOR OF THE FORMER.


KEY WORDS: CORPUS- AIDED APPROACH, SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY

## Introduction

This study is initiated to address the difficult problem of improving specialized vocabulary at intermediate level. So this study aims at shedding light on using corpus- aided approach while teaching specialized vocabulary. Here, corpus- aided approach is going to help Iranian Intermediate EFL students to improve specialized vocabulary. This study investigated the effect of corpus- aided approach on improving specialized vocabulary of these learners.

This study has three main goals; (1) to improve the students' knowledge of how the different components of language interact through lexis (vocabulary), (2) to get a feel for the array of different corpus-based tools available for usage-based approach to language, and (3) to get the students to develop teaching
perspectives which in which they can use this new knowledge. By the end of the course, all students will have a much better idea of how languages are really work and are used, particularly in relation to the various roles word units play in language as well as the different corpus and related tools available which document and allow us to explore these roles in real language. This knowledge should enable teachers to carry out more theoretically sound approaches to the teaching of EFL vocabulary making use of such computer-based tools.

## Definition of key terms

Corpus- aided approach: is a broad field that studies a representative body of language as it exists in authentic speech or text rather than language that is invented for the purpose of illustrating a certain linguistic construct or theory (Meyer, 2002; Murphy, 1996).

Specialized vocabulary: are words that are "recognizably specific to a particular topic, field or discipline" (2001, p. 198).

## Traditional approaches to vocabulary

The learning of a second language (L2) vocabulary is obviously different from the learning of the first language (L1) vocabulary. Second language learners already possess the knowledge of the words of their first language, as well as the system of concepts that these words are related to. They also possess the network of associations that link the words to one another, for example, words like red and white, or hand and leg are linked together as the members of the same category of concepts. The learning of an L2 vocabulary involves both learning a new conceptual system, and constructing a new vocabulary network - a second mental lexicon (Saville-Troike, 2006). The acquisition of new words may proceed explicitly (consciously) with the aid of the teacher's explanations or implicitly (unconsciously), which is facilitated by exposure to language input, for example, extensive reading of various texts.

The role of the teacher in implicit learning is to provide the students with suitable input and to equip them with the strategies of inferring the meaning of words from their context.
Another difference between L1 and L2 vocabulary learning lies in the number of words acquired by native speakers and by second language learners. An educated native speaker knows vocabulary of about 20,000 words or word families, whereas most adult second language learners during several years of L2 learning usually acquire about 5,000 words or word families (DeCarrico, 2001). The number of words the learner should know depends on his or her needs. Apparently, different number of vocabulary is required for those who plan to go on a holiday to an English-speaking country, and for those who intend to study in a British university. Researchers, such as Nation (1990), Meara (1995) and Carter (1998), argue that a threshold level or a "core vocabulary" of 2,000 high-frequency words should be taught using explicit instruction and appropriate exercises as soon as possible after the beginning to learn an L2. This number of words is approximately what native speakers use or hear in daily situations. Having acquired 2,000 words, the learners can acquire most of low-frequency words implicitly during listening or reading of various texts, and also they can more easily infer the meaning of words from the context. Learners who intend to study in an English-speaking country need to acquire another thousand of high-frequency words plus the strategies of coping with low-frequency words which they encounter when studying their mainstream subjects.
Learning words means accumulating them in the learner's memory and remembering them. Since frequent encountering of a given word in various texts is crucial in both explicit and implicit learning, students should be exposed to an ample of authentic texts. This enables them to meet vocabulary in a real context, which facilitates its consolidation and memorization. In the teaching/learning of a new word, a significant role is attributed to learners' noticing it in the text (Schmidt, 1995). It initiates its mental processing, which facilitates the word's transfer from short-term memory to long-term memory. Shortterm memory stores only a limited number of vocabulary items for a short time (1-2 seconds), whereas long-term memory stores unlimited number of words for an unlimited time. For words to be integrated
into long-term memory, they need to undergo different kinds of cognitive operations in working memory, such as reasoning, understanding and learning.
The research conducted by Schmidt (1990, 2000) showed that noticing a new word is crucial for its perception, and that it is related to the frequency with which a new word appears in the input. The activities enhancing a word transfer from short-term memory to long-term memory involve its consolidation by repetition, elaboration or manipulation. The more the student manipulates with the word, while performing different kinds of exercises and tasks, the more effective its incorporation to long-term memory is.
Schmidt (2000) emphasizes the role of techniques which by directing of the learners' attention enhance the perception of new vocabulary items. They include marking new words with colour markers, using fonts of various size and underlining new words. Marking new vocabulary in the text is beneficial for its learning, since it helps not only to notice it, but also to observe its form and relations with other words.

## Method

## Participants

The participants were 80 EFL intermediate students out of which 40 were selected. An OPT test were administered to assign them into two groups as the experimental and the control group. A pre-test of specialized vocabulary was administered to assess the initial differences of subject knowledge of learner's specialized vocabulary. The experimental group received the corpus- aided approach. And finally, both groups sat for post-test and received the same specialized vocabulary test.

## Materials

The investigation was conducted by the use of different materials. For the sake of data collection, the participants used three types of tests. An OPT test was taken in order to measure their proficiency level, and homogenize the groups. The pre test of specialized vocabulary was taken in order to measure learners' initial subjects' knowledge of specialized vocabulary. A posttest of specialized vocabulary, was used to measure the effectiveness of treatment.

## Procedure

In this study, the participants were selected from among a group of 40 EFL students out of 80 at a language institute.

An OPT test was administered to make the subjects homogeneous.
Having being homogenized by an OPT test, Those learners whose marks were between one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were chosen and they were randomly divided into two groups, control group $(\mathrm{N}=20)$ and experimental group $(\mathrm{N}=20)$.

A pre-test of specialized vocabulary was administered to assess the initial subject knowledge of the learners under investigation. The control group received no treatment and approach the traditional method for teaching specialized vocabulary.

The experimental group received the corpus- aided approach. They were exposed to learn specialized vocabulary through using corpus- aided approach. During the teaching practice, the learners were typically presented specialized vocabulary through the form of concordances that is presented a list of all occurrence of special word, which are presented in the context. The learners were organized in pairs and guided to analyze the use and function of specialized vocabulary items presented in the text.

The duration of the experiment was 5 weeks, scheduled two hours weekly.

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And finally, both groups sat for post-test and received the same specialized vocabulary test, so the subjects' ability in both groups on the specific treatment program were assessed.

## Results

## -Data Analysis and Findings

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is particularly appropriate when subjects in two or more groups are found to differ on other initial variable. In this study, relevant variables are examined, and the resulting adjusted means of the post -test scores are compared. Through ANCOVA the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared.

Before running ANCOVA, the following the hypotheses were examined:

Liner relationship between the two variables, pre-test and post-test, that was examined through spread plots.

Equality of variances
Homogeneity of regression.
In order to examine liner relationship between the two variables, the graph 1 is examined. The figure of Graph 1 shows, the regression lines are parallel, so there is a liner relationship between the two variables in both groups.


The figure 1.The graph of the amount of specialized vocabulary learning on effectiveness of corpus-aided approach on learning specialized vocabulary two variables in both groups, pre-test and post-test.

The amount of correlation between the two variables is showed in table 1.

Table 1.The correlation between the pre-test variable and independent variable post-test.

| The variables | Specialized <br> (post-test) | $\mathbf{P}$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |


| Specialized vocabulary | $0.484^{* *}$ | 0.000 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $\mathbf{P}^{* *}<. / 01$ |  |  |

The result of correlation shows that there is a significant relationship between two variables. Therefore, using of ANCOVA is possible.

## -Descriptive Analysis of the Data

Statistical characteristic of the result of the T test of the two tests, pretest and post-test in both of the groups is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Statistical characteristic of the T test and pre-test variable and post-test variable dependent in experimental and control group.

| Variable | group | mean | SD | SE | MD | T | DF | p |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Specialized <br> vocabulary <br> (Pre-test) | control | 14.70 | 2.709 | .428 | .2000 | .348 | 78 |  |
|  | experimental | 14.50 | 2.417 | .382 | .2000 | .348 | 78 |  |
| Specialized <br> vocabulary <br> (Post-test) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The result shows that there is a significant difference between students' performance in experimental group ( $M=22.37$ ) comparing to control group ( $M=14.90$ ). As it is clear this difference is statistically significance $(\mathrm{t}=$ =13.406, $\mathrm{p}=0.000$ ). But there is not a significant difference in the pre-test scores.

Table 4-3 shows the dependent variable, which is learning specialized vocabulary. The data demonstrates that the means of the experimental group $(M=22.466)$ are higher than the of the control group ( $\mathrm{M}=14.809$ ).

Table 3. Mean and equal mean of dependent variable learning specialized vocabulary.

| Group | Post-test | Equal <br> mean |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | $\mathbf{M}$ | $\mathbf{S D}$ | $\mathbf{M}$ | SE |
| Control | 14.9000 | 3.00256 | 14.809 | .136 |
| Experimental | 22.3750 | 1.84929 | 22.466 | .136 |

The table 4 and table 5 demonstrate the comparing result pre-test and post-test between experimental group and control group.

Table 4. The result of comparing of specialized vocabulary in control and experimental in pretest.

| Groups | mean | SD | SE | MD | t | df | P |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Control | 14.7 | 2.71 | .428 | .20 | 1.84 | 39 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | .073 |
| Experimental | 14.9 | 3.00 | .474 | .20 | 1.84 | 39 |  |
| (Pre-test)    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 5. The result of comparing of learning specialized vocabulary in control and experimental in posttest.

| Groups | mean | SD | SE | MD | t | df | p |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Control | 14.5 | 2.41 | .382 | 7.87 | 47.78 | 39 | 0.000 |
| Experimental | 22.37 | 1.84 | .292 | 7.87 | 47.78 | 39 | 0.000 |
| (Post-test) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

As it is clear, there is no significant difference between mean score of specialized vocabulary in the pre-
test and the post-test of the control group ( $\mathrm{t}=1.84, \mathrm{p}=0.073$ ). But there is significant difference in mean score of specialized vocabulary of the post-test in the experimental $(\mathrm{t}=47.78, \mathrm{p}=0.000)$. So the experimental group, who received treatment, has better scores in specialized vocabulary

Sum of covariance (ANCOVA) of specialized vocabulary in between the control and the experimental group is demonstrated by eliminating subjects' effect as it is illustrated in table 4-6.

Table 6. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of specialized vocabulary in control and experimental group by eliminating subjects' effect.

| Variable | Source | Sum of <br> squares | Mean <br> Square | F | df | P | Eta |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| learning <br> specialized <br> vocabulary | Between |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | groups | 1170.914 | 1170.914 | 1586.748 | 1 | 0.000 | 0.5 |
|  | Interval | 56.821 | .738 | 1586.748 | 57 | 0.000 |  |

As it can be seen, in this model $F$ is statistically significant and meaningful. The result $(\mathrm{F}(1,57)=1586.748$, $\mathrm{P}=0.000, \mathrm{Eta}=0.954$ ) indicates that there is a significance and meaningful difference between scores

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participants of experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis of this study was rejected and integrating corpus-aided approach has proved to have a positive effect on learning specialized vocabulary.

For more Clarification of the result, the data is demonstrated in graph 2. In this graph, horizontal axis represents the experimental and the control group and the vertical axis represents the dependent variable in posttest. This graph indicates that there is a significant difference in learning specialized vocabulary between the control group and the experimental group. It means the experimental group who received the treatment session on basis of the corpus-aided approach effect had higher scores than control group.


Figure 2. The graph of the mean of specialized vocabulary learning between control and experimental group in post test.

## Results of Hypothesis Testing

The results of the present study seem not to support the hypothesis formulated in this research.

Ho: Teaching vocabulary through integrating corpus-aided approach does not have any impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' learning specialized vocabulary. The statistical result showed that there is a positive effect of the use of corpus-aided approach on the development of specialized vocabulary learning. Based on the findings of this research, if the EFL learners are provided with corpusaided approach, they will be able to learn specialized vocabulary more effectively.

## Conclusion

The corpus aided approach of vocabulary learning improves vocabulary acquisition more effectively. By providing a large amount of information about the target vocabulary in a focused way, Corpus can assist the vocabulary acquisition by largely increasing the recurrence so that learners can really master the vocabulary in short time.

The corpus aided approach has posed new challenges to learners. On the one hand, learners can have access to a large quantity of information on corpora, which will be very efficient and advantageous when

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dealing with authentic English produced by native speakers. On the other hand, students need more time to study vocabulary knowledge and master the method of discovering vocabulary information. Students should change their role as passive knowledge taker in the traditional teaching classroom. In contrast, they should continuously rethink and sum up experience about the learning process, in which with no doubt corpus will play a more and more important role in the future.

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# THE IMPACT OF PREPARATION TASKS ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' PASSAGE SUMMARIZATION ABILITY 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY AIMS TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS OF PREPARATION TASKS AS CLASS ACTIVITIES ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE SUMMARY WRITING. FOR SHOWING THESE EFFECTS, FORTY LEARNERS FROM IRAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE WERE SELECTED AFTER FOLLOWING THE OXFORD PLACEMENT TEST (OPT). THEN, THEY WERE RANDOMLY DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS; THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WHO RECEIVED THE TREATMENT ON PREPARATION TASKS, AND THE CONTROL GROUP WHO RECEIVED A PLACEBO. BOTH GROUPS HAD TO WRITE A SUMMARY THAT WERE CONSIDERED AS THEIR PRETESTS AND POSTTESTS. THE PARAGRAPHS WERE CORRECTED BY THE RESEARCHER WHO WAS A TEACHER AT THE ILI. THEIR SCORES ANALYZED THROUGH SPSS BY APPLYING INDEPENDENT T-TEST, AND PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST. THE FINDINGS REVEALED THAT PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, WHO HAD RECEIVED THE TREATMENT ON PREPARATION TASKS, SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED BETTER PERFORMANCE IN A SUMMARY WRITING TEST.


KEYWORDS: COHERENCE , EFL LEARNERS , PASSAGE SUMMARIZATION ABILITY , PREPARATION TASKS , SCHEMAS

## INTRODUCTION

The close relationship between preparation tasks and language has been recognized by many great scholars such as Peterson (2010) and Leblance (2011).The develop of these skills which can help learners on their own language processes considered a key factor in learning. Students will be able to turn off the outside world and focus on the task at hand by preparation tasks. Summarizing is a process used to condense text into its most important ideas. It involves analyzing information and distinguishing central ideas from those that are less essential. When students summarize, they are required to think actively about the important ideas in the text.

Teaching students to think about the most important ideas can help them distill key information from reading. It also helps them learn to distinguish main ideas from supporting details.

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Inspiration for learning is partial by the learners' interest in the class activities (Wisniewska, 2013). Nseendi (1984) recommends that "students will be encouraged to learn when the activities and exercises for language learning are interesting to them" (as cited in Cheung, 2001, p.59). So, the warm up activity used to motivate students should be interesting (Ruiz \& Ramírez, 2008).

Integrative and instrumental inspirations are intrinsic and extrinsic inspirations according to many researchers. The types of motivation vary from context to context as viewed by Ellis (1997) now the question that should be answered is that which type would be more effective in the context. While inspiring students can be a hard task, the rewards are more than worth it. Motivated students are more excited to learn and take part in different activities. Teaching a class full of motivated students is enjoyable for teacher and student alike. Some students are self-motivated, with a natural love of learning. But even with the students who do not have this natural drive, an excellent teacher can make learning fun and motivate them to reach their full potential.

In the preparation stage, a warm up exercise can act as an important factor to arouse students' interest to motivate them (Jun, 2000). Wisniewska (2013) also mentions that interest builds motivation and exploration to learn, to develop broad knowledge and to reach skills and experience. Beginning a class with a warm up activity is a good way to grow inquisitiveness and interest among the learners and inspire them to give their attention in further activities to know more (Zhu, 2010).

Summarizing is a process used to condense text into its most important ideas. It involves analyzing information and distinguishing central ideas from those that are less essential. When students summarize, they are required to think actively about the important ideas in the text. Teaching students to think about the most important ideas can help them distill key information from reading. It also helps them learn to distinguish main ideas from supporting details. Summarizing supports students' reading comprehension and is especially important for understanding science text, which often contains a few key ideas and several examples or further elaboration. Writing a summary is a good way to help ensure that students understand and remember the key points in the text. Many studies state that summarization is one research-based reading strategy that should be taught during classroom instruction to improve comprehension. Moreover, extensive research shows that summarization is one of the most effective among a variety of strategies for teaching comprehension and production of expository texts.

## METHODS OF RESEARCH

Pretest-posttest design was employed in this study, which means subjects were tested in the existing groups. Both groups are measured before and after treatment. Only one group received the treatment. All participants were foreign language learners of English, all of whom have been learning language in a classroom setting. Following an Oxford Placement Test (OPT), intermediate level learners were selected for the study. Afterwards, the selected participants were randomly assigned to two groups of 20 to form experimental and control groups of the study. 40 students of Iran language institute in two classes at intermediate level.The study took place during fourteen sessions. At the end of each lesson; students were asked to write a paragraph individually. All data were collected during normal class times by course instructors. This research applied a quantitative and quasi-experimental design. The first material which was used in this study was an OPT test. The second instrument used in this study was Hare \& Borchardt's direct instruction of summarization skills (1984). The third instrument used in this study was the Analytic Scale for Rating Composition Tasks to rate the pretest and posttest writing of the students (Brown, 2005).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forty students were examined. This was run to examine the possible initial differences between the two groups in terms of their abilities in English language passage summarization and as mentioned earlier considered as the students' writing ability. The results are presented in Table 1.
Table 1.Descriptive statistics for experimental and control group of summary pretest

| Pretest | Groups | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | control | 20 | 13.8000 | 2.19089 | .48990 |  |
|  | experimental | 20 | 13.6000 | 2.37088 | .53014 |  |

As Table1 demonstrates, the mean in the pretest of the experimental group was not very different from that of the control group ( $\overline{x_{\operatorname{Exp}}}=13.60, \overline{x_{~ C o n t r o l ~}}=13.80$ ). Additionally, the pretest scores for the experimental group were more heterogeneous compared to those for the control group (SD Experimental $=$ $2.37, \mathrm{SD}$ control $=2.19$ ). It can be claimed that the ability to write summarization of both control and experimental group did not differ greatly at the beginning of the study.

Table 2.Descriptive statistics for experimental and control group of summary writing posttest

|  | groups | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std.Deviation | Std.Error <br> Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| posttest | control | 20 |  |  |  |
|  | experimental | 20 | 13.900 | 1.97084 | .44069 |

As shown in table 2, the mean score for the experimental group ( $\bar{x}_{\text {Experimental }}=15.50$ ) was higher than that for the control group ( $\bar{x}_{\text {control }}=13.90$ ). Table 4.5 also showed that the scores were more heterogeneous in the posttest of the experimental group ( SD Experimental $=2.23, \mathrm{SD}$ control $=1.97$ ). It can be claimed that passage summarization ability of both control and experimental groups differed greatly.
Table 3. Paired samples statistics for the summary writing test scores

|  |  | Paired Samples Statistics <br> Mean | $\mathbf{N}$ | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pair 1 | expretest | 13.6000 | 20 | 2.37088 | .53014 |
|  | exposttest | 15.5000 | 20 | 2.23607 | .50000 |
| Pair 2 | crpretest | 13.8000 | 20 | 2.19089 | .48990 |
|  | crposttest | 13.9000 | 20 | 1.97084 | .44069 |

The mean score of the experimental group for passage summarization test has improved from (13.60) in pre-test to (15.50) in post- test; that of the control group has changed from (13.80) in pre-test to (13.90) in post-test.

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Table 4.Comparing the posttest scores of experimental and control group

|  | F | Sig | t | df | Sig.(2tailed) | mean | Std.Error <br> Difference | 95\% Confidence <br> Interval of the Difference |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 1.98 | . 167 | -2.4 | 38 | . 021 | -1.60 | . 66649 | -2.949 | -. 25 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | -2.4 | 37.4 | . 021 | -1.60 | . 66649 | -2.949 | -. 25 |

Additionally, Levene's test was used for determining equality of variances. Since the $p$ value is larger than (.05), the first line of the Table 4.7 was reported. In other words, Equal variance assumed line was taken into account. The findings showed that there was a significant difference in scores for experimental group and control groups $\mathrm{t}=-2.4, \operatorname{sig}(.021)<.05)$.

Table 5. Paired samples statistics for the summary writing test scores

## Paired Differences

|  |  | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation | Std. <br> Error <br> Mean | 95\% Confidence <br> Interval of the Difference |  | t | df | Sig.(2tailed) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | Upper | Lower |  |  |  |
| Pair 1 | expretest exposttest | -1.90 | . 911 | . 20391 | -2.3267 | -1.473 | -9.3 | 19 | . 000 |
| Pair 2 | crpretest crposttest | -. 100 | . 9119 | . 20391 | -. 52679 | . 3267 | -. 49 | 19 | . 629 |

As depicted in the tables 4, and 5, both control and experimental groups had progressed in the post-tests of passage summarization test. Based on the results of paired samples T-tests, this progress was statistically significant simply for the experimental group in but not for the control group ( P experimental group $(.000)<0.05, \mathrm{P}$ control group $(.629) \geq 0.05)$. In other words, the experimental group made a noticeably higher advance as compared to the control group in the passage summarization posttest.

## CONCLUSION

To have a successful class the students should be interested at the very beginning of a class. So, a teacher should try to start a lesson in a way which keeps his $\backslash$ her students engaged. An interesting way of starting a lesson could be using activities called warm-up activities or ice-breakers (Robertson \& Acklam, 2000). Various types of warm-up activities such as songs, games and discussion questions can be used to get students' attention in class (Treko, 2013). Ruiz \& Ramírez (2008) say that to expand students' learning and to get the best from them, it is a must to start a class with a good warm-up session.

To start a class with a motivating activity, to help the students set a positive mood for learning and to keep them engaged in class, using preparation tasks can be an effective way. The study result has presented that in a language classroom preparation tasks can be used for many reasons. One of the reasons of using preparation is to establish a good relationship between students and teachers and to set a positive learning environment for the students to make them comfortable in classroom.

Based on the results gained through this study, we find out there is a significant difference in the results of the tests given at the end of the research and what given at the beginning. In the light of the present results some conclusions were made and the pedagogical implications of this study were discussed. It was mentioned that the EFL learners should incorporate preparation tasks in the process of learning a passage to students, so they can effectively take advantage of it to write a good summary of the passage. Later on some suggestions for future research were given including the need for future investigation with mixed gender.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPLIMENT RESPONSE PATTERN OF ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS AND THEIR AGE 

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#### Abstract

SINCE THE PROPER USE OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSE SPEECH ACT IS ESSENTIAL AND CAN RESULT IN COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN THIS STUDY MADE AN ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPLIMENT RESPONSE (CR) PATTERNS OF ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS AND THEIR AGE. TO THIS END, THE DATA WERE COLLECTED BY MEANS OF A DCT WITH FOUR SITUATIONAL SETTINGS (APPEARANCE, CLOTHING, ABILITY AND POSSESSION) FROM 50 TEENAGE AND 50 ADULT ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS OF AN ENGLISH INSTITUTE IN IRAN .AND PEARSON CHI-SQUARE FORMULA WAS USED TO ANALYZE THE DATA QUANTITATIVELY. THE RESULT REVEALED NO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CR STRATEGIES OF ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS AND THEIR AGE.


KEY WORDS: COMPLIMENT RESPONSE, INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS, PRAGMATIC FAILURE, SPEECH ACTS

## 1. Introduction

Interlanguage pragmatics( ILP) deals with the " investigation of NNSs' comprehension of speech acts, and the acquisition of L2-related speech act knowledge" (Kasper and Dahl,1991, P.215), and its domain is extended to include the use of L2 communication strategies and the emergence of intercultural styles. As Thomas (1983) believes, ILP pinpoints how learners realize speech acts and indicates that even advanced learners can fail to convey or comprehend intended meanings. Therefore, speech acts and pragmatic transfer are two fields of study in ILP.
The performance of speech act, which is one of the basic issues in the realm of ILP, involves both sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge which determines when to perform a speech act and which one is appropriate in a given situation. In accordance with Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) it connotes the presentation of three types of act: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. The locutionary act refers to the literal meaning of the utterance. The illocutionary act alludes to the speaker's intention. The perlocutionary act refers to the effect this utterance has on the addressee.
In the process of acquiring the pragmatic features of the target language, learners' pragmatic knowledge of their first language and culture plays an essential role .Hence, pragmatic transfer manifest itself due to the "similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired" (Odlin, 1989, p.27). keshavarz (2011) referring to 'transfer' as the outcome of similarities and differences between the structure of the learner's native language (NL) and that of the target language (TL), states that there are two kinds of transfer: positive transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer takes place when previously learned behavior facilitates the development of a new behavior, and negative transfer occurs when an old behavior impedes the performance of a new behavior.

Obviously positive and negative transfers are two manifestations of pragmatic transfer. It is believed that factors like L1 transfer and L2 proficiency may impact on how learners perceive and perform illocutionary acts in L2. Based on Ellis (2008):

According to the positive correlation hypothesis, the more proficient the learner the more likely transfer is to take place. In other words, transfer only becomes possible when learners have achieved sufficient L2 resources to make it possible, as Takahashi and Beebe (1987) proposed. A second hypothesis is that the more proficient the learner the greater the positive transfer but the less negative transfer will be. (p.190)
Pragmatic failure which results in cross-cultural communication breakdown is inability to understand what is intended by what is said and "The failure to convey or understand a pragmatic intention in another language and culture is what Thomas (1983) terms cross-cultural pragmatic failure: sociopragmatic failure and pragmalinguistic failure" (Paltridge, 2006, p.68). Pragmalinguistic failure is basically a linguistic problem whereas sociopragmatic failure refers to situations where a speaker of a second language fails to understand different cultural perceptions of a specific speech act.
Verbal behaviors and politeness devises vary from one culture to another. In other words, speakers of different languages employ and interpret verbal behaviors in different ways. Hence, learners' pragmatic failure is derived from lack of awareness of the target language's norms. To avoid miscommunication learners of a second language should pay attention not only to its formal aspects but also to its pragmatic aspects like rules for appropriate use in a given socio-cultural context.
Since the speech act of compliment response, which is discussed as adjacency pair of compliment by Pomerantz (1978), may be realized and interpreted differently across culture, learners of a second language need to gain socio-cultural knowledge of compliment response in addition to the grammatical and vocabulary knowledge.

## 2. Review of literature

There have been many studies in the area of compliment response since Pomerantz (1978) found out that speakers of different languages pursue different patterns when responding to compliments (e.g. Manes \& Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson, 1983; Holmes \&Brown 1997; Holmes, 1988; Herbert 1990; jaworksi, 1995; golato, 2002; Tang \&Zhang, 2009; ...).
Great number of studies compared and contrasted CR patterns of native and non-native speakers of English. For instance, Golato (2002) indicated that, speakers of German are not found to use appreciation tokens (e.g., "thank you") in CRs, although they accept compliments as much as Americans do. Also, Othman (2011), drawing on Holmes definition of compliment and his suggestion saying that compliments vary from one culture to another and compliments are generally accepted in Western culture in contrast to Eastern culture, where compliments are either rejected or denied, undertook a study to investigate the pragmatics od Malay compliments; The result depicts that there has been a shift in culture of compliments and compliment response in Malaysia as compliments when given are more appreciated than denied or rejected by Malay speakers now than before. Influence of exposure to the authentic English language and native culture on the CRs of non-native speakers was probed by Chen \& Yang (2010) as well. The result of their quasi-longitudinal study in Xi'an, China, depicted a dramatic change in the CRs of Xi'an Chinese; as they mostly accepted the compliments instead of rejecting.
In Iran, too, scholars have given away a great interest in the realm of compliment responses. Investigations were carried out, for example, to scrutinize the influence of cultural schema of shekastehnafsi 'modesty' on production of CR by Persian speakers in their L1 and L2 (Sharifian,2005; 2008), and Some studies were carried out to contrast Iranian Persian speakers to the native speakers of English in terms of compliment responses. Shahsavari, Alimohammadi \& Eslami Rasekh (2014), for example, studying compliment responses produced by Iranian EFL speakers and native speakers of American English revealed that there were similarities in compliment response patterns used by Iranian L2 participants and native speakers. For example, most of them made use of expressions like "thank you/thanks" in majority of the situations.

Several studies investigated knowledge of Iranian EFL learners in responding to compliments in their L2 (English) considering factors like educational level, professional background and gender (e.g. Allami \&Montazerii, 2012; Heidari-Shahsavar, Dastjerdi \& Marvi ,2011; Razmjoo, Barbadali \&Afra, 2013).
Compliment responses have been studied considering a wide range of factors and different aspects of it. However, there have been few studies probing CR patterns of advanced EFL learners, who are expected to be quite fluent in their L2 (English), with respect to their age. Thus, this study is conducted to address the following research question:
Q) Is there any relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age?
And, the following null hypothesis was postulated on the subject of the research question, which investigates the data quantitatively.
H0. There is no relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age.

## 3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of the current study, 50 teenage and 50 adult, were selected among 130 advanced EFL learners of an English institute in Urmia, West Azerbaijan who had taken FCE test beforehand.
3.2 Instruments

Reading and writing part of a First Certificate English (FCE) test, a DCT borrowed from Chen \& Yang (2010) which includes one question for each of four considered situations (appearance, clothing, ability, and possession),and Holmes' $(1988,1993)$ framework of CR strategies were the utilized instruments in this study.
3.3 Procedure

To verify the participants' homogeneousness, the reading and writing part of a FCE test was used. That is, 130 advanced EFL learners spent more than 2 hours to answer part 5 to 7 of the 'Reading and Use of English' section, and to deal with part 1 and 2 of the Writing section of an FCE test. Then they were asked to answer the 4 questions presented in the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Of course, the participants were informed about the aim of the study and were asked to imagine themselves in the situation and write down the answers that they would give in a natural situation. They were also required to answer the demographic question regarding their age.
Having more than 100 learners taking the FCE test gave the researcher a chance to divide the learners to two groups of teenagers and adults in addition to selecting the learners who got 70 and more in the FCE test. In other words the questionnaires of the students who managed to score 70 in the FCE test were considered as raw data.
To make sure about the reliability of the test scores inter-rater reliability was applied.
3.4 Data analysis

The participants responses were coded and classified under each category of Holmes' $(1988,1993)$ framework of CR strategies which consists of three macro strategies, namely, Accept, Evade, and Reject, and ten micro strategies shown in Table1. Then, Pearson Chi-Square was used to analyze the data quantitatively.

Table1. Holmes' $(1988,1993)$ Framework of CR Strategies

| Macro level | Micro level |
| :--- | :--- |
| Accept | 1) Appreciation token |
|  | 2) Agreeing utterance |
|  | 3) Downgrading/qualifying utterance |
| Reject | 4) Return compliment |
|  | 1) Disagreeing utterance |
|  | 2) Question accuracy |
|  | 3) Challenging sincerity |


| Evade | 1) Shift credit |
| :--- | :--- |
|  | 2) Informative comment |
|  | 3) Request reassurance |

## 4. Result

To address the research question of the study which deals with the relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age Chi-Square was employed and the result is illustrated by a table of descriptive statistics, Chi-Square Test, and a Bar chart for each situation (appearance, clothing, ability, and possession).
Is there any relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age regarding appearance?
Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the relationship between age and compliment strategies regarding appearance.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Appearance

|  |  |  |  | Age |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | Adults | Teenagers | Total |
| Strategies | Accept | Appreciation Token | Count | 18 | 33 | 51 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 38.3\% | 35.1\% | 36.2\% |
|  |  | Agreeing Utterance | Count | 4 | 3 | 7 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 8.5\% | 3.2\% | 5.0\% |
|  |  | Downgrading Qualifying Utterance | Count | 0 | 2 | 2 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | . $0 \%$ | 2.1\% | 1.4\% |
|  |  | Return Compliment | Count | 18 | 42 | 60 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 38.3\% | 44.7\% | 42.6\% |
|  | Reject | Disagreeing Utterance | Count | 1 | 3 | 4 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 2.1\% | 3.2\% | 2.8\% |
|  |  | Question Accuracy | Count | 0 | 2 | 2 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | .0\% | 2.1\% | 1.4\% |
|  |  | Challenging Sincerity | Count | 1 | 1 | 2 |
|  | Evade |  | \% within age | 2.1\% | 1.1\% | 1.4\% |
|  |  | Shift Credit | Count | 3 | 3 | 6 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 6.4\% | 3.2\% | 4.3\% |
|  |  | Informative Comment | Count | 1 | 1 | 2 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 2.1\% | 1.1\% | 1.4\% |
|  |  | Request Reassurance | Count | 1 | 4 | 5 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 2.1\% | 4.3\% | 3.5\% |
| Total |  |  | Count | 66 | 68 | 47 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 100.0\% | 100.0\% | 100.0\% |

Based on the descriptive statistics (table2), both teenagers and adults accepted the compliments on their appearance most of the times opting for the micro strategy of Return compliments ( $38.3 \%$ adults, $44.7 \%$ teenagers) and Appreciation token ( $38.3 \%$ adults, $35.1 \%$ teenagers) with very close percentages.

Chi square was used to explore the relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding appearance (see Table 3).

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Appearance

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pearson Chi-Square | $5.949^{a}$ | 9 | .745 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 7.044 | 9 | .633 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .124 | 1 | .725 |
| N of Valid Cases | 141 |  |  |

a. 16 cells $(80.0 \%)$ have expected count less than 5 . The minimum expected count is .67 .

As Table 3 shows, there is no relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding appearance, $\chi^{2}(9,141=5.949, \mathrm{Sig}=0.74>0.05)$, that is, because Asymp significance $(0.745)$ is more than 0.05 , there is not a significant association between CR strategies and age regarding appearance.

Figure 1 below shows the frequency distribution of compliment response strategies between adults and teenagers regarding appearance.

Bar Chart


Figure 1: Bar Chart for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Appearance

Is there any relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age regarding clothing?

Table 4 shows descriptive statistics for the relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding clothing.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Clothing

|  |  | Age | Total |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |


|  |  |  |  | Adults | Teenag |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Strategies | Accept | Appreciation Token | Count | 13 | 28 | 41 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 30.2\% | 38.9\% | 35.7\% |
|  |  | Agreeing Utterance | Count | 5 | 16 | 21 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 11.6\% | 22.2\% | 18.3\% |
|  |  | Downgrading Qualifying | Count | 0 | 1 | 1 |
|  |  | Utterance | \% within age | .0\% | 1.4\% | .9\% |
|  |  | Return Compliment | Count | 3 | 13 | 16 |
|  | Reject |  | \% within age | 7.0\% | 18.1\% | 13.9\% |
|  |  | Disagreeing Utterance | Count | 3 | 1 | 4 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 7.0\% | 1.4\% | 3.5\% |
|  |  | Question Accuracy | Count | 2 | 1 | 3 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 4.7\% | 1.4\% | 2.6\% |
|  |  | Challenging Sincerity | Count | 3 | 3 | 6 |
|  | Evade |  | \% within age | 7.0\% | 4.2\% | 5.2\% |
|  |  | Shift Credit | Count | 6 | 4 | 10 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 14.0\% | 5.6\% | 8.7\% |
|  |  | Informative Comment | Count | 8 | 5 | 13 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 18.6\% | 6.9\% | 11.3\% |
|  |  | Request Reassurance | Count | 43 | 72 | 115 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 100.0\% | 100.0\% | 100.0\% |
| Total |  |  | Count | 66 | 68 | 13 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 100.0\% | 100.0\% | 30.2\% |

Regarding clothing, based on the table 4, the strategy of Appreciation token which is a subcategory of Accept is the most preferred strategy by both adults and teenagers with $30.2 \%$ of adults and $38.9 \%$ of teenagers' responses. And Reject was the least favored strategy by the both groups.
Chi square was used to explore the relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding clothing (see Table 5).

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Clothing

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pearson Chi-Square | $14.537^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 8 | .069 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 14.896 | 8 | .061 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 8.272 | 1 | .004 |
| N of Valid Cases | 115 |  |  |

a. 16 cells $(80.0 \%)$ have expected count less than 5 . The minimum expected count is .67 .

Table 5 shows no relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding clothing, $\chi 2$ ( 8 , $115=5.949$, $\mathrm{Sig}=0.06>0.05$ ), that is, because Asymp significance ( 0.069 ) is more than 0.05 , there is not a significant association between CR strategies and age regarding clothing.
Figure 2 below shows the frequency distribution of compliment response strategies between adults and teenagers regarding clothing.

## Bar Chart




Figure 2: Bar Chart for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Clothing

Is there any relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age regarding ability?
Table 6 shows descriptive statistics for the relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding ability.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Ability

|  |  |  |  | Age |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | Adults | Teenagers | Total |
| Strategies | Accept | Appreciation Token | Count | 16 | 21 | 37 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 34.8\% | 28.8\% | 31.1\% |
|  |  | Agreeing Utterance | Count | 8 | 15 | 23 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 17.4\% | 20.5\% | 19.3\% |
|  |  | Downgrading Qualifying Utterance | Count | 4 | 5 | 9 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 8.7\% | 6.8\% | 7.6\% |
|  |  | Return Compliment | Count | 6 | 15 | 21 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 13.0\% | 20.5\% | 17.6\% |
|  | Reject | Disagreeing Utterance | Count | 2 | 0 | 2 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 4.3\% | .0\% | 1.7\% |
|  |  | Question Accuracy | Count | 4 | 2 | 6 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 8.7\% | 2.7\% | 5.0\% |
|  |  | Challenging Sincerity | Count | 1 | 5 | 6 |
|  | Evade |  | \% within age | 2.2\% | 6.8\% | 5.0\% |


|  | Shift Credit | Count | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  | \% within age | $6.5 \%$ | $5.5 \%$ | $5.9 \%$ |
|  | Informative Comment | Count | 2 | 6 | 8 |
|  |  | \% within age | $4.3 \%$ | $8.2 \%$ | $6.7 \%$ |
|  | Request Reassurance | Count | 46 | 73 | 119 |
|  |  | \% within age | $100.0 \%$ | $100.0 \%$ | $100.0 \%$ |

Based on the descriptive statistics (table 6), both teenagers and adults preferred Accept (Appreciation token, Agreeing Utterance and Return compliments) over Evade and Reject in responding the compliments on their ability.
Chi square was used to explore the relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding ability

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Ability

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pearson Chi-Square | $8.565^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 8 | .380 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 9.358 | 8 | .313 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .253 | 1 | .615 |
| $\mathbf{N}$ of Valid Cases | 119 |  |  |

a. 16 cells $(80.0 \%)$ have expected count less than 5 . The minimum expected count is .67 .

As Table 7 shows, there is no relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding ability, $\chi^{2}(8,119=8.565, \operatorname{Sig}=0.38>0.05)$, that is, because Asymp significance ( 0.380 ) is more than 0.05 , there is not a significant association between CR strategies and age regarding ability.
Figure 3 below shows the frequency distribution of compliment response strategies between adults and teenagers regarding ability.

## Bar Chart



Figure 3: Bar Chart for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Ability

Is there any relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age regarding possession?
Table 8 shows descriptive statistics for the relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding possession.
Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Possession

|  |  |  |  | Age |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | Adults | Teenagers | Total |
| Strategies | Accept | Appreciation Token | Count | 12 | 21 | 33 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 52.2\% | 41.2\% | 44.6\% |
|  |  | Agreeing Utterance | Count | 1 | 9 | 10 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 4.3\% | 17.6\% | 13.5\% |
|  |  | Downgrading Qualifying Utterance | Count | 2 | 0 | 2 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 8.7\% | .0\% | 2.7\% |
|  |  | Return Compliment | Count | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|  | Reject |  | \% within age | 4.3\% | 3.9\% | 4.1\% |
|  |  | Disagreeing Utterance | Count | 2 | 3 | 5 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 8.7\% | 5.9\% | 6.8\% |
|  |  | Question Accuracy | Count | 1 | 0 | 1 |
|  |  |  | \% within age | 4.3\% | . $0 \%$ | 1.4\% |
|  |  | Challenging Sincerity | Count | 3 | 5 | 8 |



As table 8 depicts Appreciation token is the most favored strategy by both teenage and adult groups. That is, $52 \%$ of teenagers and $41 \%$ of adults employed strategies like 'thank you' in their responses.

Chi square was used to explore the relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding possession (see Table 9).

Table 9: Chi-Square Tests between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Possession

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pearson Chi-Square | $13.180^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 8 | .106 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 16.326 | 8 | .038 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .770 | 1 | .380 |
| $\mathbf{N}$ of Valid Cases | 74 |  |  |

a. 16 cells ( $80.0 \%$ ) have expected count less than 5 . The minimum expected count is .67 .

Table 9 represents no relationship between age and compliment response strategies regarding possession, $\chi^{2}(8,74=5.949, \mathrm{Sig}=0.10>0.05)$, in other words, because Asymp significance ( 0.106 ) is more than 0.05, there is not a significant association between CR strategies and age regarding possession.
Figure 4 below shows the frequency distribution of compliment response strategies between adults and teenagers regarding possession.


Figure 4: Bar Chart for the Relationship between Age and Compliment Response Strategies regarding Possession

Based on the tables in 2-9 the answer for the research question of this study is: There is no relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age in none of the situations under the study (appearance, clothing, ability, and possession) which means that the null hypothesis is accepted.

## 5. Discussion

This paper intended to examine the relationship between CR strategies of advanced EFL leaners and their age. To this end, a discourse completion task (DCT) was employed to elicit compliment response strategies used by the participants who were advanced EFL learners of an institute in Urmia, and Holmes' $(1988,1993)$ framework of CR strategies was used to categorize the data after coding. Later on, the data were analyzed quantitatively to study the relationship between compliments response patterns of advanced EFL learners with their age regarding appearance, clothing, ability and possession.
Based on the Chi-Square tests there is no significant relationship between CR patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age in none of the situations. So, the null hypothesis of the study is accepted.
Furthermore, the tables of descriptive statistics and bar charts for the relationship between age and compliment response strategies depict that accepting compliments was the most favored macro strategy by all participants in all situations, and among the micro strategies of Accept, Appreciation token was preferred by both teenage and adult groups in almost all situations. And macro strategy of Reject was the least favored strategy by teenagers as well as adults. This result is compatible with the findings of Heidari-Shahsavar et al. (2011) in that, in their study too, the most frequent strategy was Accept and Reject was the least employed strategy; the age difference was not considered in their study, though.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the result of the study there is no significant relationship between compliment response patterns of advanced EFL learners and their age. This can be of use for the teachers and syllabus designers since the importance of being sensitive to age differences in EFL classrooms is evident. In other words, in the process of teaching and learning language besides accurate use of syntactic patterns; the knowledge of pragmatic, discourse strategies, and cultural differences, considering age differences and
being sensitive to cultural cognition of each age group (teenagers and adults) can play an essential role. As the age difference is neglected in most of the studies on compliment responses of advanced EFL learners this study aimed at filling this gap with the hope that it will pave the way for further exploratory studies.

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# THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION ON READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN RURAL EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THE AIM OF THIS STUDY WAS TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE AND POTENTIAL EFFECT(S) OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION (DI) ON READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN RURAL EFL LEARNERS. THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF A LESS PROSPEROUS AREA NEAR THE BORDER OF IRAN AND TURKEY. AMONG THE SECOND GRADE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE AREA, 60 WERE SELECTED AS THE SAMPLE WHO WERE BETWEEN 15-18 YEARS OLD. ON THE BASIS OF THE PRETEST, SUBJECTS WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO HOMOGENOUS GROUPS, ONE OF THEM EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND THE OTHER ONE CONTROL GROUP, EACH INCLUDING 30 PARTICIPANTS. EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WAS TREATED FOR 12 SESSIONS USING PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF DI, AND AT THE END OF THE TREATMENT A POST-TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO BOTH OF THE GROUPS AT THE SAME TIME AND IN THE SAME PLACE. AS THE RESULTS REVEALED, IN POST-TEST PHASE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP OUTPERFORMED CONTROL GROUP WITH A HIGHER MEAN SCORE, AND IT WAS SHOWN THAT DI HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON RURAL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION. THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY MAY HAVE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND POLICY MAKERS AND SYLLABUS DESIGNERS, HELPING THEM IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF READING TASKS AND ALSO TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS.


KEYWORDS: DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION, RURAL EFL LEARNER, READING COMPREHENSION

## 1. Introduction

For many teachers efficiency of the teaching and achieving the preplanned goals of the educational system and goals of the class, is a vital issue in teaching-learning process. Rock, Gregg, Ellis and Gable (2008) acclaim that, today teachers are responsible not only for meeting the diverse needs of all students but also for ensuring improved educational outcomes.

Improving skills and specially reading skill and comprehension from reading in EFL setting is a pivotal issue which concerns any language teacher, educational expert and learners themselves in any educational system. Importance of reading in lesson plan and curriculum and its effect on other skills is emphasized by some of the scholars (Brown, 2001; Chastain, 1988; Lindsay and Knight, 2006; etc.). DI which takes into account differences of the learners, can be an alternative approach for teaching English in rural areas. So this approach seems to be effective in rural environment and more probable to meet the needs of all learners. Tomlinson \& Allan (2000) proposes that in order to use DI teachers determine at the

[^12]onset of their planning what their students should know and what each child should be able to do at the conclusion of the lesson or unit.

A major drawback of traditional instruction is that many teachers "teach to the middle" (Haager \& Klinger, as cited in Anderson, 2007) also Friend and Bursick (as cited in Anderson, 2007) assert that traditional instruction has a particularly deleterious effect on students with disabilities who often display diverse cognitive abilities, evidence multiple and varied instructional needs, and perform academically below their same-age classmates.

Each student has unique features that brings them into the class with himself, so it is teachers' duty to identify and respect those differences and plan lessons in a way that no student become frustrated due to ignoring his differences. One of the approaches that takes into account these differences and adjusts teaching methods and tasks with the class and students preferences is what Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999, 2001), a leading expert in the field, defined as Differentiated Instruction (DI).

Differentiated Instruction and assessment (also known as differentiated learning or, in education, simply, differentiation or multilevel teaching ) is defined as a framework or philosophy for effective teaching that involves providing different students with different avenues to learning (often in the same classroom) in terms of: acquiring content; processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas; and developing teaching materials and assessment measures so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability (Tomlinson, 2001). Differentiated classrooms have been described by Brown (2004) as ones that are responsive to students' variety in readiness levels, interests and learning profiles.

Differentiated Instruction is a teaching and learning philosophy that emphasizes students at the core. Because each student is different, Differentiated Instruction stresses that one style of teaching will not accommodate every student, especially when the teacher's style is a mismatch of the student's style (Levine, 2002 as cited in Stanford \& Reeves, 2009). Tomlinson \& Allan believe that in the context of education, we define differentiation as a teacher's reacting responsively to a learner's needs (Tomlinson \& Allan, 2000).

Tomlinson and Allan (2000) put it as "Within 30 year cognitive psychologists and educational researchers have recognized that individuals have diverse ways of thinking, learning, solving problems and creating product. Differentiation is simply attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students rather than the more typical pattern of teaching the class as though all individuals in it were basically alike "(p.4).

Tomlinson (1999) believes that teachers in differentiated classes use time flexibly, call upon a range of instructional strategies, and become partners with their students to see that both what is learned and the learning environment are shaped to the learner.

Although Tomlinson claims that there is no single formula for creating a differentiated classroom (Tomlinson, 1999), but she proposes some key ideas for having successful Instruction based on differentiation, which can be summarized as following items:

- The teacher focuses on the essentials
- The teacher attends to student differences
- Assessment and instruction are inseparable
- Teacher modifies content, process and products
- All students participate in respectful work
- The teacher and the students collaborate in learning
- The teacher balances group and individual norms
- The teacher and students work together flexibly (Tomlinson, 1999).

According to what scholars said, we can conclude that the goal of a differentiated classroom is maximum student growth and individual success.

Tomlinson and Allan (2000) clearly summarize What's and How's of DI in figure 1.
Figure 1. Balancing the equation to make differentiation work (adapted from Tomlinson $\mathcal{E}$ Allan, 2000)


## THE WHAT

- High-level, idea-based instruction using key skills to understand and apply the ideas employing key principles of differentiation:
- Flexible grouping
- Respectful activities
- Ongoing assessment and adjustment
- Modifying content, process, and product based on student readiness, interest, and learning profile using a range of studentcentered, meaning-making instructional strategies
- Coaching for individual growth with the goal of moving each student as far and fast as possible
- Assessing student growth at least in significant measure according to personal growth

THE HOW

- Clarity of purpose and vision
- Systemic efforts
- Generalist/specialist partnerships for classroom application
- Time and support for collaboration
- Structured lesson (curriculum) planning and instructional evaluation
- Focused staff development with plans for transfer
- Incentives for classroom application
- Aligned and focused policies and initiatives
- Coherent leadership
- Integration with professional growth and accountability
- Formative and summative evaluation of efforts and use of findings
- Involvement of parents in understanding and contributing to assessment of change
- Persistence over time

A comparison between Differentiated Instruction and traditional teaching was done by Jenifer Fox and Whitney Hoffman (2011) which is summarized in the following table.

Table 1. A comparison between Differentiated Instruction and traditional teaching Adapted from Jenifer Fox and Whitney Hoffman (2011).

| One-Size-Fit-All Teaching | Differentiated Instruction |
| :--- | :--- |
| Teachers answer all the questions | Teachers redirect questions to students |
| Every student writes on the same topic | Students choose from a variety of topics |
| Tests are all Multiple questions | Tests have different sections that offer multiple <br> ways to demonstrate learning |


| Everyone reads the same book | Students choose books according to their interest <br> and reading levels |
| :--- | :--- |
| For must class time, teachers re at the front of the <br> room directly teaching all students the same <br> material | Teachers guide students through activities rather <br> than spend most of the time delivering content |
| Teachers give only verbal directions | Teachers give both oral and written directions; <br> teachers may provide a sample of a project so <br> students can see an expected outcome |
| Class time is spent doing one kind of activity the <br> entire time | Class is broken down into seven-to ten minute <br> chunks with new activities for each chunk |
| Teachers are viewed as the authority on all <br> knowledge | Teachers ask for students input on lessons, <br> topics, and projects |
| Students read in class and work on projects <br> outside the class | Students work with others in class and do things <br> they can do on their own when they are not in <br> class |
| Students have one opportunity to perform <br> usually in the form of some kind of cumulative <br> test at the end of a unit | Students are provided examples of what quality <br> work looks like, and their work is checked along <br> the way with many opportunities for revision |

### 1.2. Literature Review

Brown (2004) in her article discusses theoretical characteristics of Differentiated Instruction and presents a multilevel lesson planning system that is manageable in a standard-based instructional context, along with a variety of helpful instructional strategies and real-life examples. In her work supports are outlined for students with mild disabilities, and adaptations are explained for students with severe disabilities and for students with special gifts and talents. Advice is provided for making a manageable change to differentiated instruction.

Thompson \& Valladares (2011) claim that the use of differentiated instruction in the classroom has proven to be the most effective way of assuring that every student's needs are being met. Every teacher has a different teaching style just as every student has different ways of learning in all content areas. By using differentiation, teachers recognize each student's needs. Thus, teachers can use a variety of engaging strategies that give students opportunities to use their strengths to develop their weaknesses.

Smit and Humpert (2012) studied the effect of DI in rural areas of alpine, Switzerland. They said that DI could help improve the teaching culture by allowing instructors to better adapt to better heterogeneous student groups.

Alavinia and Sadeghi (2013) studied the impact of differentiated instruction via heeding learning style on EFL learners' feasible proficiency gains. A small sample of academic freshmen (totaling 60, out of which only 47 remained to the end of the study) were chosen. To cater for homogeneity a version of TOEFL (2006) test was used. They also used VAK learning style self-Assessment Questionnaire to determine the learning style. They instructed experimental group with DI and control group with taskbased instruction. T-test was used to analyze collected data and it revealed that no significant difference existed between the performance of the experimental and control groups on the post test.

Morgan (2014) believes students tend to comprehend little and lose focus of classroom instruction when their teachers fail to use instructional strategies that match students' learning styles. He continues in his article that Differentiated instruction can alleviate or eliminate this disengagement.

Aliakbari and Khaleshaghighi (2014) explored the usefulness of differentiated instruction and traditional-based pedagogy in the promotion of male and female learners reading comprehension in separate gender educational system in 2014. The outcomes of ANOVA from post-test results indicated that the students of the experimental group outperformed the control one. Further, the computation of post hoc analysis revealed that female learners of the experimental group performed better in comparison to male ones in the post-test. It can be understood from the upshots of the current study that one standard curriculum cannot respond to the needs of all learners of the same proficiency level,

Arzhanik M.B., Chernikova E.V., Karas S.I. and Lemeshko E.Y (2015) explored the effect(s) of differentiation in higher education in 2014 in Russia. They asserted that due to the increasing demands for professional development of specialists it is necessary to apply DI approaches to teaching so that students of all learning levels could fully understand the material.

### 1.3. Definition of Key Terms

Differentiated Instruction: the process of ensuring that what a student learns, how he/she learns it, and how the student demonstrates what he/she has learned is a match for that student's readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning (Tomlinson, 2004).

Rural EFL learner: Learners who live in rural areas. English as a foreign language refers to the teaching of English to people for whom it is not the first language (Stevenson, 2010).

Reading Comprehension: perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading). The understanding that results is called reading comprehension (Richards \& Schmidt, 2013).

### 1.4. Significance of the Study

The main beneficiaries of this study are learners in rural areas who will experience a method of teaching in which less stress they will have, they will learn how to work in teams and mates, their personal differences will be respected and they will be more eager to attend English classes which seems a nightmare to some of them due to incorrect methods; as a result the quality of learning will increase for them. This study aims to introduce a teaching method and its benefits to teachers who teach English in rural areas and by doing so, they would facilitate the learning process of reading comprehension skill for students so the present study can help teachers who are doing their best to teach the lesson in a more efficient way and they can increase the percentage of the success of the students using DI not only for reading comprehension, but also for other skills that are taught in the class. Also, policy makers, syllabus designers and material developers who work for Education Ministry of Iran may use the results of this study to change the content of the textbooks which are published for senior second grade high school students in Iran and publish a new book on the basis of DI approach in order to have better outcomes.

### 1.5. Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of the current study is to examine the possible and potential effects that Differentiated Instruction (DI) may have on the reading comprehension skill of rural EFL learners in order that the teachers can improve their students reading comprehension skill.

### 1.6. Research Question and Research Hypotheses

RQ: Does differentiated Instruction have any significant effect on the reading comprehension skill of Iranian rural EFL Learners?
$\mathbf{H}_{0}$ : Differentiated Instruction does not have any significant effect on the reading comprehension skill of Iranian rural EFL Learners.
$\mathbf{H}_{\mathbf{1}}$ : Differentiated Instruction has effect on the reading comprehension skill of Iranian rural EFL Learners.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Participants

This study is conducted in the public high schools of Somy Bradoost Area which is located very near to border of Iran and Turkey and is a suburb of Urmia City, Iran.

Among the second grade students of senior high school, 60 male students/learners were selected as the sample and were divided into two groups, Control and Experimental. On the basis of the results of Pretest homogeneity of subjects was analyzed before dividing them into two groups.

### 2.2. Instruments/ Materials

Before starting the treatment, a pre-test was administered to the learners to divide them into two groups and to examine homogeneity of the two groups. On the basis of the results of the pre-test, subjects were divided into two groups of Experimental and Control groups. Pretest included a reading with 10 comprehension questions which is attached to the appendix. The allotted time for it were 15 minutes.The main source of reading tasks in the classroom was the textbook written by syllabus designers and published for second grade of senior high school students by Education Ministry of Iran. Readings of units 4 to 7 are taught by the use of Differentiated Instruction techniques.

The treatment proceeded for12 sessions and in addition to readings in the text book, some samples of reading comprehension tasks were chosen from American English file 1 and Interchange Intro (3rd Edition). After 12 sessions that devoted to reading the texts and doing the comprehension exercises using DI methods, a posttest with 12 questions were administered to both Experimental and Control groups at the same time and in a same exam hall, allotted time was 18 minutes. Both of pretest and posttest were adopted from www.readtheory.com, a standard source of reading comprehension source.

### 2.3. Design of the Study

On the basis of research question and hypothesis that mentioned later in this chapter, and since this study is intended to examine the possible effect(s) of Differentiated Instruction as an independent variable, on reading comprehension, as a dependent variable, the research would be a quantitative and quasi-experimental one.

### 2.4. Procedure

Having prepared the task for that session beforehand, the teacher (researcher himself) entered the class and after greeting, he rolled the names to make sure that everybody was present. Then he started a warm up period by discussing about the topic of the reading that was going to be covered that session. This warm up included brainstorming, explanations by peers in the group or the whole class, reading short related and informative texts about the main topic, explanation by teacher using English as far as possible and understandable and sometimes explanations by peers in their mother tongue (Kurdish) and Persian since sometimes there was a need to clarify the issue in Persian. If none of the members of the group was able to answer that problem or question, they would ask their teacher to clarify it for them. Some type of questions asked by groups are vocabulary definitions and meanings, grammatical points (tenses), comprehension questions about reading and questions about reading strategies.

When the learners became familiar with the topic teacher asked students to start the reading. Readings were read from textbook or from other sources that were copied and distributed among the learners each session. Each learner, first was supposed to deal with the reading individually for about 25-30 minutes. Then some questions were asked from learners by the teacher (researcher) on the basis of Bloom's Taxonomy of questions to assess the amount of their comprehension. There were some unclear points for some of the students so they were supposed to try to find solutions inside their groups. During the treatment each group had access to bilingual dictionary and if they had any question they could find answer by discussion among the members or they could ask the teacher to clarify it if they could not find the answer themselves. Learners in the experimental group were taught to use strategies needed for studying the text. Strategies like scanning, skimming, top-down approach, button-up approach, reading questions before reading the text.

After that teacher checked students' comprehension one more time using the Bloom's taxonomy to make sure that all the students understood the text and were able to answer the comprehension questions. Some extra exercise on reading was done by teacher asking questions from reading which were not included in post reading questions in the text. These comprehension questions were compatible with each students' ability to comprehend that was measured by the use of pretest ,changing group members by the teacher each session, and according to the difficulty level of the text that was being that session. They could also select the kind of activity in doing exercises and homework. It means every student was able to choose his own way of doing the task and homework.

Each session students' worksheets were gathered and kept by the teacher as their portfolios and checking and analyzing them made learners' progress known to their teacher, educational experts and school management board.

There were 3 levels of students during the study, challenged, average and gifted. During one session gifted students were grouped together, average students together and challenged ones together. Some other sessions they were mixed together and this grouping system originated from difficulty of the text and the need to peer work in reading the texts. The rationale for different grouping system during the treatment was to let the students work together and progress using the help that came from gifted students and in addition, not to inspire to the students that they had different levels in the class. The researcher did not let the students to know that they had different abilities of reading in the class since this might cause average and challenged students to become frustrated and gifted ones to become proud of themselves.

Since subjects in both groups had contact with each other in other classes and at school some texts, which were not as same as experimental group's texts, as a compensatory equalization were distributed among learners and students in control group but they were not guided on the base of DI principles, for example there did not have access to dictionary while reading texts, they were not questioned differently on the basis of their reading level, they were not grouped differently on the basis of the difficulty of the text, and they all were asked to do the exercises the same way.

During 13 days of Nowruz vacation, extra homework assignment was assigned for gifted students who were 10 learners. Others in the experimental group were asked to review the texts which were covered in the class before. After 12 sessions of treatment the post test was administered to all 60 learners, to both experimental and control groups in the same day and in the same exam hall. The results of the posttest were analyzed by the SPSS software.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

Instrument for data collection was pretest and posttest. The collected data was analyzed by SPSS software (Version 22). The procedure of data analysis was done through making use of descriptive and
inferential statistics. According to the topic, research question, hypothesis of this research, the results of pretest and posttest were analyzed by parametric t-test and Mann Whitney U test respectively.

## 3. Results

As an attempt to work on DI, this study focused on reading skill and the effect(s) that DI may have on reading comprehension of rural EFL learners who are living in less prosperous areas near the borders of Iran and Turkey. In so doing, a pretest was administered before treatment and on the basis of the results of pretest 60 learners were divided into two homogenous groups, one of them as experimental and the other one as control group. After 12 sessions of treatment for experimental group a post-test was administered to the both of the groups at the same time and in the same exam hall. T-test was used to analyze the results of the both tests. The research question of the study which was mentioned above:

RQ: Does differentiated Instruction have any significant effect on the reading comprehension skill of Iranian rural EFL students?

To address this research question, the researcher made use of parametric test for pretest results, since the grades were distributed normally and for analyzing post-test results Mann-Whitney $U$ test was used since the posttest scores were not normally distributed.

Table 2. Ranks for two groups at posttest

|  | Groups | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| posttest | Experimental | 30 | 43.87 | 1316.00 |
|  | Control | 30 | 17.13 | 514.00 |
|  | Total | 60 |  |  |

Table two shows the mean rank of two groups (control and experimental) at posttest and it can be clearly inferred that mean rank of experimental group is higher than mean rank of the control group in the posttest.

Table 3.Mann-Whitney U test

| posttest |  |
| :--- | :---: |
| Mann-Whitney U | 49.000 |
| Wilcoxon W | 514.000 |
| Z | -5.971 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |

According to above Tables the results manifested that the mean of experimental group is 26.74 percentage points higher than the mean of control group in post-test and the significance equals 0.00 which is less than 0.05 . So the difference between the mean scores of the groups was significant, in other words, two groups were significantly different at posttest. It is inferred that the treatment based on DI
was efficient in this research or in other words DI had a significant and positive effect on the reading comprehension of Iranian rural EFL learners. On the basis of these results it can be inferred that, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis of this study is accepted because DI affected the reading comprehension of rural EFL learners positively.

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# LEARNING MANDARIN CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES 

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#### Abstract

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#### Abstract

MANDARIN CHINESE IS INCREASINGLY POPULAR AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS. THE NUMBER OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ENROLLING IN MANDARIN CHINESE CLASSES HAS INCREASED DRASTICALLY SINCE 2000. LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS NO LONGER A PRIVILEGE FOR TYPICALLY DEVELOPING STUDENTS IN GENERAL EDUCATION. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE SUPERVISORS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES ADVOCATES FOR THE INCLUSION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM FOR ALL STUDENTS, ASSERTING THAT STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ALSO BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. IN THIS PAPER, SEVERAL EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS WHO TEACH MANDARIN CHINESE LANGUAGE INCLUDING CHORAL RESPONDING, RESPONSE CARDS, AND CLASS-WIDE PEER TUTORING. THESE STRATEGIES ARE EMPIRICALLY BASED, DEMONSTRATING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN PROVIDING MEASURABLY SUPERIOR GAINS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ACROSS DIFFERENT CURRICULA. MOREOVER,


# EACH STRATEGY HAS BEEN EMPLOYED SUCCESSFULLY IN BOTH SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS. 

## KEYWORDS: MANDARIN CHINESE, FOREIGN LANGUAGE, DISABILITY, INCLUSION

## Learning Mandarin Chinese as a Foreign Language:

Evidence-based Strategies for Teaching Students with Disabilities
"GET AHEAD! LEARN MANDARIN!" was the headline appearing on the cover of TIME magazine (Ramzy, 2006) reporting that, because of China's remarkable economic boom--from the classrooms in the United States of America (USA) to the boardrooms of Tokyo, Japan--the world has been awakening to the importance of learning Mandarin, the national language of the People's Republic of China. Fluent Mandarin Chinese has become a must-have asset for many students' future and professionals hoping to benefit from China's booming economy. In Britain, a poll of business executives rated Mandarin Chinese as the third most useful language for their employees to learn after French and German. The Schools Secretary proposed all secondary schools should offer classes in Mandarin and provide opportunities to learn Mandarin Chinese to primary school students (Shepherd, 2010). In the USA, not only do many universities offer Mandarin Chinese courses as a foreign language, many local school districts have also launched English-Chinese dual-language immersion programs for their secondary and primary school students (Bonacci, 2013; Dillon, 2010; Robelen, 2011; Rubello, 2013; Ruethling, 2005; Tran, 2008). The increased interest in Mandarin Chinese in the USA is evident by a 51 percent increase from 2002 in the number of students studying Mandarin in colleges and universities across the country (Robelen, 2011). Although thousands of public schools across the USA have stopped teaching foreign languages since 2000, many schools have expedited offering instruction in Mandarin Chinese due to student demand (e.g., Bonacci, 2013; Robelen, 2011). For example, according to Robelen (2011), between 2004-2005 and 2007-2008 enrollment in Mandarin Chinese classes increased 195 percent. In the USA, Mandarin Chinese instruction is no longer limited to port entry cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. In recent years, schools throughout the USA have started Mandarin Chinese programs in mid-western states (e.g., Ohio, Illinois), southern states (e.g., Texas, Georgia), and Mountain West states (e.g., Colorado, Utah). In many cases, Mandarin is available for students from preschool through high school.

## Inclusive Education

In the USA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 2004) and its predecessor, IDEA (1997), supports previous legislation regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classrooms. An inclusive classroom is an instructional setting where students with disabilities are included in a general education classroom and where both a general education teacher and a special education teacher provide instruction. IDEA 1997 and 2004 mandate that an individualized education plan (IEP) must be developed for each student with disabilities which includes provisions to ensure that the student be meaningfully involved and given the opportunity to make progress in the general education curriculum. Because of federal legislation, many children with special needs are able to study together with their typical peers in the same instructional settings. Like their typical peers, students with disabilities should have the same rights and opportunities to learn a foreign language. Participation in inclusive programs have a beneficial impact on students with and without special needs, resulting in positive gains such as increased and more meaningful social interactions (Purcell, Horn, \& Palmer, 2007). For example, in inclusive classrooms, young children with special needs demonstrate higher levels of social play and show gains in cognitive and motor skills, meanwhile, their more typically developing peers are better able to accept differences and become more aware of the needs of others.

Students with disabilities have been diagnosed and classified as having a certain type(s) of disabilities which requires specialized services in order to maximize learning. Disabilities may be evident as cognitive, physical/motor, behavior, social/emotional, and combinations of these disabilities. The
learning characteristics of students with disabilities vary: (a) low achievement in most or all academic areas, (b) preference for concrete rather than abstract lessons, (c) weak listening skills, (d) deficits in memory, (e) inattentive and easily distractible, (f) low interest in school work, (g) high anxiety, (h) deficits in adaptive behavior, (i) behavior problems, and (j) poor social skills (Henley, Ramsey, \& Algozzine, 2008; Rosenberg, Westling, \& McLeskey, 2010). The academic and social learning needs of many students with disabilities present great challenges for teachers.

## Foreign Language Education for All Children

A position paper published by The National Council of State Supervisors for Foreign Languages (NCSSFL) asserted that NCSSFL "firmly advocates for the inclusion of foreign language education in the school curriculum for ALL students, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve and beyond" (NCSSFL, n.d., para. 1). Including statements from the Standards for Foreign Language Learning Preparing for the in the 21st Century, NCSSFL further states that :

The United States must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. (NCSSFL, n.d., para. 4).

Providing opportunities for children with disabilities to learn foreign languages require that teachers have the ability to teach in inclusive classrooms so that all learners can benefit. However, learning a foreign language can be a very frustrating and discouraging process for students with disabilities as often their disabilities manifest themselves in language-related areas such as reading, writing, and memory (Abrams, 2008; Arries, 1999). Foreign language teachers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills that can enable them to be effective teachers in inclusive educational programs. There are three general approaches to teaching of a foreign language based on different learning theories: (a) the oral-situational approach (Pasia, n.d.), (b) the notional-functional approach (Finocchiaro \& Brumfit, 1983) and (c) the taskbased approach (Leaver \& Willis, 2004). Other approaches include various humanistic approaches, content-based language teaching, and the lexical approach (Ellis, 2005). There have been, however, gaps in knowledge about what transpires in foreign language classrooms and what effect it has on learning (Duff \& Li, 2004; Ellis, 2005), in particular in the case of non-European language classrooms (Duff \& Li, 2004). Moreover, relatively little research has been conducted on classroom instruction or interaction in Asian foreign classes, nor are there many specialized textbooks on classroom or teaching methods for Asian languages (Duff \& Li, 2004).

In a similar vein, there has been little research on foreign language learning and students with disabilities (Abrams, 2008). A small number of studies investigated second language acquisition of students with learning disabilities (e.g., Ganschow \& Sparks, 1995; Raynor, 1991; Sparks, Ganschow, Artzer, \& Patton, 1997; Sparks, Ganschow, Kenneweg, \& Miller, 1991) and most of these studies focused on university students. Students with cognitive, behavioral, and emotional disorders, however, have seldom been addressed in foreign language-based research. Thus, there is no consensus regarding a single method or approach for teaching a foreign language to students with disabilities.

In the special and general education professional literature, there is growing recognition of the need for explicit and systematic instruction of content information as an effective pedagogy for ALL learners. Researchers have found that effective instruction includes student engagement with the instructional materials, high levels of accurate response, immediate feedback on the quality of the student response, on-going assessment of student performance, and teaching to a pre-determined mastery level (MachandMartella, Slocum, \& Martella, 2004). These elements of effective instruction also apply to the teaching of foreign languages (Arries, 1999; Duff \& Li, 2004; Ellis, 2005).

The authors of this paper are teacher educators in the areas of special, inclusive, and foreign language education. They have extensive experience working with students with and without disabilities. In this paper, several data-based instructional strategies used to deliver the language curriculum are recommended for foreign language teachers who teach Mandarin Chinese.

## Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies for Teaching Mandarin Chinese

Evidence-based strategies are those that have been proven to produce positive educational outcomes for learners (Tankersley, Harjusola-Webb, \& Landrum, 2008). Implementation of a curriculum using evidence-based strategies is more likely to produce the desired academic effects. Effective academic instruction is essential for students' achievement. Mandarin Chinese language teachers should utilize an effective instructional sequence such as, "I- do-We- do-You- do model," that will maximize instructional effectiveness. In other words, the teacher first models the target skill, then the teacher and children do the target skill simultaneously (the teacher provides children with feedback on the quality of their responses), and the teacher directs students to perform the target skill independently. For beginning learners of Mandarin, modeling and demonstration during acquisition stage and extensive supervised practice during proficiency stage are vital to improving learners' response accuracy and proficiency. The Mandarin Chinese curriculum proposed in this paper is best taught employing direct instruction (Howard, n.d.).

Researchers have found that active student engagement during instructional activities is positively correlated with student achievement (Bodovski \& Farkas, 2007; Carini, Kuh, \& Klein, 2006; Marks, 2000). Direct instruction strategies promote academic student engagement (Christenson et al., 2008). The more opportunities students have to respond to a particular content or practice a skill, the better their acquisition of the material or skill (Blackwell \& McLaughlin, 2005; Greenwood, Delquadri, \& Hall, 1984; Skibo, Mims, \& Spooner, 2011). Moreover, increasing opportunities for responding tends to increase the amount of material covered and does not result in negative attitudes toward school or learning. Research has also suggested that active engagement behavior of students with disabilities is the single best indicator of their academic gains (Reschly \& Christenson, 2006; Sutherland \& Snyder, 2007).

Active student response. Heward (1994) defined the interaction between instructional stimuli and students as active student response (ASR). ASR is "an observable response to an instructional antecedent," (p. 10) and is based on the concept of the learning trial as the basic unit of instruction. A learning trial consists of three elements: an instructional antecedent (e.g., a teacher's question or prompt), a student response (e.g., an answer to the question), and teacher feedback (e.g., "Yes, that is correct!"). The time periods between the three elements and the time between trials control how many learning trials can be delivered in a given time period. Research has shown that the number of learning trials correlates with academic achievement of students (Rosenshine \& Berliner, 1978). A functional relationship between increased active student responding and improved academic performance of students has been demonstrated in various research studies (e.g., Clayton \& Woodward, 2007; George, 2010; Gettinger \& Seibert, 2002; Logan, Bakeman, \& Keefe, 1997). Therefore, Mandarin language teachers must ensure that a high level of opportunity for students to actively respond to instructional antecedents is part of the Mandarin lessons.

Choral responding (CR), response cards (RC) (Blackwell \& McLaughlin, 2005) and class-wide peer tutoring (CWPT) (Institute of Education Sciences, 2007; Terry, n.d.) are examples of evidence-based instructional strategies that can provide increased opportunities for students to respond to curriculum materials. Similar strategies are commonly used by general education language teachers in vocabulary instruction and to check comprehension. These student-centered strategies have been found to be effective with students with and without disabilities (Greenwood, Delquardri, \& Hall, 1989; Heward, 1994; McMaster \& Fuchs, 2002). Each of the strategies promotes high levels of active student response, high rates of accurate response, and immediate feedback. These strategies can be powerful in providing
successful learning for all students in an inclusive environment (Hardin \& Hardin, 2002). The strategies also allow each student's response to instruction(s) to be monitored for accuracy.

## Choral Responding and Response Cards Strategies

Choral responding and response cards are two "low tech" teaching strategies for increasing active student response. These strategies are called "low-tech" because they are low cost, easy to make, durable, hands-on, and require only limited instruction before implementation. Also, these strategies exponentially increase the number of complete learning trials that can occur during large group instruction compared to calling on one student at a time to respond to a teacher's question.

CR requires all students in the class to orally respond in unison to teacher-posed questions. The strategy also allows all students to respond to every question posed by the teacher. The use of CR results in very high rates of active student response because it involves a quick oral question (or a signal), and a short (two- or three-word) oral response. CR is appropriate for any content that can be delivered in a fastpaced presentation, has short answers, and has only one correct answer. Signal (e.g., sounding out, snap) and thinking pause are necessary to control student response. After a few CR trials, the teacher needs to randomly select an individual student, preferably a low-achieving student, to respond to the question. The teacher asks a question first, provides thinking pause to students, and then calls a student's name, making certain the student is able to answer the question. In some cases, it may be necessary for the teacher to provide individual private prompts to ensure a student can respond appropriately.

RC are cards, signs, or items that are held up simultaneously by all students to display their responses to a teacher-posed question. There are two types of RC: (a) cards with pre-printed response choices (e.g., "YES/NO", numbers, colors, Chinese characters) and (b) cards on which students write their responses. Preprinted cards may also include those with multiple responses, allowing students to indicate their chosen response. With write-on response cards, each student marks or writes an answer to each instructional item on blank cards or boards that are erased between learning trials.

Previous studies have reported that the use of RC during instruction increased participation of students, decreased students' off-task behavior, and reduced inappropriate behaviors displayed by the students (Godfrey, Grisham-Brown, Schuster, \& Hemmeter, 2003; Wood, Mabry, Kretlow, Lo, \& Galloway, 2009). These studies suggested that RC can be used during a lesson warm up, interspersed throughout a lesson, or used as an end-of-lesson review. RC can be an ideal strategy for young children with a range of diverse learning needs. With RC, low-achieving students are less likely to be intimidated or embarrassed for making an incorrect response in front of classmates. RC requires that the teacher uses a clear-cut signal or cue to indicate when students are to respond and then use a "get ready" signal if thinking pause is more than a couple of seconds. The teacher must provide thinking pause and let the complexity of problems/questions determine the timeframe. Students could give a signal when ready (e.g., thumb-up). The teacher gives feedback regarding correct answers. If a question/ problem results in many errors, the teacher intersperses it for several trials. With RC, the teacher should let students look at classmates' response cards after responding or if they are uncertain how to respond.

Mandarin Chinese language teachers can use CR and RC to teach new materials. The procedure includes immediate feedback and positive practice required for shaping correct responding. Both CR and RC are commonly used to review materials that have been previously taught. Reviews help reinforce what students have learned and increase fluency.

Mandarin language teachers can use both $C R$ and $R C$ to check for students' ability to accurately respond to teacher questions. CR and RC allow the teacher to quickly assess students' knowledge in relation to the target skill(s). Having this information prevents the teacher from moving on before students have learned content or wasting time by presenting material students have already mastered.

Teachers may use the information to modify their instruction as needed. Both CR and RC provide teachers immediate feedback on the effectiveness of their instruction.

CR and RC can help manage student behavior, as they produce high rates of student academic response that is practically incompatible with disruptive behavior (Armendariz \& Umbreit, 1999). They can also be used in situations in which there is a high probability of disruptive behavior (e.g., downtimes, transition from one instructional activity to another).

## Class-wide Peer Tutoring

CWPT refers to a class of instructional strategies in which students are taught by peers who are trained and supervised by the classroom teacher (Greenwood, Maheady, \& Delquadri, 2002). Extensive professional literature has reported that CWPT has been effective for increasing academic achievement, improving the classroom behaviors of students with different needs in both special and general education (e.g., Buzhardt, Greenwood, Abbott, \& Tapia, 2007; Hardin \& Hardin, 2002; Maheady \& Gard, 2010; Xu, Gelfer, Sileob, Filler, \& Perkins, 2008), and enhancing interpersonal interactions among students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (e.g., Madrid, Canas, \& Ortega-Medina, 2007). Moreover, teachers have used CWPT in a variety of academic content (e.g., spelling, reading, English as a second language) and in different grade levels (Buzhardt et al, 2007; Maheady \& Gard, 2010; Xu et al., 2008). Teachers have found peer tutoring valuable because it is (a) adaptable to any teaching style and curriculum, (b) does not create extra work for the teacher, (c) easy to implement, (d) cost effective, (e) time efficient, and (f) effective with all ability levels of students (Gardner, Noble, Hessler, Yawn, \& Heron, 2007; Greenwood, Delquadri, \& Carta, 1997). Both tutors and tutees evidence academic gains and experience more positive social interactions (Greenwood, Carta, \& Maheady, 1991; Greenwood, Delquardri, \& Hall, 1989; Greenwood, Terry, Utley, Montagna, \& Walker, 1993). Additionally, CWPT improves the self-esteem and self-knowledge of both tutor and tutee.

In general, a CWPT program has four primary components: (a) weekly competing teams; (b) highly structured, reciprocal tutoring procedures; (c) daily point earning, public posting, and contingent rewards; and (d) direct practice in functional instructional activities (Maheady \& Gard, 2010). In most subject areas, CWPT requires about 30 minutes in which each student receives 10 minutes of tutoring (i.e., 10 minutes for each student to serve as a tutor and another 10 minutes to be the tutee). The dyad tests each other to see if they "learn" the words/problems ( $\checkmark$ or X). Students then graph their testing results on their progress charts. Students are assigned to a team every Monday, and they remain on this team for the entire week. Students who serve as peer tutors may need ongoing training to become skillful helpers in order to assist other students in the classroom. Once the tutors fully understand their responsibilities for the lesson, they can work with students with special needs to provide more attention and feedback they need in order to learn. However, the teacher should not overlook opportunities to offer students with special needs the chance to tutor their nondisabled classmates. CWPT can be used as an alternative practice activity during independent work time. It should not be done with new material, but rather used with content that was taught previously through direct instruction.

## Conclusion

In order to create a supportive and caring sense of learning environment and the feeling of belonging that is conducive to students with and without special needs, a special instructional context must be carved out of the day for formal collaborative efforts and opportunities to participate by all students. The use of low-tech strategies and CWPT can be structured in ways that build in the power of active student learning for young children with and without special needs. Learning a foreign language together can be a fun experience for most students!

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# GROUP LEARNING AND TEACHING OF VOCABULARY, TERMINOLOGY AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES BY THE USE OF CELLPHONE APPLICATIONS IN ESP COURSES 

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#### Abstract

THE FOLLOWING EMPIRICAL STUDY WAS TO EXAMINE THE EFFICACY CELLPHONE APPLICATIONS AS USEFUL LANGUAGE LEARNING DEVISES AND TO CHECK STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AFTER THE CELLPHONE BASED LEARNING/ TEACHING. FOR THIS A TOTAL OF 30 HOMOGENIZED ESP COLLEGE STUDENTS OUT OF 50 PARTICIPATED IN THIS RESEARCH, A PILOTED PRETEST OF 40 ITEMS WAS ADMINISTERED TO 50 ESP COURSE STUDENTS. THE RELIABILITY OF THIS TEST WERE ./77 AND THE VALIDITY OF THIS TEST WAS CONFIRMED BY SOME TEST MASTERS. THEN BASED ON THE MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF STUDENTS' SCORES 30 OF THEM SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY. THEY WERE RANDOMLY DIVIDED INTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP. THE CONTROL GROUP WERE TAUGHT BASED ON NORMAL TEACHING BUT THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WERE TAUGHT BY THE USE OF CELLPHONE APPLICATIONS AS WELL. AFTER 4 WEEKS INSTRUCTIONS THE SAME PRETEST WAS ADMINISTERED AS THE POSTTEST AND THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP OUTPERFORMED THE CONTROL GROUP. ANOTHER METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS STUDY WAS A QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY BY SARAH SNELL (2012). THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HAD THREE PARTS WHICH ASKED THE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE COURSE, TECHNOLOGY AND THEIR SELF- EFFICACY. THE RELIABILITIES OF THESE PARTS ARE AS FOLLOW 0.83, $0.85,0.87$ THAT WERE ACCEPTABLE BASED ON THE STATISTICS. BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE THE MAJORITY OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP LEARNERS HAD POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE COURSE, TECHNOLOGY AND THEIR SELFEFFICACY.


KEYWORDS: VOCABULARY, TERMINOLOGY, READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES, CELLPHONE APPLICATIONS, ESP COURSE

## 1. Introduction

" Learning new vocabularies is an important part of learning a new language" (Khodashenas \& Amouzegar, 2013, p. 51). " In order to comprehend a text, someone should be able to know hundreds and thousands of words which comprise a text. Vocabulary is considered one of
essential components of a language" (Derakhshan \& Khodabakhshzadeh, 2011, p. 1150). In consequence, in order to understand a text in both first language (L1) and second language (L2), the effectiveness of vocabulary learning techniques and strategies is a significant element. The relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension has been strongly shown in both first language and second language settings. An important part of learning a foreign language is mastering learning. "Mastering the fundamentals of learning not only can help language learners in learning vocabulary, acquiring basic structures, and improving the necessary linguistic and communication skills, but it also helps the learners to be in active control of their own learning processes"( Mehrpour, Sadighi \& Bagheri 2012, p. 108).

Today, different technologies have been used in different aspects of language teaching. One of them is cellphone. Cellphones have an impact on students' learning, especially in the case of foreign language learning. At the end of 2010, there were an estimated 5.3 billion cellphone users in the world (Associated Press, 2010). Additionally, there were over 2 billion Internet users (Indo-Asian News Service, 2010). Computers, cellphones, 4th generation smart phones, information search engines, and social networking sites are being used and accessed by more than half of the world's population. Complete Internet and mobile satiation, when the entire world has access to affordable and reliable Internet and mobile service, is not too far off in the future. The world has changed with these new technologies and so must not only EFL teachers and the EFL classroom but also ESP teachers and ESP classrooms. In developing countries the change is more apparent. Rural areas can now have cellphone and Internet service using solar-powered chargers and propane gas-powered generators. Remoteness is no longer synonymous with isolation. In more developed countries, EFL teachers are dealing with technologically savvy students and often competing for their students' attention with the latest gadgetry (Jalilifar, \& Mashhadi, 2013). But what about ESP teachers and students? Zenging Hu (2011) argued these portable and accessible devices offer more opportunities to improve students' memory and achievement and support different needs of the younger digital generation. Today, almost all students have cellphones. They spend many hours of the day on their phones talking with their friends, browsing the internet and playing games. Moreover, by the use of a mobile device learners are more likely to have access to electronic learning materials, applications, resources, people and the world around them. For EFL teachers, these technological advances bring challenges and opportunities. Challenges stem from controlling the degree that students rely on the information available to them on the Internet. Opportunities present themselves in the ways that an EFL and ESP teacher can use these fascinating technologies in the classroom. Activities that incorporate the use of cellphones, laptop computers and other technologies can be used to lower the affective filters of students, challenge them through tasks that they enjoy, and provide effective ways of stimulating learning (Jalilifar, \& Mashhadi, 2013). Often teachers feel that these technologies distract students from the learning experience and they discourage the students the use of cellphones in the classroom, but the most important point is that we should concentrate on the teaching and learning by the use of these devices not concentrate on the devices.

## 2. Literature review

In this review some of the most typical studies, using different functions of cell phones such as Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) , multimedia capabilities, e-mail and Short Message Service (SMS) in their m-learning practices.

### 2.1 Using Multimedia Capabilities of Cell Phones in Language Learning 2.1.1 Cellphone application studies conducted abroad.

Kadyte (2004) in order to teach the grammar and vocabulary lessons of Finnish language designed the Mobile Language Learning System. In this study, the researcher used sound and text. This system had multilingual contents, based on this when learners subscribed to the system they could select a specific language and receive lessons in Finnish. Based on this, according to the context of the selected item and the learners' personal profile they were able to select between categories like topics, milestones and vocabularies to receive information. In the vocabulary section
in order for the learners to learn the correct pronunciation of the language' a language gide explained them for the learners using mobile headphones.

Saran, Seferoglu, and Cagiltay (2009) investigated the possibility of MMS via cellphones in order to improve L2 learners' pronunciation of English words. In this study based on a pre-study questionnaire's data the researcher divided 24 elementary- level students purposefully into three different groups. These groups were instructed by the use of three different media: cellphones, printed handouts, and Web pages. These groups in addition to usual classroom instructions received identical materials as a supplement. In this study, a total number of 80 English words were included. The cellphone- based group received four MMSs, which included four words and their audio- visual representations. This was done on their school days in fragmented time-slots with one hour time interval by which each word's pronunciation was taught. The paper based group received the same four words after the first week lecture meeting in the morning on the paper. For this group the instructor pronounced each word after the handouts were distributed. The third group or the Web- based group had access to the same four words via their Internet-connected computers daily at 9:00 am. Based on the analysis of the posttest results, those students who received MMS outperform the paper-based and Web- paged groups. The participants in the mobile group said this kind of teaching/ learning was " very effective" for learning pronunciation because cellphones led to repeat the materials and to a better learning of the words pronunciations. The results of the post study semi- structure interviews and post survey questionnaire also confirmed the students' positive views about using MMS for learning the pronunciation of English words.

### 2.1.2 Cellphone application studies conducted in Iran.

Taki and Khazaie( 2011) investigated the efficacy of multimodal representation of L2 vocabularies for 158 pre-intermediate level L2 learners aged 18-23. Since short-term memory plays an important role in vocabulary learning, they placed the students into four different short-term memory (STM) ability groups using visual and verbal STM Tests. Also, cell phone-based vocabulary presentations with different annotations, i.e. pictorial vs. written, were adapted to the cell phone screen to render on learners' cell phones via Bluetooth. Finally, the participants took English vocabulary recognition and recall tests. The statistical analysis of the results showed that presenting learning materials with pictorial or written annotations rather than without annotations to learners with high-visual and high-verbal abilities resulted in better learning. Also, presenting learning materials with pictorial annotation to learners with high-visual ability as well as presenting the materials with written annotation to learners with high-verbal ability resulted in better learning. Low-visual and low-verbal ability groups showed better results under no annotation condition.

### 2.2 Cellphone-Based Multimedia Games for Language Learning/ Teaching

Todd and Tepsuriwong (2008) designed a reading maze for cellphone which can be used in language learning communicatively. Twenty-eight Thai students participated in this project. In this survey the researchers used Flash Lite which can be downloaded on the cellphone platform, they designed three mazes. Based on the students' choices each maze consisted of $50-700$ pages of content. For difficult English words and phrases Thai interpretations were given to the students to help them in understanding the sentences when they play a game. The results of the interviews and aloud [protocols showed that most of the participants rated the game positively. 21 of 28 Thai university students had positive views about learning English by the use of Mobile Mazes software. Moreover, the participants criticized that there was "a lot of text in English", the technical drawback of cellphones like small screen size and unsuitable keypad were among those issues.

### 2.3 Cell Phone's Mail Affordance in Language Learning/ Teaching

Thornton \& Houser (2005) reported a study of 44 Japanese students who received small chunks of English vocabulary teaching material on their mobile phones. Different chunks were sent out three times a day in the hope that students would study each chunk as it arrived. The authors report considerable success but note that over half the students did not engage in this
'carefully timed interval study'; they saved the chunks for one time of day when they could concentrate on them in a batch. In their study on vocabulary learning, Joseph, Bested, and Soothers (2005) presented a pattern that enabled the users to boost their vocabulary learning by studying word-image paired associates that ha[d] been uploaded to a shared database. The objectives for the "Photo Study" system proposition were to increase more collaborative learning, encourage deep processing and a wider range of content modalities. The Photo Study system which make use of both wireless markup languages and Java MIDlets, could run on wired and wireless mobile devices were used to meet technological limitations and users' preferences. In this study for those participants who used mobile devices the images were e-mailed for them, whereas an HTML file upload operation was used for image upload for those users who used wired devices. A typical form of the Photo Study system displayed an image followed by a multiple choice question in which the users were required to select the most suitable vocabulary item describing the image. When the users selected the answer, the system provided feedback for them to determine their future course of actions for the next quizzes in the study. The results of the study showed that the words' appearances or structures had a significant bearing on the users learning, on the contrary of their spelling. The majority of the students which participated in this study supported the idea of having the Photo Study system on their mobile phones. About half of the participants were of the opinion that while learning those vocabularies they studied collaboratively and played some roles.

### 2.4 SMS and Language Learning/ Teaching

### 2.4.1 Cellphone application studies conducted abroad.

Lu (2008) in National Keelung High School, Keelung City, Taiwan, did a research about the effectiveness of vocabulary learning via mobile phone. His study aimed to examine the effectiveness of SMS vocabulary lessons of limited lexical information on the small screens of mobile phones. Thirty high school students were randomly distributed into two groups and given two sets of English words either on paper or through SMS messages during two weeks. Students recognized more vocabulary during the post-test after reading the regular and brief SMS lessons than they did after reading the relatively more detailed print material. Qualitative data from interviews offered information about the learning process as well as the benefits and limitations of m-learning. Results of the questionnaires showed that students in general hold positive attitudes towards learning vocabulary via mobile phone. On the other hand, technological limitations, unfamiliar presentations and learning activities may prevent students from reading SMS lessons.

Alamri (2011) researched about the use of mobile phones in learning English language by Sultan Qaboos University students. His paper attempted to study and investigate the current use and practices of cell phones in the process of learning English Language by Sultan Qaboos University freshmen. The paper described the actual practice of mobile phone by students, their behavior and attitudes and the problems they face in using their mobile in an educational and instructional setting in Sultan Qaboos University. A questionnaire survey had been devised and administered to sample of 100 students on the Intensive English for Science Programme. The results from an analysis of the questionnaire survey indicated that the use of mobile phones in the classroom was still limited. Students liked to use them but teachers did not encourage them to do so fearing that this digital device will be a big distraction for both teachers and students alike. Also, despite the fact that mobiles manifested themselves as a good learning tool, they needed to still proof for educationists, practitioners, teachers and decision makers that they are more "saint" than sinners in the educational field and classroom. They further suggested that mobile phones are boons blessed if students only handle them wisely. The paper concluded with some implications for the use of mobile phone in learning and education.

Kim (2013) investigated the effects of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in listening skills. The study aimed to investigate 1) whether participants improve their listening skills after taking a one semester college English course, 2) examined whether there were any significant differences in listening skills between the control group without mobile apps and the experimental
group with mobile apps, and 3) investigated learners' perceptions towards mobile-based learning for developing listening abilities. The participants in the study were 44 students majoring in Korean Literature, English Literature, management, economics, educational psychology, and physical education at a women's university. They were divided into two different classrooms, and all participants were enrolled in a TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication course) which focused on listening and reading during the fall semester of 2012. Originally, the number of enrolled participants was 49, but due to the late drop, the data of 44 students were analyzed in the study. The control group was composed of 24 students while the experimental group was 20. All participants were instructed to improve listening and reading skills to prepare for TOEIC tests. The students in the experimental group were assigned to English listening using their smart phone apps two times a week while those in the control group were not. Later, the participants took the same listening comprehension test extracted from a practical TOEIC book as well as a certified TOEIC test before- and after-the course. Based on the results the experimental group outperformed the control group.

Katz (2014) 296 first year college students who studied academic Hebrew language in a mandatory 28 week long (yearly) 'Introduction to Academic Hebrew' course were divided into two comparison groups and exposed to two different modes of vocabulary delivery. The first group of students received weekly lists of academic Hebrew vocabulary definitions sent via SMS messages to their cell-phones and the second group received weekly lists of academic Hebrew vocabulary definitions sent via email messages to their personal computer email inboxes. The academic Hebrew vocabulary lists studied by the students and provided via SMS and email delivery platforms were identical and the students received weekly lists 20 words and their exact definitions (total of 560 words) for the 28 week period of the course. At the end of the course the students in the two groups were tested on a standardized Academic Hebrew Vocabulary Achievement Test (AHVAT) and responded to a questionnaire that examined their levels of learner self-esteem, learner attribution and learner technological efficacy. Results of the study indicate that there were no significant differences between the achievement scores on the standardized Academic Hebrew Vocabulary Achievement Test attained by students in the SMS delivery group and students in the email delivery group. However, there were significant differences between the students in the two different delivery groups regarding their levels of learner self-esteem, learner attribution and learner technological efficacy. The students who received academic Hebrew vocabulary definitions via SMS messages indicated significantly higher levels of learner self-esteem, learner attribution and learner technological efficacy than their counterparts who received academic Hebrew vocabulary definitions via email messages. The result s of the study indicate the potential evident in SMS based learning delivery platforms regarding enhancement of students' attitudes such as learner self-esteem, learner attribution and learner technological efficacy in academic vocabulary learning. It is proposed that SMS learning delivery platforms can become a viable technological mobile delivery system in the university learning process and serve as a routine alternative platform for the delivery of relevant learning materials to students.

### 2.4.2 Cellphone application studies conducted in Iran.

Yousefzadeh (2012) explored the superiority of mobile-based collocation words learning in comparison with classical paper-based collocation words learning. 80 students from a high school in Ardabil were chosen randomly. After the pre-test 10 participants were excluded from study, because of their partial knowledge of collocation words. Then they were divided into two groups: mobile-based $(\mathrm{n}=35)$ and paper-based $(\mathrm{n}=35)$. The pre-test was administered in order to identify the level of participants' prior knowledge of collocation words. The result of pre-test showed that there was no significant differences between the participants. In treatment sessions, the mobilebased group received a list of unfamiliar collocation words via SMS while, the paper-based group received the same list on sheets of paper. After treatment sessions, the result of post -test indicated the superiority of mobile -based group over paper based group.

Hayati, Jalilifar, and Mashhadi (2013, cited in Jalilifar and Mashhadi, 2013, p. 119) also capitalized on the push aspect of SMS affordance to deliver bite-sized English-idiom lessons on spaced intervals, visa- vis two other modes of instruction (i.e., self-study and contextual learning) to the learners in a private English language institute. Overall, the results revealed that the student receiving short mini-lessons on their mobile phones via SMS were more enthusiastic and learned more than their counterparts on paper or the contextual groups. The students' perceptions and attitudes in the SMS-based group also indicated that they were supporting the m-learning approach and held highly positive views about learning English idioms using the SMS affordance of mobile phones, as it promoted regular study.

## 3. Research Methods and Materials 3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 30 homogenized ESP course students from among 50 students. They were divided randomly in two groups, 15 of them in control group and 15 in experimental group. English was a foreign language for both groups and their mother tongue was Persian. Despite the fact that some of them had experience in learning general English in different institutions but they did not speak English for daily life communications. The participants were tough English for specific purposes and their attitudes toward this kind of learning were surveyed through a questionnaire. The setting of this study were Ofogh and Fazel language institutions.

### 3.2 Instruments

The aim of this study was to examine the difference between current and group learning/ teaching of vocabularies, terminologies and three reading comprehension strategies by the use of cellphone applications. The materials which were used in this study were a piloted 40 items pretest based on the test collections book by Reza Shayani. The Cronbach alpha reliability of this piloted test based on SPSS 2010 version was.$/ 77$. The validity of test was also confirmed by some ESP course masters. The next Instruments in this study were respectively cellphone applications, treatment sessions, a post test and an adapted three part questionnaire by Sara Snell (2012) in order to estimate these ESP students' attitude toward this kind of teaching/ learning.

### 3.3 Data Collections Procedures

In order to identify the subjects' collection vocabulary, terminology and reading comprehension knowledge before experiment a piloted pretest was administered, with its reliability to be ./77 using Cronbach Alpha by SPSS software version 2010. The validity of this pretest were confirmed by some ESP course practitioners. After the pretest students were assigned randomly in the control and the experimental groups. During the study both groups were taught four lessons of an ESP course book about eight sessions, the control group received the lessons based on the regular scheduled classes. The experimental group not only received the lessons in class but also based on TD theory (Park, 2011) they were taught by the use of cellphone applications in their cellphone application group before and after each session. During the study the most important vocabularies, terminologies and three reading comprehension strategies like determining the importance of the text, making inferences and synthesizing the text were thought to both groups in the class but after each session the teacher/ researcher worked with the experimental group by the use of cellphone applications. For the first two lessons before each session in order to stimulate students the researcher sent out new vocabularies, technologies, their equivalents in Persian and her recorded voice of those vocabularies and technologies by the use of cellphone applications to the experimental group in order to the students learn the pronunciation of them.

After that the researcher sent some parts of the reading text and wanted the students to discuss it in their group. Then the researcher sent some reading comprehension questions base on the reading comprehension strategies which the students learned by the use of cellphone application. Moreover, the researcher wanted the students to send the answers of those questions by the use of private message option of the cellphone application to the teacher/ researcher.

There was a little difference in the teaching of the last two lessons. This time the teacher/ researcher sent the vocabularies and terminologies to the students cellphone group and wanted the students to send the meaning of them in the group. Moreover, during the study the experimental group were allowed to ask their questions before or after each session in their cellphone based group and solve them cooperatively and collaboratively.

At the end of the eight sessions in order to investigate both groups progression, all the students were given the same 40 items pretest as the post test. Both groups answered the posttest on the answer sheet. The day after the posttest the experimental group were asked to complete an adapted questionnaire by Sara Snell (2012) to investigate their attitudes towards the course, technology and their self-efficacy.

## 4. Results and discussions

To diagnose how learners utilize cellphone applications, we need to know how often they used it and how they deal with the messages by these applications after their questions and difficulties were answered in their cellphone- based group. As the results show most of these ESP course learners read the messages and learn the vocabularies, terminologies and reading comprehension strategies by the use of cellphone applications. Because mobile devices like cellphones are portable and accessible, they create opportunities for the students to make use of them anywhere and anytime. The results of the study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Tables 1 and 2 illustrates the results of this study.

Table 1
The Results of the Mean, Standard Deviation and Standard Error of the Mean for Both Group

|  | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pretest | Control <br> Experime <br> Posttest | 15 | 12.7667 | .59362 | .15327 |
|  | ntal <br> Control <br> Experime <br> ntal | 15 | 12.8333 | .55635 | .14365 |
|  | 15 | 14.4667 | .71880 | .18559 |  |

Table 2
The Results of the T-test

| t-test for Equality of Means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| T | Df | Sig | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | $95 \%$ Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |


| Pre test | -.317 | 28 | .75 | -.066 | .21006 | -.49 | .36363 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Post test |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | -14.78 | 28 | .001 | -4.50 | .30446 | -5.12 | -3.87447 |

Based on the questionnaire the majority of these ESP course students were interested in this novel way of learning vocabularies, terminologies and reading comprehension strategies. Moreover, based on the results and we can say that this kind of teaching/ learning was very positive. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the results of the questionnaire.

Table 3

One-Sample Statistics of the Questionnaire

|  | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| course1 <br> technology1 <br> efficacy1 | 15 | 4.2667 | .28295 | .07306 |
| 15 | 4.1333 | .15285 | .03947 |  |

Table 4
One-Sample Test of the Questionnaire

|  | Test Value $=3$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| course1 | 17.338 | 14 | . 000 | 1.26667 | 1.1100 | 1.4234 |
| technology1 | 28.717 | 14 | . 000 | 1.13333 | 1.0487 | 1.2180 |
| efficacy1 | 3.622 | 14 | . 003 | . 52679 | . 2126 | . 8410 |

## 5. Conclusion

In this research we investigated the use of mobile devices like cellphone applications in group learning /teaching vocabularies, terminologies and reading comprehension strategies in ESP courses. We know that cellphones are portable and available, so by use of them for teaching/ learning, students and teachers are in contact anywhere and anytime. In this research we saw that students were divided in two groups of control and experimental groups. The cellphone- based group or the experimental group were instructed not only in the classroom but also by the use of cellphone applications. Based on the results of the pretest and posttest the cellphone applications_ based group outperformed the control group and the results of the questionnaire survey showed this ESP course were interested in this type of learning/ learning. So, we can conclude that group learning/
teaching is a positive way to teach and learn vocabularies, terminologies and reading comprehension strategies.

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# THE COMPARATIVE EFFECT OF SELF-SCAFFOLDING AND PEER-SCAFFOLDING ON EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING THE COMPARATIVE EFFECT OF SELF-SCAFFOLDING AND PEER SCAFFOLDING ON EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT IRANIAN EFL INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION. TO CHOOSE THE LEGITIMATE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY, A FULL VERSION OF PET WAS USED. BASED ON THE SCORES OF PET, 120 PARTICIPANTS OUT OF 150 WHOSE SCORES FELL ONE STANDARD DEVIATION ABOVE AND BELOW THE ZERO WERE CHOSEN. THE120 SELECTED PARTICIPANTS WERE THEN GIVEN THE EYSENCK PERSONALITY INVENTORY. TO THIS END, THE 120 PARTICIPANTS WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO 60-MEMBER GROUPS OF INTROVERT AND EXTROVERT LEARNERS. THESE TWO GROUPS WERE EACH SUBDIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS OF 30 LEARNERS. TO ASSURE HOMOGENEITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FOUR GROUPS IN TERMS OF READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE A READING COMPREHENSION TEST FROM ANOTHER VERSION OF PET WAS ADMINISTERED TO THE FOUR GROUPS. TO CARRY OUT SELF AND PEER-SCAFFOLDING, THE RESEARCHER USED VAN LIER'S (2004) FEATURES OF SCAFFOLDING. AFTER THE TREATMENT, THE READING COMPREHENSION OF PET FROM ANOTHER VERSION WAS GIVEN TO THE LEARNERS THE RESULTS OF WHICH WERE USED TO INVESTIGATE THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS. THE RESULTS OF THE TWO WAY ANOVA RUN ON THE POST-TEST SCORES OF READING COMPREHENSION OF THE PARTICIPANTS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE USE OF SELFSCAFFOLDING WAS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE EFFECTIVE ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF THE INTROVERT LEARNERS IN COMPARISON WITH THE USE OF PEER-SCAFFOLDING. MOREOVER, THE USE OF PEER-SCAFFOLDING HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF THE EXTROVERT LEARNERS IN COMPARISON WITH THE USE OF SELFSCAFFOLDING. ADDITIONALLY, THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY INDICATED THAT THE EFFECT OF SELF-SCAFFOLDING ON READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN INTROVERT AND EXTROVERT EFL LEARNERS IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT WITH THE INTROVERT LEARNERS OUTPERFORMING THE EXTROVERT LEARNERS WHEN RECEIVING SELF-SCAFFOLDING. MOREOVER, PEER-SCAFFOLDING WAS FOUND TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN EXTROVERT LEARNERS.


KEYWORDS: SCAFFOLDING, SELF-SCAFFOLDING, PEER-SCAFFOLDING, READING COMPREHENSION, PERSONALITY, EXTROVERSION, INTROVERSION

## Introduction

Reading comprehension is one of the important aspects in the process of language learning, and as researchers (e.g., Badr El Deen, 2011; Knouzi, Swain, Lapkin, \& Brooks, 2010) assert, there are many ways that teachers can teach reading comprehension in order to help them to be better language learners
(Swihart, 2009). The inherent nature of human beings indicates that they really like to be good readers. But for reaching this goal they need some assets and strategies which help them get the opportunity to reach their goals. According to Duke (2000), "there is a need to train scaffolding strategies to students' understanding of expository text to build comprehension and engagement in the process of language learning". Despite the fact that, nearly all the attention has been paid to teacher-scaffolding in Iran and as Vygotsky (1978) considers, self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding have an important role to enhance the process of language learning the present experiment seeks to investigate the effect of self and peerscaffolding on the reading comprehension performance of Iranian EFL learners. In the realm of language learning the role of personality has also been discussed by many researchers.

As one type of personality, extroversion-introversion accounts for a dual aspect of human personality, with extroverts inclining toward outward manifestation and social interaction and introverts leaning toward reserved and solitary behavior. Extroverts have an outgoing personality, seeking to grab the potential opportunities to start conversation with the other. Being so, such a personality may be judged to benefit the learning activities such as language learning. In the same vein, Tanwar and Malhorta (1999) maintain that extroverts are motivated from outside and their attention is directed outward. They are people who appear relaxed, confident, and have trouble understanding life until they have lived it. When they are feeling bad, low in energy, or stressed, they are likely to look outside themselves for relief. In contrast, introverts try to keep away from the public. They keep quiet, showing shyness and distant".

In fact, in relation to what has been discussed about a decline in comprehension strategy instruction (Swihart, 2009), the researcher aimed to find how much the other scaffolding styles can have an impact on Iranian introverted and extroverted EFL learners' reading comprehension.

## Review of the Literature

## Extroversion and Introversion

Studies on extroversion and introversion dimension of personality factors were initially introduced by Carl G. Jung (1933). Extroversion and introversion is often thought of as being bipolar, but in reality, it occurs along a continuum which shows one's degree of outgoingness; people who fall at the extremes have clear preferences. Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) characterize a typical extrovert as a person who tends to be sociable, needs people to talk to, craves excitement, takes chances, is easy-going, and optimistic. By contrast, a typical introvert is quiet, retiring, reserved, plans ahead, and dislikes excitement. Rosier (1976) reported a positive relationship between extroversion and English oral proficiency, and Smart, Elton, and Burnett (1970) reported achievements above the predicted grades for introverts. At the same time, there are a number of other studies indicating no correlation between extroversion and language sub-skills such as pronunciation (Suter, 1977), or indeed any of the language measures and five personality indices (Hamayan, 1980).

Ellion (1972) detected an interesting relationship between educational achievement and personality that changes in time. By the age of eight there is statistically positive relationship in children between extroversion and academic attainment. Ten years later the relationship is reversed so that achievement is positively related to introversion. There is evidence that introversion in girls proves beneficial quite early in secondary life. Extroversion in most people increase up to about the age of fourteen, and then shows a steady decline towards introversion throughout the rest of life (in other words people become more introverted as they grow older).

The view that extroverts are brighter is misleading. Extroverts actually need other people in order to feel good. However, extroverts are not necessarily loud mouthed and talkative. They may be relatively shy, but still need the affirmation of others. Introversion on the other hand is the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment apart from a stereotype introverts can have inner strength of character that extroverts do not have. Unfortunately these stereotypes have influenced
teachers' perception of students. Educators have warned against prejudging students on the basis of perceived education. Nowhere is there more evident where teachers admire the talkative, outgoing students who participate freely in class discussion. On the other hand introverts are sometimes thought of as not being as bright as extroverts. (p. 109)

Cook (1991) noted: "perhaps an ongoing sociable person learns better than a reserved and shy person "(p.87). Ehraman or Oxford (1995) stated that "some have suggested that the best learners are likely to be extrovert because of their willingness to speak out and interact" (p. 70). Chastain (1988) stated that: Some students are so shy and so timid and unsure of themselves even in their first language, that attempting to communicate in a second language can be traumatic for them. On the other hand the extroverted students seem to be able to engage more freely in activities which may exposes his linguistic inadequacies to his classmates. Each type has its own advantage in learning a second language. Introverts may be more conscious dedicated to the tasks. Extroverts tend to participate more actively in class with less fear of risk taking and they are willing to practice their developing communication skills with native speakers. (p. 124)

In another case, Wang and Wang (2004) in their study on language learning of students majoring in physical training found out that "teachers need to help extroversion students to devote in reading for comprehension, understanding sentence structures and developing individual opinions in the reading materials," and concluded that "as extroverts are active, teachers may not make all the students keep silent or simply under their control to listen to their one-man shows, rather they should make an active discussion, smooth free talk, exciting play show, wonderful movie dialogues and so on" (p.75).

Strong (1983) in his study on the link between social styles and second language acquisition revealed that certain personal characteristics are consistently related to successful language learning. Chastain (1975) also found that outgoing students tended to have better grades in certain foreign languages. Ehrman and Oxford (1990) studied some differences in the strategy use of seventy-nine foreign language learners to check if they were related to one's personality and found that extroverts used social strategies more consistently and easily whereas introverts tended to reject them (cited in Brown, 2000). Personality theorists can use measures of personality traits to predict how people will behave across a variety of situations, in accordance with the assumption that people's behavior in all kinds of situations should be similar to the extent that people share common underlying dispositions or personality traits (and different to the extent that they are characterized by different personality traits or dispositions). (p. 60)

According to Hejelle and Ziegler (1992), the essence of Eysenck's theory is that the elements of personality can be arranged hierarchically. In this scheme indicated in figure below certain super traits or types, such as extroversion, exert powerful influences over behavior. In turn he sees each of these super traits as being comprised of several components traits. The component traits either are more superficial reflections of underlying type dimension, or are specific qualities that contribute to that dimension.

Lightbown and Spada (2006) state that many classroom teachers believe that in second or foreign language learning, extroverts are more successful than introverts, particularly in their communicative ability. Ellis (2004, p. 541) cites that Dewaele and Furnham (1999) in a review of some 30 articles on the issue came to the conclusion that "in oral communication, extroverts were found to be generally more fluent than introverts both in L1 and L2, but on other aspects of L2 proficiency there exists a weak relationship with extroversion". Dornyei and Skehan (2003, p. 590) also conclude that "progress in this area has been slow, in terms of both methodology and systematic patterns of results... and further research is needed in order to come to sound conclusions".

## Reading comprehension

Different scholars have investigated many methods regarding reading ability. Some of these include the psycholinguistic model, schema theory model, and investigative model (Grabe, 1991), the will be explained bellow:

The psycholinguistic model is based on Goodman's (1975) ideas on reading. In focuses on the process of reading and relates reading to the underlying psycholinguistic abilities. The role of a reader which is to predict and construct message is emphasized here. The process begins with receiving the phonological or graphic display and ends with meaning.

Goodmans' model was criticized and another model was proposed by him in which the reader's background knowledge is an important factor in comprehension. It was believed that background knowledge is an important variable in understanding different passages in such a way that the readers with Western backgrounds learn English faster than others. He also states that background knowledge can compensate for the syntactic difficult readers may encounter.

According to schema theory Model reading is an interactive process between the background knowledge of the reader and what the writer writes (Nunan, 1991). No text carries the meaning by itself. It provides the reader with some direction to construct the meaning based on his/ her previous knowledge. This previously acquired knowledge is called schemata. The schema theory assumes that the reader recreates the meaning of the text based on the interaction between his/ her background knowledge and the printed text (Carell \& Eisterhold, 1983).

According to Goodman (1987), this theory considers the mind as an information processor which stores, activates, and recalls the information. Based on this assumption, there exist two main models of information processing: bottom- up and top - down. The bottom -up approach views reading as a process of decoding written symbols into their aural equivalents in a linear fashion. Thus, one first discriminates each letter as it is encountered, sounds these out, matching the written symbols with their aural equivalents, blends these together to form words and drives meaning. Arriving at the meaning of a word is the final step in the process. In the top - down or the psycholinguistic approach, one being with a set of hypotheses or predictions about the meaning of the text, one is about to read and selectively samples the text to determine whether or not one's predictions are correct. Reading is process of reconstructing meaning rather than decoding from and the reader only resorts decoding if other means fail.

According to Carrel and Eisterhold (1983): The role of background knowledge in language comprehension has been formalized as the schema theory. According to this theory, a text (either spoken or written) does not by itself carry meaning. It only provides directions for listeners or readers as how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge.

Interactive models are concerned with two concepts. At first, they refer to the interaction between the reader and the text. In this notion, the reader reconstructs the information of the text based on the information available in the text and his/ her prior knowledge (Barnett, 1989). Secondly, the interactive models refer to the interaction of many skills simultaneously which lead to fluent reading (Grabe, 1991). In this view, reading involves both lower level automatic identification skills and higher level comprehension interpretation skills (Carrel, 1991). According to Grabe (1991), these two concepts are complementary, although in literature, the focus has usually been on one pre susceptive rather than the other. As Ur (1996) puts it, the construction of meaning that occurs in reading is a combination of bottom up processes and top - down ones. He suggests that learner should be encouraged to combine these two strategies in reading such as discussing the topic of a text before reading it, arousing expectations, eliciting connections between references in the text, and saturations known to the learners.

Reading is also interactive in the sense that many skills work together simultaneously in the process so that working any of the skills reinforces learning the other ones. Reading is comprehended. The reader normally expects to understand what $\mathrm{s} /$ he is reading. Reading is flexible, that is the reader employs a range of strategies to read efficiently.

## Scaffolding

Scaffolding as explained by Winnips (2001) to education world focuses on active learning and students' choice. He ascertained that the technique works well with technology based learning, in which students need to be more self-reliant. Scaffolding allows them to work being self-reliant while receiving adequate support. He further stressed that the type of instruction given would determine the result of scaffolding. To general learning, in the classroom students learn their second language through 'scaffolding' dialogues with their teachers or peers in language teaching and learning (Ellis, 2003). Scaffolding instruction originates from Vygotsky's socio cultural theory and his concept of ZPD. Vygotsky theorized that "learning occurs through participation in social or culturally embedded experiences". In his view, the learner does not learn in isolation that happens in the context.

The pedagogical concept of "scaffolding" lies in the work of Jean Piaget (1955/1977) and Lev Vygotskey (1938/1978), though neither used that terminology. Other professional education researchers whose philosophical beliefs support this theory are Seymour Papert (1964), Jerome Bruner (1978), and John Dewey (1900). The concept supports the beliefs of educators who are philosophically aligned with Constructivism. The earliest of these theorist/educators was John Dewey, who is considered to be the father of progressive education in America. Dewey's beliefs, were that students learned by "directed living," facilitated by workshop-type projects so that learning was combined with concrete activity and practical relevance (Dewey,1900). Dewey rejected the practice of rote learning, which was the common mode of instruction in his day
(Briner, 1999). Vygotsky's ZPD does not agree with the use of standardized tests as a means to measure student's intelligence. Vygotsky began his research with children's functions. He actually stated that "children develop deliberate control over every day concepts through contact with scientific concepts" ( $\mathrm{p}: 160$ ). Social interaction serves as the basis for cognitive growth within Vygotskian concept of ZPD.

Bruner (1978) created a concept of scaffolding based on his readings of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. His use of the term scaffolding seemingly describes what mothers often do to enable and make more manageable children's learning of language: The mother's support includes helping the child focus his or her attention to pertinent aspects of the task and modeling her expectations of the child (Bruner, 1978; Stewart, 2002).

## Self-Scaffolding

While there are various explanations and studies that focus on the definition of self-scaffolding (Butler \& Winne, 1995; Pintrich, 2000), it can be simply described as a learning process with four attributes (Schunk \& Zimmerman, 1994):

1. Intrinsically or self-motivated: Self-scaffold learners tend to maintain learning behavior with a very strong motivation. Learners can raise this motivation through some practices, such as setting learning goals.
2. Planned or automatized: Self-scaffold learners are apt to use some strategies along with their learning processes, including both cognitive and self-regulated strategies. Generally, learners improve their learning performance when using self-regulated strategies rather than cognitive strategies. Self-regulated strategies contain goal-setting, goal-planning, organization, transition, exercise, and so on. A self-scaffold learner needs to effectively use self-regulated strategies for his learning.
3. Self-aware of performance outcomes: Throughout the learning process, Self-scaffold learners
sharpen their self-awareness toward their learning behavior. To approach an ideal outcome, Selfscaffold learners should be aware of their own learning qualities, and change the behavior or strategies correspondingly.
4. Environmentally/socially sensitive and resourceful: The learning environment and resources can affect one's learning pattern. Self-scaffold learners have better skills in seeking learning resources or support. With such ability, they should arrange the environmental conditions and search for other resources effectively.
Azevedo, Cromley, Thomas, Deibert, \& Tron (2003) indicated that, when receiving no assistance, students are less effective at regulating their learning in their hypermedia environment. Hadwin \& Winne (2001) proposed a prototype electronic notebook, CoNets2, to support self-regulation through explicit scaffolding. Its system can support monitoring and controlling engagement in the phases of selfscaffolding, but unskillful self-scaffold learners may shun the tool because CoNets2 lacks enough functions to motivate their learning. Moreover, the tool is often limited to taking down notes, and does not develop important self-scaffolding skills such as goal-setting, scheduling, and self-evaluation.

Traditionally, scaffolding in education has emphasized the role of dialogue and social interaction to foster comprehension and monitoring activities (e.g., Palinscar \& Brown, 1984) and student-generated self-explanations (e.g., Chi et al., 1994, 2001). Tutors can also scaffold by providing hints and feedback on performance, as well as motivating students to continue the task (Graesser et al., 1997; Lepper, Drake, \& O'Donnell-Johnson, 1997; Merrill, Reiser, Merrill, \& Landes, 1995).

Dlaska and Krekeler (2008) alert on the importance self-scaffolding procedures for enhancing learners' self-awareness, increasing the reliability of their assessments, and motivating them to continue working on their reading problems on their own. The integral role of self-reflective practices in creating opportunities for learners to become increasingly self-regulated and more aware of their deficient oral skills has also been documented in the literature (de Saint

Lèger, 2008). In fact, self-scaffolding have been found to be conducive to learning and more accurate when learners receive explicit instruction, feedback, and practice on how to self-scaffold (Chen, 2008); and when they refer to their reading comprehension of using particular skills in the classroom (Ross, 1998).

## Peer-Scaffolding

As Storch (2007) points out scaffolding can also occur when peers work together and interact in pairs or small groups. Storch (1999) explored the impact of peer scaffolding on the students' language learning and found that collaboration has a positive impact on the overall grammatical accuracy of the learners when doing grammar focused exercises. As a result, it can be concluded that peer scaffolding leads to coconstruction of knowledge by the learners and language development.

Storch (2005) also investigated the reading performance of 23 ESL students completing degree courses. Comparing texts produced by pairs with individuals, the results showed that the pairs produced better in terms of task fulfillment, complexity, and fluency. However, in this study pairing was not done in a way that more competent reading work with less competent ones.

In another study, Wiggleworth and Storch (2009) investigated the use of collaborative reading on students' reading ability in terms of their reading fluency, accuracy and complexity. Although they found it effective on the learners' accuracy in reading, the results did not reveal a positive, effective influence on the learners' fluency and complexity of reading.

The term 'scaffolding' was developed as a metaphor to describe the type of assistance offered by peer to support learning. Current socio cultural theorists have extended the concept of scaffolding to include other forms of collaborative activity, including pair work among peers, specifically Donato (1994) who explored the notion of 'mutual scaffolding' among L2 learners. Donato attempted to explain that
peers can scaffold one another in much the same way experts scaffold novices. Some researchers provided evidence that pairing children has led to development.

The impact of peer scaffolding is considered important for second language learning and use. Some researchers, Bakhtin (1981/1986), Rommetveit (1974), and Volosinov (1929/1973), have explored the positive impact of peer-peer scaffolding on the process of noticing form and meaning within language learning. Peer Assisted Learning Strategies is an instructional strategy developed to enhanced student's literacy development and beliefs about reading within a peer mediated from word. PALS uses a motivational system in which each pair is assigned to classes. Learners receive points for completing reading activities and demonstrating proper tutoring behavior.

Given the literature review and the significance of reading comprehension and self and perscaffolding on the one hand and the importance of personality factors on the other hand, the present study sought to explore the effect of self and peer-scaffolding on the reading comprehension performance of Iranian extroverted and introverted EFL learners. In an attempt to address the objectives of the study the following research questions were formulated:

Q1: Is there any significant difference between the effect of self-scaffolding on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' reading comprehension?
Q2: Is there any significant difference between the effect of peer-scaffolding on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' reading comprehension?
Q3: Is there any significant difference between the effect of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on extrovert EFL learners' reading comprehension?
Q4: Is there any significant difference between the effect of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on introvert EFL learners' reading comprehension?

Regarding the above mentioned questions, the following null hypotheses were formed:
H01: There is no significant difference between the effect of self-scaffolding on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' reading comprehension.
H02: There is no significant difference between the effect of peer-scaffolding on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' reading comprehension.
H03: There is no significant difference between the effect of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on extrovert EFL learners' reading comprehension.
H04: There is no significant difference between the effect of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on introvert EFL learners' reading comprehension.

## Participants

This study was conducted with 120 intermediate EFL learners within the age range of 25-34 studying at Elmi-Karbordi University in Iran. These participants were non-randomly selected and homogenized through Preliminary English Test (PET) (Version, 2010) out of 150 learners studying in the same college. The participants whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen. It is worth mentioning that the PET, which was used to homogenize the candidates at the beginning of the study, was initially piloted on 30 learners with the same characteristics of the participants of the study. The researcher checked the homogeneity of the two groups of learners with respect to their reading comprehension, speaking, and writing skills prior to the start of the treatment. Homogenizing participants regarding their reading comprehension ability was also assured prior to the main study.

This study was conducted with eight classes each consisting of 15 college students. There were two major groups each with a total of 60 participants ( 30 extrovert and 30 introvert learners in each subgroup) underwent the self-scaffolding procedure while, another four classes with 60 learners (again
comprising 30 extrovert, 30 introvert learners) experienced peer-scaffolding procedure. It is noteworthy that another teacher helped the researcher in order to rate the speaking, and writing sections of the PET.

## Instrumentation

To accomplish the objectives of this research, the researcher utilized three versions of PET (2009, 2010 \& 2011). A complete version was used for assuring homogeneity of the participants in terms of overall language proficiency (Version, 2010). The reading comprehension from another version of PET (2009) was administered as the pre-test of reading comprehension. Likewise, reading comprehension from a third version of PET (2011) was run as the post-test of reading comprehension. Moreover, the Eysenck personality inventory was also employed to identify the extrovert and introvert learners. Furthermore, certain materials were used in the teaching procedure described in this section.

## Preliminary English Test (PET)

PET (2010) was administered for homogenizing the participants at the beginning of the study. This test is designed by Cambridge ESOL and is used as a proficiency test for selecting the intermediate level students among the whole participants. Actually, it is appropriate for those who deal with everyday written and spoken communications (e.g. read simple books and articles, write a simple personal letter, and so on). It covers all four language skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. PET consists of three main sections: a 35 -item reading comprehension test and an 8 -item writing test in the first part (1 hour and 30 minutes), a 25 -item listening comprehension test in the second part ( 35 minutes) and a speaking test consisting of four sections in the third part (10-12 minutes).

## The Pet Speaking Rating Scale

The speaking rating scale used in this study was developed for PET by Cambridge named General Mark scheme. Both examiners-the researcher and her colleague- assessed the candidates. The interlocutors were awarded a mark for global achievement, whilst the assessors awarded marks according to the four analytical criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation, and Interactive Communication.

## The PET Writing Rating Scale

The writing rating scale developed for the PET by Cambridge named General Mark scheme was used to rate the writing section of PET. Part two of the writing section of PET is related on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale having a mark in the range of 0-5. And part three was rated according to the rating scale provided especially for the part having a band score of 0-5 which is translated to a mark out of 15 .

## Reading Comprehension Pre-test

In order to assure the homogeneity of the participants in the four groups the reading comprehension of PET from another version (2009) was run.

## Reading Comprehension Post-test

Reading comprehension posttest was selected from reading section of another sample of Preliminary English Test (2011) which consisted of three passages followed by 35 multiple-choice, true-false reading comprehension questions lasting 35 minutes, was administered at the end of the treatment.

## Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI)

EPI is a self-report personality inventory based on Eysenck's (1947-1952) factor analysis of personality which assumes three basic factors (the two most important being extroversion/introversion and neuroticism). It was devised by the German psychologist Hans Jurgen Esenck and his wife Sybil B.G (1975).The original version of this test contains 57 yes/no questions based on which the degree of extroversion and introversion become clarified. Initially, the questionnaire was filled out by the participants. The filled out questionnaires were then scored and the results were rank ordered. To score the questionnaire based on the guidelines the yes answers were counted. Each yes answer was assigned
one point. Following that, based on the resultant descriptive statistics, the sixty upper scores were chosen as extroverts and the sixty lower scores were selected as the introvert subjects of the study. Based on the descriptive statistics gained, scores lower than 29 were put into the introvert groups and scores upper than 29 were considered as extroverts.

## Materials

The researcher used the following material in the process of treatment for all 120 participants in the four groups.

## Learning to Read English for Pre-University Students

Learning to Read English for Pre-University Students authored by Birjandi, Anani Sarab, and Samimi (2003), was the main textbook used in this research. It contains 8 units. In the first term, the students were required to study the first four units and units 5 to 8 were covered in the second term. The study was carried out in the second term. Reading comprehension was the main focus of this book. The learners were provided with reading comprehension tasks from teacher's guide of this book, internet, and workbook.

## Procedure

This study aimed at investigating the impact of peer and self-scaffolding on the reading comprehension performance of Iranian EFL extrovert and introvert intermediate learners. This section explains the procedure adopted for the purposes of this study.

## Selecting the Participants

The participants of this study were chosen non-randomly from among the students studying at Elmi Karbordi University in Iran. To choose the legitimate participants of the study a full version of PET (2010) was used. This test was first piloted on 30 participants and item analysis was carried out based on the results gained some of the items were discarded. Then, this test was administered to the initial 150 participants. Based on the scores of PET, 120 participants whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen as the legitimate participants for this study.

## Grouping the Participants

The selected 120 participants were then given the Eysenck personality inventory. The scores gained were rank ordered and the subjects with scores upper than 29 were considered as extrovert and those with scores lower than 29 were put into the introvert groups of the study. To this end, the 120 participants were divided into two 60-member groups of introvert and extrovert learners. These two groups were each subdivided into two groups of 30 learners. Thus, there were four groups namely two introvert and two extrovert groups.

## Homogenizing the Participants in terms of Reading comprehension prior to the main study

To assure homogeneity of the participants in the four groups a reading comprehension from another version of PET (2009) was administered to the four groups. Following that, one way ANOVA was run on the scores. After assuring the homogeneity of the four groups in terms of reading comprehension as the dependent variable of the study the treatment began. Subsequent to grouping the participants, treatment was administered. Table 1 displays the schematic representation of the treatment.

Table 1 Schematic Representation of Treatment

| Groups | Treatment |
| :---: | :---: |
| Extrovert One | Self-Scaffolding |
| Extrovert Two | Peer-Scaffolding |
| Introvert One | Self-Scaffolding |
| Introvert Two | Peer-Scaffolding |

## Treatment

As table 1 shows two main types of treatment were employed in this study including self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding. To carry out self and peer-scaffolding, the researcher used Van Lier's (2004) features of scaffolding. Van Lier (2004, p. 90) notes six features of scaffolding as follows:

1) Contextual support: a safe but challenging environment, errors are expected and accepted as part of the learning process;
2) Inter-subjectivity: mutual engagement and support, two minds thinking as one;
3) Contingency: the scaffolding support depends on learners' reactions, elements can be added, changed, deleted, repeated, etc.
4) Handover/Takeover: there is an increasing role for the learner when skills and confidence increase;
5) Flow: communication between participants is not forced, but flows in a natural way.
6) Continuity: repeated occurrences over time, with variations connected to one another;

In the peer-scaffolding groups the treatment unfolded as follows:
As for the first feature "contextual support" the researcher in taught the learners how to treat one another's errors. To this end, they were instructed to treat the errors quite tactfully and respect each other. They were also asked to correct the errors quite indirectly.

Concerning the second maxim as "Inter-subjectivity" the participants were encouraged to help and support each other in all the tasks given to them.

Regarding the element of contingency learners were given enough freedom to add to the questions posed in reading sections cooperatively. To this end, they were encouraged to discuss the deletions or parts added cooperatively and make decisions based on that.

With respect to the handover element when it was noticed that the learners had acquired the ability to do a certain task, they were given more challenging tasks to gain more confidence as a result.

As for the fifth element, efforts were made by the researcher to let the communication between the participants as smoothly as possible. To this end, the researcher also encouraged the learners to listen to each other attentively and ask each other questions to do the tasks at hand.

Concerning the sixth element, the researcher tried to make a logical connection between the tasks given to the learners. To do so, efforts were made to include topics which had relevance to each other. At a cognitive level, the researcher also helped learners to continue doing the tasks and helping each other continuously.

As for self-scaffolding the same procedures outlined for peer-scaffolding were employed. However, the elements related to cooperation were not included. For instance, the learners did the tasks individually. There was no support from the peers and most decisions were made individually.

## Duration of the Study

All of the learners received the same treatment and same amount of instruction during 2 months throughout 8 weeks in 16 sessions. Each session lasted 90 minutes. They worked on the same book, learning to read English for Pre-University Students. Finally, the reading comprehension of PET from
another version (2011) was administered again the results of which were used to investigate the research questions.

## Design

This study is quasi-experimental, and comparison group design. The dependent variable is EFL learners' reading comprehension while self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding are independent variables. The moderator variable is personality trait (extroversion and introversion), and the control variable is language proficiency (intermediate).

## Data analysis and Results

To address the research questions under scrutiny in this study first it was deemed necessary to assure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of overall language proficiency and reading comprehension performance.

## Homogenizing the participants concerning overall language proficiency

Initially, based on the normal curve of PET (2010) scores and the respective histogram, (figure 1), 120 subjects out of 150 whose scores fell within the range of $38.79+/-5.429$ (one standard deviation above and below the mean) were selected. This was done to assure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of overall language proficiency. Figure 1 displays the respective histogram of PET scores for the initial 150 chosen participants. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for PET scores as well.

Table 2 descriptive Statistics of PET scores for the initial 150 subjects

| Descriptive Statistics |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |  |
| PET Scores | 150 | 20.00 | 50.00 | 38.7867 | 5.42872 |  |
| Valid N <br> (listwise) | 150 |  |  |  |  |  |



Figure 1 Histogram of PET scores with the normal curve for the initial 150 subjects
Since the aim of the study was to investigate the effect of the independent variables on reading comprehension of the participants, it was also important to homogenize them in terms of reading comprehension performance as the outset of the study.

## Homogenizing the participants concerning reading comprehension performance

To homogenize the 120 selected participants in terms of reading comprehension, first it deemed necessary to divide the learners into four 30 group-members (based on the results of the Eysenck personality questionnaire (two extrovert and two introvert groups). Following that the reading section of PET from another version (2009) was administered to the four 30 -member groups of the study and one way ANOVA was run to investigate any significant differences among the mean scores of the four groups. To do so, the following procedures were taken.

The 120 homogenized participants were asked to fill out Eysenck personality questionnaire. The results of which were used to divide the participants into four groups of 30 i.e. two extrovert and two introvert groups of learners. To this end, the questionnaires were scored and the results were rank ordered. Based on the resultant descriptive statistics, the sixty upper scores were chosen as extroverts and the sixty lower scores were selected as the introvert subjects of the study. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics regarding the scores of the Eysenck personality questionnaire. Based on Table 3 scores lower than 29 were put into the introvert and scores upper than 29 were considered as extroverts.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of the Eysenck personality questionnaire

| Descriptive Statistics |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Eysenck Personality <br> Scores | 120 | 10.00 | 47.00 | 26.9000 | 10.61741 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 120 |  |  |  |  |

The learners were then divided into four groups namely; two extrovert and two introvert groups. At this stage it also deemed important to assure homogeneity of the participants in the four groups in terms of reading comprehension. To this end, the reading section of another version of PET (2011) was administered. Subsequent to this, one way ANOVA was run to examine any significant differences between the mean scores of the four groups. Before discussing the results it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's F $(3,116)=.653, \mathrm{P}>.05)$ (Table 4).

## Table 4 Pretest of Reading; Test of Homogeneity of Variances

| Levene's <br> Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| .544 | 3 | 116 | .653 |

Table 5 illustrates descriptive statistics of the reading scores of the four groups obtained for homogeneity purposes prior to the main study.

Table 5 Descriptive statistics of Pretest of Reading

|  | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Minimum | Maximum |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Extro-one | 30 | 17.9333 | 4.98918 | .91090 | 12.00 | 32.00 |
| Extro-two | 30 | 18.5000 | 5.07020 | .92569 | 12.00 | 33.00 |
| Intro-one | 30 | 17.3667 | 4.29501 | .78416 | 12.00 | 32.00 |
| Intro-two | 30 | 17.7000 | 4.90004 | .89462 | 12.00 | 33.00 |
| Total | 120 | 17.8750 | 4.78015 | .43637 | 12.00 | 33.00 |

Table 6 shows descriptive statistics of the one way ANOVA. As it could be seen the significant level is 0.830 which is higher than the confidence level of 0.05 which means that there are no significant differences between the 4 groups in terms of reading comprehension prior to the main study.

Table 6 Results of one way ANOVA for the reading comprehension test scores of the four groups

|  | Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Between Groups | 20.492 | 3 | 6.831 | .294 | .830 |
| Within Groups | 2698.633 | 116 | 23.264 |  |  |
| Total | 2719.125 | 119 |  |  |  |

After assuring homogeneity of the participants regarding overall language proficiency level and reading comprehension the treatment was administered. Following that, at the end of the study the participants took reading comprehension of PET from a third version PET (2011) the results of which will be drawn on to test the four null hypotheses and explore the corresponding research questions.

## Investigating the Null Hypotheses

To investigate the null hypotheses formed, since there were two independent variables each with two levels and one dependent variable involved in the study a two way ANOVA was employed to investigate any significant differences between the means of the four groups' scores of reading comprehension after the treatment.

Table 7 Descriptive statistics of the four groups' scores of reading comprehension after the treatment

| Extroversion/ | Mean | Std. Error | $95 \%$ Confidence Interval |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  |  | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Self and peer-scaffolding |  |  |  |  |


| Extro-one(Self- <br> scaffolding) | $18.100^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .646 | 16.821 | 19.379 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Extro-two(peer- <br> scaffolding) | $23.967^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .646 | 22.688 | 25.245 |
| Intro-one(self- <br> scaffolding) | $24.533^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .646 | 23.255 | 25.812 |
| Intro-two( Peer- <br> scaffolding) | $18.400^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .646 | 17.121 | 19.679 |

Before discussing the results it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's F $(3,116)=.225, \mathrm{P}>.05)$ (Table 8).

Table 8 Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Reading scores after the treatment

| F | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 8.492 | 3 | 116 | .225 |

After assuring the homogeneity of variances of the scores, the two way ANOVA was run on the scores. Table 9 shows the respective results.

Table 9 Two way ANOVA results of the Reading comprehension Scores after the treatment

| Source | Type III Sum <br> of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Corrected Model | $97.333^{\text {a }}$ | 3 | 362.056 | 28.958 | .000 |
| Intercept | 1421.067 | 1 | 54187.500 | 433.004 | .003 |
| Extro- Intro | 48.433 | 1 | 24.217. | 4.128. | .322 |
| Scaffolding(self-peer) | 20.933 | 1 | 6.978. | 1.189 | .002 |
| Extro-intro * <br> Scaffolding | 27.967 | 1 | 4.661. | .795 | .579 |
| Error | 281.600 | 116 | 12.503 |  |  |
| Total | 1800.000 | 120 |  |  |  |
| Corrected Total | 378.933 | 119 |  |  |  |

As it is seen in Table 9, the interaction index is 0.579 which means that there is no significant interaction between independent variables. As it is shown in table 9, the significant levels of 0.000 and 0.003 as well as 0.002 indicate that there are significant differences between the means of the four groups on the reading comprehension test. To probe the differences between the groups, it is necessary to run the Post-hoc Scheffe test to compare the groups two by two. Table 10 depicts the results of Scheffe test comparing the groups' means two by two.

Table 10 Results of the Scheffe test comparing the groups two by two

| Groups | Groups | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95\% Confidence Interval |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | Lower Bound | Uppe <br> r <br> Boun <br> d |
| Extro-one(Selfscaffolding) | Extro-two(peerscaffolding) | -5.87* | . 913 | . 002 | -8.46 | -3.28 |
| Extro-one(Self scaffolding) | Intro-one(selfscaffolding) | -6.43* | . 913 | . 012 | -9.02 | -3.84 |
| Extro-two(peerscaffolding) | Intro-two (Peerscaffolding) | 5.57* | . 913 | . 043 | 2.98 | 8.16 |
| Intro-one(selfscaffolding) | Intro-two( Peerscaffolding) | 6.13* | . 913 | . 031 | 3.54 | 8.72 |

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

## Investigating the first null hypothesis

The first null hypothesis of this study was, there is not any significant difference between the effects of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on reading comprehension of Iranian introvert EFL learners. To probe this null hypothesis, the mean scores of the two introvert groups receiving self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding were compared through administering a two way ANOVA. As it is noticed, in table 10 the significant level is 0.031 which indicates that there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups with a mean difference of 6.13 . Table 7 shows that the mean score of the introvert participants receiving self-scaffolding is 24.533 while the mean score of the introvert group receiving peer-scaffolding is 18.400 . Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study is rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the effects of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on reading comprehension of Iranian introvert EFL learners with the self-scaffolding group outperforming the peerscaffolding group.

## Investigating the second null hypothesis

The second null hypothesis of this study was, there is not any significant difference between the effects of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on reading comprehension of Iranian extrovert EFL learners. To explore this null hypothesis, the mean scores of the two extrovert groups receiving self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding were compared through administering a two way ANOVA. As it is noticed, in table 10 the significant level is 0.002 which indicates that there is a significant difference between the means of the
two groups with a mean difference of -5.87 . Table 7 illustrates that the mean score of the extrovert participants receiving self-scaffoldings 18.100 while the mean for the peer-scaffolding group of extroverts is 23.967 . Therefore, the second null hypothesis of the study is rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the effects of self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding on reading comprehension of Iranian extrovert EFL learners with the peer-scaffolding group outperforming the selfscaffolding group.

## Investigating the third null hypothesis

The third null hypothesis of this study was, there is not any significant difference between the effects of self-scaffolding on Iranian introvert and extrovert learners' reading comprehension. To examine this null hypothesis, the mean scores of the introvert and extrovert groups receiving self-scaffolding were compared through administering a two way ANOVA. As it is noticed, in table 10 the significant level for the difference of these two groups is 0.012 which indicates that there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups with a mean difference of -6.43. Table 7 shows that the mean score of the introvert and extrovert participants receiving self-scaffolding is 24.533 and 18.100 , respectively. Thus, the third null hypothesis of the study is rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the effects of self-scaffolding on reading comprehension of Iranian introvert and extrovert EFL learners with the introvert learners outperforming the extrovert learners when receiving self-scaffolding.

## Investigating the fourth null hypothesis

The fourth null hypothesis of this study was, there is not any significant difference between the effects of peer-scaffolding on Iranian introvert and extrovert learners' reading comprehension. To investigate this null hypothesis, the mean scores of the two extrovert and introvert groups receiving peer-scaffolding were compared through running a two way ANOVA. As it is noticed, in table 10 the significant level is 0.043 which indicates that there is a significant difference between the means of the introvert and extrovert groups receiving peer-scaffolding with a mean difference of 5.57. Table 7 illustrates that the mean score of the extrovert and introvert participants receiving peer-scaffolding is 23.967 and 18.400. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis of the study is rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the effects of peer-scaffolding on reading comprehension of Iranian extrovert and introvert EFL learners with the extrovert learners outperforming the introvert learners when receiving peer-scaffolding.

## Discussion

The current study sought to investigate the comparative impact of self and peer-scaffolding on Iranian EFL extrovert and introvert learners' reading comprehension performance. The results of the two way ANOVA run on the post-test scores of reading comprehension of the participants demonstrated that the use of self-scaffolding is significantly more effective on the reading comprehension of the introvert learners in comparison with the use of peer-scaffolding. Moreover, the use of peer-scaffolding has a significant impact on the reading comprehension of the extrovert learners in comparison with the use of self-scaffolding. Additionally, the results of the study indicated that the effect of self-scaffolding on reading comprehension of Iranian introvert and extrovert EFL learners is significantly different with the introvert learners outperforming the extrovert learners when receiving self-scaffolding. Moreover, peerscaffolding is more effective on reading comprehension of Iranian extrovert learners.

The results of this study further corroborate the findings of other studies (e.g. Ehrman \& Oxford, 1990; Wakamoto, 2007;Yadegari, 2007; Pazhuhesh,1994; Nasrabadi,1996; Daneshvari, 1996) displaying the discrepancies between extrovert and introvert individuals when it comes to the task of learning in general and language learning in particular. Some experts like Busch (1982) believe that personality type is an important issue when it comes to language learning and there are differences between the ways individuals learn and the amount they pick up in the process because of the specific personality type they possess. Thus, individual variability in language learning is an important factor. The results of the current experiment are therefore consistent with remarks of these experts who focus on the individual differences as an important variable in learning.

The findings of this study are in line with Pazhuhesh's (1994) investigation. She explored the relationship between the personality dimension of extroversion/introversion and reading comprehension. She concluded that introverts were significantly better than the extroverts. In a study Nasrabadi (1996) probed the role of extroversion-introversion in EFL listening comprehension in Iran. He came to the conclusion that extroverts were significantly better than their introvert counterparts. In yet another study Daneshvari (1996) investigated the impact of being an extrovert or introvert on listening comprehension in Iran. He found out that extroverts were better listening strategy users. In the same context and considering the findings of these studies, the present investigation further confirms the views of scholars and theoreticians in the field as extrovert and introvert learners are different in language learning.

The results of the current study clearly indicate that peer-scaffolding has been to the advantage of extroverts and self-scaffolding has helped introverts more. Given the fact that according to Eysenck (1975) extroverts tend to be sociable and introverts on the other hand are less outgoing and more calm and collected, could be a possible explanation for the results gained in this study. In other words, the very nature of self-scaffolding has been in line with the personality construct of introverts and has created an optimal situation for these learners to develop their reading comprehension. As for the extroverts, the very fact that peer-scaffolding involves interaction has helped creating the required synergy, hence assisting the extroverts in achieving more in terms of reading comprehension.

One possible explanation for such results could be due to the personality characteristics of introvert and extrovert learners. The findings of this study remind the fact that students have different personality traits and it is necessary to acknowledge and accommodate these characteristics in the teaching practices.

If the educational settings become compatible with the learners' personal orientations, learners may be able to engage in educational activities more and will thus gain an advantage in learning. On the other hand, if this compatibility goes unobserved, learners may not get fully involved in the learning process which can consequently decrease their chances of educational success. The findings indicate that educators need to gain awareness of different factors significant in learning in order to address individual educational needs of learners.

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that the improvements in the learners' reading comprehension as a result of using self-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding for introvert and extrovert learners respectively, might have emerged due to the fact that learners have possibly employed the maximum amount of cognitive repertoires in their possession and which has consequently led to enhancement in their reading comprehension. In other words, the use of self-scaffolding and peerscaffolding might have paved the way for learners to accomplish the goals set by the reading tasks on the test.

One of the justifications that can be come up regarding introverts outperforming extroverts in reading comprehension is that introverts have been described as being studious and hard-working in comparison with extrovert learners Eysenck (1975, cited in Hjelled \& Ziegler, 1992, p. 281). In other words, they seem to be more attentive when it comes to receptive tasks like reading. As a consequence, this attentive type of personality trait may have contributed to a higher level of enhancement concerning reading comprehension performance of introvert learners.

However, more studies need to be carried out to further investigate the issue and possibly shed more light on the different ways introvert and extrovert learners approach various tasks in general and language skills and components in particular.

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# EFL TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS AND THEIR CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK PREFERENCES IN IRAN (SHIRAZ) 

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#### Abstract

FOR DECADES NOW, QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA) HAVE BEEN HOTLY DEBATED, SPAWNING A GREAT DEAL OF THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCHES. ALTHOUGH THE FACILITATIVE ROLE OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN SLA HAS RECEIVED SOME EMPIRICAL SUPPORTS, THE CLAIMS REGARDING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS HAVE YET TO BE FULLY OR DECISIVELY SUBSTANTIATED ESPECIALLY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (FLA) CONTEXT. IN ORDER TO MOVE THIS LINE OF RESEARCH FORWARD, IT IS IMPORTANT TO EXAMINE THE ISSUES ARISING IN THE SLA LITERATURE. THE PRESENT CORRELATIONAL STUDY SOUGHT TO SCRUTINIZE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS AND THEIR CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK (CF) PREFERENCES IN (FLA). TO DO SO, 50 EFL TEACHERS COMPLETED TWO QUESTIONNAIRES THAT CONTAINING THREE PARTS, E.G. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS (39 ITEMS ADOPTED FROM (HORWITZ, 1987B, COTTERALL (1995) AND INTARAPRASERT (2004) AND (QCFAS) INTRODUCED BY LYSTER AND RANTA (1997). THE RESULTS OF CORRELATION DIDN'T CONFIRM SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THESE TWO VARIABLES.


KEY WORDS: PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS, CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

## Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English. TEFL can occur in the student's own country, either within the state school system, or privately, e.g., in an after-hours language school or with a tutor. TEFL can also take place in an English-speaking immigrant country, for people who have moved (either temporarily for school or work, or permanently). TEFL teachers may be native or non-native speakers of English. Other acronyms for TEFL are TESL 'Teaching English as a Second Language', TESOL 'Teaching English as a Second or Other Language', and ESL 'English as a Second Language. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)
It is impossible to contemplate teaching in isolation from learning. Teaching well also means learning well to some extent, and teachers' beliefs will subconsciously propel teachers to adopt different teachinglearning methods.
Learning is the act of acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing, existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information. The ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals and some machines. Progress over time tends to follow learning curves.

Learning is not compulsory; it is contextual. It does not happen all at once, but builds upon and is shaped by previous knowledge. To that end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge. Learning produces changes in the organism and the changes produced are relatively permanent. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

## Teachers' pedagogical beliefs

Each teacher holds a set of beliefs that determine priorities for pedagogical knowledge and how students acquire knowledge. Ertmer (2005), who investigated teacher beliefs about teaching and learning, called these beliefs pedagogical.

As cited in Md. Eftekhar Uddin "Teachers' Pedagogical Belief and its Reflection on the Practice in Teaching Writing in EFL Tertiary Context in Bangladesh" (2014), Before any innovation or changes to work properly, it is essential to understand what beliefs the teachers in their particular context have about teaching as teachers are "active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context sensitive networks of knowledge thoughts, and beliefs" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Thus, teachers' thinking systems play a major role in their approaches to, and innovation in, everyday teaching.

According to the "Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs and Actual Classroom Practices in Social Studies Instruction" Dr. Fakhri R. Khader cited when people believe something is true, they perceive information supporting that belief. What teachers do in the classroom is said to be governed by what they believe, and these beliefs often serve to act as a filter through which instructional judgments and decisions are made (Pajares, 1992; Cantu, 2001).
M. Raouf Moin in (2008) "The impact of EFL teachers' cognition on teaching foreign language grammar" defines teaching as a multidimensional activity that involves social, educational, and pedagogical, linguistics, personal, and cognitive dimensions. In the last years, in general education the cognitive dimension of teaching has been recognized as central to successful teaching. The last decade has witnessed steady growth in the study of teachers' cognition. Researchers have paid more attention to the study of teachers' belief about teaching, learning, learners, and the impact it has on teaching practices, activities, and learning outcomes.
By reviewing the previous definitions, the researcher believes that the teachers' beliefs are a set of ideas rooted in the psychological and mental content of the teacher and play a central role in guiding his/her teaching behavior (Dr. Fakhri R. Khader).

## Defining corrective feedback

Recent corrective feedback research has usually examined the effect of corrective feedback on students' linguistic outcomes. The present study proposes to expand the scope of this inquiry to include teachers' corrective feedback preferences. Using qualitative data, this paper examines the beliefs that appeared to be at work in TEFL teachers' corrective feedback preferences. By investigating how their beliefs are related to their corrective feedback preferences, this author contends that a more careful look at teacher corrective feedback that takes into consideration teachers' perspectives on how they utilize corrective feedback in their overall instructional scheme and what they hope to accomplish by it is warranted.

Lightbown and Spada (1999) define corrective feedback as: Any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect. This includes various responses that the learners receive. When a language learner says, 'He go to school every day', corrective feedback can be explicit, for example, 'no, you should say goes, not go' or implicit 'yes he goes to school every day', and may or may not include metalinguistic information, for example, 'Don't forget to make the verb agree with the subject'. (p. 171172).

Chaudron (1988) has pointed out the fact that the term corrective feedback incorporates different layers of meaning. In Chaudron's view, the term "treatment of error" may simply refer to "any teacher behavior following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error" (p. 150). The treatment may not be evident to the student in terms of the response it elicits, or it may make a significant effort "to elicit a revised student response". Finally, there is "the true" correction which succeeds in modifying the learner's interlanguage rule so that the error is eliminated from further production.

Herein, we define corrective feedback as statements that convey messages of how to improve after poor performance or mistakes. We distinguish corrective feedback from negative (or failure) feedback: whereas corrective feedback focuses more on the process, that is, on the aspects of one's performance that one fails to enact well or the aspects of one's performance that need remediation during achievement strivings, negative feedback focuses on the end result and, particularly, on one's failure to achieve a certain outcome. We relied for this definition of corrective feedback on Amorose and Weiss (1998), who showed that feedback containing information of low performance can be differentiated depending on the extent to which it conveys, among others, criticism (e.g., "That was awful"), information (e.g., "You need to keep an eye on the ball"), or neutral statements (e.g., "That was wrong").

## Types of corrective feedback

Errors inevitably occur in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. The importance lies in the fact that how teachers respond to such errors while teaching new materials. Different teachers behave differently to correct their pupils' errors. It seems worthwhile to introduce different CFs.
Different types of feedback presumably have a different impact on the acquisition process. Lyster \& Ranta (1997) distinguish six types in their often-cited classroom observation study:

1. Explicit feedback: teacher provides the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect.
2. Recasts: the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error.
3. Clarification requests: question indicating that the utterance has been misunderstood or ill-formed and that a repetition or reformulation is required.
4. Metalinguistic feedback contains either comments, information, or questions related to the wellformedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form.
5. Elicitation: teachers try to elicit the correct form by asking for completion of a sentence, or asking questions, or asking for a reformulation
6. Repetition: the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the erroneous utterance.

Types (2) and (6) give feedback implicitly, they are up to the learner to notice that an error was made; the other types are explicit in indicating that an error occurred. The interpretation of the distinction is related to the setting of the feedback, e.g., an implicit recast may be argued to be explicit in formal classroom settings.

## 2. Review of literature

Here is a review of primary research studies done by scholars in the field of teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback, and to find out any relationship between these two variables. The theory is based on this assumption that different teachers have different beliefs. A brief review on teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback runs as follow.

Dr. Fakhri R. Khader (2012) at Petra University adopted a qualitative case study approach to check how the pedagogical beliefs of social studies teachers correspond to the practices observed by their own students. The results showed that there is no statistically significant correlation between the teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their actual classroom practices of such beliefs.

Shih-Hsiung Liu (2010) investigated the factors related to pedagogical beliefs of teachers and technology integration. First examined the relationship between pedagogical beliefs of teachers and teaching activities, and then identified differences between teacher beliefs and teaching activities of Taiwanese
teachers in each factor associated with technology integration. The result of Chi-square test revealed that most Taiwanese teachers held learner-centered belief, but did not integrate constructivist teaching with technology. This analytical result confirmed the conflict between teacher beliefs and teaching activities.

Reiko Mori(2002) in a secondary analysis of the data from a larger qualitative study in which the participating teachers' beliefs about classroom interaction in general were researched, it has examined how their beliefs are related to their corrective feedback behavior conclude, since teachers' beliefs can have a strong influence on how they conceptualize their daily teaching practice, not only corrective feedback, but also all aspects of teaching should be reexamined from the standpoint of teachers' beliefs.

Nobuhiro Kamiya (2014) also investigated the relationship between stated beliefs of four English as second language (ESL) teachers about teaching and oral corrective feedback (OCF) and their actual classroom practices. The results show that their stated beliefs of teaching were found to be in accordance with their stated beliefs concerning OCF
In reviewing the research literature, it is noticed that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences was open to debate.

## 3. Methodology

Based on the nature of the experiment, different issues such as participants, instruments, data collection, and statistical procedures are considered in detail in this part. The first section concerns the characteristics of the participants of the study. Section two reports on the tests and questionnaires used in this study and the related issues of reliability. Then the procedures used to collect the data are mentioned. In the last section, the procedures employed to analyze the collected data are also explained.

### 3.1 Participants

A sample including 50 EFL teachers teaching English in language institutes in Shiraz, Iran were selected through convenient sampling. Their age ranged from 20 to 45 . Both males and females were asked to take part in the study. Their academic degree ranged from BA to PhD in TEFL, English literature, English Translation and linguistics. The participants had 1 to 20 year teaching experience.

### 3.2 Instruments

In order to achieve the required data, two instruments were used: The Questionnaire for Corrective Feedback Approaches (QCFAs) and the questionnaire in order to check participants' pedagogical beliefs; Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), Horwitz, 1987b, Cotterall (1995) and Intaraprasert (2004).

### 3.3 Data collection procedure

Participation in this study was totally voluntary. The participants received required information regarding the purpose of the study. Then the researcher gathered the participants' electronic emails to send them the instruments to complete. Having developed the final version of the questionnaire, the authors sent it to the participants' emails. The completed questionnaires were forwarded to the researchers' emails almost 15 days after the date of sending. Having employed SPSS (19.0), the data were analyzed and the findings were discussed. 100 questionnaires distributed among institutes' teachers that 50 participants were excluded because they didn't complete their questionnaire. Among them, eighteen teachers held a bachelor's degree. Also, twenty teachers reported holding master's degree. Furthermore, two of the participants of the study got her/his PhD degree in English-related majors. The remaining teachers got their diploma in English-related majors.
The study conducted in July 2015 in several different institutes in Shiraz. The participants were asked to answer two questioners, Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) and pedagogical beliefs questionnaire. Before distributing the questionnaires to the participants, through email, they were given brief information about the purpose of the questionnaires, their scope, and their significance for this
study. The administration of questionnaires procedure took approximately three weeks. Having collected the two completed questionnaires, the researcher analyzed the data and extracted the results.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The data gathered from the questionnaires were transferred to SPSS software 19th Version. To determine the relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences Pearson correlation analysis was used. Reliability of the BALLI questionnaire was also inspected through Coaronbach alpha procedures.

## 4. Results and discussion

The data were fed into the computer and analyzed. The results are presented in tables for a better understanding. The tables are followed by interpretation and explanation of the results. The discussion section of this chapter is devoted to summarizing the results and linking them to the research question. The discussion section also includes the comparison between the results of the present study and other pieces of evidence available in the literature. The purpose of the discussion section is to demonstrate how much the present study supports or rejects the results of the related research. The report of the findings contains (1) descriptive analyses (frequencies, means, and standard deviation) from the BALLI and The Questionnaire for Corrective Feedback Approaches, (2) principal-component and factor analyses of beliefs variables and corrective feedback approaches, (3) Pearson $r$ correlation analyses regarding the relationships between pedagogical beliefs and corrective feedback preferences, and (4) a qualitative analysis of the open-ended data.

### 4.1 Results

As mentioned before, all the participants answered two questioners, the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), Horwitz, 1987b, Cotterall (1995) and Intaraprasert (2004), and The Questionnaire for Corrective Feedback Approaches (QCFAs).

Table 1 presents the frequency of teachers' responses in, means and standard deviations in area of beliefs about language learning on the BALLI and (QCFAs). Descriptive statistics were computed on the teachers' responses to two questionnaires items. These analyses were done to address the teachers' beliefs about language learning and teachers corrective feedback preferences.

1. Descriptive statistics of teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Teachers' pedagogical <br> beliefs | 50 | 2.03 | 4.17 | 3.3086 | .43262 |
| Teachers' corrective <br> feedback preferences | 50 | 1.83 | 5.00 | 3.9325 | .46972 |

### 4.2 Reliability estimates

In order to make sure that the BALLI questionnaire is reliable, Cronbach's Alpha was employed.
2. Reliability statistics of teacher beliefs inventory

|  | Cronbach <br> Alpha Based <br> on <br> Cronbach's <br> Alpha | Standardized <br> Items |
| ---: | ---: | ---: |
| .692 | .664 | N of Items |

Cronbach Alpha coefficient was computed to determine the internal consistency of BALLI. The value obtained for reliability was .692 which is a relatively high level of internal consistency. Therefore, it was confidently employed as the research instrument.

### 4.3Results of Pearson correlation

To find out if there is any relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences, the researcher ran Pearson correlation. Table 3 shows the pertaining results.
3. The Results of Correlation between Teachers pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences

| Variables | Pearson Correlation | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| The difficulty of language <br> learning <br> Explicit Correction | -.193 <br> The difficulty of language <br> learning <br> Recast | .228 <br> The difficulty of language <br> learning <br> Clarification Request <br> The difficulty of language <br> learning <br> Elicitation <br> The difficulty of language <br> learning <br> Repetition |
| Foreign language aptitude | .110 <br> Explicit Correction | 1 <br> -.281 |
| Foreign language aptitude | 1 <br> Recast | .123 |


| Foreign language aptitude | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 1 \\ & .100 \end{aligned}$ | . 490 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Clarification Request |  |  |
| Foreign language aptitude | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 1 \\ & -.025 \end{aligned}$ | . 863 |
| Elicitation |  |  |
| Foreign language aptitude | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \\ & .092 \end{aligned}$ | . 527 |
| Repetition |  |  |
| The nature of language learning | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 1 \\ & -.208 \end{aligned}$ | . 156 |
| Explicit Correction |  |  |
| The nature of language learning | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \\ & -.014 \end{aligned}$ | . 926 |
| Recast |  |  |
| The nature of language learning | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \\ & -.043 \end{aligned}$ | . 767 |
| Clarification Request |  |  |
| The nature of language learning | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \\ & .299^{*} \end{aligned}$ | . 035 |
| Elicitation |  |  |
| The nature of language learning | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \\ & .005 \end{aligned}$ | . 975 |
| Repetition |  |  |
| Learning and communication strategies | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 1 \\ & -.220 \end{aligned}$ | . 133 |
| Explicit Correction |  |  |
| Learning and communication strategies | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 1 \\ & -084 \end{aligned}$ | . 575 |
| Recast |  |  |
| Learning and communication strategies | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 1 \\ & .066 \end{aligned}$ | . 650 |


| Clarification Request |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Learning and communication <br> strategies | 1 | .385 |
| Elicitation | .126 | .611 |
| Learning and communication <br> strategies | 1 |  |
| Repetition | .074 |  |

Based on data in table 3, significance value is less than .05 (sig=.000) which confirms a statistically significant relationship between teachers pedagogical beliefs and type of CF chosen by the participants. Accordingly, it can be concluded that different EFL teachers chose different types of CF. Present table clarifies this relationship. As a consequence, the first null-hypothesis denying a statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their preference of CF type is rejected. Table 3 presents the correlations of four factors of the EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs and five factors of the corrective feedback approaches. The five categories of corrective feedback and four categories of beliefs were not significantly correlated with one another. In addition, explicit correction and clarification request had a negative correlation with beliefs about the difficulty of language learning and recast, elicitation and repetition showed weak correlation with it. Foreign language aptitude had a negative correlation with beliefs about foreign language aptitude, recast; clarification request and repetition were weakly correlated with it.
Explicit correction, recast, clarification request had a negative correlation with beliefs concerning the nature of language learning and repetition had weak correlation and elicitation was only strategy that significantly correlated with it. Explicit correction and recast were negatively related to beliefs about the learning communication strategies. Clarification request, elicitation and repetition showed a weak correlation with it.

### 4.4 Discussion

Using the research question as a framework, the following section discusses and interprets findings of the data analyses. Each section offers interpretations of findings based upon the descriptive analysis of the data (BALLI \& QCFAs). The findings of the current study are then compared with those found in previous studies.
This study aimed to investigate if there is any relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences.
The importance of corrective feedback in SLA theory has devoted an increasing number of studies to examining the relationship between feedback and L2 learning. The purpose of this study is to investigate if there is any significant relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences. To answer this research question, the researcher ran the correlation. According to the results, there isn't any significant correlation between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences. The result of this study isn't in line with the results of previous studies:

Reiko Mori(2002) in a secondary analysis conclude, since teachers' beliefs can have a strong influence on how they conceptualize their daily teaching practice, not only corrective feedback, but also all aspects of teaching should be reexamined from the standpoint of teachers' beliefs.

Nobuhiro Kamiya (2014) investigated the relationship between stated beliefs of four English as second language (ESL) teachers about teaching and oral corrective feedback (OCF) and their actual classroom practices. The results show that their stated beliefs of teaching were found to be in accordance with their
stated beliefs concerning OCF. . Although it was almost the most similar study to mine, contexts were different. As you see the results are different as well.
The results obtained from this study clearly depict that teachers choice of corrective feedback is more an attribute of environmental factors rather than their personal beliefs and characteristics. In fact, classroom atmosphere, learners learning objectives and social and educational settings and contexts are stronger determines of teachers preferred teachers for corrective feedback.

## 5. Conclusion

The present investigation has been conducted in a data-based, systematic, and descriptive manner. The study also gives a comprehensive picture of the teachers' beliefs about English language learning. It is a new study which has contributed to the field of research on the relationship between EFL pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences in our context (EFL) in general and to the field of research on beliefs about English language learning held by teachers in teacher education in particular, in terms of investigated variables, i.e. teachers' gender, teachers' education program and major; and teachers' teaching experience and level of teaching. The findings of mismatch between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences showed there isn't any significance relationship between these two variables. It can be stated that effective corrective feedback can only be used when teachers are aware of their learners' needs, capabilities, potentials, expectations and preferences. As a result, it is also important for teachers to be aware of what particular belief their students hold. To conclude, drawing on relation between EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their corrective feedback preferences, the researchers in this study focused on provision of CF pedagogy in EFL setting. EFL teacher enjoyed almost all correction strategies. Findings of this study further show that the teacher should investigate students' preference of feedback which is dependent on many learner characteristics including learning styles, proficiency levels, motivation, and so on. As was found in this study, the teacher should expect and work out individual differences as well as group differences in the preference of corrective feedback perceived by various students.

## Suggestions for further study

The findings of my present study should be validated by further research, using the validated findings and recommendations here as principles, professional training program should be organized. Later, a further investigation should be made to understand the impact of training on choosing corrective feedback. To make the findings generalizable, the above three points should be replicated with larger sample.
Interested researchers are suggested:

1. Choose a higher sample in order to enhance the generalizability of findings.
2. Use interview as a qualitative data collection instrument to determine the consistency of results obtained from difficult studies.
3. Work on the effect of variables such as teaching experience and proficiency on corrective feedback use.

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# THE IMPACT OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF LEXICOGRAMMATICAL DEVICES ON EFL LEARNERS' WRITING FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY 

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#### Abstract

UNDOUBTEDLY, WRITING IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT SECOND LANGUAGE SKILLS. AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF COHESION IN ENGLISH BY HALLIDAY AND HASAN (1976), THE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF COHESION AND COHERENCE IN THE ENGLISH WRITING HAS BEEN INCREASED. TO THIS END, THIS STUDY INVESTIGATED THE EXTENT TO WHICH INSTRUCTION OF COHESIVE DEVICES BASED ON HALLIDAY AND HASAN'S (1976) TAXONOMY IMPROVED INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNER'S WRITING FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY. BY MEANS OF THE ILI PLACEMENT TEST ADMINISTERED IN THE BEGINNING OF EACH TERM, TWO HOMOGENOUS INTACT INTERMEDIATE FEMALE CLASSES (N= 20 IN EACH CLASS) OUT OF 5 CLASSES WERE SELECTED RANDOMLY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ASSIGNED INTO EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS AT IRAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, URMIA BRANCH, URMIA, WEST AZARBAYJAN, IRAN. THE RESEARCHER SELECTED A TOPIC WHICH SERVED THE PURPOSE OF PRE-TEST FOR BOTH GROUPS TO WRITE ABOUT. THE WRITTEN DATA OF THE LEARNERS IN BOTH GROUPS WERE ANALYZED FOR FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY ACCORDING TO THE METHOD APPLIED BY WIGGLESWORTH AND STORCH (2009). FLUENCY INCLUDED THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS, T-UNITS AND CLAUSES PER TEXT AND COMPLEXITY WAS ANALYZED IN TERMS OF THE PROPORTION OF CLAUSES TO T-UNITS AND PERCENTAGE OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES TO TOTAL CLAUSES. DURING THE TREATMENT, THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WAS EXPOSED TO EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF CDS FOR 10 SESSIONS. IN EACH SESSION, THEY GOT FAMILIARIZED WITH DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES OF SOME TYPES OF CDS PROPOSED BY HALLIDAY AND HASAN (1976). THE LEARNERS WERE ASKED TO USE CDS IN THEIR SENTENCES. SINCE THIS STUDY AIMED AT DETERMINING THE EFFECTS OF CDS INSTRUCTION ON THE LEARNER'S WRITING FLUENCY AND COMPLEXITY IMPROVEMENT, THE CONTROL GROUP RECEIVED NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON CDS. AFTER THE TREATMENT, THE RESEARCHER ADMINISTERED THE POST-TEST OF WRITING TEST ON THE TOPIC LEARNERS WROTE ABOUT IN PRE-TEST TO SEE WHETHER ANY CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS HAD OCCURRED AFTER THE TREATMENT IN THEIR WRITINGS OR NOT. ALSO, AN INTER-RATER RELIABILITY IN POST-TEST WAS ESTABLISHED THROUGH DOUBLE RATING SOME OF THE WRITTEN DATA BY ANOTHER RESEARCH ASSISTANT WHICH WAS 0.84. THE RESULTS OF AN INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST REVEALED THAT THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP OUTPERFORMED THE CONTROL GROUP REGARDING THEIR WRITING ACCURACY AND COMPLEXITY. THE IMPLICATIONS ARE DISCUSSED IN TERMS OF THE ADVANTAGES OF CD INSTRUCTION IN EFL CONTEXTS.


## KEY WORDS: COHESIVE DEVICES, FLUENCY, COMPLEXITY

## 1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, writing is one of the most difficult second language skills. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that the difficulty in writing lies both in expressing and organizing ideas and presenting those ideas into readable text. Halliday and Hasan $(1976,1989)$ believed that cohesion and coherence are two important parts and features of a good writing. Therefore, if language learners want to be good English writers, whether they are EFL or ESL learners, they are in need of writing coherent and cohesive texts.

In our personal and professional lives, writing plays an important role. Writing is considered an act of communication and a useful way of addressing an audience. However, in an academic area, writing is regarded more than just a means of communication. Therefore, the ability to express meaning clearly in written texts is an important skill for academic success. In fact, college students' writing skills are the best indicators of their academic success (Geiser \& Studley, 2001), and also outside the academic context, writing skills are important predictors of professional competence (Light, 2001). However, for many students writing activities are among the least enjoyable or interesting ones. Thus, understanding the characteristics of good writing is an important purpose, both for theoretical and applied reasons (Barkhuizen, 1998; Spratt, 2001).

After the publication of cohesion in English by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the research in the field of cohesion and coherence in the English texts has been increased. According to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory, cohesion provides a sequence of interrelated sentences in a text. Cohesion happens when the interpretation and understanding of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another (Halliday \& Hasan, 1976). Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. vii) pointed out that cohesion is one of the main elements for text construction. In fact, cohesion refers to the explicit cues in the text that help readers/listeners to understand the semantic relations in a text.

When elements in the text are related to each other, a text gets meaningful and that relation can occur through Cohesive Devices (CDs) including reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction as grammatical and lexical cohesion. Thus, the grammar and lexicon are two forms of cohesion. These CDs used by speakers and writers in order to express meaning provide semantic relations for the elements and facilitate the interpretations (Rassouli \& Abbasvandi, 2013).

The mastery of CDs is a crucial element of effective academic writing and essential for academic success in any academic context where English is taught. Consequently, the application of CDs in academic writing has attracted the attention of many researchers who are interested in addressing the issue of lack of cohesion in students' writing, especially in a foreign context (Hesamy \& Hamedi, 2013).

## 2. Review of the Literature

Since writing is a complicated process even in our first language, learning this skill is more difficult for EFL/ESL learners. According to many English teachers learning writing skill seems to be more demanding compared to learning any other language skill. There are a lot of researches which have aimed at finding out different factors that influence writing skill and lead to problems for language learners. Some of the factors influencing learners' writing have been mentioned in Angelova's study (as cited in Rassouli \& Abbasvandi, 2013) including "L1 writing competence, meta-cognitive knowledge about writing task, use of cohesive devices, writers personal characteristics and writing strategies" (p. 15).

Among the factors which can affect writing tasks, cohesion and coherence, seem to be two most problematic area for EFL learners (Shokrpour \& Fallahzadeh, 2007). Cohesion is considered to be one of the important factors which needs special attention in writing since it connects different parts of the text. Text is considered to be a text by means of cohesion, without which sentences would not be united and it would result in some unrelated sentences. In other words, cohesion is a quality which distinguishes a text from non-text (Halliday \& Hasan, 1976).

Though closely related concepts, cohesion and coherence are also distinctive (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010). Both cohesion and coherence are means of providing connectivity in a text or a discourse and facilitating
understanding; however, cohesion involves the syntactic and semantic connectivity existing between linguistic forms at a surface-structure level (Connor \& Johns, 1990; Halliday \& Hasan, 1976) while coherence refers to the "principle of organization postulated to account for the underlying functional connectedness or identity of a piece of spoken or written language (text, discourse)" (Crystal, 1991, p. 60). In other words, while cohesion is a facilitator of textual flow in the surface structure, coherence involves the connectedness in content and organization.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), there are various ways to held ideas together in a text, and "cohesion" refers to the structure of meaning the writer creates in connected sentences or utterances. Cohesion, in these linguists' view, is a factor which determines if a group of sentences form a unified text or they are solely a set of unrelated sentences. However, though cohesion has something to do with semantic relations, it is not concerned with content (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010). Halliday and Hasan (1976) indicated that "cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text is constructed as a semantic edifice" (p.26). In other words, although cohesion is a determining factor in connecting ideas between sentences in a paragraph, it does not necessarily play an important role in the global flow of a text across paragraphs.

In Kolln's (1999) view, cohesion and coherence differ noticeably. Whereas cohesion mainly refers to the semantic relations that exist between sentences, coherence is defined as "cohesion on a global scale" (p. 94). In other words, coherence primarily involves the overall connectedness of the ideas existing in a piece of writing rather than relationships between sentences. Coherence in a broader scope includes discourse-level relations and is "the internal set of consistent relationships perceived in any stretch of discourse" (Winterowd, 1975, p. 225).

Halliday and Hassan (1976) refer to the basic categories of grammatical cohesion and state that this concept can be systematized by being classified into a small number of distinct categories, namely, reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. Reference is one option that the grammar of English offers to create surface links between sentences. Halliday and Hassan (1976) believe that without referring to some other features in the text, reference features cannot be semantically interpreted. Substitution occurs when a previous word or expression is replaced by another one (Halliday \& Hassan, 1976). It is vital to mention that substitution and reference are distinct based on what and where they operate, thus substitution involves the relations related with wording, while reference is concerned with relations related with meaning. Moreover, whereas substitution is a way to avoid repetition in the text itself, reference requires to retrieve its meaning from the situational textual occurrence (Azzouz, 2009).

There is a close relation between substitution and ellipsis because one can say that ellipsis is "substitution" by zero (0). The essential point in ellipsis is that although some elements are deleted from the surface text, but they are still comprehended. Thus, by referring to an element in the preceding text, omission of these elements can be recovered. Harmer (2004) points out that "words are deliberately left out of a sentence when the meaning is still clear" (p. 24). Conjunctions are used to create grammatical cohesion in texts which show the relationship between sentences. They differ from other cohesive ties in that they employ other features in the discourse to convey the meaning. As Nunan (1993) points out, they use some features to refer to the other parts of the text and by so doing, they make relationship between sentences extremely understood. Halliday and Hassan's description of lexical cohesion is the recent attempt at studying vocabulary above sentences? Lexical cohesion is created to have the choice of a given vocabulary and the role played by particular major semantic relations between words to create textuality (Halliday \& Hassan, 1976).

In the past many years, interest in research on cohesion has grown greatly. Some researchers have investigated the relationship between the usage of cohesive devices and the quality of writing. The results have been somewhat contradictory. In other words, some studies have shown a positive relationship between the use of cohesive devices and good writing (Ferris, 1994). By contrast, there are some other studies which have not shown a meaningful relationship between the number of cohesive features employed and the quality of writing (Jafarpur, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000). Also, according to some researchers lexical devices formed the highest percentage of the total number of cohesive device in students' writings, followed by references and conjunctions (Liu \& Braine, 2005; Zhang, 2000).

Beside, these early studies, other linguists examining this issue have focused on coherence or on the relationships which exist between cohesion and coherence (e.g. Fitzgerald \& Spiegel, 1986). With regard to specific language skills, various studies have been performed on the role of coherence in reading (e.g. Allison, 1989; Slatin, 1990). Furthermore, another significant area that has been extensively studied is coherence and writing (e.g. Vande Kopple, 1983). Zhang's (2000) study investigating the importance of various grammatical and discourse features in the evaluation of second language writings indicated that raters strongly depended on cohesion when evaluating the overall quality of the essays. This point was a further support for the idea of considering CDs as important devices in evaluating the quality of essays. Yang and Sun (2012) explored the cohesive devices in argumentative writing of 2nd- and 3rd-year undergraduate Chinese EFL (English as a foreign language) learners at different levels of proficiency. The researchers emphasized that regardless of their EFL proficiency levels, the writing quality of the students estimated the appropriate use of cohesive devices.

In Behforouz's (2014) study, 60 Iranian intermediate EFL learners participated. Prior to the treatment, a pretest was also administered to find out the writing ability of participants. After the instruction, a posttest was given. The results revealed that there was no significant relationship between the instruction of reference as a cohesive device and the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing quality after the instruction.

Moreover, Hessamy and Hamedi (2013) compared and contrasted the frequency of using cohesive devices in independent and integrated essays which were written by 95 upper-intermediate Iranian EFL students. According to the results, considering textual cohesion, the participants employed more anaphoric references compared to cataphoric references while in both independent and integrated sample writings, substitution and ellipsis were scarcely employed. Furthermore, the students were more proficient at using references and lexical cohesion when writing integrated essays than in writing independent essays.

Research findings in this area seem contradictory and since no single study was conducted to analyze the effectiveness of explicit instruction of CDs on Iranian EFL learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement, it seems that more investigation into this issue is needed. Moreover, in EFL contexts such as Iran where there is much little direct exposure to English, L2 writers should always keep in their mind that readers cannot understand and connect the ideas in any written text if they do not interconnect the preceding and following ideas through contextual clues.

Recently, how EFL/ESL learners write and what problems they usually face in their writing have attracted the researchers' attention to a large extent (Ghasemi, 2013). One of the most common problems in students' writing is that their writing is full of gaps of meaning or that there is no clear logical development between sentences or paragraphs. They write according to their mind without realizing that no one can read their mind unless it is clearly expressed in words. Some of the weak writers try to use more explicit links such as connectives to impose surface logicality in their writing where no deep logicality exists (Crewe, 1990). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which instruction of cohesive devices based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy can improve intermediate EFL learner's writing fluency. To this end, the researchers formulated the following research questions.
3. Does explicit instruction of CDs significantly affect EFL learners' writing fluency?
4. Does explicit instruction of CDs significantly affect EFL learners' writing complexity?

## 3. Method

## Participants

By means of the ILI placement test administered in the beginning of each term, two homogenous intact intermediate female classes ( $\mathrm{N}=20$ in each class) out of 5 classes were selected randomly for data collection and assigned into experimental and control groups at Iran Language Institute, Urmia Branch, Urmia, West Azarbayjan, Iran. The participants were females between 16 and 22 years of age speaking different languages such as Turkish, Kurdish and Farsi as their native languages.

## Instruments

In the current study, the researchers used some instruments, namely, Iran Language Institute Placement Test, Pre-test, and Post-test for data collection and moving toward achieving the goals of the study.

## Design of the study

First of all, the researcher attempted to homogenize the participants. To this end, the researcher randomly selected 2 intact intermediate female classes (including 20 learners in each class) from among 5 classes based on the Iran Language Placement Test (ILI) which is administered in the beginning of each term and assigned them to control and experimental groups. Thus, the current study followed an intact group design which is considered quasi-experimental. The study consisted of 2 groups (i.e., 1 experimental and 1 control) at intermediate level. In the beginning of the treatment, the researcher asked the learners to write a composition which was used as pre-test before the treatment. Then, the experimental group went through the intervention in comparison to the control group with no treatment. At the end of the treatment, both groups were exposed to post-test to see if the treatment had any significant effect on the experimental group. It is worth noting that this study was quantitative which included pre-test and post-test and statistically analyzing the result of the data gathered by means of those instruments.

## Procedures

Before the treatment, by means of the ILI placement test at the beginning of the term, the researcher selected 2 intact intermediate female classes (including 20 learners in each class) from among 5 classes. During the study, the participants were randomly assigned into 2 groups, namely experimental and control group. Then, before the treatment, a topic which served the purpose of pre-test was selected and given to both the experimental and the control groups to write. Learners were asked to write at least 120 words in their compositions. The written data of the learners in both groups were analyzed for fluency and complexity according to the method applied by Wigglesworth and Storch (2009). Fluency included the average number of words, T-units and clauses per text and complexity was analyzed in terms of the proportion of clauses to T-units and percentage of dependent clauses to total clauses. More importantly, in order to increase the reliability of the writing scores, rating activities were carried out first by the researcher herself and then by another teacher and later the mean score of two raters for writing pre-test was calculated.

During the treatment, the experimental group (EG) was exposed to explicit instruction of CDs for 10 sessions. In each session, they got familiarized with definitions and examples of some types of CDs proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) who classified them into five domains, four of which were grammatical text features and one of which was a lexical text feature. The grammatical and lexical cohesive tie domains were distinguished and described by Halliday and Hasan (1976) are (a) reference, (b) substitution, (c) ellipsis, (d) conjunction, and (e) lexical ties. The learners were asked to use CDs in their sentences. The treatment was conducted two days a week which included roughly thirty minutes of CDs instruction at the end of each session. Since this study aimed at determining the effects of CDs instruction on the learner's writing fluency and complexity improvement, the control group (CG) received no specific instructions on CDs.

After the treatment, in order to see the effect of CDs awareness on the learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement, the researcher administered the post-test of writing test on the topic learners wrote about in pre-test to see whether any changes and improvements had occurred after the treatment in their writings or not. Also, an inter-rater reliability in post-test was established through double rating some of the written data by another research assistant, that is, the researcher and her co-worker corrected the written data together to establish inter-rater reliability.

## Data Analysis

By means of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software, the researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare the writing fluency and complexity scores of experimental and control groups in pretest and make sure that they were homogeneous. Then, in order to see whether the treatment procedure implemented to the experimental group had any significant effect on this group and to see whether the experimental groups' mean was significantly different from that of the control group, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare their mean scores in post-test.

## 4. Result

Table 4.1 shows descriptive statistics for differences between the experimental and control groups regarding word number in post-test.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics Regarding Word Number in Post-test (Fluency)

| Fluency | Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Word <br> Number | Control group | 18 | 66.38 | 13.08 | 3.08 |
|  | Experimental group | 18 | 114.33 | 33.16 | 7.81 |

According to the mean scores, there was a difference between two groups and an independent-samples ttest was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: T-test for Word Number in Post-test (Fluency)

|  | Levene's <br> Test for <br> Equality of <br> Variances |  |  |  | t-test for quality <br> of means |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. <br> (2- <br> tailed <br> ) | Mean <br> Differenc <br> es | Std. Error <br> Differenc <br> e | 95\% Confidence <br> Interval of the <br> Difference |

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of experimental and control group. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group ( $M=114.33, S D=33.16$ ) and control group $[M=66.38, S D=13.08 ; t(34)=-5.70 p=.00<.05]$, that is, the word number of experimental group was more than control group.

Table 4.3 shows descriptive statistics for the differences between the experimental and control groups regarding t-unit number in post-test. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented, accordingly, in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics Regarding T-unit Number in Post-test (Fluency)

| Fluency | Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | ---: | ---: |
| T-unit <br> Number | Control group | 18 | 5.61 | 1.53 | .362 |
|  | Experimental group | 18 | 9.83 | 4.44 | 1.048 |

According to the mean scores, there was a difference between two groups in regarding t-unit number in posttest and an independent-samples t-test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: T-test for T-unit Number in Post-test (Fluency)

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for quality of means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean Differenc es | Std. <br> Error Differen | 95\% Co <br> Interva <br> Diffe | fidence of the ence |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 8.33 | . 00 | -3.80 | 34 | . 001 | -4.22 | 1.10 | -6.477 | -1.967 |
| Equal <br> variances <br> not <br> assumed |  |  | -3.80 | 21.0 | . 001 | -4.22 | 1.10 | -6.529 | -1.914 |

An independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to compare the scores of experimental and control groups regarding t-unit number. There was a significant difference in scores among experimental group ( $M=9.83, S D=4.44$ ) and control group $[M=5.61, S D=1.53 ; t(34)=-3.80, p=.00<.05]$, that is, the T-unit number of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group in post-test.

An independent-samples t -test was conducted to compare the mean score of the experimental and control groups regarding clause number. The results of the descriptive statistics are as follows (see Tables $4.5)$.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics Regarding Clause Number in Post-test (Fluency)

| Fluency | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Clause | Control group | 18 | 8.11 | 2.34 | .553 |
| Number | Experimental group | 18 | 13.55 | 5.52 | 1.301 |

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between two groups in post-test and an independent $t$-test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: T-test for Clause Number in Post-test (Fluency)
Levene's $\quad$ t-test for quality of means

|  | Test for Equality of Variances |  | t | df | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sig. } \\ (2- \\ \text { tailed } \\ \text { ) } \end{gathered}$ | Mean Differences | Std. <br> Error Differe nce | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 8.43 | . 00 | -3.84 | 34 | . 000 | -5.444 | 1.414 | -8.318 | -2.56 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | -3.84 | 22.9 | . 001 | -5.444 | 1.414 | -8.370 | -2.518 |

An independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to compare the experimental and control group regarding clause number. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group ( $M=13.55$, $S D=5.52$ ) and control group [ $M=8.11, S D=2.34 ; t(34)=-3.84, p=.00<.05]$, that is, the clause number of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean score of the experimental and control groups regarding the proportion of clauses to T-units in post-test. The results of the descriptive statistics are as follows (see Tables 4.7).

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Proportion of Clauses to T-Units in Post-test (Complexity)

| Complexity | Group | $\mathbf{N}$ | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error <br> Mean |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Proportion of | Control group | 18 | 1.46 | .316 | .074 |
| Clauses to T- | Experimental group | 18 | 2.58 | .498 | .117 |
| Units in Pre- <br> test | Exp |  |  |  |  |

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between two groups in post-test and an independent t -test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: T-test for the Proportion of Clauses to T-Units in Post-test (Complexity)

|  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  | t-test for quality of means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig. | t | df | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sig. } \\ (2- \\ \text { tailed } \\ \text { ) } \end{gathered}$ | Mean Differences | Std. Error Differe nce | 95\% Confidence Interval of the Difference |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances | 3.73 | . 06 | -7.9 | 34 | . 00 | -1.113 | . 139 | -1.396 | -. 830 |


| assumed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Equal <br> variances not <br> assumed | -7.9 | 28.7 | .00 | -1.113 | .139 | -1.398 | -.828 |

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the experimental and control group regarding the proportion of clauses to $t$-units in post-test in post-test. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group $(M=2.58, S D=.49)$ and control group $[M=1.46, S D=.31 ; t(34)=-7.99, p=.00<$ .05], that is, the proportion of clauses to t-units of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean score of the experimental and control groups regarding the percentage of dependent clauses of total clauses in post-test. The results of the descriptive statistics are as follows (see Tables 4.9).

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Percentage of Dependent Clauses of Total Clauses in Post-
\(\left.$$
\begin{array}{cccccc}\hline \text { Complexity } & \text { Group } & \mathbf{N} & \text { test (Complexity) } & \text { Mean } & \text { Std. Deviation }\end{array}
$$ \begin{array}{c}Std. Error <br>

Mean\end{array}\right]\)| Percentage of |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Dependent <br> Clauses of | Control group | 18 | 20.48 | 7.23 |
| Total Clauses <br> in Post-test | Experimental group | 18 | 49.44 | 9.24 |

According to the mean scores, there was a significant difference between two groups in post-test and an independent t-test was employed to confirm it (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: T-test for the Percentage of Dependent Clauses of Total Clauses in Post-test (Complexity)

|  | Levene's <br> Test for <br> Equality of <br> Variances |  | t-test for quality of means |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | F | Sig | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | Mean Differenc es | Std. Error Differenc e | 95\% Co Interv Diff | idence of the ence |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 3.97 | . 05 | -10.4 | 34 | . 00 | -28.960 | 2.766 | -34.58 | -23.33 |
| Equal variances not assumed |  |  | -10.4 | 32.1 | . 00 | -28.960 | 2.766 | -34.59 | -23.32 |

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the experimental and control group in posttest. There was a significant difference in scores for experimental group ( $M=49.44, S D=9.24$ ) and control group $[M=20.48, S D=7.23 ; t(34)=-10.47, p=.00<.05]$, that is, the percentage of dependent clauses of total clauses of the experimental group was significantly more than that of the control group.

## 5. Discussion

The present study investigated the effect of explicit CDs instruction on EFL learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement. The results of the study revealed that the experimental groups receiving explicit CDs instruction outperformed the control group. In other words, the writing fluency (i.e., word number, T-unit number, and clause number) and complexity (proportion of clauses to T-units and the percentage of dependent clauses of total clauses) of the learners' writing in the experimental group improved due to the explicit instruction of CDs.

These findings lend support to Lee's (2002) results regarding the positive effect of explicit instruction of cohesion, that is, the students improved their writing skills in the areas of cohesion and directed their attention to the discourse level of texts during revisions. Moreover, the findings can support Majdeddin's (2010) idea about the effectiveness of instruction on increasing use of cohesive ties in writing. Tangkiengsirisin (2010) also reached at the same conclusion.

Also, the results are in line with Mohseni and Behforouz's (2013) and Rassouli and Abbasvandi's (2013) studies investigating the impact of explicit teaching of cohesive devices on Iranian EFL learners' use of these features. The findings of their studies, in accordance with this study, indicated that the instruction could promote the learners' use of cohesive devices. Thus, explicit instruction of CDs is very important since the effectiveness of writers' efforts to prepare a written text appropriately depends mostly on how they manage to use language that best helps the readers move smoothly in the text, understand pragmatics and the writers' ideas and social relations. Therefore, explicit instruction of CDs is undoubtedly a step forward in enhancing students' knowledge of such elements. Explicit instruction can equip learners with ways of making their essays and compositions comprehensible.

Regarding the quality of the learners' writings, the findings indicated that explicit instruction of CDs enhanced learners' writing fluency and complexity and this also implies that the less cohesive knowledge the EFL student has, the lower the quality of composition is. Thus, from the statistical point of view, the cohesive knowledge has a highly significant relationship with the quality of writing. The students who had better background about using cohesive ties appropriately could write more coherent, fluent, complex, and well-organized texts. These findings match Wahby's (2014) study indicating that the use of CDs is related to differences in the quality of students' writing. This may be resulted from the exposure to instruction and feedback, which in turn lead to more knowledge of how language users connect sentences to create textuality. So, instruction increased the competence in producing linguistically wellformed written material and helped learners create meaningful texts that conveyed the information appropriately, fluently and accurately as well as coherently.

However, these results are in contrast with that of Liu and Brain's (2005), Rassouli and Abbasvandi's (2013) and Dastjerdi and Samian's (2011) studies which indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the writing scores and the number of cohesive devices used in the written pieces. It can related to teaching methods or the students' not receiving sufficient training in writing in English.

In sum, according to the results of this study, students should become familiarized with CDs in writing classes and teacher should not rely on the deductive teaching of writing mechanics and practice at the sentence level (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010). As the findings showed, teachers should go beyond structure-level analysis and focus on whole texts which can shift the learners' attention to discourse features that are fundamental in achieving unity. According to Heller (1995) and Hirvela (2004), students should become familiar with the crucial role cohesive devices can play in the logical development of the topic.

## 6. Conclusion

Researchers have paid a lot of attention to learners' writings and studied their problems in writing a text. Cohesion is one of the most important concepts in second language writing. By the application of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, myriad studies on cohesion and coherence in ESL/EFL writing have been conducted (Jafarpur, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000, as cited in Ghasemi, 2013).

According to Salehi (2005, as cited in Behforouz, 2014), cohesion indicates the grammatical and lexical relationship among parts of a text. Different parts of sentences are related to each other through cohesion
(Behforouz, 2014). Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that coherence depends on both external factors such as the background of the reader and context as well as textual cohesion. A text is coherent when a reader understands the function and role of each part of the text in the overall meaning development of it (Alarcon \& Molares, 2011).

Empirical studies demonstrate that cohesion is an important component of any written text and that L1 and L2 learners of English have considerable difficulty in using cohesive devices. In this respect, the present study aimed at examining the effect of explicit CDs instruction on EFL learners' writing fluency and complexity improvement. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers arrived at the following conclusions, that is, CDs instruction has a positive effect on the fluency and complexity of ELF learners' writings. In general, the results of this study lend supplementary support to the idea that awareness of CDS can have a positive effect on learners' writings. In other words, it was shown that the more the learners become aware of CDs, the more their writing fluency and complexity will be improved.

The findings of this study could also be beneficial for language teachers to benefit from the explicit CDs instruction introduced to the experimental group as a part of their own strategies to enhance learners' writing fluency and complexity. Writing instructors, especially EFL teachers, are encouraged to incorporate into their classes the instruction of CDs and their functions in different contexts and different text types. They should design activities to motivate English learners to approach a writing course by sensitizing them to different types of CDs and their applications. Moreover, language learners may be considered as the ones who benefit more than other people from the teaching CDs explicitly. Students are more likely to use CDs as a writing strategy with greater awareness of its contributive role in text organization.

What is more, the issue of CDs instruction and awareness may be useful for policy makers, language planners, curriculum designers and text book developers who are concerned with how learners' writing should be enhanced. Finally, the results also suggest that material developers include sections for introducing and practicing CDs and their different types in various contexts. They should develop suitable texts that contain CDs for learners of various language proficiency levels. The findings help them design more coherent texts to enhance EFL learners' ability to write comprehensible texts. What is more, the explicit CDs instruction identified in this study can be used in teacher training courses, especially for novice teachers.
As any human production, this study has some limitations, thus the findings of the study need to be interpreted after the due considerations of this drawback. The limitations are as follows:

A serious limitation of this study was that it did not take into account the proficiency level, that is, the researcher addressed just one proficiency level, that is, intermediate. In order to make generalizations in a more confident manner, other studies with learners at various proficiency levels could be done to ensure the external validity of these findings. In addition, it seems that researchers can reach better interpretations provided that they consider the effect of explicit CDs instruction on learners' writing fluency and complexity for several sessions before the immediate post-test then be given a delayed posttest. Furthermore, due to learners' linguistic background as well as time limitations, the results of the study must be cautiously interpreted. Last but not least is the scope of the research in conducting the study with only female learners which leaves the results with other gender in an aura of ambiguity.

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# PERFECTIONISM, MOTIVATION AND SELF-EFFICACY OF EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG PERFECTIONISM, MOTIVATION AND SELF-EFFICACY OF EFL LEARNERS. AMONG THE 132 PARTICIPANTS, 87 WERE FEMALE AND 45 WERE MALE WITH DIFFERENT MAJORS IN HIGH SCHOOL. THERE WERE THREE QUESTIONNAIRES IN THIS STUDY; THE ALMOST PERFECT SCALE - REVISED, THE ACADEMIC MOTIVATION SCALE AND THE GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE. REGARDING THE FIRST RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS, THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANCE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND EFFICACY. AS PERFECTIONISM INCREASES, EFFICACY OF THE PARTICIPANTS INCREASES, TOO. CONCERNING THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS, IT IS REVEALED THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANCE CORRELATION BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND EFFICACY. AS FOR HYPOTHESES THREE AND FOUR, IT WAS SHOWN THAT THERE WAS A STRONG AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE VARIABLES. THE LARGEST NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS IN THIS STUDY WENT TO THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND OTHER VARIABLES WHEREAS THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND SELF-EFFICACY WAS LOW. IN ADDITION, IN MOST CASES, THE CORRELATIONS AMONG PERFECTIONISM AND MOTIVATION AND OTHER VARIABLES WERE POSITIVE AND HIGH.


KEYWORDS: PERFECTIONISM, MOTIVATION, SELF-EFFICACY, EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

Face-to-face service professions are characterized by intense interaction and involvement with clients and their problems. Teaching, a face-to-face profession, is among the most stressful jobs in the world as well as having a high degree of turnover.
Perfectionism refers to a set of self-defeating thoughts and behaviors. These are concerned with reaching excessively high and unrealistic goals, even in areas in which high performance does not matter. Perfectionists often engage in overly critical self-evaluations. Failure experiences are often overgeneralized, and they will often pay particular attention to their failures at the expense of their successes. Perfectionists often experience all-or-none thinking, where they believe they are a failure if not all of their goals are completed without any mistakes - they have inflexible notions of what constitutes success and failure. They often experience a fear of making mistakes, and measure their self-worth in terms of productivity and accomplishment. Failure to achieve their goals results in a lack of personal worth (Hewitt, Flett, \& Weber; Broday, 1988; Brophy, 2005; Ellis, 2002; Frost \& Marten, 1990; Shafran, Cooper \&Fairburn, 2002).
The fear of failure, of not being perfect and of not being able to live up to the expectations of themselves and others, can cause overwhelming feelings that lead to procrastination as an avoidance tactic - this allows the individual to avoid a less than perfect performance (Frost \& Marten, 1990). Perfectionists also fear disapproval by others, and believe that if they let others see their flaws they will not be accepted. They commonly believe that others achieve success with minimal effort or stress, while they feel they
have to work hard without obtaining success (Frost \& Marten, 1990). Taken together, these irrational beliefs can lead to the experience of negative emotions, such as shame, guilt and embarrassment (Tangney, 2002).
High-efficacy learners are willing to take risks, believe more in their capabilities, and put additional effort on teaching tasks to be more effective, while low-efficacy learners believe that they cannot change anything or produce positive learning outcomes, and they question their instructional capabilities.This, in turn, causes stress, and long-term exposure to stress causes burnout. Moreover, since a school is a social network of relations among students, teachers and administrators, teachers' sense of efficacy might also affect their sense of collective efficacy (Goddard \& Goddard, 2001; Kurz\& Knight, 2004).

People working in face-to-face professions have to interact more than people working in other professions, and this requires spending more time and being more involved with their clients. They have to solve their clients' problems and while doing that, they may experience "feelings of anger, embarrassment, fear, or despair" (Maslach\& Jackson, 1981, p. 99). However, Maslach and Jackson (1981) argue that it is not always possible to find fast and effective solutions to these problems, which causes frustration.

In the field of education, self-efficacy is an important factor that could influence learners' instructional performance. Bandura (1997) argues that teachers' perceptions of their instructional efficacy play a partial role in determining the academic activities in their classrooms and influence the way students evaluate their intellectual capabilities.

Previous findings have found that self-efficacy plays a role in academic procrastination. Bandura (1995) explains that self-efficacy "refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). Self-Efficacy Theory stems from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Self-Efficacy Theory postulates that people will generally only attempt things that they believe they will accomplish. An individual's self-efficacy plays a big role in how they will approach a task or set of goals. People who are high in self-efficacy will generally see difficult tasks as something to be mastered, rather than avoided. They will show strong commitment to their activities and recover quickly from setbacks.

Conversely, people who are low in self-efficacy typically will avoid challenging tasks, believing they are not capable to perform such tasks and will focus on negative outcomes. It would seem likely then that people with low levels of self-efficacy are more likely to procrastinate than those who are highly efficacious, as procrastinators often have problems setting goals for themselves. Active procrastinators will be more similar to non-procrastinators in terms of self-efficacy beliefs (Chu \& Choi, 2005).

The efficacy of learners' motivation in workplace is of great importance. Instructional experience of researchers shows that some principals of pre-school centers, try more in their activities to do their best and have better instructional performance, so that environmental incentives have less effect on their behaviors, while instructional performance of some their principals are closely related to the outer or environmental factors and incentives. On the other hand, perfectionism dimensions and coping strategies got too less attention as two interpersonal variables in relationship with motivation. Over the last decade, there has been an increasing interest in the relationship between motivation and self-efficacy. Studies on this relationship demonstrate that motivation and self-efficacy could be related, and that a low sense of efficacy could cause demotivation (Brouwers\&Tomic, 2000, Brouwers\&Tomic, 2002; Schwarzer \& Hallum, 2008). Moreover, Bandura (1995) claims that a low sense of efficacy causes learners to feel that academic demands are stressful, which may lead to a decrease in their commitment to teaching and an avoidance of problems in an escapist pattern. This effect, in turn, increases their level of demotivation. The studies done before shows that there is a relationship between the aforementioned variable, but there has been little studies regarding specifically perfectionism and the variables in this study. In a new and different setting, the present study aimed to cast additional light on the relationship between perfectionism and motivation and self-efficacy. And also, the study was done on just English learners; the learners that has little exposure to the language that they learn.

## Significance of the Study

Due to a lack of research in what we are going to study in this research, the present study contributed to the field by exploring learners' motivation experiences, perfectionism and perceptions of self-efficacy, and the relationship among them. Thus, the investigation of these variables could provide valuable data, especially for EFL teachers and administrators in similar settings. Moreover, it could form a baseline for further research that focuses on how self-efficacy and perfectionism and motivation achievement are related in different educational settings, especially in Iran.

At the local level, this study was the first study in its setting, as well as in Mashhad, on the relationship among perfectionism, self-efficacy and achievement motivation. These data could help develop an understanding of EFL teachers working conditions in schools and their needs and expectations, a research field that needs to be explored.

Finally, in light of the results, administrators could develop specific interventions and modify the current educational policies to organize more professional development activities to increase the level of self-efficacy and perfectionism at the same time, if necessary. This could also boost teaching efficacy and create a higher level of student success.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the aforementioned facts, the present study tried to answer the following research questions. Q1. Is there any relationship between perfectionism and self-efficacy of EFL learners?
Q2. Is there any relationship between motivation and self-efficacy of EFL learners?
Q3. Is there any relationship between perfectionism and motivation of EFL learners?
Q4. Is there any difference among perfectionism and self-efficacy and motivation?
Considering the above research questions, the researcher posed four hypotheses.
H1. There is not any relationship between perfectionism and self-efficacy of EFL learners.
H2. There is not any relationship between motivation and self-efficacy of EFL learners.
H3. There is not any relationship between perfectionism and motivation of EFL learners.
H 4 . There is not any difference among perfectionism and self-efficacy and motivation.
The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among relationship among perfectionism, motivation and self-efficacy of EFL learners in Tabadkan District, Mashhad.

## Method

## Participants

This study was run in Ministry of Education in Khorasan-e-Razavi, Mashhad and was conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year. 132 high school learners participated in the study. Among the 132 participants, 87 were female and 45 were male with different majors in high school. Their age ranged between 15 and 18 years old.

## Instrumentation

There were three questionnaires in this study in order to answer the research questions. Each of the questionnaires was answered by the participants of this study.

## A) Perfectionism

The Almost Perfect Scale - Revised (Slaney, Mobley, Trippi, Ashby \& Johnson, 1996) is a 23 -item scale used to assess attitudes people have towards themselves, their performance and towards others. It measures the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of perfectionism. Participants were asked to respond to items such as "I set very high standards for myself" using a Likert-type scale from " 1 - Strongly disagree" to " 7 - Strongly Agree". The Scale consists of three subscales - High Standards, Discrepancy and Order which were attained by totaling scores for particular items. The High Standards and Order reflect adaptive perfectionism and the Discrepancy subscale reflects maladaptive aspects of perfectionism. Scores ranged from 11-77 for adaptive perfectionism and from 12-84 for maladaptive perfectionism, with higher scores indicating higher perfectionism. Slaney and his colleagues (2001) reported internal
consistency coefficients for the APS-R ranging from .82 to .93 and good concurrent and construct validity (Chu \& Choi, 2005). The scale was reported to have a construct validity established by factor analysis and reliability of 0.89 .

Table 1. Perfectionism Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's <br> Alpha | N of <br> Items |
| :--- | :--- |
| 89. | 23 |

## Motivation (B

The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C 28) College Version (Vallerand, Pelletier, Blais, Briere, Senecal\&Vallieres, 1992) is a 28 -item scale used to look at the reasons why people go to college. The Scale consists of three subscales - Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation and Amotivation - which are attained by totaling scores for particular items. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent each of the items on the Scale corresponded to the reason they go to college using a Likert-type scale from " $1-$ Does not correspond at all" to " 7 - Corresponds exactly".

An example of an item on the Scale that participants had to respond to was "For the pleasure that I experience when I read interesting authors". This would represent intrinsic motivation. Scores ranged from 4-28 for amotivation and from 12-84 for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with higher scores indicating higher motivation. Vallerand, et al. (1992) demonstrated adequate levels of reliability and factorial validity. Internal consistency of the subscales ranged from .83 to .86 . The scale was reported to have a construct validity established by factor analysis and reliability of 0.82 .

Table2. Motivation Reliability Statistics
Cronbach's N

Alpha

| 28. | 28 |
| :--- | :--- |

## Self-Efficacy (C

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer\& Jerusalem, 1995) is a 10-item scale created to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy with the aim in mind to predict coping with daily hassles as well as adaptation after experiencing all kinds of stressful life events. Participants were asked to respond to items such as "I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events" using a Likert-type scale from " 1 - Not true at all" to " 4 - Exactly true". The responses for each of the ten items were summed to give a total score. The range was from 10 to 40, with a higher score indicating higher self-efficacy. Scholz, Gutiérrez Doña, Sud and Schwarzer (2002) have demonstrated that the GSE Scale is reliable, homogenous and unidimensional across 25 nations with an internal consistency coefficient of .86 . The scale was reported to have a construct validity established by factor analysis and reliability of 0.94.

Table 3. Self-Efficacy Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's <br> Alpha | N |
| :--- | :--- |
| .94 | 10 |

## Procedure

After choosing the targeted participants, the questionnaires were given to them and the data for the analysis of the study was gathered. After collecting the data from the three questionnaires, the relationship among them was investigated.

## Design of the Study

There were three variables in this study; perfectionism, motivation and learner's self-efficacy. Perfectionism was independent variable and motivation and learner's self-efficacy were dependent ones. This study was an ex-post facto design.

## Data Analysis

In this study, to show the relationship among each of the questionnaires, correlations and regressions were applied.

## Results

## Descriptive Statistics in Males and Females

Gender frequency of the participants is presented in the following table. Out of 132 participants of this study, 45 of them were males and 87 of them were females, that equals to 34.1 percent and 34.1 percent for the males and females, respectively.

Table 4. Gender Frequency

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Valid | Female | 87 | 65.9 | 65.9 | 65.9 |
|  | Male | 45 | 34.1 | 34.1 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

In the following section, the frequency statistics for male participants in relation to each of the variables are presented.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics Concerning the Three Variables

|  | Perfectionism | Motivation | Efficacy |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| N | Valid | 132 | 132 |
|  | Missing | 0 | 0 |
| Mean |  | 95.31 | 119.10 |
| Median | 90.00 | 120.00 | 0 |
| Mode | $95.00^{\mathrm{a}}$ | $123.00^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 25.60 |
| Std. Deviation | 26.72 | 31.25 | 25.50 |
| Variance | 714.21 | 976.82 | $24.00^{\mathrm{a}}$ |

According to Table 5, the mean of the participants' perfectionism, motivation and efficacy equaled $95.31,119.10$ and 25.60 respectively. The median equaled 90,120 and 25.50 . Standard deviation in each of the variables (perfectionism, motivation and efficacy) equaled to be 26.72, 31.25 and 5.56, respectively. Below, the histograms regarding each of the variables are presented.
In relation to perfectionism, participants were categorized as low, medium, and high.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics on Categorization of Perfectionism

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Low | 18 | 13.6 | 13.6 | 13.6 |
|  | Medium | 77 | 58.3 | 58.3 | 72.0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | High | 37 | 28.0 | 28.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

As Table 6 shows, out of 132 participants in perfectionism group, 18 of them were low, 77 of them were medium and 37 of them were high in perfectionism.

Participants were also classified according to their levels of motivation. Regarding the motivation, the following descriptive results were found.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics on Categorization of Motivation

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Valid | Low | 16 | 12.1 | 12.1 | 12.1 |
|  | Medium | 81 | 61.4 | 61.4 | 73.5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | High | 35 | 26.5 | 26.5 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

According to Table 7, out of 132 participants, 16 were low, 81 were medium, and 35 were high in motivation. Below is the histogram in relation to motivation.
Participants were also classified according to their levels of efficacy. Regarding the efficacy, the following descriptive results were found.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics on Categorization of Efficacy

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Valid | Low | 26 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 19.7 |
|  | Medium | 77 | 58.3 | 58.3 | 78.0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | High | 29 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

Similar analyses were run in relation to efficacy. According to Table 8, out of 132 participants in efficacy group, 26 of them were low, 77 of them were medium and 29 of them were high in efficacy.

## Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of the Normality of the Data

Table shows the normality of all the variables (perfectionism, motivation, and efficacy). According to this table, the value of the test for the perfectionism equaled to 0.61 for the male participants and the obtained level of the significance is 0.85 and the value of the test for motivation equaled to 0.73 and the obtained level of significance is 0.65 , and the value of the test for the efficacy equaled to 0.75 for the male participants and the obtained level of the significance is 0.61 which in all the data, the value is greater than 0.05 . So, perfectionism, motivation and self- efficacy are all normal variables.

Table 9. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for All the Variables

|  |  | Perfectionism | Motivation | Efficacy |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| N |  | 132 | 132 | 132 |
|  | Mean | 95.31 | 119.10 | 25.60 |
| Normal Parametersa,b |  |  |  |  |
|  | Std. Deviation | 26.72 | 31.25 | 5.56 |
|  | Absolute | .08 | .11 | .07 |
| Most Extreme Differences | Positive | .08 | .11 | .04 |
|  | Negative | -.06 | -.05 | -.07 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z |  | 1.00 | 1.27 | .86 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .26 | .07 | .43 |

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.

Table 9 shows the normality of all the variables (perfectionism, motivation, and efficacy). According to this table, the value of the test for the perfectionism equaled to 1 for the male participants and the obtained level of the significance is 0.26 and the value of the test for motivation equaled to 1.27 and the obtained level of significance is 0.07 , and the value of the test for the efficacy equaled to 0.86 for the male participants and the obtained level of the significance is 0.43 which in all the data, the value is greater than 0.05 . So, perfectionism, motivation and efficacy are all normal variables.

## Testing the Research Hypotheses

In this section the results related to the research hypotheses are presented.
Regarding the first hypothesis; that is, there is not any significant relationship between perfectionism and efficacy, the following analyses were run.
Table 10. Correlation for Perfectionism and Efficacy

|  |  | Perfectionism | Self-Efficacy |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Perfectionism | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.80^{* *}$ |
|  |  |  | .00 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | 132 | 132 |
| Self-Efficacy | N | Pearson Correlation | $.80^{* * *}$ |
|  |  |  | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .00 |  |
|  | N | 132 | 132 |

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

Table 10 shows the correlation between perfectionism and efficacy. According to this table, the correlation is 0.80 and the obtained level of the significance was found to be 0.00 , which is less than 0.05 . As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significance correlation between perfectionism and efficacy. As perfectionism increases, efficacy of the participants increases, too.

Regarding the second research hypothesis; that is, there is not any significant relationship between motivation and efficacy, the Pearson Correlation analysis was run. Table 11 shows the correlation analysis for motivation and efficacy.

Table 11. Correlation for Motivation and Efficacy

|  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Motivation | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.74^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .00 |
|  | N | 132 | 132 |
| Self-Efficacy | Pearson Correlation | $.74^{* *}$ | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .00 |  |
|  | N | 132 | 132 |

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

According to Table 11, the correlation is 0.74 and the P -value is 0.00 . As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significance correlation between motivation and efficacy. If one of them increases, the other will also increase.

Research hypothesis three was aimed at investigating whether there is any significant relationship between perfectionism and motivation. In order to test this hypothesis, a correlation was run between perfectionism and motivation.

## Table 12. Correlation for Perfectionism and Motivation

|  |  | Perfectionism | Motivation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Perfectionism | Pearson Correlation | 1 | $.61^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .00 |
|  | N | 132 | 132 |
| Motivation | Pearson Correlation | $.61^{\text {** }}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .00 |  |
|  | N | 132 | 132 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
According to the table above, the correlation is 0.61 and the obtained level of the significance was found to be 0.00 , which is less than 0.05 . As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significance correlation between perfectionism and motivation. As perfectionism increases, participants' motivation increases, too.
In relation to research hypothesis 4, the correlation among perfectionism and motivation and efficacy was tested. In order to test the last hypothesis, considering perfectionism and motivation as independent variables and efficacy as dependent variable, regression test was run.

Table 13. Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | $.86^{\mathrm{a}}$ | .75 | .74 | 2.79 |

a.Predictors: (Constant), Perfectionism, Motivation

According to Table 13, the correlation between the aforementioned variables equaled to be 0.86 and R Square equaled 0.75 . For further statistics, an ANOVA was run, too.

Table 14. ANOVA

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Model |  | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 3049.08 | 2 | 1524.54 | 195.41 | $.00^{\text {a }}$ |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Residual | 1006.43 | 129 | 7.80 |  |  |
|  | Total | 4055.51 | 131 |  |  |  |

Predictors: (Constant), Perfectionism, Motivation a
Dependent Variable: Self Efficacy .b
According to this table, the F was found to be 195.41 with the P -value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 . As a result, it can be concluded that the regression was meaningful.

Table 15. Coefficients ${ }^{\text {a }}$

| Model |  | Unstandardized Coefficients |  | Standardized Coefficients |  | Sig. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | B | Std. Error | Beta | t |  |
| 1 | (Constant) | 5.98 | 1.03 |  | 5.79 | . 00 |
|  | Motivation | . 07 | . 01 | . 39 | 7.16 | . 00 |
|  | Perfectionism | . 11 | . 01 | . 56 | 10.13 | . 00 |

Dependent Variable: Self Efficacy .a
Table 15 depicts perfectionism and motivation regression coefficients on efficacy. Perfectionism and motivation's regression coefficient equaled 0.11 and 0.07 respectively. And the $P$-value equaled 0.00 which is less than 0.05 . As a result, independent variables (perfectionism and motivation) have significant effect on efficacy. ( $\mathbf{Y}=\mathbf{5 . 9 8}+\mathbf{0 . 0 7 \times 1}+\mathbf{0 . 1 1 \times 2}$ ).
The current study investigated the relationship among perfectionism, motivation and self-efficacy of EFL learners. The present study enjoyed a correlational design and consists of three separate questionnaires. Before the administering questionnaires, participants were roughly homogeneous in term of their overall characteristics.

Then, the participant were asked to fill out the three questionnaires that perfectionism was considered as an important underlying factor that in one way or another effects on the kind of decision whether or not a person has willingness to be perfect or not.

Finally, Pearson Correlation and an ANOVA were conducted to examine the probable relationship among the teachers' perfectionism, motivation and self-efficacy.

At the end, the statistical analyses of data revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between participants' perfectionism, motivation and self-efficacy.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results of this study that were discussed in the previous chapter, there were strong even though significant correlations between the three variables; self-efficacy, perfectionism and motivation. Moreover, on a study on the relationship between efficacy and motivation among ELT teachers, Cagle (1998) found a strong negative relationship between efficacy and motivation. This may be due to the fact that learners of this study, who had high levels of self-efficacy, had high motivation.

These results of this study are not to some extent in line with the findings of Cagle (1998) who found no significant correlations between self-efficacy efficacy and interpersonal rapport of the learners, even though not very congruent with Cagle's (1998) findings which showed high correlations between efficacy and interpersonal rapport and intellectual excitement, these are the two components related to learners in general.The largest number of significant correlations in this study went to the correlations between perfectionism and other variables whereas the correlation of perfectionism and self-efficacy showed only a number of low correlations with each other. In addition, in most cases, the correlations among perfectionism and motivation and other variables were positive and high.

By doing this research, this study attempted to investigate the relationship among perfectionism, motivation and self-efficacy. It is hoped that some contribution is made to the development of language learning and teaching. By employing an ex post facto design and the statistical techniques of Pearson Correlation, the researcher set on the task of investigating the research questions. The first research hypothesis was proved; there is a significant relationship between perfectionism and self-efficacy. The second and third and fourth research hypotheses were proved as well.
There has been a clear-cut relationship between the three variables of this study so far. Thus, the current study can add to the literature on perfectionism, motivation and self-efficacy. Based on the findings of this study, one can conclude that there is a relationship between these variables two by two.

The findings of this study can be useful if we want to help teachers develop and improve their efficacy and their perfectionism. The present study can, therefore, help researchers and teacher educators recognize the relationship in their classes. Consideration of individual differences is a must for any language teachers.
The subsequent suggestions arising from this study are presented with the hope that other researchers will find them interesting enough to pursue in the future, as a research starts where another has ended and ends where another starts.

1) In order to obtain more generalizable results, this research can be replicated among different samples not necessarily the same level or age.
2) Other age groups can be investigated too.
3) Other studies can be carried out to investigate the effects of the variables and not necessarily investigating the relationships among them that were not measured focally in the present study.
4) Since the present study focused on Iranian participants, similar studies could be done with other nationalities.
5) A study can be done to see whether specifically learner's age has any significant effect or not.

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# THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES OF EFL LEARNERS 

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#### Abstract

THIS STUDY EXAMINED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL LEARNERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND TEST-TAKING STRATEGY. FURTHERMORE, THE STUDY EXAMINED WHAT KIND OF STRATEGIES LEARNERS WITH HIGH AND LOW LEVEL OF SELF-EFFICACY EMPLOY. ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS STUDYING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY. THEY WERE AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL AND INCLUDED BOTH MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS. ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED TO COMPLETE A SELF-EFFICACY QUESTIONNAIRE AND A TEST-TAKING STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE. FINDINGS REVEALED THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN LEARNERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND THEIR TEST-TAKING STRATEGY USE. BESIDES, IN THE INTERVIEW WITH 10 LEARNERS, THE PARTICIPANTS STATED THAT BY EMPLOYING TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES IN TEST SITUATION, THEIR MOTIVATION AND SELF-EFFICACY IMPROVED TO A LARGE EXTENT. INTERVIEWEES WITH HIGH LEVEL OF SELF-EFFICACY SEEMED TO HAVE MORE STRATEGIES IN THEIR DISPOSAL AND INCLINED MORE TO EMPLOY TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES.


KEYWORDS: SELF-EFFICACY, TEST-TAKING STRATEGY.

## 1. Introduction

These days one of the powerful tools for decision making is test. Individuals of all ages and all groups are judged and evaluated with respect to their achievement and abilities. Consequently, doing well on tests has become a great concern for most learners specially those who are more involved with test situations and are more influenced by the result of their performance. Therefore, research on learning processes as a way of helping students to perform better on tests seems necessary. A primary step to attain this goal could be studying test-related factors for ability is not the mere factor that affects learners' performance. There are some cognitive, personality and psychological factors which affect test performance (Hambleton et al., 1991).

Test-taking strategy is one of those cognitive factors that enable learners to use the characteristics and format of a test to increase scores in a test-taking situation (Rogers \& Harley, 1999). Cohen and Upton (2007, p. 211) define test-taking strategies as "those test-taking processes which respondents have selected and which they are conscious of, at least to some degree".

However, there are some elements which may affect the use of test-taking strategies. These elements can differ interpersonally and therefore, cause different ways of employment of test-taking strategies and using different strategies. Consequently, this variety of use and types may lead to diversity in
individuals' achievement. Psychological elements like self-efficacy which change from person to person seem to have an effect on test-taking process and strategies.

Self-efficacy refers to the belief about the capability to perform a task and determine the expectations about the outcome, so self-efficacy belief may lead to certain outcomes and have an effect on the performance and achievement of students. Bandura (1993) defined self-efficacy as "students' beliefs in their efficacy to regulate their own learning, master academic activities and determine their aspirations, level of motivation, and academic accomplishment" (p. 117).

The present study aimed to improve the quality of learning and learners' performance in test situation by investigating some factors that seem to have a major role in learning and assessment.

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

### 2.1. Test-taking Strategies

"Test-taking skills are cognitive skills that allow students to undertake any test-taking situation in an appropriate manner, and to know what to do before, during, and after the test" (Dodeen, 2009). They are transferable skills, where once acquired, students are able to apply them across various subjects and within different situation and conditions (Sefcik, Bice \& Prerost, 2013). Using test taking strategies help students to eliminate any feelings of tension and anxiety that impede them from doing well on a test situation (Austin, Partridge, Bitner \& Wadlington, 1995). So, improving student's test taking strategy can indirectly improve student's achievement. Using test-taking strategies will positively influence student's testing competence and so their academic performance. This is particularly true for low-ability students who perform better than expected (Dolly and Williams, 1986). On the other hand, students who are expected to perform well in test but do not, either lack testing strategies or use poor ones (Vatanapath and Jaiprayoon 1999). Feryal (2007, p.106) states that "good strategy use minimizes failure and enables students to take advantage of learning opportunities". Hirano (2009, p. 158) argues that there are basically distinct types of strategies that respondents use as they do language tests: 1) language learner strategies (the way learners operationalized their basic skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing including the related skills of grammar, vocabulary, and translation), 2) Test-management strategies ("strategies for responding meaningfully to the test items and tasks"), and 3) testwiseness strategies ("strategies for using knowledge of test formats and other peripheral information to answer test items without going through the expected linguistic and cognitive processes").

Vattanapath and Jaiprayoon (1999) examined the effect of teaching test-taking skills on achieving higher scores in English tests. According to the results the participating students achieved higher scores and developed positive attitudes toward the learning of test-taking skills.

Dolly and Williams (1986) investigated the effect of using test-taking strategies on multiple-choice test scores. Results showed that participants who receiving test taking strategy training for several weeks outperformed their counterparts on tests.

Empirical research supports the idea that differences in academic performance among students are largely due to their different learning and study strategies. The strategies, in turn, affect the self-efficacy of the students. In a study carried out by Yip (2012) Two hundred university students participated by completing a revised Chinese version of the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, on examining the extended relationship among the three components. The study revealed two major findings. First, there were important differences among different study strategies used by university students with high academic achievement and those with low academic achievement. Second, the variable of self-efficacy was equally important to differentiate high academic-achieving students from low academic-achieving students at the university level.

In a study carried out by Hong (2014) a structural equation model of relationships among testingrelated motivation variables (test value, effort, self-efficacy, and test anxiety), test-taking strategies (test tactics and metacognitive strategies), gender, and math test performance were examined. Participants of this study were 438 students in 10th grade include 182 males and 256 females. The results revealed that motivation variables influenced the use of test-taking strategies and demonstrated stronger impacts on math performance than did test-taking strategies. Gender differences were found in self-efficacy and test anxiety.

Yılmaz (2010) investigated the English language learning strategies employed by English majors and also explored the relationship between preferred language strategies, gender, proficiency, and selfefficacy beliefs. 140 students ( 23 males and 117 females.) in the department of English Language Teaching at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey participated in this research. For collecting date, a 50item Strategy Inventory for LanguageLearning was administered to students. The results of this study revealed that the highest rank ( $79.4 \%$ ) was for Compensation strategies involve filling any gaps in the knowledge of language through guessing, using gestures, repeating and taking notes while the lowest ( $63.8 \%$ ) was for Affective strategies involve strategies used for handling feelings, attitudes and motivations. The results also pointed to significant differences for the strategies in favor of good learners. This study found that language learning strategies were widely used among more proficient learners than less proficient learners. However, the results of the current research showed some differences regarding Turkish students' preferences for the frequency of usage of learning strategies. Research findings suggest that learners' self-efficacy beliefs were strongly related to their use of all types of learning strategies. In terms of self-efficacy, the emerging picture is that the students with high proficiency reported using Cognitive, Compensation and Metacognitive strategies more frequently than less proficient students. In terms of gender, the strategies that showed significant differences were only affective strategies. The results indicated that there were significant differences between means of affective strategies according to gender in favour of females.

### 2.2. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is of those psychological concepts which can play roles in test-taking strategies used by learners and therefore, affect their test performance. Self-efficacy refers to belief one holds about one's ability to organize and perform courses of action needed to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1998). According to Bandura, the organizer of self-efficacy theory, in any course of action, it is the judgment about our capabilities that determines the expectation about the outcome of action. Individual's behavior and performance is determined by these efficacy beliefs and expectations, and this in turn forms certain outcomes. Bandura (1993) defined self-efficacy as "students' beliefs in their efficacy to regulate their own learning, master academic activities and determine their aspirations, level of motivation, and academic accomplishment" (p. 117). Graham (2011) also relates self-efficacy to individuals' beliefs in their capacity to complete tasks successfully, assumed to have a strong effect on levels of persistence and the choices individuals make. Chamot (1993) states that one of the crucial needs of language learners is having a high level of confidence in successfully completing a task. Learners who have high level of self-efficacy beliefs are persistent when deal with challenging situations and are more successful in academic achievement (Wang \& Pape, 2007).

Zare and Davoudi Mobarakeh (2011) conducted a research to study the relationship between self efficacy and use of reading strategies among Iranian senior high school students. The participants of this study were 45 senior high school students in Shoushtar which were randomly selected. Two questionnaires, one of which measured students reading self-efficacy and the other one measured use of reading strategies were used as instruments in this study. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and use of reading strategies. The result of the study showed that the participants, on averages felt confident of their capabilities to perform general reading tasks. They also demonstrated an acceptable level of using three different subcategories of reading strategies (metacognitive, cognitive and socio affective strategies). According to the study a significant positive correlation was seen between reading self-efficacy and use of reading strategies.

Examining the relationship between self-efficacy and use of language learning strategies among ESL pre service teachers in Malaysia, Siew and Wong (2005) found that teachers with higher degrees of selfefficacy reported to use language learning strategies more frequently than those with lower levels of selfefficacy.

### 2.3. Research Questions

In order to achieve these purposes, the following research questions are designed: Quantitative Questions:

Is there any relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and their use of test-taking 1 strategies?

Qualitative Question:

1. What types of test-taking strategies do EFL learners with high and low self-efficacy employ?
2. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 150 out of 500 learners who were studying English as a foreign language in four language institutes in Quchan, Iran. The participants were native speakers of Persian and English was their foreign language. The subjects were at intermediate level and included 75 male and 75 female learners. All learners were between the ages of 16 and 20 and their mean age was 17. In order to collect qualitative data, 10 learners were chosen to take part in retrospective think aloud interview. The interviewees included learners with high self-efficacy and ones with low self-efficacy according to the results of self-efficacy questionnaire in this study.

### 3.2. Design

This study intended to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and test-taking strategies. The current study employed a mixed-method design, which included both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Researcher employed random sampling to choose participants from among learners in institutes.

### 3.3. Instruments

### 3.3.1. Self-efficacy Questionnaire

The participants' self-efficacy was measured using the scale used by Rahemi (2007) in her study (Appendix A). Self-efficacy questionnaire was intended to seek information regarding participants' beliefs in their own capabilities. The inventory consists of 10 multiple choice items written using a 5 -point Likert-type scale. All statements in questionnaire were positively worded. The participants were asked to rate the degree to which each item applies to them on a scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was 0.82 .

### 3.3.2. Test-taking strategy Questionnaire

To measure subjects' test-taking strategies, a 5-point Likert rating-scale questionnaire: 1 (Never) to 5 (Always) adopted from Rezaei (2006) was used (Appendix B). Subjects were required to choose the option which exactly indicated the degree of using or not using the specific strategy introduced in that statement while answering the questions of a language test. All statements were positively worded except for items 1 and 20, which were negatively worded to increase the instrument's reliability. This inventory includes 22 multiple choice items with the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.76 . 3.3.3. Interview

In order to find the relationship between self-efficacy and test-taking strategies, and also to investigate what kinds of strategies learners with high and low levels of self-efficacy employ, 10 learners were interviewed. The interviewees included learners with the highest levels of self-efficacy and ones with the lowest levels of self-efficacy. To obtain the data, retrospective think aloud protocol was performed. It's a form of think aloud protocol performed after the testing session activities, instead of during them.

### 3.4. Procedure

### 3.4.1 Data Collection

In order to find the level of learners' self-efficacy and test-taking strategies, participants were asked to complete the related questionnaires.
3.4.2. Data Analysis

Data collected from the two questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 19. In order to investigate any relationship between self-efficacy and test-taking strategies, a Pearson product moment correlation was conducted. The qualitative data that came from the
interviews were transcribed and analyzed following the general qualitative analysis techniques and specific interview analysis techniques.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Quantitative Data

Data analysis procedures for this phase of the study included calculating descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations for the whole sample.

Table 4.1.Descriptive Statistics for Age, Self-Efficacy and Test-Taking Strategy

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Age | 150 | 16.00 | 20.00 | 17.1600 | 1.40504 |
| Self-efficacy | 150 | 28.00 | 48.00 | 39.0100 | 4.83149 |
| Test-taking Strategy | 150 | 50.00 | 95.00 | 75.6900 | 9.33409 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 150 |  |  |  |  |

### 4.1.1. Result of Self-Efficacy and Test-Taking Strategy

The first question in this study investigated the relationship between the EFL learners' self- efficacy and their use of test-taking strategies. A Pearson product moment formula was used and the correlation between self-efficacy and test-taking strategy was computed. The result of the analysis showed that there was a significant, positive relationship between self-efficacy and test-taking strategy, $r=.447, p<.05$. Learners with high level of self-efficacy employ test-taking strategies more. Therefore, the first research hypothesis was rejected. The effect size (.44) was moderate. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.Correlations between Self-Efficacy and Test-Taking Strategy

|  |  |  | Test-taking <br> Strategy |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Self-efficacy | Pearson Correlation | Self-efficacy | $.447^{* *}$ |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 150 | 150 |
| Test-taking Strategy | Pearson Correlation | $.447^{* *}$ | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 150 | 150 |
| ** Corran |  |  |  |

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

### 4.2. Qualitative data

At the qualitative phase of this study, the researcher attempted to discuss the effects of self- efficacy on test-taking strategy use with ten participants. In the interview, participants stated that by employing testtaking strategies in test situation, their motivation and self-efficacy improved to a large extent. "When I employ test-taking strategies in a test situation my scores get better and this makes me feel better and believe my skills" (Interviewee 8).Although they had always found tests as a stressful situation, they were more successful in performing in English tests by using these strategies. "Tests were always like a nightmare for me, but when I learned test-taking strategies and how to employ them, I found myself released from stress in test situation". (I1) Not only this kind of strategies improved learners' motivation and self-confidence, but it also improved their score on a test. They also declared that the presence of testtaking strategies is very helpful and by employing them, they are ready to produce more accurate answers in test situation. "Surely if I want to just rely on my knowledge of subject matter, I'm not able to perform very well and get such a good score, so employing test-taking strategies is very effective" (I2).

According to the interview, there was a difference between learners with high levels of self-efficacy and learners with low levels of self-efficacy regarding employing test-taking strategies. Interviewees with high levels of self-efficacy had more strategies in their disposal and inclined more to employ test-taking strategies. Planning time while taking a test, avoiding guessing when there is a penalty for incorrect responses, starting with the easiest questions and then answering the hard ones, skipping hard questions, managing time to overview the test were some general guidelines which are used by both interviewees with high and low levels of self-efficacy. But, according to interviewees' responses, some strategies just are used by high self-efficacy learners and they don't work for learners with low self-efficacy. Relying on first impression when answering questions, reading questions before the text in reading comprehension tests, using punctuation marks in understanding the text, guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context, analyzing the structure of words (prefix, suffix and stem), using transition words in a sentence and also using some strategies in writing tests such as brainstorming, spider gram, outlining, clustering, free writing, drafting, revising and editing are the most common strategies that are used frequently by high self-efficacy learners. All of the learners stated they use test-taking skills in multiple choice tests, reading comprehension tests and true-false tests more.
The participants have found using test-taking strategies very supportive and contributive to overcoming their fear and lack of confidence in test situations. In fact, helping learners utilize test-taking strategies more effectively gives them more self-confidence. The results of interview were summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Strategies Used by Learners with High and Low level of Self-Efficacy

| Strategies Used By Both Learners |  | Strategies Just Used By High Self-Efficacy <br> Learners |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| General Strategies | Specific Strategies | General Strategies | Specific Strategies |
| Planning time while <br> taking a test | Eliminating unlikely <br> answers (MC) | Getting enough sleep <br> the night before the test | Reading Questions <br> before the test (RC) |
| Avoiding guessing <br> when there is a penalty <br> for incorrect responses | Selecting answers that <br> are longer and more <br> descriptive (MC) | Relying the first <br> impression when <br> answering questions | Scanning and <br> Skimming (RC) |
| Starting with the easiest <br> questions and then <br> answering the hard <br> ones | Getting a clue from <br> similar answers (MC) | Getting use of <br> punctuation marks(RC) |  |
| Skipping hard <br> questions* | Noticing emphasized <br> words (underlined, <br> bolded, italicized, or <br> capitalized) (MC) | Pay attention to some <br> words such as extreme <br> modifiers and <br> qualifiers (T/F) | Guessing the meaning <br> instructions unknown words <br> from the context(RC) |
| Anefully |  |  |  |



Using transition words(RC)

## 5. Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and test-taking strategy use. With regard to first objective that investigated the relationship between these two variables, a Pearson product moment formula was utilized and the correlation between self-efficacy and test-taking strategy was computed. The result of the analysis showed that there was a significant, positive relationship between self-efficacy and test-taking strategy, $r=.447, p<.05$. It shows that students with high level of self-efficacy, employed test-taking strategies more than students with low level of selfefficacy. Also in order to find the relationship between self-efficacy and test-taking strategies, ten learners with the highest and the lowest level of self-efficacy were interviewed through retrospective think aloud protocol. In the interview, the participants stated that by employing test-taking strategies in test situation, their motivation and self-efficacy improved to a large extent. It also revealed that there was a difference between learners with high level of self-efficacy and learners with low level of self-efficacy regarding employing test-taking strategies. Interviewees with high level of self-efficacy had more strategies in their disposal and inclined more to employ test taking strategies.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and test-taking strategy among EFL intermediate learners. Regarding the relationship between these two variables, the study showed a significant positive relationship. According to the results of interview employing test-taking strategies has an important effect on learner's motivation and self-efficacy in test situation. It also indicated that learners with high level of self-efficacy have more strategies in their disposal and are more inclined for employing these strategies.

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## Appendix A:

## Self- Efficacy Questionnaire <br> Dear student,

Below are beliefs and feelings that some people have about learning foreign languages. Read the statements and then decide if you:
(5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (2) disagree , (1) strongly disagree.

There is no right or wrong answers. Mark your ideas in the answer sheet.

1. I have got a special ability for learning English.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

2. I believe I have the power to get my desired grade in English final exam.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

3. I think that someday I will speak English very well.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

4. I am sure I can solve any problems I face in learning English because I've got the power to do it.

| $\mathbf{1}$ | $\mathbf{2}$ | $\mathbf{3}$ | $\mathbf{4}$ | $\mathbf{5}$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $\mathbf{5}$ 5. Personally, I'm satisfied with my current level of English proficiency. |  |  |  |  |
| $\mathbf{1}$ | $\mathbf{2}$ | $\mathbf{3}$ | $\mathbf{4}$ | $\mathbf{5}$ |

6. I'm definitely sure that I can improve my English by trying more.

| $\mathbf{1}$ | $\mathbf{2}$ | $\mathbf{3}$ | $\mathbf{4}$ | $\mathbf{5}$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |


| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

7. If I do not do well in this lesson, it is only because I do not exert enough effort.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

8. Generally speaking, my self -confidence in English classes is high.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

9. Learning English is a very easy task.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

10. I try to study English to reach the highest level of ability in it.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

## Thank you very much!

## Appendix B: Test Taking Strategies Questionnaire

| (5) Always,(4) Frequently, (3) Sometimes, (2) Rarely, (1) Never |  |  | 3 | 4 |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. The best time for preparing for a test is the night before the test. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. While answering the questions in a test, if I know what I should do I do not spend my time reading the directions of the different parts of the test. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. I answer the easy questions first and I leave the difficult questions until last. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. I try to eliminate the options that I am sure are incorrect and then I choose the correct answer from among the remaining options. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. If two options imply the correctness of each other, I choose neither or both of them. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. In a four-option multiple-choice test, I choose one of the two options which is correct and implies the incorrectness of the other one. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. I restrict my choice to those options which cover all or two or more given statements known to be correct. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. In answering a particular question, I utilize relevant content information in other test items and options. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. If two alternatives are correct, then I look for a third which includes these two. I choose that option as a correct answer. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. I look for similarities among options and identify these as incorrect. The remaining one may be the correct answer. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. In Reading Comprehension questions, I certainly review the questions before I read the text. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. In Reading Comprehension questions, if a question asks for a number or a name, I scan the text to find the correct answer. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. While reading a text, I try to keep in mind all the details as in answering the questions I may not find any time to go back and scan it. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. In order to get a general idea of the text I survey it before reading it carefully. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15. Punctuation Marks are very important for me in understanding a text completely. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16. I examine options which are noticeably longer than the others in the set as these may be the correct answers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. I look for an association, usually semantic or grammatical, between a word or phrase in the stem and a word or phrase in one of the options which cues the answer. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18. I pay close attention to an adverb (time, place, manner ...) as it can help me find the correct answer in a test of grammar. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19. In a test of grammar, first I read the stem carefully in order to find a clue and then I answer the question. Then I go through the options to find the one option which corresponds to my answer. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. In tests of vocabulary, I must know the meanings of all words as the punctuation marks and discourse markers cannot be of any help to me. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21. Analysis of the structure of words (prefix, suffix and stem) helps me finding the meanings of unknown words in tests on vocabulary. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22. Transition words in a sentence help me to get the meaning of a particular word or the whole sentence. |  |  |  |  |  |

# بررسى تاثير هوش معنوى بر اخلاق حرفه ای كادريزشكى بيمارستان آيت اله طالقانى چالوس 

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جكيده:







 كليد وارة: هوش، هوش معنوى، معنويت، اخلاق حرفه ایى، سازمان


#### Abstract

مقدمهد          

بكيريم. (ساغروانى، 1388: 9-10).   چرخشى پارادايمى از »انسانِ كاوِ شيرده راضى نئوكلاسيكهاء، به انسانى تعالى جوى كمالخواهـ (فرهنكى و ديكران، 1385: 2-3).


بيان مسئله








نشده است.
فرد براى ارتقا هوش معنوى خود لازم است ارتباط خود را در سه زمينه مورد بررسى بيشتر قرار دهد: اول ارتباط با با خالق خويشى دور دوم اري ارتباط با با خويشتن، و و هايتاً ارتباط با


بعد كوجك تر افزايش خواهد يافت．مديريت سازمان با آكاهى نسبت بها اين موضوع بايد در جهت افزايش مهارتها و توانايىهاى هوش معنوى كاركنان سـازمان اقدام كنند． متاسفانه آشنايى لازم نسبت باه هوش معنوى در سـازمانهاى امروزى وجود ندارد و نيز نسبت بـه تأثير آن بر اخلاق حرفـه ای تاكيدى صيورت نگرفته است．اين مسـأله، محقق
 علاوه بر اين، بدون شك اخلاق حرفه ای جزء اولويتهاى اساسى مديران ارشد هر سـازمانى مىباشد و به تبع آن در بيمارستان نيز دستيابى باه ميزان بالاى اخلاق حرفه اى
 ای كه متأسفانه كريبانگير هر سـازمانى مىتواند شود را كاهش دهيم． با توجه باه بررسى تحقيقات انجام شـده در مورد دو متغير هوش معنوى و اخلاق حرفه ای، مسئلـه ایى كه مورد توجاه محقق قرار گرفت بررسى تاثير اين دو متغير روى هم مى باشـد．
／هميت وضبرورت موضوع

 كند．

ضرورت ديگر طرح اين موضوع ظهور دوبارهى كشش معنوى و نيز جستجوى درك روشنترى از ايمان و كاربرد آن در زندگى روزانه مىباشـد．با توجاه باه آنكه معنويت و هوش معنوى در ايجاد ارزشها و ديدكاههاى افراد نقش عمدهاى ايفا مىكند، بررسى اين مفهوم در ادبيات كسب و كار بسيـار ضرورى و حياتى خواهد بود، چرا كه افراد با چيزى
 مىگذارند．（ساغروانى و غيور ، 1388：27）． از طرف ديكر، يكى از دغدغه هاى مديران كارآمد در سطور ،

 فشار زيادى قرار هستند، چرا كه در محيطى شفاف（نسبت به كذشتـه）كار مى كنند و اعمال و رفتارهاى آهها به صـورتى روشن و واضح در انظار عمومى جلوه گر مى شـود． بنابراين، مجموعه ای رهنمودهاى اخلاقى و ارزشى كاه مديران را در رفتارها و اعمال سـازمانى يارى مى نمايد و نوعى هماهنگى و وحدت رويـه در حركت بـه سـوى شيوه مطلوب جمعى و عمومى ميسر مى سـازد، باء عنوان يكى ضرورت اساسى مطرح گرديده و مورد توجها مديران قرار گرفتـه است．



رسوخ كند．（اميرى، همتى و مبينى، 1389：138）．


 هوش معنوى بر اخلاق حرفه ای از موضوعات مهم قابل بحث در حوزه پزشكى بوده كهه مطالعه آن از اهميت ويثهه ایى برخوردار است．
／هـداف پثوهش
اين تحقيق داراى يكـ هدف اصلى و 4 هدف فرعى مى باشد：
هدف اصلى پ夫وهش：بررسى تاثير هوش معنوى بر اخلاق حرفه ایى كاركنان
اهداف فرعى پثوهش：
— 1 بررسى تاثير هوش معنوى بر مؤلفه » احترام باه حقوق و شـان منزلت انسان＂در اخلاق حرفه اى كاركنان
2 －بررسى تاثير هوش معنوى بر مؤلفه»روح رقابت« در اخلاق حرفه ای كاركنان
3 －بررسى تاثير هوش معنوى بر مؤلفه»مسئوليت پذيرى《 در اخلاق حرفه ای كاركنان
4 4
پيشـينه تحقيق
تحقيقات داخلى هوش معنوى
1－يعقوبى، ذوقى پايدار، عبدالله زاده و محققى درباره رابطه بين هوش معنوى اخلاق حرفه ای دانشجويان دانشُكاه بوعلى سينا همدان（1393）انجام داده، اين پثوهش



## Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)



 محققى، 1393).




 سلامت روانى با هم تفاوت معنادارى دارنده،.(لطفى و سيار ، 1392)





 توسط انتشارات روان سنجى تهيه و منتشر شده است.،( كشميرى و عرب احمدى، 1388).



ساغروانيو ذبيحى1392).
تحقيقات داخلى اخلاق حرفه ایى
1-برهانى و ديكران تحقيقى با عنوان "




ارتباطات بين فردى و محدوديت هاى محيطى بالينى باشند. (ب برهانى، الحانى، محمدى و عباس زايّى زاده، 1390)



. 1388





تحقيقات خارجى هوش معنوى
1-جاين و هاروهيت (2006) تحقيقى در رابطه با بررسى هوش معنوى افراد سالمند انجام دادند. بنابراين200 شهروند سالخورده از ايالت هاى مختلف را انتخاب كردند، كهـ




تعاريف، مدل و ابزار كيرى هوش معنوى انجاميده استا كاست. (كينگ، 2008).
 بنابراين 500 نفر را بطور تصادفى از 5 زندان در نيجريه انتخاب شدند اند. از اين تعداد 458 مرد و 42 زن بودند. نتايج ارتباط معنادار مثبتى بين متغيرهاى مستقل و سازكارى

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { زندانيان را نشان داد، در ابتدا براى هوش هيجانى (r=0/95) و در ادامه هوشى معنوى (r=0/83) و نهايتاً بهره هوشى (r=0/79)بودند. } 3 \text { متغير مستقل 2/93 كل متغير ملاكى را } \\
& \text { مشاركت داشتند. (آنى ماساهان، 2010 201 ران } \\
& \text { 4-آمرام(2009) تحقيقى با عنوان »سههم هوش هاى هيجانيانى و معنوى بر رهبرى تجارى كاراء انجام داد. جامعه آمارى اين تحقيق را } 42 \text { سازمان CEO و } 210 \text { نفر از كاركنان }
\end{aligned}
$$

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { دهد. ( آمرام، 2009). }
\end{aligned}
$$

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { معنوى برداخته و از ديدكاه فلسفى اين مفاهيم را بررسى و ارتباط هوش معنا } \\
& \text { تحقيقات خارجی اخلاق حرفهاءى }
\end{aligned}
$$

فرضيه هاى تحقيق
فرضيهه اصلى تحقيق: هوش معنوى بر بر اخلاق حرفه ای كاركنان تاثير دارد.
فرضيها هاى فرعى ثرُوهش:
1-1 هوش معنوى بر مولفه احترام بها حقوق و شان منزلت انسان در اخلاق حرفه ای تاثير دارد.
2- هوش معنوى بر مولفه روح رقابت در اخلاق حرفه ای تاثير دارد.
3- هوش معنوى بر مولفه مسئوليت پذيرى در اخلاق حرفه ایى تاثير دارد
هوش معنوى بر مولفه امانت و درستى در اخلاق حرفه ایى تاثير دارد.

## تعاربف مفهومى متغيرها:


 1-تفكروجودى انتقادى: ظرفيت تفكر انتقادى طبيعت موجوديت، حقانيت، عالم هستى، فضا ، زمان، مركـ و ديكر موضوعات وجودى يا متافيزيكى است.(كينگ، 2008:

2-ارائه مفهوم شخصى: توانايى ساخت مفهوم شخصى و مفهوم تجربيات ذهنى و فيزيكى، شامل ظرفيت توليد و تسلط بر هدف ون زندىى.(كينگ، 2008: 61)




 ایى دربيمارستان آيت الله طالقانى چالوس استا
 قلمرو زمانى اين تحقيق يك محدوده زمانى جند ماهـه از از فروردين 1393 تا آذر آنـر 1393 را در بر برمى ايكيرد.



 قابليت تحليل را دارا نبودند و در نهايت تعداد 197 پرسششنامه براى تحاى تحليل مورد استفاده قراد

شيوهها و ابزارهاى گرددآورى دادهها وار ارتباط آنها با مدل تح انحقيق در اين تحقيق از دو روش كُردآورى اطالاعات يعنى روشا
 صايكاههاى اينترنتى انجام شده است احت



1- بررسى ميزان هوش معنوى كاركنان كينگ (2008)(سؤالات 1 تا 24)

| سؤالات | شـاخص ها | مؤلفه ها | متغير مستقل |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 <br> 3 <br> 5 <br> 9 <br> 13 <br> 17 <br> 21 | "تفكر درباره سرشت و طبيعت حقيقت زندگى" "تفكر درباره هدف يا علت وجودى خويشتن" »تفكر عميق درباره بعد از مرگ" <br> » آكاهى كامل نسبت به مسـائلى از قبيل: زندكى، مرك، حقيقت و موجوديت" "تفكر درباره اتفاقاتى كه در زندگى فرد مى افتد" »تفكر ردباره ارتباط بين انسـان و آرامش جهانى" »اعتقاد به وجود قدرت يا نيرويى برتر در جهان" | تفكر وجودى انتقادى |  |
| 7 <br> 11 <br> 15 <br> 19 <br> 23 | "توانايى در يافتن معنا و هدف زندگى براى انطباقپٍيرى با موقعيت هاى پر <br> تنش" <br> "تعريف هدف براى زندگى" <br> »يافتن علت و هدف شكست در زندگى" <br> "توانايى در تصميم كيرى بر مبناى اهداف زندكى »توانايى در يافتن معناى تجربيات و اتفاقات روزانهـ" | ارائه مفهوم |  |
| $\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 6 \\ 10 \\ 14 \\ 18 \\ 20 \\ 22 \end{array}$ $6$ | »"توانايى تشخيص ابعاد عميق تر از بعد جسمانى" <br> "توانايى درك مسـائل غير مادى" <br> »آكاهى نسبت به وجود ارتباط بين فرد و ديگران" <br> "توانايى تعريف خويش با ويرگى هاى غير مادى " <br> "آكاهى كامل نسبت به جنبه هاى معنوى زندگى " <br>  <br> افراده <br> »افزايش تمركز با تشخيص وجود ابعاد معنوى در زندگى" | آكاهى متعالى |  |
| $\begin{array}{r} \hline 4 \\ 8 \\ 12 \\ 16 \\ 24 \end{array}$ | » افزايش ميزان سطح هوشيارى" » "توانايى افزايش يا كاهش ميزان هوشيارى(ورود و خروج باه سطوح مختلف)" "توانايى در افزايش اختيارى ميزان هوشيارى" "توسععه مهارت هاى افزايش هوشيارى" | كسترش حالت هوشيارى | $\begin{aligned} & \text { G} \\ & \xi \\ & \xi \\ & \varepsilon_{0} \\ & \underline{g} \end{aligned}$ |

كوياههاى پرسشنامه هوش معنوى در طيف پنج درجهاى ليكرت (كاملاً نادرست، نادرست، گهكاهى، موافقم، بسيار موافقم) تنظيم شـده اند. لازم باه ذكر است كها پرسشـنامه



مؤلفهاها، شـاخصها و سؤالات اخلاق حرفه ایى

| شـؤاره | شـاخص ها | مؤلفه ها |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\begin{aligned} & 1 \\ & 2 \\ & 3 \\ & 4 \\ & 5 \\ & 6 \end{aligned}$ | » <br>  <br>  " تفحص و جمع آورى اطلاعات صرفا مرتبط با بيمارى" » تعهد اخلاقى نسبت باه مسـائل شخصى بيمار" » در اختيار قرار دادن اطلاعات محرمانه بيمار در صورت قانونى بودن" | احترام به حقوق و شـان منزلت انسـان | $\begin{aligned} & \frac{G}{6} \\ & 6 . \\ & 6 \\ & 6: \\ & 6 . \\ & 6 . \end{aligned}$ |



كوياههاى پرسشنامه اخلاق حرفهاى در طيف پنج درجهاهى ليكرت( خيلىكم، كم، متوسط، زياد و خيللزياد) تنظيم شدهاند.

از ضريب آلفاى كرونباخ براى تعيين پاياياي پرسشنـامه استفاديه شد، كها نتايج آن در ادامه بيان شده است:
جدول: ضريب آلفاى كرونباخ متغيرهاى تحقيق

| ضريب آلفاى كرونباخ | متغير | رديف |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $0 / 815$ | هوش معنوى | 1 |
| 0/786 | اخلاق حرفه إى | 2 |

روايى پرسششـنامه هـا
پرسششنامه هوش معنوى كينگ(2008)، از طريق توزيع آن در بين خبركان روايى آن مورد تاييد قرار گرفته است. خبركان مورد نظر براى بررسى پرسشـنامه تحقيق داراى
 آن مورد تاييد قرار كرفت.
 حد مورد قبول مى باشـد. تحليل داده هـا

 دادههاى بدون پاسخ با ميانگين ديگر دادههاى مربوطه جايگزين شدند و سوالات منفى دوباره كدگذارى شـدند. در بخش تحليل استنباطى ابتدا به بررسى فرض نرمال بودن
 بين مولفه ها و متغير مربوطه پرداخته شود. تحليل توصيفى سؤالات پرسششنامه

تحليل توصيفى سؤالات متغير هوش معنوى از لحاظ مؤلفه تفكر وجودى انتقادى - سؤالات 21و17و13و9 و5 و3 و1 مؤلفها تفكر وجودى انتقادى را مورد بررسى قرار مى دهد.
 مرك ، حقيقت و موجوديت " به ميزان 22/3 درصـد است است
تحليل توصيفى سؤالات متغير هوش معنوى از لحاظ مؤلفه ارائه مفهوم شخصى

- سؤالات 7 و11و15و19و23 مؤلفاء ارائه مفهوم شخ ارئى را مورد بررسى قرار مى دهد.

بيشترين موافقت مربوط به شاخص" درك اهداف و معانى تجربيات روزانه " باه ميزان 81/7 درصد است و كمترين موافقت مربوط باه شاخص " درك تجربـا شكست " به ميزان 6/6 درصد است
تحليل توصييفى سؤالات متغير هوش معنوى از لحاظ مؤلفه آكاهى متعالى
سؤالات 2و6 و10و14و18و20و22 مؤلفه آكاهى متعالى را مورد بررسى قرار مى دهد.
بيشترين موافقت مربوط به شاخص" تشخيص ابعاد غير مادى زندگى " به ميزان 75/6 درصد است و كمترين موافقت مربوط به شـاخص " درك سخت مسـائل غير مادى " به ميزان 28/5 درصيد است
تحليل توصيفى سؤالات متفير هوش تجارى از لحاظ مؤلفه كسترش حالت هوشيارى
سؤالات 4و8 و12و16و24 مؤلفه كسترش حالت هوشيارى را مورد بررسى قـرار مى دهد.
بيشترين موافقت مربوط به شاخص" افزايش ميزان سطوح هوشيارى " به ميزان 82/7 درصد و كمترين موافقت مربوط به شاخص " دانستن نتايج بحث و انتخاب حالت هاى بالاتر هوشيارى " باه ميزان 10/2 درصيد است .
تحليل توصيفى سؤالات متغير اخلاق حرفه ای از لحاظ مؤلفه احترام باه حقوق و شأن منزلت انـلت انسـان سؤالات1و2 و3 و4 و5 و6 و7 و8 مؤلفه احترام باه حقوق و شـأن منزلت انسـان را بررسى قرار مى دهـ دهد
بيشترين موافقت مربوط به شاخص" در اختيار قرار دادن اطالعات بيمار تحت شرايط خاص " به ميزان 85/3 درصد است و كمترين موافقت مربوط باه شاخص " پذيرش
 تحليل توصيفى سؤالات متغير اخلاق حرفه ای از لحاظ مؤلفه روح رقابت سؤالات 9و 10و 11و 12 و 13 و 14 و 15 و 16 مؤلفه روح رقابت را مورد بررسى قرار مى دهد.
 فعاليت علمى در صورت داشتن منفعت و ادامه تحصيل در برنامه هاى آتى" بها ميزان 6/6 درصد است بانـ تحليل توصيفى سؤالات متغير اخلاق حرفه ای از لحاظ مؤلفه مسـؤليت پـذيرى سؤالات 17 و 18 و 19 و 20 و 21 و 22 مؤلفه مسؤلّيت پذيرى را مورد بررسى قرار مى دهد.
 مشـاركت فرايندها و روياه هاى پاسخخويى در زمينه شغلى خود " بها ميزان 2/0 درصيد است . تحليل توصيفى سؤالات متغير اخلاق حرفه ای از لحاظ مؤلفه امانـي
سؤالات 23 و 24 و 25 و 26 و 27 و 28 مؤلفه امانت و درستى را مورد بررسى قرار مى دهد.
 همكاران در هنكام مواجه شـدن با معضل ، عدم ورود در كارهايى كاء موجب فريب بيمار مى شود ، توضيح علت استفاده هر دارو براى بيمار " به ميزان 1/0 درصيد است

شـاخص هاى برازش مدل اوليه

| نتيجهه | مقدار | دامنه مورد قبول | عنوان شاخص |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| رد مدل | 5/1 | $\mathrm{X} 2 / \mathrm{df} \leq 3$ | $\mathrm{X}^{2} / \mathrm{df}^{20}$ |
| تاييد مدل | 0/000 | RMSEA<0.09 | RMSEA ${ }^{21}$ |
| رد مدل | 0/89 | GFI>0.9 | $\mathrm{GFI}^{22}$ |
| رد مدل | $0 / 8$ | AGFI>0.85 | AGFI |
| تاييد مدل | 0/94 | CFI>0.90 | $\mathrm{CFI}^{23}$ |


| تاييد مدل تاييد مدل | $0 / 94$ | $\mathrm{IFI}>0.90$ | $\mathrm{IFI}^{24}$ |
| ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| مدل | $0 / 91$ | $\mathrm{NNFI}>0.90$ | $\mathrm{NNFF}^{25}$ |
| مدل\| | $0 / 89$ | $\mathrm{RFI}>0.90$ | $\mathrm{RFI}^{26}$ |

بيشنهادات اصلاحى ليزرل :



اين اصلاح مدل نهايى حاصل شد.


مقادير استاندارد مدل نهايى
 اخلاق حرفهاءى را اندازه كيرى مى كنند.

| تاثير شاخص ها در مدل | مبراورد | مقدار استانداردشده | خطاى <br> استاندارد | T مقدار | مقدار واريانس تبيين شده(R) | سطح معنى دار | نتيجه، |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. هوش معنوى بر اخلاق حرفه | $0 / 59$ | $0 / 64$ | $0 / 08$ | 8/96 | $0 / 58$ | $\mathrm{P}<0.01$ | تاييد شاخص |
| هوش معنوى بر احترام به حقوق و شان منزلت انسان | 2/43 | $0 / 57$ | $0 / 28$ | 8/62 | 0/33 | $\mathrm{P}<0.01$ | تاييد شاخص |
| هوش معنوى بر روح رقابت | 2/66 | $0 / 6$ | $0 / 29$ | 9/14 | $0 / 36$ | $\mathrm{P}<0.01$ | تاييد شاخص |
| هوش معنوى برمسئوليت پـذيرى | 0/99 | 0/91 | 0/07 | 14/1 | 0/82 | $\mathrm{P}<0.01$ | تاييد شاخص |
| هوش معنوى بر امانت و درستى | 1/00 | 0/92 |  |  | 0/84 | $\mathrm{P}<0.01$ | تاييد شاخص |

با توجه به جدول بالا، نتايج تحليلى هر يك از شاخص هاى مدل يابى معادلات ساختارى بها شرح زبر است












بررسى نتايج فرضيات
فرضيه اصلى تحقيق: هوش معنوى بر اخلاق حرفه ای تاثير معنادارى داردي


 فرضيه فرعى اول: مولفه احترام بها حقوق و شـان منزي









 متغير اخلاق حرفه ایى نيز ارتقا پيدا مى كند








 برخورد براى بيماران آشنا و غرببه، افزايش يابند ميزان مولفه امانت و درستى نيز افزايش مى يابد كها بها تبع آن متغير اخلاق حرفه ایى نيز ارتقا يبدا مى كـند

بيشّنهادات تحقيق





 مفهوم شخصى مى باشد، لذا براى ارتقا اين مولفه بايد شاخص هاى ״توانايى در يافتن معنا و هدف زندكى براى انطباقيذيرى با موقعيت هاى پر تنش"، » ״ تعرفـ هدف براى

## Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)

> آشنا و غريبهاء افزايش پيدا كا كنند.
> براى تحقيقات آتى نيز يششنهادات زير ارائه شـده است:


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 يعقوبى ابوالقاسم، رابطه بين هوش معنوى و بهداشت روان دانشجويان دانشكاه بوعلى.مجموعه مقالات جهارمين سمينار سراسرى بهداشت 1387.

 بورْمهرانى مهدى، رابطه بين هوش معنوى و اختلالات شخصيت را با استفاده از پرسشنامه ميلون و پرسششنامه هوش معنوى در بين 110 نفر از مادران شهرستان عان عانى آباد كتول. 1387

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    Mohammad Reza Talebinejad
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    METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS
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    FROM TEACHER ISOLATION TO TEACHER COLLABORATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS
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    WHAT'S HIDDEN IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS?
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    Hamed Shaygan Nasab and Saeed Taki
    RAPPORT AND EFL LEARNERS' MOTIVATION: PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS VS. PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN IRAN
    Hasti Heidarpour and Saeed Taki

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[^3]:    ${ }^{4}$ This is a framework for reading and listening which matches the appropriate score to each text based on degree of difficulty of text and each text was given a Lexile score from zero to four.

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[^5]:    * Significant at $\mathrm{P}<0.05$

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[^7]:    KEYWORDS: LANGUAGE PLANNING, GUIDED AND UNGUIDED PLANNING, ACCURACY, COMPLEXITY, FLUENCY

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