

# Journal of Language Teaching and Research

ISSN 1798-4769

Volume 2, Number 1, January 2011

## Contents

---

### REGULAR PAPERS

- Rituals and Beliefs Ingrained in World Language Pedagogy: Defining Deep Structure and Conventional Wisdom 1  
*Brigid Moira Burke*
- Negotiating Tasks in EFL Classrooms 13  
*Luu Trong Tuan*
- Impact of Discussion Boards to the Success of English Lesson 26  
*Harun Yilmaz and Duygu Sağlam*
- The Reading Motivation and Reading Strategies Used by Undergraduates in University Teknologi MARA Dungun, Terengganu 32  
*Badariah binti Sani, Muhammad Noor bin Wan Chik, Yah binti Awg Nik, and Nor Adeena binti Raslee*
- When the Blind Lead the Blind: the Fallacy of Promoting Standard British English Accent in Cameroon 40  
*Aloysius Ngefac*
- Non-native Teacher Talk as Lexical Input in the Foreign Language Classroom 45  
*Eunice Tang*
- The Effect of Using Instructional Conversation Method in Teaching Reading Comprehension in Selected Junior Secondary Schools in Kaduna Metropolis 55  
*Hanna Yusuf*
- A Study on the Development of Strategic Tools in Study Orientation Skills towards Achieving Academic Excellence 60  
*Mohd. Ghani Awang and Suriya Kumar Sinnadurai*
- The Relation between Success and Absenteeism at Esogu English Preparatory School 68  
*Ümit Özkanal and Nadire Arıkan*
- Linguistic, Ideological, and Cultural Issues in Chinese and English Argumentative Writings 73  
*Jie Zhang*
- The Influence of Incidental and Intentional Vocabulary Acquisition and Vocabulary Strategy Use on Learning L2 Vocabularies 81  
*Minoo Alemi and Alireza Tayebi*
- Formative Assessment in Classrooms: Operational Procedures 99  
*Liqiu Wei*
-

---

The Relationship between Critical Thinking Ability of Iranian EFL Learners and Their Resilience Level Facing Unfamiliar Vocabulary Items in Reading <i>Zahra Kamali and Mansoor Fahim</i>	104
Types of Explicitation within the Texts in Chinese-English Translation—A Case Study on the Translation of Chapter Titles of <i>Hong Lou Meng</i> <i>Hong Guo</i>	112
The Effect of Social Status and Size of Imposition on the Gratitude Strategies of Persian and English Speakers <i>Vajiheh Ahar and Abbas Eslami-Rasekh</i>	120
Corpus-based Stylistic Analysis of Tourism English <i>Ning Kang and Qiaofeng Yu</i>	129
(Post)-Methodism: Possibility of the Impossible? <i>Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi</i>	137
Chinese Tour Guides' Strategies in Intercultural Communication—Implications for Language Teaching and Tourism Education <i>Ying Huang</i>	146
Applying the Reader-response Approach in Teaching English Short Stories to EFL Students <i>Sarvenaz Khatib</i>	151
On Cultural Differences and Translation Methods <i>Hongmei Sun</i>	160
A New Approach to Teaching English Poetry to EFL Students <i>Mohammad Khatib</i>	164
A Feasibility Study of Error Analysis on the Teaching of Chinese-English Translation—A Case Study of Non-English Major Freshmen in BUPT <i>Yunhong Zhang and Baoling Wang</i>	170
Mnemonic Instruction: A Way to Boost Vocabulary Learning and Recall <i>Mohammad Amiryousefi and Saeed Ketabi</i>	178
An Empirical Study on the Relationship between Metacognitive Strategies and Online-learning Behavior & Test Achievements <i>Yuhui Liu and Hao Feng</i>	183
Field-dependence/independence as a Factor Affecting Performance on Listening Comprehension Sub-skills: the Case of Iranian EFL Learners <i>Shiela kheirzadeh and Zohreh Kassaian</i>	188
On Implicit Mode of Speech Reporting in Chinese Advertisements <i>Jianwu Peng</i>	196
The Presence of Turkish Accent in the Iranian Turkish Speaking People's Farsi Contrasted with its Absence in Their Speaking English: Minimal Overwhelms Maximal Bilingualism <i>Ataollah Maleki</i>	201
A Probe into Chinese Learners' Negative Cultural Transfer in EFL <i>Honglin Zhu</i>	212
Reading-writing Connections in EAP Courses: Cross-linguistic Summary Protocols <i>Abbas Emam</i>	216

---

---

Length-based Bilingual Sentence Alignment in Different Literary Forms <i>Jun Zhao</i>	229
Analysis on the Main Factors Affecting the Reliability of Test Papers <i>Jiang Zhu and Lemeng Han</i>	236
Investigating the Construct Validity of the FCE Reading Paper in Iranian EFL Context <i>Elahe Tavakoli and Hossein Barati</i>	239
On Adding Cultural Contents to English Teaching <i>Yanping Huang</i>	248
On the Translation of Children’s Literature <i>Yu Zhang</i>	251
Analysis of Power and Threat Manifestation in the Discourse of Traffic Police Officers: A CDA Perspective <i>Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi, Mehdi Latifi, and Elham Mohammadi</i>	255
Towards the Abolition of Hierarchy—On O’Connor’s Racial Ideas in her Works <i>Jiping Yang</i>	261
Validity Considerations in Designing an Oral Test <i>Wei Li</i>	267
Deepening ESP Reading Comprehension through Visualization <i>Seyyed Mahdi Erfani, Abutaleb Iranmehr, and Hossein Davari</i>	270
Three Models of Equivalence in English Translation of Chinese Classics in the Light of the Theory of Translation as Selection and Adaptation <i>Guodong Zhao and Xiao Liu</i>	274
Exploring Cultural Knowledge in EFL Teaching in an EAVSC <i>Leijuan Hou and Zhihong Lu</i>	279

---



# Rituals and Beliefs Ingrained in World Language Pedagogy: Defining Deep Structure and Conventional Wisdom

Brigid Moira Burke

School of Teaching & Learning, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, United States  
Email: bburke@bgsu.edu

**Abstract**—Why are so many teachers *still* not using communicative methods or making communicative language teaching (CLT) a part of their daily instructional approach? Many world language teachers seem to possess certain beliefs about language teaching, and perform particular rituals, which emphasize rote grammar learning and translation. Teachers' beliefs, based on their values and experiences, significantly influence their methods. Deep structure, molded by conventional wisdom shared by teachers, constitutes a barrier that inherently makes it difficult to change world language pedagogy. Teachers need support from inside and outside their classrooms to try new methods in order to break away from rituals and beliefs world language teachers have valued for centuries.

**Index Terms**—conventional wisdom, deep structure, educational reform, teacher beliefs, world language education

## I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

For many years, researchers and national organizations have attempted to initiate positive change in U.S. world language education. Years ago, the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (1979) recommended numerous changes to better world language instruction at secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, calling for "a major, sustained national effort to raise American competence in foreign languages to levels commensurate with our nation's needs" (p. 11). Their principle concern was "the failure of schools and colleges to teach languages so that students can communicate in them" (p. 11).

The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1999) devised content standards to guide teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers at both state and local levels to begin to improve world language education in U.S. schools. The eleven-member task force that created the document envisioned a future in which students would develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical.

And, most recently, the Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007, p.3) advocated in a report that language majors at the university level "should become educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence," with the capability to operate between languages. Teachers would focus on students' ability to function as informed and capable interlocutors and use a more holistic cross-curricular approach to language learning and teaching. Students would understand the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture.

Since the late 1800s, U.S. educators and the public have witnessed considerable tinkering with school curricula that does not seem to have had much direct effect in classrooms (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Tye, 2000). Politicians, policymakers, and national organizations devise recommendations and report research to the public with the intent of improving curriculum and instruction in classrooms. These reports often result in a top-down approach to reform, leaving school administrators and teachers with little to no support to implement the suggested changes effectively. Moreover, the *deep structure of schooling* (Tye, 1987, 1995, 2000), a broad range of deeply embedded structures (i.e. curriculum, schedule, school and classroom layout) found in U.S. schools, continues to influence teaching methods, further impeding meaningful and long-lasting change in classrooms.

Although certain researchers have shown the benefits of using a communicative model of language teaching to teach world languages, attempts to reform world language instruction to reflect more communicative methods and goals, in the U.S. as well as in the rest of the world, have remained for the most part unsuccessful (Berns, 1984, 1990; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Nunan, 1991; Savignon, 1983, 1997, 2002). Many U.S. world language teachers—elementary, secondary and post-secondary—continue to focus primarily on grammar and translation and use English as the medium of instruction when designing curriculum and teaching lessons (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Hall, 2004). As a result, many students continue to fail to develop an appropriate degree of communicative competence, or translingual and transcultural competence (MLA, 2007; Savignon, 1983, 1997).

From my observations in the past twenty four years in elementary, secondary and post-secondary world language classrooms in the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, the deeper problem

seems to be that teachers have limited experience with communicative language teaching (CLT). Teachers are not given opportunities in *their classrooms* with *their students* to learn about CLT and the theories that support this approach to world language pedagogy. Instead, teachers' beliefs, based on their values and experiences as world language students, significantly influence their methods (Goodlad, 1974, 2004; Lortie, 1975, 2002). If teachers experienced language learning with a heavy emphasis on grammar learning and the use of translation, and if they value the intricate study of grammar and use of translation in their own learning, then they also are likely to use more of a grammar-translation approach to teach world language.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a theory as to why—after more than thirty years of research—so many teachers *still* are not using communicative methods or making CLT a part of their daily instructional approach. It is crucial to discuss and research these questions if we are to proceed toward facilitating the development of communicative competence, or translanguaging and transcultural competence, in students at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

Here I propose that world language teachers may not use communicative methods consistently, whether or not they are Advanced or Superior speakers and writers (ACTFL, 1999, 2001) of the world language they teach, because they possess certain beliefs about language teaching, and perform particular rituals, which emphasize rote grammar learning and translation. Educators have valued many of these beliefs and rituals for centuries (Musumeci, 1997; National Educational Association, 1894). Borrowing from Tye (1987, 1995, 2000), I refer to these commonly shared beliefs as *conventional wisdom* and the prevalent rituals as *deep structure*.

The term deep structure should not be confused with Chomsky's (1965) theory of transformational generative grammar. Recalling the deep structure term used by Chomsky (1965) to describe his theory of transformational generative grammar, the applied linguist and second language researcher may readily grasp Tye's meaning. In Chomsky's linguistic theory, transformations represent different surface structures, or grammatical forms, of the same underlying deep structure, or meaning. 'John is easy to please' may be different in form from 'It is easy to please John', but both have the same deep structure or underlying meaning. Even if some teachers promote CLT, certain rituals and beliefs may be so ingrained in the structures of world language classrooms that viable change in U.S. world language pedagogy may be impossible.

This paper aims to begin to define deep structure and conventional wisdom as it pertains to world language education, particularly relative to why and how it influences teachers' beliefs, and world language curriculum and instruction. It appears that the deep structure in world language classrooms, molded by the conventional wisdom shared by teachers, constitutes a barrier that inherently makes it difficult to change world language pedagogy.

In what follows, the terms CLT and communicative competence are reviewed, and then the notion of deep structure is operationalized. Next, the question is posed as to what may have been the source of the deep structure embedded in present day world language pedagogy in the U.S. After that, common rituals and beliefs are presented; formulating what specifically could be defined as the deep structure and conventional wisdom visible in world language classrooms. Concluding remarks offer some hope about how deep structure might change, so that students can be enabled to communicate more effectively in the world language they learn in elementary, secondary, or post-secondary classrooms.

## II. COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

World language teachers that focus on communication in classrooms and facilitate students' development of communicative competence use a communicative approach to language teaching (CLT) (Burke, 2006, 2007; Savignon, 1983, 1997). Savignon (1983, 1997), following Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), asserts that together the components of grammatical competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic competence offer a model of communicative competence as a basis for curriculum design and classroom practice. Her model closely resembles what the MLA committee (2007) emphasizes in its explanation of translanguaging and transcultural competence.

CLT teachers create curriculum and instruction that promote students' development of communicative competence (Burke, 2006; Savignon, 1983, 1997). They use instructional methods such as immersion, where both the teacher and students speak only the world language during class, and provide students with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). Teachers design and implement student-centered activities and contextualized lessons in which students are given opportunities to use the language they are learning (Burke, 2006; Berns, 1990; Ellis, 1982, 1997; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983). In order to encourage beginner language learners to use the world language, they teach students strategies before, during, and after implementing communicative activities (Burke, 2006; Savignon, 1983, 1997). Communicative activities in CLT classrooms focus on communication and encourage socialization between students in the world language (Burke, 2006, 2007). Grammatical competence remains integral to the development of communicative competence; however, implicit grammar teaching may occur more often than explicit grammar teaching in a CLT teacher's classroom (Burke, 2006). Grammatical competence can be developed by relating grammar to learners' communicative needs and experiences in CLT classrooms (Ellis, 1997; Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

## III. OPERATIONALIZING DEEP STRUCTURE

According to certain researchers and educators in the field of world language education, teachers are the main obstacle to reform in classroom practice (Glisan, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001, 2003, 2005; Musumeci, 1997, 2002). Musumeci (2002) asserts, “one of the biggest obstacles in language teaching practice is teachers’ perception that there is not enough time to do what they are currently doing, let alone to do more or to try something different” (p. 161). Brown (1994) proposes that the grammar-translation method may remain so popular because it “requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers” (p. 53). He adds that students have “little motivation to go beyond grammar analogies, translations, and rote exercises” because of how they are tested by their teachers and on standardized world language tests (p. 53).

Tye (1987, 1995, 2000) uses the term deep structure to explain why school reform is unsuccessful. She identifies a broad range of structures that have remained deeply embedded in U.S. schools, such as, the use of space and time in schools, the organization of curriculum and the practice of tracking. For Tye (2000), deep structure is “a composite of widely held beliefs about what schools are for and how they should function, coupled with a number of inhibiting forces that actively seek to prevent change in how schools are put together and work” (p.23). Deep structure resides within the walls of U.S. schools and is held together by the conventional wisdom, “a sort of ideological glue” of its people (p.37). For Tye it is “part and parcel of what we absorb in the process of becoming socialized within a particular culture, and it settles into the taken for granted and usually unexamined aggregation of beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions that form our world view” (p.25).

Tye argues that conventional wisdom impedes innovation and progress in the curriculum, asserting that unless society sees a need for a shift in its own daily practices, school systems will not change their practice according to theory. Change in deep structure will only occur when society wants something different from its schools. Tye (2000) claims, “Educators cannot change the ‘deep structure’ of schooling”(p. 13). She believes that deep structure “accommodates changes that are compatible and defeats changes that are not” (p. 23). She asserts that change is more likely to succeed at the “unique personality level,” or school-level (p. 155). She encourages reform to be site-specific and teacher-driven.

Figure 1 may be helpful to understand the relationship between deep structure and conventional wisdom, showing that there is a possibility for both to change. It is difficult to say if deep structure first influenced conventional wisdom or vice versa, but it does seem that they do influence each other. If conventional wisdom were to change, deep structure also would be affected. If the deep structure were to change, then it seems logical conventional wisdom also would be altered. In both cases, it seems that the change instigator would need to be transformative.

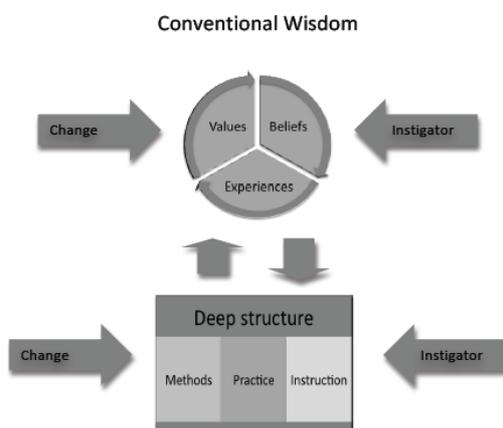


Figure 1: Deep structure-conventional wisdom relationship with possibility for change

In addition to Tye, several other scholars suggest a myriad of theories and explanations as to why teachers teach the way they do, and why successful educational reform is difficult to attain (Berlak and Berlak, 1981; Goodlad, 1974, 2004; Lortie, 1975, 2002; Metz, 1990; Tyack & Tobin, 1994). Tyack and Tobin (1994) relate well to the concept of deep structure in their identification of the “grammar” of schooling, adding further to the linguistic lexicon being used to define failed school reform (p. 454). They point out that certain structures and rules that organize instructional work in schools have remained stable for decades. Schools continue to organize time and space in particular ways, classify students and assign them to certain classrooms, and divide the school day into subjects. The solidity of the grammar impedes change in schools. Tyack & Tobin (1994) explain:

Practices like graded classrooms structure schools in a manner analogous to the way grammar organizes meaning in language. Neither the grammar of schooling nor the grammar of speech needs to be consciously understood to operate smoothly. Indeed, much of the grammar of schooling has become so well established that it is typically taken for granted as just the way schools are. It is the *departure* from customary practice in schooling or speaking that attracts attention. (p. 454)

Tyack and Tobin allege that the grammar of schooling persists because it enables teachers to do their job in a predictable fashion and to cope with everyday tasks that school boards, principals, parents, and students expect them to

perform. If teachers are asked to implement change, they may suffer cognitive and emotional strain because it moves away from what they are accustomed to doing. If they attempt to change their methods, they are required to persuade students, colleagues, parents, and school boards to accept new behavior as normal and desirable. To avoid complete refusal to change, Tyack and Tobin advise that reform efforts be designed according to local needs and knowledge.

In his study of schooling, Goodlad (1974, 2004) found that teachers used traditional teaching methods that did not promote critical thinking. Teachers lectured, monitored seatwork, and implemented activities that required only rote learning. Goodlad concluded that teachers often use the same methods in their classrooms that they themselves experienced from elementary school through college. If teachers are to use innovative techniques, Goodlad ensures that they must be provided with opportunities to see and use them in their classrooms.

Lortie (2002, p. 61) likewise suggests that the “apprenticeship of observation” influences both the way teachers teach and the way schools function. Students implicitly serve as apprentices of teaching as they observe their teachers teach year after year. Like Goodlad (1974, 2004), Lortie believes that teachers frequently teach as they were taught.

Goodlad (1974, 2004), Lortie (2002), and Tyack and Tobin (1994) developed their own terms to explain the deep structure found in schools, but they only allude to the existence of conventional wisdom and its power to influence deep structure and undermine school reform, or even small scale change in classrooms. Tye’s identification of what molds the deep structure sets her apart from the others, and is essential in explaining why the deep structure remains an obstacle to change. In addition to understanding Tye’s notion of deep structure and conventional wisdom, it is important to speculate about the possible roots of the deep structure embedded in present day world language pedagogy in the U.S.

#### IV. INFLUENCES FROM THE "OLD"

For centuries, teachers worldwide have chosen not to put second language acquisition theory into practice because of their own beliefs, values and past experiences related to world language pedagogy. In Musumeci’s (1997) study, she traced language teaching philosophy and methodology as far back as the fourteenth century. She investigated writings of three influential Western European language educators and philosophers, and found that these men were essentially trying to reform world language pedagogy just as several researcher-educators are today worldwide. Guarino Guarini (1374-1460), Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), and Johannes Amos Comenius (1592-1670) all advocated for teachers to use a communicative approach to language teaching. All three reformers, from different time periods, agreed that teachers should use authentic texts, speak Latin exclusively during instruction, and design contextualized lessons. Musumeci, however, found that teachers did not take the reformers’ advice. They relied on their students’ first language during instruction, employed translation throughout, promoted explicit grammar instruction and memorization of rules, and focused on linguistic accuracy. Oral and written communicative lessons were avoided with beginning-level students and content-based instruction took place only in advanced-level course.

Although teaching language as communication was advocated by Western reformers of Latin curricula in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Musumeci, 1997), curriculum designers of U.S. secondary school education in the nineteenth and early twentieth century still were more influenced by the more traditional grammar-translation model. One of the earliest documents to examine curriculum in U.S. schools, including Latin, Greek and other modern languages, was the *Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies* (National Educational Association, 1894). At that time educators gathered nationwide to make decisions concerning curriculum and instruction in secondary schools, establishing what may have contributed largely to the deep structure of U.S. schooling. The report submitted to the Committee of Ten by those scholars attending the Conference of Modern Languages offers a perspective on the deep structure of U.S. world language education.

The committee recommended that students begin studying French or German at the age of ten because of the “greater ease with which they can be taught and learned, and because of their closer relation to the interests and ideas of to-day” (National Educational Association, 1894, p. 96). They believed that modern language study trained students’ memory, developed their sense of accuracy, and quickened and strengthened their ability to reason. Studying modern language helped students understand English sentence structure and “the real meaning of English words” (p. 96). Students’ minds were broadened “by revealing to them modes of thought and expression different from those to which they have been accustomed” (pp. 96).

For elementary-level French and German, the committee advocated familiarity with the rudiments of grammar, translation at sight of a passage of easy prose containing no rare words, flawless pronunciation, and recognition of words and easy sentences when they were uttered. For more advanced French and German, they suggested students develop proficiency in more advanced grammar, translate ordinary German and standard French, write a paragraph in the modern language, and follow a recitation and then answer questions asked by the instructor in the modern language. The main objective was to learn to read in the language.

The committee also encouraged teachers to cover as much curriculum as possible and upheld the native speaker ideal, suggesting enforcement of correct pronunciation at all times. The foreign language was to be used as often as possible during class, besides during “set conversation activities” (p. 100). Grammar and translation exercises were promoted along with oral repetition with the teacher.

The committee was careful to emphasize the need for well-prepared teachers: “The worst obstacle to the progress of modern language study is the lack of properly equipped instructors” (p. 103). They recommended that universities, states, or cities provide teachers with opportunities for proper training.

The advice given by the Committee on Modern Languages over a century ago in many ways resembles world language teaching methods and curriculum found in classrooms in the twenty-first century, even ten years after the creation of the National Standards (1999). From my observations over the years in a variety of U.S. schooling contexts, it seems that the committee’s suggested focus on grammar, translation, repetition, reading at sight (emphasizing translation again), native-like pronunciation, and covering a certain amount of material have molded the deep structure of modern U.S. world language curriculum. These same structures appear to be prominent, even dominant, in many world language classrooms today.

Teachers today, as Latin teachers did in Western Europe centuries ago, still reject second language acquisition theory and research that validates that students benefit from a more communicative approach to language teaching. There are, of course, exceptions. Although research that documents specific observation of the teaching methods of U.S. world language secondary teachers in educational and modern language journals is scant, assertions have been made by respected methodologists that high school teachers continue to focus predominantly on grammar (Allen, 2002; Burke, 2006; Connor-Linton, 1996; Lozano et al., 2002). Many teachers refrain from planning and implementing meaningful communicative experiences for their students (Burke, 2006; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Hall, 2004); theory continues *not* to meet practice.

## V. DEFINING DEEP STRUCTURE AND CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IN WORLD LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

In my study (Burke, 2005) with secondary world language teachers, through analysis of data collected from teacher questionnaires, written reflections, observations and field notes, common values and beliefs (conventional wisdom) and specific instructional rituals (deep structure) were identified in these teachers’ classrooms. Common values and beliefs, or conventional wisdom, were found to be relative to what the teachers thought was essential to world language teaching and how they described world language curriculum and instructional methods. Rituals, or deep structure, were embedded in the teachers’ instructional methods. In many cases, instruction did not appear to promote the development of communicative competence in students, and may have impeded world language learning. Here the focus is on what beliefs and rituals emerged from these teachers, but the same beliefs and rituals seem to be valued by teachers in many elementary, secondary and post-secondary classrooms. Further study is imperative to identify additional values, beliefs and rituals of world language teachers in the U.S., and worldwide, which perpetuate and mold the conventional wisdom and deep structure in classrooms.

### A. *Conventional Wisdom*

After visiting countless world language classrooms in the past twenty-four years, I hypothesize that the values and beliefs of the teachers in my study (Burke, 2005) are similar to those of many other U.S. world language teachers. It seems that most world language teachers value teaching to the four skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Teaching culture may occur, but often as an add-on or as a topic separate from language. Additionally, teachers believe that students can *master* the language and therefore enforce grammatical accuracy in instruction and assessment.

#### 1. Teaching to the Four Skills.

The four skills have been essential components to world language curricula since the Committee of Modern Languages submitted their report to the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies (National Educational Association, 1894). In communicative language teaching, language is not separated into skills, but instead involves interpretation, negotiation, and expression of meaning through written or spoken discourse (Savignon 1983, 1997). The focus is on communication rather than on teaching one skill at a time. In most activities in world language teachers’ classes, students can be seen reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a variety of ways. The purpose of the activity and the way students communicate determines whether students are engaged in studying separate skills or developing their communicative competence.

Culture was not considered in the curriculum by the Committee on Modern Languages in 1894, and did not gain widespread attention by secondary world language teachers until recently. Brooks (1968) proposed the notion that culture should constitute an important component in the development of proficiency forty years ago, and in the last few decades several scholars have attempted to show the significance of teaching culture in classrooms (Kramsch, 1988, 1995; Petherbridge, 1976; Simpson, 1997). Nevertheless, teachers have not viewed culture as an integral curriculum component until the American Council of Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proposed the National Standards (1999). ACTFL advocates that teachers create opportunities in which students make connections and comparisons between the U.S. and other world cultures in world language classrooms, as well as promote diverse perspectives on cultural products and practices (National Standards, 1999). Discussion of what culture is, and what methods teachers should use to teach it in classrooms, has been at the forefront of discussion in world language education only in the past decade (Durocher, 2007).

#### 2. Teaching for Mastery of the Language and Grammatical Accuracy.

Savignon (1983) uses ‘mastery’ when she defines grammatical competence as “mastery of the linguistic code, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological features of a language and to manipulate these features to form words and sentences” (p. 37). Grammatical competence is demonstrated “by using a rule, not by stating a rule” (p. 37). In my observations, most students at the beginning level of world language study are neither interested nor linguistically capable of *mastering* complex grammatical rules. Through trial and error, effective communication and comprehensible pronunciation should be encouraged by teachers (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983) instead of trying to enforce mastery of the world language.

In world language classrooms, students and teachers should be able to communicate with each other while developing their grammatical, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic competence, and teaching of grammar and communication as two separate entities should be avoided. Grammatical competence should be developed by relating grammar to learners’ communicative needs and experiences (Ellis, 1997; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Savignon, 1972). In certain classrooms where CLT is practiced, implicit grammar teaching may occur more often (Burke, 2006). Explicit grammar teaching can take place in classrooms promoting CLT when the teacher or students determine that they are ready to learn particular rules in order to help negotiate meaning, or when that particular form is needed in order for the students to communicate (Ellis, 1999; Fotos, 1994; Lightbown, 1998; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Norris & Ortega, 2001).

### B. Deep Structure

Rituals discussed below were observed in the teachers’ classrooms in my study (Burke, 2005), and have been seen in many other world language classrooms in the U.S. Readers who frequently visit or teach in world language classrooms will no doubt also recognize the structures as commonplace. Deep structure activities that do not appear to promote communicative competence and that possibly hinder student learning of the world language include: phrase and story translation, vocabulary presentation through word lists, review through drill and translation games, book activities that focus on grammar learning, and grammar practice worksheets, and non-contextual explicit grammar teaching. In addition, teachers frequently may use the audio-lingual method, teach language separately from culture, and use an unnecessary amount of English during classroom activities. Certain methods and practices recommended more than a century ago by the Committee of Ten continue to be ever-present in world language classrooms.

#### 1. Use of Translation.

Translation often occurs in the form of vocabulary presentation and review. When many teachers introduce a new unit, they distribute word lists, or refer students to a page in the textbook that has vocabulary translated. Students and teachers work together to translate the vocabulary words written on the lists in the world language to English or vice versa. Most teachers expect students to memorize these lists. Similar to the Committee of Ten’s proposal (National Educational Association, 1894), teachers in my study (Burke, 2005) asked students to learn seven hundred to eighteen hundred words during one school year. In order to memorize these word lists, teachers can be found reviewing vocabulary through drill exercises and games, such as, Verbo, Backs to the Board, White boards, Fly Swatter, Tic Tac Toe Verb, word searches, and crossword puzzles.

All of these games are intended to stress memory training and sense of accuracy (National Educational Association, 1894) instead of meaning. The games focus on forms (Ellis, 1997; Long, 1988, 1991) and vocabulary through drill and translation, and there is no context except that the words and forms came from the list being studied. Traditional language teaching treats language as an object of learning and consists of lessons being taught where structures are taught explicitly in a decontextualized manner in which students are expected to learn through drills and translation exercises (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Skehan & Foster, 1999). During these games, the majority of students seem engaged and enthused most of the time. Without asking students to apply the grammatical forms and new vocabulary, it is uncertain if students remember the structures long-term or if they are able to use them in a communicative setting (Savignon, 1983, 1997). Certain teachers seem to review or drill vocabulary with the students, not so they can communicate in the language, but so they can *cover* the material for the unit of study and their students can pass the next test.

#### 2. Grammar Practice.

Most world language teachers assign activities (*actividades, activit s,  bungen, etc.*) out of the textbook, and/or grammar practice worksheets that they either create themselves, or obtain from other sources. Teachers often go over some or all of the answers to these written grammar activities in class. They direct student responses and give them feedback, acknowledging correct or incorrect answers. Teachers may ask students to repeat answers after correcting a grammatical form or pronunciation, or they recite the correct form or pronunciation and move on to the next question. Most of the time, textbook activities and grammar practice worksheets promote study of the language through translation and conjugation. Focus is mainly on sentence-level structure with explicit attention to form. For the most part, these activities have no personal meaning to the students doing the activity. Students seem bored and unmotivated to participate, but when called on, they recite their responses.

Similar to proposals made by the Committee of Ten to stress familiarity with the fundamentals of grammar and native-like pronunciation (National Educational Association, 1894), many world language teachers today are still adamant about explicit attention to form through practice and drills during completion of textbook activities and grammar practice worksheets as seen in my work (Burke, 2005; Burke, 2006). Teachers attempt to *cover* material and

prepare students for tests during these worksheets discussions. Attempts to promote communicative competence are absent. Language is given a meaningful context at times, but more often it is an unfamiliar and uninteresting one for a diverse group of students.

Certain world language education scholars have encouraged teachers to implement communicative activities in a certain order, focusing on forms, or grammatical structures, and then moving to more functional/interactional activities (Littlewood, 1981; Paulston, 1976; Rivers, 1971, 1973, 1976, 1983). Rivers (1971, 1973) divided language learning into skill-getting or skill-using and then renamed it microlanguage learning and macrolanguage use (1976, 1983). Similarly, Littlewood (1981) suggested the shift from pre-communicative activities, involving structural and quasi-communicative activities to communicative activities, or functional communication activities and social interaction activities. A communicative activity is just that, an activity where communication is taking place in the world language about a certain topic, grammar or not. This communication can be student-to-student, student to self, student to teacher.

### 3. Non-Contextual Explicit Grammar Teaching.

Non-contextual explicit grammar teaching usually occurs before and/or during class time spent working on textbook activities and grammar practice worksheets. Teachers give explicit instruction on forms. Students often are told that they will be tested on the features on which they are instructed and have practiced in class or for homework. A mixture of English and the world language may be used during grammar lessons, and students usually ask questions in English. Numerous explanations of grammar rules with many exceptions and irregularities are explained in grammatical terms. Rudiments of grammar, memorization of conjugations, and mastery of sentence order are promoted by teachers (National Educational Association, 1894). Comparisons are made to the structure of English sentences and English word meanings in explanations (National Educational Association, 1894).

Long (1991) disputes this feature-focused type of instruction because second language research has demonstrated that students learn different structures at different times and acquire them gradually in stages. Ellis (1997) claims that form-focused instruction can result in visible gains in accuracy, but only if the structures are simple, do not involve complex processing operations, and if they are related to a specific function. Grammatical competence should be demonstrated by *using* a rule in a meaningful context to the students (Savignon, 1983, 1997). Explicit grammar teaching is recommended to take place in a classroom when the teacher or students determine that they are ready to learn particular rules in order to help negotiate meaning or when that particular form is needed in order for the students to communicate (Ellis, 1999; Fotos, 1994; Lightbown, 1998; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Norris & Ortega, 2001).

Many researchers believe that students must notice a grammatical feature in order for it to be learned, no matter how often an instructor attempts to teach it explicitly (Ellis, 1993; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Sharwood Smith, 1993; Stevick, 1996); however, several support the integration of explicit grammar teaching in world language classroom lessons. Fotos (1993) and Fotos and Ellis (1991) have shown that conscious-raising tasks, created by teachers in which students figure out linguistic rules by working interactively in small groups to solve grammar problems in the world language, can aid in the development of students' grammatical competence.

VanPatten (1996) believes that learners need to focus only on selective subsets of input at times. During input-processing tasks, students can be guided by teachers to focus on particular forms that could be causing processing problems in order to increase the chances of the feature becoming intake. Swain (1985, 1995, 1998) asserts that students must engage in language production activities if they are to find out what they know and don't know how to say. She believes that if teachers create communicative tasks that emphasize pushed output, then learners likely will seek out relevant input in a focused way.

In reference to the ongoing debate between effectiveness of grammar teaching—explicit or implicit—Larsen-Freeman (2003) states:

There is considerable agreement that learner awareness is required in order for grammatical acquisition to be accelerated beyond what ordinarily takes place in naturalistic acquisition. Pure implicit learning may work, but it is very slow. Researchers remain divided on whether or not learners' attention has to be conscious and focal, and even more so on whether there has been accompanying output practice. This is because the traditional rationale for practice derived from habit formation—the idea that grammar patterns should be repeated and repeated, in fact overlearned, in order to overcome the habits of the native language and to establish firm new habits in the target language. (p. 99)

Larsen-Freeman wants language teachers to think of grammar as something we do rather than just something we know. As Savignon (1983, 1997) has promoted for years, Larsen-Freeman recommends that teachers provide opportunities for students to use grammar accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately, and not think of it as a “static product that consists of forms that are rule-governed, sentence-level, absolute, and constitute a closed system” (2003, p. 143).

World language learning should not be equated to grammar learning. Designing lessons in which students relate grammar forms and vocabulary to their own communicative needs and experiences can develop grammatical competence. Language should be taught in context with a focus on meaning as opposed to on disconnected grammatical structures.

### 4. Culture, abbreviated.

Culture may be addressed more often since the National Standards were published (1999) in a variety of ways, but often English is the medium of communication when it is discussed. Learning language and learning culture seem to be

thought of as separate activities. Teachers often focus on a grammar point, discuss grammar practice worksheets or textbook activities, and then discuss cultural information. Culture does not seem to be recognized as instrumental to shaping the students' communicative competence in most cases (Berns, 1990). Some teachers may stress the importance of teaching students about different countries and current events, but they do not have students focus on the language at the same time.

In their recommendations, the Committee of Ten did *not* mention the teaching of culture in the modern language classroom (National Educational Association, 1894). ACTFL (see National Standards, 1999) has encouraged teachers to integrate the teaching of culture into the language classroom, and the Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007) currently recommends a translanguaging and transcultural approach to teaching and learning world language. These organizations promote instruction of practices, products, and perspectives of the culture being studied in classrooms while communicating in the world language.

Culture should be more than a “‘feel-good’ additive to the curriculum” and go “beyond the ‘heroes and holidays’ approach to diversity” (Nieto, 2002, p. 27). In order to understand others' perspectives, values, beliefs and histories, teachers should design curriculum that explores deep culture (beliefs, attitudes, values) rather than only surface culture (popular music and entertainment, food) while students also must function in the world language (Burke, 2007; Reyes & Klein, 2010). Cultural competence, equity, diversity, and character building need to drive learning experiences in which students simultaneously improve their communicative competence in the world language (Burke, 2007).

Teachers can introduce authentic world language texts into lessons to teach culture and to prepare students to understand differences in social customs (Nunan, 1991). Students can learn about the world with an emphasis on communicating through interaction in the world language (Nunan, 1991). Teachers and students can have meaningful conversations and work on creative projects, such as travel brochures, posters or presentations, *and* function in the language in a communicative manner.

#### 5. English Use.

Teachers assign many potential communicative activities, but since language is often translated, it is difficult for students to focus on meaning and try to function in the world language. All of these activities have potential to model CLT, but the manner in which they are implemented do not encourage students to develop strategic competence, allow them to attempt to learn language through trial and error, or provide them with comprehensible input in the world language (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983; Krashen, 1981).

Additionally, teachers usually allow students to communicate in English when they work on student-centered and pair or group activities such as skits, improvisations, writing, and even textbook activities. Teachers can ask students to try to communicate in the world language, but often they do not. Most of the time students continue to speak English to one other, even when the teacher speaks in the world language, and the activity involves using only the world language. In many cases, the English language is not necessary for communication, but using it is a habit that seems hard to break. Frequent comparisons between English and the world language make it more difficult for students to focus on communication in the language orally. The Committee of Ten predicted that students would not be capable of forming oral sentences until the second year, and immersion would not be possible until the third year of language study (National Educational Association, 1894).

Although some researchers have promoted use of the students' first language in language classrooms (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Cook, 2001; Cummins, 2007), I believe this approach weakens the students' ability to develop their strategic competence, which is crucial in this early stage of learning a world language in the classroom. To promote development of communicative competence in classrooms, beginners must be given opportunities to develop strategic competence during communicative activities in which they are required to compensate for imperfect knowledge of social or linguistic rules, as well as factors such as fatigue, distraction and inattention that may hinder communication (Savignon, 1983, 1997). Teachers need to speak the world language and help students develop strategic competence by coaching them to speak the world language during communicative activities and to use gestures, draw, or find other words they know to convey their message.

Teachers should encourage students to use what they know as soon as possible, even with beginning learners, even though it may seem unnatural when students and the teachers share English as their first language (Savignon, 1997). I have suggested that teachers ask beginners to participate actively and use the world language they have learned to communicate with one another and the teacher (Burke, 2007). In Burke (2007), I propose that in six to eight weeks, beginner students acquire enough vocabulary and expressions to be expected to use the language on a consistent basis with peers. I also encourage teachers to use immersion, and speak only the world language during class, while also asking students to use what they know at all times. By agreeing to use the language as much as possible, teachers and students can create communicate classrooms (Burke, 2007). The longer teachers put off asking students to speak the language, the more difficult it is to get students to use it consistently. In order for students to learn a language, it seems logical that they would be asked to *use* it in the classroom, and to use it often.

## VI. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper is to provide a theory as to why—after more than 30 years of research—so many teachers *still* are not using communicative methods or making CLT a part of their daily instructional approach? It seems that

world language teachers possess common values about what is essential to teach in their classrooms and share understandings about what curriculum components they believe they address in their classrooms. They also often use similar activities in their classrooms that reinforce rote grammar learning and translation. They, indeed, appear to share a conventional wisdom about language teaching and learning that influenced their daily instructional approach.

A focus on classroom lessons tends, as it did over a century ago, to be on mastery of language, with separation of language into skill categories of listening, speaking, reading and writing, instead of on development of communicative competence through meaningful communication by expressing, interpreting, and negotiating meaning. Methods such as translation, drills, non-contextual explicit grammar teaching, use of grammar practice worksheets, separation of language and culture, and using English as the medium of instruction, may prevail in classroom lessons because of the deeply embedded practices passed down from, and valued by, each new generation of world language teachers who enter U.S. secondary school classrooms.

Communication in world language classrooms should not be compartmentalized into separate skills, but instead be regarded as the means to negotiate, interpret and express thoughts and feelings in meaningful interaction. When students communicate in written or oral form, it is rare that they are focusing on one skill at a time. If students are listening to someone in a conversation, then they will likely speak at some time. If students are writing a composition, then they also are likely reading it as they construct it. Language must be viewed by teachers as social interaction, inter- or intra-personal, if they are ever to abandon the rigid breakdown of language into four skills.

Teachers, administrators, parents, and students may unconsciously value deep structure activities in world language classrooms because it is the norm; deep structure represents consistency, control, and conformity. Whether or not deep structure affects schools and classrooms in a positive or negative way, it may be valued by society because most people have not experienced alternative approaches to instruction in schools that result in enhanced development in students' communicative competence. A common script, the apprenticeship of observation, and the grammar of schooling have been discussed in the past by scholars as impediments to school reform (Lortie, 1975, 2002; Metz, 1990; Tyack & Tobin, 1994).

Alternative practices to education have continued not to be implemented in a meaningful and lasting way even though theory and research have supported that these practices improve student learning. The general U.S. public has certain expectations about what schools are and how they work. If world language teachers try to do something different in the classroom, the students, their parents, administration, and fellow teachers may not accept the change simply because the teacher's method strays from the norm.

Seen from Tye's (2000) perspective, if world language teachers do not feel comfortable or confident when trying out lessons that promote CLT principles, we may never see certain traditional methods fully disappear from classrooms. World language teachers may not know why they possess certain beliefs about language teaching and learning, or why they design curriculum and instruction in a particular way because of conventional wisdom. They unconsciously, and perhaps innocently, accept certain values and practices that have been passed down generation to generation, which in turn create and maintain the deep structure apparent in world language classrooms.

Teachers occasionally may appear to implement activities that promote communication in the world language, representing the "hybrid teacher" (Burke, 2006, p.153). Burke (2006) describes the hybrid teacher as someone who speaks the world language, teaches non-contextual explicit grammar lessons, usually in English, implements communicative activities, and integrates writing and cultural lessons. Hybrid teachers may never become true CLT teachers because they insist on implementing grammar and translation activities (Burke, 2006).

Deeply embedded structures that have been present in world language curriculum and instruction for decades, molded by the conventional wisdom that teachers share as to how to teach language and how students learn language, may be one of the main reasons why meaningful change is not visible in most U.S. secondary world language programs. These rituals and beliefs may inhibit student world language learning, and certainly make it difficult, if not impossible, for students to develop translingual and transcultural competence.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Follow-up research is being conducted to further investigate the influence of deep structure and conventional wisdom in world language classrooms, along with the possibility of evolution in deep structure and the more long-term effects of conducting on-site professional development for teachers. Although organizations, such as ACTFL and MLA aspire for elementary, secondary, and post-secondary teachers to integrate culture and communication into curriculum, deep structure and conventional wisdom prevent teachers from doing so. Teachers need more direction as to how to integrate CLT into their classrooms lessons, such as teaching culture while using the world language, especially with beginning-level language students. If teachers receive support from inside and outside their classroom to try new methods from other teachers, instructors, and researchers who understand CLT, it will make it easier for teachers to break away from those methods they have valued for centuries.

## VIII. EXPERIMENTAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: MOVING THE PROFESSION FORWARD

Change is more likely to succeed at the “unique personality level,” or school-level (Tye, 2000, p. 155). Studies also have shown innovation to occur when the professional development was more experientially-based with outside consultants coaching teachers on how to implement unfamiliar strategies (Baker & Showers, 1984; Hirsch, 2003; Showers, 1982, 1984) or guiding teachers in action research (Elliot, 1998).

As a researcher-consultant, I offered an *experiential* professional development (EPD) course to world language teachers so they could have opportunities to engage in teaching unlike their normal routine (Burke, 2005). The main objective of this particular EPD, which was communicated to the teachers prior to enrollment, was to create opportunities in world language classrooms where teachers could learn to use CLT through hands-on experience by implementing communicative activities into their lessons. Although the teachers valued certain rituals that promoted rote grammar learning and translation, they also integrated communicative activities during and post-EPD because it promoted fieldwork, collaboration, reflection, observation, and demonstration. Post-EPD teachers integrated communicative activities such as daily questions, interviewing, dialogues, skits, improvisation, games, presentations, implicit grammar and vocabulary instruction, computer-mediate communication and interactive computer programs. Culture also was taught while functioning in the language. Follow up visits five years later showed that teachers continued to implement CLT methods, and one teacher’s methods had completely transformed.

Professional development that occurs during the school day, in the classrooms of world language teachers when teaching their students, can create more sustainable opportunities during which teachers learn CLT through hands-on experience. Schools and world language departments can provide teachers with opportunities *inside* their classrooms to understand, experience, and promote CLT methods. Researchers can work *with* teachers and students more often to create communicative classrooms and attempt to break down the deep structure barrier and instigate change in the conventional wisdom.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] ACTFL revised proficiency guidelines—Speaking. (1999). Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- [2] ACTFL revised proficiency guidelines—Writing. (2001). Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- [3] Allen, L. (2002). Teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and the standards for foreign language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(5), 518-529.
- [4] Antón, M. & DiCamilla, F. (1998). Socio-cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 54(3), 314-342.
- [5] Berlak, A. & Berlak, H. (1981). Dilemmas of schooling: teaching and social change. New York: Methuen, Inc.
- [6] Berns, M. (1984). Functional approaches to language and language teaching: another look. In S. Savignon & M. Berns, (Eds.), *Initiatives in communicative language teaching: A book of readings* (pp. 3-21). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- [7] Berns, M. (1990). Contexts of competence: Sociocultural considerations in communicative language teaching. New York: Plenum.
- [8] Brown, H.D. (1994). Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- [9] Brooks, N. (1968). Teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 1, 204-217.
- [10] Brooks, F.B. & Donato, R. (1994). Vygotskian approaches to understanding foreign language learner discourse during communicative tasks. *Hispania*, 77(2), 262-274.
- [11] Burke, B.M. (2005). Experiential professional development: Promoting communicative language teaching with Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound design. (Doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University). [Online]. Available: <http://etda.libraries.psu.edu/theses/approved/WorldWideIndex/ETD-818/> [2005, October 7].
- [12] Burke, B.M. (2006). Theory meets practice: A case study of pre-service world language teachers in U.S. secondary schools. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(1), 148-166.
- [13] Burke, B.M. (2007). Creating communicative classrooms with experiential design. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(3), 441-462.
- [14] Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. Richards & R. Schmidt, (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2-27). London: Longman.
- [15] Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1-47.
- [16] Chomsky, N. (1965). Aspects of the theory of syntax. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- [17] Connor-Linton, J. (1996). The Arlington curriculum development model. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(2), 138-151.
- [18] Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 402-423.
- [19] Cummins, J. (2007). Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 221-240.
- [20] Durocher, D.O. (2007). Teaching sensitivity to cultural difference in the first-year foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(1), 143-160.
- [21] Ellis, R. (1982). Informal and formal approaches to communicative language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 36, 73-81.
- [22] Ellis, R. (1993). Interpretation-based grammar teaching. *System*, 21(1), 69-78.
- [23] Ellis, R. (1997). SLA research and language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [24] Finocchiaro, M. & Brumfit, C. (1983). The functional-notional approach: From theory to practice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- [25] Fotos, S. (1993). Consciousness-raising and noticing through focus on form: Grammar task performance versus formal instruction. *Applied Linguistics*, 14(4), 385-407.
- [26] Fotos, S. & Ellis, R. (1991). Communication about grammar: A task-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(4), 605-628.
- [27] Glisan, E. (1996). A collaborative approach to professional development. In R. Lafayette, (Ed.), *National standards: A catalyst for reform* (pp. 57-95). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- [28] Goodlad, J., Klein, M.F. & Associates. (1974). *Looking behind the classroom door*. Worthington, OH: Charles A. Jones Publishing Company.
- [29] Goodlad, J. (2004). *A place called school*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [30] Hall, J.K. (2004). "Practicing speaking" in Spanish: Lessons from a high school foreign language classroom. In D. Boxer & A. Cohen, (Eds.), *Studying speaking to inform second language acquisition* (pp. 68-87). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- [31] Kramsch, C. (1988). The cultural discourse of foreign language textbooks. In Singerman, A.J. (Ed.), *Toward a new integration of language and culture* (pp. 63-88). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- [32] Kramsch, C. (1995). The cultural component of language teaching. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 8(2), 83-92.
- [33] Krashen, S. D. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- [34] Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(1), 27-48.
- [35] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(4), 537-560.
- [36] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press.
- [37] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2005). *Understanding language teaching: From method to post-method*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [38] Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003). *Teaching language: From grammar to grammaring*. Boston: Heinle.
- [39] Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (1993). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [40] Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [41] Lortie, D.C. (1975). *Schoolteacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [42] Lortie, D.C. (2002). *Schoolteacher*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- [43] Lozano, A., Sung, H., Padilla, A., & Silva, D.M. (2002). Evaluation of professional development for language teachers in California. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(2), 161-170.
- [44] Metz, M. (1990). Real school: A universal drama amid disparate experience. In D.E. Mitchell & M.E. Goertz (Eds.), *Education politics for the new century: The twentieth anniversary yearbook of the politics of education association* (pp. 75-91). New York: The Falmer Press.
- [45] Modern Language Association. (2007). *Foreign languages and higher education: New structures for a changed world* [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.mla.org/flreport>.
- [46] Musumeci, D. (1997). *Breaking tradition: An exploration of the historical relationship between theory and practice in second language teaching*. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- [47] Musumeci, D. (2002). The use technology in high-enrollment courses: Implications for teacher education and communicative language teaching. In S. Savignon, (Ed.), *Interpreting communicative language teaching: Contexts and concerns in teacher education* (pp. 154-164). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- [48] Nassaji, N. & Fotos, S. (2004). Current developments in research on the teaching of grammar. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, 126-145.
- [49] National Education Association. (1894). *Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies with the Reports of the Conferences Arranged by Committee*. New York, NY: American Book Company.
- [50] National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. (1999). *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Yonkers, NY: National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project.
- [51] Nieto, S. (2002). *Languages, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [52] Nunan, D. (1987). Communicative language teaching: Making it work. *ELT Journal* 41, 136-145.
- [53] Nunan, D. (1991). Communicative tasks and the language curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(2), 279-295.
- [54] Paulston, C. (1976). *Teaching English as a second language: Techniques and procedures*. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop.
- [55] Petherbridge, D. (1976). Controversial issues in modern language teaching. *Alberta Modern Language Journal*, 14(3), 14-37.
- [56] President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. (1979). *Strength through wisdom: A critique of U.S. capability*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.
- [57] Reyes, S.A. & Kleyn, T. (2010). *Teaching in two languages: A guide for K-12 bilingual educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- [58] Rivers, W. (1971). Talking off the tops of their heads. *TESOL Quarterly*, 5, 71-81.
- [59] Rivers, W. (1973). From linguistic competence to communicative competence. *TESOL Quarterly*, 7, 25-34.
- [60] Rivers, W. (1976). The natural and the normal in language learning. In H.D. Brown (Ed.), *Papers in second language acquisition* [Special issue]. *Language Learning*, 4, 1-8.
- [61] Rivers, W. (1983). *Speaking in many tongues: Essays in foreign-language teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [62] Savignon, S. (1972). *Communicative competence: An experiment in foreign language teaching*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.
- [63] Savignon, S. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.
- [64] Savignon, S. (1997). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

- [65] Savignon, S. (2002). Communicative language teaching: Linguistic theory and classroom practice. In S.J. Savignon (Ed.), *Interpreting communicative language teaching: Contexts and concerns in teacher education* (pp. 1-27). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- [66] Schmidt, R. & Frota, S. (1986). Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: A case study of an adult learner of Portuguese. In R. Day (Ed.), *“Talking to learn”: Conversation in second language acquisition* (pp. 237-326). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- [67] Sharwood Smith, M. (1993). Input enhancement in instructed SLA: Theoretical bases. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15(2), 165-179.
- [68] Skehan, P., & Foster, P. (1999). The influence of task Structure and processing conditions on narrative retellings. *Language Learning*, 49(1), 93-120.
- [69] Stevick, E. (1996). *Memory, meaning and method*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- [70] Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and output in development. In S. Gass & C. Madsen (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- [71] Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (eds.), *Principles and practice in applied linguistics* (pp. 125-144). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [72] Swain, M. (1998). Focus on form through conscious reflection. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition research* (pp. 64-81). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [73] Tyack, D. & Tobin, W. (1994). The “grammar” of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(3), 453-479.
- [74] Tyack, D. & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- [75] Tye, B.B. (1987). The deep structure of schooling. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 69(4), 281-284.
- [76] Tye, B.B. (1995). *Multiple realities: A study of thirteen American high schools*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- [77] Tye, B.B. (2000). *Hard truths: Uncovering the deep structure of schooling*. New York: Teacher’s College Press.
- [78] VanPatten, B. (1996). *Input processing and grammar instruction in second language acquisition*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- [79] Yuan, F. & Ellis, R. (2003). The effects of pre-task planning and on-line planning on fluency, complexity and accuracy in L2 monologic oral production. *Applied Linguistics*, 24(1), 1-27.



**Brigid Moira Burke** was born in Chicago, Illinois, United States on October 6, 1972. Dr. Burke graduated in 1996 from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign with a B.A. in French education. She studied abroad at Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier III in 1994-1995. In 2002, she earned an Ed.M. from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She completed her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction with an applied linguistics option in 2005 at The Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania.

Before becoming an assistant professor of education at Bowling Green State University, Dr. Burke taught and consulted students and teachers in a variety of areas of the United States. She taught French at Mount Carmel High School in Chicago, IL. She started the language program at Codman Academy Charter School in Dorchester, Massachusetts in its inaugural year while studying at Harvard. She worked as a School Designer for Expeditionary Learning Schools in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. While

teaching graduate courses at DePaul University in Chicago, IL, she was a Differentiation Coach for the Chicago Public Schools where she worked with elementary students and teachers. She also taught undergraduate and graduate education courses at American University in Washington, District of Columbia and Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. Burke is currently an Assistant Professor of Education and World Language Education Program Coordinator at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio in the United States. Her research interests include world language pedagogy, action research, professional development, education reform, experiential learning, and differentiated instruction. She is a member of ACTFL, AAAL, AILA, AERA, and ASCD. She has published two articles in *Foreign Language Annals* and one in *The Language Educator*.

# Negotiating Tasks in EFL Classrooms

Luu Trong Tuan  
National University of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
Email: luutrongtuan@vnn.vn

**Abstract**—This paper sought to examine whether task negotiation - a process in which the teacher and students involve in a joint enterprise, discussing with each other what tasks to be done and how- could accommodate students' learning needs and increase their learning effectiveness. 77 first-year students from the two EFL classes, one treated as the experimental group (EG) and the other as the control group (CG), at the Faculty of English Linguistics of Hung Vuong University were invited to participate in the study, whose findings substantiated the benefits of task negotiation as an effective activity to enhance learners' motivation, involvement, and achievement, as well as to build a close bonding between teachers and learners.

**Index Terms**—task negotiation, learning needs, learning effectiveness, motivation, English as a foreign language (EFL) learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s, learner-centredness has become a topic of widespread discussion in the language teaching literature. Much effort has gone into finding means of making language teaching more responsive to learners' needs, characteristics and expectations, encouraging their active involvement in their own learning and educating them to become independent and ongoing learners. This preoccupation of learner-centredness is evident in the emergence of a number of trends in the professional literature such as *humanistic language teaching*, *communicative language teaching*, *learning strategy research*, *individualisation*, *learner autonomy* and *syllabus negotiation* (Tudor, 1996). The final notion represents one of the most significant innovations in recent years which highlight the importance of learner independence, collaborative learning and shared decision-making (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). In negotiative approaches, teacher and learners discuss with each other to decide what to learn and how to learn it. Proponents of this development believe that the syllabus which emerges from the negotiating process will be more flexible and relevant to learners' needs and thus more motivating and will allow learners to play a more informed and self-directive role in their learning (Bloor & Bloor, 1988; Nunan, 1988; Boomer et al., 1992; Nunan, 1992, 1999; Tudor, 1996; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). The fact that there is a growing number of teachers' accounts of successful negotiated work in a wide range of educational settings (in Western and Eastern cultures, in state and private institutions, in small and large classes, with students of different age ranges and levels) demonstrate the feasibility of negotiation in diverse contexts (Boomer et al., 1992; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Huang, 2006). This indicates the potential of this approach in the realm of language teaching and learning.

In Vietnam, learner-centredness has become one of the buzzwords in the language teaching circle over recent years. Ways to tailor the teaching to learners' needs and encourage learners to become active participants have been the focus of numerous workshops and studies. There have, however, been few research projects on negotiation as a learner-centred approach to language teaching although interest in this development is high in the professional literature. It was this fact that motivated the researcher in the first place to carry out the study in order to investigate how negotiation works in the Vietnamese context.

Another inspiration of the study is the concern over Vietnamese learners' verbal communicative competence and the growing interest in communicative language teaching in Vietnam in recent years. For a long period of time, the language teaching in Vietnam has been dominated by grammar – translation methods, which results in the often heard complaint that Vietnamese learners are good at grammar, reading and writing but cannot conduct a short conversation well. With the development of economy, Vietnam has become a popular destination for foreign tourists and investors; mastering spoken English has, therefore, become a must for learners of English. This demand leads to the shift of focus towards the aural/oral skills and communicative approaches to language teaching. This drove the researcher to conduct research on syllabus negotiation, a development which emerged from the communicative language teaching movement and has been vigorously upheld by a growing number of writers. According to Breen (2001) “collaborative decision-making about different aspects of the teaching – learning process in the classroom [...] involves learners in authentic opportunities to use and develop their knowledge and capabilities” (p. 154). While engaging them in responsible decisions about their work, syllabus negotiation generates meaningful interaction among the participants in the classroom and thus contributes to learners' language development.

Above are the primary factors that led to the implementation of the study on syllabus negotiation in EFL classes. The research just focuses on the task level of the syllabus, however. One obvious reason is the existence of a pre-determined syllabus in the context of the study. The other is the increasing recognition of the importance of tasks in syllabus design

ever since the emergence of task-based learning. Research on second language acquisition area during the 1980s suggested that learners' interaction and, through it, negotiation for meaning during task performance could facilitate their acquisition of linguistic knowledge and its social use. It is, therefore, proposed that task should be the key unit in the syllabus and teachers should provide appropriate tasks that can generate rich and meaningful interaction which will be facilitative of language acquisition. In addition, some writers have highlighted a connection between learner-centredness and learning tasks in the classroom (Wright, 1987; Nunan, 1989). Nunan (1989), for instance, suggests learner role and teacher role as two components of a task and points out the need to involve learners in task design and selection. Given the significant implications for language acquisition and learner-centredness of tasks in classrooms, the researcher found it justified in undertaking negotiation between teacher and learners at the level of tasks.

The research focuses on task negotiation, namely the teacher discussing with students in order to reach agreement with respect to what tasks are going to be done and how. Two questions were formulated to guide the research:

- (1) What are the impact of task negotiation on the teaching and learning English?
- (2) What are the students' reactions towards the application of task negotiation to English teaching and learning?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Negotiation

#### 1. Definitions of 'negotiation'

As can be noticed from the historical account of the formative influences of the idea of negotiated decision-making, the term "negotiation" refers to different things in the language teaching world. Breen and Littlejohn (2000) distinguish three types of negotiation: *personal negotiation*, *interactive negotiation* and *procedural negotiation*.

*Personal negotiation* refers to the complex mental process that occurs when we interpret what we read or hear or when we try to express what we mean in writing or speaking (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). An example of this kind of negotiation is that one poem can be interpreted differently by different people owing to their different previous knowledge and experience. It can be understood differently even by the same person the second time (s)he reads it. This kind of negotiation is inevitable whenever we use language for interpreting or expressing meaning.

*Interactive negotiation* or *negotiation of meaning* is "the interactional work done by speakers and listeners to ensure that they have a common understanding of the ongoing meanings in a discourse" (Nunan, 1999: 311). This notion, as presented in the preceding section, had its origins in SLA research during the 1970s. Studies have shown that during the interaction, the lack of comprehension on the listener's part prompts him/her to ask for clarification, repetition or confirmation, resulting in the speaker's adjustments of his/her language to make it more understandable. It has therefore been argued that negotiation of meaning provides learners with comprehensible input and thus facilitates L2 acquisition.

*Procedural negotiation*, which is often referred to as syllabus negotiation, is, as Breen and Littlejohn (2000) define, "the discussion between all members of the classroom to decide how learning and teaching are to be organised" (p. 1). As the purpose of the discussion is to reach agreement among the parties involved, the use of 'negotiation' here is in a sense similar to that in industrial or international politics (Bloor & Bloor, 1988; Boomer et al., 1992; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). However, since "there should be no conflict between the goals of the parties, the teacher's aim being to achieve what is best for the students", classroom negotiation is "not a bargaining process [...] but a joint exploration of possibilities and targets, an exploration to which [the teacher and the students] bring different specialist knowledge" (Bloor & Bloor, 1988: 63). It is this type of negotiation which evolved from the concern regarding how to make the teaching and learning process more communicative during the 1980s and which is also the focus of the present study.

#### 2. Arguments for procedural negotiation

Subsequent are the chief reasons for implementing procedural negotiation in language teaching and learning.

##### a. Negotiation can make the teaching responsive to learners' needs.

Given learners' different experiences, expectations and preferences, any syllabus determined by the institution or the teacher prior to the encounter between the teacher and the learners proves inadequate (Nunan, 1988; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). Even when information about learners is collected in order to diagnose their needs, the discrepancy between the demands of the classroom and the prescribed syllabus cannot be satisfactorily bridged. The reason is the information collected is only objective or factual information such as age, occupation, language proficiency and educational background. Subjective information (attitudes, preferred methodology and learning-style preferences), which is more useful for the selection of content and methodology, can only be obtained once the teacher has met the students and a mutual relationship has been established between them. Therefore, any pre-determined syllabus which is based on information gathered in the initial collection is "superficially learner-centred" (Nunan, 1988: 24). Negotiated syllabus is, meanwhile, more relevant to learners' needs. Through ongoing dialogue, teacher and learners gradually discover the latter's affective needs, expectations and preferences (Nunan, 1988; Tudor, 1996). The subjective information obtained then helps to shape and refine the content, objectives and even the methodology, which include learning activities and materials, during the course of programme delivery, particularly in the initial stages (Nunan, 1988). The modified syllabus is therefore more responsive and learner-centred.

##### b. Negotiation can increase learners' motivation and involvement in learning

Negotiation helps generate learner interest and engagement in learning as it offers them the shared ownership of the course. In participating in decision-making via negotiation and consultation with teacher, learners play a more active

role in the shaping of their learning program. This gives them a sense of ownership, which in turn leads to increasing involvement in the course (Brandes & Ginnis, 1986; Bloor & Bloor, 1988; Boomer et al., 1992). This engagement can be seen in learners' investment and commitment. Since "people tend to strive hardest for the things they wish to own, or to keep and enhance things they already own", learners will be intrinsically motivated to contribute to the construction and modification of the study program (Cook, 1992: 15). As Bloor & Bloor (1988) believe, "negotiation inevitably recurs as the course proceeds, and, if the students want changes, they are likely to give voice in their views. This can motivate the students to continued involvement in the course" (p. 15). And because the educational program is what they have chosen, learning becomes more relevant, meaningful and intentional; learners will study harder and thus learn more and better.

c. Negotiation can foster learner autonomy

To start with, the negotiating process helps raise learners' awareness, a prerequisite for developing learner responsibility. As most learners enter a course with a vague idea about what they hope to acquire, any course designed to increase learners' responsibility must set out to help them have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and their expectations and preferences. Negotiation provides the context to develop such a critical self-awareness (Bloor & Bloor; 1988; Nunan, 1988). Through the ongoing dialogue with teacher, learners are encouraged to reflect upon their prior knowledge, learning experiences, affective needs and preferences. Gradually, they come to understand and, more importantly, are able to articulate their needs and learning goals. Moreover, the sharing of perspectives and the joint selection of learning content and form helps learners become aware of the facilities available and the range of learning options as well as constraints in their learning context and hence able to understand the consequences of choices they make (Bloor & Bloor; 1988; Nunan, 1988; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). These insights enable learners to begin to assume more control over their learning.

Additionally, negotiation facilitates a reformulation of the traditional roles in the classroom. Normally, it is the institution and the teacher who make decisions relative to learning content and form and learners are supposed to be passive "consumers" of language courses. In the process of negotiation and consultation, learners have an opportunity to contribute to the decision making by bringing their prior knowledge, learning experiences and attitudes and voicing their wants and preferences. The collaborative relationship established via ongoing dialogue and the teacher's appreciation and acknowledgement of their ideas help build and enhance learners' confidence and self-esteem, which, in turn, promotes their interest and motivation. They then willingly continue to get involved in the negotiating process in order to exploit the learning options available for their own benefit. Further, the sense of ownership, as mentioned earlier, motivates them to willingly take control of their own learning (Brandes & Ginnis, 1986; Boomer et al., 1992).

Negotiation helps foster learner autonomy, which has been one of the major concerns in the profession since 1960s (Bloor & Bloor, 1986; Boomer et al., 1992; Tudor, 1996; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). It is what Tudor (1996) calls *learner empowerment*, which is "the ultimate goal of a learner-centred approach to teaching" (p. 27). *Learner empowerment* "relates to learners' ability to assume an active and informed role in their language study and, ultimately, to pursue those of their life goals which pertain to language use and learning in self-directive manner" (*ibid*: 28). Breen and Littlejohn (2000) make it clear what it means to be autonomous in learning:

However, negotiation entails freedom within discipline. It does *not* mean 'anything goes'. Collaborative decision-making requires the constant balancing of an individual agenda with everyone else's. It also requires the constant balancing of particular goals, be they negotiable or not, with personal purposes and preferences for learning. In the classroom group, genuine autonomy has to be exercised in an interdependent way. (p. 22)

As a result of the involvement in the shared decision-making, learners become responsible members of the classroom community, who will later become "people who are self reliant and flexible in their working lives, socially responsible rather than merely self-seeking and collaborative rather than competitive in their dealings with other people" (*ibid*: 20).

d. Negotiation can enrich classroom discourse and the social and cultural resources of the classroom group

A major advantage of syllabus negotiation, or procedural negotiation, is that it provides the context for expanding and enhancing personal and, more importantly, interactive negotiation, which are essentially beneficial for the learning of a language. In discussing and reaching a consensus related to learning content and form, learners inevitably engage in the process of negotiating for meaning, which includes sharing, checking comprehension and clarifying meanings. Underlying this interactive negotiation is the mental process of interpreting and expressing meaning, namely personal negotiation. Breen and Littlejohn (2000: 10) have illustrated the relationship of "interactivity and entailment" of the three forms of negotiation as follows (Figure 1):

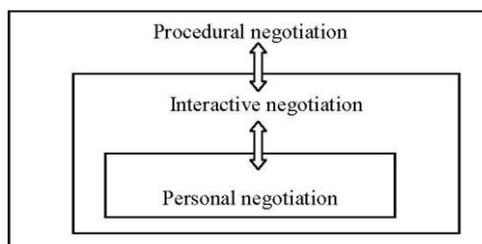


Figure 1: Relationship between three kinds of negotiation

“Genuine communication” generated in the process of negotiating and consulting “diversifies the input, extends opportunities for learner output, and allows the exercise of judgements of appropriacy and accuracy in relation to the language made available for learning” (*ibid*: 26). Classroom discourse which is diverse and authentic therefore promotes the acquisition of the target language and hence improves learners’ communicative capacities.

Another rewarding aspect of the collaborative process of shaping the learning programme is that it can generate diversified social and cultural resources. Breen and Littlejohn (2000) describe the classroom, “a microcosm of the wider society”, as “multicultural in terms of the different voices and perspectives on the new language, on learning and on most things in the world” (p. 23). This multicultural feature is certainly apparent in a class of learners from different cultural backgrounds. Each member in the classroom community therefore contributes to the share decision-making by bringing their own prior knowledge, learning experiences, preferences and views on the teaching and learning process. This results in evolving differing ways of working, which, in turn, enrich their own repertory of learning strategies. What’s more, the drawing on the multicultural resources of the classroom community can develop “an openness and flexibility in students’ approaches to the learning” (*ibid*: 23).

It should be noted that the generation of diverse language, social and cultural resources is a beneficial part of classroom interaction that is natural or, in other words, unplanned by the institution or teacher in advance. This exemplifies what Boomer et al. (1992) call “incidental learning”. As Onore (1992) notes, “unlike traditional curriculum, where it is assumed that what is learned is equivalent to what is taught, in negotiation it is acknowledged that a great deal of learning is incidental, unplanned, and even unconscious. But it is learning, nonetheless” (p.188).

## B. Tasks in Language Teaching and Learning

### 1. Task-based learning

The recognition of the effectiveness of tasks as a stimulus to language learning comes from task-based learning (TBL), which evolved from CLT and rested on the findings in SLA research. The CLT movement arose from one significant innovation in the field of linguistics in the late twentieth century, i.e. the development of the notion of “communicative competence”, as proposed by Hymes in contrast to Chomsky’s “linguistic competence”. In the early days of its evolvement, the advocates of CLT attempted to create a communicative syllabus which specified the notions and functions appropriate with the learners’ communicative needs and a communicative approach that put an emphasis on language use in the classroom (Willis & Willis, 2001). Subsequent research on CLT, however, raised considerable doubts as to its effectiveness in accommodating learners’ needs and promoting communication (Carter & Nunan, 2001, Kumaravadivelu, 2006). The communicative syllabus was “still a series of language patterns, albeit patterns linked to semantic and pragmatic values” and in the so-called communicative language classrooms, “there was still a powerful tendency to see the study of language form as prior to language use”, with tasks being “used to assist ‘free’ production at the end of a controlled form-based teaching cycle” (Willis & Willis, 2001, 174-5). Consequently, since the 1980s CLT has evolved in different directions and one important development is TBL.

TBL has its root in SLA research. Studies in the 1980s and 1990s denote that genuine interaction will engage learners’ general cognitive processing capacities, which will result in the development of their language system. Therefore, in the classroom, “if we can provide learners with a series of tasks which involve both the comprehension and the production of language with a focus on meaning this will prompt language development” (Willis & Willis, 2001: 176). TBL then stresses the significance of language use and meaning-based tasks and views the learning process as one of learning through doing (Willis & Willis, 1996; Nunan, 1999; Carter & Nunan, 2001; Richards & Renandya, 2002; Ellis, 2003).

### 2. Definition of ‘task’

With the advent of TBL, task assumes a central role in syllabus design and methodology. There is, however, no agreement in relation to the definition of task in the language teaching literature. In his book in 2003, Ellis, after examining a number of definitions, combines almost all the main points regarding what a ‘task’ is in a comprehensive definition:

A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes. (p. 16)

From his composite definition, 6 criterial features of a task can be identified:

- 1). A task is a workplan.
- 2). A task involves a primary focus on meaning.
- 3). A task involves real-world processes of language use.
- 4). A task can involve any of the four language skills.
- 5). A task engages cognitive processes.
- 6). A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome. (Ellis, 2003: 9-16)

According to Ellis, numbers 3, 6 and, particularly, 2 are important features of a task, whereas numbers 1, 4 and 5 can be found in all kinds of teaching materials, including exercises.

3. Task components

A framework for describing a task is of great importance in analysing, classifying, selecting, adapting and designing tasks. However, as with the definition of tasks, there is no definite answer to the question of what a task consists of.

According to Wright (1987), there are two principal components in a task: ‘input data’ from materials, teachers or learners and ‘instructional questions’ which tell learners what they are going to do with the data (in Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003). Wright does not include ‘objectives’ or ‘outcomes’ in his framework since it is, according to him, impossible to predict the outcome(s) of a task. Learners’ expectations about the nature of learning tasks and the way in which they perform the tasks will, as he argues, influence the dynamics of the classroom and the learning outcomes. There is thus a discrepancy between the actual outcome of a task and what the teacher expects learners to learn from it.

Ellis (2003) suggests a more complex framework with 5 components:

TABLE 1:  
A FRAMEWORK FOR DESCRIBING TASKS (ELLIS, 2003: 21)

Design feature	Description
Goal	The general purpose of the task, e.g. to practise the ability to describe objects concisely; to provide an opportunity for the use of relative clause.
Input	The verbal or non-verbal information supplied by the task, e.g. pictures; a map; written text.
Conditions	The way in which the information is presented, e.g. split vs. shared information, or the way in which it is to be used, e.g. converging vs. diverging.
Procedures	The methodological procedures to be followed in performing the task, e.g. group vs. pair work; planning time vs. no planning time.
Predicted outcomes: Product	The ‘product’ that results from completing the task, e.g. a completed table; a route drawn in on a map; a list of differences between two pictures. The predicted product can be ‘open’, i.e. allow for several possibilities, or ‘closed’, i.e. allow for only one ‘correct’ solution.
Process	The linguistic and cognitive processes the task is hypothesized to generate.

Ellis draws a distinction between the kind of input provided to learners and the way in which it is presented. The same input may, as he points out, be presented or used in different ways and likewise, different input in one way. Regarding the predicted outcomes, he argues that one of the important criterial features of tasks is clearly defined product outcomes. As for process outcomes, they can be predicted and, more importantly, “in language pedagogy, [...] tasks are devised with the expectation that they will generate specific process outcomes” (*ibid*: 20). Therefore, predicted outcomes must, according to him, be included in a framework for describing tasks.

In his interesting book in 1989, Nunan proposes a framework for analysing communicative tasks as follows:

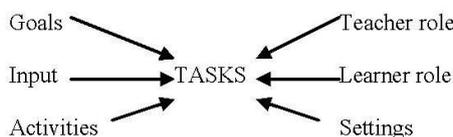


Figure 2: A framework for analysing communicative tasks (Nunan, 1989: 48)

As seen from Figure 2, Nunan shares Wright’s point about the unpredictability of outcomes. Yet, he includes ‘goals’ as a task element, which he defines as “the vague general intentions behind any given learning task” (Nunan, 1989: 48). The goals of the tasks must coincide with the objectives of the broader curriculum. In addition, there is usually no one-to-one relationship between the goals and the tasks. In other words, a task may consist of a number of activities and thus have more than one goal.

As for input, a wide range of data sources around us can be exploited. Nunan raises the issue of authenticity. According to proponents of authentic materials, learners should be exposed to real-world texts in the classrooms so that they are prepared to cope with what they hear or read outside the classroom.

‘Activities’ refers to “what learners will actually do with the input which forms the point of departure for the learning task” (*ibid*: 59). They can be analysed according to the extent to which they mirror the kind of activities learners might do in the real world, whether they aim at ‘skill getting’ or ‘skill using’ and whether they focus on fluency or accuracy.

“‘Role’ refers to the part that learners and teachers are expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interactional relationships between the participants” (*ibid*: 79). Implicit in tasks are, therefore, assumptions regarding the control and power in the classrooms. For example, learners usually play a more active and powerful part in role-plays and problem solving tasks than in drills and the like. The roles of teachers and learners are closely related. In communicative approaches, for example, the learner is “an interactor and negotiator who is capable of giving as well as taking” while the teacher play the role of “facilitator”, “participant”, “observer” and “learner” (*ibid*: 80 & 87). One important point concerning roles is the mismatch between learners’ and teachers’ role perceptions. Nunan suggests in such cases there be consultation and negotiation between teachers and learners.

“‘Settings’ refers to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task, and it also requires consideration of whether the task is to be carried out wholly or partly outside the classroom” (*ibid*: 91). This component is also of great

importance in task selection and design as whether learners are going to work individually, in pairs or in groups and where the task is going to be done may influence the roles and relationships of the participants in the classroom.

Above are three frameworks selected from a number of proposals regarding task description. Each framework contributes to the difficult task of analysing learning tasks in their own way. Nunan's framework is particularly interesting since it points out the implicit assumptions of learner and teacher roles in tasks. More importantly, Nunan highlights the frequent discrepancy between teachers and learners' role perceptions and the need to involve learners in task selection and design.

#### 4. Task types

A variety of task typologies can be found in the professional literature. Tasks can be categorized in terms of their real-world value (i.e. real-world versus pedagogic tasks), the kind of input data (e.g. map, pictures, stories), how the input is organised (i.e. split versus shared information tasks), whether interaction is required in order to achieve the outcome (i.e. reciprocal versus non-reciprocal), the kind of activity that learners are going to perform (e.g. role-plays, discussions, decision-making activities), the type of discourse they elicit (e.g. narrative, description, instructions), the type of cognitive activity involved (e.g. information-gap, reasoning-gap, opinion-gap tasks) and so on. Clearly, there is no consensus on the classification of tasks. Besides, most of the distinctions are continuous rather than dichotomous (Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003). Take the reciprocal/non-reciprocal distinction, for example. Some tasks are obviously reciprocal (e.g. speaking tasks in which participants have to interact to achieve the outcome); some are non-reciprocal (e.g. listening tasks in which learners cannot interrupt); and there are some which are somewhere in the middle rather than at one end of the continuum (e.g. an interactive lecture in which students have the opportunity to interrupt the lecturer). What's more, there are many tasks which contain a number of subtasks. 'Projects', for instance, often involve different types of tasks such as comparing, problem-solving, and sharing personal experiences (Ellis, 2003). An agreed classification of tasks therefore continues to elude the profession.

Another question related to task types that remains unanswered is what kinds of tasks promote language acquisition. Research into task types has revealed a lot of useful findings. For example, small group work encouraged learners to use a greater variety of language functions than whole-class activities; two-way tasks (i.e. tasks in which the information to be exchanged is split between two or more participants) produce more interaction modifications than one-way tasks; tasks of the required information type (i.e. tasks that require all the participants to exchange information) generate more negotiation of meaning than tasks of the optional information type (Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003). Although these findings are of great value for syllabus designers and teachers, much has remained to be done in order to arrive at an adequate answer to the question. It is because there are a lot of factors that may influence the effects of tasks on learning such as the teaching cycle, the topic or content matter, the learners' characteristics and expectations, the situational factors and so on. Take, the learner and context factors, for example. Whereas a lot of research has proved that information-gap tasks help to promote acquisition, Prabhu, basing on his teaching experience in high schools in southern India, advocated reasoning-gap tasks (Ellis, 2003). Ellis (2003) therefore points out that "the type of task that works best may depend on the contingencies of individual teaching contexts" (p. 214).

#### 5. Tasks and syllabus negotiation

As already noted in the discussion on task components, there is a connection between learning tasks and the redistribution of the roles of the participants in the classroom. This has a significant implication for the implementation of syllabus negotiation: as a key unit of the syllabus, tasks can be used as the vehicle for encouraging learners to make choices regarding the learning content and form and play a more active role in their own learning. By involving learners in selecting, adapting and creating tasks, "one opens to the student the possibility of planning and monitoring learning – one breaks down the hierarchic barriers as it were" (Nunan, 1989: 20). Besides, negotiating tasks is a practical choice in situations where there exist such constraints as an externally determined syllabus, time constraints and large class size. As Breen and Littlejohn (2000) suggest, "making negotiation available at the higher levels of the pyramid (for example at the level of how students are to work on a chosen task) can offer initial experience for both teachers and students in managing shared decision-making, without jeopardising the structure of the course as a whole" (p. 287).

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participants

77 first-year students (from among a population of 241 first-year students), 58 females and 19 males, from the two classes of practically analogous English proficiency level (predicated on the students' scores from the pretest) at the Faculty of English Linguistics of Hung Vuong University were invited to participate in the study. The average age was 19.26 years ranging from 18 to 24 years old.

One first-year class (2010B) was treated as the experimental group (EG), and the other (2010E) as the control group (CG). The students in the experimental group were immersed in the selection of learning content and form through negotiating tasks with the teacher whereas the students in the control group were taught according to the syllabus imposed by the Faculty of English Linguistics.

#### B. Instrumentation and Procedure

Pretest and posttest were employed as instruments to measure students' English proficiency level. The initial English proficiency level of the whole population of first-year students was investigated by the pretest, from which scores contributed to the choice of the experimental group and control group of virtually similar English competence level.

Upon the arrival of the fifteenth week, the students in both experimental group and control group took the post-test, which sought to assess the impact of task negotiation on the students' English competence.

The main purpose of the questionnaire survey is to learn about the students' evaluation of the course under study. The students' comments and opinions, though subjective, can yield significant insights into the impacts of task negotiation on the English teaching and learning. The questionnaires were handed out on the day the students took the posttest. The numbers of completed questionnaires collected were 35 in the experimental group and 37 in the control group.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Impact of Task Negotiation Practice on Learners' English Competence

As regards the results of the posttest, the findings from an independent samples t-test demonstrated that Class 2010B (EG) mean score (M = 6.5366) was significantly higher (sig. 2-tailed value  $p = .024 < .05$ ) than Class 2010E (CG) mean score (M = 5.2073), implying the English competence of the students of the EG improved at a higher level than that of the students of the CG.

TABLE 2:  
THE OUTPUT PRODUCED BY THE T-TEST ANALYSIS OF THE POST-TEST SCORES

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	.044	.024	1.375	70	.174	.3404	.24760
Equal variances not assumed			1.376	69.954	.173	.3404	.24738

B. The Students' Reactions towards the Course through Questionnaire Survey

a. Students' evaluation of the tasks done in the course

1. Question 1 is concerned with the students' opinions about how interesting the tasks done in the course were. The results shown in Table 3 reveal a noticeable difference in the evaluation of the two groups. While almost all the students in the experimental group (94.3%) found the tasks very interesting, just more than half of the students in the control group did (56.7%). Particularly, more than twice as many experimental students chose the response with the highest intensity in the scale compared with the control students. On the other hand, 18.9% of the control students thought the tasks were boring.

TABLE 3:  
STUDENTS' OPINIONS OF HOW INTERESTING THE TASKS WERE

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	0	0.0	7	18.9
3 – somewhat	2	5.7	9	24.3
4	23	65.7	16	43.2
5 – extremely	10	28.6	5	13.5
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

2. Similar findings can be drawn from the responses to Question 2, dealing with the students' perceptions of the usefulness of the tasks (see Table 4). A vast majority of the experimental students (94.2%) agreed that the tasks in the course were very useful whereas less than three-thirds of the control students (62.1%) did. Also, the number of students in the experimental group selecting the highest level is almost double that in the control group. And there were a few control students (13.5%) giving unfavourable responses to this question.

TABLE 4:  
STUDENTS' OPINIONS OF THE USEFULNESS OF THE TASKS

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	0	0.0	5	13.5
3 – somewhat	2	5.7	9	24.3
4	20	57.1	16	43.2
5 – extremely	13	37.1	7	18.9
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

3. However, regarding the difficulty level of the tasks, the figures are broadly similar across the groups (see Table 5). More than half of the students in both groups agreed that generally the level of the tasks was just right (68.6% in the experimental group and 62.2% in the control group).

TABLE 5:  
STUDENTS' OPINIONS OF THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF THE TASKS

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – very easy	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	2	5.7	4	10.8
3 – just right	24	68.6	23	62.2
4	6	17.1	8	21.6
5 – very difficult	3	8.6	2	5.4
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

4. In response to Question 4, a large proportion of the experimental group claimed that they frequently felt involved in the tasks (51.4% usually and 22.9% always) while just nearly half of the control group did (43.2% usually and only 5.4% always). 43.2% and 8.1% of the control students chose “sometimes” and “seldom” respectively, compared to only 25.7% and 0.0% respectively of the experimental ones (see Table 6).

TABLE 6:  
STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE TASKS

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – never	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	0	0.0	3	8.1
3 – sometimes	9	25.7	16	43.2
4	18	51.4	16	43.2
5 – always	8	22.9	2	5.4
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

5. Results of the four previous questions reveal that generally the responses of the experimental group were more positive than those of the control group. This finding is confirmed by the information attained from Question 5, concerning the students' overall assessment of the tasks. The experimental students largely agreed that the tasks were good, with more than a third rating them as “very good”. By comparison, just nearly two-thirds of the control group selected positive responses, with only 8.1% choosing the highest level. There was a small proportion of the control students (8.1%) thinking the tasks were generally not good (see Table 7).

TABLE 7:  
STUDENTS' OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE TASKS

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – very bad	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	0	0.0	3	8.1
3 – average	5	14.3	11	29.7
4	19	54.3	20	54.1
5 – very good	11	31.4	3	8.1
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

b. Students' self-assessment

1. Question 6 asked the students to evaluate their interaction with their classmates during the course. Whereas the whole experimental group gave positive responses to this question, not all the control students (86.5%) did. The number of experimental students choosing level 4, i.e. "quite a lot", is almost double that of the control group and the difference was even greater in the response with the highest intensity as displayed in Table 8.

TABLE 8:  
STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTION

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – very little	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	0	0.0	5	13.5
3 – normally	19	54.3	24	64.9
4	11	31.4	6	16.2
5 – a great deal	5	14.3	2	5.4
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

2. In terms of interaction between teacher and students, the results are also more positive in the experimental group. Over one-third of the experimental students questioned (31.4%) felt that they talked a lot with the teacher during the course compared with only 16.2% of the control group. Generally, the experimental group's percentage for the favourable options (71.4%) was significantly higher (see Table 9).

TABLE 9:  
TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – very little	0	0.0	2	5.4
2	10	28.6	13	35.1
3 – normally	14	40.0	16	43.2
4	9	25.7	5	13.5
5 – a great deal	2	5.7	1	2.7
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

3. The next question also reveals that a greater number of experimental students contributed to the lessons by answering questions of the teacher and fellow students or offering their own ideas. In particular, as shown in Table 10, 65.7% of the experimental students claimed that they sometimes or frequently participated in the lessons whereas just nearly half of the control group (45.9%) did.

TABLE 10:  
STUDENTS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE CLASSES

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – never	2	5.7	10	27.0
2	10	28.6	10	27.0
3 – sometimes	16	45.7	12	32.4
4	5	14.3	4	10.8
5 – very frequently	2	5.7	1	2.7
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

4. Question 9, which consisted of 7 sub-questions, enquires as to what the students learned from the course. In each sub-question, there are five options for them to choose: not at all, almost nothing, a little, to some extent, a lot. Given the limited amount of time allocated for this course, the third choice is regarded as a positive response to the question. The results are represented in Figures 3 and 4.

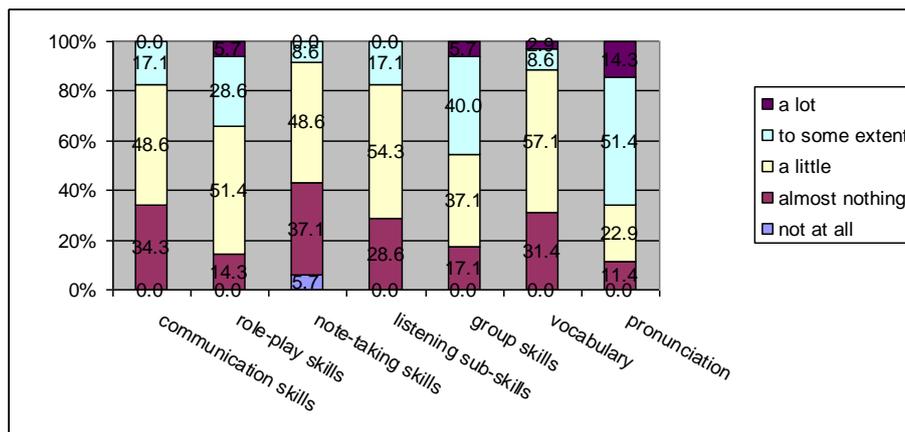


Figure 3: Experimental students' perceptions of what they learned

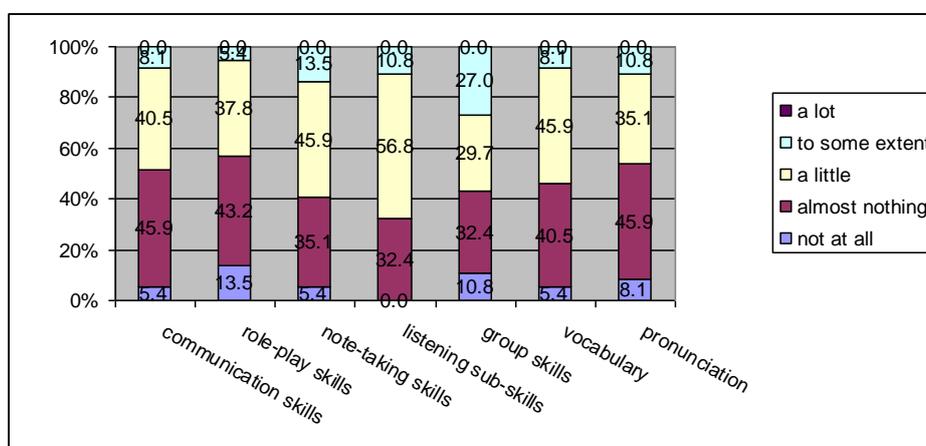


Figure 4: Control students' perceptions of what they learned

As shown by the first bars of the two figures, the number of favourable responses of the experimental group in sub-question 1 was much greater. 65.7% of the experimental students reported to have learnt communication skills as compared to 48.6% of the control students.

In response to part 2 of the question, more than three-quarters of the experimental students (85.7%) claimed to have learnt something about role-play skills from the course. The proportion of the control students choosing positive alternatives was much smaller: 43.2%. Particularly, 28.6% and 5.7% of the experimental students selected "4" and "5" respectively (which are the two highest levels), compared to only 5.4% and 0.0% respectively in the control group.

In the third sub-question, which is concerned with note-taking skills, the results are, however, fairly similar across the two groups: 57.2% of the experimental group and 59.4% of the control group gave positive responses.

As regards listening sub-skills, there is also not much difference in the responses of the two groups. 71.4% of the experimental students and 67.6% of the control students claimed that they had learnt some listening sub-skills from the course.

On the other hand, there is some variation in the results for learning strategies, i.e. group skills. The experimental students selecting positive responses outnumbered the control students. Specifically, in the experimental group, 37.1% of the students thought they learnt a little about group skills, 40.0% to a fair degree and 5.7% a lot. By comparison, the corresponding figures of the control group are 29.7%, 27.0% and 0.0%.

The fifth sub-question, which deals with vocabulary, also produced more favourable responses from the experimental group. 68.6% of the experimental students thought they had learnt some vocabulary from the course as compared with 54.0% of the control group.

The difference is particularly marked in the last section, i.e. pronunciation. Almost twice as many experimental students (88.6%) thought they had learned how to pronounce from the course as the control students (45.9%). Moreover, the numbers for the two highest levels in the experimental group are remarkable: 51.4% for "to some extent" and 14.3% for "a lot".

On the whole, the results of Question 9 suggested that the experimental group seemed to gain more from the course than the control group.

5. Question 10 is interested in whether the students felt more self-confident after finishing the course. In response to this question (see Table 11), approximately three-quarters of the experimental group (74.3%) claimed to be more

confident, whereas nearly two-thirds of the control group (64.8%) did. Almost twice as many experimental students selecting “4” and “5” as control students.

TABLE 11:  
STUDENTS’ ASSESSMENT OF THEIR INCREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – not at all	3	8.6	6	16.2
2	6	17.1	7	18.9
3 – a little	14	40.0	17	45.9
4	11	31.4	7	18.9
5 – a lot	1	2.9	0	0.0
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

6. Similarly, as displayed in Table 12, the figure of the experimental students who perceived some progress in their independence in studying English is higher than that of the control students (74.2% and 62.1% respectively). And it was noticeable that the number of responses with the two highest levels in the control group represented less than half that in the experimental group (16.2% and 37.1% respectively).

TABLE 12:  
STUDENTS’ ASSESSMENT OF THEIR PROGRESS IN INDEPENDENCE IN ENGLISH LEARNING

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – not at all	1	2.9	5	13.5
2	8	22.9	9	24.3
3 – a little	13	37.1	17	45.9
4	11	31.4	6	16.2
5 – a lot	2	5.7	0	0.0
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

7. Interestingly, as shown in Table 13, the vast majority of both groups gave positive responses to question 12, dealing with their increased interest in English learning. However, the number of the experimental students who felt that they liked studying English a lot better after finishing the course (77.2%) is much greater (Although the figure of the control students choosing the response with the highest intensity is a bit higher, all things considered, it is not very important).

TABLE 13:  
STUDENTS’ ASSESSMENT OF THEIR INCREASED INTEREST IN STUDYING ENGLISH

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – not at all	0	0.0	1	2.7
2	1	2.9	3	8.1
3 – a little	7	20.0	18	48.6
4	22	62.9	8	21.6
5 – a lot	5	14.3	7	18.9
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

c. Students’ overall evaluation of the course

1. Question 13 relates to the number of tasks done in the course. As displayed in Table 14, a substantial majority of the experimental group agreed that there were enough tasks to do, while just over half of the control group was satisfied with the number of tasks. In addition, 20% of the experimental students thought that there were too many tasks, whereas 32.4% of the control students wanted to have more tasks. In general, the results of the experimental group are more positive than those of the control group.

TABLE 14:  
STUDENTS' OPINIONS OF WHETHER THERE WERE ENOUGH TASKS

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – very few	0	0.0	1	2.7
2	0	0.0	11	29.7
3 – sufficient	28	80.0	22	59.5
4	6	17.1	3	8.1
5 – too many	1	2.9	0	0.0
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

2. The responses to the next question show the experimental group's higher rating as to the effectiveness of the course in enhancing their communicative competence. Almost all of the experimental students thought the course improved their communicative ability, whereas approximately three-quarters of the control group did. Significantly, over half of the students in the experimental group reported to have good progress, more than twice as many as in the control group (see Table 15).

TABLE 15:  
STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COURSE IN IMPROVING THEIR COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Responses	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	2	5.7	8	21.6
3 – a little	13	37.1	20	54.1
4	20	57.1	9	24.3
5 – a lot	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

3. The last close-ended question is concerned with the students' satisfaction over the way of teaching and learning in the course. The results indicated in Table 16 suggest that generally both groups were pleased with the way they were taught. Nevertheless, a few control students (10.8%) showed their unhappiness over the mode of working in the course. In addition, the number of students who were quite satisfied represented less than half that in the experimental group.

TABLE 16:  
STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY OF WORKING

Level	Experimental group		Control group	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	0	0.0	4	10.8
3 – somewhat	2	5.7	16	43.2
4	27	77.1	14	37.8
5 – extremely	6	17.1	2	5.4
Missing values	0	0.0	1	2.7
Total	35	100.0	37	100.0

In a nutshell, the results obtained by means of the questionnaire survey suggest that task negotiation worked well in the course. The positive impacts of the approach can be seen in the experimental students' higher ratings as to the tasks done in the course, higher sense of achievement and progress and greater satisfaction with the mode of working.

## V. CONCLUSION

The findings obtained through the data are sufficient to conclude that the approach in question worked well in the context of the study, which answers the research questions: task negotiation can be a viable approach in EFL classes at Hung Vuong University.

In addition to the conclusion concerning the effect of negotiation on the students' communicative competence as compared to that of the traditional teacher-led mode of working was drawn from the posttest scores, the more positive results attained through the experimental students' responses in the questionnaire indicate the effectiveness of the approach in question: it generated the students' motivation and involvement, promoted their learning initiative, enhanced their sense of progress, and facilitated group cohesion. Considering these positive impacts, classroom

negotiation holds great promise for helping students improve their communicative competence. Moreover, the students' acceptance of the approach, which was reflected through their responses in the questionnaire, helps justify its productivity and workability. Overall the findings attest to the power of shared decision-making as a classroom practice in EFL classes. Besides the wide range of benefits, the results disclose some factors causing difficulties for participants in the negotiating process, including time constraints, large class size, student diversity, prior learning experiences. Nevertheless, difficulties such as these found in the study are, in fact, evident in almost all educational situations and therefore a realistic part of the negotiating process (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). On the whole, the negotiated work undertaken in the study can be considered successful, which proves the feasibility of procedural negotiation as an approach to language teaching in the Vietnamese context in general and at Hung Vuong University in particular.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bloor, M. & Bloor, T. (1988). Syllabus negotiation: the basis for learner autonomy. In A. Brookes & P. Grundy (Eds.), *Individualisation and autonomy in language learning* (pp. 62-74). London: Modern English Publications & the British Council.
- [2] Boomer, G., Lester, N., Onore, C., & Cook, J. (1992). *Negotiating the curriculum: educating for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. London: The Falmer Press.
- [3] Brandes, D. & Ginnis, P. (1986). *A guide to student-centred learning*. Herts: Simon & Schuster Education.
- [4] Breen, M.P. (2001). Syllabus design. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 151 – 159). Cambridge: CUP.
- [5] Breen, M.P., & Littlejohn, A. (2000). *Classroom decision-making: negotiation and process syllabuses in practice*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [6] Carter, R. & Nunan, D. (2001). *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [7] Cook, J. (1992). Negotiating the curriculum: Programming for learning. In G. Boomer, N. Lester, C. Onore, & J. Cook (Eds.), *Negotiating the curriculum: educating for the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (pp. 15-31). London: The Falmer Press.
- [8] Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: OUP.
- [9] Huang, J. (2006). Fostering learner autonomy within constraints: Negotiation and mediation in an atmosphere of collegiality. *Prospect: An Australian Journal of TESOL*, 21(3), 38-57.
- [10] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, challenging trends. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 59-81.
- [11] Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centred curriculum*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [12] Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [13] Nunan, D. (1992). *Collaborative language learning and teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [14] Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- [15] Onore, C.S. (1992). Negotiation, language, and inquiry: Building knowledge collaboratively in the classroom. In G. Boomer, N. Lester, C. Onore, & J. Cook (Eds.), *Negotiating the curriculum: educating for the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (pp. 181-193). London: The Falmer Press.
- [16] Richards, J.C., & Renandya, W.A. (Eds.). (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [17] Tudor, I. (1996). *Learner-centeredness as language education*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [18] Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2001). Task-based language learning. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 173-178). Cambridge: CUP.
- [19] Willis, J. & Willis, D. (Eds.) (1996). *Challenge and change in language teaching*. MacMillan Heinemann English Language Teaching.
- [20] Wright, T. (1987). Instructional task and discorsal outcome in the L2 classroom. In C. Candlin & D. Murphy (Eds.), *Language learning tasks*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall.

**Luu Trong Tuan** is currently an EFL teacher at National University of Ho Chi Minh City. He received his M.TESOL from Victoria University, Australia in 2004. Besides his focus on TESOL, his recent publications such as Language Transfer is Cultural Transfer between Communities, *Social Sciences Review*, No. 11, 2004, pp. 60-63; and Principles for Scientific Translation, *Social Sciences Review*, No. 8, 2004, pp. 63-67; and Building Vietnamese Medical Terminology via Language Contact, *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 2009, pp. 315-336 show his interest in language contact and translation areas.

# Impact of Discussion Boards to the Success of English Lesson

Harun Yılmaz

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), Ankara, Turkey

Email: harunyilmaz@gmail.com

Duygu Sağlam

Zonguldak Karaelmas University, Zonguldak, Turkey

Email: duygusefercik@hotmail.com

**Abstract**—Computer technology has developed and become an indispensable mean to reach the information and communicate with peers in an organized way. Discussions are the keys to enhance the communication among learners. Online peer response that blends written and electronic communication can promote student participation and collaboration. Hence, utilizing online discussion in language learning has potential to increase practice and improve student learning. This study investigated the effects of using discussion on students' achievement in online courses using the pre-test post-test with control group experimental research design with 32 students studying in the Undergraduate Compulsory Preparatory Program of a state university. Findings of the study showed that integrating discussion in online courses improves students learning more than online courses that do not include discussion.

**Index Terms**—computer assisted language learning, discussion boards, communication, language learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in the Internet technology offered various ways to realize many second language learning theories. One of these learning theories is Michael Long's interaction hypothesis suggesting "language is acquired as learners actively engage in attempting to communicate in the target language" (Nunan, 1999, p.51). However, as we all experience even in our native languages, communication is not always so smooth. There are times when we do not understand what the other party has said. When it happens, they signal their interlocutors that they did not understand what they have just said. In that case, their interlocutor tries to find alternative ways, such as paraphrasing or using other cues, to make their language more comprehensible. It the process of the negotiation of meaning where interlocutors experience difficulty in understanding what has been said -possibly as a result of a lack of some linguistic or lexical knowledge of either side- and seek for ways to understand each other. This process is called the negotiation of meaning, and according to Long, it is very crucial for language acquisition (Long, 1985). This type of interactional modifications is believed to be promoting L2 acquisition, even though there is little empirical evidence supporting such arguments (Ellis, 1994, 1997; Nunan, 1999).

Blake's (2000) study emphasizes the Interaction Hypothesis as a base point of using a particular technology tool in a foreign language classroom. His study examined 50 intermediate Spanish learners' networked discussions through Remote Technical Assistance (RTA) by which users can exchange digitized sound, manipulate each other's web browser, and do point-to-point or group chat. As a result, Blake (2000) stated that "Well-designed networked tasks promote learners to notice the gaps in their lexical interlanguage in a manner similar to what has been reported in the literature for oral learner/learner discussions" (p.132). In other words, when the learners were completing the tasks, they occasionally failed in communicating with each other. At these moments, they noticed what is problematic in their interlanguage, e.g. lack of lexical items or morphological confusions, then they try to gather the meaning by asking questions, which is called the negotiation of meaning.

Another important finding of the study is that this kind of networked interaction allows all participants equal and increased participation. Such increased opportunities for learners to get involved in social interactions with their peers could also be interpreted as a real life application of Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory proposing that learning takes place on social level before it becomes a mental process for an individual. Although the learners did not actually talk the target language in an online community, the author concluded that "CMC (computer-mediated communication) produces similar benefits to those of oral discussions without the temporal and spatial constraints imposed by the classroom" (Blake, 2000, p.132). As many other studies claimed (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995) that such online communication tools create a friendlier atmosphere where learners feel no peer or teacher pressure when they are communicating online, which results in higher motivation to talk (Donaldson & Morgan, 1994).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Zone of Proximal Development*

Related to the interactional hypothesis of Long, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) and social development theory are of great importance regarding second language acquisition. Vygotsky argued that higher mental functions such as voluntary attention and problem-solving are related to social interaction of child, which is mainly mediated by speech. Child's social interaction, through speech or other means such as play or online activities, plays a crucial role in child's development. In sociocultural approaches, students' participation is the main purpose of language learning and a key factor of acquisition process (Kasper, 2001; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

In the process of ZPD, another important term that needs clarification is scaffolding. Scaffolding is a technique used by teachers to move children through their ZPD by supporting and also challenging them to be active learners. Scaffolding, which can also be described as "assisted performance" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991), is one of the requirements of the successful ZPD (Ohta, 2000). According to Ohta, "development cannot occur if too much assistance is provided or if a task is too easy" (2000, p.52). This statement, indeed, describes what scaffolding is providing assistance just as needed and providing challenging tasks.

Kern's (1995) prominent study supported the benefits of CMC in classroom discussions. In his study, Kern analyzed the students' interaction using the InterChange software, a chat program, and compared them with their oral production during an oral discussion of the same topic. He also investigated students' and teachers' perception of using the InterChange software.

The results of the study showed that there were "striking differences in quantity production between InterChange and oral discussions" (Kern, 1995, p.464). To give an idea, the InterChange students took an average of 11.8 turns, whereas the oral discussion students took an average of 5.4 turns. Just this number alone shows that the participants of this study were more actively involved in the communication process through the InterChange than regular oral discussions. Chun (1994), who found similar results in her study, explained the reason for more active participation as following:

"A decided advantage of CACD is that learners are under neither time pressure to respond, nor the physical pressure of making a mistake or looking foolish. In addition, the length and breadth of their entries are not restricted, and their individual styles are allowed to flourish" (p.28).

Clearly, students feel more comfortable when they are talking by writing as opposed to talking by talking. Especially having the chance to think about what they are going to write gives them stronger self-confidence when they are initiating any conversation or participating to an ongoing interaction (Braine, 2001; Ware, 2004).

Sotillo (2000) studied in synchronous and asynchronous communication to explore the discourse functions and syntactic complexity. The researcher found that both synchronous and asynchronous groups, despite the teachers' attempts to control the focus of the discussions, managed to change the topic. Although it seems to be a negative aspect, especially in terms of the teachers' classroom management, the author maintained that this is the strength for this group of students because they realized purposeful action in collaboration. Furthermore, Sotillo (2000) argued that the students' collaborative efforts to create the text and context would, in Vygotsky's terms, serve as a mediational tool to generate new meanings collaboratively.

Sotillo (2000) also maintained that, since the asynchronous group did have more time to think about their responses and compose them coherently, they were able to focus on both form and meaning more synchronous group where the participants needed to faster and constantly. Therefore, it would be reasonable to claim that learners pay more attention to form and meaning when they are communicating through a synchronous communication too than students engaging in regular oral classroom discussions which require them to talk very fast and as smoothly as possible (Yuan, 2003). In parallel of these results, several studies produced the findings demonstrating that text-based online communication such as discussion boards is helpful for oral communication (Blake, 2009; Satar & Özdener, 2008).

### B. *Student-centeredness and Student Autonomisation*

Student centeredness and student autonomisation are also among the trendy issues in foreign language education. Enhancing student autonomy and control over the language learning process is one of the main goals of modern language teaching approaches (Warschauer, Turbee, & Roberts, 1996). Learner autonomy is sometimes considered as self instruction, but definitely it is not all of it.

In this process of making students more autonomous, the teachers' role is very important. In order to create an environment where scaffolding to occur, teachers are supposed to guide students gradually to be autonomous learners. For example, Donaldson and Kotter's (1999) study involving one of the synchronous CMC tools created such an environment in which students took control over what they wanted to do with the target language they were practicing.

As a result of the study, Donaldson and Kotter (1999) asserted that "unmistakable success of the independent learning that took place in the project indicates that the MOO is a powerful tool in the arsenal of technological weapons to aid learning" (p.543). It was one of the goals of the study to show that the online environment is a relatively good tool for autonomous learning, where teacher help is available just when it is needed. The authors also stated that the playful nature of the MOOs maintained very high motivation amongst the learners to participate in the online activities which resulted in better language learning.

### C. *Authentic Data and Use of Discussion Boards*

Using authentic data in foreign language teaching is quite essential. Nunan (1999) describes authentic data as "samples of spoken and written language that have not been specifically written for the purposes of teaching language" (p.27). By this definition, any attempt to modify any authentic would "de-authenticate" it. Teaching with contrived pieces of language samples may not help learners to gain the language that they can use in real life situations. However, it is not possible to supply the learners all the time with 100% authentic data. Nunan (1999) states that "learner should be fed as rich a diet of authentic data as possible, because, ultimately, if they only encounter contrived dialogues and listening texts, their task will be made more difficult" (p.27). All in all, if the purpose of foreign language teaching is to prepare learners for real-life communication in the respective foreign language, it is essential to get them familiar with as much authentic data as possible.

New technologies, such as various Internet tools, made it easier for teachers to incorporate authentic data in their teaching. One of the best examples of these internet tools is discussion boards that provide an environment for the users to discuss a topic and interact each other. The discussion board is defined by Rovai (2001) as an online classroom. In order to create a community of practice and reach a success in this online class, there should be a small group that participates in the discussions and the instructor playing a facilitator role in this environment (Kling & Courtright, 2003).

Learner participation is one of the key factors affecting online learning. In the literature, there are several studies focusing specifically on learner participation. While Woods (2002) asserted that interaction between the instructors and peers is vital to be successful in online environments, Davies and Graff (2005) found a relationship between participation level and students' grades.

Because of the enthusiastic approaches of many researchers to the use of new technologies in language classrooms, some studies do not even mention any problems encountered during the application of such technologies. It would be naive to suggest that those studies implemented perfectly without any problems.

Olivia & Pollastrini (1995) reported that some learners complained about the overwhelming technical skills they needed to learn in order to participate in the study. Naturally, not all students were technologically able. Kern's (1995) also highlighted some drawbacks of using CMC tools as a part of teaching/learning process. In her study, teachers felt that their control over classroom was compromised. The results of the questionnaire showed that the teachers were not as enthusiastic as the students towards the use of technology. These two results confirm each other. In other word, as a result of the teachers' loss of control over the class interaction, they also lost their enthusiasm towards the tool that caused it. This result shows that teachers should be trained more about the importance of student centered classroom along with methods to negotiate the freedom given to students in order to avoid chaotic classrooms because of authority.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following three major research questions regarding the usage of discussion boards were targeted in our research:

Is there a difference between the structure level of the students using discussion board in online instruction before and after the study?

Is there a difference between the structure level of the students who did not use the discussion board in online instruction before and after the study?

Is there a difference between the gain scores of the students using the discussion board in online instruction and the gain scores of the students not used the discussion board in online instruction?

### IV. METHOD

#### A. *Instructional Context*

This study was applied to an Undergraduate Compulsory Preparatory Program of a state university in Turkey. Integrated skills are mainly used throughout the courses and laboratories to enhance the students' second language acquisition. In the program, technological devices like computers, overhead projectors, reflecting projectors, DVD and CD players are highly used. The courses are supported by an interactive computer program including many kinds of exercises for target language. At the end of the term, students are expected to acquire the language.

#### B. *Participants*

The 32 participants were chosen randomly from two equal level classes in Undergraduate Preparatory Program of a state university. Of the 32 students, 16 were female and 16 were male. They are named as experimental group including 18 students and control group including 14 students. The difference of these groups is the experimental group has a discussion board which students can indicate their own opinions and comment on their friends' opinions.

#### C. *Research Design*

This study investigated the effects of using discussion boards on students' achievement in online courses using the pre-test post-test with control group experimental research design. The students are informed about the implementation before the process. A grammar rule was chosen for the target groups and taught for four weeks in exe-learning program which was presented in Moodle. Both groups were responsible for the personal information, grammar review and

practice parts. In addition to these, experimental group was expected to indicate their own opinions and comments on their friends' ideas as peer-correction in the discussion board of the program. During the program, control group only made self-study. Before and after the study, a multiple choice test was applied to both groups.

V. RESULTS

The first research question investigated whether there was a difference between the structure level of the students using discussion board in online instruction before and after the study. The result of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Paired Samples was presented at the Table 1. Results indicate that the structure level of the students using discussion board in online instruction after the study is significantly higher than the structure level of the students using discussion board in online instruction before the study.

TABLE 1.  
THE RESULTS PRE-TEST POST-TEST COMPARISON OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP USING THE WILCOXON SIGNED RANK TEST FOR PAIRED SAMPLES

Post-Pre Test	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	p
Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.724*	0
Positive Ranks	18	9.5	171		
Ties	0				

\*Based on negative ranks

The second research question investigated whether there was a difference between the structure level of the students who did not use the discussion board in online instruction before and after the study. The result of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Paired Samples was presented at the Table 2. Results indicate that the structure level of the students who did not use the discussion board in online instruction after the study is not significantly different from the structure level of the students who did not use the discussion board in online instruction before the study.

TABLE 2.  
THE RESULTS PRE-TEST POST-TEST COMPARISON OF THE CONTROL GROUP USING THE WILCOXON SIGNED RANK TEST FOR PAIRED SAMPLES

Post-Pre Test	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	p
Negative Ranks	5	8.1	40.5	0.35	0.72
Positive Ranks	8	6.3	50.5		
Ties	1				

\*Based on negative ranks

The third research question investigated whether there was a difference between the gain scores of the students using the discussion board in online instruction and the gain scores of the students not used the discussion board in online instruction. The result of the Mann Whitney U-test for Independent Samples was presented at the Table 3. Results indicate that the gain scores of the students using the discussion board in online instruction are higher than the gain scores of the students not used the discussion board in online instruction.

TABLE 3.  
THE COMPARISON OF THE GAIN SCORES FOR THE EXPERIMENT AND THE CONTROL GROUP USING THE MANN WHITNEY U-TEST FOR INDEPENDENT SAMPLES

Groups	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Experimental	18	9.07	127	22	0

The results of this study demonstrated that there is no significant difference between the structure level of the students who did not use the discussion board in online instruction before and after the study. It seems that students keep their learning pace without using discussion boards. On the other hand, the results indicated that students who used discussion boards produced higher scores than students who did not use discussion boards. This suggests that student may perceive the inputs which interactionally and collaboratively are modified by peers, are given in text form in discussion boards (Warschauer, 1996).

Students who have participated in discussion board activities seemed to pay attention to a morphosyntactic operation, specifically in the context of Simple Past Tense in this study. It seems that interactions in discussion boards enable students to consider additional resources on the web to give responses to peers and use different strategies to communicate with them (Ortega, 1997). The results confirmed that students feel more comfortable when they are talking by writing to communicate or participate in an interaction in online environment (Ware, 2004). One of the reasons of having more comfortable may be that students have more time to think about what they need to response or

give feedback (Yuan, 2003). In addition, use of discussion boards in language learning makes students more autonomous and maintains high motivation amongst the students to participate in discussion boards which produced better language learning (Donaldson, & Kotter, 1999).

The study revealed that use of discussion boards has a positive effect on ESL students' learning. As a successful case of English language learning, we believe that the more interaction occurs in online environment between students to students and students to an instructor in the case of language learning, the more student learning and use of different teaching strategies are encouraged.

Future studies can focus on the analysis of discussions, as well as quantitative results with larger samples. In addition, conducting interview with students can help researchers to support the results.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Blake, R. (2000). Computer mediated communication: A window on L2 Spanish interlanguage, *Language Learning Technology*, 120-136. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: <http://lt.msu.edu/vol4num1/blake/default.html>
- [2] Blake, C. (2009). Potential of text-based internet chats for improving oral fluency in a second language. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93(2), 227-240.
- [3] Braine, G. (2001). A study of English as a foreign language (EFL) writers on a local-area network (LAN) and in traditional classes. *Computers and Composition*, 18(3), 275-292.
- [4] Chun, D. M. (1998). Using computer-assisted class discussion to facilitate the acquisition of interactive competence. In J. Swaffar, S. Romano, K. Arens, and P. Markley (Eds.), *Language learning online: Theory and practice in the ESL and L2 computer classroom* (pp. 57-80). Austin, TX: Labyrinth Publications.
- [5] Davies, J. & Graff, M. (2005). Performance in e-learning: online participation and student grades. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 36(4), 657-664.
- [6] Donaldson, R.P., & Morgan, L.Z. (1994). Making the most of scarce resources: A small college language department's experiences with HyperCard, *CALICO Journal*, 11(4), 41- 60.
- [7] Donaldson, R. P. & Kotter, M. (1999). Language learning in cyberspace: Teleporting the classroom into the target language culture. *CALICO Journal*, 16 (4), 531-557.
- [8] Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [9] Kasper, G. (2001). Four perspectives on L2 pragmatic development. *Applied Linguistics*, 22(4), 502-530.
- [10] Kern, R. G. (1995). Restructuring classroom interaction with networked computers: Effects on quantity and characteristics of language production. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(4), 457-476.
- [11] Kling, R., & Courtright, C. (2003). Group behavior and learning in electronic forums: A sociotechnical approach. *The Information Society*, 19(3), 221-235.
- [12] Lantolf, J.P., & Thorne, S.L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the Genesis of L2 development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [13] Long, M.H. (1985). A role for instruction in second language acquisition. In K. Hyltenstam & M. Pienemann (Eds.), *Modeling and assessing second language acquisition*. (pp.77-99). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
- [14] Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- [15] Ohta, A. (2000). Rethinking interaction in SLA: Developmentally appropriate assistance in the zone of proximal development and the acquisition and L2 grammar. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 51-78). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- [16] Olivia, M., & Pollastrini, Y. (1995). Internet resources and second language acquisition: An evaluation of virtual immersion. *Foreign Language Annals*, 28(4), 551-563.
- [17] Ortega, L. (1997). Processes and outcomes in networked classroom interaction: Defining the research agenda for L2 Computer-assisted Classroom Discussion. *Language Learning & Technology*, 1(1), 82-93.
- [18] Pavlenko, A., & Lantolf, J.P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 155-177). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [19] Rovai, A. P. (2001). Building classroom community at a distance: A case study. *Education Technology Research and Development*, 49(4), 33-48.
- [20] Satar, H. M., & Özdenner, N. (2008). The effects of synchronous CMC on speaking proficiency and anxiety: Text versus voice chat. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(4), 595-613.
- [21] Sotillo, S. M. (2000). Discourse functions and syntactic complexity in synchronous and asynchronous communication. *Language Learning and Technology*, 4 (1), 82.
- [22] Tharp, R., & Gallimore, R. (1991). *The instructional conversation: Teaching and learning in social activity* (Research Report 2). Santa Cruz, CA: The National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, University of California, Santa Cruz.
- [23] Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- [24] Ware, P. (2004). Confidence and competition online: ESL student perspectives on web-based discussions in the classroom. *Computers and Composition*, 21, 451-468.
- [25] Warschauer, M. (1996). Comparing face-to-face and electronic discussion in the second language classroom. *CALICO Journal*, 13(2), 7-26.
- [26] Warschauer, M., Turbee, L., & Roberts, B. (1996). Computer learning networks and student empowerment. *System*, 24 (1), 1-14.
- [27] Woods, R.H.J. (2002). How much communication is enough in online courses? Exploring the relationship between frequency of instructor-initiated personal email and learners' perceptions of and participation in online learning. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 29 (4), 377-394.

[28] Yuan, Y. (2003). The use of chat rooms in an ESL setting. *Computers and Composition*, 20(2), 194-206.

**Harun Yılmaz** received his Ph.D. degree in Instructional Design and Technology from Virginia Tech (2007), USA. He worked as an instructional designer and instructor at University of Phoenix from 2005 to 2007. He is currently working at the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), Turkey as a scientific programs expert.

**Duygu Sağlam** received his B.S. (2005) degree in English Language Teaching from Kocaeli University, Turkey. She is seeking M.Sc. degree in Curriculum Development and Instruction and working as an instructor at the Foreign Languages Compulsory Preparatory Program, Zonguldak Karaelmas University, Zonguldak, Turkey.

# The Reading Motivation and Reading Strategies Used by Undergraduates in University Teknologi MARA Dungun, Terengganu

Badariah binti Sani

Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak, Seri Iskandar, 32600 Bota, Perak, Malaysia  
Email: badariah@perak.uitm.edu.my

Muhammad Noor bin Wan Chik

Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak, Seri Iskandar, 32600 Bota, Perak, Malaysia  
Email: muhammad@perak.uitm.edu.my

Yah binti Awg Nik

Centre for Language Studies and Generic Development, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Locked Bag 36, Taman Bendahara, Pengkalan Chepa, 16100 Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia  
Email: yah@umk.edu.my

Nor Adeena binti Raslee

Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia  
Email: adeenaraslee@gmail.com

**Abstract**—There is a major concern among educators and parents about children who cannot read but more seriously about those who can read but do not have the motivation to read. The study investigated 245 undergraduates' level of reading motivation and their reading strategies use when they read academic texts. This study aims at finding the connection between reading motivation and reading strategy, to discover the differences between male and female students' reading motivation and reading strategy and the relationship between variables such as program of study and family's income. The results showed that the undergraduates' reading motivation was of moderate level and they mostly use the cognitive reading strategy instead of the metacognitive reading strategy. There seemed to be a connection between the undergraduates' reading motivation and the reading strategy used. The results indicated that the undergraduates' motivation to read had an influence on the use of the reading strategy. Though female students had higher reading motivation compared to male students, both groups only use the cognitive reading strategy. Therefore, the results showed that undergraduates having moderate reading motivation tend to use only cognitive reading strategy. Thus, reading motivation does influence the acquisition of reading skills and there is a possibility that the higher reading motivation, the higher the tendency to use high level reading skills such as metacognitive which is a necessity for students' effective reading. Instructors should motivate students to become active readers by improving students' intrinsic motivation and decreasing their extrinsic motivation. Other results revealed that there was a significant difference among the five Diploma programs and finally, the students' reading motivation had no significant relationship with their economic background.

**Index Terms**—reading motivation, reading strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching children to read for the sake of literacy learning is not an adequate goal. The goal should be for teachers to teach their children to value reading so that they will read for various purposes such as for information as well as for pleasure. Educators who are concerned about their children's reading behaviour will wonder whether the children are reading enough in a day and are they enjoying what they are reading? Morrow and Weinstein (1982) carried out a study on primary-grade children and found out that very few of the children choose to look at books during their free time. They believe that children do not spend enough time reading and that they rather do other activities in their spare time. Thus, it is important for educators to motivate their students to read because many students are at risk of reading failure due to their lack of motivation.

In addition, reading is closely related to writing competence, students who do not read in their free time often face problems during their writing assignments and thus many perform poorly in writing test. This would mean that these students would have difficulty in not only the reading skills but the writing skills as well. In trying to improve students' reading motivation, educators should understand how students acquire the motivation to enable them to be engaged

readers. It is vital that educators know what stimulate students' motivation to read and think of some strategies to improve students' reading ability. As Spangler (2000) recommended that if students are to become mature and effective readers, they must have the skill and the will to read.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) noted that students are thought to be motivated extrinsically which is reading for an external reward or intrinsically that is for the sake or value of doing something and that an engaged reader is someone who reads for the sake of reading and not for a grade or for other external incentives. They claimed that reading motivation does not only explain why some children read more than others but also how the children utilize the strategic skills which allows him or her to engage in the reading. They emphasized that without motivation children will less likely be using metacognitive strategies such as using prior knowledge, searching for information, self-monitoring, and are less likely to read. In this sense, motivational variables, such as self-efficacy, interest, and autonomy, are greatly influential in reading engagement which is an integration of social, cognitive, and motivational aspects.

In the literature of reading strategies, two major categories are mentioned: cognitive and metacognitive. Cognitive strategies help the reader to construct meaning from the text. Block (1986), Carrell (1989), Davis and Bistodeau (1993) cited that studies in both first and second language reading research generally provide a binary division of cognitive strategies as bottom-up and top-down. Aebersold and Field (1997) mentioned how the readers' minds repeatedly engage in a variety of processes during reading. Readers normally start by using the bottom-up strategies like processing information at the sentence level. This means that they focus on identifying the meaning and grammatical category of a word, sentence syntax, text details, and so forth. Barnett (1988) and Carrell (1989) added that while the students are processing the information provided by each sentence, they check to see how the information fits, using top-down strategies like background knowledge, prediction, getting the gist of a text, and skimming. On the other hand, metacognitive strategies are used to regulate or monitor cognitive strategies. They check or evaluate the effectiveness of the reading done. Devine (1993) and Flavell (1981) described metacognitive strategies in reading as strategies that act to monitor or regulate the cognitive strategies. Baker and Brown (1984) added that metacognitive strategies include checking the outcome of any attempt to solve a problem, planning one's next move, monitoring the effectiveness of any attempted action, testing, revising, and evaluating one's strategies for learning. Devine (1993) commented that skimming a text for key information involves the usage of cognitive strategy, whereas assessing the effectiveness of skimming for gathering textual information would be a metacognitive strategy. Hence, using only cognitive reading strategy to read is insufficient for effective reading and there is a possibility that the reader may make the wrong interpretation of the reading.

Researches on college and university students reading habits have questioned the factors that influence what students want to read? Juel (1988) found out that early success of achieving reading competencies or cognitive competencies can influence students' interest in reading. This means that in order for students to be engaged in reading, they must acquire a good reading ability. If they do not achieve a certain level of reading competencies, then they would not want to have anything to do with reading. These students would not be able to read independently even for their own personal interest (Turner, 1992). As a result this may lead to poor academic achievement and a decline in language proficiency and critical thinking skills. Baker (2000) also put forward similar thoughts and agreed that cognitive skills are foundational to creating an engaged reader. Thus, having low language proficiency can become barriers in motivating readers to read.

In Malaysia, there is a widespread concern among educators and parents about children not having the ability and lacking the motivation to read. Zuhilmi (2005), in an article in the *New Straits Times*, observed that reading is often confined to classrooms and for educational pursuits. This could be one of the reasons why children have not developed good reading habits and need further encouragement to motivate them to read. In another situation, in the *News Straits Times* dated 12<sup>th</sup> February 2006 reported a survey conducted by the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) on students' ability to read in various primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. From the 70 secondary schools population of 73,858 students analyzed, 1964 students could not read. What is more shocking is that these students are in Form five and having had eleven years of schooling yet failed to achieve the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Drastic actions need to be taken to overcome this situation because these students will not only lose interest to read but will face many problems in the future especially in getting a job and so on.

In the *New Primary School Curriculum* (2001) or the "Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah" better known as KBSR, the importance of acquiring reading, writing and arithmetic skills by primary school students is stressed. The curriculum emphasized that every primary school student must be able to read, write and do arithmetic, the 3Rs before proceeding to the secondary education. It is hoped that once the students have acquired the skills to read, they would then develop their reading habits. Students' reading ability in the first and second language needs to be developed so that they can become active engaged readers. However, the expectation that students would become engaged readers once they have acquired the reading skills and habits does not necessarily prevail. Noorliza (2006) in her study about reading preferences of 30 high achievers Primary students in a rural school in Terengganu, found that these students do not usually read when they have free time. This indicates that students lack the motivation to read and though they have the ability to read does not make them engaged readers.

Moving on to tertiary level, the lack of reading habits is still prevalent. In a study conducted by Abdul Kadir (2005) on Universiti Teknologi MARA Office Management students' inability to timely complete their studies, he found that

one of the reasons is due to having poor reading interest. He commented that his students do not make reading their habit and they hardly read any reading material during their free time. He urged that something ought to be done to instill reading interest among the students. Thus, it is clear that undergraduates are facing problems in their reading. This could be due to incomprehensibility of text, inability to interact with text and low motivation for reading (Palincsar and Brown, 1985). They commented that students are adequate decoders but poor comprehenders and this will pose a major hurdle for the undergraduates when they need to read a lot of academic texts in order to do their assignments and it cannot be denied that Diploma students and undergraduates need to read a lot of academic texts, journals, websites and magazines regularly which require them to use high level of reading skills and therefore making reading an effortful activity. Due to this reason many students often choose not to read. They read too little and rarely read for deep understanding (Guthrie, Schafer and Huang, 2001). Thus, if their motivation for reading is low, then it would cause the students to suffer reading failure. Hence, motivation to read is a high priority and students who are at risk of having reading failure can lead to poor academic achievement. This is because for many students at the tertiary level, reading academic texts is a new experience and can be overwhelmingly difficult. This is especially true for those whose reading skills are less than excellent. In schools, students spent 11 or more years basically reading for academic achievement as well as for pleasure. They do light reading like reading newspapers, entertainment magazines and the like and would spend a short period of time reading. The situation is not the same when they enter higher education as they have to spend long hours surfing the internet for information and reading academic textbooks. These students will be unwilling readers or are inattentive about their reading. They feel insecure and easily intimidated by complex material. They feel inadequately prepared for the readings given. In addition, students need to interact with their reading text and use the correct reading strategies to understand the text. This may not be easy because part of the learning is to use reading strategies and each time a new and different strategy has to be used when old ones failed. Students need to keep going, finish up, summarize and connect new information to other knowledge they have acquired. Based on the above problems, the study aims to find out what causes students to not want to read and what could be done to improve students' reading motivation and reading strategies and discover the possible ways that can improve students' willingness to read.

Hence, the general purpose of the study is to examine students' level of reading motivation and the reading strategies used when they read academic texts. This study also aims at finding connections, relationships and differences between male and female students' reading motivation and reading strategies used and to discover any significance relationship between variables such as program of study and family's income.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The results were tabulated and coded by using the SPSS version 11.5. The frequencies and percentages obtained were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and the central tendencies such as mean and standard deviation were obtained. For inferential statistics, the T-test, Anova and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) were used to ascertain the relationship that existed between variables such as male and female students' reading motivation level, reading strategy, students' program of study and family's income. A questionnaire consisting of two parts was used: firstly, an adapted reading motivation questionnaire originally created by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) consisted 45 items and divided into 11 categories of reading motivation to measure aspects of reading motivation which includes self-efficacy, several types of intrinsic and extrinsic reading motives, social aspects of reading and the desire to avoid reading and secondly, a reading strategy inventory developed by Cor and Conny (2003) which included 10 items of the cognitive strategies and metacognitive reading strategies.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Demographic Factors

The samples used in the study consisted of 245 Diploma students of which 61 are male and 184 are female. The samples are chosen from five different programs of study which included Diploma in Computer Science, Diploma in Accountancy, Diploma in Public Administration, Diploma in Banking and Diploma in Office Management and Technology. Their ages ranged from 18 years to 20 years old. They have similar educational background that includes eleven years of primary and secondary education. 85 percent of the samples hailed from the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia namely Kelantan and Terengganu, and 15 percent came from the other states of Peninsular Malaysia. The students use Malay language for communication at home and at the university. Only 11 percent speak English at home as well as for communication with others.

For the students' reading motivation, there is a significant difference between male and female students' reading motivation. From the mean, we can see that female students have a higher reading motivation of 163.93 with Standard Deviation of 23.06 while male students have only 153.28 with Standard Deviation of 12.26. The same result is obtained for students' reading strategy whereby the female students obtain a slightly higher mean of 17.31 with Standard Deviation 1.25 while the male students have a mean of 15.92 with Standard Deviation of 1.38. Though the female students scored higher than the male students, both groups are using more of the cognitive reading strategies than the metacognitive strategies. Next, the results revealed that among all five Diploma programs there were significantly

different in their reading motivation. The F probability value is 1.87 and given  $p$  is more than 0.05. Similarly, from the SPSS output, the Critical F tables, the F- probability value is 3.088, given  $p$  is less than 0.05, shows that the reading strategy used by the five Diploma programs are different. Lastly, the study also found that there seems to be no significant relationship between students' reading motivation level and students' economic background with the Pearson Correlation  $r$  of 0.226. Thus, higher income does not associate with having higher reading motivation. This finding is similar to a study done by OECD/UNESCO-PIS (2003) whose findings revealed that readers who read for pleasure and read a variety of reading materials are better readers regardless of their family background.

### *B. Reading Motivation*

Generally, the reading motivation is around the midpoint range where the scale "Agreed" had the highest mean score for ten of the reading motivation construct with the exception of Work Avoidance which has the highest scale for "Disagree". This shows that students would not avoid reading difficult text and after calculating the average score for all the 11 dimensions, the result show highest score of 'Agree' with 510 points (38%) and the lowest case is 'Totally Disagree' with only 32 or 2.39%. From the Mean obtained that is 3.48 and standard deviation of 7.61, we can conclude that the students' reading motivation is in the middle level that signifies a moderate level because from a scale of 1 to 5, most of the respondents' answers are between the scales of 'Not Sure' and 'Agree'. Nevertheless, it appeared that the mean score for some dimensions such as challenge, curiosity, compliance, grades and self-efficacy were higher than others. For self-efficacy and competency in reading with a percentage of 57.6%, majority of the samples agreed that they have the competency and efficacy belief that they can be successful in their reading. On the other hand, only a small percentage of 1.53% strongly disagreed that they can be successful. The data showed that the samples had a moderately high level of self-efficacy and reading competency. As for the next dimension challenge, 59.66% of the samples said that they are willing to read difficult reading materials. However, only 0.98% strongly disagreed to take on reading difficult materials. Thus, it can be concluded that majority of the samples have the willingness to try and read texts or reading activities that are challenging to them. The work avoidance dimension revealed that almost half or 45.1% of the samples disagreed that they will avoid reading activities if the words or vocabulary and the stories are difficult. On the other hand, 6.8% strongly agreed that they would avoid reading activities. Hence, when the students lack a sense of self-efficacy, they are likely to avoid challenging reading activities. The curiosity dimension which refers to the desire to read about a particular topic of interest, a majority of 58.92% of the samples agreed that curiosity is the drive that makes them want to read while on the other end, 1.48% of the total samples strongly disagreed that curiosity would make them want to read. From the moderately high percentage score, it clearly shows that the samples' curiosity motivates them strongly to read. On the aspect of involvement in reading which means the enjoyment that the reader will experience when they read certain kinds of literary texts or materials, showed that 49.43% of the samples agreed that they are involved and they enjoy their reading. However, a small percentage of 4.48% of the respondents strongly disagreed about involvement and enjoyment they had when reading. Most of the respondents have a very strong feeling about the importance of reading and most of the samples that is 48.8% strongly agreed that reading is important and none of the sample strongly disagreed on the importance of reading. Reading for recognition which is another dimension in reading motivation, showed that a majority of 44.2% of the samples agreed that they read to gain a certain form of recognition through their success in reading. Only 3.5% strongly disagreed that recognition would be the reason to make them want to read. However, a large percentage of more than half or 57.33% of the samples agreed that grades play an important role in their desire to read especially in doing well in tests and examinations and only 1.55% strongly disagreed that grades is the only reason for them to read. Thus, we can conclude that grades are a vital element that would motivate students to read. Another important dimension in reading motivation is competition which is the desire to outperform others in reading. More than half of the respondents, that is 54.58% agreed that competition is a motivational factor for them to read and only 2.45% strongly disagreed about competition being a motivator for reading. Thus, recognition, grades and competition can be said to be prominent factors in motivating students' to read. The next dimension of the reading motivation that is social purpose for reading showed slightly less than half or 47.48% of the samples agreed that they read for some social purposes like sharing meanings of what they read or sharing stories with others and only a small percentage of 6.58% strongly disagreed with reading for the sake of socializing. Lastly, compliance which means doing reading to meet the expectation of others depict quite a large number of the samples that is 57.62% agreed that they read to comply with others like teachers, parents, and friends who want them to do well in their studies and only 4.17% of the samples strongly disagreed that they read to comply with other people's wishes.

To summarize the findings, the data indicated that the students characterized themselves as motivated readers having moderate scores, which reflected that they have a moderate level of self-efficacy. In other words, respondents thought that they would be moderately successful in their reading. Thus if their expectations for the reading tasks is of a moderate mode, then this would show that their willingness to expend efforts is only of average range or level because they believe partially in their success in the task. They tend to have some perseverance in their reading. Thus, when the respondents are faced with difficult texts/tasks, they would still persist doing the task till the end and they would not stop or evade doing the task. Thus, this would indicate that the students believe that they are competent enough and are efficacious at reading. This would result in them being engaged in any reading tasks, even the difficult ones. They would also not avoid challenging reading activities. For Work-avoidance category, it reflected that the students have some desire to try readings that are difficult.

For intrinsic motivation the data shows a moderate to moderately low score. These data reflect students' desire, interests, attitude, value and how much time they would be willing to spend on their reading. Students' desire to read was only moderate, so they have a moderate reading interest. Scores for Involvement and Importance both indicate that students do not enjoy a lot when they read and therefore they would not want to be involved or spend more time reading. Similarly they do not think or value reading as important. The data reflect students' desire, interests, attitude, value and how much time they would be willing to spend for their reading. Students' desire to read was only moderate, so they have a moderate reading interest. Scores for Involvement and Importance dimensions portrayed that students do not enjoy a lot when they read and therefore they would not want to be involved or spend more time reading. Similarly they do not think or value reading as important. On the whole, the students' extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation were moderate and they reflected that the samples do their readings for evaluative and comparative purposes as well as reading for interest or pleasure. Lastly, the social purpose of reading indicated that students do most of their readings to meet the expectation of others.

### C. Reading Strategy

For the samples' reading strategy, the data shows that most of the students (61.5%) used a dictionary when they do not understand the meaning of a word or they would ask someone who knows the meaning of the word. This shows the students' attempt to understand meanings of individual word by using a bottom-up reading strategy. As for understanding a sentence or at intrasentential level, most of them (58.5%) used rereading strategy which is also a bottom-up reading strategy. Skimming and scanning is the most commonly used reading strategy among the students. They used this strategy when reading for general understanding and to better remember facts or information and to know key ideas found in sentences that contain important details. With this strategy, students may read quickly or slowly depending on the difficulty of the text. The samples used a reading strategy called association with prior knowledge before they start any reading to connect new information with the previous stated context and when they do not understand a particular sentence, they realized that they have not develop adequate links or connections with the text. The last reading strategy used by the samples is prediction as when students have problems with reading a text, they will read ahead to predict the likely content of the succeeding portions of the text.

On the whole, the data collected from the Reading Strategy Awareness Inventory shows that students used only the cognitive strategies in reading that includes 3 bottom-up strategies and 4 top-down strategies. The 3 bottom-up strategies are using dictionary, 61.5%, intrasentential features, 58.5%, and restatement or rereading, 34.2%. The top-down reading strategies include skimming/scanning, 48.2%, 47.7%, 42.5% and 40%, association with prior knowledge, 42.8%, reference to the antecedent information, 45.4%, and prediction, 40.7%. The data indicated no metacognitive reading strategies were employed by the students at all. Thus, the data reflected that the samples only possess some knowledge about cognitive reading strategies (bottom-up and top-down). Reading researchers such as Carrell, Pharis and Liberto (1989) and Cotteral (1990) commented that students who merely used bottom-up strategies are considered as having a low proficiency in their reading. Although the respondents in the study did use three bottom-up strategies, more of the top-down strategies were used while reading. However, the students do not have the knowledge of the metacognitive strategies, and thus this would affect the students' reading comprehension ability. This is because they do not know how to check or monitor their reading and therefore can make incorrect interpretation of what they are reading. Good readers need to be able to constantly evaluate and monitor their reading in order to overcome reading problems.

## IV. CONCLUSION

The study provided a clear picture about students' reading motivation, their reading ability and the strategies used when reading. From the study, it was found that students' reading motivation had an overall moderate score for all 11 dimensions. The results reflected that the respondents are not really motivated enough to read. Since they are only having a moderate level of reading motivation, it may not get them to be involved with reading and may also be less engrossed when they read. This could lead to a decrease in reading interest and they will not read or share reading with friends and family members. Despite the students' reading motivation being of an average level, there are some strong points about the students' reading motivation. These include Challenge and Self-efficacy beliefs. These two dimensions are crucial determiners of students' reading success. This would indicate that the students are not struggling readers and with the correct instruction of reading strategies, these dimensions will improve the students' academic achievements especially in reading comprehension.

The data also showed that students are moderately motivated to read on account when they will be evaluated. This is a common phenomenon during examination time but this type of reading motivation is not long lasting and students should have the intrinsic motivation and further strengthened by the extrinsic motivation. Therefore, motivation for reading should change from time to time increasing in strength, number or type. Thus, students should be encouraged to read not only for examination or evaluation purposes but also for enjoyment, interest and knowledge. It is feared that their reading motivation will decrease when there is no examination or evaluation. Then their motivation for reading will be less active. Even though extrinsic motivation is important as an external factor to motivate students to read, it is not enough or long lasting.

From the reading strategy analysis, it was found that students only used the lower level reading strategies and these strategies were used to understand meaning of words at sentence level or to remember facts. They do not make use of the metacognitive skills which are of higher level reading strategies. One of the reasons could be the students have not mastered the higher level reading strategies. They have only developed the lower cognitive reading strategies such as using dictionary, skimming or scanning and finding word meanings, which are sufficient to answer questions in examination as well as to improve their academic achievement. It is important for students to acquire the different types of reading strategies in order for them to improve their reading motivation. The connection between reading motivation and reading strategy is now clear and results show that students' reading motivation does influence the reading strategies used by them. This is similar to the study conducted by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) that revealed there is a significant influence the reading motivation has on the reading strategies.

#### V. SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING MOTIVATION AND READING STRATEGIES

In the study it was discovered that in terms of competency, the students have only acquired a minimum level of competency. Their prior knowledge and experience of their reading did little to enhance their reading motivation. So, we can conclude that the students have not acquired a lot of the reading skills or strategies when they were in school. Therefore, it is crucial for instructors to teach effective reading strategies to students during class hours. Teaching reading strategies must start with the bottom-up and top-down cognitive strategies before teaching the more difficult metacognitive skills. Students must be provided with ample exercises to practice the reading strategies taught. Instructors should not assume that their students have acquired the reading skills and have the ability to read well. These skills are difficult to master but they need to be taught and developed from time to time. Therefore students must be motivated to learn them. It is suggested that instructors do not only ask students to read but rather teach them how to read using the different reading strategies. This would improve their reading ability tremendously.

The development of students' reading ability and competencies in reading should be carried out at an early age that is at the primary school level. When students' interest to read is high then there is motivation to read and be engaged in reading. Thus their competency in the second language would be high too. At this point, the students are still learning the English Language, its grammar and vocabulary and whatever knowledge they have acquired from their primary and secondary education may not be sufficient for them to perform successfully at the tertiary level. Therefore, they may not have the competency level that is expected of them and these have affected their reading performance.

Instructors can motivate their students by providing an array of reading materials. They should bring books and other reading materials to class and introduce the materials and books to their students. It is important to remember to provide students with books that they can and want to read. It is suggested to have more fiction books that provide textual, realistic characters, readable and convincing text that would interest and fulfill the students' need. This could arouse the students' interest to read more about the subject. The selection of books brought to class ought to be carefully figured out and chosen to boost the students' interest to read them.

It is suggested that teachers or lecturers try to improve students' reading motivation by improving their intrinsic motivation. This would mean enhancing activities that increase the dimensions such as Challenge, Involvement, Social and Self-efficacy. By doing so, the students can become active readers. Active readers would be more engrossed and engaged in their reading. Once they have become engaged in the reading, they would be more intrinsically motivated to read. They will use strategies such as self-monitoring and inferencing to understand text. On the other hand, students who are less active readers or those who merely have extrinsic motivation will ultimately decrease in the number of their reading and this would decrease the chance to be active readers.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Abdul Kadir b. Othman. (2005). Factors Contributing to Students' Inability in Timely Completing Their Diploma Program: A Case of DOMT Students. Proceedings of Conference Towards Academic and Service Excellence Through Professionalism 2005, IRDC, UiTM Kampus Dungun, Terengganu.
- [2] Aebersold, J.A. & Field, M.L. (1997). From reader to reading teacher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [3] Baker, L (2000). Building the word-level foundation for engaged reading. In L. Baker, M. J. Dreher, & J.T. Guthrie (Eds.), *Engaging young readers: Promoting achievement and motivation* (pp.17-42). New York: Guilford Press.
- [4] Baker, L. & Brown, A.L. (1984). Metacognitive skills in reading. In D. Pearson, M. Kamil, R. Barr, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.) *Handbook of Reading Research*, pp. 353-394. New York: Longman.
- [5] Barnett, M.A. (1988). Reading through context: How real and perceived strategy affects L2 comprehension. *The Modern Language Journal*, 72(2), 150-162.
- [6] Block, E. (1986). The comprehension strategies of second language readers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 463-494.
- [7] Carrell, P.L. (1989). Metacognition awareness and second language reading. *TESOL Quarterly*, 73, 121-134.
- [8] Carrell, P.L., Pharis, B.G., & Liberto, J.G. (1989). Metacognitive strategy training for ESL reading. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 463-494.
- [9] Cor, A. & Conny, S. (2003). Learning reading strategies by triggering reading motivation. *Educational Studies*, 29(4), 387-410.
- [10] Cotteral, S. (1990). Developing reading strategies through small group interaction. *RELC Journal*, 21(2), 55- 59.
- [11] Davis, J.N. & Bistodeau, L. (1993). How do L1 and L2 reading differ? Evidence from think aloud protocols. *The Modern Language Journal*, 77(4), 459-471.

- [12] Devine, J. (1993). The role of metacognition in second language reading and writing. In G. Joan and L.I. Carson (Eds.), *Reading in the composition classroom, second language perspective* (pp.105-130). Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- [13] Flavell, J.H. (1981). Cognitive monitoring. In W.P. Dickson (Ed.), *Children's oral communication skills* (pp. 35-60). New York: Academic Press.
- [14] Guthrie, J.T., Schafer, W.D. & Huang, C. (2001). Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced reading instruction for reading achievement and engagement: A policy analysis of state NAEP in Maryland. *Journal of Educational Research*, 94(3), 145-162.
- [15] Juel, C (1988). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(4), 437- 447.
- [16] Morrow, L.M., & Weinstein, C.S. (1982). Increasing children's use of literature through Program and physical design changes. *Elementary School Journal*, 83, 131-137.
- [17] New Primary School Curriculum. (2001). Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris Sekolah Rendah. Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.
- [18] Noorliza bt.Abu Bakar, (2006). The impact of reading preferences on high achievers' academic achievements of Sekolah Kebangsaan Tok Dir, Kuala Terengganu. Unpublished Master Thesis, UiTM Terengganu, Dungun Campus.
- [19] National Union of the Teaching Profession. (2006). Some secondary students can't read. *New Straits Times*. 12<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2006.
- [20] OECD/UNESCO-UIS. (2003). PISA–Literacy Skills for the World of Tomorrow. Pg 164-185 <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/9/33690591.pdf>. Retrieved on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008.
- [21] Palincsar, A.S. & Brown, A.L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-monitoring Activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1(2), 117-175.
- [22] Spangler, A. (2000). The Motivation to Read. Retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005. <http://www.ci.swt.edu/course/CI5390Peterson/final%20papers/Motivation%20to%20>
- [23] Turner, G.Y. (1992). Motivating reluctant readers: What can educators do? *Reading Improvement*, 29(1) 50-55.
- [24] Wigfield, A, & Guthrie, J.T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89(3), 420-432.
- [25] Zulhilm Zainal. (2005). Reading is a habit we hold dear. *New Straits Times*. 14<sup>th</sup> Jan.2005.



**Badariah binti Sani** is a Senior Lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak, Malaysia. Had her postgraduate Diploma in TESL at Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur and further her studies at Universiti Pertanian Malaysia in Bachelor of Education in TESL. Her postgraduate studies was at the Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA. She has written articles in *Journal for Languages and Culture (JLC)*.



**Muhamad Noor bin Wan Chik** is a Senior Lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak, Malaysia. Awarded the Colombo Plan Scholarship in 1986 to do postgraduate diploma in TEFL at the University of Sydney and further his studies in Universiti Pertanian Malaysia in Bachelor of Education in TESL. He did his postgraduate studies at the Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA. He has written articles in *Journal for Languages and Culture (JLC)*. Had wide experience in teaching at the primary and secondary schools.



**Yah binti Awg Nik** is a Senior Lecturer and Head of Department for Modern Languages, Centre for Language Studies & Generic Development, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. Had her early education in Universiti Pertanian Malaysia in Bachelor of Education in TESL and further her studies in College of Education, Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand. Awarded the British Council Scholarship in 1996 and did her post graduate studies in University of Exeter. She has written articles in *Journal for Languages and Culture (JLC)* and *International Journal of Educational Technology (IJERT)*. Have wide experience in lecturing and conducting academic research and also a Master Trainer for secondary school teachers.



**Nor Adeena binti Raslee** is a postgraduate student who is currently pursuing her studies in Master of Science in Park and Recreation Management from Universiti Putra Malaysia. She graduated from the International Islamic University of Malaysia with Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Honours) in 2008.

# When the Blind Lead the Blind: the Fallacy of Promoting Standard British English Accent in Cameroon

Aloysius Ngefac\*

Department of English and American Studies, University of Regensburg, 93040 Regensburg, Germany  
Email: angefac@yahoo.co.uk

**Abstract**—The paper argues, with reference to different empirical studies, that the promotion of Standard British English accent in Cameroon to the detriment of educated Cameroon English pronunciation is an unrealistic goal. The argument is based on the fact that Cameroon displays unique sociolinguistic and pragmatic realities that make the promotion of Standard British accent an unattainable goal.

**Index Terms**—Cameroon, ELT, standard British English accent, Cameroon English accent, contextual realities

## I. INTRODUCTION

In spite of the fact that many research works (see, for instance, Masanga 1983; Mbangwana 1987; Bobda 1994; Anchimbe 2006 and Ngefac 2008) have clearly demonstrated that the English language in postcolonial multilingual Cameroon has undergone significant indigenisation and, consequently, nativisation, Standard British English (SBE) accent continues to be the preferred pronunciation model in the ELT industry in Cameroon. Interestingly, in most English Language textbooks used for the teaching of the language, drills on SBE accent abound and no drills are provided for educated Cameroon English (CamE) pronunciation. In fact, in all examinations that involve the testing of pronunciation (e.g. the entrance examination into the Higher Teacher Training College Yaounde), RP or SBE accent is always the target. Apart from Ngefac (2008 b), RP or SBE is always the reference accent in most research works (e.g. dissertations, theses and scientific papers, such as Bobda 1991) carried out on phonology in Cameroon. In other words, informants are always evaluated in most of these research works in terms of their knowledge of RP, and not in terms of their knowledge of educated CamE. The purpose of this paper is therefore to demonstrate, with reference to some empirical studies, that SBE is a far-fetched phenomenon in Cameroon, in spite of official efforts to promote it and in spite of some speakers' qualification of their accent as SBE.

## II. THE STUDY OF CAMEROON ENGLISH WITHIN THE WORLD ENGLISHES FRAMEWORK

The English language that was at one point the language of a few countries is now a global language. In the different new nations where the language has been transplanted, it has evolved according to the ecological, cultural and sociolinguistic realities of such contexts (Kachru 1986; Graddol 1997; Mufwene 2001; Anchimbe 2006; Schneider 2007; and Ngefac 2008a). Kachru's (1985, 1986) three concentric model "helps promote varieties of English by drawing attention to their systematicity, robustness, creativity, communicative potential and relative prestige" (Rajadurai, 2005:4). In these new nations, the structure of the language at all linguistic levels is significantly influenced by contextual realities and the language tends to display significant differences from British English and other traditional native Englishes.

As a result of the nativisation of the English language in the new nations, each of the countries where a new English is spoken is now claiming its own standard of the language. One can now identify in the literature expressions such as Indian Standard English and Nigerian Standard English. This trend towards recognizing the New Englishes spoken in the new nations is in conformity with Kachru's (1992:11) recommendation that "it is indeed essential to recognise that World Englishes represent certain linguistic, cultural and pragmatic realities and pluralism, and that pluralism is now an integral part of World Englishes and literatures written in Englishes". In spite of Kachru's recommendation and the efforts made by scholars from different parts of the world to defend the status, acceptability and equality of Englishes in the three concentric circles, some Outer Circle speakers continue to think that traditional native English norms are superior to those of their indigenised English, despite the positive attitude they show towards their local English. Rajadurai (2005:6) captures this tendency in the following words:

[Outer Circle] speakers express pride in their own accents and varieties, and yet at the same time, espouse a preference and yearning for the native-speaker accent and for traditional old variety norms.

---

\* Aloysius Ngefac teaches at the University of Yaounde I and is currently residing at the University of Regensburg as a fellow of Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

In postcolonial Cameroon, it is interesting to report that many Cameroonians now show a positive attitude towards their variety of English, in spite of official efforts to implant a traditional native English accent in Cameroon. In a previous investigation (see Ngefacs 2009), up to 32 % of my informants expressed a preference for CamE. In spite of this positive attitude towards CamE, there is still the strong belief that Western models of English, such as RP or SBE, should be the target of anybody who wishes to speak good English and hopes to have more professional opportunities. Bobda (2002: v) expressed this view in the following words:

While acknowledging the legitimate emergence of an autonomous variety of English in Cameroon, I believe that we are still, in many ways, dependent upon British and American norms. Our educational and professional successes are still dependent on these norms.

If ELT goals in Cameroon are aimed at promoting SBE accent, the fundamental task we have at hand is to evaluate the extent to which such a variety of English has actually been implanted in Cameroon, given, especially, the multilingual and other realities that sanction the teaching and learning of English in Cameroon.

Unlike most Western contexts, Cameroon displays a complex multilingual landscape. Besides French and English as the country's official languages, there are approximately 280 indigenous languages. In addition, there is Cameroon Pidgin or what is currently referred to as Kamtok, a lingua franca that is spoken by many Cameroonians of all walks of life, irrespective of their linguistic background, level of education, tribe, gender, age and occupation. Besides, there is Camfranglais, a language whose linguistic items are drawn mostly from English, French, Kamtok and Cameroonian indigenous languages. It is spoken mostly by the younger generation (see Kouega 2003a and b). In addition, these languages spoken in Cameroon, such as French, English and Pidgin English, also have their respective varieties that are determined by such factors as education, region, gender, age, tribe and occupation (see Ngefacs 2008a). In such a complex linguistic landscape where more than 280 languages and the different varieties of some of the languages are spoken in the same country, coupled with other sociocultural and pragmatic realities, can the promotion of SBE accent yield the expected results?

### III. ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THEIR ENGLISH

Questionnaires were administered to English Language teachers to make an assessment of their own English, by choosing from the options provided in the questionnaire which variety of English they speak and use as a medium of instruction. The following table captures the results obtained from the analysis of the responses of the 30 informants who made up the sample.

TABLE 1  
SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST INVOLVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN CAMEROON

Variety	Percentage
British English (BrE)	33.3
Cameroon English (CamE)	23.3
A mixture of BrE, AmE and CamE	6.7
A mixture of BrE and CamE	36.7
American English (AmE)	0
A mixture of AmE and CamE	0
A native English other than BrE and AmE	0

The most striking observation about the data displayed in the above table is the fact that the percentage of those who claimed to speak British English (BrE) is as high as 33.3 %, in spite of the obvious Camerooniansisms that characterized every aspect of their speech. The fact that the informants claimed to speak BrE and, yet, displayed many aspects of CamE phonological features is quite significant. The declaration that they speak BrE shows their wish to comply with government's policy to promote SBE in Cameroon. The fact that there were noticeable Camerooniansisms in their speech suggests that CamE is still the unavoidable companion of those who strive to promote SBE in Cameroon, as shall be in the next section. Bamgbose (1984:171) reported a very similar situation involving an important personality in Nigeria who was very much against the idea of carrying out research on Nigerian English. The man strongly advocated the teaching of BrE and argued that there is no such thing as Nigerian English, thereby claiming that his own English is a reflection of BrE. A few minutes later, after an interruption from his audience, he said "let me land", instead of BrE "let me finish". The man is, in fact, a good speaker of typical Nigerian English and has a shallower knowledge of BrE than what he thought (Bamgbose, 1982:99ff).

The table also shows that as high as 36.7 % of the informants reported that their speech was a mixture of both BrE and CamE. These informants can be said to be caught up between government's policy and the love for their local variety of English. Their profession as English Language teachers imposes some professional pressure on them to promote what the government policy prescribes, but at the same time they find it difficult to separate themselves from CamE, the variety of English that reflects their contextual realities.

### IV. ON THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF PROMOTING SBE ACCENT IN CAMEROON

Have pedagogic efforts significantly implanted SBE in Cameroon? We shall evaluate the SBE accent of teachers of English and journalists (those who are tacitly or officially expected to promote the so-called good English in Cameroon) and that of learners.

#### A. Assessing the SBE Pronunciation of Teachers of English

In a previous investigation (see Ngefac 2008a), 15 English language teachers were asked to articulate certain linguistic items according to the norms of SBE. Interestingly, the SBE pronunciation of a substantial number of these linguistic items was discovered to be completely lacking in the speech of the informants, as shown in the following table.

TABLE 2  
PERCENTAGE OF SBE AND CAMERONIAN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION OF SOME LEXICAL ITEMS

Words	SBE Pronunciation	CamE Pronunciation	Frequency of SBE	Frequency of CamE	% of SBE	% of CamE
commented	'commented		0		0	
		com'mented		15		100
insurance	in'surance		0		0	
		'insurance		15		100
preparatory	pre'paratory		0		0	
		prepa'ratory		15		100
Explanatory	ex'planatory		0		0	
		expla'natory		15		100

(Adapted from Ngefac, 2008: 106)

In 2003 when I went to the field to assess student teachers involved in practice teaching, one of them was heard drilling his learners on the SBE stress pattern of the word “semester”. He rightly explained that the word is stressed on the penultimate syllable in SBE, but the model pronunciation he was providing to his learners clearly showed that he was stressing the word on the first syllable as “semester”, the CamE pronunciation of the word, instead of SBE se'mester.

A further evidence to prove that SBE is a far-fetched phenomenon to teachers of English in Cameroon is presented in Bobda (1993:441). The author presents the reaction of an English teacher to a feature of RP as follows:

A recent reaction of an old English teacher to the observation of a lecturer that “consumption” has /s/ instead of /z/ was: “what language is that?”

He goes further to state the reaction of a televiewer to a television programme “English With A Difference” on good English that presented the word “colonel” and kernel” as homophones. The televiewer is said to have argued and maintained that

If it is true that the author of EWAD [English With A Difference] admits that “colonel” (an army officer) and “kernel” (a nut) are pronounced the same, then it is unfortunate and the programme should be scrapped before it does more harm (Bobda 1993:441, quoting *Cameroon Tribune*, No. 1936, August 1, 1989:15)

The first quotation above shows that English Language teachers who are presumed to be promoters of SBE accent are not even familiar with the SBE or RP variant. The question “what language is that?” is a clear exhibit that the teacher himself or herself, like the learners, is used only to the CamE variant which contains /z/, and not /s/ as in SBE.

The second quotation shows the reaction of another person who was probably not a teacher of English, but who, like the teacher of English, has a keen interest in English language issues. If such a person should dispute the fact that “colonel” and “kernel” are pronounced the same in SBE, it is an indication that this variety of English has so far not penetrated the hearts and minds of Cameroonians in general and English Language teachers in particular. This further shows that government’s efforts to implant SBE accent in a New English setting with unique contextual realities is likely to yield very little fruits.

#### B. Assessing the SBE Accent of Journalists

As concerns journalists, there is sufficient evidence to justify the claim that SBE accent is significantly lacking in their speech, as a result of the contextual realities of Cameroon. In Ngefac (2008a) the speech of some categories of speakers, including journalists, was thoroughly studied. Like the case of English Language teachers previously discussed, none of the journalists assessed was able to realize the SBE pronunciation of the underlined portions of the words “cupboard”, “of”, “period”, “village”, “happy” and the SBE stress pattern of the words “commented”, “insurance”, “illogical”, “preparatory”, “explanatory”, “authoritative” and “jubilee”. Such results clearly show that SBE accent in Cameroon is a hidden phenomenon, even to journalists.

Another evidence is the fact that a substantial number of dissertations and theses have been written by students of the Departments of English at various universities in Cameroon on the English language production of journalists and the unanimous conclusion in most of these research works is that they significantly deviate from SBE accent. In spite of this general conclusion, there are noticeable features of British and American English phonological features in the speech of a handful of them, especially those who have spent some time in the UK and in the US.

#### C. Assessing the SBE Accent of Learners of English in Cameroon

Like the cases of English teachers and journalists, SBE remains a far-fetched phenomenon to learners of English, in spite of the assumption that this variety of English is being promoted in Cameroon. The difficulties Cameroonian learners of English face vis-à-vis SBE are presented in Talom (1990). He read out a number of words according to the norms of SBE to Upper Sixth students and they were asked to write down what they heard. The word “mayor” was rightly recognized by only 9 % of his informants; as high as 78 % wrote the word “man”; and as high as 13 % could not write down anything because of the inaccessibility of the pronunciation to them. The word “climbing” was rightly recognized by only 30 % of the informants; as high as 52 % wrote down the word “climate”; 4 % wrote down “time” and 13 % failed to write down anything. As concerns the word “pestle”, only 6 % rightly recognized the word; as high as 26 % thought the word read was “pencil”, 37 % wrote down the word “parcel”; 11 % wrote down “person” and another 11 % failed to make any attempt.

A situation very similar to the one reported by Talom (1990) was witnessed during one of my lectures at the Department of English at the University of Yaounde 1. Out of 108 students present in a Second Year Spoken English class, only 3.7 % of the students were able to recognize the word “forehead”, which was given a SBE rendition. The intelligibility rate was alarmingly low because such a pronunciation contrasts sharply with the CamE pronunciation of the word.

#### V. CONCLUSION: SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND PEDAGOGIC IMPLICATIONS

The evidence provided so far in this paper clearly shows that teachers, journalists and learners of English have little knowledge of SBE accent or RP, the pronunciation model targeted in the ELT industry in Cameroon. The sociolinguistic and pedagogic implications of such a situation are manifold. First, the conspicuous absence of many SBE phonological features and the dominance of typical CamE aspects in the speech of the speakers is an indication that CamE, which is the unavoidable companion of many Cameroonians, should be standardized and promoted in Cameroon. In this case, only uneducated CamE features should be discouraged. The educated aspects of CamE can be conveniently promoted on the Cameroonian landscape and the promotion of SBE and any other native variety of English (e.g. American English) should not constitute the main target in ELT in Cameroon.

Second, the scarcity of SBE pronunciation features in the speech of both teachers and learners shows that the necessary human and material resources to ensure the effective teaching of this variety of English are lacking, if at all the teaching of the variety is necessary. How many language or linguistic departments in secondary schools and universities in Cameroon have language laboratories for the effective teaching of the language? In some institutions, it is conspicuously inscribed “language laboratory” on certain doors, yet there is no single instrument in these rooms which has been preserved for the effective teaching of the language. How many British and American speakers of English have been recruited to teach SBE accent in Cameroon? How many teachers and journalists have been sponsored by the Cameroon government to travel to Britain for exposure to this model of pronunciation? It can therefore be recommended that instead of fruitlessly spending time and energy promoting SBE accent in Cameroon, the resources can be invested on the codification, standardization and promotion of educated CamE.

Third, the promotion of SBE at the expense of CamE is an indication that decision makers on language issues in Cameroon are not conversant with the new status that has, in recent years, been attributed to varieties of English spoken in the new nations. Instead of perceiving such varieties of English as error systems, inadequate learning, failures, incongruous concoctions, different scholars from different corners of the globe have successfully projected these Englishes as strong forces to reckon with. In fact, it has been unambiguously acknowledged that English in the Outer Circle, such as Cameroon, has developed through an itinerary that is conditioned by the sociolinguistic and cultural realities of the place and it is actually serving the communicative needs of the people concerned. I therefore suggest that decision makers on language issues in Cameroon should open their ears to current debates provided in international conferences in favor of the New Englishes and should also open their eyes to interesting argumentative essays published in international journals which x-ray the New Englishes as self-contained systems of communication, instead of spending their time castigating CamE and setting ELT goals in terms of Western standards.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Anchimbe, A. Eric. (2005). The World Englishes in the American Tongue. *PHiN* 32, 1-11.
- [2] Anchimbe, A. Eric. (2006). Cameroon English: Authenticity, Ecology and Evolution. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- [3] Bamgbose, Ayo. (1971). The English Language in Nigeria. In Spencer, J. (ed.) *The English Language in West Africa*. London: Longman, 35-48.
- [4] Bobda, Augustin Simo. (1991). Does Pronunciation Matter. *English Teaching Forum* 29 (4), 28 – 30.
- [5] Bobda, Augustin Simo. (1993). English Pronunciation in Cameroon: Conflicts and Consequences. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 14:6, 435-445.
- [6] Bobda, Augustin Simo. (1994). Aspects of Cameroon English Phonology. Bern: Peter Lang.
- [7] Bobda, Augustin Simo (2002). Watch Your English! (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Yaounde: B&K.
- [8] Crystal, David. (1997). A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- [9] Graddol, D. (1997). The Future of English. UK: The British Council.
- [10] Jenkins, Jennifer. (2000). The Phonology of English as an International Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- [11] Kachru, B. Braj. (1985). Institutionalized Second-Language Varieties. In Greenbaum, S. (ed) (1985). *The English Language Today*, 221-226, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 221 - 226.
- [12] Kachru, B. Braj (1986). *The Alchemy of English. The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-native Englishes*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- [13] Kachru, B. Braj. (1992). World Englishes: Approaches, Issues and Resources". *Language Teaching*, 25 (1), 1-14.
- [14] Kouega, J. P. (1991). Some Speech Characteristics of Cameroon Media News in English. An Explanatory Study of Radio and Television News Text. Unpublished Doctorate de 3<sup>e</sup> Cycle thesis, University of Yaounde I.
- [15] Kachru, B. Braj. (2003a). Camfranglais: a novel slang in Cameroon schools. *English Today* 19(2), 23-29.
- [16] Kachru, B. Braj. (2003b). Word Formative Processes in Camfranglais. In *World Englishes*, 22 (4), 511-538.
- [17] Masanga, D. W. (1983). The Spoken English of Educated Moghamo People: A phonological study. Unpublished Doctorate de 3<sup>e</sup> Cycle thesis. University of Yaounde I.
- [18] Mazrui, Alamin M. and Mazrui, Ali A. (1996). A Tale of Two Englishes: The Imperial Language in Post-Colonial Kenya and Uganda. In *Post-Imperial English*, 271-302.
- [19] Mbangwana, P. (1987). Some Characteristics of Sound Patterns of Cameroon Standard English. *Multilingual*, vol. 4, 411-424.
- [20] Mbassi-Manga, F. (1973). English in Cameroon. A Study of Historical Contacts, Patterns of Usage and Current Trends. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Yaounde.
- [21] McArthur, T. (1998). *The English Languages*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [22] Modiano, Marko. (1999a). International English in the Global Village. *English Today*, 15 (2), 22-28.
- [23] Modiano, Marko. (1999b). Standard English(es) and Educational Practices for the World's Lingua Franca. *English Today*, 15 (4), 3-13.
- [24] Mufwene, Salikoko S. (2001). *The Ecology of Language Evolution*. Cambridge: CUP.
- [25] Mufwene, Salikoko. (1994). New Englishes and the criteria for naming them. *World Englishes*, 13, 21-31.
- [26] Mufwene, Salikoko. (1997). Native Speaker, Proficient Speaker, and Norm. Native speaker: multilingual perspectives. Edited by Rajendra Singh. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 111-123.
- [27] Ngefac, Aloysius. (2009). Which English for Cameroonians in the new millennium: the quest for English and cultural identity. *Annals, FALSS*, University of Yaounde I.
- [28] Ngefac, Aloysius. (2008a). *Social Differentiation in Cameroon English: Evidence from Sociolinguistic Fieldwork*. New York: Peter Lang.
- [29] Ngefac, Aloysius. (2008b). The Social Stratification of English in Cameroon. *World Englishes*, 27, (3/4), 407-418.
- [30] Ngefac, Aloysius. (2005). Homophones and Heterophones in Cameroon English. *Alizes*, 25/26, 39-53.
- [31] Ngefac, Aloysius. (2006a). Linguistic variants as signals of social hierarchy: The ambiguous situation of Cameroon. *PHiN* 35, 25-32.
- [32] Ngefac, Aloysius and Bonaventure M. Sala. (2006b). Cameroon Pidgin and Cameroon English at a confluence: A real-time investigation. *English World-Wide*, 27 (2), 217-227.
- [33] Ngefac, Aloysius and Bonaventure M. Sala. (2006c). What's happening to Cameroon Pidgin English? The depidginisation of Cameroon Pidgin English. *PhiN* 36.
- [34] Passé H. A. (1947). *The English Language in Ceylon*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of London.
- [35] Platt, John, Heidi Weber and Ho Mian Lian. (1984). *The New Englishes*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- [36] Rajadurai, Joanne. (2005). Revisiting the Concentric Circles: Conceptual and Sociolinguistic Considerations. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7 (4), 1-24.
- [37] Schmied, Josef. (1991). *English in Africa*. New York: Longman.
- [38] Sey, Kofi A. (1973). *Ghanaian English*. London: Macmillan.
- [39] Talom, P. (1992). The intelligibility of some RP forms in Cameroon. Unpublished postgraduate dissertation, ENS Yaounde, University of Yaounde I.
- [40] Todd, Loreto. (1999). Global English. *English Today*, 15 (2), 30-31.
- [41] Todd, Loreto. (1991). *Talk Pidgin. A Structured Course in West African Pidgin English*. Leeds: Tortoise Books.

**Aloysius Ngefac** holds a PhD and many other academic and professional certificates from the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, where he is currently Senior Lecturer at the Advanced College of Education. He has won international awards such as the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship for Experienced Researchers, the Fulbright Senior Scholarship and the DAAD and has given guest lectures in such universities as the University of Pennsylvania, City University of New York, Indiana State University, Indiana University and Drexel University. He is author of *Social Differentiation in Cameroon English* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008) and many scholarly papers, which have appeared in journals such as *World Englishes* and *English World-Wide*.

# Non-native Teacher Talk as Lexical Input in the Foreign Language Classroom

Eunice Tang

Faculty of Education, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

Email: tangeunice@cuhk.edu.hk

**Abstract**—Non-native or indigenous English teachers have provided the largest teaching and professional support in Asian countries where English is taught and learnt in school as an additional or international language. As the language environment outside classroom in these countries is generally poor, teachers become a major source of language input for learners. This article explores the Lexical Variation (LV) ratio of non-native teacher talk and the percentage of words teachers used at different vocabulary levels to determine the lexical richness in a foreign language classroom. The classroom data revealed that teachers' oral input failed to provide a lexically rich environment as the teacher talk were limited in both variation and frequency range. Ways to enhance the lexical environment will be discussed.

**Index Terms**—non-native English teachers, lexical input, teacher talk, foreign language classroom

## I. INTRODUCTION

Non-native or indigenous English teacher teaching English in non-English speaking environment is a common phenomenon in Asian countries, like China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, where English is taught and learnt as a compulsory school subject. They provided the largest teaching and profession support to the foreign language classroom. In China, it was estimated that there were 1.15 million full-time local foreign language teachers, of whom the majority of them were teaching regular English classes to 230 million full-time students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels<sup>1</sup> (Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2007). The non-native or indigenous English teachers are the backbone of the teaching force. Native English teachers, on the other hand, are often considered as extra labour force or bonus to the language teaching environment. In Hong Kong, almost all primary and secondary schools have recruited 1 to 2 native English teachers to serve the whole school. However, these native English teachers are usually assigned to teach oral English only. School administrators are concerned about the cost of hiring expatriates as well as the contribution these native English teachers could make to prepare students for the high-stake examinations which characterizes the education system in this "Confucian-heritage culture" (CHC)<sup>2</sup> region. Although studies on the context of teaching of non-native English teachers are available (e.g. Watson & Punjaporn, 2009; Haynes, 2009), the actual classroom practices of such a huge number of non-native English speakers teaching English in populated non-English speaking environment in Asia are overlooked.

Theories of second language acquisition have claimed that language input has a consistent positive effect in improving proficiency. These theories maintain that the input has to be comprehensible to the learner and modified through interactions. In vocabulary acquisition, the Input Hypothesis (Krashen 1981, 1982) has inspired studies of incidental vocabulary learning through reading and listening and analysis of teacher's talk as oral input. Elley (1989) conducted an experiment with children aged seven to eight concerning incidental vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. Elley found that these children, despite their varied ability, gained 15% of the vocabulary without teacher explanation and 40% with teacher explanation. The highest gains were nouns and there was less improvement with adjectives and verbs. This finding accords with belief about the imageability of words in dual-code theory (Paivio, 1986). The follow-up tests showed that the incidental vocabulary learning was relatively permanent. Elley identified three features that best predicted successful incidental vocabulary acquisition. They were the frequency of the word in the text, the depiction of the words in illustration and the amount of redundancy in the surrounding context. In a more recent study, Vidal (2003) studied first-year university EFL students on their academic listening of lectures as lexical input for vocabulary expansion. She found that listening to lectures resulted in vocabulary gain. Greater vocabulary gain was highly correlated with lecture comprehension, frequency of word occurrence, word elaborations and types of vocabulary. These studies threw light on incidental vocabulary acquisition from oral input, indicating that contextual variables, extent of elaboration, treatment of word and interactivity are critical in determining whether teachers can produce effective language for incidental acquisition.

<sup>1</sup> English is the compulsory foreign language to be taken by all primary, secondary and undergraduate/college students in China.

<sup>2</sup> According to Ho (1991), "Confucian-heritage cultures" refers to countries or educational systems which are influenced by and inherited the cultures of Confucian, e.g. China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea. See also Wong & Wong (2004) and Biggs & Watkins (1996) for the discussion of CHC classroom and learners.

Teacher talk plays an important role in classroom organization and management, giving feedback and asking questions. It is generally agreed that language input provided by teacher is vital in second classroom for language development (Van Patten, 2003; Ellis, 2005). In China, teacher talk dominated the foreign language classroom (Tang, 2009). This could be explained by some pragmatic reasons. First, the large amount of teacher talk in Chinese classrooms matched the expectations of teachers, learners, schools and even parents (Li, 1999). Second, teacher talk is a natural outcome of traditional teaching practice, large class sizes, and low linguistic competence of the learners. Third, the curriculum, to a great extent, encourages teacher-centredness as it is the safest way of complying with the examination requirements and preparing students for the high stake public examinations. Thus, both the quantity and quality of teacher talk are valuable to learners as:

- a) it provides a potentially valuable source for language input for acquisition.
- b) it is unrealistic to reduce teacher talk time (TTT) as it is culturally inappropriate, where the classrooms are preoccupied with the traditional role of a teacher as knowledge-transmitter.
- c) in an “input-poor” environment where the teacher is the principal source of lexical input, questions, nomination of topics, and interaction patterns initiated or shaped by the teacher affect exposure to the language.
- d) the amount of input will affect the language learning outcomes (Mangubhai, 2005).

In China, the quantity and kinds of words to be acquired at different learning stages are stipulated in the English curriculum in the form of word lists. Teachers spend most of the class time to teach explicitly the “important” words, i.e. words highlighted by the textbook writers. However, Lado (1977, p.184), while commenting on West’s *A General Service List of English Words*, pointed out that “it is also important to note that whenever these vocabularies have been taught in their entirety, the learners learn countless additional words and lexical units not found in the list”. In other words, while teachers are explicitly teaching the target vocabulary items in the English lessons, they are at the same time creating a lexical environment for learners to “pick up” other words through the oral input.

## II. RESEARCH APPROACH

### A. The Study

In this study, the lexical environment in the English language classrooms in China was examined. These lessons were all conducted by non-native or indigenous English teachers. It aimed to find out if non-native teacher talk could provide a rich lexical environment in terms of the variety and frequency level of the teacher input for incidental vocabulary acquisition.

### B. Methodology

Six teachers with five to ten years of teaching experience from three Chinese universities were invited to make a one-week recording of their English teaching to the non-English major freshmen. The recorded lessons were transcribed. Teacher talk was analyzed to see the extent to which learners could benefit from oral input, and the extent to which it provided a lexically rich environment for incidental vocabulary acquisition. The focus rested on the variety and the frequency level of the teacher input.

TABLE 1:  
BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE STUDY

Teacher	Place	University	Recording time in minutes	Unit	Total number of explicitly treated words
T-A	Shenzhen	key university	200	Bk. 2 Unit 9	94
T-B	Shenzhen	key university	200	Bk. 1 Unit 10	93
T-C	Guangzhou	non-key university	240	Bk. 2, Unit 4	71
T-D	Guangzhou	non-key university	240	Bk. 4, Unit 7	197
T-E	Beijing	key university	240	Bk. 3, Unit 1	48
T-F	Beijing	key university	240	Bk. 2, Unit 10	25

[Source: Dong (ed.) 1997. *College English: Intensive Reading (revised edition)*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.]

The teacher talk was extracted from the lesson transcription and examined using the measure of lexical variation (LV) adopted by Meara, Lightbown and Halter (1997) and Brown, Sagers and LaPorte (1999) to assess the lexical richness of teacher talk. LV is the type-token ratio, and was chosen as an indicator of lexical richness because the calculation is straightforward, although it requires a clear definition of the terms “type” and “token”:

$$LV = \frac{\text{no. of types}}{\text{no. of tokens}} \times 100$$

In this study, ‘types’ were defined as all the different words in the corpus, and ‘tokens’ as the total number of running words. ‘Type’ was taken to include both the base form and all its derivations, despite any differences in orthography and pronunciation. The calculation was prepared with the aid of the WordSmith Tools 3.0 (Scott, 1998). Because the validity of the LV measure can be affected by differences in text length (Richards 1985; Laufer and Nation, 1995), a

calculation based on the first 1,500 words of the teacher talk was also made to show more reliable and comparable LV scores.

The LV ratio alone does not give a full picture of lexical richness, however, as this requires additional consideration of word type frequency levels. Following Meara, Lightbown and Halter (1997), I matched the wordlists derived from each lesson transcript against basic 2,000 words from the *British National Corpus* (Leech, Rayson & Wilson, 2001) and frequency lists available in the computer program *VocabProfile* (Nation 1986). The *British National Corpus* (BNC) was chosen because the 100 million-word corpus reflects the reality of today’s English communication. The *VocabProfile* (VP) contains 3 sets of word list. first list (VP1) includes the most frequent 1,000 words of English; the second (VP2) includes the second 1,000 most frequent words, and the third (VP3) includes words not in the first 2,000 words of English, but frequent in upper secondary school and university texts from a wide range of subjects. All three lists include the base forms of words and derived forms. In this study, contractions such as “I’m”, “how’s” and “can’t” were added to VP1 together with expressions commonly produced by Chinese speakers, such as “yeh”, “ha”, and “ah”. (see Appendix A for words added toVP1).

### III. FINDINGS

#### A. Variety of the Lexical Input

Table 2 below shows that the LV ratio of the six teachers varied greatly. Although the ratio rose in some individual lessons, this only reflected the instability of the ratio due to size of the corpus. The relatively low LV ratio implies that the teacher talk was not lexically rich. In other words, the fact that the foreign language learners are exposed to an “input-poor” environment is further substantiated. Learners not only have scarce exposure to the L2 outside classroom, they also have limited extensive exposure to the target language inside the classroom as well.

TABLE 2:  
LEXICAL VARIATION OF INDIVIDUAL TEACHER

Teachers	Tokens	Types	LV ratio
T-A	6,373	1,046	16.41%
T-B	4,502	964	21.41%
T-C	1,848	509	27.54%
T-D	11,854	1,187	10.01%
T-E	7,689	1,150	14.96%
T-F	6,373	1,020	16.01%

As mentioned, the difference in the length of the teacher talk or quantity of words in lessons has significant impact on the LV ratio. In order to validate the LV ratio and assure the reliability of the study, the first 1,500 words from each teacher were extracted for further analysis (Table 3). When the length of the corpus was limited to 1,500, the LV ratio of the six classes had relatively similar results, with Teacher B and Teacher E showing comparatively higher scores. The overall mean of the LV ratio of the six teachers was 28.70% which is comparable to the overall mean of the LV ratio of the nine teachers (28.33%) observed in Meara, Lightbown and Halter’s study.

TABLE 3:  
LEXICAL VARIATION OF INDIVIDUAL TEACHER (WITH CORPUS OF 1,500 WORDS EACH)

Teachers	Tokens	Types	LV ratio
T-A	1,500	420	28.00%
T-B	1,500	507	33.85%
T-C	1,500	400	26.85%
T-D	1,500	363	24.14%
T-E	1,500	527	35.27%
T-F	1,500	360	24.08%

Teacher D who taught the most vocabulary in the one-week lessons did not provide a rich lexical environment for learners to “pick up” other words from her speech. Yet, the large number of tokens and a low LV ratio suggest that there had been lots of repetition and recycling of words within the 240 minutes of lesson. Generally, the teacher was able to create a favourable acquisition environment for learners to encounter the words. It is not known, however, whether the new words were repeated more frequently than other, known, words.

#### B. Frequency Levels of Lexical Input

Although BNC is considered as a reliable source of reference to reflect modern English written and spoken communication, these basic words seemed to be underused to teach and communicate in the language classrooms of these six subjects. Series 2 in Figure 1 below represents the percentage of BNC words used by individual teacher.

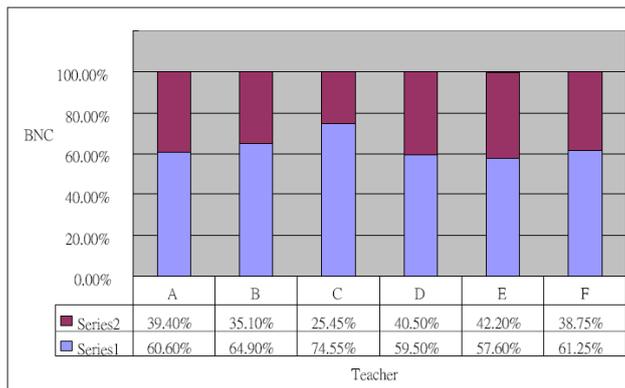


Figure 1: Percentages of BNC words in individual teacher talk

Teacher C who spoke the least in the whole week’s lessons had the lowest percentage of BNC words, while Teacher E who had the highest LV ratio also had the highest percentage of BNC words. Among the six teachers, these basic words had served slightly half of the total different words used in the class (see Figure 2).

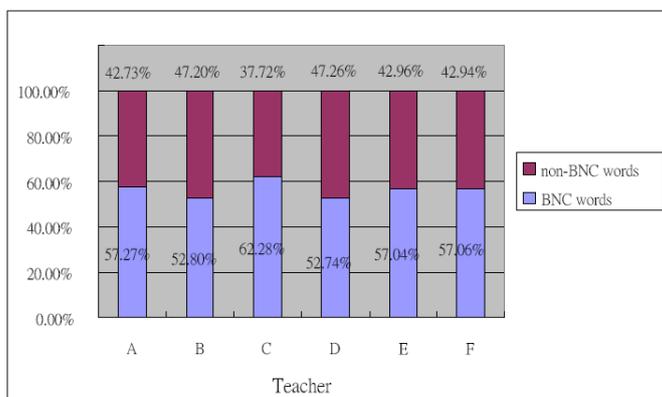


Figure 2: Percentages of words of individual teacher when compared with BNC

In order to have a closer examination of the kinds of words available from the oral input, the six teacher word lists were compared with the different levels of *VocabProfile* (Table 4 and Figure 3 below). All six teachers showed a greater proportion of words at VP1 and VP2, the first 2,000 most frequent words. Only 22% of the words were at VP3 or beyond, of the type found in upper secondary school and university texts (see Appendix B for beyond VP3 words from Teacher C). The classroom did not seem to provide a lot of opportunities for an “i+1” condition as “comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1981) for acquisition.

TABLE 4:  
OVERALL WORD FREQUENCY LEVELS

Frequency levels	Number of words	Percentage
VP1	3,744	63.7%
VP2	832	14.2%
VP3	361	6.1%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>4,937</b>	<b>84%</b>
Beyond VP3	939	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,876</b>	<b>100%</b>

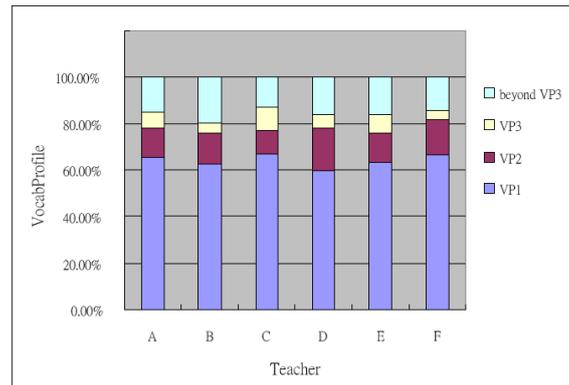


Figure 3: Percentages of words by frequency level of individual teacher

The majority of the words beyond VP3 level were from the textbooks, for example, *sputnik*, *outraged*, *Luxembourg*, which are glossed; *grunt*, *dismay*, *embarrass*, which are found in the textbooks and the word list prescribed in the national syllabus, and, *professor*, *fantastic*, *bullet*, which are not in the textbooks but are in the syllabus word list. The production of ‘high-level’ words relies very much on the wordlists in the textbooks and the syllabus.

There were a number of foreign names, such as *Isaac Asimov*, *Oscar*, and *Francesco*, and places, such as *Lauderdale*, *Jacksonville*, and *Brunswick*, in the word list beyond VP3. It is not surprising to find these unfamiliar proper names as all of the passages of the English textbooks are adapted from western publications. The disadvantage of this is that the contents are detached from both the teacher’s and the learners’ daily life and world knowledge. Fortunately, most of these proper names are glossed in the textbooks and the background information can be read to the learners from the teacher’s book. The reason for learning these proper names is for the sake of comprehending the rest of the passage. It would probably be more appropriate to update the passages in the English textbooks so that learners could relate to the context and content more easily, however.

There are other words, like *kidding*, *grumble*, and *nettalk*, which do not appear in the textbooks nor the syllabus word list. These include topical proper nouns, such as *Clinton*, *Madonna*, *Bananarama* and pinyin and Chinese terms, such as *yuan* (Chinese currency), *ren* (people), and *Liang* (Chinese surname). They appear when the teacher elaborates the word meaning or interacts with the learners. The occurrence of these words was closely linked with the way teachers taught the words and the delivery mode chosen by the teacher.

Using an expression coined by Krashen (1981), the teacher’s speech was ‘roughly tuned’. In other words, the teacher talk was approximately adjusted to the learners’ foreign language development. This is different from ‘finely tuned’ (Krashen, 1981) which involves interaction with dynamic adjustment of utterances arising from the conversation rather than simplicity in form and semantic redundancy (Robinson, 1982 quoted in Ellis, 1984). As Tang and Nesi (2003) observed, interaction that triggers classroom dynamics includes student initiated vocabulary teaching and spontaneous talk between teacher and learners. This stimulates and encourages the production of ‘high-level’ words.

However, classroom discourse in CHC classroom is heavily teacher-led and is typical in large classes throughout the world. The discourse exemplifies a structured approach leading to the pedagogical goal – the teaching of the vocabulary item (see Example 1). Thus, non-topic related words do not usually occur as the explanation is focused, and in many cases, very brief, with interruptions from the learners to allow for diversity of topic and lexical variation.

Example 1: (Teacher E / Lesson 1)

T: ..... “**Temporary**”, lasting only for a limited time, but if lasting for a long time or forever. What’s the word? The opposite to temporary is permanent. I think in the last semester, we have learned this word. “**permanent**”. “**Stroll**”, walk at leisure, [*stroll, promenade*]<sup>3</sup>. Walk slowly at leisure. And there’s another word “**wander**”. it means move about aimlessly, without purpose. “Stroll” [*It means walking leisurely*]. “Wander” [*It means walking aimlessly*]. “**Commit**”, do something bad or unlawful. [*make mistakes, how to say?*] On the other hand, if the structure can be loosened to allow “freer explanation” and “interruptions”, the classroom discourse changes and the lexical input will be changed accordingly. Example 2 below shows how the teacher attains the pedagogical goal of teaching “aptitude” while expanding the lexical input.

Example 2: (Teacher A / Lesson 1)

T: The first one, **aptitude**. It means natural ability or skill. Please pay attention to this, **natural ability**, it means what?  
 S: *it’s natural*  
 T: Yeah. [*it’s natural*]. You’re born with aptitude. [*There is “inborn”, and something developed afterwards, how do you call that?*]  
 S: **Skill**.  
 T: Skill? [*There is another word for it, we have mentioned it before.*] **Ability**? [*it’s a*] general word. [*We have mentioned another word, for example, when we talk about examination, competition. What kind of test is it?*]

<sup>3</sup> The italicized words in square brackets in this paper are translation of the Chinese words.

S: Competence.

T: **Competence**, right. Aptitude and competence. Aptitude is natural ability, but competence is the ability you developed after learning., after learning. O.K. For example, the English test, English competence test, is a test to test your ability of what---how well you have learned English, right? [*This is not a natural aptitude of learning English. It's how well you have learned English.*] How well you learn. [*This is called*] competence, aptitude [*is some you were born with*]. Now next word. **Normal**.

Example 2 above also illustrates another aspect of acquisition, which is the attention needed to realise the new input. Grounded on Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 2000), learners must 'notice' critical features for acquisition to take place. Teacher A drew learners' attention to the new materials in the input by associating meaning with words, "aptitude" means "natural ability". She also asked learners' about the meaning of "natural ability", relating it to personal experience or prior knowledge when "competence" was introduced. Of course, there are other ways to draw learner's attention to the new input, for example, by associating sound with form and demanding higher cognitive activities such as the production of examples.

### C. L1 and L2 Use in the Foreign Language Classroom

There has always been controversy about using L1 in the language classroom. Some argue that the use of the mother tongue will have positive effects on the learners and learning as they could be more focused on the demands of the task and could then be involved in higher quality discussion. It is argued that it reduces the learning load.

Elliott and Tao (1998) suggested that L1 translation is the most favourable teaching condition for recalling lexical meanings. Providing the L1 translation or eliciting the L1 translation seems to be equally sufficient and beneficial as aids to vocabulary retention.

However, the use of L1 in the language classroom deprives the learner of opportunities for exposure to the target language and practice in a simulated environment. In the Chinese classroom, the use of L1 in teaching seems to depend on the teachers, their teaching style and belief and even on the language competence of the teacher, rather than on the ability of the learners. For example: Teacher D is teaching in a non-key university which accepts average learners. She claimed that her learners have a low standard of English and low motivation. She used the most target language in the classroom. Teachers E and F are both teaching in a prestigious key university in the capital Beijing. Their learners have above average scores in the National Matriculation English Test, but their English classes were not conducted entirely in the target language.

There are signs in the data that teachers tended to rely quite heavily on L1 as a classroom language. This is shown in Table 5. The L1 was used as much as the L2 and for some teachers, for example, Teachers A and C, L1 was used as principal language in English lessons.

TABLE 5:  
TEACHERS' CHOICE OF LANGUAGE

Class	Class time	Tokens in English	Tokens in Chinese	Number of English words per minute	Number of Chinese words per minute
T-A	200	6,373	8,584	63.73	85.84
T-B	200	4,502	3,906	45.02	39.06
T-C	240	1,848	3,491	15.38	29.10
T-D	240	11,854	5,146	98.78	42.88
T-E	240	4,459	4,234	37.16	35.29
T-F	240	7,689	5,573	64.08	46.44

The reliance on L1 in the classroom raises the question of the teachers' ability to explain vocabulary in English and their general command of the language. It could be an alarming indication of the teachers' lack of proficiency. Example 3 below shows how L1 was used in teaching the word "chop" to the learners. The teacher first tried to relate the new word to another word "chopstick". However, the learners could not give her the correct L1 equivalent. So, the teacher decided to teach both "chop" and "chopstick". She used L1 to give an illustrative example of "chop", then she switched to L2 for its parts of speech and L1 again for the translation. In teaching "chopstick", the teacher first gave an illustrative situation in L2. Then, she stopped the elaboration and decided to provide the L1 meaning of the word "chopstick" instead.

#### Example 3: (T-D-1)

529 T: Next one, **chop**. Do you know, do you know chopstick? Do you know this word? Do you know **chopsticks**?

530 Ss: [*stick*]

531 T: Chopstick? Do you know chop? [*The flesh attaches to the bone. This ... this means sparerib.*] Yes? As a...a ...a noun, it [*sparerib*] or [*chop*]. As a verb, also means [*chop*]. Chopsticks, what's the meaning of chopsticks? This one is... er...are produced in China. Asian people use chopsticks--- [*chopstick*].

This switch of language could possibly suggest that the teacher felt more comfortable using L1 for extended speech or complicated ideas and L2 for brief and short utterances. Of course, the teacher could make decisions about language choice because of other reasons, such as the pace of teaching, learners' requests (if there are any), etc.

Although experimental evidence has suggested that excessive explanation often resulted in learner incomprehension (Chaudron, 1982), in Example 3 above, the teacher could have elaborated further in the L2 as the context and the

meaning had already been made clear to the learners. The use of the target language allows repeated encounters with known words and increases exposure to unknown words. The over-reliance on the L1 deprives learners of access to the target language.

Furthermore, if providing the L1 equivalent becomes an established practice it seems likely that learners will “switch off” when the teaching is done in the L2 as they know that the L1 meaning will be provided anyhow. Heavy reliance on the L1 discourages learners from listening and processing in the target language. If most of the vocabulary items are “picked up” during exposure to the target language, this “switching off” mechanism will close the channel to incidental learning.

Also, as there is often no direct L1 equivalent for the target word, simply providing the L1 translation will lead to distortion of meaning and inappropriate use in the communicative context. It is certainly not reliable to assume that knowledge of the L1 equivalent indicates acquisition of the new word.

#### D. Learners' Output

It is thought that ‘good’ teacher talks less as too much teacher talk time (TTT) will deny learners opportunities to speak (Cullen, 1998). However, it could be a fallacy that when the teacher speaks more, it will automatically minimize learners' chance of participation. Teacher F spoke as much as the other teachers did in the lessons, but the learners in her class were able to vocalize and to take part in the learning process. In her lessons, she deliberately spared time at the beginning of the lessons for learners to talk freely about any topics, so the learners' output was raised.

The degree of participation is calculated on the basis of the total number of tokens from learners' speech, regardless of the language medium, over the total contribution of tokens from the teacher and learners. The higher the percentage, the more opportunities the learners have to participate in class. Most studies use the amount of time as a measure of the TTT as proportion of time allowed for learners to participate. However, the classroom data in China did not reveal any individual or group activities. It is, therefore, unreliable to measure the time as an indicator of degree of participation. In this study, the token, regardless of the medium, is adopted as a measurement tool to reflect the TTT and learners' participation.

In most classes, learners' output was minimal (Table 6). This suggests that the classroom does not allow adequate “comprehensible output”, as proposed by Swain (1985) for acquisition. Also, the learners' contribution included mainly choral pronunciation practice and individual responses. Participation through interaction with the teacher or among learners was rare. There was no way to try out new rules and acquire new language through output.

TABLE 6:  
LEARNERS' OUTPUT

Class	Teachers (Tokens)	Tokens in English	Tokens in Chinese	Degree of participation (%)
A	9,212	393	206	6.1
A	5,745	294	513	12.3
B	5,467	229	188	7.1
B	2,941	1,270	1,075	44.4
C	2,794	193	1	6.5
C	2,545	15	46	2.3
D	7,492	676	255	11.1
D	9,508	543	34	5.7
E	5,042	222	20	4.6
E	3,652	668	610	26
F	8,237	2,134	67	21.1
F	5,025	2,562	53	34

\* The two double lessons of the one-week recording were counted and presented separately.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

This study of English vocabulary input focused on the quality and quantity of oral input from the teachers. The analysis of teacher talk is done with the purpose of reflecting the reality of the classroom and suggesting appropriate and attainable models for language teachers to follow within the classroom context on the other hand. The measure of LV and frequency levels suggests that the Chinese classroom in terms of quantity and quality is lexically impoverished. Teacher talk provides some sort of lexical environment for acquisition, but it is not a rich one.

As Krashen (1982) asserted, the more the communication in the classroom environment is approximated to the real world, the greater the extent of acquisition. In other words, the best lexical environment is a virtual representation of the natural language setting. However, the language that the teachers used was “caretaker” language and the interaction was limited to display questions only. Learners had no opportunities to negotiate meaning. The EFL classroom is not an “acquisition-rich” setting at all and input from teachers is not the best kind of lexical input for acquisition. The classroom does not provide an environment for natural exposure. It is an artificial one, with the special features of classroom language. Teachers use simple language and vocabulary. The choice of words is also restricted because of the limited functions that could possibly take place in the classroom.

One way to deal with the issue of the impoverished lexical environment in the classrooms observed in this study is to see the vocabulary instructions and lexical environment as problems and approach them with the need for change and innovation. In order to improve the lexical environment, it is necessary to expand the topics, vary the teaching skills and enrich the interaction. Bowers (1980 quoted in Malamah-Thomas 1987) listed six contexts for verbal behaviour of the teacher in the classroom. They are: questioning/eliciting; responding to learners' contributions; presenting/explaining; organizing/giving instructions; evaluating/correcting; socialising/establishing and maintaining classroom rapport. These contexts are not new to any teachers but the potential of allowing teachers to create more lexical input should not be ignored. Attempts to negotiate meaning with learners and create opportunities for learners to interrupt can open more opportunities to wider lexical variety.

A richer lexical environment requires conscious effort from the teachers to allow more teacher-learner interaction, more topics nominated by the teachers or learners and more spontaneous exchanges. Observation of classroom activities and occurrences of "high-level" words in the data suggests that only when teachers use the target language more often, explaining words with elaboration, and interacting with learners, can a rich and varied lexical environment be created. Laufer & Hulstijn (2001) stressed the importance of devising learning tasks to induce more involvement load for successful incidental vocabulary learning. According to Laufer & Hulstijn, teacher should design learning task which can induce different combination of the involvement factors "needs", "search" and "evaluation" for each word. The more factors involved in one word, the greater involvement load they generate and better retention can be achieved. Kasper (2001) insisted that language socialization is an integrate part of second/foreign language teaching. However, it relies on teachers' cultural, pragmatic and interactional expertise in the language. When no or minimal interaction is allowed in the class, the number of words and the types of words from teachers will have a significant impact on vocabulary acquisition.

To create a rich lexical environment, one of the major issues is the choice of language. The foreign language classroom led by non-native or indigenous English teachers tend to adopt mother tongue to improve the efficiency of teaching. The reliance on L1 impedes a rich lexical environment for incidental acquisition and teacher talk lacks variety and high-level words. Their speech, under appropriate conditions of comprehensible input, could promote incidental vocabulary acquisition. However, this does not seem to be a major concern of teachers. Their mindset remains on helping the learners to acquire the glossed words in the textbooks to meet the vocabulary requirements in the mandatory national examination. The mindset of helping learners to learn most words within the limited class time through L1 also fails to allow learners to 'notice' the features of L2 input for successfully language learning. The potential of the teacher as a source of lexical input is overlooked.

The data have also shown that the L1 was used not only for explaining vocabulary items but also as a medium to communicate with the learners. The heavy reliance on L1 can be regarded as an indication of lack of variety of teaching methods or teaching skills. It can be an alarming signal of the lack of proficiency of the teacher and of inadequate training. It is also worth developing the reflective thinking ability of the teacher to raise the quality and not just the quantity of teacher talk. Teachers can build on redundancy in L2 and use less L1 while explaining the words. They can critically analyze their taped lessons to raise their awareness of the use of lexis, the vocabulary teaching methods and the language use in the classroom. They can make a list of teaching strategies which enable more oral lexical input but not necessarily reduce the learners' output and their chance of participation.

Teacher talk could also be introduced to the teacher training programme to establish a solid and sound knowledge and ability to enrich the quality of their speech for a rich lexical environment.

To regulate the input-poor environment, there is a need to expand the exposure to the target language. Setting up English corner at school, data bank of vocabulary on the web, electronic English books can all be helpful to allow more intentional or incidental learning.

## V. CONCLUSION

Overall, it seems apparent from the classroom data that teacher talk from non-native or indigenous English teachers could not provide a rich lexical environment for incidental vocabulary acquisition in the foreign language classroom. However, we also see a high potential of teacher talk as lexical input. It has to be stressed that it is not the intention of this paper to evaluate the non-native or indigenous English teachers. On the contrary, this is an attempt to value the contributions of this large labour force who are instructing probably the greatest number of English learners in the world.

## APPENDIX A: WORDS ADDED TOVP1

ah	en	hm	ok	they've	why's
aha	er	hmmm	okay	un	won't
ain't	er	how's	one's	wasn't	wouldn't
aren't	err	huh	other's	we'd	wow
can't	err	huh	shan't	we'll	ya
can't	ha	I'd	she'd	we're	yah
couldn't	ha	I'll	she'll	weren't	yap
couldn't	hadn't	I'm	she's	we've	yea
didn't	hah	isn't	shouldn't	what's	yeah
doesn't	hasn't	it's	that's	what's	yeh
don't	haven't	I've	there's	where's	you've
eh	he'd	la	they'd	which's	you'd
eha	he'll	let's	they'll	who's	you'll
em	he's	mm	they're	whom's	you're

APPENDIX B: BEYOND VP3 WORDS FROM TEACHER C

(T-C) - 68 words		
ADJ	GRUNT	ROSES
ALGEBRA	HEADMASTER	SANDYCOLOURED
BLOODSHOT	HYDROGEN	SENIOR
BOOTLACE	INCOMPETENT	SETUP
BRITAIN'S	INDIGNITY	SHRUB
CABBAGE	-ING	SHRUBS
CAMEL'S	JOHN	SHY
CARPET	JUNIOR	SHYLY
CERTIFICATE	LACE	SLENDER
COLONEL	-LY	SLIM
CONJ	METER	STALE
CONSUL	MOBILEPHONE	UNBEARABLE
COUPLE	MOUSTACHE	UNDID
CRICKET	MUMBLE	UNDO
CRUMB	ONESELF	UNDOING
DISMAY	PARAGRAPH	UNDONE
DISMAYED	PEOPLE'S	UNDO'S
EVERGREEN	PHRASE	UNSTREAMED
EXAM	PHRASES	VISA
FOREHEAD	PLUS	WAISTED
FUME	PREDECESSORS	WINKLED
GRAVEL	PROSPECT	WRITER'S
GRUMBLE	RANGING	

REFERENCES

[1] Biggs, J. & Watkins, D. (1996). The Chinese Learner in Retrospect. In Watkins, D.A. and Biggs, J.B. (Eds.) *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*. Hong Kong and Melbourne: Comparative Education Research Centre and The Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd, pp.269-285.

[2] Bowers, R. (1980). Verbal behaviour in the language teaching classroom. Unpublished PhD thesis, Reading University.

[3] Brown, C., S. Sagers and C. LaPorte. (1999). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from oral and written dialogue journals. In M. Wesche and T. S. Paribakht (eds.). *Incidental L2 Vocabulary Acquisition: theory, current research, and instructional implications*. Cambridge University Press.

[4] Chaudron, C. (1982). Vocabulary Elaboration in Teachers' Speech to L2 Learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 4(2), 170-180.

[5] Cullen R. (1998). Teacher talk and the classroom context. *ELTJ*, 52(3), 179-187.

[6] Department of Development and Planning, Ministry of Education. (2007). *Educational Statistics Yearbook of China 2007*. Beijing: People's Education Press.

[7] Elliott, R.T. and V. Tao. (1998). The effect of four learning conditions on short-term recall of lexical meaning. *Educational Research Journal*, 13(1), 63-84.

[8] Ellis, R. (1984). *Classroom second language development*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

[9] Ellis, R. (1995). Modified oral input and the acquisition of word meanings. *Applied Linguistics*, 16(4), 409-441.

[10] Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. *System*, 33(2), 209-224.

[11] Elley, W. B. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 24(2), 174-187.

[12] Haynes, D. (2009). Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers, Context and English Language Teaching. *System*, 37(1), 1-11

[13] Huang, Z.H. (1999). The impact of globalisation on English in Chinese universities. In D. Graddol and U.H. Meinhof. (eds.) *English in a changing world*. Guildford: Biddles Ltd, pp. 79-88.

[14] Kasper, G. (2001). Four perspectives on L2 pragmatic development. *Applied Linguistics*, 22(4), 502-530.

[15] Krashen, S. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.

[16] Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.

[17] Lado, R. (1977). *Language Testing*. London: Longman.

- [18] Laufer, B. & P. Nation. (1995). Vocabulary Size and Use: Lexical Richness in L2 Written Production. *Applied Linguistics*, 16(3), 307-322.
- [19] Laufer, B & Hulstijn, J. (2001). Incidental vocabulary acquisition in a second language: the construct of task-induced involvement. *Applied Linguistics*, 22(1), 1-26.
- [20] Leech G., Rayson, P., & Wilson, A. (2001). Word frequencies in written and spoken English: based on the British National Corpus. Harlow: Longman.
- [21] Long, M. H. (1981). Input, interaction and second language acquisition. In H. Winitz (ed.), *Native Language and Foreign Language Acquisition. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 379, 259-278.
- [22] Long, M. H. (1983). Does second language instruction make a difference? A review of research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 14, 378-390.
- [23] Li, S. Y. (1999). On the effectiveness of teacher talk in the ELT classroom. *Teaching English in China*. Issue 36. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, pp.11-16.
- [24] Malamah-Thomas, A. (1987). Classroom Interaction. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [25] Mangubhai, F. (2005). What can EFL Teachers Learn from Immersion Language Teaching?. *Asian EFL*, 7(4), 203-212.
- [26] Meara, P., P. Lightbown & R. Halter. (1997). Classrooms as Lexical Environments. *Language Teaching Research*, 1(1), 28-47.
- [27] Nation, I.S.P. (1986). Vocabulary Lists. *Occasional Publication No.17*. English Language Institute, Victoria University of Wellington.
- [28] Nunan, D. (1990). The questions teachers ask. *JALT Journal*. 12(2), 187-202.
- [29] Paivio, A. (1986). Mental representations: a dual coding approach. Oxford. England: Oxford University Press.
- [30] Richards, J.C. (1985). Lexical knowledge and the teaching of vocabulary. *The Context of Language Teaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.176-188.
- [31] Schmidt, R. (2000). Attention. In P. Robinson (ed.), *Cognition and Second Language Instruction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [32] Scott, M. (1998). WordSmith Tools 3.0. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [33] Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S.M. Gass and C.G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in Second Language Acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- [34] Tang E. and H. Nesi. (2003). Teaching vocabulary in two Chinese classrooms: intensive and extensive exposure in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. *Language Teaching Research*. 7(1), 65-97.
- [35] Tang, E. (2009). A cultural framework of “Chinese learn English”: a critical review of and reflections on research. *Journal of English as an International Language*. 4:7-43.
- [36] Van Patten, B. (2003). From input to output: A teacher's guide to second language acquisition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [37] Vidal, K. (2003). Academic listening: a source of vocabulary acquisition? *Applied Linguistics*, 24(1), 56-89.
- [38] Watson, T. & Punjaporn, P. (2009). Implicit Attitudes towards Native and Non-Native Speaker Teachers. *System*, 37(1), 23-33
- [39] Wong, N. Y. & Wong, W. Y. (2002). The “Confucian Heritage Culture” learner’s phenomenon. *Asian Psychologist*, 3(1), 78-82.

**Eunice Tang** is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She completed her PhD in English Language Teaching at the University of Warwick. Her research interests include technology in teacher education, vocabulary, and professional teacher development. Her recent publications include: i) Introduction and Development of a Blog-Based Teaching Portfolio: A case study in a pre-service teacher education programme. *International Journal of Learning*. 16, (8), 89-100. (2009); ii) Studying lexical input from ESL textbooks for primary and junior secondary students: a case study in Hong Kong. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 6(3), 35-58. (2009); iii) A cultural framework of “Chinese learn English”: a critical review of and reflections on research. *Journal of English as an International Language*. 4:7-43. (2009)

# The Effect of Using Instructional Conversation Method in Teaching Reading Comprehension in Selected Junior Secondary Schools in Kaduna Metropolis

Hanna Yusuf

Curriculum Section, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Samaru-Zaria, Nigeria  
Email: hannayusuf@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—This study was designed to compare the effectiveness of the instructional conversation and the vocabulary methods in teaching reading comprehension in Junior Secondary Schools. The population for the study comprised all the Junior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State. The schools randomly selected within Kaduna metropolis were used for the study. The study was quasi experimental. G.S.S. U/Rimi was used as the treatment group, while G.S.S. Sabon Tasha was used for the control group. Both groups were assessed after six weeks of teaching, using three different reading assessment instruments namely cloze, word recognition and retelling tests. T-test was used to test the hypothesis raised in the study. The findings revealed significant differences in the performance of students taught reading comprehension using Instructional Conversation method. The study further revealed that students from both groups made appreciable gain in the pre-test. Based on these findings, teachers are encouraged to adopt a thematic integrated approach (i. e combining the salient features of the instructional conversation method and the vocabulary method) since both methods could complement each other, if effectively used.

**Index Terms**—instructional conversation, reading comprehension, vocabulary method, cloze test, word recognition test, retelling test

## I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY/PROBLEM

Deficiency in the reading ability students has become a concern to specialists in reading. (Unoh, 1983, and Oyetunde 1989). The alarming rates at which such concerns are expressed have precipitated the need to continually carry out research in primary and post primary schools. It is hoped that the findings of this research will be useful in helping teachers to teach reading comprehension effectively and efficiently.

Most of the studies so far conducted in Nigeria (Oyetunde 1989, Umolu 1990, Unoh 1983) have concentrated on examining reading difficulty of students at the primary and secondary levels. This study is based on the opinion that there are other non-text factors that can effect reading comprehension as well. Literature search reveals that such non-text factors as pedagogic factors have largely received little or no attention in Nigeria as far as this researcher is aware of. The absence of such crucial information as the actual effect of pedagogic factors on reading comprehension constitutes a problem, which has motivated the present study.

Given the situation above, any effort to upgrade the quality of reading instruction is neither wasted nor misplaced. Such effort should be considered to step in the right direction since it constitutes an investment capable of yielding valuable dividends in the long run.

### A. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the difference in the performance of students taught reading comprehension, using vocabulary method and those taught using instructional conversation in cloze, word recognition test and retelling test.

### B. Research Question

What is the difference in the pre-test and post test gain scores of students taught using the instructional conversation method and those taught using the vocabulary method in cloze word recognition and retelling tests?

### C. Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the post-test scores of students taught reading comprehension using instructional conversation and those taught using vocabulary method in cloze, word recognition and retelling tests.

### D. Research Design

The research design of the study was quasi experimental in nature and employed the test re-test method. This involved a pre-test and post-test as advocated by Cambell and Stanley (1986).

In this research, the treatment group was taught, using the instructional conversation method which is a new approach to teaching reading comprehension, while the control group of the study was taught, using the traditional method of teaching reading comprehension (i.e. vocabulary method).

#### 1. The Population/Sample

The population from which the sample was drawn was made up of JS two students in all the three hundred and eighty four (384) Junior Secondary Schools in Kaduna metropolis. An urban population was selected in order to ensure that a wide range of reading abilities was represented among the students. Similarly, the urban population was made up of students from all over Nigeria, representing a wide range of ethnic groups and socio-cultural background. JS two was selected because students at this basic education level should have recorded reasonable progress in reading and acquired adequate skills to carry out the various reading tasks, in the reading comprehension tests.

#### 2. Sample / Sampling Technique

The instrument of the study included was used to select two schools and twenty students. A total of sixty students used for this study could be justified based on the assumption that the mean performance of students was likely to vary by a random selection of thirty students per school. (Borg and Gall, 1998).

### E. Instrumentation

The instruments of the study included cloze test, word recognition and retelling test. Three passages were carefully selected from the Junior Secondary English project textbook 2 currently in use in Kaduna. The passages were selected because the:

- (i) passages were interesting in nature;
- (ii) subject matter of the passage were of interest to both male and female students;
- (iii) content of passages were educative and informative.

#### 1. The Cloze Test

The cloze procedure is employed in the study because of its value as a valuable and reliable assessment technique both in the first and second language situations (Umolu, 1990). Cloze has been documented as discriminating effectively between 'good' and 'poor' comprehenders; and between high and low achievers (Smith, 1975). Thus one can safely assume that a good reader will perform better on close reading comprehension tasks than would a poor one.

In this study, the cloze test was based on "The rainmakers". There were twenty blanks in all, based on seventh word deletion ratio.

#### 2. Word recognition test

In the word recognition test used for this study, twenty words that were crucial to the understanding of the passage, titled "The machete Wound" were written on flash cards and students were asked to identify the words in the passage.

Five marks were awarded for each correct word identified. A total of 100 marks were awarded to the twenty words correctly identified."

#### 3. Retelling

Retelling is a power compression strategy and assessment tool. Students learn to identify, clarify and organize their thinking as well as evaluate other's use of language and interpretations of meaning. Research confirms that students' retelling result is increased in understanding of story structure, oral language development and reading comprehension. Retelling also emphasizes key components of literary elements and genres. The key concept of retelling include:

- (a) develop an understanding of story structure, oral language and reading comprehension.
- (b) examine key components of literary elements and genres.
- (c) become aware of the development and instructional steps that lead to written retelling.
- (d) learn to scaffold comprehension with oral retelling and story props.

Retelling can specifically reveal the point or points that students can recall in the stories they read. Some may recall little of the story but communicate a point while retelling. Others may recall a good deal more and yet communicate largely the same point. The retelling text used in this study was based on a passage titled "School bullies."

#### 4. Treatment

The teacher:

(i) arranges the classroom to accommodate conversation between the teacher and a small group of students on a regular and frequent basis;

(ii) has a clear academic goal that guides conversation with students.

(iii) ensures that student talk occurs at higher rates than teacher talk;

(iv) guides conversation to include student's views, judgments, and rationales using text evidence and other substantive support;

(v) ensures that all students are included in the conversation according to their preferences;

(vi) listens carefully to assess levels of students' understanding;

(vii) assists students learning throughout the conversation by questioning, restating, praising, encouraging etc;

(viii) guides the students to prepare a product that indicates the Instructional Conversation's goals was achieved.

II. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Research Question

What is the difference in the Pre-test and Post-test scores of students taught using the instructional conversation method and those taught using the vocabulary method in cloze, word recognition and retelling tests?

TABLE 1  
SHOWING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST MEAN SCORE OF STUDENTS TAUGHT USING THE INSTRUCTIONAL CONVERSATION METHOD AND VOCABULARY METHOD IN CLOZE TEST

Method	Pre-test (x)	Post-test (x)	Deference Gain score	Standard Deviation
Instructional conversation	48	79	31	24
Vocabulary Method	49	68	19	25

N = 30

TABLE 2  
SHOWING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST MEAN SCORE OF STUDENTS TAUGHT USING THE INSTRUCTIONAL CONVERSATION METHOD AND VOCABULARY METHOD IN WORD RECOGNITION TEST.

Method	Pre-test (x)	Post-test (x)	Deference Gain score	Standard Deviation
Instructional conversation	53	75	22	27
Vocabulary	49	60	11	26

N = 30

TABLE 3  
SHOWING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST SCORES OF STUDENTS TAUGHT USING THE INSTRUCTIONAL CONVERSATION METHOD AND VOCABULARY METHOD IN RETELLING TEST

Method	Pre-test (x)	Post-test (x)	Deference Gain score	Standard Deviation
Instructional conversation	52	78	26	26
Vocabulary Method	49	61	12	26

Looking at table 1-3, one can observe that the difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of students taught using instructional conversation method was higher than those of the students taught using the vocabulary method in cloze, word recognition and retelling tests. The answer to the research question, therefore, is that there were indeed, differences between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students taught using Instructional Conversation and those taught using vocabulary method in cloze, word recognition and retelling tests.

The hypothesis below was tested using T-test statistic.

There is no significant difference in the post-test gain scores of students taught reading comprehension using instructional conversation and those taught using vocabulary method in cloze, word recognition and retelling tests.

TABLE 4  
SHOWING COMPARISON OF THE GAIN SCORES OF STUDENTS OF THE TWO GROUPS IN TEST NO1 (CLOZE TEST)

Method	Pre-Test	Post-test	Gain	Df	SD	t-Cal	t-critical	Decision
Instructional conversation	48	79	31	29	24	1.123	0.21	Rejected
Vocabulary Method	49	68	19		25			

N = 30

TABLE 5  
SHOWING COMPARISON OF THE SCORE OF STUDENTS OF THE TWO GROUPS IN TEST NO 2 (WORD RECOGNITION TEST)

Method	Pre-Test	Post-test	Gain	Df	SD	t-Cal	t-critical	Decision
Instructional conversation	53	75	22	29	25	1.121	0.210	Rejected
Vocabulary Method	49	60	11		26			

N = 30

TABLE 6  
SHOWING COMPARISON OF THE GAIN SCORES OF STUDENTS OF THE TWO GROUPS IN TEST NO 3 (RETELLING TEST)

Method	Pre-Test	Post Test	Gain Score	df	SD	t-Cal	t-Critical	Decision
instructional conversation	52	78	26	29	26	1.221	0.002	Rejected
Vocabulary Method	49	61	12		26			

N = 30

The hypothesis was tested using T-test statistic. From table 3-6, one would observe that performance in the post-test scores generally improved in the three different tests irrespective of the method that was used. Although, students taught using instructional conversation method performed much better than those taught using the vocabulary method. One could, therefore, conclude that both methods were effective in teaching students reading comprehension.

The findings in tables 1-6 agree with Tharp et al (2002) and Smith (1975) who have all stressed the use of instructional conversation, knowledge of vocabulary items or words as effective in enhancing the teaching of reading comprehension. Williams (1990) also stressed the need for language teachers to be sensitive to variables within the teaching situation in selecting methods of teaching.

This study has carefully included such consideration in using both methods.

The findings in this study are also in line with earlier studies which indicated increased gains in students achievement when one of the five pedagogical method was used in teaching (Tharp 2002).

The findings in this study shows that the effectiveness of instructional conversation method could depend on a number of factors or considerations such as variation in school type and in classroom situation, background experiences of the learners, pedagogical issues, location in terms of facilities, the psycho-social factors and so on.

### III. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the result obtained from the study one can conclude by encouraging teachers to adopt a thematic integration of the two methods (i.e. combining the salient features of the instructional conversation method and the vocabulary method as Oyetunde (2009) and Willaims (1990) put it “no one method of teaching holds the answer for all purpose and situations”. Therefore, in striving for the new method, we must be careful to preserve what is worthwhile in the old.

The instructional conversation method is effective in enhancing students’ language proficiency, thereby, improving their reading efficiency while the vocabulary method helps to increase students’ knowledge on words and their meanings and knowledge of word meaning is a basic component of reading ability. Both methods could, therefore, be used to complement each other. An integration of the vocabulary method with the instructional conversation method will enrich the reading comprehension lesson.

### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The instructional conversation method should be used during the introductory and first part of the reading comprehension lesson. The vocabulary method should be used during the second or middle part of the lesson when students are given the opportunity to read the passage silently to bring out difficult or new words. Such words should be discussed in the context in which they appear as well in a variety of content using well-structured guided questions. A regular practice of this kind of exercise will facilitate and enhance students’ reading comprehension.

In using instructional conversation method, teachers should make sure that they set clear academic goals that will guide the conversation with students in class. Teacher can achieve this by using good questioning skills or techniques. Questions should be relevant to the topic at hand and they should be thought– provoking as well.

Teachers should ensure students–talk occurs more than teacher–talk. As much as possible, teachers should encourage all students to participate actively in class conversation.

Teachers should guide conversation so as to include student’s views, judgment, rationales, using text evidence and other substantive support.

Teacher should praise students’ effort no matter how little such efforts may be. This will encourage students especially, the introverts to speak out.

In using the instructional conversation method, teachers should always consider the peculiarities of learners, their background experiences and psycho-social factors as well as other pedagogical issues. There is need for teachers to always stimulate students’ existing knowledge in order to make them relate their background knowledge to the text. The use of instructional conversation would help teachers to engage their students in purposeful conversation/dialogue. Such purposeful conversation could assist students in providing relevant information needed for the comprehension of the text.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Borg, W.R. and Meredith Gall. (1998). *Educational Research: An introduction* 5th edition. New York: Longman.
- [2] Cambell, D. T, and Stanley Drum. (1986). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- [3] Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2004). *National Policy on Education* (4th ed.) Lagos: NERDC Press.
- [4] Oyetunde, T.O. and Umolu, J.J. (1989). The teaching of reading and writing in junior secondary schools: An appraisal. *Nigeria Educational Forum*, 12(1), 43-49.
- [5] Smith, F. (1975). *Comprehensive and learning: A conceptual framework for teachers* New York: Holt, Rinechart and Winston.
- [6] Tharp, R.G. (1982). The effective instruction of comprehension: results and description of the Kamehameha early education program. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 17(4), 503-527.
- [7] Tharp, R.G, Estrada P., Dalton, S.S., & Yamauchi, L. (2002). *Teaching transformed: Achieving excellence fairness, inclusion, and harmony*. Boulder: West view Press.

- [8] Umolu, J.J. and Oyetunde, T.O. (1990). Assessment of reading problems in Nigeria: A cloze format for second language readers. *The Journal of Special Education and Rehabilitation*, 2(1), 1-6.
- [9] Unoh, S.O. (1983). Reading improvement in Nigeria as a multilingual nation: problems and prospects. In S.O Unoh, R.A Omojuwa, and S.K.M Crow, (Eds.), *Literacy and Reading in Nigeria*, Vol. 1 Zaria: Institute of Education. Ahmadu Bello University.
- [10] Williams, David. (1990). English language teaching. An integrated approach. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- [11] Yusuf, H.O. (2001). Effect of two instructional methods on pupils' reading comprehension. In E. Abe, B. Lawal, E. Onukaogu, T. Jegede (Eds.) *Literacy and Reading in Nigeria* Vol. 7.
- [12] Yusuf, H.O. (2005). A comparative study of the effectiveness of language development and vocabulary methods in teaching reading comprehension. Unpublished Ph. D thesis, University of Abuja, Abuja.

**Hanna Yusuf** was born in Ilorin, Kwara state in 1964. She has the following qualifications: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Curriculum Studies (2005), University of Abuja, Nigeria, Masters Degree in Teaching English as a second language (1996), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, Bachelor of Education Degree in Language Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, Nigerian Certificate in Education (English major) (1984) A.B.U. Zaria.

She has worked in the following organizations; Universal Basic Education Commission, Abuja, Nigeria as a Research Officer, Principal Project Officer and Chief Monitoring Officer 1989-2006. She transferred her services in 2006 to Ahmadu Bello University, where she currently works in 2006 as a lecturer in the Curriculum section of the department of Education, Faculty of Education. She teaches both undergraduate and post graduate students. She is a member of the internal and external Oral Examination panel for Masters and PhD degrees. She has supervised and graduated a few masters' degree and PhD students.

Dr (Mrs.) Hanna Yusuf is a member of the Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN), International Reading Association (IRA) and Curriculum Organisation of Nigeria (CON). She has some publications to her credit among which are: (1). Yusuf, H.O. (2009) "Strategies for improving the teaching of reading comprehension in primary schools." *Journal of Education Research and Development*. Zaria: ABU. (2). Yusuf, H.O (1997) "Effect of Direct-Reading-Thinking Activity Approach on pupils' reading comprehension" *Literacy and Reading in Nigeria*, vol 7. (3). Yusuf, H.O (2001) "How to make and use a big book to teach reading in the primary school", *UBE digest* vol. 1 No.1.

# A Study on the Development of Strategic Tools in Study Orientation Skills towards Achieving Academic Excellence

Mohd. Ghani Awang

Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences, University Malaysia Pahang, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia  
Email: ghani@ump.edu.my

Suriya Kumar Sinnadurai

Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences, University Malaysia Pahang, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia  
Email: suriyakumar60@gmail.com

**Abstract**—The purpose of this research is: to measure: the study orientation skills: and to provide remedial tools in correcting respondents' study orientation skills faults. The research also measures the relationship between study orientation skills and the academic performance among first year students of University Malaysia PAHANG. The measurement of study orientation skills is done by innovating a website based on a survey of study habits and attitudes questionnaire (SSHA); <http://portal.ump.edu.my/survey>. The students' study orientation skills are analyzed and sorted into three groups of achievement; the higher achiever, normal achiever and lower achiever. The treatment tools comprise of the treatment website; <http://portal.ump.edu.my>, a textbook (Study Orientation Skills in Action, Ghani format of note-taking, DVD on the study orientation skills and lecture on study orientations skills aspects. The assessment on the academic performance is based on grade point average (GPA) scores of UMP undergraduates from their first semester and second semester results. 59 respondents are randomly selected from two groups of undergraduate students from the Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology and from the Faculty of Civil Engineering & Natural Resources. The research uses Quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test by comparing both group samples. The finding has shown that the study orientation skills (SOS) website was able to measure SOS effectively among the respondents in the two groups. There is a significant difference in SOS and academic performance between pre-test and post test scores of the respondents. The results also show that there is a correlation between SOS and GPA scores in pre-test and post-test within and between each group.

**Index Terms**—study orientation skills, study habits, study attitudes, academic performance

## I. INTRODUCTION

New students enrolling in tertiary institutions will feel disorientated as they face learning difficulties due to a transition period and changes in their study orientation. A lot of research has been done to show that changing environment of study among undergraduates students who have to orientate themselves from the various systems of learning from dependent, teacher centered, monotonous and convergent into independent, student centered, autonomous and divergent form of learning (Carpenter, 1990; Rohana Zubir, 1988, Entwisle, 1982). Hence, a study on their study orientation skills will be able to determine their study difficulties encountered by these students and by knowing the faults the students can easily re-correct them by using a series of remedial devices and improve their academic performance.

## II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There is so much literature and research done by well known scholars in the field of study skills to measure study orientation skills among undergraduates using the Study Skills Habits and Attitudes questionnaire. These studies used traditional methods of assessing the SOS and GPA among undergraduates across many disciplines including engineering, humanities and medical. Eventually these traditional ways in measuring SOS takes time to interpret the data.

Reviewing the academic performance among those graduated in 2006/2007 and the entry qualifications of new students, UMP students are considered as average students. The academic performance of those graduated from the Civil Engineering faculty in 2007 show that only 8% passed with a first class honors in, 92 % second class upper and lower class honors. In comparison the Computer engineering (Computer system and network) graduating students in show that only 5.63% scored first class, 94.3 % second class upper and lower class.

With regards to the above student's academic performance, this research is trying to determine the level of study orientation skills among group achievers and its correlation towards the academic performance of UMP undergraduates.

The research used new and more complete SOS devices comprising of a website for measurement and remedial, textbook, DVD, and lectures in measuring students SOS and method in re-correcting students SOS. Results from the research will show the UMP undergraduates score in their SOS and its relationship to their academic performance. These findings can be used to access and provide remedial devices to all university undergraduates in Malaysia either local or private universities, college or Polytechnics.

### III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives to be achieved by the research are:

1. To develop devices in enhancing SOS among first year undergraduates.
2. To classify the SOS group achievers based on study orientation skills measurement.
3. To determine the effectiveness of the devices in improving students' study orientation skills.
4. To determine the effectiveness of the remedial devices in improving study orientation skills in relation towards their academic performance.

### IV. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

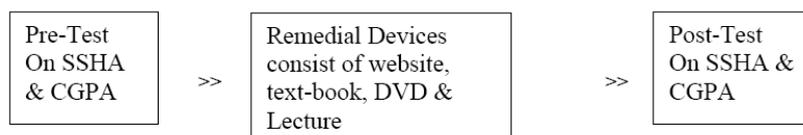
Below are the null hypotheses to be answered by the research finding:

1. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test of study orientation skills among Civil Engineering respondents.
2. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test in the study orientation skills among Computer Engineering respondents.
3. There is no significant difference in pre-test of study orientation skills between Civil Engineering respondents and Computer Engineering respondents.
4. There is no significant difference in post-test of study orientation skills between Civil Engineering respondents and Computer Engineering respondents.
5. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post test on grade points average of Civil Engineering respondents.
6. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test on grade point Average of Computer Engineering respondents.
7. There is no correlation between study orientation skills and academic performance among Civil Engineering respondents.
8. There is no correlation between study orientation skills and academic performance among Computer Engineering respondents.
9. There is no correlation between study orientation skills and academic performance among Civil Engineering respondents and Computer Engineering respondents.

### V. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research is as illustrated in the following chart as:



#### B. Research Process

This research is using pre-test and post-test with remedial devices with two different groups of engineering undergraduates comparatively. Pre-test was given to the respondents after two weeks they resumed their study in their second semester. The assessment on SOS is measured and the GPA score for the first semester results is obtained. Post-test is given after both groups of respondents received their second semester results. The assessment on SOS and GPA is once again calculated as sources of data. Analysis of data by percentage scores, mean scores and ANOVA was determined to find out the significant difference at p-values of 0.05 between pre-test and post-test scores on SOS and GPA within the groups and in between the groups. The correlation test using Spearman–Brown formula was tested to find out the correlation within and between the groups.

### VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. The Measurement of Study Orientation Skills in Pre-test and Post-test Based on Group Achievers among Civil Engineering Respondents

Pre-test result showed that the number of higher achiever group was 0%; normal achiever was 9 (15.25%) and under achiever was 50 (84.75%). Post-test results shows that there was an increase in the percentage value for the higher achiever group and normal achiever group; 3 (5.08%); 23 (38.98%) and decrease in the under achiever number to 33 (55.93%). All parameters of SOS such as DA (Means = 14.8 to 20.9), WM (16.1 to 23.1), TA (18.8 to 24.4), EA (20.3 to 24.4), SH (30.9 to 43.8) and SA (39.1 to 48.8) showed an increase in each means score.

This result has shown that there was an increase in higher and normal achiever group as well as decrease in the percentage of under achiever after the respondents had received the remedial devices of study orientation skills. This means the respondents were successful in re-correcting their study orientation skills the website seems successful in measuring the value of study orientation skills among Civil engineering respondents into three group achievers.

#### B. The Measurement of Study Orientation Skills in Pre-test and Post-test Based on Group Achievers among Computer Engineering Respondents

Pre-test results shows that the number of higher achiever group for computer respondents was only 1 (1.69%); normal achiever was 16 (27.12%) and under achiever was 42 (71.19%). It showed that SOS practiced among respondents was incorrect (Mean score for SO is only 83.9 S.D 25.589 out of 100). Post-test result shows that after remedial devices were given to the respondents it was very obvious there was a tremendous increase in the percentage score of higher achievers 9 (15.25%), normal achievers 23 (38.98%) and under achievers becomes less 27 (45.76 %). Mean scores for study orientation has increased to 98.93 and the S.D was at 34.237. All the study orientation skills parameters showed an increase in means score in the pre-test and post-test; DA (Mean score = 18 to 21.8), WM (19 to 22.9), TA (23.2 to 28), EA (23.7 to 26.3), SH (37 to 44.6), SA (46.9 to 54.3).

The results show there was an improvement in all aspects of study orientation skills. The respondents study habits and study attitudes and study orientation scores has also increased. This showed that the methods of intervention used in this research are effective. It also can provide early remedial help to the respondents in correcting their study orientation skills.

#### C. The Measurement of Study Orientation Skills in Pre-test Score between Civil Engineering Students and Computer Students

TABLE 3:  
THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TEST SCORE ON STUDY ORIENTATION SKILLS BETWEEN CIVIL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING RESPONDENTS IN PRE-TEST.

Groups (Factor)	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Pre-test Civil	59	4130	70	522.8965517
Pre-test Computer	59	4950	83.89831	654.817066

#### ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	do	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Factor	5698.305	1	5698.305	9.676894279	0.002349	3.922878
Error	68307.39	116	588.8568			
Total	74005.69	117				

Reject Ho if  $F_{test} > F_{crit} (F_{0.05,1,116})$  or  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$   
 $9.6769 > 3.9229$  and  $0.002349 < 0.05$   
 So Reject Ho and accept  $H_1$ .

There was sufficient evidence to conclude that there was a difference in pre-test score between Civil Engineering Students and Computer Students at a significant level of 0.05

Table 3 shows that there was a significant difference of study orientation skills between Civil engineering and Computer engineering students in the pre-test at P- Value  $0.002349 < 0.05$ . Thus we accept  $H_a$  and reject  $H_o$ . But the difference in value is rather minimum when compared with the difference in mean score for Civil engineering respondents, which is 70 (variance 522.9) and mean score for Computer engineering respondents is 83.9 (variance 654.8). The result has shown that there was a difference among the respondents before the respondents who had undergone remedial devices of SOS. The Computer engineering respondents had a much better score in study orientation skills compared to civil engineering respondents.

#### D. The Measurement of Study Orientation Skills in Post-test Score between Civil Engineering Students and Computer Students

TABLE 4:  
THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TEST SCORE ON STUDY ORIENTATION SKILLS BETWEEN CIVIL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING RESPONDENTS IN POST-TEST.

<i>Groups (Factor)</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Post-test AWAM	59	5463	92.59322	899.86616
Post-test COMPUTER	59	5837	98.9322	1172.20222

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	1185.39	1	1185.39	1.14416092	0.286996	3.922878
Within Groups	120180	116	1036.034			
Total	121365.4	117				

Reject Ho if  $F_{test} > F_{crit} (F_{0.05,1,116})$  or  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$   
 $1.1442 < 3.9229$  and  $0.286996 > 0.05$   
 So accept Ho and reject H<sub>1</sub>.

There was sufficient evidence to conclude that there was no difference in post-test score between Civil Engineering Students and Computer Students at a significant level of 0.05

Table 4 above shows that there was no significant difference in post-test of study orientation skills score between Civil engineering and Computer engineering respondents in study orientation skills score at P – Value of  $0.2869 > 0.05$ . Thus, we have to reject H<sub>a</sub> and accept H<sub>o</sub>. The mean score for Civil engineering respondents was 92.59 (variance 899.9) and mean score of SO for Computer engineering respondents was 98.93 (variance 1172.2). This result shows that after the remedial devices were given to both groups of respondents, there was a more or less similar increase in study orientation skills among Civil engineering and Computer engineering respondents. It shows that the remedial devices given to the respondents were effective and correct.

*E. The Measurement of Study Orientation Skills in Pre-test and Post-test on Grade Point Average of Civil Engineering Respondents*

TABLE 5:  
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST ON GRADE POINT AVERAGE OF CIVIL ENGINEERING RESPONDENTS

<i>Groups (Factor)</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Pre Test	59	162.32	2.751186	0.169683
Post Test	59	181.96	3.084068	0.105576

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	3.268895	1	3.268895	23.75138	3.51E-06	3.922878
Within Groups	15.96504	116	0.13763			
Total	19.23394	117				

Reject Ho if  $F_{test} > F_{crit} (F_{0.05,1,116})$  or  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$   
 $23.75138 > 3.9229$  and  $3.51E-06 < 0.05$   
 So Reject Ho and accept H<sub>1</sub>.

The significant difference between pre-test and post-test on grade points average of civil engineering respondents.

Results from Table 5 showed that there was a significant difference on the score of grade points average between pre-test and post-test for the Civil engineering respondents. P-value is  $23.75 > 3.92$  at significant level of 0.05. Thus, we reject H<sub>o</sub> and accept H<sub>a</sub>. Pre-test means was 2.75 (variance 0.17) and means for post test has increased to 3.08 (variance 0.11). The increase in means value was quite obvious between the pre-test and post-test. The results showed that the remedial devices given on SOS had an impact on the grade point average score or in the respondent’s academic performance. This concurs with the findings of Schultz (1989); and Carpenter (1990).

*F. The Measurement of Study Orientation Skills between Pre-test and Post-test on Grade Points Average of Computer Engineering Respondents*

TABLE 6:  
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST ON GRADE POINT AVERAGE OF COMPUTER ENGINEERING RESPONDENTS  
ANOVA: SINGLE FACTOR

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Pre Test GPA	59	183.57	3.111356	0.262236
Post Test GPA	59	198.05	3.35678	0.101439

ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	1.776868	1	1.776868	9.771721	0.00224	3.922879
Within Groups	21.09318	116	0.181838			
Total	22.87005	117				

Hypothesis Null: there is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test grade point average of Computer Engineering respondents  
Hypothesis Alternative: there was significant difference between pre-test and post-test grade point average of Computer Engineering respondents  
Reject Ho if  $F_{test} > F_{crit}$  or  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$   $9.7717 > 3.922879$  and  $0.00224 < 0.05$   
So Reject Ho.

The significant difference between pre-test and post-test on grade points average of computer engineering respondents.

The results from table 6 shows that there was a significant difference in grade point average between pre-test and post-test of Computer engineering respondents at probability of 0.05, where  $F_{test} > F_{critical}$   $9.77 > 3.923$ . Mean score for pre-test is 3.111 (S.D = 0.512) and post-test was 3.357 (S.D = 0.318). Thus we reject Ho and accept Ha. This means that the difference in mean score between pre-test and post-test was obvious. The results also support the hypothesis and also previous findings. Wang (1993); Roxana Zuni (1988) in their experiment found similar where an increase in study orientation skills will also influence an increase in grade point average among the undergraduates.

#### G. The Correlation between Study Orientation Skills and Academic Performance among Civil Engineering Respondents

Result shows that there was a weak positive correlation between study orientation skills and grade point average among Civil engineering respondents. The r Spearman Brown formula score is 0.2395. This value shows that the correlation between study orientation skills and grade point average score after the respondents received the remedial devices within the 6 months of interval. The strong correlation is determined by the value of  $r > 8.0$ . Weak positive correlation was sometimes found due to the sample size and the duration of the remedial devices used in correcting the respondents study orientation skills. The smaller the number of the sample will contribute to the smaller the value of correlation between SOS and GPA.

#### H. The Correlation between Study Orientation Skills and Academic Performance among Computer Engineering Respondents.

Result shows that there was a weak correlation between study orientation skills and grade point average score among Computer engineering respondents. The value of r was 0.382. These mean that after receiving the remedial devices after 6 months the respondents seem to show some changes in the study orientation skills score and their academic performance. The weak positive correlation between SOS score and GPA among Computer engineering respondents was due to the sample size and the duration of the remedial devices used in correcting the respondents SOS. This result is quite similar to the results obtained among Civil engineering respondents. Cox (2001) has shown that the students who received the study skills program were more successful then those students who did not receive.

#### I. The Correlation between Study Orientation Skills and Academic Performance among Civil Engineering and Computer Engineering Respondents

Result shows that there was a weak positive correlation between study orientation skills and grade point average between Civil engineering respondents and Computer engineering respondents. This finding has shown that two groups of respondents have the correlation in study skills orientation skills as well as grade point average. The value of r is 0.3058. Once again, the result shows a weak positive correlation comparatively between Civil engineering respondents and Computer engineering respondents. The weak correlation is still influenced by the number of sample and the duration of re-correcting SOS by using all the devices used in this research. Graham (1991) showed among native students senior high schools girls has shown increase in study habits and study attitudes and this will help the students to perform better in the academic performance. As the conclusion to the above results, both Civil engineering and Computer engineering has shown a significantly difference in GPA scores between pre-test and post-test. Beside that it also shows that there was a significant difference in SOS and GPA scores between pre-test and post test of both respondents. The correlation score of SOS and GPA also shows correlated results for both group respondents.

## VII. DISCUSSION

These findings show that the remedial devices used in evaluating and intervention of the students study orientation skills was effective and correlated. The findings seem to support the past findings done by Wang (1993) who carried out a research in Hubei University and had indicated that students having a high score in SOS also excel in their academic performance. Zainul Asmawi (1988) also found that there was a strong correlation between SOS and the academic performance; He further quoted that a good score in SOS will also secure a good score in their CGPA.

Generally all hypotheses tested in the research showed a positive result by rejecting  $H_0$  and accepting  $H_a$ . Thus, all the tested hypotheses can be accepted and supports the past findings about measuring and re-correcting study orientation skills among undergraduates in institutions of higher learning.

The result shows that all the respondents either from Civil engineering or Computer engineering were positive in improving their SOS. Post-test and pre-test scores of all parameters of study orientation skills for both groups have also increased after the respondents received the remedial devices intervention. There was an increase in all parameters of study orientation skills including delay avoidance (DA), work methods (WM), teacher approval (TA) and educational acceptance (EA). Apparently an increase in means score has also occurred in student study habits (SH) and study attitudes (SA). Thus, there is a significantly difference in pre-test and post-test in study orientation scores.

The result also shows that both groups of respondents have improved in their grade point average (GPA) score although the correlation between study orientation skills and grade point average was weakly positive. The weakly positive correlation may be due to the number of sample not being too big, (59 respondents for each group) and the duration taken in giving the intervention was only for a period of six months only.

The significant difference test between pre-test and post-test of both group respondents also shows there were a significant difference between pre-test and post-test at the p value of 0.05. This results show that the remedial devices on SOS given to both groups respondents were effective. It is demonstrated by the increase ion values of means score in post-test compared to the pre-test. Increasing in the mean scores between pre-test and post-test of both groups respondents also showed a significant difference in grade points (GPA) scores.

Correlation test using r spearman brown formula of correlation coefficient shows that there was a weak positive correlation between SOS and GPA value in post test of both group respondents and comparatively in between the groups of Civil engineering and Computer engineering respondents. The weak correlation between SOS and GPA .found probably was due to the sample size (Navidi, 2006)

### VIII. CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

It was found that the portal website was successful in measuring respondents study orientation skills and divided them into three groups of achievers such as higher achiever, normal achiever and under achiever. The results also showed there was an increase in mean scores from pre-test to post-test. The increase in the number of higher achiever and normal achiever as well as decrease in the number of under achiever for Civil engineering respondents and Computer engineering respondents showed that the SOS remedial devices were effective in inculcating SOS among respondents. And the intervention website was an effective device in inculcating SOS and re-correcting students fault in their study methods. With the help and guidance by the SOS text book or using DVD supplied then the respondents can easily go through the process of intervention to re-correct their study methods. The results above shows that the finding of this research is effective and will produce a new portal website in evaluating and re-correcting the undergraduates study orientation skills.

The results also proved that with an increase in respondents study orientation skills it will also increase the respondent's academic performance. These findings were supported by previous finding done by Brown & Holtzman (1960), Hill & Porter (1981), Rohana Zubir (1988), Wang (1993), Isaak (2007) and many more other research findings. The innovation and improvement done by this research through its portal website in accessing and providing remedial devices to the respondent's study orientation skills in short interval period of time and in a more convenient way.

The finding from this research can be practiced by undergraduates in public and private universities, Private colleges, polytechnics and MARA Colleges.

### IX. RESEARCH PRODUCT

1. Study orientation skills Portal
2. Study Orientation Skills in Action Textbook
3. Study Orientation Skills Kit
4. Study Orientation Skills DVDs
5. Ghani's format of note-taking

### REFERENCES

- [1] Anderson, J. (1969). *Study Methods – A Practical Guide*. McGraw Hill Book Company.
- [2] Annis L.F. (1987). Project START: A Case Study on Improving Study Skills in a Remedial Summer Entry Program Designed To Enable Students to Succeed in College. Report Paper, ERIC.
- [3] Bigs J.B. (1978). Individual and Group Differences in Study Process. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 48,226-239.
- [4] Brown W.F, Holtzman W.H. (1956). *Survey of Study Habits & Attitudes Manual*. The psychology Corporation.
- [5] Brown W.F, Holtzman W.H. (1964). A Study– Attitudes Questionnaire for Predicting Academic Success. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 48, 5-84.
- [6] Carpenter, R.M. (1990). The relations of self-concepts and study habits of at risk student. Unpublished Theses Ph.D., North Texas University United States.
- [7] Cole C.G. (1979). A Group Guidance Approach to Improving Students' Study Skills. *The School Counselor*, 88, 29-35.

- [8] Cox, F.W. (2001). The relationship of study skills and mathematic anxiety to success in mathematics among community college students. Dissertation Delta State University, USA.
- [9] Crabbe J.L., Scott W.A. (1972). Academic and Personal Adjustment. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 19, (1) ,58-64.
- [10] Devine T.G. (1981). Teaching Study Skills. Allyn & Bacon, Inc.
- [11] Elshout-Mohr M. (1983). The Research-Perspective of Study Skills Group of the COWO, University of Amsterdam. *Higher Education*, (12),49-60
- [12] Elton L. (1988). Student Motivation and Achievement. *Studies in Higher Education*, 13:2, pp: 215-221.
- [13] Entwisle N.J., Brennan T. (1971). The Academic Performance of Students– 2 Types of Successful Students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*,(41) ,268-276.
- [14] Entwisle N.J (1978). Personality and Attainment. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, (42), 137-151.
- [15] Gersten S.G., (1989). The Relationship between Study Habits, Attitudes and Orientation among Developmental Freshman of Kean College. Unpublished Master theses, ERIC.
- [16] Graham, H., Randy, K., and Eldon, G. (1991). Study orientation, persistence and retention of native students: implications for confluent education. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30: 3.
- [17] Hewitt C.R. (1973). Study Habits– Adjustment to Universities Studies. 8th Annual Conference of Society and Research into Higher education, Northomton Square, London SRHE.
- [18] Isaak M.I. (2007). Academic, Motivational and Emotional Problems Identified by College Students in Academic Jeopardy. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice*, V:8 N:2 P171-183.
- [19] Laurillard D. (1979). The Process of Student Learning Higher Education. V: 8, p: 395-409.
- [20] Mohd. Ghani Awang, (1992). The Effects of Group Guidance on the Study Skills and Its Relationship Towards Academic Performance. Unpublished Theses, USM.
- [21] Mohd. Ghani Awang. (1994). Satu Kajian Tentang Kemahiran Belajar Dikalangan Pelajar-pelajar Diploma Lanjutan Pendidikan, UTM. *Jurnal Pendidikan UTM*, 4, MS: 34-40.
- [22] Maslow A.H. (1970). Motivation and Personality. Second Edition, Harper and Row.
- [23] Marbeau V. (1976). Autonomous Study by Pupils. *Education and Culture Journal*, V: 31, N: 2, P: 14-21.
- [24] Navidi, W. (2006). Statistics for engineers and scientists. (online)Retrieved on September 6, 2008 from [http://66.102.1.104/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:5TDsVjCncs0J:www.stat.ufl.edu/CourseINFO/STA3032/Navidi2\\_SolutionsManual.pdf+navidi+2006.html](http://66.102.1.104/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:5TDsVjCncs0J:www.stat.ufl.edu/CourseINFO/STA3032/Navidi2_SolutionsManual.pdf+navidi+2006.html)
- [25] Rohana Zubir. (1988). Descriptions of Teaching and Learning: A Malaysian Perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, 13, 2, pp: 139-149.
- [26] Robert M.M. (1981). Establishing a Study Skills Course for Sixth Form Students. *Educational Research*, V: 24, N: 1, p: 24-30.
- [27] Rhody T.W. (1993). The Study Skills, Habits, and Attitudes of High School Freshmen and Their Relationship to First-Term Academic Achievement. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Oregon USA.
- [28] Saeger W. (1984). Relationship between Learning Strategies and Academic Performance of Disadvantaged Students. Research Report, ERIC.
- [29] Schultz, A. H. and Edmunds, N. (1989). Personality type and temperament in industrial education students: A descriptive study. *Journal of Studies in Technical Careers*, 11: 183-201.
- [30] Svenson L. (1976). Study Skills and Learning. University of Guterberg, Studies in Educational Science.
- [31] Tabberer R. (1982). Introducing Study Skills at 16 to 19. *Education Research*, V: 26, p: 85-89.
- [32] Van Rooijen L. (1986). Advance Student's Adaptation to College. *Higher Education*, 15, pp: 641-682.
- [33] Watkins D. (1982). Factors Influencing the Study Methods of Australian Tertiary Students. *Higher Education*, V: 11, p: 369-380.
- [34] Wang, F.Y. (1993). The relationship between science achievement and attitudes toward science. Unpublished Theses Ph.D., Texas University.
- [35] Wankowski J. (1974). Teaching Methods and Academic Success in Sixth Form and University. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, V; 6, N: 1.
- [36] Zainul Asmawi. (1988). Intellective and non-intellective predictors of academic achievement of Indonesian college students. Theses Ph.D. New York State University.



**Mohd. Ghani Awang** is a senior lecturer in the Center for Modern Languages & Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Pahang in Kuantan Pahang, Malaysia. His first degree is in Bachelor of Science (Hons) Biology & Mathematics, second degree is Master of Education (Guidance & Counselling) in Study Skills and Doctor of Philosophy (Technology Management) in study skills. He has about 25 years experiences teaching in the university. He is a former Director of Publication Center in UMP and Directors of a few private colleges. He has written 11 books and 5 of it in the study skills. He has done a lot of research in study orientation skills under university grant and FRGS grant. He also conducted workshop and training in study orientation skills for university students, college, polytechnics and school.



**Suriya Kumar Sinnadurai** is a lecturer in the Center for Modern Languages & Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Pahang in Kuantan Pahang, Malaysia. His first degree is in Bachelor of Education (Hons) TESL from Nottingham University. His Masters degree is in Masters of Arts TESL for National University Malaysia. He has about 20 years experience teaching in schools and 6 years at tertiary level. He is a member of the research team in study orientation skills under the university grant and also the FRGS grant. He also conducts workshop and training in study orientation skills for university students, college, polytechnics and school students.

# The Relation between Success and Absenteeism at Esogu English Preparatory School

Ümit Özkanal

Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Bölümü Çamlık Kampüsü 26010 Eskişehir, Turkey  
Email: ozkanal@gmail.com

Nadire Arıkan

Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Bölümü Çamlık Kampüsü 26010 Eskişehir, Turkey  
Email: nadirearikan@gmail.com

**Abstract**—Attendance to school where students are expected to be exposed to necessary information, abilities and attitudes required by the community they live in has always been considered as a crucial element in attaining success. This study aims to search if there is any correlation between absenteeism and academic success at ESOGU FLD. The participants were the students who enrolled in the ESOGU FLD during 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 academic years. Analyzing their written records of absenteeism and success, the relation between success and absenteeism were investigated. In addition to this, whether gender and students' majors were factors in determining students successes in relation to absenteeism was also investigated. The findings show that attendance to the classes regularly significantly contributes to high achievement level. The study also suggests that while students' major is a significant factor contributing to students' achievements, gender proved to be an insignificant factor.

**Index Terms**—success, absenteeism, gender, students' majors, achievement

## I. INTRODUCTION

Although recent developments in information and technology have changed many things in education, school system still seems to be the most important element in it. School system is considered to be the first place where individuals learn to live in a community, which is a crucial step for them. Therefore, any school which is formed to educate and train people should plan what kind of information and abilities are going to be delivered so that the students can become the ideal people that a country needs to develop. The aforementioned information, abilities and attitudes aimed for students are delivered via some teaching techniques at school (Erden, 1998). To what extent students have reached these is evaluated via some evaluation techniques and the result may be called as academic success or performance. It is defined as the level of reaching to the pre-determined, desired objectives (Silah, 2003). In order to reach these desired goals, one must carry out some school based activities and be successful based on the necessary evaluation techniques.

## II. ABSENTEEISM AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

As mentioned above, school is a kind of social organization in which people start socialization as well as being equipped with knowledge that they will use in their future lives. In order to be academically successful, there are some steps one must follow seriously. One of the most important of them is to attend classes and/or laboratories so that one can get equipped with necessary knowledge and abilities which are crucial academically and for life in the future.

As known, there are many factors that affect academic success, but non-attendance or absenteeism is the study objective of this paper since it is thought that absenteeism is a key concept in academic success, especially in the case of higher education as it is at Eskişehir Osmangazi University English Preparatory School.

Absenteeism may be defined as not coming to school or not following the courses without having a valid excuse (Wisconsin, 2000). In another definition, it is said that it may be called as school refusal behaviour (SRB) based on the definition of Kearney and Silverman (1990), stating a kind of difficulty attending school or remaining in school for the whole day.

Absenteeism may also be viewed as a personal decision related to ability and the motivation to attend (Kottasz, 2005). In the relevant literature, it is stated that absenteeism may be caused by family, school, personal problems, peer and gender related issues (Kadi, 2000). For some students school attendance may be conceived as a kind of punishment acting a negative reinforcement. Similarly, for some, schools and their curricula may be the contributing causes of absenteeism (Williams, 2001). Family health and/or financial concerns, drug and alcohol use, poor school climate, transportation problems and different attitudes towards education may also be mentioned among the causes of absenteeism (Teasley, 2004). Another cause for absenteeism is motivation; there is a crucial difference between a motivated student and an unmotivated one who feels she/he has to go to school (Kottasz, 2005).

Student absenteeism is also an important concern in higher education since it results in inadequate learning and poor academic success because of the classes missed (Friedman, Rodrigues and McComb, 2001; Marburger, 2001). It is important in higher education as this does not only affect the absent student and his/her academic success, but it can also affect the lecturers, other present students and thus the whole learning environment at school (Salisa and others, 2009). School is a social organization and interaction among students and their instructors is very important because the school lets them socialize professionally by observing the others, especially faculty members and recognizing them as role models (Fjortoft, 2005; Hammer and others, 2003). It is stressed that those who miss the class frequently are the ones who do not realize that the classroom or school is a community that they belong to and must be a part of and that when they do not attend classes, their learning level decreases and it becomes difficult to reach desired academic goals (Cronon, 1998; Brown, 2002).

It is interesting to note that among university students absenteeism days are frequently are Mondays or Fridays, which shows to be quite trivial reasons of absenteeism stating that this kind of absenteeism does not have a concrete reason (Timmins, 2002; Rodgers, 2002). This situation is the same at ESOGU FLD since students mainly prefer not to attend on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons. The information has been obtained via an interview carried out with the office chair responsible for attendance and documents investigated by the researchers.

It may be important to note that while some schools in some countries do not impose clear messages about the importance of attendance and students cannot be aware of its importance, this is not the case at ESOGU FLD. Attendance to classes is very important and students may not attend only 10% of the total class hours. To illustrate, if a level of English prep class has 800 hours of lessons, a student may not attend only 80 hours of lessons during the academic year, namely both in autumn and spring terms. When students exceed this number, they can take neither the final exam nor the make-up exam (ESOGU Rehber, 2009). Medical reports are not valid for the absenteeism and the right of non-attendance up to 10% is for some situations like being sick and not coming the school due to this or any other unexpected events one may face. This is announced to all students at the beginning of the academic year in a warm-up meeting and students may reach any information they need from the web-site of the department.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to search if there is any correlation between absenteeism and academic success at ESOGU FLD. The main research question is:

Is there any correlation between absenteeism and academic success?

Based on this main question, two sub-questions were added as:

Is there any correlation between absenteeism and academic success with respect to gender?

Is there any correlation between absenteeism and academic success with respect to majors?

### IV. METHODOLOGY

In order to find out if there is any correlation between absenteeism and academic success, the formal written absenteeism records and overall academic success of students having studied at ESOGU FLD in two academic years, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 were investigated.

The records of each term were analyzed in detail. For 2007-2008 academic year, 413 students' records were analyzed while for 2008-2009, 731 students' records in total were analyzed. The records were grouped according to the students' groups, namely elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels in English, French and German classes since in each group the right of non-attendance was different.

The records were on Microsoft Excel and the correlations were calculated in this program. The students' grade point averages, the success ratio of final exam and absenteeism and general academic success and absenteeism for each academic year were correlated with the percentages of absenteeism. Then, the results were shown and depicted in the tables.

### V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to investigate whether there is any relationship between absenteeism and academic success in a FLD context, namely Eskişehir Osmangazi University FLD. The data gained from student records were analyzed and presented in the tables 1 and 2. The data of two academic years were taken into account to justify the relation between academic success and absenteeism based on aforementioned criteria.

It must be noted that in the calculations of such correlations 0 and 0.25 is defined as the poor level and 0.50 - 0.60 as medium, 0.70 - 0.85 as strong and 0.90 - 1 as very strong.

TABLE 1.  
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ABSENTEEISM AND SUCCESS FOR 2007-2008.

	All groups	Intermediate English learners	Pre-intermediate English Learners	Elementary English Learners	French Learners	German Learners
<b>gpa vs absenteeism</b>	<b>0,835374</b>	<b>0,959929</b>	<b>0,893844</b>	<b>0,789604</b>	<b>0,829898</b>	<b>0,924228</b>
<b>Final exam vs absenteeism</b>	<b>0,727515</b>	<b>0,921068</b>	<b>0,857404</b>	<b>0,653303</b>	<b>0,9465</b>	<b>0,826931</b>
<b>average vs absenteeism</b>	<b>0,786686</b>	<b>0,946528</b>	<b>0,883145</b>	<b>0,727068</b>	<b>0,915547</b>	<b>0,888798</b>

As seen in the table 1, the correlation was calculated based on three different criteria: the correlation between grade point average and absenteeism, the success ratio of final exam and absenteeism, and general academic success and absenteeism. The reason why all these three criteria were included was to see if there were any significant differences among the criteria.

When the correlations are examined, it can be seen that grade point average in all levels is above 0.70, which means there is a significant correlation between them. It could therefore be suggested that students who attend the classes regularly have a higher achievement level.

When the correlation between final exam and absenteeism is studied, it is clear that in all levels except for elementary the correlation proved to be significant. Although the correlation in the elementary level is just below 0.70, it may be expressed that having 0.65 may be seen a significant value.

When the correlation of the general academic success and absenteeism is studied, it can be seen that the correlation in each level is above 0.70, which means there is a close and significant correlation between them. Therefore, it may be stated that attending all the classes contributed to general achievement in all levels and the students finished the prep school successfully.

TABLE 2.  
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ABSENTEEISM AND SUCCESS FOR 2008-2009.

	All groups	Intermediate English learners	Pre-intermediate English Learners	Elementary English Learners	French Learners	German Learners
<b>gpa vs absenteeism</b>	<b>0,8407</b>	<b>0,9453</b>	<b>0,7005</b>	<b>0,8254</b>	<b>0,8586</b>	<b>0,9332</b>
<b>Final exam vs absenteeism</b>	<b>0,6814</b>	<b>0,892</b>	<b>0,6018</b>	<b>0,6424</b>	<b>0,7671</b>	<b>0,8188</b>
<b>average vs absenteeism</b>	<b>0,7646</b>	<b>0,9303</b>	<b>0,6674</b>	<b>0,7379</b>	<b>0,8172</b>	<b>0,896</b>

As seen in Table 2, the correlation was calculated based on three different criteria: the correlation between grade point average and absenteeism, the success ratio of final exam and absenteeism, and general academic success and absenteeism. The reason for including all these three criteria was to see if there were any significant differences among the criteria.

When the correlations are examined, it can be seen that grade point average in all levels is above 0.70, which means there is a significant correlation between. Therefore, it can be stated that students who attend the classes regularly have high achievement level.

When the correlation between final exam and absenteeism is studied, it is seen that although the correlation between them is not so significant, it is observed that they are still high.

When the correlation of the general academic success and absenteeism is studied, it can be seen that in all levels except pre-intermediate level (0.66), the correlation is above 0.70, which means there is a close and significant correlation between them. The difference between the other levels and that of pre –intermediate is only 0.4, which does not show a considerable difference. Therefore, it may be stated that attending all the classes contributed to general achievement in all levels and the students finished the prep school successively.

Although both tables show the correlations of two different academic years with different students, it can be easily stated that attendance is a very significant contributor of academic success as seen in the tables clearly.

TABLE 3.  
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ABSENTEEISM AND SUCCESS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER

2007-2008	male	0,84983606	0,740869	0,799351
Academic Year	female	0,797565	0,70885	0,757906
2008-2009	male	0,840087102	0,6796	0,8401
Academic Year	female	0,721120961	0,545233	0,634449

As seen in the table 3, the correlation was calculated based on gender differences. When the correlations are investigated, it can be seen that in 2007-2008 academic year the correlation for both males and females is above 0.70, which means there is a significant correlation and this also shows that gender is not an important factor to affect success.

When the correlation between final exam and absenteeism between genders is studied, it is seen that both males and females have lower correlation, which again shows that gender does not play an important role in the relation between success and absenteeism.

TABLE 4.  
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ABSENTEEISM AND SUCCESS WITH RESPECT TO MAJORS

2007-2008 Academic Year			
Departments	gpa vs absenteeism	final grade vs absenteeism	Average grade vs absenteeism
1314	0,908065	0,830434	0,876954
1512	0,8926	0,821462	0,862308
1517	0,655826	0,485206	0,571285
1518	0,840521	0,670537	0,761201
1521	0,890108	0,791318	0,85556
2611	0,538827	0,499626	0,522253
2007-2008 Academic Year			
Departments	gpa vs absenteeism	final grade vs absenteeism	Average grade vs absenteeism
1314	0,915	0,813	0,8763
1512	0,811732	0,653664	0,733953
1517	0,782894	0,553792	0,663954
1518	0,8179	0,674	0,7531
1521	0,875703	0,786597	0,842134
2611	0,860044	0,671539	0,78055

As seen in the table 4, the correlation was calculated based on majors of students. The reason for including this is to see if there are any significant differences among the majors.

When the correlations are investigated, it can be seen that except two majors the correlation between success and absenteeism proved to be significant, having strong correlation rates. The problem with these two majors may be that the students are aware that they will just follow few of the courses in English in their departments.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of the current study show that attendance to the classes regularly significantly contributes to high achievement level. Therefore, it can be said that the study is congruent with the findings of previous studies in that when students attend classes regularly, they become successful whereas student absenteeism yields inadequate learning and academic failure (Friedman, Rodrigues and McComb, 2001; Marburger, 2001). In addition, another finding in the present study suggests that the level of success changes according to students' majors; therefore, it is a significant factor contributing to students' achievements. Gender, however, was determined to be an insignificant factor to affect success.

Considering these findings, it is important to make students attend the classes regularly, so schools should take necessary precautions to provide this. It is also important to ensure that students realize they will need English not only at the university but also in their job lives to motivate and help them take English learning seriously.

In this study, there are some limitations. The formal written records were used; however, they were not supported by means of interviews. In the future studies, interviews with the students may be helpful to shed light on the issue. Furthermore, a study on the causes of absenteeism may also be investigated and necessary precautions to prevent this may be taken in order to increase achievement level in the school.

## REFERENCES

[1] Brown, W. (2002). Why I do not Let Students Cut My Classes. In: Gordon VN, Minick TL, eds. *Foundations: A Reader for New College Students*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth;100-2.

- [2] Cronon, W. (1998). Only Connect.....: The Goal of a Liberal Education. *Am. Scholar*. 67(4):73-80.
- [3] Erden, M. (1998). Introduction to Teaching Profession. İstanbul: Alkim Publications.
- [4] Esog ü Rehber. (2009). Eskisehir: ESOGU Publications.
- [5] Fjortoft, N. (2005). Students' Motivations for Class Attendance. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*. 69 (1).
- [6] Friedman, P., Rodrigues, F. and McComb, J. (2001). Why Students Do and Do Not attend Class. *College Teaching*, 49, 124-133.
- [7] Hammer, D.P., Berger B.A., Beardsley, R.S. and Easton, M.R. (2003). Student Professionalism. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*. 67 (3).
- [8] Kadi, Z. (2000). The Reasons of Absenteeism of Primary School Students in Adana. Unpublished MA Thesis. Malatya: İnönü University Social Sciences Institute.
- [9] Kearney, C. A. and Silverman, W. K. (1990). A preliminary Analysis of a Functional Model of Assessment and Treatment for School Refusal Behavior. *Behavior Modification*.1, 340-366.
- [10] Kottasz, R. (2005). Reasons for Student Non-Attendance at Lectures and Tutorials: An Analysis. *Investigations in University Teaching and Learning*. 2(2)
- [11] Marburger, D. R. (2001). Absenteeism and Undergraduate Exam Performance. *Journal of Economic Education*, 32, 99-109.
- [12] Rodgers, J.R. (2002). Encouraging Tutorial Attendance at University Did Not Improve Performance. *Australian Economic Papers*, September, 255-266
- [13] Salisa, C.W. and others. (2009). Factors Influencing Pharmacy Students' Attendance Decisions in Large Lectures. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* 7, (5)
- [14] Silah, M. (2003). The Place and Importance of Absenteeism Which is An Important factor Affecting the Academic Success Among University Students. *Educational Studies Journal*. 10:102-115.
- [15] Teasley, M. (2004). Absenteeism and truancy: risk, protection, and best practice implications for school social workers. *Children & Schools*, 26(2), 117-128.
- [16] Timmins, F. (2002). Absenteeism among Nursing Students- Fact or Fiction? *Journal of Nursing Management* 10 (5): 251-264.
- [17] Williams, L. L. (2001). Student Absenteeism and Truancy: Technologies and Interventions to Reduce and Prevent Chronic Problems Among School-Age Children. Available at:[http://teach.valdosta.edu/are/Litreviews/vol1no1/williams\\_litr.pdf](http://teach.valdosta.edu/are/Litreviews/vol1no1/williams_litr.pdf)
- [18] Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau. (2000). Truancy Reduction Efforts: A Best Practice Review. *Spectrum: Journal of State Government* 73 (4), 13-15

**Ümit Özkanal** has been an English instructor at Eskisehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department for 15 years. He has got a PhD degree from Anadolu University Educational Sciences Institute, Curriculum and Teaching Program. His interests are curriculum evaluation, development and EFL.

**Nadire Arıkan** has been an English instructor at Eskisehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department since 1999. She has got a MA degree from Bilkent University, Social Sciences Institute, MA TEFL Program. Her interests are teacher training, testing, EFL, and ESP.

# Linguistic, Ideological, and Cultural Issues in Chinese and English Argumentative Writings

Jie Zhang

Department of Applied Linguistics, the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, USA  
Email: zhangjie2001@gmail.com

**Abstract**—Social and cultural differences underlying people’s ideology exist not only in daily oral communications but also in formal written texts. This study focuses on the use of support and the presentation of personal voice in Chinese and English argumentative writings respectively to investigate the influence of Chinese collective culture and English individualistic culture upon their writing. Contrastive textual analysis was conducted on a sample of Chinese argumentative essays and English argumentative essays. Analysis of the use of support shows that Chinese writers extensively provide examples and direct quotes with less effort to elaborate on them, whereas English writers use fewer examples but elaborate them in details. Chinese writers frequently use direct citations, whereas no direct citation was found in English essays. The analysis of first person pronoun use reveals that the use of first person singulars is more frequent among English writers. English writers use “I” to put forward their arguments, while Chinese writers use “I” to make a modest suggestion. The use of first person plurals displays an opposite tendency. Chinese writers use much more first person plurals than the English writers. The findings suggest a need for incorporating social conventions and cultural thinking in ESL/EFL writing instruction to Chinese learners.

**Index Terms**—ESL/ EFL writing, contrastive rhetoric, collectivism, individualism

## I. INTRODUCTION

As English takes its position as the global language, a fervent enthusiasm of studying English has been witnessed in China. In the meantime more and more students in China pursue further studies in English-speaking countries such as the U.S., Canada and Australia. Despite the fact that most of them are intermediate or advanced English learners with a good grasp of vocabulary and grammar, many feel frustrated when it comes to writing in English. More often than not, their writing is accused of “lacking a focus” and “being digressive”. An explanation to this situation is that beyond the more discernable differences at the surface level (such as syntax, grammar and choice of words), the subtle differences between English and Chinese reflected on the level of discourse and style tend to be ignored. Rhetoric, as “a way of thinking about the relationships that exist among speaker, subject matter, purpose, and audience” (Matalene, 1985, p. 789), is a reflection of people’s thought and logic, which are defined by culture and social ideology. (Kaplan; 1966; Cai, 1999; Liu, 2005) Rhetoric and writing are “schematic representation of the writer’s experience and interactions with the given sociocultural context” (Cai, 1999, p. 293).

The fundamental proposition of this paper is that social and cultural ideologies influences one’s thought, and this way of thinking, in turn, is reflected in written texts. With this in mind, a contrastive textual analysis of five Chinese and five English argumentative essays was conducted in their use of support and presentation of personal voice. The ideological and cultural issues that underlie the linguistic differences are discussed. Implications to ESL/EFL writing instruction are suggested.

## II. CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

Different languages encode different aspects of the world, and draw their users’ attention to certain aspects of the objective world and reality. (Slobin, 1996) The view that language shapes mind is usually referred to as “Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis” and “Linguistic Determinism”. Although a strong version of “Linguistic Determinism” has been proven problematic, a wide range of cross-cultural studies has indicated that language plays a role in formulating people’s thinking, and the past twenty years has witnessed a renewed interest in the relationship between language and mind, which was interpreted as a weaker version of Whorfian hypothesis known as linguistic relativity”. Linguistic relativity suggests that one’s native language influences one’s thinking. When people are exposed to another language, the way of thinking imposed by their native language system may have an effect on the acquisition of the new language system.

Taking a cultural anthropological perspective, Robert B. Kaplan applied it to the analysis of cross-cultural rhetoric and compositions. In his 1966 article *Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education*, he pointed out that not only does cultural variation exist at the level of sentence, grammar, and vocabulary, but “logic *per se* is a cultural phenomenon as well” (Kaplan, 1966, p. 2). Rhetoric, taking its basis on logic, is not universal either; it varies from culture to culture, and within the same culture it evolves from time to time. Language not only determines thought, but more important that “logic and rhetoric are interdependent as well as culture specific” (Connor, 1996, p. 30). Based on

his analysis of 600 students' compositions, Kaplan proposed the models of paragraph organization of three basic language groups. The English pattern of written discourse was described as mainly a linear structure, that of oriental people was doodles, and the Arabic patterns displayed a series of complex parallel structures. Kaplan's 1966 article was the first in ESL studies that extended the textual and rhetorical analyses to the discourse and textual levels, and thus initiated a new field of study, i. e. Contrastive Rhetoric (CR). CR approaches texts based on different social-cultural backgrounds of the writers, with a focus on the rhetorical differences in ESL students' writing and that of native English writers.

Although Kaplan's diagrams have been criticized for being overly simplistic and literal (Scollon, 1997; Zamel, 1997 in Connor, 2002), it has important implications to language and culture studies in that it recognized the reciprocal relationship between rhetoric and logic on the one hand, and cultural and social norms on the other hand, which justifies the vigorous research conducted in CR in the past decades. (Kaplan, 1972, 1987; Jensen, 1987; Connor, 1996, 2002)

### III. CHINESE AND ENGLISH CONTRASTIVE RESEARCH

Much research has been conducted on Chinese and English rhetoric since Kaplan described the oriental way (including Chinese) of paragraph organization as "doodles". (Matalene, 1985; Mohan and Lo, 1985; Shen, 1989; Taylor and Chen, 1991; Kirkpatrick, 1997, 2002; Liu, 1996; Cai, 1999; Liu, 2005; Jarratt et al, 2006) Most studies used the classical approach of CR, i.e. textual analysis. The English and Chinese writing by Chinese ESL learners have been contrastively analyzed. (Mohan and Lo, 1985; Shen, 1989; Cai, 1999; Jarratt et al, 2006) Other genres that have been covered include newspaper articles (Scollon, 1997 in Connor, 2002) and business letters (Zhu, 1997 in Connor, 2002). Textbooks and online instruction materials are the other sources that have been looked at. (Kirkpatrick, 2002; Liu, 2005)

The theme under most discussion is the rhetorical patterns and overall organization. Kaplan in his 1966 article first described Oriental way of paragraph organization as circular. He further elaborated the Chinese rhetoric pattern in 1972, arguing that current Chinese writers are still heavily influenced by ancient Chinese rhetorical tradition, especially the eight-legged essays (*ba-gu-wen*). As a means of eliciting official candidates in ancient China, the eight-legged essays were characterized as indirect, circular and delaying in stating the thesis. The analysis of 4 ESL essays by Chinese students showed similar traits as those of eight-legged essays, especially in the seemingly unnecessary wandering around the topic. (Kaplan, 1972) Cai (1999) studied a Chinese student's EFL writing portfolio. It showed that the student tends to structure her paragraphs in the 4 parts *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* progression (beginning-continuing-transition-summary), which is regarded to be an evolved and simplified version of eight-legged essays. Cai also found that although the student is an advanced English learner, she still resorted to translating her intended meaning from Chinese to English in writing English essays.

By studying the typical Chinese patterns, in particular *ba-gu-wen* and *qi-cheng-zhuan-he*, it is concluded that Chinese learners tend to write circularly, and Chinese writing displays traits of indirectness, non-expression, softness, discursiveness, and the avoidance of opposing to others' opinions. In contrast, English people usually write in a linear order, and English rhetoric honors directness, clear position, strong arguments, and the refutation of the opposing views. When it comes to writing in English, Chinese students tend to transfer the Chinese rhetorical organization into English. (Mohan and Lo, 1985; Jensen, 1987)

Some researchers, however, argue that the rhetorical differences have been exaggerated. Scholars from this camp have tried to prove that the patterns of writing in Chinese, even in classical rhetoric, are diverse. Liu (1996) analyzed typical Chinese expository writings, and categorized various rhetorical patterns in Chinese, including both indirect and direct. The Chinese direct patterns were found to display the same linear paragraph development as those in English. It was suggested that the diverse patterns in Chinese have been observed since ancient China, although indirect patterns have been regarded as traditional unmarked patterns in China. Kirkpatrick (2002), by analyzing the textbooks in China concluded that Chinese rhetorical styles are extremely diverse and sensitive to audience and the context of situation. Chinese textbooks advise that argumentative texts should consist of three parts: the thesis, the argument, and the proof. Both inductive and deductive forms of argument are possible. The textbooks also suggested explicit and direct argument is persuasive, while allowing "circuitous" techniques to be used in certain circumstances. Kirkpatrick further suggested the diverse writing styles were due to the influence of the western rhetoric more than the traditional Chinese rhetorical style. Liu (2005) compared the Chinese and American online instruction materials about argumentative writing. The findings showed both materials emphasized the three part organization of argumentative essays; both formal logic and valid informal reasoning were introduced as important argumentative techniques.

The above review of literature indicates a lack of agreement on the studies of Chinese-English rhetoric patterns. The overall message is that there are differences, but on the other hand, Chinese rhetoric is diverse either due to the traditional rhetoric heritage or due to the influence of western rhetoric. Considering the long and rich history of Chinese rhetoric, the similarities and differences found in Chinese-English texts are natural, and it is not hard to find some patterns that display similar characteristics as those in English. It is close to impossible to make a generalized statement about Chinese rhetorical patterns.

On the other hand, with the globalization of English, the western rhetorical traditions are permeating into Chinese rhetoric. So they are slowly but gradually accepted and learned by Chinese students. However, people's ways of thinking that underlie rhetoric and writing remain stable for a relatively long period of time, and they have been firmly

defined by and embedded in Chinese culture and social ideology. Consequently, they are frequently reflected in Chinese writing. This can be best illustrated in argumentative writing, given that argumentative writing is a genre that requires the writer to take a position and persuade the readers. Besides the frequently studied rhetorical patterns, the use of support and the presentation of personal voice in particular reflect the underlying social and cultural ideologies of Chinese learners.

The use of support has not been intensively studied in the contrastive study of Chinese-English rhetoric; only the citation traditions are mentioned sparingly by some scholars along with the analysis of rhetoric patterns. According to Matelene (1985), Chinese literacy has been based on memorization. Chengyu, proverbs, maxims, and piece of folklore are to be memorized by root. Chinese rhetoric appeals to history, tradition, and the past. Its technique always is the repetition of maxims, proverbs, piece of folklore, and analogies. Chinese rhetorical values are imitations, inculcation, and indirection. Cai also found in his case study that the student frequently used quotations from other sources instead of expressing personal views, but without "citing references" in the Western style and giving credits to the source of the information. (Cai, 1999) In English rhetoric citing sources is indispensable in that the author needs to give credit to the sources. It is also found people's attitudes toward the proportion of citation differ greatly. English people highly restrict the proportion of citation to avoid plagiarism, while Chinese people don't regard high proportion of citation problematic. This may be one reason that English writers find Chinese citation traditions to be ambiguous.

Presentation of personal voice is another aspect that has been overlooked in Chinese-English CR studies. However, it denotes important information about the social and cultural ideology and people's general views on argumentation. In a culture of observation, memorization, and illustration, the purpose of Chinese argumentative writing is to "tell" the reader rather than "showing" to the reader. Therefore, Chinese writers tend to use impersonalized expression and distance themselves from the arguments. Their personal voice is usually implied through analogies, maxims and citations. Predictably, there are less uses of first personal pronouns in Chinese writing. Instead in English the personal voice of the author is made explicit by expressions such as "I argue that", "I hold that", "My viewpoint is that...". Students are encouraged to express their personal voice and demonstrate critical thinking.

The above features are precise illustrations of Chinese and English people's ideology as reflected in writing. Still they have not been extensively studied. In this paper we focus on the use of support and the presentation of personal voice, and conduct a contrastive textual analysis by comparing five Chinese argumentative essays and five English argumentative essays. Two research questions are raised:

1. Are there differences in the use of support between Chinese argumentative writing and English argumentative writing? What are the social and cultural ideologies underlying the use of support in argumentative writing?
2. Are there differences in the presentation of personal voice, as reflected in the use of first person pronouns, between Chinese argumentative writing and English argumentative writing? What are the social and cultural ideologies that underlie the presentation of personal voice?

#### IV. THE STUDY

##### A. Data

The essays used in the study are five argumentative essays written by Chinese students and five by American students. The five Chinese essays are sample essays from the writing section of 2006 National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). NCEE is a compulsory examination for high-school students in China. It functions as the elicitation test for national colleges and universities. In the Chinese subject (*Yu Wen Kao Shi*) of NCEE, there is a writing section, which accounts for 60 out of the total score 150. In this section, students are required to write a composition based on a given topic in 30-45 minutes. Argumentative genre is the most frequently used by Chinese students in this section. For the purpose of the present study, we choose 5 sample essays from 2006 College Entrance Examination. All of them are graded full score or close to full scores. Therefore they are exemplars among the essay pool. The writing prompt is as follows:

The word "Yi Qi" has three meanings according to Dictionary of Contemporary Chinese.

- (1) will and spirit, such as in the phrase *Yi Qi Feng Fa* (to be energetic)
- (2) temperament, such as in the phrase *Yi Qi Xiang Tou* (to have similar temperament)
- (3) personal feelings (or prejudice), such as in the phrase *Yi Qi Yong Shi* (an imprudent behavior caused by personal feelings)

Please write an argumentative essay of 800 characters on "On Yi Qi" based on your personal experiences and understandings.

The five English essays are sample essays of SAT tests. SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) in the U.S. is comparable to NCEE in China. Since 2006 writing an argumentative essay is required for all candidates. Students are given 25 minutes to write on a given topic, by taking a position and using specific examples or facts to support their position. The five essays used in this study are exemplars of English argumentative writing posted on [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). They are graded either 6 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 6 with 6 as the highest score. The topic is stated as:

Do memories hinder or help people in their effort to learn from the past and succeed in the present? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

## B. Methods

The essays are compared in their use of support and presentation of personal voice. To analyze the use of support, the numbers of support are counted; types and sources are categorized. Considering that personal voice is often featured by the use of first personal pronouns. The numbers of first personal pronouns are counted; the singular and plural forms are counted separately.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### A. The Use of Support

The use of support by Chinese and English writers is summarized in Tab. 1. A major similarity is found in the essays. All the essays, Chinese and English alike, cite historical events and famous historical figures to support their arguments. This shows the basic understanding of the two cultures about argumentative writing is the same.

TABLE 1  
THE USE OF SUPPORTS IN THE CHINESE AND ENGLISH ESSAYS

	# of Instances	Sources of Supports
Chinese essays	33	1. direction citation of <i>Shi</i> and <i>Ci</i> lyrics, prose, and maxims 2. life experience of famous persons in history 3. contemporary famous figures 4. ancient Chinese emperors or poets
English essays	8	1. the author's personal experience 2. historical events, such as the World Wars 3. historical figures

However, major differences are found in the use of support. Firstly, the length and number of citations differs greatly from Chinese essays to English essays. The total number of supports used by Chinese writer is 33, while that used by English writer is 8. It shows that Chinese writers use much more examples and citations than English counterparts. However, in terms of the explanation of supports, English writers explain their citations and examples in more details and make logical reasoning out of the support. (example 1 and 2) It seems that Chinese writers tend to "tell" the facts and examples with less effort to make logical reasoning out of the support. The underlying ideology may be that they think the examples in themselves are convincing and credible enough. They pay more attention to the extensiveness of citations to present the examples, historical facts, etc, so that the essays are stylistically rich. In contrast, the English counterparts don't cite many examples; however, they explain the examples and facts in detail. They are not simply telling the facts; their efforts are to "show" why it is like this and how the use of the supports proves their arguments. From the writing prompt of SAT writing section, we can perceive the underlying philosophy clearly. One of the requirements in the writing section of SAT says:

**Don't oversimplify.** Developing your point of view doesn't mean coming up with as many examples as you can. Sometimes students cut a great example short to move on to something else, and end up oversimplifying. Take the time to really explain an example; that's the best way to fully develop your point of view. An essay with one or two thoughtful, well-developed reasons or examples is more likely to get a high score than an essay with three short, simplistic examples. (Writing prompt, SAT)

More significantly the content of the support differs dramatically. (example 1 and 2) English writers rely on their personal experience, feelings, and understandings to develop their topic, while Chinese writers rely heavily on citing from the past and the present. When English writers cite others, they use less historical facts, while Chinese writers cite the facts, anecdotes, maxims, proverbs, and even the exact sentences from the history. The basic assumption may that Chinese writers regard themselves as less reliable as the sages and historical figures. Compared to expressing their own voice and using their personal experience directly, citing from the history is more credible. This is indeed regarded as one of the best approaches to successful writing, because in Chinese writing, students are encouraged to create a sense of *pan zheng bo yin* (citing extensively from various sources) and *yin jing ju dian* (citing intensively from the sages' books and the holy books). (Cai 1999) Even now when Chinese students prepare for National College Entrance Exam, they are provided with large quantities of materials to memorize by root, so that they are able to write out of memory when taking the exams. Those who make good use of the citations are usually praised by the assessors and set as example for other students.

1. 凡人欲成大事者，皆需受尽千磨万砺。也许上天就是喜欢捉弄那矢志于成功的人们，总是要为孜孜于辉煌的人们设置障碍。那障碍，可能是罗马宗教裁判所前的熊熊烈火，可能是哥伦布远航新大陆中的连天风雷，可能是红军长征中的雪山草地。然而，幸运的人们呵，他们还有理想，在献身理想的意气的指引下，他们如布鲁诺一般投身于火海，为捍卫真理而与烈火永生；他们在献身理想的意气指引下，如哥伦布一般义无反顾地踏上征途为探寻未知世界而披肝沥胆；在献身理想的意气的指引下，他们如红军战士一般豪气顿生征服千山万水为拯救民族而抗争，——献身理想的意气，是成功的精神动力。(from Chinese essay #3) (Translation: All those who have made great achievements have gone through tons of hardships. Maybe fate enjoys playing with people who are determined to be successful, and it always sets barriers for them. It could be the flaming fire in front of Rome Catholic

Church, the fierce storm Columbus faced when sailing to the New Continent, or the mountain and vast swamp that the Red Army crossed in the Long March. However, they are lucky people because they have dreams. With their dreams in mind, they plunged into the fire and burn themselves like Bruno did. With their dreams in mind, they embarked on pursuing the unknown world like Columbus did. With their dreams in mind, they fought for the future of the nation like the Red Army soldiers did. Therefore, the spirit to pursue one's dreams is the impetus to success.)

2. An example of this is looking back in history to WWI. Sedition acts at this time allowed for the imprisonment of anyone who voiced an opinion against the president, or against the war. America recognized this shady time in its past, and instead of covering it up in a movement towards a more democratic nation, these acts were published in textbooks and taught to students. Americans saw the poor judgement of this situation and later with the war in Iraq, approached "patriotism" differently. With this present war, those adverse to the war are able to voice their opinions without fear of imprisonment or death. In seeing the undemocratic ways of an earlier era, America was able to recognize the bad and try to reform it. If the Sedition Acts had been forgotten then what is to say that they wouldn't come back? (from English essay #3)

Another note-worthy difference is found in the ways these sources are cited. Not a single direct citation has been found in the English essays. In contrast, Chinese writers frequently use direct citations, but without giving credit to the authors. I hold that the understandings about knowledge are different in the two cultures. Chinese people regard knowledge as commonly shared heritage, and hence the mission of teaching is to impart knowledge to students. Such teaching philosophy is best defined by Han Yu, a famous Chinese prose writer and philosopher, as *chuandao, shouye*, and *jiehuo* ("Teaching is to impart knowledge, teach skills, and respond to students' questions.") Students regard the classical books as Holy Bible. They memorize the facts, maxims, proverbs, and even sentences from books. They cite the examples without giving credit to the authors, for citing itself indicates paying respect to the authors, and knowledge is regarded as a common heritage. (Matalene, 1985; Scollon, 1997) However, the Chinese way of citation will appear to be ambiguous to English writers, and they will regard these citations as cliché which is detrimental to the creativity and originality of their writing. (Matalene, 1985) More importantly, they will regard such practice as plagiarism. The citation tradition in the west is a cultural practice based on individualism. They pay respect to other people by citing them and giving credit to them. (Ibid.) They are particularly careful in citing others and strictly control the proportion of the citations.

*B. Presentation of Personal Voice*

As is shown in Tab. 2, the use of first person singulars is more frequent among English writers. All the five writers in the present study use "I"; only three Chinese writers use "I", and two of them do not use "I" at all. A close look at the use of "I" shows that English writers use "I" to put forward their viewpoints and arguments; however Chinese writers use "I" mostly to make a modest suggestion. In example 3, the author says "I think I am lucky and blessed." This is not to put forward an argument, but a self expression of feelings. In example 4, the author says "Compared with the sages, I am nothing more than a drop in the ocean." Then he goes on to give his suggestion, which appears to be a modest and tentative one in his use of subjective mood "would like to". In example 5, the writer starts from an expression of opinions, but very quickly he/she turns to the use of first person plurals "we". In comparison, the "I" used by English writers denotes a strong sense of self expression and authentic voices, which can be shown by phrases "I agreed with..." (example 6) and "I believe that..." (example 7).

TABLE 2  
THE USE OF FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS AS SUBJECTS OR OBJECTS

	# of First Person Singulars	# of First Person Plurals
Chinese essays	12	13
English essays	36	5

3. 如此看来, 我觉得我是幸运的、幸福的。(from Chinese essay #2) (Translation: From this perspective, I think I am lucky and blessed.)

4. 与这些伟人相比, 我不过是沧海一粟。然而我愿意循着伟人的足迹, 去继承那份属于中华人的“意气”。(from Chinese essay #4) (Translation: Compared with the sages, I am nothing but a water drop in the ocean. However, I would like to follow the footsteps of the sages and inherit the spirit of the Chinese people. )

5. 我觉得, “意志和气概”固然是人人追求的品质, “志趣和性格”也是必不可少的东西, 但我们也不能落下“主观和偏激产生的情绪”。(from Chinese essay #5) (Translation: I think although ‘dreams and spirit’ are what everybody is seeking for, “temperament and personality” are indispensable as well. However, we cannot leave the impression of being “subjective and emotional”.)

6. I agree with Ms. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot in saying that some people "see old memories as a chance to reckon with the past and integrate past and present." (from English essay #4)

7. Interestingly enough, I fall in the middle of these statements. I believe that one should remember the past and learn from those events. However, I also believe that many bad memories harm the present and the future. The only way to continue, many times, is to forget and forgive. (from English essay #5)

The use of first person plurals shows an opposite tendency. Chinese writers use far more first person plurals, and all the five writers use it. Especially in the concluding paragraph, the first person plurals are frequently used to create a sense of closure, by including both the writer and the reader. The statements in example 8, 9, 10 all appear in the concluding paragraph. They are used in the inclusive sense to include both the writer and the reader. The assumption is that in the conclusion the plural from “we” is used to create a sense of harmony and closure, and an attempt to generalize the argument. However, English writers’ use of “we” is fewer. When it is used, it is not in conclusion paragraph (example 11, 12). In the conclusion, English writers tend to state the issue again without using “we” to include the reader. This reminds people that the essay demonstrates the writer’s own viewpoint. It is also an act of respect for the readers by not imposing the writer’s opinions on the reader.

8. 凡此种种，我们要坚决反对，打击，为构建社会主义和谐社会扫清道路。(from Chinese essay #1) (Translation: We should firmly oppose to and fight against cases like this so as to clear the road in constructing a harmonious socialist society.)

9. 在寻觅中，我们对“意气”的理解会越深刻越宽广，而我们得到的回报也一定丰厚无比。(from Chinese essay #2) (Translation: In the process of pursuit, we will have deeper and broader understandings about Yi Qi, and what we will get from this effort will surely be rewarding.)

10. 让我们以舍我其谁的意气为帆，以献身理想的意气为指引，以勇于探索、勇于挑战的意气为浆，驾起人生的巨轮，向着成功的彼岸远航！(from Chinese essay #3) (Translation: Let us have the spirit of “Who but myself can do it” to be our sail, the spirit of pursuing dreams to be our steering wheel, the spirit of consistently exploring and challenging to be our oar. Let us anchor the titanic ship of life, and sail to the shore of success.)

11. Without our past, our future would be a tortuous path leading to nowhere. In order to move up the ladder of success and achievement we must come to terms with our past and integrate it into our future. Even if in the past we made mistakes, this will only make wiser people out of us and guide us to where we are supposed to be. (from English essay #1)

12. Marshall knew that if the US did not help war torn Germany and, especially, Japan, we could eventually have a World War III on our hands. (from English essay #4)

The difference in the presentation of personal voice may stem from the underlying ideologies of the two cultures. The most important credo that underlies Chinese ideology is collective goals and the maintenance of harmony, which has been regarded as the ultimate goal of people’s communication and social interaction. (Cai, 1999; Liu, 2005) The ideological orientation can be traced back to the earliest rhetoric in China, as was stipulated in works by the prestigious philosophers Confucius, Mencius, and philosophical schools such as Taoism and Buddhism. Harmony and avoidance of conflicts with other people and nature have been cherished, respected, and practiced in ancient China for thousands of years. The collective sense prevalent in China has as its goal the harmony in the society and between people. This is manifest in example 8, when the writer concludes the essay with a calling for “constructing a harmonious socialist society”. Chinese culture does not encourage personal voice, and individualism is related to some negative connotations.

In contrast, English people have long valued and practiced individualism in both communication and writing, which could be found in Aristotle’s argument about rhetoric, stating that the purpose of rhetoric is to persuade the audience, and that there are three ways to approach it, i.e. ethos, pathos, and logos. (Jensen, 1987) English people have placed great value on originality and individuality. The individualism as is reflected in rhetoric is an emphasis on “authentic voice” and critical thinking. (Matalene, 1985; Jensen, 1987) The purpose of argumentative essay is to “State your case and prove it”. Writers are expected to contribute to the argument by putting forward some viewpoints of their own. The emphasis on originality and self expression can find trace in SAT writing section as well. The writing prompt of SAT writing section states that:

**There is nothing wrong with “I”.** You are asked to develop your point of view on the issue, not give a straight report of the facts. This is your opinion, so feel free to use “I”, and give examples that are meaningful to you, even ones from your personal life or experiences.... Remember: the essay is an opportunity for you to say what you think about an important issue that’s relevant to your life. So relax and be yourself, and you will do just fine. (Writing prompt, SAT)

### C. Other Findings

It is also found that the organizational patterns of Chinese and English essays both display a clear-cut linear order. As pointed out by Kaplan, rhetoric “varies from culture to culture, and within the same culture it evolves from time to time” (Kaplan, 1966, p. 2). It should be noted that contemporary Chinese rhetoric has been greatly influenced by western rhetoric ever since the opening up of country. The influence is especially obvious in the scientific academic writing (Taylor and Chen, 1991), EAP writing, business letters, and news reports (Zhu, 1997 in Connor, 2002). They are exerting some influence on Chinese rhetoric. (Kirkpatrick, 1997) However, to what extent the new elements influence Chinese writers’ ideology and ways of thinking is still unknown. According to the study of Cai (1999), Chinese writers still think in the Chinese way when they compose English essays. That is to say, they are adopting the norm of English, mostly its organization, but their logic and ideology are still typical Chinese.

A conspicuous difference is also found in the style of writing. Chinese argumentative writing is richer in its use of language compared with English argumentative writing. Chinese writers use more parallel structures, analogies, and

four-word phrases. It creates a sense of richness and variety in language. English language is more plain and direct to the point.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS TO ESL/EFL WRITING INSTRUCTION

The present contrastive analysis of Chinese and English writing shows that there are fundamental differences in ideology and culture between Chinese and Anglo-Americans, which account for the rhetoric differences in their writing. It does not imply superiority of one upon the other. Every language and culture has its own tradition and roots, its own way of communication, negotiation, and mediation. It is unique and valuable. These differences need to be addressed in second language learning and teaching. The present study provides important implications for the learning and teaching of ESL/EFL writing.

For ESL practitioners in the U.S. or other English-speaking countries, instead of dismissing students' writing problems as misunderstanding, they need to take into account students' cultural backgrounds, which can be dramatically different from that in English. An explicit explanation of English rhetoric based on its ideology and logic, or a contrastive analysis of Chinese and English writing will be helpful for students to notice the differences.

For EFL practitioners in China, especially English teachers of Chinese background, it is desirable that they develop good knowledge about the cross-cultural differences in ideology, so that they are able to address these subtle differences in their instruction to help students understand and appreciate the English writing discourse, and gradually develop their own voice in English writing.

### APPENDIX A: SAMPLE CHINESE ESSAY

#### 谈意气

意气，是李白“仰天长啸出门去，我辈岂是蓬蒿人”的高歌；意气，是杜甫“致君尧舜上，当使民风淳”的肺腑之言；意气，是毛泽东“数风流人物，还看今朝”的壮怀……

人要有意气，有自己的意志和气概，要意气风发。人不能没有意气，就像傲视苍穹的红杉不能没有坚固的根基，芳香四溢的鲜花不能没有给予它自信的阳光。

人有意气，才能有豁达的胸襟。“惟江上之清风，与山间之明月，耳得之而为声，目遇之而成色”，苏子有意气，虽遭官场与文场一齐泼来的污水，但他仍意气风发，“侣鱼虾而友麋鹿”，心胸之豁达可见一斑。“安能摧眉折腰事权贵，使我不得开心颜”，遭人诽谤的李白，被玄宗赐金放还，虽有昭昭若明星之德，日月齐辉之才，终化为泡影，但他仍意气风发，“举杯邀明月，对影成三人”，酒入愁肠，三分酿成月亮，七分化为剑气，秀口一吐便是半个盛唐。若无意气，他怎会有如此豁达的胸襟？

人有意气，才能千古留名，流芳百世，才能在国家危难之时挺身而出。几百年的风风雨雨，早已涤荡了风波亭的点点残血；几百年的潮起潮落，早已淹没了零丁洋里的声声叹息；几百年的猎猎西风，早已拂走了牧羊的老者；几百年的漫漫黄沙，早已淹没了西域路上的声声驼铃……然而，岳武穆的满腔热血，文天祥的一颗丹心，苏武的一根竹杖，张骞的十几年牢狱之苦，早已映入史册，成为民族的精神瑰宝。若无意气，他们怎会有如此壮行？

人有意气，才能摧不垮，压不倒，追求不泯，意志不衰。还记得舞台上那尊慈祥博爱的千手观音吗？邰丽华，虽是聋哑人，但她有意气，手臂练得青肿了，脚底磨出血泡了，她始终坚持练习。最终，她用手指勾勒人性的美好，用舞姿诠释内心的感觉，感动中国，感动你我。若无意气，她怎会从不幸的底谷达到艺术的巅峰？

意气，是成就人生所必需的。然而，现实生活中缺乏意气之人委实不少。他们在温柔富贵乡中疲软筋骨麻木神经，在歌舞升平中平息了壮志，在灯红酒绿中丧失人性……凡此种种，我们要坚决反对，打击，为构建社会主义和谐社会扫清道路。

人，要有意气，要意气风发。

### APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ENGLISH ESSAY

Memories act as both a help and a hinderance to the success of someone. Many people advise you to learn from the past and apply those memories so that you can effectively succeed by avoiding repeating your past mistakes. On the other hand, people who get too caught up with the past are unable to move on to the future.

Elie Wiesel's memoir *Night* perfectly exemplifies the double nature of memories. Wiesel, a Jewish man, suffered heavily throughout the Holocaust and *Night* is rife with horrific descriptions of his experience. These memories help to spread the view of what life was like. Through recounting these memories, Wiesel is able to educate world readers about the atrocities committed in hopes that the same blatant violations of human rights are never repeated again. Through reliving the Holocaust through his writing, Wiesel was inspired to become proactive in the battle for civil rights. Some would point to his peaceful actions and the sales of his book and label him a success.

Despite the importance of recounting such memories, Wiesel acknowledges the damage that memories can also cause. Following his liberation from the Auschwitz concentration camp, Wiesel was a bitter, jaded man. He could not even write *Night* until several years later. The end of the novel describes Wiesel's gradual but absolute loss of faith throughout the experience. His past experiences haunted him for several years, rendering him passive. It was not until he set aside his past that he could even focus on the future. Had he remained so consumed with the pain and damage caused in the past, he may never have achieved the success that he has attained.

Overall, Wiesel's experiences exemplify the importance of the past as a guide. Wiesel's past experiences helped to guide him in later life, but it was not until he pushed them aside that he could move on. To me this means that you should rely on your past without letting it control you. Allow your past to act as a guide, while making sure that you are also living in the present and looking to the future.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Cai, G. (1999). Texts in contexts: understanding Chinese students' English compositions. In C.R. Cooper and L. Odell (eds.), *Evaluating Writing* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp 29-297). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- [2] Connor, U. (1996). *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural Aspects of Second-language Writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [3] Connor, U. (2002). New directions in contrastive rhetoric. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36 (4): 493-510.
- [4] Jarratt, S. C., Loseh, E. & Puente, D. (2006). Transnational identifications: biliterate writers in a first-year humanities course. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15, 24-48.
- [5] Jensen, Vernon, J. (1987). Teaching East Asian rhetoric. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 17 (2), 135-49.
- [6] Kaplan, R.B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. *Language Learning* 16, 1-20.
- [7] Kaplan, R.B. (1972). *The Anatomy of Rhetoric: Prolegomena to a Functional Theory of Rhetoric*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, 1972.
- [8] Kaplan, R.B. (1987). Cultural thought patterns revisited. In U. Connor and R. B. Kaplan (eds.), *Writing across Languages: Analysis of L2 Written Text* (pp. 9-22). Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- [9] Kirkpatrick, A. (1997). Traditional Chinese text structures and their influence on the writing in Chinese and English of contemporary Mainland Chinese students. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 6 (3), 223-244.
- [10] Kirkpatrick, A. (2002). Chinese rhetoric through Chinese textbooks: uniquely Chinese? In X. Lu, W. Jia & D. R. Heisey (Eds.), *Chinese communication studies: contexts and comparisons* (pp. 245-260). Westport, CT: Ablex.
- [11] Lan Tian Zuo Wen Wang (Blue Sky Composition Website). <http://www.ltzw.com/zuowen/person/1-3000/2002/48621.htm>
- [12] Liu, L. (2005). Rhetorical education through writing instruction across cultures: a comparative analysis of select online instructional materials on argumentative writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 1-18.
- [13] Liu, Y. (1996). A taxonomy of direct rhetorical patterns in Chinese. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- [14] Matalene, C. (1985). Contrastive Rhetoric: An American Writing Teacher in China. *College English*, 47 (8), 789-808.
- [15] Mohan, B.A. and W. A-Y Lo. (1985). Academic writing and Chinese students: transfer and developmental factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19 (3), 515-534.
- [16] SAT writing section overview. [http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep\\_one/essay/pracStart.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/essay/pracStart.html)
- [17] Shen, F. (1989). The classroom and the wider culture: identity as a key to learning English composition. *College Composition and Communication*, 40 (4), 459-466.
- [18] Slobin, D. I. (1996). From 'thought and language' to 'thinking for speaking'. In J. J. Gumperz & S. C. Levinson (Eds.), *Rethinking linguistic relativity* (pp. 177-202). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [19] Taylor, G. and Chen, T. (1991). Linguistic, cultural and subcultural issues in contrastive discourse analysis: Anglo-American and Chinese scientific texts. *Applied Linguistics*, 12 (3), 319-336.

**Jie Zhang** is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Applied Linguistics at the Pennsylvania State University in the United States of America. She earned her M.A. in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics in Foreign Languages from Tsinghua University in China.

She was instructor of College English at University of Science and Technology Beijing between 2004 and 2006. She teaches ESL Academic Writing and Chinese at The Pennsylvania State University. Her research interests are ESL/EFL writing, Second Language Acquisition, Chinese as a Foreign Language, and Sociocultural theory.

# The Influence of Incidental and Intentional Vocabulary Acquisition and Vocabulary Strategy Use on Learning L2 Vocabularies

Minoos Alemi

Sharif University of Technology, Iran  
Email: alemi@sharif.ir

Alireza Tayebi

Sharif University of Technology, Iran  
Email: alireza\_tayebi2008@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—This study is an attempt to investigate the role of incidental and intentional vocabulary acquisition in addition to the influence of language learning strategy: namely, the use of vocabulary strategy by Iranian EFL learners in learning new vocabularies. Accordingly, this study is two-faceted. First, Part A examines the difference between different modes of presentation, incidental and intentional learning of new vocabularies (i.e., incidental, etymology-based intentional, and meaning-based intentional), and acquisition of new vocabularies. Part B investigates the impact of the use of language learning strategies—in this case vocabulary and reading strategy use using *The Language Strategy Use Inventory*—on the learning of new vocabularies. Part A, studying the influence of incidental as opposed to intentional presentation and acquisition of vocabularies, involved 30 students (i.e., 26 males and 4 females). Part B of the study, investigating the role of vocabulary learning strategy use, involved 59 students (i.e., 49 males and 10 females). The results of Part A shown by t-test indicate that, as far as performance of the students on a test of vocabulary acquisition is concerned, there is no significant difference between the two modes—incidental and intentional learning. However, for the same part, linear regression proved that among the vocabularies presented through different modes of presentation, it is vocabularies learned through meaning-based intentional mode that is the most predictive of the performance of the students on a test of vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, as for part B, the study found that there is a positive, but weak, correlation between the students' vocabulary strategy use – measured by students filling out a self-report questionnaire entitled *The Language Strategy Use Inventory* developed by Cohen, A, Oxford, L. R, and Chi. J. – and their learning of new vocabularies. Finally, the findings of part B of the study indicate that, as the degree to which the students' use of vocabulary strategy use increases, so does their use of reading strategy use.

**Index Terms**—incidental and intentional learning, explicit and implicit learning, language learning strategies, vocabulary learning strategy use

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the old days of language teaching, vocabulary learning and teaching were given little importance. As Jo Moir and Paul Nation (2008) write, at one time it was widely assumed that lexical instruction is not essential as it can happen by itself; therefore, the teaching of vocabulary was not popular (Nation, 1990).

However, nowadays, the significance of vocabulary and its significance in learning a language have become more accepted. Vocabulary is a basic component of language proficiency which provides the basis for learners' performance in other skills, such as speaking, reading, listening and writing. Griffiths (2003, 2006) points out, for example, that recently the significance of teaching vocabulary has been acknowledged.

Gass (1999), similarly, states that learning a second language means learning its vocabulary, suggesting that knowing a lexical item means knowing a number of things. She further mentions that Paribakht and Wesche (1999) note that acquisition of vocabulary is an incremental and perhaps recursive process that involves the integration of various kinds of knowledge along with gaining different levels of ability to make use of that knowledge in communication.

It is said that some deliberate learning strategies such as word part analysis, learning using word cards, and dictionary use (Nation, 2001) are also valuable shortcuts as far as learning vocabulary and vocabulary growth are concerned. Nation also notes that learners need to acquire a few important vocabulary learning strategies such as guessing from context, using word cards, using word parts, using mnemonic techniques, expressing the keyword techniques and making use of dictionaries.

Hedge (2000) also mentions that despite the traditional methodology, recent studies have greatly focused on vocabulary learning and teaching containing the following issues:

-What strategies learners use to acquire vocabularies

- How learners' mental lexicon is organized
- Why some words are easier to learn than others

Hedge (2000) points out that linguistic studies focus on lexical system and acquisition studies focus on how vocabulary is learned. The idea of how vocabulary is learned is principally related to strategies used by learners as well as approaches to teaching vocabulary. One of the principal controversial issues in vocabulary teaching and learning in the field is how to identify significant approaches and strategies to teaching and learning vocabularies, which result in longer and easier retrieval of the vocabularies.

A classification is available that considers three approaches to vocabulary teaching: 1) incidental learning (i.e., learning vocabularies as the by-product of other activities as reading, listening, etc.) 2) Explicit or intentional instruction and 3) Independent strategy development (Hunt and Beglar, 1998; cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002). As proven by many studies, teaching approaches and learning strategies are two main factors affecting learners' performance. Investigating the effects of different modes of teaching vocabularies—incidental and intentional—on learners' acquisition of new vocabulary items might lead to influential and fruitful pedagogical implications on how to teach vocabularies. In terms of Hedge, (2000) such strategies can be either cognitive (i.e., direct mental operations to understand and store new words) or meta-cognitive (i.e., indirect strategies that facilitate the conscious efforts to remember new words).

Moreover, examining the relationship between learners' use of vocabulary strategy use and learning vocabularies may lead us to pay more attention to the role of learning strategies. Therefore, the current study is basically concerned with main approaches to vocabulary learning and teaching. The use of vocabulary learning strategy is one of the factors investigated by the current study.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Incidental and Intentional Learning in L2 Vocabulary Literature*

As Hulstijn (2003) points out, learning a second language can either mean months and years of “intentional” study, by deliberately committing to memory thousands of words along with grammatical words, or it can mean “incidental” learning by “picking up” structures and lexicon of a language, through getting engaged in a variety of communicative activities, namely reading and listening, while the learner's attention is focused not on the form but on the meaning.

Incidental and intentional learning mainly appear in the area of vocabulary. This is because incidental learning can be applied to both abstract and factual declarative knowledge, while intentional is only applicable to factual knowledge (Hulstijn, 2003).

Hunt and Beglar (1998) point out that many vocabularies are learned incidentally through extensive reading and listening. Accordingly, motivating learners to read and listen extensively can provide them with great opportunities to learn new vocabularies. In terms of Huckin and Coady (1999), too, except for the first few thousand most common words, vocabulary learning predominantly occurs through extensive reading with the learner guessing the meaning of unknown words. This process is incidental learning of vocabulary for the acquisition of new words and is the by-product of the reading (i.e., not the main focus of the cognitive activity, reading). However, this process of incidental learning of vocabularies occurs gradually as Anderson (1985; cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002) claims. The incidental vocabulary learning, as Hunt and Beglar (1998) point out, can be a useful approach for all language learners at all levels.

Shmidth (1990; cited in Nyiazadeh, 2009), also points out that incidental learning is definitely passive in that it can happen when the focus of attention is on some relevant features of input. However, he believes that since incidental learning is useful in task-based language, pedagogy is still a fruitful area of investigation. He further notes that there is an argument that maintains what is learned—whether incidentally or intentionally—is what is noticed (Ericsson & Simon, 1985; cited in Shmidth, 1996).

So far, many studies have been carried out in the field concerning vocabulary learning/teaching approaches. For instance, Huckin and Coady (1999) investigated the role of incidental and intentional vocabulary acquisition. They conclude that incidental vocabulary learning is not entirely incidental in that learners pay at least some attention to individual words. The other studies are reviewed below.

Huckin and Coady (1999) mention the following advantages of incidental vocabulary learning:

- a. It is contextualized, giving the learner a rich sense of word use and meaning.
- b. It is pedagogically efficient in that it yields two activities at the same time: vocabulary acquisition and reading.
- c. It is more learner-based, in that it is the learner who selects the reading materials.

It is worthy of notice that in a review of 114 studies, Krashen (1989) argued that incidental vocabulary acquisition occurs through operation of his input hypothesis: that reading provides comprehensible and necessary input that eventually leads to acquisition. In addition, Krashen (1989, cited in Hulstijn 2003), points out that acquisition of vocabulary and spelling is achieved through exposure to comprehensible input, in this case, reading.

Wode (1999) in a study of incidental vocabulary acquisition in a foreign language classroom, found that it is important to investigate in detail which properties of IM teaching -late partial English immersion (IM) programs- are best suited to trigger the incidental learning with respect to vocabulary (and other linguistic elements).

Ellis and He (1999) investigated the roles of modified input and output in the incidental acquisition of word meaning. Their study proved that interactional output which provides opportunities for learners to use new vocabularies contributes to better incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Paribakht and Wesche (1999) also conducted research investigating the relationship between reading and incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition. Their study demonstrated incidental acquisition of new lexical knowledge through reading of thematically related texts; hence, vocabulary knowledge may be acquired as a by-product of reading comprehension. In addition, their study showed that among learners' strategies, inferencing, was the main vocabulary strategy use employed.

Among the other factors, frequency of exposure to new vocabularies is another determining factor in learning vocabulary. Rott (1999) studied the effect of frequency with which words occur in a reading text and the role of reading as an input resource in vocabulary acquisition. Her study examined whether intermediate learners incidentally acquire and retain unknown vocabulary by reading a text. The result of the study indicated that, regarding retention measures on productive vocabulary knowledge, only half of the subjects displayed a significant rate of retention, and on receptive knowledge, all but one experimental group retained vocabularies over four weeks.

Hulstijn (2006) makes a distinction between intentional and incidental learning as "Intentional learning refers to the learning mode in which participants are informed, prior to their engagement in a learning task, that they will be tested afterward on their retention of a particular type of information. Incidental learning refers to the mode in which participants are not forewarned of an upcoming retention test for a particular type of information."

Incidental learning has been defined differently by scholars in the field. For instance, Schmidt (1994a; cited in Hulstijn, 2003) three definitions are presented as follows:

"(i) ... learning without the intent to learn. (ii) ... the learning of one stimulus aspect while paying attention to another stimulus aspect ... incidental learning is learning of one thing (...) when the learner's primary objective is to do something else. (iii) the learning of formal features through a focus of attention on semantic features." Moreover, Hulstijn (1996; cited in Gass, 1999) asserts that the definition of incidental learning is: "learning in the absence of an intention to learn."

In spite of the fact that incidental and intentional learning might seem similar to implicit and explicit learning, respectively, these two dichotomies are not identical. As Paradis (1994a; cited in Hulstijn 2003) points out, since implicit competence is incidentally acquired, is stored implicitly and is used automatically, it means more than incidental learning. Therefore, while incidental vocabulary learning of vocabulary may be a useful way of acquiring vocabularies for most advanced learners, intentional/explicit instruction is essential for beginning learners whose reading ability is limited (Hunt and Beglar, 1998).

Ellis (1994b, cited in Gass 1999) also points out that incidental learning differs from implicit learning in that incidental learning is based on a behaviorist notion "with the meaning of a new word being acquired totally unconsciously as a result of abstraction from repeated exposures in a range of activated contexts" (p.219).

Ellis (2008) defines explicit and implicit knowledge in this way:

"Implicit knowledge is intuitive, procedural, systematically variable, automatic, and thus available for use in fluent unplanned language use. It is not verbalizable. ... Explicit knowledge is conscious, declarative, anomalous, and inconsistent (i.e., it takes a form of 'fuzzy' rules inconsistently applied) and generally accessible through control processing in planned language use. It is verbalizable ... like any type of factual knowledge it is potentially learnable at any age."

On the other hand, explicit learning involves awareness at the time of learning, whereas intentional learning occurs by deliberately attempting to commit new information to memory. Accordingly, with the L2 vocabulary learning, incidental and intentional learning are regarded as two distinct categories, because while intentional learning implies the use of deliberate retention techniques, incidental learning does not (Hulstijn, 2003). Therefore, while incidental vocabulary learning of vocabulary may be a useful way of acquiring vocabularies for most advanced learners, intentional/explicit instruction is essential for beginning learners, since their reading ability is limited (Hunt and Beglar, 1998).

Suchert (2004; cited in Ellis 2008) defined attention as "a process in which biological mechanisms interact when goal-directed behaviors and stimulus-driven responses converge in action (p.144)".

As for experimental operationalization of incidental and intentional learning (i.e., type 1 and type 2 design), as mentioned in Hulstijn's study, two experimental methods are employed usually. The first one is type 1 design, or between group one, which was employed in earlier studies aimed at demonstrating that while incidental learning exists, intentional learning is superior to incidental learning. On the other hand, in within-group type 2 design is within group, which has been used in later studies, is the one employed in the present study. In this design type 2 some additional stimuli in addition to some main stimuli are presented to learners. Retention of these additional stimuli are also tested unexpectedly afterwards, while the students expect to be tested on main materials.

Methodologically, if learners are told in advance of the treatment that they will be tested on the material this is intentional learning, whereas if they are not told, those materials would be considered to be learned incidentally (Hulstijn, 2003). This methodology was followed by the present study, so that the participants were told that they will

be tested only on their knowledge of bold type -intentional- vocabularies. To their surprise, they were also tested on their knowledge of not bold type-incidental- vocabularies appearing in the reading texts.

### *B. Language Learning Strategy*

Ever since 1975, when Rubin brought out the concept of language learning strategies for the first time, many, many studies have been carried out to investigate the role of this construct and its influence on learning an L2 in general, and vocabulary acquisition, in particular.

As Wenden (1985; cited in Griffiths, 2006) says, an old proverb states: " 'Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime.' " According to the meaning implied by this proverb, the teachers should provide the students with some fruitful techniques that may help them learn better without the direct help of teachers (hence, making them autonomous).

Tajeddin (2006), in a similar vein, points out that there has been a shift from the methods of teaching to the learner's characteristics, and accordingly, their influence on process and product of language learning. He further notes that a discrepancy exists pertaining to the effect of frequency of strategy use and its effect on the achievement of language proficiency.

Lawson and Hoghen (1996) similarly, note that theorists nowadays put an emphasis on the importance of developing autonomous learning strategies by foreign language learners. Moreover, books demand that teachers provide their students with language learning strategies and encourage them to use them (McCarthy, 1990; Nation; 1990; Oxford; 1990; cited in Lawson and Hoghen, 1996).

The importance of language learning strategies are once more highlighted by Grainger (2005) who mentions that, among many factors, that second language research has been identified to have an impact on proficiency of language learners' language learning strategies. He goes further and defines language learning strategies as techniques that are consciously used by a learner to assist him or her purposely in the language learning process. These techniques in terms of Grainger (2005) can fall into subgroups which are known as "factors or groupings" which indicate special kinds of strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective or compensatory. He concludes that language learning strategy use in learning a second language is related to proficiency or achievement (p.2). The current study too, attempts to investigate the link between vocabulary use and vocabulary acquisition.

In addition, Griffiths (2006), points out that the pioneering work in the field of language learning strategies was carried out by Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) during the mid-'70s. Nevertheless, after a quarter of a century, the language learning strategy field is characterized by "no consensus" (O'Malley et al, 1985a: 22; cited in Griffiths, 2006) and the concept of language learning strategies still remains "fuzzy" (Ellis, 1994: 539; cited in Griffiths, 2006).

However "fuzzy" it might appear, there are some operational definitions of this construct. For instance, Oxford (1990) points out that learning strategies are those steps taken by learners in order to enhance their own learning and that these are especially important for learning a language. This is because they are essential for developing communicative competence. She also notes that by using language learning strategies an improved proficiency and greater self-confidence is achieved. She suggests that the steps taken by students to enhance their own learning are called strategy. Strategies are considered to be tools for gaining autonomous involvement, an essential factor for development of communicative competence.

Many other researchers (Donato and MacCormick, 1994; Ellis, 1994; McDounough, 1999; Wenden, 1998; cited in Gao, 2006) declare that learning strategy research is mostly concerned with listing and classifying language learning strategy use. This can help make association between strategy use and various factors to develop strategy use of language learners. In addition, he points out that other research indicates that the use of strategy is a dynamic phenomenon and varies across contexts, and therefore, is contextual and temporary. In other words, strategy use is dependent on and related to the specific tasks and particular situations, so not all of them can be used in all situations. That is why they are temporary and context-bound.

Most of the studies are mainly concerned with theoretical considerations of language learning strategies (Griffiths, 2008). Rubin (1975; cited in Oxford, 2002) for instance, asserts that good language learners: "a- willingly and accurately guess, b- want to communicate, c- are inhibited about mistakes, d- focus on both structure and meaning, e- take advantage of all practice opportunities, and f- monitor their own speech and that of others". In a similar vein, (Naiman, Frohlich, & Todesco, 1975; cited in Oxford, 2002) add that successful language learners pay attention to effective aspects of language learning and think in language. It should also be noted that no language learner uses just one strategy for vocabulary acquisition (Farhady, 2006).

There are some operational definitions of this construct however "fuzzy" they might appear. For instance, Oxford (1990) points out that learning strategies are those steps taken by learners in order to enhance their own learning and that these are especially important for learning a language. This is because they are essential for developing communicative competence. She also notes that by using language learning strategies an improved proficiency and greater self-confidence is achieved. She suggests that the steps taken by students to enhance their own learning are called strategy. Strategies are considered to be tools for gaining autonomous involvement, an essential factor for development of communicative competence.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p: 2; cited in Farhady2006), learning strategies are "special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning or retention of information". Oxford (1990) points out

that learning strategies are those steps taken by learners in order to enhance their own learning. These are especially important for learning a language in that they are essential for developing communicative competence. She also notes that by using language learning strategies, an improved proficiency and greater self-confidence is achieved.

O'Malley et al. (1985a, cited in Griffiths, 2006), use the "operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information" (p. 23) as the definition of the language learning strategies. And, Rubin (1975, p. 43; cited in Griffiths, 2008) declares "strategies are the technique or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge".

Oxford (1990; cited in Griffiths, 2003) defines strategies as "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). However, Griffiths defines language learning strategies in this way: "specific actions consciously employed by the learner for the purpose of learning language".

Researching language learning strategies in the field, finally, has come to this definition of this construct: that "... strategies that contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and (which) affect learning directly" (Rubin, 1987, p. 23; cited in Leavell and Nam, 2006).

However, there are some conditions under which the use of language learning strategies are useful: "a- the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand, b- the strategy fixes the particular students' learning style preferences to one degree or another, and c- the student employs strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies" (Ehrman, & Leaver, and Oxford, 2003).

Recent research, as Leavell and Nam point out, has aimed at determining a connection between strategy use and language proficiency (Green and Oxford, 1995; Oxford and Ehrman, 1995). The result of such research indicates that more proficient language learners employ more strategies compared with less proficient learners (p.2). He further notes that research has shown that there exists a difference between male and females regarding their use of strategies, so that females use more strategies than males (Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Green and Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1993; cited in Leavell and Nam, 2006). The relationship between the language learning strategy use, namely, vocabulary learning strategy use, and vocabulary acquisition is one of the main concerns of the present study, as aforementioned.

### C. Vocabulary Learning Strategy

In recent years, the importance of vocabulary acquisition has been emphasized by researchers and commentators, in that vocabulary acquisition plays a crucial role in learning a second language (Allen, 1983; Laufer, 1986; Nation, 1990; Richards, 1980; cited in Lawson and Hoghen, 1996). However, there is a lack of consensus regarding the conceptualization of the process concerning what contributes to vocabulary acquisition. For example, "the importance of the context use for acquiring vocabulary, and the extent to which students do develop specific strategies for vocabulary learning during their language studies" (Lawson and Hoghen, 1996). They point out that another determining factor concerning vocabulary acquisition is the importance of context and the value of reading (Moulton, 1966, Twaddle, 1980, Parreren; cited in Mondria & Wit-De-Doer, 1991).

Different scholars identify vocabulary learning strategies differently, some of which are: 1). memorization strategies, 2) repetition strategies, 3) association strategies, 4) key word method, 5) inferencing strategy, 6) dictionary use (Cohen and Macaro, 2007), 7) semantic grid strategies, 8) word lists (Farhady, 2006). According to Farhady (2006), applying certain types of strategies forms an approach to vocabulary learning that influences the level of foreign language proficiency. In other words, appropriate strategy use results in improved achievement in specific skills or sub-skills. Moreover, language proficiency also affects the use of particular vocabulary strategy use.

### D. Purpose of the Study

The current study is an attempt to broaden our knowledge of vocabulary acquisition by investigating the effect of different modes of teaching vocabularies in terms of incidental and intentional, along with the effect of vocabulary and reading strategy use, and its effect on or relationship to vocabulary acquisition. Accordingly, the current study has focused on teaching vocabulary and the effect of learning strategy use by learners and their success in learning vocabulary and the relationship between the two.

### E. Research Questions

With regard to the nature and purpose of this study, the following questions are posed:

1-Is there any difference between different modes of teaching vocabularies in terms of incidental and intentional teaching and learning, and the acquisition of vocabularies by Iranian EFL learners?

2-Is there a relationship between Iranian EFL learners' use of Vocabulary Strategy and their ability to acquire new vocabularies?

3-Is there a relationship between Iranian EFL learners' Vocabulary Strategy use and Reading Strategy use?

4-From among the three modes of presentation and acquisition of new vocabulary items (i.e., incidental, etymology-based intentional, meaning-based intentional), which one has the most impact on Iranian EFL learners' performance on a test of vocabulary acquisition including all the target words presented through these three modes of presentation?

As for the distinction between the meaning-based and etymology-based intentional learning it should be explained that, those vocabularies whose meanings are presented via marginal glossary fall in the meaning-based intentional type,

and those vocabularies whose meanings are presented by analyzing their roots, prefixes and suffixes are in the category of etymology-based intentional.

#### F. Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no difference between different modes of teaching vocabularies in terms of incidental and intentional teaching and learning, and the acquisition of vocabularies by Iranian EFL learners.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is a relationship between Iranian EFL learners' use of vocabulary strategy and their ability to acquire new vocabularies

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is a relationship between Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary strategy use and reading strategy use.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no difference between Iranian EFL learners' acquisition of new vocabularies taught incidentally or intentionally (i.e., meaning-based and etymology based).

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participants

Part A of the study (i.e., studying the difference between incidental and intentional vocabulary learning) involved 30 students from different majors passing the General English Course at Sharif University of Technology. They were Persian native speakers who have studied English at least four years at high school. The age of the subjects ranged from 18 to 20. The majority of students were male (N=26) and the rest were female (N=4).

Part B of the study (i.e., investigating the relationship between vocabulary and reading strategy use and the achievement on post-test as the index of vocabulary knowledge) involved 59 students with characteristics similar to the students of part A of the study as aforementioned. The number of participants in terms of gender is: males: (N=49) and females (N=10).

#### B. Materials and Procedure

The Language Strategy Use Inventory (developed by Cohen, A, Oxford, L. R, and Chi, J.), a self-report questionnaire, was used to measure the students' vocabulary and reading strategy use. In this questionnaire, a trusted measure, language learning strategies are grouped into six categories for assessment: listening, speaking, vocabulary, reading, writing, translation strategy use.

The language strategy use inventory makes use of four Likert-type responses for each strategy item ranging from 1 to 4 (i.e., from "this strategy doesn't fit for me" to "I use this strategy and like it"). In the current study, participants were asked to respond to each item based on their use of the strategies mentioned.

All of the participants (N=59) also were asked to take the pretest, which was administered one week prior to the study. The pre-test consisted of 32 items from which 12 were selected as the Target Words (TWs). These 12 items were the ones which 30 students (26 males and 4 females) didn't know (i.e., answered these 12 items incorrectly). Therefore, these 12 target words and the 30 students formed the part A of the study and were the main subjects of the post-test, which was administered three days after the introduction of the treatment.

The post-test consisted of the 12 target words (TWs) in addition to six more items (two incidentals, two intentional meaning-based and two intentional etymology-based). The 12 TWs consisted of four incidental vocabularies, four meaning-based intentional vocabularies, and four etymology-based intentional vocabularies. These 12 words were the ones presented in pretest as well-TWs.

Two chapters of the book *English for Science & Engineering Students*—written by Alemi et al (2009) — were taught by the teacher/researcher of the study. These two chapters consist of several parts: namely, reading text, vocabulary study, idioms and collocation, grammar, writing section. The reading text and vocabulary sections of chapters 9 and 10 of the book were concerns of the current study in which TWs, both incidental and intentional ones, were included. The meaning of the incidental words was not taught directly, so that by explaining and focusing on the content of the tests these vocabularies were taught. Intentional words were those words which were typed bold in the texts of reading sections. These words were focused on so that the meanings of meaning-based intentional words were taught by proving their meaning in marginal-glossary appearance in footnotes. Etymology-based intentional words were taught by analyzing the words into their prefixes and roots and suffixes which appeared at the end of the texts along with their meanings.

To follow the methodology of incidental and intentional research, the students were told in advance of doing the research that they would be tested on these bold-typed vocabularies. However they weren't told that they would also be tested on the incidental words-not bold-typed. But, unexpectedly they were tested on these words as well.

Therefore, the students consciously and by paying attention to the intentional words learned them, whereas their focus was on the content of the reading texts while learning incidental words.

#### C. Data Analysis

The performance of the students on posttest was analyzed by paired t-test so that the scores achieved on different subsections of the posttest were compared with each other separately. That is to say, the scores of incidentally acquired

vocabularies as well as those of etymology-based intentionally and meaning-based intentionally learned vocabularies were compared.

In addition, Spearman correlation was run in order to show how much students' gender correlate with their use of vocabulary learning strategy and reading strategy use, separately. Also, Spearman correlation was measured to know how much the participants' vocabulary strategy use correlated with their reading strategy use.

Moreover, in order to find out that from these three modes of presentation and acquisition of vocabularies (i.e., incidental, etymology-based intentional and meaning-based intentional) which one has the most impact on the ultimate performance on the test of vocabulary acquisition, linear regression was calculated. (All of the statistical procedures are available in Appendices).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first research question, the result of the t-test indicates that the participants mean score of incidentally acquired vocabularies was 2.90 (M=2.90, SD=0.95), the mean score of etymology-based intentionally learned vocabularies was 2.63 (M=2.63, SD=0.88), and the mean score of meaning-based intentionally learned vocabularies was 3.03 (M=3.03, SD=0.80). Therefore, the subjects performed best on the items testing their knowledge of meaning-based intentionally learned vocabularies, as the mean shows.

Regarding the difference among incidentally acquired vocabularies, and etymology-based intentionally, and meaning-based intentionally learned vocabularies, the results of three paired t-tests indicate that there is not any significant difference between the participants' performance on each subgroup of the test. That is to say, the difference between meaning-based and etymology-based intentionally learned vocabulary items is 1.88 (t=1.88, df=29, sig=0.07). As for the difference between meaning-based intentionally and incidentally learned vocabularies, paired t-tests again show that there is not a significant variation between the participants' mean score on the posttest (t=0.66, df=29, sig=0.51). Concerning the last comparison, the comparison between incidentally and etymology-based intentionally learned vocabularies, again, no significant difference was observed (t=-1.39, df=29, sig=0.17).

Gass (1999) argues being able to prove that a word is learned incidentally, in that there is no direct way to know what a learner is doing, is one of the main difficulties in the concept of incidental learning. She mentions that the American Heritage Dictionary of English Language defines incidental as follows: "occurring as a fortuitous or minor concomitant." So incidental learning is a by-product of doing something else.

As for the second question, the Spearman correlation indicates that vocabulary strategy use and acquisition of new vocabularies are weakly correlated (r=0.006). However, concerning the third question, the results indicate that there is a significant relationship between students' use of vocabulary strategy use and reading strategy use (r=0.398, sig=0.002), which, according to table 1, is significant at .01 level of significance.

Correlations

TABLE 1  
SPEARMAN CORRELATION BETWEEN VOCABULARY AND READING STRATEGY USE

			Vocabulary Strategy Use	Reading Strategy Use
Spearman's rho	Vocabulary strategy use	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.398(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
		N	59	59
	Reading strategy use	Correlation Coefficient	.398(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	59	59

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

As for the last question, through the statistical procedure of linear regression, it was found that in a test of vocabulary including incidentally and meaning-based intentionally and etymology-based intentionally learned vocabulary items, it is the participants' knowledge of meaning-based intentionally learned vocabularies that determines how well they will perform on the vocabulary test.

V. CONCLUSION

Concerning the findings of the current study, a couple of suggestions are made to follow in further research. As mentioned above, the mean score of meaning-based intentionally learned vocabularies is 3.03, which is the highest mean compared with the mean scores of etymology-based intentionally and incidentally acquired vocabularies. However, as the results of the statistical procedure of t-test indicate, there is not any significant difference among acquisition of these three kinds of words through three modes of presentation. This might be explained using the words of Huckin and Coady (1999), who posit that, incidental vocabulary learning is not entirely incidental in that learners pay

at least some attention to individual words. Accordingly, the to-be-incidentally-acquired vocabularies have not been acquired purely incidentally. In addition, that the nature of some of the vocabularies which were going to be acquired incidentally, was such that could yield itself to the same analytical procedures that have been used to convey and teach the meaning of etymology-based intentionally learned vocabularies, supports the claim made by Huckin and Coady.

As Griffiths (2006) points out, language learning strategies, irrespective of the type, are employed more frequently by higher-level learners as indicated by a large-scale study of university students in Puerto Rico, by Green and Oxford (1995). Too, Oliver and Magogwe (2007) point out that there is a link between language proficiency and the use of language learning proficiency (e.g., Green and Oxford 1995; Khaldieh, 2000; Wharton, 2000) the overall pattern being that as the use of strategies increases so does language proficiency. The present study, on the contrary, found that vocabulary strategy use and acquisition of new vocabularies are weakly correlated ( $r=0.006$ ).

There are two important factors concerning the role of language learning strategy use and its applications in teaching and learning an L2, in light of which the result pertaining to the relationship between the use of learning strategy and proficiency may be discussed. One of these factors, as Griffiths (2006) points out, is that language learning strategies cannot be observed directly, which is one of the difficulties with researching this construct, in that they can only be inferred from language learner behavior. Griffiths (2003) also points out that only a few language learning strategies such as dictionary use are observable and can be directly measured, and that the rest must be inferred from the behavior of language learner is one of the difficulties in researching this construct. The use of vocabulary learning strategy was more like the kinds of strategies that are not directly observable. Perhaps the students' reports on their use of vocabulary learning strategy were not truly representative of how they learn vocabularies. Therefore, it is suggested that instead of just measuring the participant's use of vocabulary leaning strategy (and/or any other type of learning strategy) by asking them to fill out the self-report questionnaire, one or more ways of measuring the use of this construct be used, such as observations, interviews, and the like.

Secondly, as asserted by Griffiths (2008), in addition to strategies, many other learner variables can potentially affect the outcome of language learning efforts, such as aptitude, learning style, motivation, age, belief, culture, gender, personality, metacognition or autonomy. She also states that learning variables, too, can affect the final efforts of language learning, namely vocabularies, grammar, pronunciation, function, skill, teaching/learning methods, strategy instruction, error correction, or task. Taking all of the factors affecting the outcome of language learning mentioned by Griffiths into account, it might be concluded that the learners might have used those strategies as they reported on the questionnaire, but these underlying factors have been influential and have rendered the results unpredictable.

The other finding of the study is that there is a significant relationship between students' use of vocabulary strategy use and reading strategy use. This is a logical finding due to the fact that many students prefer to use learning strategies in every aspect of the task of learning a language, perhaps because they are "good language learners" who have found it a fruitful and constructive activity.

It has been also found that it is the participants' knowledge of meaning-based intentionally learned vocabularies that mostly influences how well they will perform on the vocabulary test. It might be due to the fact that the number of TWs falling in each category (i.e., incidental, etymology-based intentional and meaning-based intentional) was only four. To confirm this finding it is suggested that more research be done involving many more TWs.

Regarding the nature of the vocabularies which are supposed to be acquired incidentally, in further research, it is suggested that vocabularies which cannot be divided into prefix and root and suffix be selected; otherwise, the students will get used to analyzing them as they do so when it comes to learning etymology-based intentional vocabularies.

It is one of the influential limitations of the study that no control group was involved. Further research is needed including a control group studying the impact of incidental and intentional learning on acquisition of vocabulary items.

Last, but not least, as Griffiths (2003) points out, studies exploring language learning strategies with regard to sex are not common. The current study also, due to the fact that the proportions of males and females were not the same, has not investigated the role of gender. It is suggested that further research be done taking into account the effect of sex on the use of language learning strategy use.

#### APPENDIX A. COMPARISONS OF DIFFERENT PARTS OF POST-TEST (T-TESTS)

PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	posmean	3.0333	30	.80872	.14765
	posetym	2.6333	30	.88992	.16248

PAIRED SAMPLES CORRELATIONS

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	posmean & posetym	30	.065	.731

PAIRED SAMPLES TEST

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Pair 1 posmean - posetym	.40000	1.16264	.21227	-.03414	.83414	1.884	29	.070

PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 posmean	3.0333	30	.80872	.14765
posincid	2.9000	30	.95953	.17518

PAIRED SAMPLES CORRELATIONS

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 posmean & posincid	30	.227	.228

PAIRED SAMPLES TEST

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Pair 1 posmean - posincid	.13333	1.10589	.20191	-.27961	.54628	.660	29	.514

PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Posetym	2.6333	30	.88992	.16248
Posincid	2.9000	30	.95953	.17518

PAIRED SAMPLES CORRELATIONS

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 posetym & posincid	30	.359	.051

PAIRED SAMPLES TEST

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Pair 1 posetym - posincid	-.26667	1.04826	.19139	-.65809	.12476	-1.393	29	.174

APPENDIX B. CORRELATIONS

CORRELATIONS

		vocabstrat	posttotal
Spearman's rho	vocabstrat	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.006
		N	.964
posttotal	posttotal	Correlation Coefficient	.006
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.964
		N	59

CORRELATIONS

			posttotal	gender
Spearman's rho	posttotal	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.227
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.084
		N	59	59
gender	gender	Correlation Coefficient	.227	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.
		N	59	59

CORRELATIONS

			vocabstrat	readingstrat
Spearman's rho	vocabstrat	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.398(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
		N	59	59
readingstrat	readingstrat	Correlation Coefficient	.398(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	59	59

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

CORRELATIONS

			vocabstrat	gender
Spearman's rho	vocabstrat	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.049
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.711
		N	59	59
gender	gender	Correlation Coefficient	-.049	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.711	.
		N	59	59

CORRELATIONS

			gender	readingstrat
Spearman's rho	gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.004
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.976
		N	59	59
readingstrat	readingstrat	Correlation Coefficient	.004	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.976	.
		N	59	59

APPENDIX C. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Statistics

POSTTEST

N	Valid	30
	Missing	0

POSTTEST

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5.00	1	3.3	3.3
	8.00	2	6.7	10.0
	10.00	1	3.3	13.3
	11.00	2	6.7	20.0
	12.00	6	20.0	40.0
	13.00	5	16.7	56.7
	14.00	4	13.3	70.0
	15.00	6	20.0	90.0
	17.00	3	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
posttest	30	5.00	17.00	12.9000	2.70823
Valid N (listwise)	30				

CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY

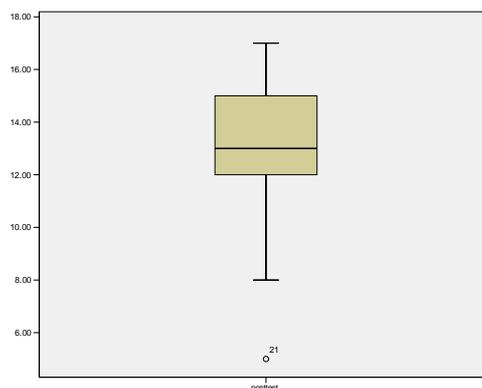
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
posttest	30	100.0%	0	.0%	30	100.0%

DESCRIPTIVES

		Statistic	Std. Error
posttest	Mean	12.9000	.49445
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound 11.8887 Upper Bound 13.9113	
	5% Trimmed Mean	13.0556	
	Median	13.0000	
	Variance	7.334	
	Std. Deviation	2.70823	
	Minimum	5.00	
	Maximum	17.00	
	Range	12.00	
	Interquartile Range	3.00	
	Skewness	-.936	.427
	Kurtosis	1.488	.833

posttest Stem-and-Leaf Plot

Frequency Stem & Leaf  
 1.00 Extremes (= < 5.0)  
 2.00 8 . 00  
 .00 9 .  
 1.00 10 . 0  
 2.00 11 . 00  
 6.00 12 . 000000  
 5.00 13 . 00000  
 4.00 14 . 0000  
 6.00 15 . 000000  
 .00 16 .  
 3.00 17 . 000  
 Stem width: 1.00  
 Each leaf: 1 case(s)



Statistics

POSMEAN

N	Valid	30
	Missing	0

POSMEAN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
2.00	6	20.0	20.0	23.3
3.00	14	46.7	46.7	70.0
4.00	9	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
posmean	30	1.00	4.00	3.0333	.80872
Valid N (listwise)	30				

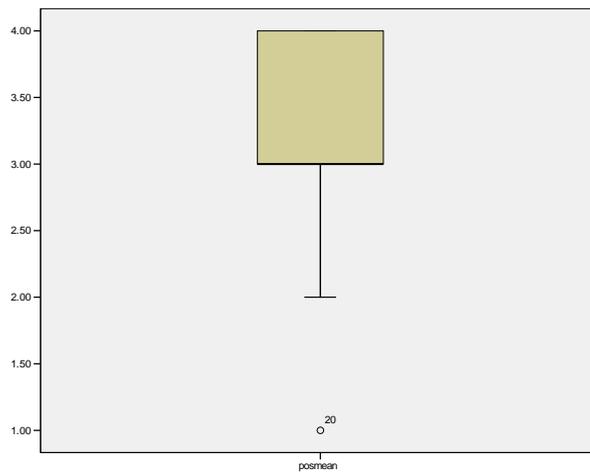
CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
posmean	30	100.0%	0	.0%	30	100.0%

DESCRIPTIVES

		Statistic	Std. Error
posmean	Mean	3.0333	.14765
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound 2.7314 Upper Bound 3.3353	
	5% Trimmed Mean	3.0741	
	Median	3.0000	
	Variance	.654	
	Std. Deviation	.80872	
	Minimum	1.00	
	Maximum	4.00	
	Range	3.00	
	Interquartile Range	1.25	
	Skewness	-.482	.427
	Kurtosis	-.184	.833

posmean Stem-and-Leaf Plot  
 Frequency Stem & Leaf  
 1.00 Extremes (= < 1.0)  
 6.00 2 . 000000  
 .00 2 .  
 14.00 3 . 0000000000000000  
 .00 3 .  
 9.00 4 . 000000000  
 Stem width: 1.00  
 Each leaf: 1 case(s)



Statistics

POSETYM			
N	Valid	30	
	Missing	0	

POSETYM				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	1	3.3	3.3
	1.00	2	6.7	10.0
	2.00	7	23.3	33.3
	3.00	17	56.7	90.0
	4.00	3	10.0	100.0
Total		30	100.0	100.0

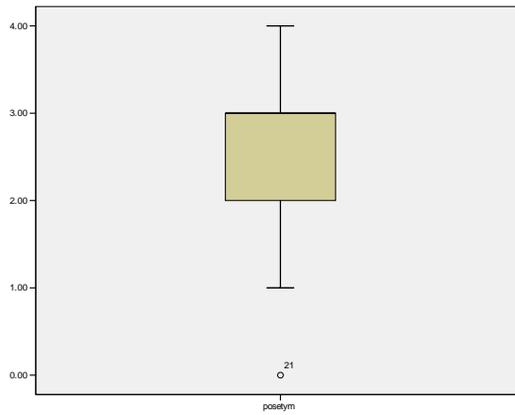
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
posetym	30	.00	4.00	2.6333	.88992
Valid N (listwise)	30				

CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
posetym	30	100.0%	0	.0%	30	100.0%

DESCRIPTIVES				Statistic	Std. Error
posetym	Mean			2.6333	.16248
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		2.3010	
		Upper Bound		2.9656	
	5% Trimmed Mean			2.6852	
	Median			3.0000	
	Variance			.792	
	Std. Deviation			.88992	
	Minimum			.00	
	Maximum			4.00	
	Range			4.00	
	Interquartile Range			1.00	
	Skewness			-1.062	.427
	Kurtosis			1.682	.833

posetym Stem-and-Leaf Plot

Frequency Stem & Leaf  
 1.00 Extremes (=<.0)  
 2.00 1 . 00  
 .00 1 .  
 7.00 2 . 0000000  
 .00 2 .  
 17.00 3 . 000000000000000000  
 .00 3 .  
 3.00 4 . 000  
 Stem width: 1.00  
 Each leaf: 1 case(s)



Statistics

POSINCID		
N	Valid	30
	Missing	0

POSINCID					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	2.00	9	30.0	30.0	36.7
	3.00	9	30.0	30.0	66.7
	4.00	10	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
posincid	30	1.00	4.00	2.9000	.95953
Valid N (listwise)	30				

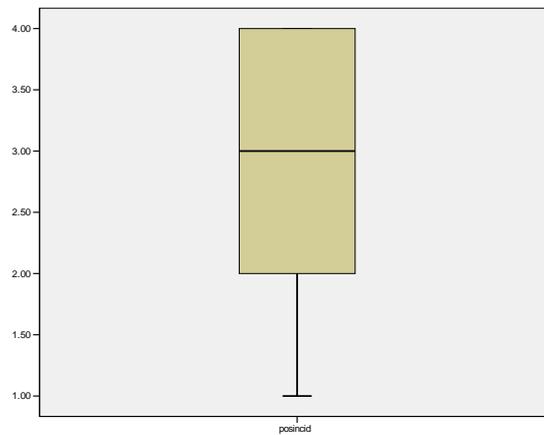
CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
posincid	30	100.0%	0	.0%	30	100.0%

DESCRIPTIVES

		Statistic	Std. Error
posincid	Mean	2.9000	.17518
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound 2.5417 Upper Bound 3.2583	
	5% Trimmed Mean	2.9444	
	Median	3.0000	
	Variance	.921	
	Std. Deviation	.95953	
	Minimum	1.00	
	Maximum	4.00	
	Range	3.00	
	Interquartile Range	2.00	
	Skewness	-.291	.427
	Kurtosis	-1.005	.833

posincid Stem-and-Leaf Plot

Frequency Stem & Leaf  
 2.00 1 . 00  
 .00 1 .  
 9.00 2 . 000000000  
 .00 2 .  
 9.00 3 . 000000000  
 .00 3 .  
 10.00 4 . 000000000  
 Stem width: 1.00  
 Each leaf: 1 case(s)



APPENDIX D. LINEAR REGRESSION

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
posttest	12.9000	2.70823	30
posmean	3.0333	.80872	30
posetym	2.6333	.88992	30
posincid	2.9000	.95953	30

## CORRELATIONS

		posttest	posmean	posetym	posincid
Pearson Correlation	posttest	1.000	.631	.642	.660
	posmean	.631	1.000	.065	.227
	posetym	.642	.065	1.000	.359
	posincid	.660	.227	.359	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	posttest	.	.000	.000	.000
	posmean	.000	.	.366	.114
	posetym	.000	.366	.	.026
	posincid	.000	.114	.026	.
N	posttest	30	30	30	30
	posmean	30	30	30	30
	posetym	30	30	30	30
	posincid	30	30	30	30

## VARIABLES ENTERED/REMOVED(B)

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	posincid, posmean, posetym(a)	.	Enter

a All requested variables entered.

b Dependent Variable: posttest

## MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.936(a)	.876	.862	1.00667

a Predictors: (Constant), posincid, posmean, posetym

## ANOVA(B)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	186.352	3	62.117	61.296	.000(a)
	Residual	26.348	26	1.013		
	Total	212.700	29			

a Predictors: (Constant), posincid, posmean, posetym

b Dependent Variable: posttest

## COEFFICIENTS(A)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	.809	.921		.878	.388
	posmean	1.728	.237	.516	7.279	.000
	posetym	1.445	.225	.475	6.420	.000
	posincid	1.050	.214	.372	4.906	.000

a Dependent Variable: posttest

## REFERENCES

- [1] Alemi, M., Salehi, M., Khosravizadeh, P., Hatef, A. (2009). General English for science and engineering students. Tehran: Farhang Alem Publishing Co..
- [2] Bot, K., and Paribakht, T, & Wesche, M. (1997). Toward a lexical processing model for the study of second language vocabulary acquisition: Evidence from ESL reading. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition* 19, 309-329.
- [3] Cohen, C. & Macaro, E. (2007). Language learner strategies. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [4] Ehrman, M., Leaver, B., and Oxford, R. (2003). A brief overview of individual differences in second language learning. *System* 31, 313-330.
- [5] Ellis, R., & He, X. (1999). The roles of modified input and output in the incidental acquisition of word meanings. *Studies of second Language Acquisition* 21, 285-301.
- [6] Ellis, R. (2008). The study of second language acquisition. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [7] Farhadi, H. (2006). Twenty-five years of living with applied linguistics: Collection of articles. Iran, Tehran. Rahnama press.

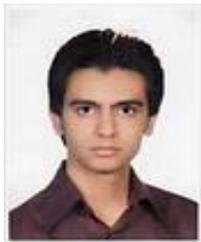
- [8] Gao, X. (2006). Understanding changes in Chinese students' uses of learning strategies in China and Britain: A socio-cultural re-interpretation. *System* 34, 55-67.
- [9] Gass, S. (1999). Discussion: Incidental vocabulary learning. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition* 21, 319-333.
- [10] Grainger, P. (2005). Second language learning strategies and Japanese: Does orthography make a difference? *System* 33, 327-339.
- [11] Griffiths, C. (2003). Patterns of language learning strategy use. *System* 31, 367-383.
- [12] Griffiths, C. (2006). Language learning strategies: Theory and research. Iran. *ILI Language Teaching Journal* 2, 1.
- [13] Griffiths, C. (2008). *Lessons from good language learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in language classrooms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [15] Hong-Nam, K. & Leavell, A. (2006). Language learning strategy use of ESL students in an intensive English learning context. *System* 34, 399-415.
- [16] Huckin, T & Coady, J. (1999). Incidental vocabulary acquisition in a second language: A review. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition* 21, 181-193.
- [17] Hulstijn, J. H., Boella, G., Damiano, R., Van der Torre, L. (2006). ACL semantics between social commitments and mental attitudes. Agent Communication II, International Workshops on Agent Communication. Selected and revised papers.
- [18] Hulstijn, J. H. (2003). Incidental and intentional learning. In C. Doughty & M. H. Long (eds). *The handbook of second language acquisition* (349-381). Oxford: Blackwell.
- [19] Hunt, A., Beglar, D. (1998). Current research and practice in teaching vocabulary. *The Language Teacher* 22, (1).
- [20] Hunt, A., & Beglar, D. (2002). Current research and practice in teaching vocabulary. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [21] Jo Moir and Paul Nation. (2008). *Vocabulary and good language learners. Lessons from good language learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [22] Kasper, G., & Schmith, R. (1996). Developmental issues in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 18, 149-169.
- [23] Khaldieh, S., A. (2000). Learning strategies and writing processes of proficient vs. less-proficient learners of Arabic. *Foreign Language Annuals* 33, (5), pp. 522-533.
- [24] Krashen, S. (1989). *Language acquisition and language education*. Herts: England.
- [25] Lawson, M. J., & Hoghen D. (1996). The vocabulary-learning strategies of foreign-language students. *Language Learning* 46, (1): 101-135
- [26] Magogwe, J. M. & Oliver, R. (2007). Relationship between language self-efficacy beliefs, age, proficiency and language learning strategies, self-efficacy beliefs and age: An investigation. *System Journal* 35, (2007), pp. 353-367.
- [27] Mondria, J. A., & Wit-de Boer, M. (1991). The effects of contextual richness on the guessability and the retention of words in a foreign language. *Applied Linguistics* 12, 249-267.
- [28] Nation, P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. New York: Newbury House.
- [29] Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [30] Nation, P. (2002). Best practice in vocabulary teaching and learning. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [31] Nyiazadeh, A. (2009). *Input-output Enhancement and Incidental Learning of Propositions*. MA Thesis, Allameh-Tabatabayi University. Tehran, Iran
- [32] Oxford, R. (2002). *Language learning strategies in a nutshell: Update and ESL suggestions*. Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [33] Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Newbury House Publications.
- [34] Oxford, R. L. & Green, J. (1995). A closer look at learner strategies, L2 proficiency, and gender. *TESOL Quarterly* 29, 261-297.
- [35] Paribakht, T. & Wesche, M. (1997). Reading and incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition: An introspective study of lexical inferencing. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition* 21, 195-224.
- [36] Paribakht, T. & Wesche, M. (1999). Incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition: Theory, current research and instructional implications. *Thematic Issue: Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 21, (2).
- [37] Richards, J., & Renandya, W. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [38] Rott, S. (1999). The effect of exposure frequency on intermediate language learner's incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention through reading. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition* 21, 589-619.
- [39] Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9, 41-51.
- [40] Stern, H. H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learner? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 31, 304-318.
- [41] Tajeddin, Z. (2006). Language learning strategies after 30 years of research. *ILI Language teaching Journal* 2, No 1.
- [42] Wharton, G. (2000). Language learning strategy use of bilingual foreign language learners in Singapore. *Language Learning* 50, (2) (2000), pp. 203-243.
- [43] Wode, H. (1999). Incidental vocabulary acquisition in the foreign language classroom. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition* 21, 243-258.



**Minoo Alemi** was born in Iran. She has been a Ph.D. candidate of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran, Iran since September 2009. She graduated B.A. in English literature and M.A. in TEFL at Allameh University and Khatam University in Tehran.

As for her professional background, she has taught English over a decade at different universities in Iran. Moreover, she has been faculty member and vice-Dean of Education at Languages and Linguistics Department at Sharif University of Technology since 2008. Her main areas of interest are (1) second language acquisition, (2) ESP, (3) vocabulary, and (4) syllabus design. Alemi has published about ten textbooks in General English and ESP, a large number of papers in different areas in international journals, and given presentations on TEFL at many international conferences.

Ms. Alemi is a member of scientific board of LiBRI, Linguistic and Literary Broad Research and Innovation journal and JLTR, Journal of Language Teaching and Research.



**Alireza Tayebi** was born in Tehran, Iran on Feb. seventh, 1986. He got his B.A in English literature from Sheikh Bahayee University (SHBU) in Isfahan, Iran, in 2009. Now he is an M.A student of Applied linguistics and working as Teacher Assistant at Sharif University of technology, Tehran, Iran.

# Formative Assessment in Classrooms: Operational Procedures

Liqui Wei

Department of Foreign Languages and literature, Hechi University, Yizhou, Guangxi, China  
Email: lisawliq@yahoo.com.cn

**Abstract**—Seen as “assessment for learning”, formative assessment has attracted the attention of more and more educators and practitioners around the globe. Based on the writer’s experience with the implementation of formative assessment in her classrooms in China, this article describes the operational procedures of formative assessment use in classrooms. It first presents guidelines for the proportion of summative assessment and formative assessment in the course’s final scores, for formative assessment plan formulating and for feedback and grading, then describes the procedures, from need analysis and goal setting to formative assessment plan drafting, communicating, implementing and evaluating and revising.

**Index Terms**—formative assessment, college English teaching, feedback, self-assessment

## I. INTRODUCTION

Around the globe, educators are beginning to pay more and more attention to the assessments teachers use in classrooms on a daily basis as a powerful lever for raising student achievement. Many nations, such as New Zealand, Scotland, England, the United States have even developed government-sponsored “Assessment for Learning” programs (Olson, 2005). Formative assessment (FA), characterized by multi-assessors, rich and varied assessing techniques and strategies, multi-aspects in contents, and being process-focused and personalized, is seen as alternative assessment for improvement of students’ learning. As a result, over the past two decades, a substantial body of research has been conducted to study FA globally (e.g., Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Pausch & Popp, 1997; Black & William, 1998a/b; Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 1994; Guo & Yang, 2003; ARG, 1999; Xu, 2003; xue 2006; Zou & Cai, 2006).

Motivated and inspired by Black and William’s (1998a, b) research review findings<sup>1</sup> and Tan’s (2004) empirical research results<sup>2</sup>, I have tried too FA use in my English classrooms for three semesters with a total number of 227 student participants, most of whom were unmotivated and low achievers in English. My circular action research results do prove that the efforts are worthwhile and FA is indeed “assessment for learning”. Its appropriate use can help students form positive view of learning and assessment, improve their motivation and self confidence, foster their independent learning and enhance their individualized use of effective learning strategies and methods, and if used persistently and properly, the impact on their English achievements can be hopefully achieved.

However, due to FA’s own acknowledged limitations such as time-consuming, labor extensive, low reliability (Xu, 2003; Zou & Cai, 2006; xue 2006), technical and professional (Xu, 2003), and medium-long-term effect, the potential advantages and empowering impact on students’ learning will not occur spontaneously. In order for FA to be effective in practice, besides collaborative efforts among colleagues and necessary special training beforehand, special attention needs to be paid to the *operational* process. In this article, based on my own research, I will describe the operational guidelines and procedures of FA implementation in classrooms, focusing on FA plan formulating, FA grading and implementing process.

## II. GUIDELINES

### A. Guidelines for the Proportion of Summative Assessment and FA in Course Final Scores

Considering the washback effect of testing upon learning, and due to the fact that formative assessment and summative assessment are interactive and they seldom stand alone in construction or effect (Gipps, McCallum & Hargreaves, 2000), when doing assessment, attention needs to be paid not only to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes (Pausch & Popp, 1997). Therefore, for the purpose that assessment is incorporated systematically into teaching strategies and practices, I propose the principle of combining summative

---

<sup>1</sup> Black and William conducted an extensive research review of 250 journal articles and book chapters winnowed from a much larger pool to determine whether formative assessment raises academic standards in the classroom, finding that efforts to strengthen formative assessment produce significant learning gains as measured by comparing the average improvements in the test scores of the students involved in the innovation with the range of scores found for typical groups of students on the same tests. Effect sizes ranged between 0.4 and 0.7, with formative assessment apparently helping low-achieving students, including students with learning disabilities, even more than it helped other students.

<sup>2</sup> Tan’s (2004) empirical research has revealed that formative assessment is more effective than summative assessment to aid adult learners to master meta-cognitive strategies, strengthen students’ motivation, form positive affect and improve students’ performance in tests

assessment and formative assessment in course scoring. In other words, summative and formative assessment should stay alongside in teaching and learning process and each weigh half in the terminal grade of the learning subject. To be specific, summative assessment (e.g., Unit tests, final exams) and formative assessment (such as group work involvement, questioning and answering, observations, portfolios) each account for 50 points in students' semester final grade for the course. The rationale for so doing is the fact that all students at all educational levels care about the final grades for any subject or course they learn. Making formative assessment weigh 50 percent can contribute to students' awareness of their daily learning and striving for better results in and throughout all learning activities. In addition, although there are many limitations and disadvantages with summative assessment, it still plays an important role and cannot be left out in educational settings, especially in China. What we need to do is adopt formative assessment as a necessary supplementary to summative assessment to impact and maximize students learning process.

#### B. *Guidelines for Formative Assessment Plan Formulating*

A practical and feasible FA plan is a crucial step for the effective use of FA to improve learning. Therefore, when formulating the formative assessment plan, we need to take some factors into consideration. As far as my own research is concerned, I mainly took into account flexibility, integration, practicality, feasibility and variety based on the requirements of good assessment (e.g., Gibbs and Simpson's 11 conditions, 2004; Pausch & Popp's nine principles, 1997; Black & William's five factors, 1998b). By flexibility, I mean that the plan can be adjusted in the implementing process and that students can have their own options to some degree. Variety and integration refer to the use of various kinds of learning activities and of assessment strategies and techniques, which may encourage students to use a variety of learning strategies to attain their goals and develop their integrated skills. The assessing plan should consist of and specify assessing/learning items, and contents to be covered, tools or strategies used, assessing agents for each item. And the learning activities must be a combination of input and output items, of cognitive and meta-cognitive ones, of required and optional ones, of individual work and collaborative projects. Required items refer to those activities designed to achieve the shared instructional goal of teacher and all students, and the optional items are for individual students to choose according to their own needs and interest, which beneficially provide a good self development platform for them. Except for testing items, peer/ self assessment is required in nearly every item. And self assessment is highly valued. Furthermore, the assessing system and items vary from semester to semester according to different semester teaching focuses and goals.

#### C. *Guidelines for Feedback and Grading*

In order for students to better monitor and direct their own learning and for them to see every effort they take counts, feedback and grading should be given to FA items. The general feedback-giving and grading principle for FA goes as follows:

Written feedback is combined with oral feedback, letter grading combined with scoring; multi-dimensional assessment, with self assessment first, peer assessment next, and teacher assessment last (not with every activity/item of course, it depends); with encouragement focused, positive comments are preferable over negative ones, advice over criticism; and emotional factors over cognitive factors. During scoring, being general is preferable over being specific. So doing lies in the purpose of our using FA. For example, the ultimate purpose of our using formative assessment in College English teaching and learning is, by taking advantage of evaluation wash-back upon instruction, to enhance students' learning, reading, writing, and action through assessing. Besides, it is hoped that students can experience the fun of learning and the joy of success through the assessing process, and acquire linguistic and reflective skills, and other social skills such as how to cooperate with others, how to evaluate others in the experiencing process. Considering criticism (other than simply identifying deficiencies) is usually counterproductive (Crooks, 1988), we should always be generous with our praise and encouragement, giving them timely feedback about their every little progress. By so doing, we can help students experience the joy of success and motivate them to strive for next goal. As it were, introducing formative assessment into classrooms is a means, through which students learn to self-manage their own learning, promote their development. Assessment is never an end because our purpose is not to judge or select. As a result, we should pay more attention to the impact of the assessment on students than its validity or reliability.

For some activities or items such as oral presentation, collaboration performance and reading log, corresponding checklists or formats should be offered to students to use as success criteria in the process of learning activities.

As for the time for final grading of FA, it is desirable to be conducted at the end of the semester. We can design something like *Final Formative Assessment Achievement Report* (See the samples in appendix) for students to do self and collaborative assessment, with criteria checklist given. They just give a letter grade varying from E to F, which stand for Excellence and Fair respectively, with V (very good), G (good), S (satisfactory) between. And the teacher, based on students' self and collaboration assessment results and observations, and by referring to students learning portfolios, give the final score for FA proportion in the course. The collaboration assessment team can be made up of either dormitory members or learning group members if any or class leaders team plus two or three student representatives.

### III. PROCEDURES

The process of formative assessment goes as the following pattern:

Needs Analysis, semester instructional goal setting →formulating the assessment plan→distributing and explaining the plan sheets →Implementing the plan →evaluating and revising the plan → formulating a new plan for next circular research

#### A. *Needs Analysis and Semester Instructional Goal Setting*

The diversity of students' background, English levels and needs means that any FA plan should be based on needs analysis and curriculum requirements to set a practical goal and draft a feasible assessment plan. In addition, the identification by teacher and students of learning goals, intentions or outcome and the criteria for achieving these is one of the five key elements of FA. There are many ways to do needs analysis. We should choose appropriate methods with regard to students' different learning stages and course nature. For example, when teaching English to freshmen, before instruction begins, we may combine a diagnostic test and a questionnaire survey to collect relevant data such as their current state of English proficiency, their preferred classroom activities and their learning habits. The test results and the questionnaire survey findings may show us students' their expectations for course, their weaknesses and strengths in the four skills and other information we need, which serve as justifications for the planning of formative assessment plan.

#### B. *Formulating the Formative Assessment Plan*

Based on the needs analysis and teaching syllabus, we make our assessing plan. Still take my own research as example. In my three-semester's research, I made three responsive assessment plans for each section. The first assessment plan which served as a pilot study in the first section included 7 required items: attendance, preview, quizzes and homework, autonomous listening, recitation of New Concept English (Book III), extracurricular reading and study plan making and implementing. Other activities were encouraged. Many evaluated contents were covered, from attendance, linguistic competence to attitude, learning behavior, independent learning awareness, and awareness of strategy. The focus of this plan was on vocabulary and structure in response to students' needs. New Concept English (Book III) has been recognized as an effective learning source to improve grammar and vocabulary bank by many English authorities such as He Qixin and many English learners. Therefore, recitation of the texts from this book was required of the students because they were generally poor in grammar and vocabulary. All items involved students' self/peer assessment and teacher assessment.

The assessment plan for the second research section was more complete and more specific because it was formulated based on the practice of the first one. And the teacher's further knowledge about students after one semester's teaching also contributed a lot to the quality formulation of the second plan. In this plan, there were six required learning items: oral presentation as task-based learning, learning in classroom, homework, testing, response log for movie, and final reflections. Three optional items (reading, dialogue conversation, listening) and other optional items were also listed for their personalized choice. More extensive contents were included for evaluation, ranging from linguistic competence, thinking skills to team spirit. What's more important with this plan is that a very specific description about the rationale for each item was given and attached to the plan for student better understanding and action.

#### C. *Communicating the Formative Assessment Plan*

The next step we need to do is to print and distribute and explain the plan, item by item, to students, to ensure that every student has one copy to keep for their regular "visit" and that every student understands what and how and why to do so as to effectively guide their subsequent learning efforts, to minimize the problem of information gap between the teacher and students in terms of teaching goal through this formative assessment plan. In order to let every student have better understanding of every item, besides communicating in detail the learning intentions of each item to students in class, in my research, I also attached to the plan sheet very specific instructions about the use of and the rationale for each item. For example, the following description was given for the item "Journal Dialog": Writing: Dialogue Journals are written conversations between students and teachers. It integrates writing and reading as one. It is not only an efficient way to improve writing but also a platform for teacher-student communication in English. In particular, it provides a good opportunity of student-teacher communication for those who are not good at or don't want to speak face to face with the teacher. In your journal, you can write about anything you want to say, your study, your opinion of someone(including the teacher and his or her behavior, teaching methods, etc.), your success, trouble or even distress Just write and don't care about the grammar. You can write in a notebook or in computer (if you have any access to computers).

One thing should be mentioned here is that the plan is general one. There is still available room for improvement during the instructional process. So long as we do not stray away from our instructional goal, any adjustment is embraced because we always change for the better result.

#### D. *Implementing the Formative Assessment Plan*

With all preparations done, we should begin implementing the plan by integrating formative assessment strategies and techniques into our instructional process. At this stage, one thing--quality feedback needs to be given priority to. As Sutton (1998) put it, our feedback should 'be specific (both positive and critical);be descriptive (describing what the student said or did), rather than evaluative (involving a value judgment); be offered as soon as possible after the event;

offer alternatives or ask the learner to do so; look forward to the specific next steps to improve performance; encourage and plan for opportunities for the feedback to be used as soon as possible; involve the learner wherever possible, to improve the chance of feedback being understood and acted upon' (p.56).

Thus in our practice, we should try our best to give feedback according to the above suggestions. We, in particular, should value the last point "involve the learner wherever possible, to improve the chance of feedback being understood and acted upon" because this was seen to have had a positive impact on students' ability to take control over their learning, enabling them to be continually reflective and analytical. As Rick Stiggins' (cited in Olson, 2005, p. 8) put it "...students make decisions [based on assessments] all the time, and they're critical," and those decisions range from "Can I learn this, or am I just too stupid?" to "Is the learning worth the energy I must expend to attain it?" Much of the information about how well they are doing will come as feedback from the teacher, but some will be through their direct involvement in assessing their own work.

#### E. Evaluating and Revising the Assessment Plan

In order for FA to achieve better results in later use, we should evaluate and revise the plan into a more practical one after implementing it. We should try to obtain relevant information about the efficacy of each item through a variety of channels such as observations, face-to-face interviews with students, specially designed questionnaire surveys, students' learning portfolios. For example, at the end of the second semester, I asked students to give a tick to every learning technique used in the very semester in corresponding box labeled "strongly agree" "agree" "Not always agree" "not agree". While evaluating, we first asked ourselves such questions as "Were students motivated and involved to do the tasks?" "Were they learning?", then synthesized the information from different sources. In this way, combined with teacher-student negotiation, a new assessment plan for subsequent learning stage will be significantly formulated. At plan making stage, we always bear in mind "successful learning occurs when learners have ownership of their learning; when they understand the goals they are aiming for; when, crucially, they are motivated and have the skills to achieve success" (Beyond the Black Box , ARG, 1999, p. 2), and in the process of adoption of formative assessment, we tried to involve students in every step because they are "ultimately responsible for their own learning and no one else can do it for them" (Beyond the Black Box , ARG, 1999, p. 2). So, evaluating the assessment plan is a necessary and worthwhile step.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Theoretically and empirically, FA proves to be "assessment for learning", and is even seen as "a new learning style" as most of my students do. In this article, I have just described and discussed the implementing guidelines and procedures of FA, mainly out of my own practice. For its effective impact on learning in other settings, there is still much to research.

#### APPENDIX FINAL FA REPORT SAMPLES

##### 1. Final Formative Assessment Achievement Report (for students)

Class _____		School No. _____		Name _____											
Oral presentation		Learning in classroom		Home-Work		Movie Response Log or other project		Final reflections		Optional items				Final Grade	
										1		2			
SA	PA	SA	PA	SA	PA	SA	PA	SA	PA	SA	PA	SA	PA	SA	PA
Final reflections: (either in English or in Chinese) Write about the changes in your attitude towards learning, the efforts you have made, your progress, your weaknesses and your insight of learning.															

#### Directions:

1. SA=self assessment, PA=peer assessment
2. Letter Grading system--E, V, G, S, F (E=Excellent, V= Very Good, G=Good, S=satisfactory, F=Fair) is preferable for each item.
3. Things to be considered when grading each item:  
Oral presentation: written by oneself? How's the content? How are the presentation skills?  
Learning in Classroom: attitude? attendance? Participation and involvement? linguistic competence(quizzes)?  
Homework: done? whether self-corrected?  
Movie response/ or project-based writing: language? contents?  
Final reflections: comprehensiveness? Attitude?  
Optional items: done? how many items? any document?

##### 2. Final Formative Assessment Achievement Report (for Teachers)

Class			School No.		Name		
Oral presentation	Learning in classroom	Home-work	Testing	<i>Movie Response Log</i>	Optional Items		Final Grading (FG)
Teacher's Comment:							

**Directions:**

Final Grading (FG) is given by the teacher by integrating students learning portfolios and the results of self assessment and peer assessment from the students final formative achievement report. Each item is first given in letter form E, V, G, S, F (E=Excellent, V=Very Good, G=Good, S=satisfactory, F=Fair) and the final grading will be then transferred into marks. If FG is E, the marks will be 95; if V, marks will be 85; if G, marks will be 80; if S; marks will be 75; if F, marks will be 65 and below. The final mark will cover 50% of the semester scoring.

REFERENCES

[1] Assessment Reform Group, U.K. (1999). *Assessment for learning: beyond the black box*. Cambridge, U.K: University of Cambridge School of Education.

[2] Black, P., & William, D. (1998a). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education*, 5 (1): 7-74.

[3] Black, P. and William, D. (1998b). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80 (2): 139-148. (Available online: <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm>.)

[4] Crooks, T. J. (1988). The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students. *Review of Educational Research*, 58, 438-481.

[5] Gibbs, G. & Simpson, C. (2004). Does your assessment support your students' learning? *Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (on-line), 1, 3-31. Retrieved from: <http://www.glos.ac.uk/adu/clt/lathe/issue1/index.cfm>.

[6] Gipps, C., McCallum, B., & Hargreaves, E. (2000). *What makes a good primary school teacher?* London: Routledge Falmer.

[7] Guo, Q. & Yang, zhi. Q. (2003). Formative Assessment and College English Teaching and Testing (In Chinese), *Research On Education Tsinghua University*, Vol.24, NO 5, pp103-108.

[8] Ministry of Education, New Zealand. (1994). *Assessment: policy to practice*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

[9] Olson, L. (2005). Classroom Assessments Stir Growing Global Interest. *Education Week*. Washington: October 5, 2005. Vol. 25, Iss.6, p.8.

[10] Pausch, L.M. & Popp, M.P. (1997). Assessment of Information Literacy: Lessons from the Higher Education Assessment Movement. Retrieved October 30, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/paperhtm/d30.html>

[11] Sutton, R. (1998). School-wide Assessment. *Improving Teaching and Learning*. New Zealand Council for educational Research. Wellington NZ.

[12] Tan, H. Y. (2004). Using Formative Assessment Strategies to Aid Students' Learning in Adult English Teaching as Foreign Language-An Experimental Study.

[13] Xue, M. (2006). A study of Formative Assessment in College EFL Learning and Teaching.

[14] Xu, B.X. (2003). On the Formative Assessment of EFL Students: From Theory to Practice.

[15] Zou, H. M. & Cai, Zh. Y. (2006). An Experiment on Implementation of Formative Assessment and the Reform of the Current Assessing System of College English Teaching (in Chinese), *Journal of Jiangxi Normal University*(Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), VoL. 39 (1): 114-118.

**Liqiu Wei** was born in Guangxi, China in 1967. She received her M.A. degree in linguistics from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China in 2008.

She is currently an associate professor in the department of Foreign Languages, Hechi University, Guangxi, China. Her research interests include English language teaching, second language acquisition and foreign language teacher development.

# The Relationship between Critical Thinking Ability of Iranian EFL Learners and Their Resilience Level Facing Unfamiliar Vocabulary Items in Reading

Zahra Kamali

College of Foreign Languages and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Campus, Tehran, Iran  
Email: manakamali@yahoo.com

Mansoor Fahim

College of Foreign Languages and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Campus, Tehran, Iran  
Email: dr.mfahim@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—In line with the studies in EFL/ESL contexts confirming the positive relationship between learner factors and language proficiency, this study investigated the relationship between critical thinking ability, resilience, and reading comprehension of texts containing unknown vocabulary items. For this purpose, 63 intermediate EFL learners were selected as the homogenized group. Afterwards, Peter Honey's (2004) appraisal test, Connor and Davidson's (2003) Resilience Scale, a vocabulary checklist, and a validated battery of four reading tests were given to the subjects. In order to empirically investigate the research hypotheses, the subjects were divided into two groups of high and low critical thinking and resilience groups. The results of the analyses for the collected data through t-test revealed that (a) the levels of critical thinking had significant effect on the scores of the subjects on resilience scale, (b) the levels of critical thinking had significant effect on the subjects' reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items, and (c) the levels of resilience had significant effect on the subjects' reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items. Therefore, the findings indicated that the three variables are related rejecting all three null hypotheses. The effect size index for the t-observed values were .62, .79, and .30, respectively. Moreover, the factor loadings for the four tests showed that the critical thinking questionnaire, resilience scale, and reading comprehension test all tap on the same underlying construct. The findings bear some implications for syllabus and materials designers, test developers, teachers and students' practice in EFL/ESL classrooms.

**Index Terms**—critical thinking ability, resilience, reading comprehension

## I. INTRODUCTION

Educational psychology has for decades recognized, emphasized, and investigated the concept of individual learner differences; "it is undoubtedly true that learners bring many individual characteristics to the learning process which will affect both the way in which they learn and the outcomes of that process" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 88). Recently, EFL/ESL researchers have focused their attention on the identification of such learner characteristics and investigation of their effects on the process, progress, and outcome of learning. One of the intellectual abilities which have been recognized as determiners of learning is critical thinking. As Freeley and Steinberg (2000) state critical thinking is "the ability to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas; to reason inductively and deductively; and to reach factual or judgmental conclusions based on sound inferences drawn from unambiguous statements of knowledge or belief" (p. 2). Academically successful learners possess problem-solving, analytical, and critical thinking skills (De Boo, 1999; Gardner & Jewler, 2000). Moreover, in dealing with stressful, challenging, and demanding world in which individuals (including L2 learners) live, the ability to overcome every day challenges and adverse situations is required to obtain academic and social success. Resilience, "a measure of successful stress-coping ability" (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p.77), is a newly-developed psychological construct which can be considered as a personality factor of individual learners. It enables individuals to overcome difficult or traumatic circumstances and grow up to become healthy, educated, and successful citizens. Consequently, schools and communities, as Krovetz (2008) and Thomsen (2002) believe, need to build resilience in students, promoting their potential to succeed. However, the role of resilience in language achievement has not been investigated in the field of foreign and second language learning/ teaching. Therefore, one of the main purposes of the present study was to bring this construct into focus in L2 education and research, and explore the relationship of this personality factor of EFL/ESL learners with their cognitive ability of critical thinking.

Given the tendency of language classrooms to promote debilitating anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986, as cited in Finch, 2001), and the generally agreed upon proposition that learning a new language presents "a massive learning problem" (Stern, 1983, p. 381) demanding flexibility and higher-order thinking skills (Liaw, 2007), it seems inevitable for second language learners to be high critical thinkers and resilient individuals possessing personal resources and effective coping strategies which can contribute to their academic achievement. Moreover, since reading in a foreign language especially in the case of facing unfamiliar aspects of L2 can be anxiety-provoking to some learners (Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999), success of fluent and competent L2 readers in such challenging situations may be related to their level of critical thinking ability and resilience. Consequently, it is hoped that findings of the present study bring new correlates of success in reading comprehension of texts containing unknown vocabulary items.

It is vital for the future of a society that its children become competent and productive citizens. Therefore, a major focus in education and psychological literature, according to Melendez and Tomlinson-Clarke (2004), is the overall health and well-being of children and youth. As Masten and Coatsworth (1998) state research on competence provides a fundamental knowledge base for policies and programs that aim to promote successful development. In the educational system, there is an urgent need to understand the processes and factors that facilitate the development of competence. Critical thinking and reading ability may be of the protective factors competent individuals possess. The results of investigating the relationship between critical thinking, resilience and reading ability of EFL learners is expected to bring new insights into the identification of resources for healthy development and is, therefore, significant for designing competence-promoting programs at school, family, and community level.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

For the above-stated purposes, the following research questions were raised:

1. Do learners' critical thinking levels have any significant effect on their scores on resilience scale?
2. Do learners' critical thinking levels have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items?
3. Do learners' resilience levels have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items?

Consequently, the following null hypotheses were also constructed:

- Ho (1).Learners' critical thinking levels do not have any significant effect on their scores on resilience scale.
- Ho (2).Learners' critical thinking levels do not have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items.
- Ho (3).Learners' resilience levels do not have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. *Participants*

A sample of 76 male and female students participated in this investigation. The subjects were intermediate EFL students learning English at Nourafshan English Language Institute in Karaj, Iran. Their age varied but all of them were adult EFL learners above 18. As the first step, these participants were given Nelson 200C English proficiency test in order to check their proficiency level and come up with the homogenized group. Through considering the normal distribution of the subjects' scores on proficiency test, the researcher chose those learners whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean. Consequently, 63 of them were found to be homogenous and were chosen for the purpose of the current study.

### B. *Instruments*

For the purpose of the study, the following instruments were used:

- a) A piloted version of Nelson 200C English proficiency test to determine the subjects' level of English language proficiency for the purpose of homogeneity. The test comprised of 40 multiple choice items which assessed the knowledge of English structures.
- b) Peter Honey's (2004) 30- item critical thinking questionnaire adopted from Naieni (2005) to evaluate the skills of analysis, inference, evaluation, and reasoning. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated amounting to .86 by Naieni (2005).
- c) The 25-item Connor-Davidson (2003) Resilience Scale to measure subjects' stress-coping ability. The scale was developed as a brief self-rated assessment to help quantify resilience. It is made up of items reflecting several aspects of resilience including a sense of personal competence, tolerance of negative affect, positive acceptance of change, trust in one's instincts, sense of social support, spiritual faith, and an action-oriented approach to problem-solving. Initial work suggests that the scale is a promising measure for use with adult psychiatric and normal populations (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The translation of the questionnaire into Persian and its adaptability into Iranian culture was done by Jokar, Samani, and Sahragard (2007). The reliability of the scale was calculated through Chronbach's  $\alpha$  analysis amounting to .73 by Jokar, et al. (2007).

d) A vocabulary checklist comprising of 216 words in order to enable the researcher to select reading passages with vocabulary items unknown to the subjects.

e) A battery of four reading passages selected from Advanced Reading Comprehension by Mirzaie (1991) in order to test subjects' reading comprehension ability of the texts including unfamiliar vocabulary items. To select appropriate passages for reading tests, two criteria were used. The first criterion was the judgment of the subjects' English language teacher who commented on the context and the content of the passages. The second criterion was the average readability of the passages in the students' textbook. In order to meet the final criterion, the readability of five passages selected from subjects' textbook was computed through Gunning Fog Index Readability Formula. The mean of the readability indexes of the passages were 10.11. The mean of the readability indexes of the selected passages for reading tests were 10.77 which was very near to the criterion mean.

### C. Procedure

In order to test the research hypotheses of the study, the following steps were taken. First, to ensure the homogeneity of the participants, the piloted version of Nelson 200C English proficiency test was administered to 76 students. From among 76 learners who took part in the testing session, 63 learners whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean (scores between 16 and 22) were selected as the subjects of the present study. In the 4th session of the term, the subjects were provided with the Critical Thinking Questionnaire. In the next session, the subjects were given the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale. To avoid any misunderstandings, the researcher used the translated versions of the two questionnaires. The translated version of the Critical Thinking Questionnaire and resilience scale were piloted by the researcher to 20 learners and the estimated reliability indices were .88 and .86, respectively. Afterwards, to identify the unknown words for reading passages, a vocabulary checklist containing 216 vocabulary items was given to the subjects. After getting feedback from the subjects, four reading passages out of 10 reading passages were selected to test the reading comprehension ability of the sample when faced with unfamiliar vocabulary items. Each chosen test contained 10-15 unfamiliar vocabulary items and was followed by 5 multiple choice items.

## IV. RESULTS

### A. Testing the First Hypothesis

In order to test the first hypothesis, i.e. learners' critical thinking levels do not have any significant effect on their scores on resilience scale, the students were divided into two groups of high and low critical thinking groups based on their median on critical thinking (CT), i.e. 107. In other words, the students whose scores on the CT were equal to or lower than 107 were considered as low critical thinking group and those with scorers higher than 107 consisted the high critical thinking group.

An independent t-test was run to compare the high and low critical thinking groups on the resilience scale. The t-observed value (see Table 1) is 5.53 ( $p = .000 < .05$ ). Since the probability associated with the t-value is lower than the significance level of .05, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference between the high and low critical thinking groups' mean scores on the resilience scale.

TABLE 1  
INDEPENDENT T-TEST RESILIENCE SCALE BY CT LEVELS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	10.588	.002	5.487	61	.000	20.665	3.766	13.134	28.197
Equal variances not assumed			5.536	47.533	.000	20.665	3.733	13.159	28.172

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the high and low CT groups on the resilience scale. The high CT group with a mean score of 73.29 outperformed the low CT group on the resilience scale.

TABLE 2  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS RESILIENCE SCALE BY CT LEVELS

CTLEVEL	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
HIGHCT	31	73.29	9.873	1.773
LOWCT	32	52.62	18.580	3.284

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the first null-hypothesis as learners' critical thinking levels do not have any significant effect on their scores on resilience scale is rejected. That is to say the levels of critical thinking have significant effects on the performance of the subjects on the resilience scale.

Based on the criteria developed by Cohen (1988, as cited in Cohen & Brooke Lea, 2004), the independent t-test statistic is sensitive to number of sample and it only shows the statistical significance of the differences. The size of the difference – known as effect size – is much more important than its statistical significance. The effect size index criteria are:

- .1 weak,
- .3 medium and
- .5 strong.

The effect size index for the t-value of 5.53 is .62 which shows that the results of the independent t-test are both statistically significant and important.

However, it should be noted that the two groups did not enjoy homogeneous variances (Levene' F = 10.58;  $p = .002 < .05$ ) (see Table 1). That is why the second row of Table 1 "Equal variances not assumed" is reported.

*B. Testing the Second Hypothesis*

In order to test the second hypothesis, i.e. learners' critical thinking levels do not have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items, an independent t-test was run to compare the high and low critical thinking groups on their reading comprehension ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items. The t-observed value, as shown in Table 3, is 10.31 ( $p = .000 < .05$ ). Since the probability associated with the t-value is lower than the significance level of .05, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference between the high and low critical thinking groups' mean scores on the reading comprehension test.

TABLE 3  
INDEPENDENT T-TEST READING COMPREHENSION BY CT LEVELS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.002	.966	10.313	61	.000	4.707	.456	3.794	5.619
Equal variances not assumed			10.301	60.376	.000	4.707	.457	3.793	5.620

Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for the high and low CT groups' reading comprehension ability of texts containing unfamiliar vocabulary items. The high CT group with a mean score of 14.61 outperformed the low CT group on the reading comprehension test.

TABLE 4  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS READING COMPREHENSION BY CT LEVELS

CTLEVEL	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
HIGHCT	31	14.61	1.874	.337
LOWCT	32	9.91	1.748	.309

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the second null-hypothesis as learners' critical thinking levels do not have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items is rejected. That is to say the levels of critical thinking have significant effects on the performance of the subjects on the reading comprehension test.

The effect size index for the t-value of 10.31 is .79 which shows that the results of the independent t-test are both statistically significant and important.

It should be noted that the two groups enjoy homogeneous variances (Levene' F = .002;  $p = .96 > .05$ ) (see Table 3). That is why the first row of Table 3 "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

*C. Testing the Third Hypothesis*

In order to test the third hypothesis, i.e. learners' resilience levels do not have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items, the students were divided into two groups of high and low resilience groups based on their median score of 67. In other words, the students whose scores on the resilience scale were equal to or lower than 67 were considered as low resilience group and those with scorers higher than 67 formed the high resilience group.

An independent t-test was run to compare the high and low resilience groups on reading comprehension ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items. The t-observed value, as shown in Table 5, is 2.47 ( $p = .016 < .05$ ). Since the probability associated with the t-value is lower than the significance level of .05, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference between the high and low resilience groups' mean scores on the reading comprehension test.

TABLE 5  
INDEPENDENT T-TEST READING COMPREHENSION BY RESILIENCE LEVELS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.108	.744	2.478	61	.016	1.785	.721	.344	3.226
Equal variances not assumed			2.480	60.906	.016	1.785	.720	.346	3.225

Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics for the high and low resilience groups' reading comprehension ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items. The high resilience group with a mean score of 13.13 outperformed the low resilience group on the reading comprehension test.

TABLE 6  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS READING COMPREHENSION BY RESILIENCE LEVELS

Resilience Scale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
HIGH RES	31	13.13	2.754	.495
LOW RES	32	11.34	2.958	.523

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the third null-hypothesis as learners' resilience levels do not have any significant effect on their reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items is rejected. That is to say the levels of resilience have significant effects on the performance of the subjects on the reading comprehension test.

The effect size index for the t-value of 2.47 is .30. That is to say although the results of the independent t-test are statistically significant, the effect size index of .30 shows that these results are of medium importance.

It should be noted that the two groups enjoy homogeneous variances (Levene'  $F = .10$ ;  $p = .74 > .05$ ) (see Table 5). That is why the first row of Table 5 "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

#### D. Construct Validity of the Tests

A factor analysis was run to probe the construct validity of the four tests administered in this study. The SPSS extracted two factors (see Table 7) which accounted for 81.92 percent of the total variance. This is a high index of construct validity for the battery of the tests employed in this study.

TABLE 7  
TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.275	56.875	56.875	2.275	56.875	56.875	2.263	56.565	56.565
2	1.002	25.049	81.923	1.002	25.049	81.923	1.014	25.359	81.923
3	.537	13.413	95.337						
4	.187	4.663	100.000						

Table 8 displays the factor loadings for the four tests. The critical thinking, resilience, and reading comprehension tests all tap on the same underlying construct. That is to say, they seem to measure the same attribute.

TABLE 8  
FACTOR LOADINGS

	Component	
	1	2
CT	.932	
Resilience	.846	
Reading	.823	
Nelson		.998

Due to the nature of the critical thinking, resilience, and reading comprehension tests and the high index of factor loading associated with critical thinking, the first factor may be labeled as critical thinking ability. As Seliger and Shohamy (1989) state, "those variables which have the *highest* loadings with the factors are used to define the factor" (p. 229). However, the Nelson test loads on a different factor that may be called, due to the nature of the Nelson test, as general proficiency factor.

## V. DISCUSSION

Critical thinking is one of the cognitive abilities that "increase[s] the probability of a desirable outcome, ... the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions" (Halpern, 2003, p.6). Today, it is strongly believed that higher-order thinking skills especially critical thinking should be an integral part of L2 curriculum to foster language proficiency of the EFL/ESL learners (Davidson, 1998; Chamot, 1995 as cited in Liaw, 2007). The findings of the present study seem to confirm and add to the literature in L2 learning concerning the important role of cognitive and personality factors in language learning.

The results indicated that EFL learners' critical thinking levels have significant effects on their resilience level. In other words, critical thinking as a cognitive ability and resilience as a personality factor are highly related. Reviewing the literature of resilience, the researcher noticed intellectual and cognitive abilities including planning ability, moral reasoning, problem solving skills, and intrapersonal reflective skills have been found by the researchers as the characteristics of resilient individuals, enabling them to succeed in life (Benard, 1998; Kumpfer, 1999; Brooks & Goldstein, 2001; Melendez & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2004). Emphasizing the link between problem-solving and decision-making skills and a resilient mindset, Brooks and Goldstein (2001) state:

When children can articulate problems, reflect on and engage in possible solutions, and consider other options if the initial solutions don't pan out, they demonstrate a resilient mindset. These skills foster a sense of ownership for and control of their own lives. (p. 228)

The results of examining the first hypothesis seem to provide empirical support for the prediction that critical thinking and resilience are related factors. However, since no studies, to the knowledge of the researcher, have investigated the relationship between critical thinking and resilience in the field of language teaching and learning, the results of testing the first hypothesis seems to bring a new construct and correlate of critical thinking ability into focus in the realm of TESOL which can ignite further research in the field of L2 education.

The study also revealed that learners' critical thinking levels have significant effects on their reading comprehension ability when faced with unknown vocabulary items. This finding aligns with Facione's (2007) finding that there is a significant correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension; "improvements in the one are paralleled by improvements in the other" (p. 18). The presence of such a strong relationship may be due to the fact that critical thinking and reading are both cognitive abilities which have some identifiable cognitive skills in common. The cognitive skills of synthesis, evaluation, inference, and monitoring employed in the complex process of reading (Grabe, 1991, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001) are those cognitive skills that experts such as Facione (2007) consider as being at the very core of critical thinking: "as to the cognitive skills here is what the experts include as being at the very core of critical thinking: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation" (p.4).

Although the researcher could not find a similar study carried out in Iran on the relationship between critical thinking and reading ability of texts containing unfamiliar vocabulary items, the results are particularly in line with three relevant studies. Saeepour (2009) carried out an investigation on the impact of teaching critical thinking skills on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. The results of data analysis revealed that using critical thinking skills can help learners improve their reading comprehension as a general cognitive skill, and process information at deeper level. Sheikhy Behdani (2009) also conducted a research study on the relationship between autonomy, critical thinking ability, and reading comprehension of the Iranian EFL learners. The results showed that there existed a strong relationship between critical thinking ability of learners and their performance on reading comprehension. In other words, the higher the critical thinking ability, the higher the reading comprehension. In addition, critical thinking and autonomy of students were highly correlated. Finally, the relationship between critical thinking and lexical inferencing of EFL learners was examined by Mirzaie (2008). The researcher found out there was a relationship between critical thinking levels and lexical inferencing of learners. Confronted with unknown words while reading, those learners who had higher levels of critical thinking demonstrated more ability of lexical inferencing. The findings of the current study are

consistent with the results of the above-stated investigations supporting the positive relationship between critical thinking ability and language learning especially the language skill of reading.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that levels of resilience have significant effects on the reading ability of the subjects when faced with unknown words. It should be noted that reading skill has been recognized by some experts as one of the characteristics of resilient individuals (Werner & Smith, 1992, as cited in Jones, 2003; Kumpfer, 1999; Krovetz, 2008). Jones (2003) quotes Werner and Smith's (1992) finding that reading is a protective factor which helps individuals formulate their identity. It is an important developmental task for children and can lead to exhibiting qualities of resilience; "many resilient children and adolescents were competent readers" (p. 95). Additionally, Krovetz (2008) states effective reading skills by grade four (ages nine and ten) are one of the most potent predictors of successful adult adaptation. The results of the present study seem to provide confirmation of previous research findings concerning the positive relationship between resilience and reading skill. However, it should be stated that unlike the previous studies, the current study examined the relationship between resilience and *second language* reading skill. Therefore, before generalizing the result, the need is felt to conduct more research in the field of language teaching.

Not surprisingly, the prediction that resilient second language learners are more successful readers was confirmed through testing the third hypothesis suggesting that coming across unfamiliar aspects of L2, i.e. unknown words in a written text, can be an unfavorable condition that may create acute stress for low-resilient learners hindering the process of comprehension. An explanation for such a positive correlation between the two variables may lie in the shared attributes of skilled readers and resilient individuals. Flexibility, adaptability, and positive self-concept which characterize a resilient individual (Connor & Davidson, 2003) have been identified by some authorities as the hallmarks of a good reader (Bowen et al., 1985; Nuttal, 1996; Grabe, 2002). "One of the principal characteristics of a good reader is flexibility... people who read flexibly are skilled at judging what they need to get out of a text to accomplish their purpose" (Nuttal, 1996, p.48). Grabe (2002) also believes the ability to flexibly and strategically adapt various processing and monitoring activities while reading marks a good reader. Finally, Bowen et al. (1985) mention unlike poor readers who have negative images, good readers enjoy positive self-concepts as readers.

In conclusion, the results revealed that there is a significant relationship between critical thinking ability, resilience, and reading comprehension suggesting that good internal resources such as high levels of critical thinking ability and resilience can affect academic performance, i.e. competence in reading, and may be considered as protective factors among L2 readers.

## VI. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

From the evidence of the study, some implications may be drawn. Since it has been found that levels of critical thinking have significant effects on both resilience and reading ability of texts with unknown words, it can be concluded that the utilization of critical thinking strategies would help learners read more effectively and improve their resilience and stress-management skills. Therefore, it is absolutely crucial for EFL/ESL teachers to encourage students to use their thinking abilities and provide them with challenging opportunities to reflect, grow, and learn. In other words, it is the responsibility of teachers to educate students for inquiry, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and reflection which can contribute to their progress in language learning.

On the other hand, an awareness of learner characteristics and individual differences e.g., level of critical thinking ability and resilience can sensitize teachers to possible variations in learners' reactions to teaching and to differences in learning strategies, enabling them to make modifications, if necessary, to their approach to language teaching and adapt their teaching styles to learners' cognitive and personality variables.

Moreover, since the results showed that resilience is related to comprehension ability especially in the case of encountering unfamiliar words, it seems reasonable to suggest that fostering resilience of L2 readers may positively affect their reading performance particularly in dealing with such challenging and stress-provoking situations i.e., coming across unknown words. Consequently, EFL/ESL teachers should try to apply educational practices and strategies which help learners develop resilience particularly in coping with stressors and problems.

The prime suggestion would be directed for syllabus designers and materials developers. It seems that learners are very much in need of course books and materials that invoke critical thinking. Furthermore, the construct of resilience has not been receiving the attention it deserves in education including L2 education. Therefore, materials developers need to make an effort to create lessons that promote critical thinking and encourage students to reflect on their progress and take charge of their own thinking. They should also incorporate activities and practices which stimulate and build features of resilience, preparing them to function well in the society as competent and healthy citizens.

Finally, test developers should bring about changes in testing, constructing tests that integrate critical thinking skills and improve students' ability to think critically and reason effectively.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Benard, B. (1998). Fostering resiliency in kids: Protective factors in the family, school, and community. Retrieved March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, from University of Minnesota, National Resilience Resource Center website: [http://www.cce.umn.edu/pdfs/NRRC/Fostering\\_Resilience\\_012804.pdf](http://www.cce.umn.edu/pdfs/NRRC/Fostering_Resilience_012804.pdf)

- [2] Bowen, J. D., Madsen, H., & Hilferty, A. (1985). *TESOL techniques and procedures*. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- [3] Brooks, R., & Goldstein, S. (2001). *Raising resilient children: Fostering strength, hope, and optimism in your child*. Illinois: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, Inc.
- [4] Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed.). MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- [5] Cohen, B. H., & Brooke Lea, R. (2004). *Essentials of Statistics for the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- [6] Connor, K. M., & Davidson, J. R. T. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC). *Depression and Anxiety, 18*, 76-82.
- [7] Davidson, B. W. (1998). Comments on Dwight Atkinson's "A Critical Approach to Critical Thinking in TESOL": A case for critical thinking in the English language classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*(1), 119-123.
- [8] De Boo, M. (1999). *Enquiring children, challenging teaching*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- [9] Facione, P. A. (2007). Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts. Retrieved February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, from <http://insightassessment.com/t.html>
- [10] Finch, A. (2001). The non-threatening learning environment. *The Korea TESOL Journal, 4*(1), 133-158.
- [11] Freely, A. J., & Steinberg, D. L. (2000). *Argumentation and debate: Critical thinking for reasoned decision-making*. Stamford: Wadsworth.
- [12] Gardner, J. N., & Jewler, A. J. (2000). *Your college experience: strategies for success* (4th ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- [13] Grabe, W. (2002). Reading in a second language. In R. B. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 49-59). New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- [14] Halpern, D. F. (2003). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking* (4th ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [15] Jokar, B., Samani, S., & Sahragard, N. (2007). Resilience, psychological health, and life satisfaction. *Journal of Psychiatric and Clinical Psychology of Iran, 50*(3), 290-295.
- [16] Jones, J. L. (2003). "I build resiliency": The role of the school media specialist. *School Libraries Worldwide, 9* (2), 90-99.
- [17] Krovetz, M. L. (2008). *Fostering resilience: Expecting all students to use their minds and hearts as well* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- [18] Kumpfer, K. L. (1999). Factors and processes contributing to resilience: The resilience framework. In M. D. Glantz & J. L. Johnson (Eds.), *Resilience and development: Positive life adaptations* (pp. 179-224). New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- [19] Liaw, M. (2007). Content-based reading and writing for critical thinking skills in an EFL context. *English Teaching and Learning, 31*(2), 45-87.
- [20] Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, J. D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist, 53*(2), 205-220.
- [21] Melendez, M. C., & Tomlinson-Clarke, S. (2004). Home, school, and community: Catalysts to resilience. In C. S. Clauss-Ehlers & M. D. Weist (Eds.), *Community planning to foster resilience in children* (pp. 311-325). New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- [22] Mirzaie, M. (1991). *Advanced reading comprehension*. Tehran: Ghazal Publications.
- [23] Mirzaie, Z. (2008). The relationship between critical thinking and lexical inferences of Iranian EFL learners. Unpublished master's thesis, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Campus, Tehran, Iran.
- [24] Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Oxford: Macmillan.
- [25] Saeepour, M. (2009). The impact of teaching critical thinking skills on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. Published master's thesis, Nonprofitable University of Khatam, Tehran, Iran.
- [26] Saito, Y., Garza, T. J., & Horwitz, E. K. (1999). Foreign language reading anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 83*(2), 202-218.
- [27] Seliger, H. W., & Shohamy, E. (1989). *Second language research methods*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- [28] Sheikhy Behdani, R. (2009). The relationship between autonomy, critical thinking ability, and reading comprehension of the Iranian EFL learners. Unpublished master's thesis, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Campus, Tehran, Iran.
- [29] Stern, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- [30] Thomsen, K. (2002). *Building resilient students: Integrating resiliency into what you already know and do*. Thousand Oaks: CA: Corwin.
- [31] Williams, M., & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Zahra Kamali** was born in Babol, Iran in 1984. She received her M. A. degree in teaching English as a foreign language from Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Iran in 2010.

**Mansoor Fahim** was born in Tehran, Iran. He received his PhD degree in teaching English as a foreign language. Dr. Fahim is currently a professor in Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran.

# Types of Explicitation within the Texts in Chinese-English Translation—A Case Study on the Translation of Chapter Titles of *Hong Lou Meng*\*

Hong Guo

Foreign Languages College, Tianjin Normal University, Tianjin, China  
Email: ghcn2002@yahoo.com.cn

**Abstract**—Explicitation or explicitness means to make something implied explicit and clear. It is regarded as one of the translation universals and has been studied by many researchers all over the world. Because of the great difference between English and Chinese and their cultures, some different and special types of explicitation should be adopted in Chinese-English translation in order to meet the needs of the readers, the language and the function of the text. On the basis of detailed analysis of the translation of the chapter titles of *Hong Lou Meng* and the comparison of three translations, three types of explicitation commonly used within the text in Chinese-English translation come to the foreground. The three types of explicitation within the text are those of subjects, of cohesion and coherence and of grammatical meanings. This research may help translators in their Chinese-English translation practice.

**Index Terms**—explicitation, types, Chinese-English translation, chapter titles

## I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Explicitation or explicitness means to make something implied explicit and clear, or to explain something. It “can be characterized in general terms as the phenomenon which frequently leads to TT stating ST information in a more explicit form than the original” (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997, p.55). Since Baker (1993) pointed out that explicitation was one of the translation universals in 1993, much research has been done on it. For example, Cveras (1998), based on the analysis of English and Norwegian, found that, compared with the mother tongue, the translated language tended to be explicit” (Cited from Ke Fei, 2005, p.303, my translation). Chen Ruiqing (2004), after comparing the connectives used in the original Chinese texts and the translated texts in Taiwan Parallel Corpus, found that when paratactic Chinese was translated into hypotactic English, there was also a tendency of explicitation. Ke Fei (2005) studied both explicitness and implicitness in English-Chinese translation and pointed out that both are related to and caused by the translator, the language and the social and cultural differences. In 2006, Juiching Wallace Chen found in her PhD dissertation that explicitation was brought through the use of connectives in translated Chinese. Liu Yanshi in 2007 explained translation explicitation in its broad sense. He said that “explicitation, in its broad sense, does not only mean that of cohesive devices, but also includes that of meaning” (Liu, 2007, p.64, my translation). The explicitation of meaning should be usually brought by “adding the understandable (I’ve moved this word) overt expression and in various grammatical ways” (ibid, p.64, my translation), i.e. to make the implied information explicit by using language and grammatical forms. All of this research has set a solid foundation for the ongoing studies.

As is known, there are a lot of differences between English and Chinese and the two cultures. When the paratactic Chinese is translated into the hypotactic English, explicitation is “brought about by the translator filling out ST...motivated by the translator’s conscious desire to explain the meaning to the TT reader...” (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997, p.55). This has been testified as mentioned above. Is there anything special and in common in the explicitation in Chinese-English translation? Some Chinese researchers have found a few types, such as inserting notes, the use of scare quotes or an italic typeface...or an additional footnote... (Fan, 1996, p.139-143, cited from Chen, 2006), most of which are those outside the texts. “In her study of Dutch novels translated into English, Vanderauwera (1985) also identifies numerous types of explicitation...” (Chen, 2006, p.83), including both that within the texts (eg. addition of conjunctions) and outside (eg. insertion of explanatory items). This study will mainly focus on the explicitation within the texts in Chinese-English translation.

## II. MATERIALS USED

---

\* This study is part of the project of the Young and Middle Aged Key Faculty Research Abroad which was sponsored by Tianjin Municipal Education Commission and Tianjin Normal University.

This study will be based on the comparison between the Chinese Chapter Titles of *Hong Lou Meng* and their three English versions<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of using these materials is twofold: to find the types of explicitation within the texts in Chinese-English translation and to find whether or not they are the same types.

*Hong Lou Meng* is one of the masterpieces of Chinese “Zhang Hui” novels, which is a special form in ancient Chinese literature. The novels are usually made up of many chapters each of which is a complete story and part of the whole one as well. Each chapter has its own title which shows the readers the outline or the theme of the whole chapter. Though it usually consists of one or two sentences, it is a text. For “TEXT is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a united whole” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.1). The one or two sentences of the title are a united whole with complete meaning. “The experience of meaningfulness correlated with successful integration during reading, which the reader projects back into the text as a quality of wholeness in its meaning” (Phelps, 1985, cited from Conner, 1990, p.1) can be brought by it. It can “build up a world picture around it” (Conner, 1990, p.13). So in this study we take them separately as examples (texts) to show the differences between English and Chinese and explicitation in translation.

The three English versions, which I use in this translation study are: the one translated by Benccraft Joly in 1892-1893 with the name of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (henceforth, J’s), the one by the couple Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang in 1965-1974 with the name of *The Dream of Red Mansions* (Y’s) and the one by David Hawkes and J. Minford in 1973-86 with the name of *The Story of the Stone* (H’s). For Joly only translated the first 56 chapters, we only use the titles of the first 56 for the comparison, and among them chapter 18, 51,52,53 are missing, so there are altogether 52 chapter titles with 104 sentences used.

Chapter titles have vivid, colourful, rhythmic features and artistic and aesthetic value, so in titling, special attention is paid to the choice of words and sentence patterns. So many studies have been done especially on the patterns and features of Chinese chapter titles of *Hong Lou Meng* (Guo Jingwen 2007, Li Tao & Xiao Weiqing 2006, Zhang Jie 2006, Wang Hongyin 2002, Liu Yongliang 1998, ect.). They found each title of the 120 chapters of *Hong Lou Meng* consists of two parallel eight-character sentences. And most of the sentences are made according to the pattern “323”, named by Pro. Wang Hongyin (2002), which means a sentence made of three parts (phrases), the first with three characters, the second with two and the third with three. For example, 金陵城/起复/贾雨村. The first three-character part is the name of a city, the last is a person’s name, and the two-character part in the middle is a phrase used as a predicate meaning “to recommend”. In Chinese they are simply put together one after another, but they are “coherent with respect to context of situation...; and ...coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.23).

In order to help the western people understand the meaning of the title and the theme given, and still make it function as a title, the differences between the languages and cultures and the need of the readers must be considered. In this study we will compare not only the Chinese version with the English one, but also the three English versions with each other because as has been mentioned, the three were translated in different times and by translators from different social and cultural backgrounds. Though sometimes the three translators dealt with them a little bit differently, generally speaking, there are similarities in the ways of bringing explicitation into the texts, such as explicitation of subjects, of cohesion and coherence and of grammatical meanings.

### III. TYPES OF EXPLICITATION WITHIN THE TEXTS IN CHINESE-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In the following section, we will examine the three types of explicitation within the text in Chinese-English translation with the analysis of the titles of the *Hong Lou Meng* chapters in their Chinese version and their three English translations.

#### A. Explicitation of Subjects

Due to different aesthetic values existing in the eastern and western societies, English and Chinese, which belongs to two language systems, differ in many regards, first of all at the syntactical level.

In Chinese “there are many ‘head and tail hidden’ sentences because, according to the context and the logic, the subject, object or even predicate of a sentence is usually unnecessary and omitted...” While “in English, sentences are made basically on SVO structure, in which subject, object (if any) and predicate (apart from special patterns) are usually needed (主语、宾语甚至谓语在逻辑上往往承接前句而省略或干脆空缺, 造成许多‘藏头匿尾’式的语句.....。英语中每一单个的句子 (特殊句型除外)都严格遵循以‘SVO’为主体的句子结构原则, 句中的主语、谓语和宾语(如果有宾语的话)基本上都是完备的)” (Liu, 2007, p.65, my translation).

Titles usually function as outlines of chapters, so most of the chapter titles in *Hong Lou Meng* are narratives. Though the subject is sometimes grammatically implied and sometimes not given, the sentence is still complete in meaning and meets the need of aesthetic value and rhythm. Considering the social and cultural differences, the readers’ expectation and the communicative function, which are features peculiar to English, all the three translators make the most of subjects explicit. Here is an example: (*pinyin* is added above the Chinese words in order to show the rhythm of the titles. A slash “/” is used to separate the two sentences. Ch=Chinese, EEq=English words with equivalent meaning to the

<sup>1</sup> The original and the three translations are taken from the corpus made by Yanshan University, China.

Chinese characters. Some parts are highlighted with the bold or italic, as noted.)

Example 1: Ch: jīn 金 lǐng 陵 chéng 城 qǐ 起 fù 复 jiǎ 贾 yǔ 雨 cūn 村 / róng 荣 guó 国 fǔ 府 shōu 收 yǎng 养 lín 林 dāi 黛 yù 玉

EEq: Jinling City recommend Jia Yucun / Rong Mansion adopt Lin Daiyu

Y's: *Lin Ruhai*<sup>2</sup> **Recommends** a Tutor to His Brother-in-Law *The Lady Dowager*<sup>3</sup> **Sends** for Her Motherless Grand-Daughter

H's: *Lin Ru-hai* **recommends** a private tutor to his brother-in-law And *old Lady Jia* **extends** a compassionate welcome to the motherless child

J's: *Lin Ru-hai* **appeals to** his brother-in-law, Chia Cheng, recommending Yu-ts'un, his daughter's tutor, to his consideration-*Dowager lady Chia* **sends** to fetch her granddaughter, out of commiseration for her being a motherless child.

In Chinese title, both “金陵城” and “荣国府” are adverbs showing the places. “起复” and “收养” are predicates (the bold, henceforth the same) of the sentences. “贾雨村” and “林黛玉” are objects of the two verbs. These three show the readers the most important “wh”s—what, where and who—of the story. Without the subjects, which in fact is implied in the adverbs, the meaning of the Chinese sentences is complete and clear. But if they are translated directly into English without the subjects, they are, first of all, grammatically incorrect. Besides, they may not be understood, so all three of the translators add subjects (the italic, henceforth the same) *Lin Ruhai* (林如海) and *Old Lady Jia* (贾母), which make the sentences readable and meaningful.

In the following translations, the same strategy is adopted.

Example 2: Ch: kāi 开 shēng 生 mǐ 面 mèng 梦 yǎn 演 hóng 红 lóu 楼 mèng 梦 / lì 立 xīn 新 chǎng 场 qíng 情 chuán 传 huàn 幻 jìng 境 qíng 情

EEq: The first time in dream show *Hong Lou Meng* / In new setting through love send fairy riddles

Y's: *The Spiritual Stone*<sup>4</sup> **Is Too Bemused** to Grasp the Fairy 's Riddles *The Goddess of Disenchantment* in Her Kindness Secretly **Expounds** on Love

H's: *Jia Bao - yu* **visits** the Land of Illusion And *the fairy Disenchantment* **performs** the ' Dream of Golden Days.

J's: *The spirit of Chia Pao-yu* **visits** the confines of the Great Void - *The Monitory Vision Fairy* **expounds**, in ballads, the Dream of the Red Chamber.

This chapter is about how Jia Baoyu met the fairy in his dream, was led by her to know the story of “the dream of red mansions” and “the twelve beauties in Jinling”, and to experience love for the first time. “开生面” means “the first time”, and “立新场” “the new place”; “梦” means “in the dream”, and “情” “through love experience”. All are adverbs in the sentences, but the verbs with their modifier imply the participants (doers). The participant of “梦演” and “开生面” is Jia Baoyu, while that of “情传” and “立新场” is the fairy. So in the translation of the sentences, the subjects are made explicit in order to meet the needs of English sentence structure and to make the expression meaningful. The only difference is that the first sentence of Y's translation is in passive voice (the underlined) because of the different verb chosen.

Example 3: Ch: qíng 情 zhōng 中 qíng 情 yīn 因 qíng 情 gǎn 感 mèi 妹 mèi 妹 / cuò 错 lǐ 里 cuò 错 yǐ 以 cuò 错 quàn 劝 gē 哥 gē 哥

EEq: In affection and because of it, move sister / In wrong deed and by it, persuade brother

Y's: Moved by Affection, *Baoyu* **Moves** His Cousin A Wrong Report Makes *Baochai* **Wrong** Her Brother

H's: A wordless *message* **meets** with silent understanding And a groundless *imputation* **leads** to undeserved rebukes

J's: *Tai-yu* **loves** Pao-yu with extreme affection; but, on account of this affection, her female cousin gets indignant. Hsueh P'an commits a grave mistake; but *Pao-ch'ai* **makes** this mistake a pretext to tender advice to her brother.

In this translation, the three translators show the relationship among the heroes and the story clearly by making the subjects of “感” and “劝” explicit.

From the examples above, we can draw a conclusion: in Chinese-English translation, in order to meet the needs of readers and clear expression, considering the differences of the two languages and social cultures, the translators always make explicit some parts of a sentence, which is mostly the subject, usually by adding it. In the 104 sentences (altogether 312 translated sentences) we compared, 34 (with 102 translated ones) are without subjects. And among their 102 translated sentences, 92 were translated by adding subjects. For the others, the implicit subject is shown through the change of sentence structures or the way of expression. For example:

Example 4: Ch: lóng 栊 cuì 翠 ān 庵 chá 茶 pǐn 品 méi 梅 huā 花 xuě 雪 / yí 怡 hóng 红 yuàn 院 jié 劫 yù 遇 mǔ 母 huáng 蝗 chóng 虫

EEq: Green Lattice Nunnery tea sip, plum flower and snow / Happy Red Court rob and meet Granny L

Y's: *Baoyu* **Sips** Tea in Green Lattice Nunnery *Granny Liu* **Succumbs** to Wine in Happy Red Court

H's: *Jia Bao-yu* **tastes** some superior tea at Green Bower Hermitage And *Grannie Liu* **samples** the sleeping

<sup>2</sup> Lin Ruhai is the name of Lin Daiyu's father.

<sup>3</sup> Old Lady Dowager (or Old Lady Jia) is the grandma of Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu.

<sup>4</sup> Jia Baoyu is regarded as the spirit of stone for he was bone with a stone in his hands.

accommodation at Green Delights.

J's: *Chia Pao-yu tastes* tea in the Lung Ts'ui monastery - *Old goody Liu gets* drunk and falls asleep in the I Hung court.

In the three translations, the subject of the first half is made explicit by adding it (Jia Baoyu); while in the second half, the object Grannie Liu (Old goody Liu), the implied participant, is transferred into the subject, even though different verbs ("succumb, samples, gets and falls") are used. For another example:

Example 5: Ch: lú 芦 xuě 雪 ān 庵 zhēng 争 lián 联 jì 御 jǐng 景 shī 诗 / nuǎn 暖 xiāng 香 wù 坞 yǎ 雅 zhì 制 chūn 春 dēng 灯 mí 谜

EEq: Reed Snow Cottage vie collective poem/ Warm Scented Arbour fine make Lantern Riddles

Y's: In Reed Snow Cottage Girls Vie in Composing a Collective Poem In Warm Scented Arbour Fine Lantern Riddles Are Made

H's: *Linked verses in Snowy Rushes Retreat And lantern riddles in the Spring In Winter Room*(*短语*)

J's: In the Lu Hsueh pavilion, *they vie* with each other in pairing verses on the scenery-In the Nuan Hsiang village, *they compose*, in beautiful style, riddles for the spring lanterns.

In Y's translation of the second sentence, the passive voice is used to emphasize the object "lantern riddles"; H put the whole into phrases; while J adds "they" to make the subject clear. Though they use different ways in dealing with the sentence, making the subjects implied out in the texts is the universal technique they adopted. And by doing this, the meaning and the logic of the titles are obvious.

### B. Explicitation of Cohesion and Coherence

Like cohesion, coherence is a network of relations which organize and create a text: cohesion is the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text, and coherence is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text (Baker, 1992, p.218).

As Conner (1990) said, "Cohesion is the term for overt grammatically describable links on the textual surface... whereas coherence is the quality that makes a text conform to a consistent world picture and is therefore summarizable and interpretable... They (cohesion and coherence) (my note) may be found just as well within a sentence as between sentences" (Conner, 1990, p.7). "We could say that cohesion is the surface expression of coherence relations, that it is a device for making conceptual relations explicit" (Baker, 1992, p.218). But this does not mean cohesive relation is only structural. It is in fact also semantic. "What cohesion has to do with is the way in which the meaning of the elements is interpreted" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.11). So a well-formed coherent text is more than a series of grammatical sentences lined up one after another like so many blocks in a row. The sentences in well-formed writing are more like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle; the sentences interlock, each sentence building on the preceding ones while at the same time advancing discourse. Coherent writing, then is dependent on how sentences fit together to form a whole. The fit is achieved by the way the elements are arranged within the sentences and the choice among the sentence patterns themselves (Conner, 1990, p.45).

Compared with English texts, which "...must have semantic coherence as well as sufficient signals of surface cohesion to enable the reader to capture the coherence" (Enkvist, 1978, p.126, cited from Conner, 1990, p.1), Chinese ones are usually "non-cohesive in form but coherent in meaning/spirit.... Sentences in a Chinese text are connected together by their implied logic. Connectives, pronouns and lexical cohesion are seldom used" (Liu, 2007, p.66). This means that sentences in Chinese texts fit together coherently with less or without cohesive devices. A text is usually organized and linked by meaning instead of by form.

All three of the translators noticed the difference between the two languages in this aspect and made the implied cohesive and coherent relation explicit in English, mainly by connection (including by using connectives, non-predicate forms, propositions and adverbial phrases), references and lexical cohesions (the italic in the following examples). For example, each title in Chinese consists of two sentences without any connectives in between narrating the series of things happening. In translating most of them, H put an "and" in each pair, and J used a dash to link them. But Y just kept them in parallel with an intention of introducing the Chinese way of chapter titling. The explicitation of cohesion and coherence can also be found in many other aspects.

Example 6: Ch: qíng 情 zhōng 中 qíng 情 yīn 因 qíng 情 gǎn 感 mèi 妹 mèi 妹 / cuò 错 lǐ 里 cuò 错 yǐ 以 cuò 错 quàn 劝 gē 哥 gē 哥

EEq: affection in affection and because of it, move sister / Wrong deed in wrong deed and by it, persuade brother

Y's: Moved by Affection, Baoyu Moves *His* Cousin A Wrong Report Makes Baochai Wrong *Her* Brother

H's: *A wordless* message meets with silent understanding *And a groundless* imputation leads to undeserved rebukes.

J's: Tai-yu loves Pao-yu with extreme affection; *but*, on account of *this* affection, *her* female cousin gets indignant. Hsueh P'an commits a grave mistake; *but* Pao-ch'ai makes *this* mistake a pretext to tender advice to *her* brother.

In Y's translation, the relationship between the participants is realized by the references "his (sister)" and "her (brother)". "情中情", an adverb showing the reason is made explicit by the past participle phrase "moved by affection". In J's translation, more than one explicit device is used. First, the use of the references, "her" and "this", makes the relationship of the participants and the sentence meaning clear. "This affection" is for the previous "extreme affection" and "this mistake" for "a grave mistake"; "her" in the first sentence refers to "Tai-yu", while in the second to

“Pao-ch’ai”. Second, the connective “but” used in each sentence indicates clearly a turning of the statement. Third, the propositional phrase “on account of” shows clearly its function of reason. While in H’s, lexical cohesion “wordless” and “groundless” is used to show the relationship of the two sentences.

Example 7: Ch: xiù 绣 yuān 鸳 yāng 鸯 mèng 梦 zhào 兆 jì 记 yún 芸 xuān 轩 / shí 识 fēn 分 dìng 定 qíng 情 wù 悟 lǐ 梨 xiāng 香 yuàn 院

EEq: Embroider Mandarin Duck dream foretell Jiangyun Pavilion/ Know destiny, feeling arouse Pear Fragrance court

Y: A Dream *During* the Embroidering of Mandarin Ducks *in* Red Rue Studio Foretells the Future Baoyu Learns *in* Pear Fragrance Court That Each Has *His* Share of Love.

H: Bao-chai visits Green Delights *and* hears strange words from a sleeper Bao-yu visits Pear-tree Court *and* learns hard facts from a performer.

J: *While* Hsi Jen is busy embroidering mandarin ducks, Pao-yu receives, *in* the Chiang Yun Pavilion, an omen from a dream. Pao-yu apprehends that there is a destiny in affections, *when* his feelings are aroused to a sense of the situation *in* the Pear Fragrance court.

In this title, both “绛芸轩” and “梨香院” refer to the place. In both Y’s and J’s translations, the propositional phrases with “in” make the function clear. “绣鸳鸯” indicates the time when the thing happens. Y makes it explicit by using a propositional phrase with “during”, while J does it by changing it into an adverbial clause directed by “while”. H in his translation uses “and” to link the different things that happened.

Example 8: Ch: jīn 金 lán 兰 qì 契 hù 互 pōu 剖 jīn 金 lán 兰 yǔ 语 / fēng 风 yǔ 雨 xī 夕 mèn 闷 zhì 制 fēng 风 yǔ 雨 cǐ 词

EEq: Girl friends talk each other heart-to-heart / Windy rainy evening, dully write verses

Y’s: Two Girls Pledge Friendship *After* a Heart-to-Heart Talk A Plaintive Poem Is Written *One Windy, Rainy Evening*

H’s: *Sisterly* understanding finds expression in words of *sisterly* frankness *And autumnal* pluviosity is celebrated in verses of *autumnal* melancholy.

J’s: *Friends* interchange words of *friendship* - Tai-yu feels dull on a *windy and rainy* evening, *and* indices verses on *wind and rain*.

In the translation of this title, the explicitation of cohesion and coherence is mainly realized by lexical cohesion. Both H and J use repetition and synonyms to show the relationship of the two sentences. While in Y’s translation, the adverbial phrases directed by “after” and “one...evening” distinctively show clearly the logic of the two sentences.

All the examples above indicate that, in Chinese-English translation, in order to make the logic of the sentences clear enough, explicitation of cohesion and coherence is always necessary, and this kind of explicitation is usually realized by using connection, references and lexical cohesions. This kind of explicitation appeared in almost all the sentences we compared. But we should also notice that “when a SL is translated into a TL, there must be some tracks of the SL in the translated text (从一种语言翻译到另一种语言, 多少会存留一些源语的痕迹.....)” (Wang & Qin, 2009, p.102, my translation). Though “the cohesive and coherent models follow those of the target language in translation, they reflect a certain model used in the original in a certain degree as well (译文的衔接模式趋同于目的语, 同时译文一定程度上(也会)反映原文衔接模式.....)” (Dong & Zhang, 2006, p.59, my translation). Y’s operations of the two sentences, H’s translation in example 6, H and J’s translations in example 8 are such examples. In doing so, the translators not only help the readers understand the text with ease, but also lead them to know the original language, thus experience the beauty conveyed by the language.

### C. Explicitation of Grammatical Meaning

“By grammatical system, we refer to the devices we study in morphology and syntax: affixation, syntactic features, constructions such as clefting, topicalization, passive and middle, and other devices such as word order...” (Tara, 1999, p.8). “For every language it is necessary to consider grammatical form...and grammatical meaning...and the interrelationships of these...” (Platt, 1971, p. 63). In some languages, meaning (or events) is carried by a special form. English for instance, “...the distinction between past and present events is often signaled by verbal affixes...” (Tara, 1999, p.1). While other languages, “such as Chinese, Malay... have no formal category of tense or aspect. ...If necessary, time reference can be indicated by means of various particles and adverbials” (Baker, 1992, p.99). In Chinese, for example, different tenses are expressed by adverbials *zhe*(着), *le*(了) or *guo*(过). “...Because tense and aspect are not grammatical categories in Chinese..., tense and aspect distinctions may also take on additional, more subtle meanings in discourse” (Baker, 1992, p.99, 100).

Grammatical meaning here refers to the meaning given by grammatical inflections, such as plural of nouns, tense and voice of verbs. They indicate something more than the word itself. In English which is a synthetic language, these grammatical meanings are usually realized by the explicit change of word forms. While in Chinese, an analytic language, whose words lack grammatical inflection, the grammatical meaning or relation is usually realized through word order and function words or sometimes implied in the words used. In the analysis of the translations we found the grammatical meaning and relation of most chapter titles in *Hong Lou Meng* is realized this way. In order to meet the need of the readers and the language, most of them are made explicit by using grammatical inflections in the English

translation. Look at the following examples (the word with implied grammatical meaning is bolded).

Example 9: Ch qín 秦 kě 可 qīng 卿 sǐ 死 fēng 封 lóng 龙 jìn 禁 wǔ 尉 / wáng 王 xī 熙 fēng 凤 xié 协 lǐ 理 níng 宁 guó 国 fǔ 府

EEq: Keqing dies appoint the Imperial Guard / Wang Xifeng helps manage Ning Mansion

Y's: Keqing Dies and a Captain of the Imperial Guard *Is Appointed* Xifeng Helps to Manage Affairs in the Ning Mansion.

H's: Qin-shi posthumously acquires the status of a Noble Dame And Xi-feng takes on the management of a neighbouring establishment.

J's: Ch'in K'o-ch'ing dies, and Chia Jung *is invested* with the rank of military officer to the Imperial Body-guard-Wang Hsi-feng lends her help in the management of the Jung Kuo Mansion.

In *Modern Chinese Dictionary*, one of the explanation of the word “封” means that in ancient times, the king gave a peerage (sometimes including a piece of land) to his official. Even though the word is used without a subject, the meaning of the sentence is obvious. In this title, “龙禁尉” is the peerage. One of the themes shown in the title is the promotion of the family's status. So which king gave it or who was given is not as important as what was given. But in English the passive voice must be realized by grammatical inflection. So Y changes the order of the sentence and translates it into a passive voice, thus the relationship between “封” and “龙禁尉” is explicit, saving the effort to explain the complex relationship among people. J also puts the sentence into passive voice with the recipient of the peerage “Chia Jung 贾敬” as the subject in order to show the theme. H's translation doesn't seem very exact. He may have partially misunderstood the meaning.

Example 10: Ch: jià 贾 yuán 元 chūn 春 cái 才 xuǎn 选 fēng 凤 zǎo 藻 gōng 宫 / qín 秦 jīng 鲸 qīng 卿 yāo 夭 shì 逝 huáng 黄 quán 泉 lù 路

EEq: Jia Yuanchun, Cairen, select Phoenix Palace / Qin Zhong die young, on the road to the heaven.

Y's: Yuanchun *Is Selected* as Imperial Consort in Phoenix Palace Qin Zhong Dying Before His Time Sets Off for the Nether Regions.

H's: Jia Yuan-chun *is selected* for glorious promotion to the Imperial Bedchamber And Qin Zhong is summoned for premature departure on the journey into Night.

J's: Chia Yuan-ch'un is , on account of her talents, *selected* to enter the Feng Ts'ao Palace-Ch'in Ching-ch'ing departs , in the prime of life , by the yellow spring road.

“才” for “才人” (*Cairen*), in ancient China, is a female officer and a princess as well. In chapter 4 of *Hong Lou Meng*, Cao Xueqin wrote:

Recently, to honour culture, encourage propriety and search out talent, in addition to selecting consorts and ladies-in-waiting the Emperor in his infinite goodness had made, the Board compile a list of the daughters of ministers and noted families from whom to choose virtuous and gifted companions for the **princesses** in their studies. (近因今上崇诗尚礼, 征采才能, 降不世出之隆恩, 除聘选妃嫔外, 凡世宦名家之女, 皆亲名达部, 以备选为公主、郡主入学陪侍, 充为才人、赞善之职。)(The bolded is my note.) (Y's translation)

Combined with the word “才” and “风藻宫” which is the royal palace, the word “选” implies a passive relationship with “贾元春”. So all the three translators put it into passive voice explicitly and the meaning and logic of the sentence is clear.

Example 11: Ch: xī 西 xiāng 厢 jì 记 miào 妙 cí 词 tōng 通 xì 戏 yǔ 语 / mǔ 牡 dān 丹 tǐng 亭 yàn 艳 qǔ 曲 jǐng 警 fāng 芳 xīn 心

EEq: The Western Chamber, lines, understand fun words / Peony Pavilion, songs, wake tender heart

Y's: *Lines* from "The Western Chamber" Are Quoted in Fun *A Song* from "Peony Pavilion" Distresses a Tender Heart.

H's: *Words* from the ' Western Chamber ' supply a joke that offends And *songs* from the ' Soul ' s Return ' move a tender heart to anguish.

J's: Pao-yu and Tai-yu make use of some beautiful *passages* from the Record of the Western Side-building to bandy jokes - The excellent *ballads* sung in the Peony Pavilion touch the tender heart of Tai-yu.

Both *The Western Chamber* and *Peony Pavilion* are famous classical dramas in China. “妙词” and “艳曲” refer respectively to the dialogues and arias in the dramas. In Chinese both words “妙词” and “艳曲” can imply a single or plural meaning. But in the English translation they must be explicit to meet the needs of the sentence patterns. No matter how the translators understand them, everyone makes them explicit in his translations. “妙词” is regarded as a plural word and translated into “lines, words, passages” respectively; while “艳曲” is dealt with differently and translated into “a song” by Y, “songs” and “ballads” by H and J. The following examples belong to the same type.

Example 12: Ch: xiǎng 享 fú 福 rén 人 fú 福 shēn 深 huán 还 dǎo 祷 fú 福 / chī 痴 qíng 情 nǚ 女 qíng 情 zhòng 重 yù 愈 zhēn 斟 qíng 情

EEq: Happy man much happiness add happiness/ Infatuated girl much passion crave love.

Y's: *Favourites* of Fortune Pray for Better Fortune *An Absurd, Loving Girl Falls Deeper in Love.*

H's: In which *the greatly blessed* pray for yet greater *blessings* And *the highly strung* rise to new heights of passion.

J's: *A happy man* enjoys a full measure of happiness, *but* still prays for happiness. *A beloved girl* is very much loved, *but* yet craves for more love.

“享福人” in Chinese refers to the kind of people who are lucky. In Y and H's translation, the plural meaning is made explicit, in Y with “favourites” and in H with “the + adj.” structure. But J translates it in the single form to meet the needs of parallelism, “a happy man” with “a beloved girl”. “痴情女” in the second sentence refers to “林黛玉”. All the three translate it directly into the singular form which makes the meaning clear.

Example 13: Ch: gān 尴 g à 尬 rén 人 nán 难 miǎn 免 gān 尴 g à 尬 shì 事 / yuān 鸳 yāng 鸯 nǚ 女 shì 誓 jué 绝 yuān 鸳 yāng 鸯 ǒu 偶

EEq: Embarrassed person can't avoid awkward mission / Yuanyang vow never marry.

Y's: An Old Reprobate Makes an Unseemly Proposal Yuanyang Vows Never to Marry.

H's: An awkward person is given an awkward mission and a faithful maid vows faithfulness unto death.

J's: An improper man with difficulty keeps from improprieties - The maid, Yuan Yang, vows to break off the marriage match.

It is the same in this translation. Both “尴尬人” and “鸳鸯女” refer to the exact persons in Chinese, so all the three deal with it in the same way.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Translation is a cross-cultural activity that has to meet the needs of the readers and communication. “In order to realize the expected function of translation, translator has to make choices (译者为实现译文的预期功能, 只能对信息有所取舍)” (Yue, 2009, p.1, my translation). There is a great different between English and Chinese and their cultures. A great effort needs to be taken in Chinese-English translation, and explicitation within the text is the commonly used technique. Through the analysis of the titles in *Hong Lou Meng* chapters and their translations, we find that there are mainly three types of explicitation within a text in Chinese-English translation: explicitation of implied subjects, of cohesion and coherence and of grammatical meanings. They are made explicit in order to meet the need of the target readers, show the unity of form and meaning of the source texts and reach the goal of the translation. Besides, explicitation in translation always makes the complex stories and relationship among participants clear and meaningful in the target texts.

Explicitation is one of the universals in translation. In dealing with different kind of languages, there might be some features in common. Finding all these features may help the translators in their practice. We hope that the findings of our study will function similarly for the Chinese-English translation.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Baker, Mona. (1993). Corpus linguistics and translation studies: Implication and application. in M. Baker et al (ed.) *Text and Technology: In Honour of John Sinclair*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- [2] Baker, Mona. (1992). In *Other Words—a coursebook on translation*. Routledge: London & Newyork.
- [3] Blum-Kulka. (2000). Shifts in Cohesion and Coherence in Translation. In Lawrence Venuti (ed) *Translation Studies Reader*, Routledge: London & Newyork.
- [4] Chen Juiching Wallace. (2006). Explicitation Through the Use of Connectives in Translated Chinese: A Corpus-Based Study. A these submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities.
- [5] Chen Ruiqing. (2004). The Tendency of Explicitation of Translated Chinese Text: A Corpus-based Study. *A Symposium of the Ninth Translation and Interpreting Teaching Conference*, Tainan: Translation Department of Changrong University.
- [6] Conner Ulla & Johns M. Ann. Ed. (1990). Cohesion in writing—research and Pedagogical perspectives. Teachers of English of Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. Alexandria, Virginia, Printed in the USA.
- [7] Dong Guangcai & Zhang Xiaofang. (2006). Translation Explicitation Under the Discourse Framework. *The Journal of Xingtai Vocational Technology College*, 8:58-60.
- [8] Feng Dehe. (2009). Implication and Explication and their Losses in the Translation of *Hong Lou Meng's* Narrative Style. *The Journal of Shandong Young Administrative Officials' College*, 5:144-148.
- [9] Guo Jingwen. (2007). Different Expressions and the Reasons in Chapter Titles in *Hong Lou Meng*. *The Journal of Jiangxi Technology Normal College*, 1:84-87, 90.
- [10] Halliday, M.A.K. & Ruqaiya Hasan. (1976). Cohesion in English. Longman.
- [11] Ke Fei. (2005). Implication and Explication in Translation. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 7:303-307.
- [12] Li Tao & Xiao Weiqing. (2006). The Complementation of “Knowing” and “Feeling”—the Analysis on the Aesthetic Features of Chapter Titles in Hawkes' Translation of *Hong Lou Meng*. *Jiangxi Social Science* 6:76—79.
- [13] Liu Yanshi. (2007). Implication and Explication: A Study on Lin Yutang's English Translation of *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* in Aesthetic Perspective. *The Journal of Sichuang Wenli College (Social Science)*, 5.
- [14] Liu Yongliang. (1998). Language Aesthetics of Chapter Titles in *Hong Lou Meng*. *Academic Periodical of Hong Lou Meng*, 3:176-185.
- [15] Liu Zequan & Tian Lu. (2009). Narrative Marks in *Hong Lou Meng* and their Translation. *Foreign Language Academic Periodical*, 1:106—110.
- [16] Mohanan Tara and Wee Lionel ed. (1999). Grammatical semantics—Evidence for structure in meaning. CSLI publication.

- [17] Nord, C. (2001). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [18] Nord, C. (2005). *The Sense of Translation—Interpreting Skopostheory in Translation Study*. Translated by Zhang Meifang & Wang Kefei. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [19] Platt, T. John. (1971). *Grammatical Form and Grammatical Meaning—A tagmemic view of Fillmore’s deep structure case concepts*. North-Holland Publishing Company: Amsterdam, London.
- [20] Reiss, K. (2003). *Translation Criticism: The Potentials and Limitations*. Translated by Erroll F. R. United Kingdom: St. Jerome Publishing.
- [21] Shuttleworth, Mark & Cowie Moira. (1997). *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- [22] Tang Xinliang. (2008). The Comparative study of the “Three Beauty” in the Two Translations of *Hong Lou Meng*. *The Journal of Chongqing Science and Technology College (Social Science)*, 5:123-124.
- [23] Wang Kefei & Qin Hongwu. (2009). The Linguistic Features of English-Chinese Translation—A Macro Corpus-based Analysis. *Foreign Language Academic Periodical*, 1:102—105.
- [24] Wang Hongyin. (2002). Comparative Study on the Rhetoric of Chapter Titles in the Two Translations of *Hong Lou Meng*. *Foreign Language and Foreign Language Teaching*, 1:54-57.
- [25] Xiao, Z. & T. McEnery. (2002). A corpus-based approach to tense and aspect in English-Chinese translation. Paper presented at International Symposium on Contrastive and Translation Studies between Chinese and English. Shanghai.
- [26] Zhang Jie. (2006). Aesthetic Translation of Chapter Titles of *Hong Lou Meng*. *The Journal of Huanan University (Social Science)*, 3.
- [27] Zhang Meifang. (2005). *The Functional Approach in Translation Studies*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

**Hong Guo** was born in Lanzhou, China in 1968. She received her M.A. degree in English Teaching from the Northwest Normal University, China in 1998.

She is currently an associate professor in the Foreign Languages College, Tianjin Normal University, Tianjin, China. Her research interests include translation theories and practice and translation teaching and training.

# The Effect of Social Status and Size of Imposition on the Gratitude Strategies of Persian and English Speakers

Vajiheh Ahar  
Isfahan University, Iran  
Email: gh.ahar@yahoo.com

Abbas Eslami-Rasekh  
Isfahan University, Iran

**Abstract**—This study investigates the strategies Native English and Persian speakers employ for expressing gratitude in different situations. The strategies of Persian EFL learners are also compared with English strategies in order to find the differences that may exist between these two languages. Social status and size of imposition of the favor are social variables which are investigated in detail for three groups. Researchers working in second language (L2) acquisition have investigated interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) to document learners' formulation of speech acts (SAs) and they have found that most of the problems that EFL learners face in intercultural communication are mainly pragmatic (Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper, 1989; Kasper, 1989; Kasper, 1992; Cohen, 1996; Al Falasi, 2007; Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2004). Unlike comprehensive studies on SAs such as request and apology, the number of cross-cultural studies investigating expressions of gratitude is fairly limited and there are few studies investigating this speech act in Persian. The participants of this study were 75 advanced students from the English department of Isfahan University. The participants were both male and female, aging from 20 to 31 years old. 24 American college aged, native speakers also participated in this study. An open-ended DCT were employed for studying participants' responses and verbal reactions to different situations. The results of Chi-square test suggested that Persian and English speakers vary in their gratitude strategies. Persian students' sensitivity to social variables made them use inappropriate expressions and strategies in their English responses. It suggested that Persian learners of English transfer some of their L1 pragmatic norms to L2 because they perceive these norms to be universal.

**Index Terms**—contrastive pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics, speech act, gratitude strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Persian and English native speakers give thanks and reply to thanks on numerous occasions in their everyday-life interactions with family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers. It is necessary to learn how to understand and produce language that is appropriate to the situations in which one is functioning, because failure to do so may cause misunderstandings and miscommunications. Being able to express one's gratitude and respond to expressions of gratitude appropriately in a wide variety of situations ranging from thanking someone for opening a door to expressing one's gratitude for a gift is something that most native speakers (NSs) take for granted.

NSs can draw on the resources of their linguistic and sociocultural knowledge to formulate their speech appropriately for a given context. This knowledge is referred to as pragmatic competence. However, as Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) point out "learners of a foreign language often assume that the expression of gratitude is universal and remain unaware of significant differences in its cross-cultural realization" (p. 1). As a result, neither native speakers nor learners of the target language expect to encounter different strategies in the thanking behaviour in their interactions with each other.

In the area of cross-cultural study of speech acts, researchers have focused on how a particular speech act is linguistically realized in different languages. It is assumed that if speakers of two languages differ in the way they perform the same speech act, then it is predictable that learners of a second language may develop a particular interlanguage for doing that act. Contrastive pragmatic studies like the current work determine the patterns and strategies that native speakers of one language use in different situations. By comparing the patterns of expressing one SA in two languages teachers can equip their students with necessary and appropriate tools for successful communication. Pragmatics has typically been ignored by textbooks and teacher training programs, especially in Iran, and despite the wealth of empirical studies conducted on speech acts in general, few data-based studies have focused on L1 transfer of gratitude expressions.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Study of pragmatic development in a second language or interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) as the study of a second

language use, examines how non native speakers comprehend and produce action in the target language and investigates how L2 learners develop the ability to understand and perform action in a target language . Yet they have similarly drawn a universal conclusion that nonnative speech act behaviors can deviate from native behaviors. (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Faerch & Kasper, 1987; Murphy & Neu, 1996; Olshtain, 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985, 1989; Yu,1999).

Al Falasi (2007) believes that most of the problems that EFL learners face in intercultural communication are mainly pragmatic. Teachers of EFL often choose not to stress pragmatic knowledge in their classrooms, focusing instead on linguistic knowledge. Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh (2004) warn that this might result in pragmatic failure when EFL learners actually communicate with native speakers (NSs) and the only way to minimize pragmatic failure between NSs and NNSs is by acquiring pragmatic competence, that is, the ability to use language effectively in order to understand language in context.

One of the SAs and important discourse functions that learners are likely to encounter in a variety of situations are expressions of gratitude (Coulmas, 1981). The SA of thanking is an expressive act in the classifications of Searle (1976). This act is reactive to the prior actions of the interlocutor. Based on different social variables and also the size of favour the thanking expressions are accompanied by additional acts that directly address the actions of the hearer by way of compliments, expressing indebtedness, and stating the speaker's inability to articulate deep feelings, e. g. You're a lifesaver. Thanks. I'll never forget it. You really can't imagine what this means to me.

Apte's (1974) study is one of the earliest investigations of expressions of gratitude. He compared giving thanks in Marathi and Hindi to expressing gratitude in American English and found that " the usage of gratitude expressions in American culture is much more extensive than in South Asian communities" (p. 84). While in American English giving thanks for favours, gifts or services is considered appropriate and expected, for Marathi and Hindi expressing gratitude to family members or close friends for favours violates the feeling of closeness, as it is the duty of family members and close friends to help each other.

Eisenstein and Bodman (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986, Bodman & Eisenstein 1988) compared the use of expressions of gratitude by groups of participants with different language backgrounds and American English native speakers. They found that while certain language groups performed better than others, e.g. the results of the Russian speakers were better than those of the Japanese speakers, "the problems exhibited by [their] non-native speakers were extensive and severe" (1986, p. 173).

Ohashi's (2000) PhD thesis reveals that Japanese thanking is not the expression of gratitude or appreciation but a symbolic repayment of debt with which the beneficiary redresses the debt-credit imbalance. This result is in line with Miyake (1994) Nakata, (1989), Nakai and Watanabe (2000). Nakamura (2005) comparing English and Japanese thanks noted that while American English native speakers tended to use more compliments when expressing gratitude than Japanese native speakers, Japanese native speakers employed more apologetic expressions.

Janani, on the other hand, investigates the effect of levels of proficiency on gratitude expressions of Persian EFL learners. He claims that the difference between two levels of students was not meaningfully significant. Ghobadi and Fahim (2009), based on the obtained data from the explicit instruction group, indicated that instruction had an impressively positive effect on raising students' sociopragmatic awareness as well as their hindrance of L1 pragmalinguistic transfer to L2.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Participants*

Two groups of subjects participated in this study and these subjects were confined to undergraduate and graduate students. The PNS group had 75 native speakers of Persian at the University of Isfahan and the ANS group also consisted of 24 American college-aged, native speakers. These participants were both male and female, aging from 20 to 31.

#### B. *Instrument*

The instruments used in this study were Nelson English language proficiency test and Discourse Completion Test (DCT). Nelson test included 50 multiple choice items covering grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. There were two pragmatically equivalent versions of the questionnaire, one in English and the other one in Persian. The English version was designed first and then was rendered in Persian. The two versions of English and Persian questionnaire were first given to some native Persian and English speakers to make sure that these devices elicit the desired responses. These ten situations were then given to the students and were used as a basis for comparison.

#### C. *Procedures*

First, the advanced test of Nelson was administrated to our 134 participants, and mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of their scores were calculated. The mean score was 30.38 and the standard deviation was 5.31. The subjects whose scores fell between 0.5 SD (2.65) above the M were considered as high level learners. 75 students were selected for the main study. These 10 situations were designed to reflect combinations of different degrees of power and size of imposition. As power difference could imply differences in both age and status, the addressees in the situations were

designed to be equal or higher in both age and status compared to undergraduate and graduate students. Regarding the social distance between the interlocutors, in this work participants were to interact with people who were familiar with and it can be said that social distance was kept as a controlled variable.

As far as the size of imposition was concerned the big favour indicated either hard work requiring considerable time and/or financial/physical burden for the hearer, or the size of the benefit that the speaker received from the hearer of the conversation; e.g. the favor of a friend who offers 500.00\$ loan to the speaker was considered as a big favor, while giving back the speaker's pen was of fairly low level of imposition, since a small favor involved only momentary actions or an insignificant expense. Persian EFL students were required to answer both the English and the Persian versions of the questionnaire so as to see how they express their gratitude in these situations in their first language and their foreign language. The questionnaire was given to 24 native English speakers in order that it would be possible to compare Persian students' responses with those of native English speakers.

#### D. Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed according to the two major contextual factors, namely, the size of imposition or magnitude of the favor and social status. And in each analysis three groups of responses, Persian (L1), English (L1) and English as the foreign (L2) were examined. A detailed description of the ten scenarios in relation to the combination of the two factors i.e. size of imposition and social status is presented in Table 2. (The number of situations in the table is different from the number of the items in the DCT)

TABLE 1.  
THE DISTRIBUTION OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Gratitude strategies	Native American	Persian EFL	Native Persian
Simple thanking	70%	57%	37.60%
Acknowledging the favor	2%	15%	22%
Complimenting the person/action	15%	2.85%	0.9%
Apologizing	0%	12.45%	18.98%
Asking God for rewarding the person/a good wish	2%	6.95%	15.38%
promising compensation	11%	5.71%	5.12%
Total	100	100	100

TABLE 2.  
FREQUENCY OF GRATITUDE STRATEGIES IN THREE GROUPS OF RESPONSES

Situation	Brief description	Contextual factors	
		Size of imposition	Social status
1	Fixing the computer	+	=
2	500 \$ loan	+	=
3	Cleaning your face	-	=
4	Finding your pen	-	=
5	Salary raise	+	+
6	Recommendation letter	+	+
7	Answering a question	-	+
8	Keeping the door open	-	+
9	Helping with luggage	+	-
10	Bringing coffee	-	-

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The DCT used in this study contains ten scenarios, four scenarios involve higher social status of the addressee, four involve equal social status of the interlocutors, and two situations involve lower social status of the addressee. In each group of the situations related to a special social status, half involve a high size of imposition and the other half involve a low size of imposition. For instance the four items that represent higher social status include two situations for favors with a significant size of imposition and two situations for a relatively small size of imposition, in order that the effect of this social variable regarding different sizes of favors can be investigated.

#### A. Higher Social Status

##### a. Persian speakers

Considering the four items involving an interlocutor with a higher social status (3, 4, 8 & 9), Persian speakers produced different strategies, with respect to the kind and size of the favor. For the third scenario the most common strategy was using motshakeram (Thank you) as a simple expression of gratitude and adding another strategy such as acknowledging the favor. A typical answer to this situation was:

1- Motshaker-am. Kheili lotf kard-id. Thank you. Very favor did-2nd Pl. Thank you. You did a great favor.

The participants produced some other creative responses too. For example some of them stated their happiness because of the boss's satisfaction of their work:

2- Motshaker-am. Khoshhal-am ke az kar-am razi hast-id. Thank you. Happy-1st sing that from work-my satisfied

are-2nd Pl Thank you. I'm happy that you are satisfied with my work.

The responses to the professor (situation 4) were more diverse. Most of the speakers felt more intimacy with the professor and used other simple thanking strategies like *mamnun* and *mersi* (thank you) beside the more formal expression of *motshakeram*. They also considered it necessary to appreciate the Professor because of the allotted time:

3- *Kheili lotf kard-id, Doctor. Bebaksh-id vaqt-e-tun-o gereft-am.*

Very favor did-2nd Pl, Doctor. Subj-forgive-2nd pl time-your-obj marker took-1st sing You made a great favor, Doctor. I'm sorry that I took your time.

4- *Mamnun ostad. In lotf-etun-o faramush nemikon-am. Thanks Professor. This favor-your-obj marker forget don't-1st sing Thanks professor. I don't forget your favor.*

Examining the other two scenarios (8 & 9) which involved relatively small favors our participants employed the following strategies:

Persian speakers thanked their professors because of answering their question and keeping the door open for them, by using simple thanking strategy in addition to using the titles:

5- *Mamnun ostad. Lotf kard-id. Thanks professor. Favor did-2nd Pl Thanks professor. You made a favour.*

6- *Sharmande ostad. Ashamed professor I'm ashamed professor.*

7- *Dast-e-tun dard na-kone. Mamnun Hand-your-Pl pain Neg-marker-do. Thanks May your hand never ache. Thanks.*

Here the responses were kept relatively short because of the size of favor and due to the fact that the speakers didn't have much time and in the scenario of keeping the door open, both of the interlocutors were passing through the door. The Persian speakers used at most two expressions of gratitude in these situations.

One interesting point is that in all of the four situations that speakers are encountered with someone of higher social status, Persian participants used plural pronouns as signs of respect for the superior interlocutor, either in the form of independent pronouns or in the form of verbal endings.

For instance:

8- *Lotf kard-i. (friend) Favour did-2nd sing You did a favor.*

9- *Lotf kard-id/kard-in. (professor/boss) Favour did-2nd Pl You did a favor.*

10- *Dast-et dard nakone. (friend) Hand-your sing pain doesn't May your hand never ache.*

11- *Dast-e-tun dard nakone. (professor/boss) Hand-your Pl pain doesn't May your hand never ache.*

b. Persian learners of English

Persian learners of English expressed their gratitude in these situations with limited variation and kept their utterances relatively short. Many learners tried to add intensifiers to reach the desired level of appropriateness for these big favors. For instance they produced the following utterances:

12- *I really do appreciate it sir.*

13- *That's a kind of you, thank you very much indeed.*

14- *Thanks sir that's very kind of you.*

15- *I'm extremely grateful to you for your kindness.*

For the third situation (the boss) there were learners, however, who thanked God because their work had been satisfactory and recognized:

16- *Thanks God you're pleased with my job.*

Besides the strategy of simple thanking, with various wordings, few learners used a complimenting strategy to appreciate the professor. This pattern was not observed in the case of the boss, however.

17- *Thanks a lot you are such a humble and praiseworthy teacher, thanks.*

English learners resorted to different strategies for handling situation 8 and 9. These learners used simple thanking and sometimes added titles:

18- *Thanks a lot*

19- *Thank you sir*

20- *Thanks for your kindness*

21- *That's very kind of you. Thanks.*

22- *Thanks sir that's very kind of you.*

More creative responses included expressing thanks in addition to wishing something good for the hearer:

23- *Thank you very much. Have a nice day.*

and, of course, expressing apology:

24- *I'm sorry. Thanks.*

25- *Thanks sir. You really made me ashamed.*

c. American speakers

Looking at the Americans common strategies for these two situations it became evident that they didn't use any especial strategy and as our data in the previous section showed they resorted to simple thanking as the dominant pattern (70%).

26- *thank you very much*

27- *Thank you. Thank you so much.*

In the third scenario some American students expressed their pleasure and happiness of the attention that had been

paid to their work. It seemed that compared with Persian students, they did not think that it was merely the favor of the company president; rather, raising the salary was considered to be one's own achievement:

28- I'm glad to work for a company that recognizes my work.

29- I am happy that you paid attention to my work. Thank you.

One important difference in these situations between American and Persian students seemed to be the use of titles in addressing, with gratitude expressions. For example many Persian speakers used titles like *ostad*, *doctor*, *agha*, *jenabe raeis*, etc. in Persian and *professor*, *Doctor*, *Sir*, *Mr. Boss*, etc. in their English interlanguage performance language, respectively.

Nearly all American speakers, however, employed one expression of gratitude in the situations that represented small sizes of imposition on the speaker. Simple thanking, and more specifically, thank you, was the strategy that these participants considered most appropriate for these scenarios:

30- Thank you very much.

31- Thank you.

32- Thanks.

One interesting point observed was that generally in all of these situations, involving both big and small favors, participants tried to keep their utterances relatively short and brief. This result is in line with Eisenstein and Bodman's findings (1986) and confirms one aspect of Wolfson's Bulge Theory (1989), identifying brevity in communications between socially distant interlocutors.

### B. *Equal Social Status*

Whenever our participants were encountered with someone who had the same social status as them, they produced various and creative speech act sets depending on the kind and size of the favor. The first two scenarios of the questionnaire represented situations in which a classmate or a friend try to solve a problem for the speaker and the speakers felt greatly indebted to them.

In the first scenario the speaker had some problem with a computer program and asked a classmate to help him/her. The classmate managed to solve the problem and showed how to avoid the problem in the future. In the next scenario the speaker needed 500.00\$ and his/her friend offered to lend the money.

Scenarios 6 and 7 represent real life situations in which a friend does a relatively small favor to his/her friend. As mentioned before, small favor involves only momentary actions or favors with insignificant expense. For instance in the sixth scenario at the table in a restaurant a friend says, 'You have something on your face.' In the seventh scenario one of your classmates finds your pen, puts it into his/her bag and gives it back to you the following day before a seminar. Compared to the last two items which referred to big favors, here the speakers employed a limited range of strategies.

#### a. *Persian speakers*

Persian participants used different strategies of gratitude for each situation. All speakers used simple thanking at the beginning, middle or last of the sentence. Thanking was accompanied by acknowledging the favour, asking God for rewarding the favourer/wishing s.th good, apologizing, promising compensation and complimenting the favourer:

33- Vay mersi, kheili lotf kard-i. I-sha-la jobran kon-am.

Oh thanks, very favour did-2nd sing.if-wants-God compensation do-1st sing Oh thanks, you did a great favour. If God is willing I'll compensate.

34- Khoda kheir-et bede. Kheili komak-am kard-i, mamnun.

God blessing- to you subj-give-3rd sing. Very help-me did-2nd sing, thanks God bless you. You helped me very much. Thanks.

35- Mersi pesar. Vaqean sharmand-am kard-i.

Thanks boy. Really ashamed-me did-2nd sing Thanks boy. You really made me ashamed.

In the case of lending the money, Persian participants employed the same strategies and produced similar responses. The only significant difference was using the strategy of promising compensation. Many speakers considered it necessary to mention the kind or exact time of repayment. These statements can be considered supporting acts that are added to the head acts of thanking. For example they stated that:

36- Vay sharmande, nemidunam chejuri azat tashokor konam. Jobran mikonam. Oh ashamed, don't know-1st sing how-kind from-you thank do-1st sing. compensation do-1st sing. Oh I'm ashamed, I don't know how to thank you. I'll compensate.

37- Mersi kheili lotf kardi, ta akhar-e hafte pul-et-o barmigardunam.

Thanks very favor did-2nd sing, by end-of week money-your-obj marker payback- 1st sing Thanks you did a great favor, by the end of the week I'll payback your money.

When a friend brought attention to something on the speaker's face, Persian participants usually asked if their face had been cleaned and then simply thanked their friends:

38- Pak shod? Mersi Clean became-3rd sing? Thanks Is it removed? Thanks.

Many students just used *mersi* and *mamnun* (thanks) and since they had been given the choice to opt out a situation if they think no appreciation is needed, some of the participants didn't use any thanking expression.

The favor of the classmate that gave the pen back was more acknowledged by our Persian participants than bringing attention to something on the face. In addition to simple thanking strategy, *mersi* and *mamnun* (thanks), Persian

speakers employed acknowledging the favor:

39- Mamnun, lotf kard-i. Thanks, favor did-2nd sing Thanks, you did a favor.

40- Xeili lotf kard-i, mersi. Very favor did-2nd sing, thanks You did a great favor, thanks.

Asking God for rewarding the person/a good wish was also used in the form of:

41- Dast-et dard nakone. Hand-your sing pain doesn't May your hand never ache.

For this scenario Persian speakers used another strategy that was not used in any other situation of our questionnaire. Considering the value and the price of the pen, some speakers referred to the value of their interlocutors and tried to raise their worth by lowering the value of the pen.

42- Qabel-i na-dasht. orth-any Neg-marker-had It (pen) didn't worth. Or

43- Qabele to ro na-dasht. Worth-of you obj-marker Neg-marker-had It didn't worth you.

On the other hand the speakers indirectly offer their pen and imply that the hearer could keep it for him/herself. Accordingly, this semantic formula can be considered a strategy of ostensible speech act.

b. Persian learners of English

Persian learners of English produced similar strategies in their English responses to these items. After the strategy of simple thanking, acknowledging the favor was the most frequent strategy for these two scenarios:

44- Thank you very much. You really helped me I don't know how to appreciate you.

45- Thank you an ocean, you were a great help to me.

46- Oh that is great. It's your favor, thanks.

As might be expected, apologizing was used by many learners for expressing gratitude:

47- Thank you very much. I'm really sorry that I got you in trouble.

48- Thank you an ocean. You made me shy.

49- Sorry dear, you really helped me. Thank you very much.

50- That is very nice of you; I didn't want you to get in trouble.

When responding in English, nearly all Persian participants employed simple thanking for both of these situations. One of the differences in strategy use between these two situations was adding different intensifiers to the responses of the seventh scenario.

51- Thank you very much.

52- Thanks a lot.

53- Thank you very much indeed.

c. American speakers

American university students appreciated their interlocutors with different ways of simple thanking. For the first scenario, they preferred complementing their interlocutors and giving some titles to the other strategies:

54- Thanks for your help, you are a life saver.

55- You are a genuine miracle worker.

56- You are a computer God.

57- Dude you are a life saver. Thanks

58- You computer geek!

59- Hey bro, thanks for fixin up my suit.

There were, however, other speakers who combined various strategies and produced longer responses, for example:

60- Dude you are a life saver. Thanks so much for fixing my computer and saving me thousands of dollars.

61- Thanks, you have no idea how much this is appreciated.

62- Thanks a lot. I'd never have worked it out on my own.

63- I appreciate your skill, you are a computer God.

In the case of lending the money, after simple thanking, promising compensation was used by many speakers and stating one's intent to reciprocate appeared to be much more standardized:

64- Thank you. If there is anything I can ever do to repay you just let me know.

65- You dog! If you need somethin' just holla at me.

American speakers usually asked questions to make sure that their friend is completely willing to lend the money and it is no problem to them. For instance many participants before accepting the check asked:

66- Are you sure? Great, thanks.

67- Really? You are sure? Ok, thanks.

68- You don't mind? Thanks very much.

American speakers used simple thanking for these situations as well and it seemed that for these situations the responses of Native Americans and Persian learners of English were quit similar. The only observed difference was using expressions like cheers and ta by a number of American respondents.

### C. Lower Social Status

a. Persian speakers

The DCT questionnaire used in this study contained two situations in which the speakers wanted to communicate with someone of lower social status. In order to control the effect of age for people of lower social position, in these scenarios speakers were to interact with people who are younger and possess a lower social status. In many cultures

such as Persian culture elder people are treated politely and respectably, no matter what social status they may have.

Accordingly there were two situations (5 & 10) that speakers were faced with younger interlocutors from a lower social status. In the fifth situation that tended to reflect a big favor our participant was coming back from a trip and his/her neighbor's son helps him/her with luggage and bags and brings them to the speakers flat. In the tenth scenario a student that the participant tutored brought him/her coffee. This scenario was placed in the DCT in order to represent a relatively small and expected favor.

Persian speakers used *mersi* (thanks) besides other strategies such as asking God for rewarding the favorer/wishing s.th good in utterances like:

69- *Mersi aziz-am. Khoda kheir-et bede, kheili komakam kardi.*

Thanks dear-my. God blessing- to you subj-give-3rd sing.

Very help-me did-2nd sing Thanks dear. God bless you, you helped me very much.

70- *Dast-et dard nakone. Mersi*

Hand-your sing pain doesn't. Thanks

May your hand never ache. Thanks

It is generally supposed that speakers in higher positions are capable of evaluating the performance of those of lower status, thus some speakers utilized compliments as positive reinforcements:

71- *Dast-et dard nakone, mard-i shod-ia!*

Hand-your sing pain doesn't. Man-a become-you

May your hand never ache. You have become a man!

72- *Mersi, che pesare aqaei!*

Thanks, what boy gentleman

Thanks, what a gentleman boy!

b. Persian learners of English

The responses of Persian EFL students in this situation were similar to their responses in situations 1 and 2. The use of intensifiers and qualifiers were quite obvious in these situations:

73- You really helped me. Thank you very much.

74- Thank you very much. I really appreciate you.

75- Thanks a million. I don't forget your favor.

In the last situation, many learners using one expression of gratitude, simply thanked their students for bringing them coffee.

76- Thank you very much.

77- Thanks a lot.

78- Oh, thank you.

c. American speakers

American students, on the other hand used simple thanking and complimenting in the fifth situation. Here the neighbour's son was appreciated by expressions like:

79- Thank you.

80- Thanks, it was great.

81- Hey man! Thank you very much.

In the last situation, as might be expected, all of the respondents employed simple thanking strategies including the more informal expression of cheers, to appreciate their students:

82- Oh, thanks.

83- Thanks.

84- Cheers.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present study explored the gratitude expressions of native Persians, Persian learners of English in comparison with the data from native speakers of American English. The findings of the study showed that there are differences between the strategies that are employed for expressing gratitude in Persian and English languages.

As indicated in the table, the NAs did not change their strategy selections according to these variables frequently since they used simple thanking almost exclusively. The subjects of this group used considerable ratios of thanking + compliment or compliment only in situations 1, 2 and 5 when the interlocutor belonged to the equal or lower social position and the received favor was of significant size of imposition.

Moreover, it was found that the PN speakers reacted more sensitively both to social status differences and to the size of imposition. While they changed their responses according to the size of imposition, a closer look revealed that they used more thanking expressions for a big favor (situations 1&2) compared to situations representing small favor (situations 6 &7).

English learners intended their responses to be polite but they were not appropriate to the social norms of American society. For example, their expressions for thanking their boss and thanking their neighbor's son were quit similar both in terms of strategy and in the number of expressions used. Generally it seemed that they were not equipped with

appropriate tools to express gratitude according to the status of the interlocutor. Whereas Persian participants responded considerably to each social variable in their native language, in their foreign language it seemed that they didn't notice these variables and just reacted to the size of favor by adding intensifiers.

This suggests that it's not enough to build learners' linguistic competence and that it might be necessary to also develop their sociocultural competence, which will in turn, develop their understanding of the frames of interaction and rules of politeness within the target culture. It is also important to provide learners with knowledge of the linguistic forms or stylistic strategies appropriate to convey the intended meaning in different contexts or situations.

#### APPENDIX A

Age:                      Gender: male\female                      Education:

Please read the following situations in English and then their Persian translation. After reading each scenario write whatever you would naturally say in that situation in both versions (English and Persian). Say as much or as little as you feel appropriate for each situation. There may be situations in which you would say nothing, in such a case leave out the question. (Your interlocutor's gender is the same as yours).

1- You are having problems with a computer program your classmate has used this program for quite some time. You ask him/her to help you. He/she manages to solve the problem and show you how to avoid it in the future. What do you say?

2- You find yourself in sudden need of money—\$500.00. You mention this to a friend. Your friend immediately offers to lend it to you. You are surprised and very grateful. Your friend writes out a check for \$500.00 and gives it to you. At first you say, 'Oh no, I didn't mean for you to lend it to me. I couldn't take it.' Your friend says, 'Really, it's all right. What are friends for?' After your friend insists again, you take the check.

3- You work for a large company. The President of the company calls you into his office. He tells you to sit down. You feel a little nervous, because you have only been working there for six months. The President says, 'You're doing a good job. In fact, we are so pleased with you that I'm going to give you a \$20.00 a week raise.'

4- You ask your professor to write a recommendation letter because you need it for being employed in an institute. He accepts to write the letter and starts writing it willingly.

5- You are coming back from a trip. When you want to enter your apartment you see your neighbour's son who is a school boy. He helps you with your luggage and bags and brings them to your place.

6. At the table in a restaurant a friend says, 'You have something on your face.' You ask where. Your friend tells you. You rub your face and ask, 'Is it off?' Your friend says that it is.

7- You left your pen in a lecture. One of your classmates puts it into his/her bag and gives it back to you the following day before a seminar.

S/he: Here - this is yours, isn't it?

8- You were not able to attend the last seminar and have difficulties understanding one of the points of this seminar. After the seminar is over, you approach the lecturer, who has a very good relationship with all of his students. You tell him that you did not understand one of the points. He explains the point, when you want to leave,

9- You are carrying a lot of books into the university library. One of your professors who is coming out of the building keeps the door open for you. What do you say to the man/woman?

10- You tutor a school boy in English. After forty minutes you give him a short break and he brings you a cup of coffee.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Al-Falasi, H. (2007). Just say 'thank you': A study of compliment responses. *The linguistic journal*, 2 (1). Retrieved April 17, 2008, from www. Linguistics-journal.com
- [2] Apte, M. L. (1974). 'Thank you' and South Asian Languages: A comparative sociolinguistic study. *Linguistics*, 136, 67-89.
- [3] Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Dörnyei, Z. (1997). Pragmatic awareness and instructed L2 learning: An empirical investigation. Paper presented at the AAAL 1997 Conference, Orlando.
- [4] Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied linguistics*, 5, 196-213.
- [5] Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.
- [6] Bodman, J., & Eisenstein, M. (1988). May God increase your bounty: The expressions of gratitude in English by native and non-native speakers. *Cross currents*, 15(1), 1-21.
- [7] Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Cohen, A. (1996). Speech Acts. In S.L. McKay, & N.H. Hornberger (Eds.), *sociolinguistics and language teaching* (pp. 383 – 420). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Coulmas, F. (1981). 'Poison to your soul': Thanks and apologies contrastively viewed. In F. Coulmas, *Conversational routine* (pp. 69-91). The Hague: Mouton.
- [10] Eisenstein, M., & Bodman, J. (1986). 'I very appreciate': Expressions of gratitude by native and non-native speakers of American English. *Applied linguistics*, 7(2), 167-185.
- [11] Eslami-Rasekh, Z., Eslami-Rasekh, A., & Fattahi, A. (2004). The effect of explicit metapragmatic instruction on the speech act

- awareness of advanced EFL students. *TESL-EJ*, 8(2).
- [12] Faerch, C. & Kasper, G. (1987). Perspectives on language transfer. *Applied linguistics*, 8(2), 116-136.
- [13] Ghobadi, A., Fahim, M. (2009). The effect of explicit teaching of English 'thanking formulas' on Iranian EFL intermediate level students at English language institutes. *Science Direct*, 37, 526-537.
- [14] Janani, M. (1995). Pragmatic Failure of Iranian Language Learners in Expressing Gratitude. MA thesis. Tarbiat Modarres University. Tehran, Iran
- [15] Kasper, G. (1989). Interactive procedures in interlanguage discourse. In W. Oleksy (Ed.), *Contrastive Pragmatics*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- [16] Kasper, G. (1992). Pragmatic transfer. *Second Language Research*, 8 (3), 203-231.
- [17] Miyake, K. (1994). 'Wabi' igaide tsukawareru wabi hyogen: Sono tayoukatno jittaito uchi, soto, yosono kankei (Formulaic apologies in non-apologetic situations: A data analysis and its relation with the concept of uchi-soto-yoso'). *Nihongo Kyouiku (Journal of Japanese Language Teaching)*, 82, 134-146.
- [18] Murphy, B., & Neu, J. (1996). My grade's too low: the speech act set of complaining. In S. Gass & J. Neu (Eds.).
- [19] Nakai, M., & Watanabe, Y. (2000). A study on expressions of gratitude in Japanese and American English. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 200-216.
- [20] Nakamura, K. (2005). Appreciation Strategies of German and Japanese Native Speakers and German Learners of Japanese. Proceedings of the 4th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference. May 14-15, 2005. Tokyo, Japan: Tokyo Keizai University
- [21] Nakata, T. (1989). Hatsuwa kouji to shiteno chinsha to kansha: Nichi-ei hikaku (Apology and thanks as speech acts: Comparison between Japanese and English). *Nihongo Kyouiku*, 68, 191-203.
- [22] Olshtain, E. (1983). Socio-cultural competence and language transfer. The case of apology. In S. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.). *Language Transfer in Language Learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.
- [23] Olshtain, E. & Blum-Kulka, S. (1985). Cross-cultural pragmatics and the testing of communicative competence. *Language Testing*, 2 (1), 16-30.
- [24] Olshtain, E., & Cohen, A. D. (1989). Speech act behaviour across languages. In H. Dechert & M. Raupach (Eds.), *Transfer in language production* (pp.53-67). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- [25] Searle, J. R. (1969), *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [26] Wolfson, N. (1989). The social dynamics of native and non-native variation in a complimenting. In M. Eisenstein (Ed).
- [27] Yu, M. C. (1999). Universalistic and culture-specific perspectives on variation in the acquisition of pragmatic competence in a second language. *Pragmatics*, 9(2), 281-312

**Vajiheh Ahar** was born in 1984, Shiraz, Iran. She received her B.A in Teaching English as a foreign language from Shiraz University. In 2010 she received her M.A from Isfahan University, Iran. She has worked in the field of sociolinguistics and her thesis was a detailed contrastive pragmatic study of gratitude expressions in English and Persian and also in the interlanguage of Persian learners of English.

**Abbas Eslami-Raskh** is an assistant professor in Isfahan University, Iran. He received his B.A. in English Language, English Department of Isfahan University M.A. in Linguistics, English Department of Shiraz University Ph.D. in Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Monash University, Australia. His research interests are issues related to intercultural pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics, and sociocultural issues related to teaching ESL/EFL and he has published different articles in these fields.

# Corpus-based Stylistic Analysis of Tourism English

Ning Kang

Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China  
Email: kangningkn@163.com

Qiaofeng Yu

Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China  
Email: sunnyqf@163.com

**Abstract**—Tourism English belongs to the English for Specific Purpose (ESP) and it has its own stylistic features. This paper aims at analyzing the stylistic features of tourism English. Firstly, a large amount of authentic materials are collected from official tourism websites of Britain and the U.S., and then a corpus named Tourism English Corpus (TEC) is compiled. Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English (FLOB) is used as the reference corpus to make comparisons. The results indicate that TEC has its own stylistic features. The average word length of TEC is a little longer than that of FLOB. As for the lexical density, there is no significant difference between the two corpora. The distribution of content words shows that content words of TEC overweigh that of FLOB with the facts that nouns are the most frequently used in both corpora and there are more nouns and adjectives but less verbs, proverbs, and pronouns in TEC. Moreover, a larger quantity of proper nouns, scenic nouns, nouns of direction, descriptive adjectives with positive meaning, general superlative adjectives, and frequent use of verbs with the meaning of visiting and enjoying are employed in TEC. Lastly, the average sentence length of TEC is shorter than that of FLOB. All these contribute to the distinctive features of tourism English. It is hoped that the research could enrich the study of tourism English and promote the translation and learning of tourism English.

**Index Terms**—tourism English, corpus, stylistic features

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Purpose and Significance of the Study

As the globalization and informationization come into full play, the chances of communication have been enhanced all over the world which also has greatly promoted the international tourism exchanges. As a result, tourism English, as an important medium of international tourism communication, is widely used in tourism industry. Tourism English has its own features in that the tourism covers large amounts of information. Moreover, eastern and western countries differ in many aspects, such as social system, historical background and geographical environment, which determine that westerners and easterners have different intentions, modes of thinking and appreciation of beauty. So people attach much importance to the study of tourism English.

Nowadays, the study of the tourism English mainly focuses on the study of genre and its functional analysis. But few studies have been conducted from the perspective of stylistic analysis. What's more, these studies are not profound enough to provide a clear framework. Therefore, it is of great significance to conduct a stylistic analysis of tourism English.

The popularization of the Internet makes tourism websites a perfect approach to gain more traveling information and attract more potential tourists. It offers a large amount of information concerning tourism. The materials to be studied in this paper are chosen from official tourism websites of Britain and the United States. At the same time, corpus has been widely employed in the study of practical problems. It has become a useful instrument for the researchers to conduct stylistic studies. Therefore, a corpus-based stylistic analysis is adopted. Generally, a corpus-based study has two functions: to provide new approaches to probe into language and to promote the theoretical thinking of language on the basis of corpus which derives from a large number of great authentic facts and statistics of language. We can observe the language patterns which we did not realize or realize little before.

This paper aims to establish a Tourism English Corpus (TEC) and conducts comparisons with FLOB—a general English Corpus. By this way, features of the tourism English will be analyzed and presented clearly, scientifically and systematically so as to change the stereotype of intuitional analysis and further promote the development of the study of tourism English.

The results of this study, on one hand, will contribute to the translation of tourism English, on the other hand, are helpful for students to learn tourism English and write this kind of articles. Furthermore, it will broaden the scope of stylistics analysis, especially stylistic analysis of tourism texts.

### B. *Methodology and Instruments*

The development of computer technology makes it possible to collect, label, observe and analyze linguistic data on a large scale, and it also provides people with a more macroscopical perspective to know language systematically and scientifically. Consequently, the corpus-based study is widely applied and highly popularized, and has made remarkable strides in many aspects in recent years.

Therefore, a corpus-based study is carried on in this paper to investigate the features of tourism English. The first step is to collect materials from the official tourism websites of Britain and the U.S., and then a corpus of tourism English is established after selection. The method for doing analysis is quantitative in the way of adopting some language analytical tools: Claws 4 for corpus annotation, WordSmith 3.0 and AntConc 3.2 for retrieval analysis. Besides, with the aid of FLOB (Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English), a corpus of general English representing the language of the early 1990s, a comparison is made between language of tourism English and that of common English in order to better present the features of Tourism English.

Instruments:

Claws 4 (the Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System) is applied in this paper for POS tagging of the corpus. Claws software was developed by the Unit for Computer Research on the English Language at Lancaster in 1980s. It has consistently achieved 96-97% accuracy.

AntConc 3.2 is free, simple, and easy to use corpus analysis software. It has several effective tools including powerful concordancers, word and keyword frequency generator, tools for cluster and lexical bundle analysis, and a word distribution, etc.

WordSmith Software designed by Mike Scott is an integrated suite for looking at how words behave in texts. It has three main functions: concordance, wordlist and key word statistics. WordSmith 3.0 in this paper is used to calculate the Type-Token Ratio, word length and sentence length of the corpus.

The Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British (FLOB) is produced jointly with Geoffrey Leech and Nick Smith representing the language of the early 1990s. FLOB, approximate 1 million words, contains 500 texts of around 2000 words each, distributed across 15 text categories.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Style and Stylistics*

Although style is a familiar word to us and used frequently in literary criticism and other fields, it is challenging to offer a precise definition. Crystal and Davy (1969) define that style has four aspects of meanings when investigating English style. Firstly, it may refer to some or all of the language habits (i.e. speech and writing habits) of one person. Secondly, style may refer to some or all of the language habits shared by a group of people at one time, over a period of time. Thirdly, the word "style" is given a more restricted meaning when it is used in an evaluative sense, referring to the effectiveness of a mode of expression. The last aspect of style, which is the widespread use of "style", refers to literary language.

Different situations tend to generate different varieties of a language which, in turn, show different linguistic features, so style can be seen as the various characteristic uses of language that a person or a group of persons make in various social contexts (Xu Youzhi, 1992).

Stylistics is the study of varieties of language whose properties position that language in context, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language.

According to the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richard, 2005), stylistics is a branch of linguistics which studies the characteristics of situational-distinctive use of language, with particular reference to literary language. Xu (1992) puts forward the concept that stylistics is a discipline that studies the sum of stylistic features of the different varieties of language. Hu (2001) maintains that stylistics is the branch of linguistics that studies language style. It explains the relationship between the text and its context. Wright and Hope (2000) states that that stylistics studies the use of language in specific contexts and attempts to account for the characteristics that mark the language use of individuals and social group.

As mentioned above, the definitions of stylistics are all associated with style and context. Different contexts lead to different styles of writings, which become the various forms of stylistics.

### B. *Stylistic Analysis*

Stylistic analysis, "the study of patterns formed in the process of the linguistic encoding of information, is of importance to any major research focusing upon or dependent upon the production or analysis of language" (Sedelow, 1966). According to Wang (1980), English stylistic analysis describes and investigates the language characteristics of each English style, and emphasizes that each style has its own typical ways of expression, which demand the choices of language to be equal to its purposes.

Reinhard (1995) holds the view that stylistic analysis on linguistics refers to the identification of patterns of usage in speech and writing. In other words, stylistic analysis is to analyze the use of language with the purpose of identifying some linguistic features, ranging from the general mass of linguistic feature to those which are restricted to some social

contexts. Crystal and Davy (1969) say that stylistics analysis can be done in the lexical, grammatical, syntactic and semantic criteria.

Generally, stylistic analysis consists of qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis. Most of the previous researches apply the qualitative analysis, but it fades its color since 1960s when computational analysis came into being. Being statistic-based, immediate and practical, the corpus approach is often used to explore the subject of the quantitative stylistic analysis.

### C. *Previous Study of Tourism English*

Tourism English has its own stylistic features. In general, tourism English is natural and to the point, which tends to use simple words and sentences to describe or record the concrete stuff and facts just like taking a picture. Besides, tourism English tends to use objective and concise language in a clean logical way (Ding, 2008).

Tourism English, as the name suggests, is the English language used for tourism. As "language has to serve various purposes as there are different type of occasions for using it", tourism English has its own language functions which are mainly informative function, directive function, and evocative function, or informational function, aesthetic function, descriptive function, and persuasive function (Hu, 2001 ).

Few studies have been conducted on the stylistic features of the tourist English. Ding Dagang (2008) concluded some stylistic features of tourism: tourism English is prudent in word use, especially the key words. Loanwords, specific vocabulary, abbreviations and compound words appear frequently. Moreover, there are other characteristics: nominalization of verb phrases, the frequent usage of passive voice and present tense, the frequent employment of descriptive adjectives, superlative adjectives, imperative sentences, etc.

Sun (2009) conducts a stylistic analysis of UK's online tourist information text, in which she makes a contrast between the self-built corpus – United Kingdom's Tourist Information Texts about Tourist Attractions (UKTA) and other two corpora – JDEST (Jiao Da English for Science and Technology) and LOB (Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus), by using computational methods to conclude features of UK's online tourist information text: UKTA varies more in vocabulary than JDEST and less than LOB. As for the word length, UKTA is longer than that of LOB and shorter than that of JDEST. Large amount of nouns, adjectives and numerals are used to make the texts informative, appealing and accurate. Besides, the sentence length of UKTA is longer than that of JDEST and shorter than that of LOB. More exclamatory and imperative sentences are employed. Active sentence are preferred, while passive sentences employed are more than those of LOB and less than those of JDEST.

As mentioned above, it is only Sun Xin who makes a study on tourism English based on corpora. She collects materials only from British websites and makes analysis among self-built corpus UKTA, JDEST and LOB. Different from that, this paper establishes the corpus by collecting materials from the official websites of both Britain and the U.S., and makes contrasts between that and FLOB. FLOB is a corpus representing general English of 1990s while LOB representing general English of 1960s.

## III. PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

### A. *Compiling the Tourism English Corpus*

The process of compiling the Tourism English Corpus (TEC) will be introduced in this part. There are two major steps in compiling the corpus as follows.

#### Sampling

In the research, samples of tourism English are chosen from official tourism websites in Britain and the U.S., such as [www.enjoyengland.com](http://www.enjoyengland.com), [www.usatourism.com](http://www.usatourism.com), [www.usatourist.com](http://www.usatourist.com), [www.gohawaii.com](http://www.gohawaii.com), which are popular and accessible. These materials selected for analysis cover a wide range of landscapes: national parks, mountains, rivers, waterfalls, islands, beaches, and historical sites, etc. These natural landscapes and sceneries of humanities give an account of their history, their culture and folk customs, which illustrate different cultural backgrounds of different countries. In the process of selecting data, descriptive language is focused on but commercial and advertising information is not included. The tourism English text is saved in the format of txt as the self-built corpus.

#### Corpus Annotation

Corpus annotation means marking up the running words in the corpus with their part of speech (POS) tags. Therefore, the tagged corpus can be searched to perform not only the word-form but also a certain linguistic category they belong to. Tagset, a set of rules for tagging words, is the criterion for tagging every word in the corpus. Such tags are typically taken to be atomic labels attached to words, denoting the part of speech of the word, together with morphosyntactic information, e.g. they specify the word as a singular proper noun, a general comparative adjective, or an ordinal number. In the present study, we employ Claws 7 Tagset, which contains 137 tags. Claws 4 together with Claws 7 tagset is used in this paper for POS tagging. Claws software totally adopts probability statistics method, which makes the accuracy to the point of 96-97%.

### B. *Extracting Data*

In this part, quantitative analysis of tourism English will be conducted with the aid of the analysis software—WordSmith 3.0, and AntConc 3.2. The available data are shown in tables and figures and the comparison with the corpus FLOB is made, which clearly presents the stylistic features of tourism English.

#### Word length

Word length constitutes as a major factor which plays a vital part in the demonstration of the characteristics of a text. As it is well known that word is the basic unit of language with the combination of form and meaning. So words with their distinguished features matter much in certain stylistic effects.

Generally speaking, the shorter and simpler the words are, the less difficult and complicated the text will be; the longer and more complex the words are, the more difficult and formal the text will be (Sun Xin, 2009). Usually, the long and difficult words are used to describe abstract, professional, or complex situations.

Word length in this paper is calculated by the letter number, which is widely adopted. Both average word length and word length are extracted by WordSmith 3.0.

#### Lexical Density

When it comes to lexical density, Token/Type Ratio (TTR) will be firstly introduced. The token-type ratio (TTR) is a measure of lexical density, which refers to the ratio between the types and the tokens in any given text. Token is the total number of words in a text, while type refers to the number of words which are left after the deletion of the repetition ones. Lexical density is calculated by WordSmith 3.0 and expressed as a percentage by formula:

$$TTR = (\text{NO. of tokens} / \text{NO. of types}) * 100\%$$

Generally speaking, a higher TTR hints that a text is lexically diverse, or rich in word use, whereas, a lower TTR suggests that there are a lot of repetition of words.

However, accounting for the limitation of the English vocabulary, the number of token will increase if the text enlarges whereas the type will not grow synchronously. When the capacity of the text reaches a certain level, the augments of the type will be smaller and smaller, and the ratio between token and type cannot represent the variability of the use of words. Therefore, Standard Token/Type Ratio (STTR) has to be employed to indicate the lexical density, which is an average value of token/type ratios to be calculated in batches to length (Yang Huizhong, 2002).

#### Distribution of Content Words

According to *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richard, 2005), content words are words which refer to a thing, quality, state, or action and which have meanings when the words are used alone. Content words are mainly nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronoun. This part mainly focuses on content words instead of function words, for distribution of content words could display the characteristic of a text, such as nominal preference or verbal preference. Therefore, the study of distribution of content words has practical significances in stylistic analysis of this paper.

Frequency distributions of content words of TEC and FLOB are demonstrated. When a corpus has been annotated with parts of speech, it will be easier to calculate the proportion of content words respectively, employing AntConc 3.2.

#### Keywords

Using WordSmith 3.0, it is possible to compare the frequencies in one wordlist against another in order to determine which words occur statistically more often. All of the words that occur more often than expected in one file when compared to another are compiled together into another list, called a keyword list.

Keywords are those words whose frequency is usually high or low in comparison with a reference corpus. Keywords analysis is useful in suggesting lexical features and further examination. This part aims to observe the top 100 keywords in detail in order to conclude the exact characteristics of tourism English.

#### Sentence Length

Sentence length is also one of the important factors that determine the stylistic characteristics. Basically, sentence length refers to the number of words consisting of the sentence, from the initial letter to a full-stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark. Short sentences mean simple structures which could convey meaning concisely and are easy to be understood. What's more, the information which the short sentences express is able to grasp the readers' attention swiftly. Whereas long sentences with complex structures are usually applied in more formal occasions in that they are rich in content, logical in structure, and detailed in description.

By running the WordSmith 3.0 software, the average sentence lengths in TEC and FLOB are obtained respectively.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the comparisons between TEC and FLOB are made and the extracted data are shown in tables and figures, which have clearly presented the stylistic features of tourism English.

### A. Word Length

TABLE 1  
AVE. WORD LENGTH (IN LETTERS) IN TEC AND FLOB

Corpus	TEC	FLOB
Word Length		
Ave. Word Length (letters)	4.77	4.35

From Table 1 we can see that the average word length of TEC is a little longer than that of FLOB. So it suggests that the formality and difficulty of words in TEC is quite the same as in FLOB. Close to the difficulty of general English, the result is in accordance with the tourism English’s feature of popularization.

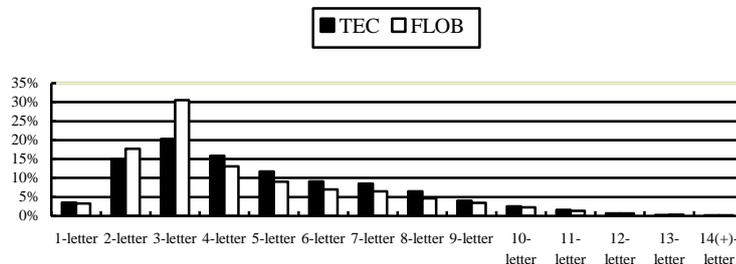


Figure 1 Word Length in TEC and FLOB

Fig. 1 gives us the details on word length in the two corpora. It is obvious that the frequent word length in these two corpora ranges from one-letter to twelve-letter. The words with thirteen or over thirteen letters are rare. The two-letter words, three-letter words, four-letter words and five-letter words account for a large percentage in both corpora. Moreover, the percentage of two-letter words and three-letter words of TEC is clearly lower than FLOB while four-letter words, five-letter words, six-letter words, seven-letter words and eight-letter words are more frequently used in TEC. The frequent use of longer words indicates that words in TEC seem a little difficult than in FLOB. It is mainly due to the fact that the tourism English is to introduce large amounts of practical information such as location, history, culture, etc. In other words, more interdisciplinary words and proper nouns occur, increasing the length and difficulty of words. In contrast, the shorter and easier words are adopted in FLOB in that they represent the general English of 1990s and need to be simple and close to daily-used ones.

B. Lexical Density

TABLE 2  
COMPARISON OF STTR IN TEC AND FLOB

Corpus	TEC	FLOB
TTR		
Tokens	107,981	1,237,424
Types	10,789	45,089
Token/Type Ratio	9.99	3.64
Standard Token/Type Ratio	44.96	45.52

It can be seen clearly from the table that TTR of TEC overweighs that of FLOB. However, STTR of TEC is more or less similar to that of FLOB. That is to say, there seems little difference between the two corpora in vocabulary richness after large amounts of texts are collected.

Through analysis, the possible reasons for similar STTRs of TEC and FLOB are as follows. It is known that tourism is an interdisciplinary industry which leads to its rich vocabularies covering many aspects such as history, geography, architecture, news, religion, etc. Consequently, tourism English possesses the nature of being integrative, complicated, and interdisciplinary. At the same time, FLOB, as a corpus representing general English of 1990s, is also a mini-encyclopedia of daily life. It is no doubt that FLOB covers many fields. Both of the two corpora are representative and based on numerous text materials. As we can see, the different TTRs but similar STTR indicate that the number of tokens increases as the text enlarges whereas the types do not grow synchronously. Thus, there is an accompanying change in the ratio between token and type. Therefore, there is no difference between TEC and FLOB in lexical density according to the similar STTR.

C. Distribution of Content Words

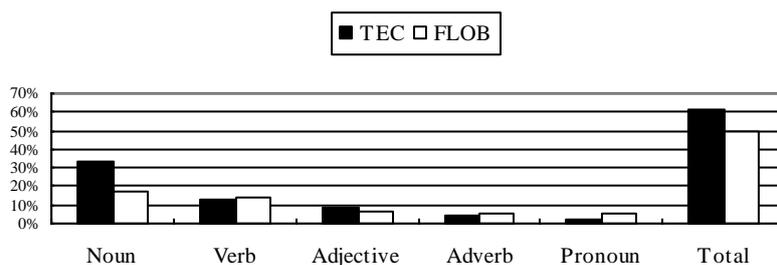


Figure 2 CONTENT Words in TEC and FLOB

From the above table, we can find that content words in TEC vary greatly from that in FLOB. The results apparently present that nouns are most frequently used in these two corpora, and verbs and adjectives also cover a high percentage. There are more nouns, adjectives but fewer verbs, adverbs and pronouns in TEC than in FLOB. Totally speaking, the percentage of content words in TEC greatly overweighs that in FLOB.

According to Ding Dagang (2008), the high percentage of nouns in TEC demonstrates the feature of tourism English. On one hand, a large number of nouns and nominal phrases contribute to a well-built, concise, clear but not complicated structure, which is easy to hold the attentions of tourists. On the other hand, tourism English tends to list concrete objectives in order to convey the actual beauty of nature. It is the faithful reappearance of the nature. Only the nouns could serve as the roles. Therefore, higher percentage of nouns but lower percentage of verbs is employed in TEC comparing to FLOB.

The purpose of an English tourism text is to attract more tourists to visit by describing the beauty of scenery. Just because of it, TEC has adopted a great number of adjectives, especially the ones with positive and cheerful meanings, to sketch the wonderland. The higher percentage of adjectives makes the famous site more romantic, fascinating and yearning. These facts better explain the higher percentage of adjectives.

#### D. Keyword Analysis

According to Ding Dagang (2008), tourism English is rigorous in word choice and deliberately chooses a large number of keywords. The characteristics of tourism English are concluded as below after comprehensive analysis of the key word list.

TEC has a higher percentage of adjectives, such as *beautiful, spectacular, famous, grand, great, popular, natural* etc. These adjectives are descriptive and agreeable, possessing commendatory meaning with positive emotion instead of derogatory meaning with negative emotion. Obviously, tourist text aims not only to highlight the distinguishing features of attractions but also to arouse the aesthetic interest of tourists. The colorful, vivid and fascinating introductions and descriptions tend to impress and attract more potential tourists to visit. Moreover, large amounts of adjectives could give special emphasis to the positive and enthusiasm emotion, especially the general superlative adjectives which convey strong positive emotions, such as the words *largest* and other adjectives with the aid of the adverb of most.

Secondly, there are many proper nouns in TEC with high keyness, such as *Roman, Manhattan, California*, etc. It suggests that proper nouns contribute to the features of Tourism English. Usually, when a famous place is introduced, the name of attractions, its location and history, famous people who were born there, and its beauty and magnificence would appear greatly. Therefore, a great number of proper nouns can often be seen in the tourism English, ranging from history and geography to art, architecture and religion. The keyness of proper nouns is determined by the nature of cross-disciplinary and cross-culture of tourism text.

Thirdly, scenic nouns in TEC cover a higher percentage with strong keyness, such as *lake, river, mountain, island, museum, bridge, beach*, etc. All these words are the targets of description that frequently occur in tourism text.

Fourthly, it is worth mentioning that there are more nouns of direction, like *north, south* and *west*, in TEC than in FLOB&FLOWN. It is not hard to figure out the reason for their keyness. These words function as a guider to introduce the exact location of the attractions to tourists. For example, In the sentence "The third stage of Stonehenge, about 2000 BC, saw the arrival of the Sarsen Stones, which were almost certainly brought from the Marlborough Downs near Avebury, in north Wiltshire, about 25 miles north of Stonehenge.", it has two north which gives a good illustration for the purpose of nouns of direction.

Besides, the unit of measurement, such as *miles* and *acres*, is the important keyword too. It gives assistance to the description of location and direction.

Last but not the least, among the top keywords in TEC are two verbs *-visit* and *enjoy*. The employment of these two words is in accordance with the intention of tourism English that is to arouse more and more tourists to come to visit and enjoy the beauty of nature. Such concentrated use of visit and enjoy has composed the outstanding features of TEC.

#### E. Sentence Length

TABLE 3  
AVERAGE SENTENCE LENGTH IN TEC AND FLOB

Corpus	TEC	FLOB
Number of Sentences	5,166	52,674
Ave. Sentence Length (letters)	20.90	23.49

It is apparent that the average sentence length of TEC is shorter than that of FLOB. That is to say, the sentences used in English tourism text are short containing simple structures.

As mentioned in former parts, FLOB is the reaction of all affairs of life, which covers many categories such as news, fictions, technology, entertainment, etc. To a certain extent, FLOB is the best illustration of life. Therefore, the sentences in FLOB are a little longer.

In contrast, tourism English is required to provide potential tourists with abundant and readable tourism information and attract them to visit. The intention to hold tourists' attention as soon as possible results in short and concise sentences. Moreover, TEC must be readable to tourists of different classes, nationalities and with different educational background to avoid ambiguity. These are the possible reasons for lower average sentence length in TEC.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In this paper, compared with FLOB, a corpus of general English representing the language of the early 1990s, the corpus-based stylistic analysis of tourism English is carried out with the aid of annotation and statistic softwares. After a detailed exploration of tourism English, the features are concluded as follows:

(1) The average word length of TEC is a little longer than that of FLOB. Longer words seem a little more frequently used in TEC. Therefore, it can be concluded that the words used in TEC are a little more formal and difficult than in FLOB.

(2) As for the lexical density, STTR of TEC is more or less similar to that of FLOB. That is to say, there is no difference between the two corpora in vocabulary richness.

(3) The percentage of content words of TEC greatly outweighs FLOB. Nouns are most frequently used in TEC and FLOB, and verbs and adjectives cover a high percentage. There are more nouns and adjectives but fewer verbs, adverbs and pronouns in TEC than in FLOB.

(4) According to top 100 keywords, there are more proper nouns, scenic nouns, nouns of direction, the unit of measurement, descriptive adjectives with positive meaning and general superlative adjectives in TEC than in FLOB&FLOWN. Visit and enjoy are the most frequently-used verbs in TEC.

(5) The average sentence length of TEC is shorter than that of FLOB, which means that sentences used in TEC are shorter with simpler structures.

Although we have found some stylistic features of tourism English in this paper, limitations are inevitable.

Firstly, the size of TEC is relatively small, which may affect the representativeness and accuracy of the research to some extent. Secondly, the source of the data just comes from the Internet. In the future study, the corpus should be further enlarged and the sources should also include tourist brochures, tour guidebook, etc. This paper only makes an attempt, far from sufficient. The author hopes that this paper will arouse more attention to the study of tourism English and be of great help for the learning of tourism English.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bullock, A. (1978). *The Fontana dictionary of modern thought*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd.
- [2] Crystal, D., & Davy, D. (1969). *Investigating English Style*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- [3] Ding Dagang. (2008). *Features and Tourism English and Its Translation*. Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press.
- [4] Hu Zhuanglin. (2001). *A Course for Linguistics*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- [5] Reinhard, Kohler. (1995). *Bibliography of Quantitative Linguistics*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [6] Richards, J.C. et al. (2005). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [7] Sedelow, Sally Y. (1966). *A preface to computational stylistics*. Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- [8] Sun Xin. (2009). *Stylistic Analysis of UK's Online Tourist Information Text*. Unpublished MA thesis, Dalian Maritime University.
- [9] Wang Zuoliang. (1980). *Collection of Papers on English Stylistics*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [10] Wright, L., & Hope, J. (2000). *Stylistics: A practical coursebook*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [11] Xun Youzhi. (1992). *Modern Stylistics*. Kaifeng: Henan University Press.
- [12] Yang Huizhong. (2002). *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

**Ning Kang** was born in Tangshan, China in 1972. He received his M.A. degree in foreign linguistics and applied linguistics from Dalian Maritime University, China in 2001.

He is currently an associate professor in the School of Foreign Languages, Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China. His research interests include translation studies and corpus linguistics.

Prof. Kang is a member of Translators Association of China.

**Qiaofeng Yu** was born in Qingdao, China in 1977. She received her M.A. degree in foreign linguistics and applied linguistics from Donghua University, China in 2006.

She is currently a lecturer in the School of Foreign Languages, Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China. Her research interests include interpretation and translation studies.

Miss Yu is now a member of Translators Association of China.

# (Post)-Methodism: Possibility of the Impossible?

Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi

Tarbiat Moallem University, Tehran, Iran & Iran Language Institute, Iran

Email: hashemi\_ili@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—This paper is a critical review of the concept of post-method language teaching. The author first presents a quick review of the history and concept of method and introduces the concept of postmodernism as a source of influence for post-method-ism. The author, then, adopts a critical approach to reviewing the concept of post-method and the idea of searching for "an alternative" to method (Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (e) merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 27-48.). The paper argues that these two concepts can have the same mode of existence in reality and the difference between them is only a virtual one that would exist in the mind of the practitioner/expert. Finally, it is further argued that skepticism toward the concept of method and the search for "an alternative" to method (as Kumaravadivelu has put it) would not guarantee the future of practice in the field of language teaching, as this search has not proved to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

**Index Terms**—method, postmethod, postmethodism, theory, practice

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a broad and burgeoning field, language teaching has witnessed accumulation of knowledge and diversity of practice from the early years to the present time. Perhaps, theories of language teaching came to life as early as the first teacher started thinking about the career; and this would probably go back to centuries ago if we could accept that "language teachers have been with us as long as there have been languages" (Savignon, 2007, p. 207). However, language teachers' knowledge, in the course of time, has assumed different shapes based on their experience, intuition, deductive reasoning, inductive experimenting and also their individual and social understanding.

Having enjoyed abundance of research in various areas, soon the field of language teaching was replete with theories that would inform practice. Theory production in language teaching, however, seems to have followed the tradition in disciplines such as education, psychology, sociology, linguistics (see Savignon, 1991, 2007). Although the recorded history takes language teaching seriously from the Middle Ages (Howatt, 2004), state-of-the-art theory production appears to have gained importance since the 40s and 50s, portraying language teaching scholars' ambition to keep the field competitive with other disciplines and to forge a scientific identity for it. This was probably due to the "tendency of social sciences to model themselves after the physical sciences through use of empirical-analytic approach" (Pennycook, 1989, p. 594). Whatever the reason, the movements led to proliferation of theories and models, thus affecting the course of practice through realization of methods and procedures. With this drive for change, then, came turning points in the history of language teaching.

On the whole, according to the observations and reports by scholars in the field (e.g. Anthony, 1963; Howatt, 1984; Kelly, 1969; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Richards and Rogers, 2001; Swaffar, Arens, & Morgan, 1982), it is possible to draw a distinction between three periods in the history of language teaching: the gray period, the black-and-white period, and the colored period. (Using colors in naming the periods would allow of understanding them as sharing the same nature, as if the difference would be a result of the light in which one views them or the context in which they are viewed!)

The gray period in the history of language teaching can be understood as the pre-method era. Pre-method here would by no means imply absence of methods. As the color gray suggests, in the pre-method era, methods do not appear as categorical, systematic entities; rather, they are mixed and barely distinguishable. This is a period of time between the 14th and the late 19th centuries (see Howatt, 2004). The practitioners in the gray period would follow their intuition, common sense and experience in the course of teaching. So the art of teaching for them was very personal. Nevertheless, contributions made by the gray-period practitioners proved to be really valuable as in their custody the field of language teaching in its embryonic form continued to survive. The contributions made by the 16th-century masters of language teaching (e.g. Bellot, Florio, Holyband: see Howatt, 2004) is a good example. Then, with the spread of English in the 17th and 18th centuries, many teaching hours were devoted to the pursuit of effective techniques and procedures for teaching the language. And by the end of the 19th century the quest for method(s) had already begun. At this point, comes the black-and-white period (the era of methods: between the late 19th century and the late 20th century) in language teaching—more specifically in ELT.

In the black-and-white period, choices made by teachers in the process of teaching are of either-or nature—good vs. bad; however, the search for better methods follows a scientifically sound philosophy. Moving beyond GTM, then, ALM becomes the leading pioneer of a generation of principled practice, later referred to as "designer" or "brand name"

methods (Richards & Rogers, 2001). In itself, the era is colorful, but the practitioners' perspectives are black-and-white when it comes to inventing a method and applying it in practice. On the one hand, there are language-centered, structure-based methods (ALM, SLT, TPR); on the other hand, pendulum swings toward learner-centered, learning-oriented methods (CLL, Suggestopedia, Silent Way, Whole Language). With the emergence of CLT and post-CLT approaches (e.g. CBI and TBLT), however, the field enters the colored period.

In the colored period of language teaching, teachers are no more colorblind! They are, hopefully speaking, reflective, dynamic and autonomous. Being as creative as a painter, the teacher in this era can see, distinguish between, and understand the colors, knowing how and where to use how much of what to create perfect harmony!

As mentioned above, the movement (change of perspective) from the gray period to the colored period of language teaching is profoundly influenced by theory and research in the field and the changes in other disciplines. In linguistics, for instance, change is attributed to Firthian linguistics, Chomsky's generative-transformational linguistics (1975), Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics (1985), developments in discourse analysis and pragmatics (e.g. Bakhtin, 1986; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Brown & Yule, 1983; Gumperz, 1982; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), new agenda in critical discourse analysis (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 1989), and the genre movement (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993).

Another discipline that helped ELT find its way was psychology: Skinners behaviorism (Skinner, 1957), Chomsky's immediate reaction (1959), Piaget's developmental and cognitive psychology (1951, 1971), Vygotsky's work on social constructivism and his notion of ZPD (1978, 1986), Roger's client-oriented psychology (see Roger, 1968), Maslow's humanistic psychology (1967), the light shed by Gestalt psychology, etc.

As powerful sources of inspiration, philosophy and education also contributed a great deal to the development of thought in language teaching, in the course of theory making and critical analysis of practice. The liberal "Socratic" method, and Plato's functionalist model of education along with Aristotle's notion of moral education are early reflections which have directly influenced the practice of teaching for many years. Among modern philosophers and educationalists, the works of John Dewey addressing his progressive view of education and emphasis on reflective teaching and learning are worth being mentioned. Another educational philosopher, Paulo Freire had a great role in development of critical thought and practice (Freire, 1972, 1998). Thoughts from sociology have also had great impact on the nature of theory production in language teaching. Giroux's concern for linking schooling to democratic principles of society (Giroux, 1988), Gramsci's (1971) notion of "hegemony" which has crept into critical discourse analysis, and Foucault's study of shifting patterns of power (1972, 1980) are instances of such influences on education, and subsequently, on language teaching. Darder, Baltodano and Torres (2003) argue that the Frankfurt school with members like Horkeimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse, and Habermas had great influence on critical educational thought, challenging the "traditional forms of rationality that defined the concept of meaning and knowledge" (Darder, et al., 2003, p. 8).

The above mentioned factors and forces, along with many others, caused the field of language teaching to gather momentum as it moved toward reflective thinking and practice. And methodizing, although not positively acknowledged, can be considered to be the earliest attempt at bringing about change. The following section is devoted to the concept of methodism and its status in the field of language teaching.

## II. ON METHODIZING

Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories (2002) describes the origin of the word "method":

"Originally a method referred to a 'prescribed medical treatment for a disease'. The word came via Latin from Greek *methodos* 'pursuit of knowledge', based on *hodos* 'way'" (emphases in original).

As its origin suggests, the concept of method reminds us of prescription and imposition. It is linked with tradition when it is perceived as "way." Also, concentrated within method is the concept of power which attracts considerable weight to the concept, especially when connected to religion and tradition. So the concept of method is deeply rooted in history and culture and would imply different meanings for different people.

In education, perhaps, method came into being with the teaching of the first teachers (for example religious leaders, philosophers, artists). Method, in its contemporary sense, however, is said to be first used by Petrus Ramus to refer to teaching a curriculum (Doll, 2001). Doll also pointed out that the strong version definition of method would link it to scientific manner. This view was later balanced by Dewey.

With his liberating point of view, John Dewey adopts a critical approach to establishing a kind of "pragmatic naturalism" (Noddings, 1998, p.25). For Dewey, emphasis should be placed on the learner experiences, joining together action with reflection, and showing respect for learners' choice (Dewey, 1916/1966, 1938/1963). This is in fact humanizing education, softening the rigidly conceived concept of method.

In language teaching, Jan Amos Comenius is among one of the first to introduce method and methodic order in the strictest sense. As Howatt (2004) describes, Comenius takes aim at theorizing a universal system of education through religious and tradition-based framework: "The Comenian curriculum is founded on the concept of natural order as the true reflection of divine order, a seventh-century concept which finds an echo in all contemporary science from Kepler to Newton" (Howatt, 2004, p. 47). Curriculum in the Comenian sense, then, is the embodiment of method to be observed by the practitioner, a devout follower who progresses toward the last stages of perfection. The moves are

prescribed and inevitable.

Introducing the concept of method in its modern sense, then, came a series of proposals made by scholars who are now known as the originators of the methods (Asher, 1969; Curran, 1972, 1976; Hornby, 1954, 1959; Krashen & Terrell, 1983, Lozanov, 1978, etc.). In essence, method in this era becomes a meaningful concept with a top-down, authoritative nature. Assigned to the concept then are definitions and models, thus making method the core of teaching.

For Anthony (1963) method contributes to systematic teaching of the materials. Based on Anthony's (1963) view—representing method as the link between theory and practice—Richards and Rodgers (1986, 2001) proposed their own model. In this model, the concept of method is geared to three levels of conceptualization: "a method is theoretically related to an approach, is organizationally determined by a design, and is practically realized in procedure" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 20). Method, from this perspective, can be understood as the heart of the pedagogy. Method, in this sense, although creating a pedagogical hierarchy, reveals a fluid nature at different levels of perception. At the level of theory, method is defined within a certain belief system; yet, the same concept can be realized differently by the lower level practitioner at the level of practice. The concept, defined in this way, appears to have two modes of existence, one in the mind of the theorist, the other in the hands of the practitioner.

But it was in the late 80s and early 90s that the concept of method attracted strong criticisms (Allwright, 1991 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006b; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990). Among others, Kumaravadivelu seems to be the severest critic of the concept of method.

In the following sections, with a glance at the movement toward de-methodizing, Kumaravadivelu's notion of postmethod will be critically reviewed.

### III. TOWARD DE-METHODIZING IN ELT

Probably the first dissenting voices expressing disenchantment with the concept of method in language teaching were those of Mackey (1965) and Finocchiaro (1971). Mackey (1965) criticized the vagueness and inadequacy of method, asserting that by sticking to only one aspect of the subject methods limit themselves. In a beautifully written paper, Mary Finocchiaro criticized the one-dimensional, method-oriented practices of the time:

Dogmatic statements related to methods and techniques have troubled interested, conscientious teachers who are aware (1) that an either/or answer to any facet of educational theory or practice limits both teacher and learner creativity, and (2) that an eclectic integrated approach...(Finocchiaro, 1971, p.3)

In the early 70s, Finocchiaro invites teachers to develop creativity in teaching and not give into mesmeric quality of only one theory or method. It is until the early 80s when language teaching scholars start giving the issue more serious thoughts.

Following Mackey (1965), Stern (1983) put forward the notion of "the break with the method concept" (Stern, 1983, chap.21), stressing that "language teaching is now no longer conceptualized in terms of single undifferentiated methodological prescription" (p.494). Stern (1983) did not reject the concept of method; rather, he expressed concern about blindly following imposed methodologies.

A very serious criticism of the concept of method, however, is reflected in Pennycook's 1989 article. Voicing deep skepticism about the concept, Pennycook (1989, p. 590) argued that method "is articulated in the interests of unequal power relationship." He even took a step further by asserting that "all education is political and all knowledge is 'interested'" (Pennycook, 1989, p. 590). Although this view seems rather extreme (as even if "all knowledge is interested," it will not necessarily indicate that all the recipients of it are interested to the same degree—if it were so, theory construction could not have a future), it rightly implies that concepts such as knowledge, theory, method carry, within themselves, an august quality of dictating and imposing nature:

The method construct...not only fails to account adequately for the historical conditions, but also is conceptually inconsistent... It is also questionable whether so-called methods ever reflected what was actually going on in the classroom. (Pennycook, 1989, p. 608)

Also, works by Clarke (1990), Clarke and Silberstein (1988), Prabhu (1990), and Richards (1990), cast critical reflections on the nature of method-oriented pedagogy in the field. Prabhu (1990), for instance, argued that the search for the best method would be futile. To Prabhu, every method has some value; nonetheless, Prabhu (1990) pointed out that teachers' subjective understanding (their "sense of plausibility") is much more valuable than blind blending of the methods or haphazard eclecticism.

Brown (1991) attributed the development in the history of language teaching to what he would call "collective wisdom" of the previous years. In light of freethinking, "collective wisdom" would not only refer to the knowledge possessed by experts and theorists, it would also be a result of contributions made by teachers and practitioners at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Finally, it was the first issue of 1994 TESOL Quarterly which made announcements of the advent of a new era! The first article in this issue harshly criticized the hierarchical nature of theory-practice relationship. In this article, Clarke called for a "complete re-orientation of the profession" through turning "the hierarchy on its head, putting teachers on the top and arraying others . . . below them" (Clarke, 1994, p.18). The second article in the same issue, then, paralleled Clarke's line of argument but dug deeper into the problem of method-oriented practice, introducing the field to the concept of "postmethod condition" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). This view was later shared by other scholars: those who

tended to sing a "requiem for methods" (Brown, 2002) and those who referred to the past history of methods as an "embarrassment" (Richards, 2001).

Before reviewing post-method-ism in language teaching, an overview of the concept of postmodernism seems inevitable.

#### IV. POSTMODERNISM AT A GLANCE

As acknowledged by Kumaravadivelu (2006a) the source of inspiration for philosophizing "postmethod" is postmodernism. So before dealing with the postmethod pedagogy, it would be helpful to take a glance at the concept of "postmodernism."

Actually, it is hardly possible to present a definition of the concept of postmodernism ("possible" in the sense that a definition needs to enjoy objective quality based on the consensus of expert opinion), as it is not compatible with—and sometimes it is even skeptical toward—the concept of definition itself (see H. W. Janson & A. F. Janson, 1995). "Post-" according to H. W. Janson and A. F. Janson (1995) implies a state of change. So postmodern would suggest moving away from or beyond the current modern condition, putting the world in a state of change. The term was first used in the late 40s to refer to the final stage of civilization that had begun with Renaissance (H. W. Janson & A. F. Janson, 1995). As a radical movement, however, postmodernism, with an anti-functionalist nature, was first used in architecture by Ventury and his wife who critically reacted to the modernist principle prescribing that form should follow function (Hutcheon, 1989; H. W. Janson & A. F. Janson, 1995). Postmodernism then emerged in painting (e.g. works of Penck, Salle, Tansey) and in photography (e.g. works of Kroger, Lemieux, Sherman). In the works of art by such postmodernists some features are easy to spot: reordering of the orderly, reshuffling and de-juxtaposing of the unchangeable; presenting and re-presenting the un-presentable, and rule breaking (see Hutcheon, 1989; H. W. Janson & A. F. Janson, 1995). The same features are easily observed in postmodern cinematography, seeking to trespass borders of logic and reason, mixing reality and fantasy, creating a new visual culture, etc. (e.g. movies directed by Lynch and Tarantino).

In philosophy, the works of Derrida and Lyotard contribute to the understanding of the postmodern. Derrida draws attention to the "imperialism of theoria" (1978, p.85). His proposal reveals a unique decentering quality called "deconstruction":

as Derrida has pointed out, parenthetically... :

... (but deconstruction is not a critical operation; it takes critique as its object; deconstruction at one moment or another, always aims at the trust confided in the critical, critico-theoretical agency, that is the deciding agency, the ultimate possibility of the decidable; deconstruction is a deconstruction of critical dogmatics). (cited in Wolfreys, 1998, p. 58)

From a Derridean perspective, one can challenge the idea of method, pattern, framework, theory, etc., considering the "other possibility" and "possibility of the other" as "there is always already the trace, the mark, the trait, *différence* within the structure, within identity, which disables mastery ahead of the encounter or even with subject of inquiry" (Wolfreys, 1998, p. 191: emphasis in original). From this point of view, a priori omniscient perspective is no more the only source for perception; rather, perceptions of the same entity would prove to be of different value from encounter to encounter, from person to person, from mood to mood, etc.

Another influential postmodern thinker is Lyotard. Lyotard describes postmodernism as "an incredulity toward metanarratives" (1984, p. xxiv). Lyotard's skepticism toward metanarratives, his disbelief in Grand theories, and doubts he casts on the status of knowledge in era of post-structuralism and post-industrialism seem to act as the essence of his postmodern thinking. Interestingly, Lyotard does not conceive postmodernism as being the end of modernism: "A work can be modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 79). So there should not exist one form of postmodernism with one single definition. According to Jameson 1984, there are different types of postmodernism: baroque postmodernism, rococo postmodernism, neo-classical postmodernism, etc.

On education, too, postmodernism had an impact as "postmodernists attacked notions of reason, means-end thinking, theory teaching;" and this consequently caused "a major shift in our conception of inquiry" (Beck, 1993, p. 5). Questioning the practice of problem posing in schools, Beck (1993) suggested that education should help students develop cultural-political understanding through "democratic and dialogical emphasis of postmodernism, its questioning of the motives of authorities and its downplaying of the role of experts" (Beck, 1993, p. 8). However, Beck (1993) called for a kind of balance by cautioning that "we should not dismantle all structure and hope that something happens" (p. 9). Although strong version postmodernism would not let in a prudence of this kind, Beck does have a point here.

In language teaching, however, postmodernism made its presence felt, wearing the disguise of postmethodism.

#### V. A CRITIQUE OF THE POSTMETHOD CONDITION

Although the field had started to experience the postmethod condition in the late 80s, it was Kumaravadivelu (1994) who has officially introduced the term. Kumaravadivelu (1994) based his argument on a number of possibilities signified by the postmethod condition. The first possibility is the "search for an alternative to method rather than an

alternative method" (1994, p. 29). Secondly, he proposed that teachers should be empowered to "theorize from their practice and practice what they have theorized," this he calls "teacher autonomy" (p. 30). Finally, he puts forward the concept of "principled pragmatism" which is the result of "informed teaching and critical appraisal" (p. 31). Based on his previous work in the context of CLT (Kumaravadivelu, 1992, 1993), he, then, presents a set of macro-strategies to help teachers discover their own context-sensitive micro-strategies (1994, 2001, 2003, 2006a). Also, Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2003, 2006a) conceptualizes three parameters for postmethod pedagogy. The parameter of "particularity" that—from Elliott's (1993) "hermeneutic principle of situational understanding" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 538)—highlights the context-sensitive nature of language teaching. The parameter of "practicality" which, building on the third possibility mentioned above, aims at connecting theory and practice to "rupture the reified role relationship between theorizers and practitioners" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b, p. 62). And the parameter of "possibility" which seeks to spell out the "importance of acknowledging and highlighting students' and teachers' individual identity" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 174). Kumaravadivelu's model looks promising. However, a couple of critical reflections and reactions are in order!

Liu (1995, p. 175), for instance, reacts to the notions of "futility/demise of the search for better method" and emphasis on finding "an alternative to method." Liu (1995) is correct in that postmethod cannot be considered as an alternative to methods because at the level of practice they both require realizable procedures. So postmethod without method is theory without practice or an alternative to thinking but not an alternative form of doing, and this would undermine the parameter of "practicality." Further, Liu (1995) believes that the term "principle" is more accurate than "macro-strategy" and argues that "macro-strategies should not and cannot replace methods" (p. 175). Liu (1995) also contends that classroom objectives are accomplished through use of methods.

In response to Liu (1995), Kumaravadivelu (1995) points out that by method he means what is "conceptualized by theorists" not what is "actualized by practitioners" (p. 177). He also notes that he is not alone in making a claim about the "demise of method" by making reference to Bartolomé (1994). Kumaravadivelu (1995) continues by emphasizing the theory neutral nature of his framework and insists that his model is an alternative to methods.

However, what is subjected to criticism by Kumaravadivelu is not method in the sense defined by the previous scholars (e.g. Anthony, 1963; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). By offering a personalized definition of method, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2006a) actually creates the concept he wishes to criticize, in a way that the concept would more comfortably lend itself to criticism. Kumaravadivelu (2006a) draws a distinction between "method" and "methodology," introducing the former as a "construct" and the latter as a "conduct" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 162). He asserts that method "is an expert's notion" (2006a, p. 162) based on theories, whereas methodology, by contrast, "is what the teacher does in the classroom" (2006a, p. 163). In light of the traditional definition for method, however, it would be hardly possible to sharply distinguish between "method" and "methodology" only because they are realized differently in two different discourses. Kumaravadivelu's definition limits the concept of method to only what goes on in the mind of the expert. However, it would be possible to even create a postmethod definition for the term method: method as conceptualized and actualized by practitioners. This confirms the inevitable existence of method even in the postmethod era. As a matter of fact, these two concepts are inextricably interwoven and mutually dependent. So the quest for an alternative to method would be meaningless; instead, our search is for an alternative perspective for renewing our understanding. This view would in fact encourage us to accept and acknowledge the subjective and compatible being of method, while rejecting its "interested" (to borrow from Pennycook, 1989) objective, and manipulative existence. Method in this sense is not dead but multiplied!

Kumaravadivelu (1995) refers to Bartolomé (1994) to stress that he is not alone in imagining a scenario for the death of the method. However, in "Beyond the Method Fetish," Bartolomé (2003) does not put the blame on the concept of the method but on the "fetish" resulted by ignorant use of method (see Bartolomé 2003). Actually, she asserts that there is "a disarticulation between the embraced method and the socio-cultural reality with which each method is implemented" (Bartolomé 2003, p. 410). Hence, for her it is the "myopic focus on methodology" (*ibid*) which is worthy of blame. She even speaks of "effective methods" in a given "socio-cultural context" (2003, p. 411). For Bartolomé method is not dead:

the informed way in which a teacher implements a method can serve to offset potentially unequal relations and discriminating structures and practices in the classroom and, in doing so, improve the quality of the instructional process for both student and teacher. (2003, p. 412)

Another claim made by Kumaravadivelu (1995, 2006a) is that his macro-strategic framework is "theory neutral." But the question inspired by Pennycook (1989) asks whether any framework or theory can be theory neutral. It should be noted that Kumaravadivelu builds his macro-strategic framework by making reference to the literature on language teaching that is by no means theory free. Even without any supporting literature, one could not neglect the fact that any discourse, educated or uneducated—in this case highly educated, cannot be free of orientation, culture, attitude and thinking.

Postmethod pedagogy for some is not but the same as CLT movement (Bygate, Skehan, and Swain, 2001). Bygate et al. argue that "communicative language teaching was explicitly a post-method approach to language teaching (see notably Brumfit and Johnson, 1979; and Brumfit, 1988) in which principles underlying the use of different classroom procedures were of paramount importance, rather than a package of teaching materials" (Bygate et al., 2001, p. 2).

Developing similar arguments, Bell (2003) points out that "many of Kumaravadivelu's strategies—negotiated interaction, integrated language skills, learner autonomy, and so on—look remarkably like CLT" (p. 332). Focusing on the relationship between method and postmethod, Bell (2003) reminds us of the constraints the postmethod condition has brought with it, threatening teacher's "sense of plausibility" by "deconstructing methods" (p.333). Kumaravadivelu's reaction to Bell's comment, then, pushes the argument to the other extreme: "postmethod pedagogy on the contrary can be considered to put a premium on the teacher's sense of plausibility" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b, p. 73). Apparently, both extremes are possible! Postmethod realized as a liberating discourse can indeed nurture subjective understanding of the practitioners and free them from deeply rooted dependence on prescriptive, prefabricated patterns of practice. At the same time, if interpreted in its utopian sense, it may corner the less experienced practitioner by forcing him/her into an isolated frame of mind and create an unbridgeable gap between the teacher's fantasy and the reality of the moment. Bell (2003), however, prefers to connect the two controversial concepts, arguing that "method and postmethod can also be seen as inevitable and necessary dialectical forces: the one imposing methodological coherence, the other deconstructing the totalizing tendency of method from the perspective of local exigencies" (Bell, 2003, p. 334). Bell's point sounds sensible! However, he does not clarify the practical aspect of his proposal. Bell (2003) does not make clear what he means by "deconstruction of method." Is it deconstruction in the Derridean sense? Again an appealing theory breeds vague realization of its practical value!

Having devoted many years to examining theory and practice in the field of language teaching, Larsen-Freeman (2005a) surprises the proponents of postmethod pedagogy by asserting: "I certainly do not want to throw out the concept of method" (p. 22). And to help teachers avoid using methods inappropriately, Larsen-Freeman (2005b, p.5) presents her seven "i's": "moving from ideology to inquiry while challenging notions of inclusive generalizations, imposition leading to implementation, intactness, and immutability." She judiciously states that "methods are not immutable in practice. As teachers gain experience, they come to understand a particular method differently (Larsen-Freeman, 2005b, p.11).

More recently, in a paper examining teacher beliefs about the claim that methods are dead, Bell (2007) reports that in the minds of teachers methods are not dead. Bell (2007) explains that teachers show awareness of how useful methods are. He concludes that "postmethod need not imply the end of the methods but rather an understanding of the limitations of the notion of method..." (Bell, 2007, p. 143).

From the above mentioned arguments, it should now be clear that some scholars are not willing to forget about the concept of method and that the concept of postmethod exists with a paradoxical nature. Out next concern, thus, would be to investigate the paradoxes.

## VI. PARTICULARITY-POSSIBILITY VS. PRACTICALITY

As reviewed above, the parameter of "particularity" contributes to the context-sensitive aspect of the pedagogy; the parameter of "possibility" takes into account students and teachers' individuality; and the parameter of "practicality" establishes a direct link between theory and practice, questioning the status of expert knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006a). The three parameters thus are expected to work in harmony to turn the "pedagogic wheel" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). However, there are times when forces of particularity and possibility are applied in the direction opposite to that in which practicality is exerting pressure. This would be proof of existence of paradoxical forces within postmethod pedagogy. More specifically, postmethod practicality parameter allows the teacher decenter the source of power (e.g. expert opinion) and produce the theory as if he/she were the center. Parameters of particularity and possibility are then responsible for context-sensitive elements and individuality of the people involved. Appealing! Too idealistic, though! Let us now deconstruct the idealistic make-up of the theory which is shaped in a universally acceptable vacuum. In doing so, we need to take a highly center-oriented culture as an example—e.g. a context like Iran. In Iran, the religious culture of people guides them to appreciate and worship only one source of power, Allah. This deeply rooted religious belief, directly or indirectly, influences every aspect of the people's life, leading them to seek unification everywhere. Iranian traditional music, for example, is homophonic. In most cases, it is characterized by a single melodic line which moves around a theme with repetitions. Iranian works of calligraphy and more recently typography also show tendency toward the center—forms converge toward the center and in many instances unification is observed. Iranian discourse is also circular with a lot of shifting and a lot of moving around the main theme. This can be easily observed in the works of Rumi, for example. Iranian painting, although believed by some as not being center-oriented, does reveal great tendency toward unification of form (e.g. schools of Harat and Tabriz). In Iranian mysticism, we have the concept of *pir* (an old person with divine qualities, close to master in the traditional sense) who is the source of inspiration for his younger disciples in their quest for truth and divinity. In its educational sense, the concept is so close in meaning to the concept of teacher. In class, thus, it is the teacher who is at the center of attention and even the seating arrangement of the students would show the superiority of the teacher as the source of knowledge and discipline. Teachers then are expected to follow the predefined educational policies. The hierarchy, therefore, imposes itself upon the curriculum and education in such a context would certainly incline toward the legitimacy of a top-down pedagogy. Authority or expert knowledge in this context is hardly ever questioned and almost never decentralized, as it would be considered against the norm. Now the question is: "How is it possible to adopt a postmethod attitude and forget about the expert knowledge as the center in a context where people highly admire

capital-T Truth, the Truth which is never pluralized? So postmethod pedagogy, that might be considered by some as the movement toward humanizing the practice in the curriculum, would in such a context, lead to dehumanization of the target group by isolating them from their history and culture.

This paradoxical nature of the postmethod pedagogy, in fact, would negatively affect the teachers in this context, especially the traditional ones. A postmethod teacher is very different from a traditionally trained teacher. A postmethod teacher can sometimes be compared to Orson Welles' Don Quixote—for some crazy enough, for others too crazy. Such teachers would undergo lots of pressure if not appreciated by the peers, students, employers, etc.

#### VII. MACRO-STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003, 2006a) offers macro-strategies and reminds us of the existence of micro-strategies. He also uses possessive pronoun MY to refer to the macro-strategic framework (2006a, p. 199). As Bell (2003) asserts, among these macro-strategies one can hardly find a maxim that is totally novel by nature. These are, in fact, the beautiful commandments that have continued to live for years in the field. The point, however, is that presenting a framework of any kind, is completely against the liberating nature of a movement that would put aside prescription. Presenting macro-strategies would be of prescriptive nature. Macro-strategies are very similar to Grand narratives and they are not welcomed by a movement like postmodernism. Although Kumaravadivelu encourages teachers to discover their own context-sensitive micro-strategies, he is consciously or unconsciously, inducing the audience to accept his macro-strategies as a point of departure. This is re-creating the hierarchy in a new discourse system. At the top, there is Kumaravadivelu's persuasive theory published in professional and well-known journals or by powerful publication houses; at the bottom, on the other hand, there are teachers and teacher candidates usually so impressed by the theory that would not think of any type of extending or personalizing.

#### VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Derrida once wrote "philosophy died yesterday...thought still has a future" (1978, p. 79). If one could say "method died yesterday," my immediate reaction would be: "but practice still has a future." Paradoxically, method will live as long as practice will. How could any practice be method-free? Method is a strange concept, old and new, meaningless and meaningful. With all systematicity it bears and the order it creates, method swings back and forth from meaninglessness to meaningfulness. At times, it deals with and leads to well-defined patterns as realizations of coherent thoughts and informed practice. There are also times when method equals chaos, especially when in the hands of unimaginative users, unreasonably insisting on sticking to their dogmatic principles. Methodic patterns as they emerge, though, are the quintessence of excellent harmony. However, when dictated and followed blindly, patterns would lose their context-sensitive meaning. Prescription of contextually isolated patterns would, then, impose limitation and this limitation will result in fossilization of practice. Teachers with dynamic minds would never let that happen, struggling to create coherence and meaning as they discover, perceive, interpret, implement and modify methods. In this sense, method and postmethod are exactly the same—difference between method and postmethod would not, thus, exist in reality.

More specifically, post-methodism, like postmodernism (see Marshal & Peters, 1999: in Keeves & Lakomsky, 1999), would allow radical breaks! At the same time it is believed to stay in dialectical relationship with Methodism (Bell, 2003). Method and postmethod are, then, both possible (in dialectical relationship) and impossible (radical break), thus reminding one of "hermeneutics of suspicion" (see Solomon & Higgins, 1996, p. 300), emphasizing philosophies over one Philosophy (Solomon & Higgins, 1996), accepting discourses over one discourse.

So from different perspectives, (post)-method reveals different qualities, different modes of being. One may move beyond methods, but the concept of method will never die, just like Christmas thanksgiving, the way of Samurai, Iranian "Tarighat" (route to the truth), etc.

Finally a word of caution about the future: the future of ELT will depend on to what extent practice will be able to catch up with theory. Theories are being accumulated. With this bulk of literature, we need to think more seriously about the future of practice.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is grateful to Dr. Mahmoud Reza Atai for his insightful comments on the content of the present article.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Allwright, R. L. (1991). *The death of the method* (Working Papers No. 10). Lancaster, England: The University of Lancaster, The Exploratory Practice Center.
- [2] Anthony, E. M. (1963). Approach, method and technique. *English Language Teaching*, 17, 63-67.
- [3] Asher, J. J. (1969). The total physical response approach to second language learning. *Modern Language Journal*, 53, 3-17.
- [4] Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- [5] Bartolomé L. (2003). Beyond the methods fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (pp. 408-439). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

- [6] Beck, C. (1993). Postmodernism, pedagogy, and philosophy of education. *Philosophy of Education*. Yearbook [electronic version]. Retrieved January 26, 2008, from <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/93-docs/>
- [7] Bell, D. (2003). Method and postmethod: Are they really incompatible? *TESOL Quarterly*, 37, 325-336.
- [8] Bhatia, V. J. (1993). Analyzing genre: Language use in professional settings. London: Longman.
- [9] Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.) (1989). Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- [10] Bourdieu, P. (1991). Language and symbolic power. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- [11] Brown, H. D. (1991). TESOL at twenty-five: What are the issues? *TESOL Quarterly*, 25, 245-260.
- [12] Brown, H. D. (2002). English language teaching in the "postmethod" era: Toward better diagnosis, treatment, and assessment. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching* (pp. 9-25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [13] Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). Discourse analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (Eds.) (2001). Introduction. Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching and testing. Harlow: Longman.
- [15] Clarke, M. A. (1990). Some cautionary observations on liberation education. *Language Arts*, 67 (4), 388-398.
- [16] Clarke, M. A. (1994). The dysfunctions of the theory/practice discourse. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28 (1), 9-26.
- [17] Clarke, M. A., & Silberstein, S. (1988). Problems, prescriptions and paradoxes in second language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 22 (4), 684-700.
- [18] Chomsky, N. (1959). A review of B. F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior. *Language*, 35 (1), 26-28.
- [19] Chomsky, N. (1975). Syntactic structures. The Hague: Mouton.
- [20] Curran, C. A. (1972). Counseling-learning: A whole-person model for education. New York: Grune and Stratton.
- [21] Curran, C. A. (1976). Counseling-learning in second languages. Apple River, Ill: Apple River Press.
- [22] Darder, A., Baltodano, M., & Torres, R. D. (Eds.), *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- [23] Derrida, J. (1978). Writing and difference (A. Bass, Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- [24] Dewey, J. (1966). Democracy and education. New York: The Free Press.
- [25] Dewey, J. (1963). Experience and education. New York: Collier Books.
- [26] Doll, E. (2002). Beyond methods? Teaching as an aesthetic and spiritual quest [electronic version]. In E. Mirochnik & D. C. Sherman (Eds.), *Passion and Pedagogy: Relation, creation, and Transformation in teaching*. Retrieved 15.6.2007 from [http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/wdoll/mypapers\\_new.htm](http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/wdoll/mypapers_new.htm)
- [27] Elliott, J. (1993). Reconstructing teacher education: Teacher Development. London: Falmer Press.
- [28] Fairclough, N. (1989). Language and power. London: Longman.
- [29] Finocchiaro, M. (1971). Myth and reality in TESOL: A plea for a broader view. *TESOL Quarterly*, 5, 3-17.
- [30] Foucault, M. (1972). The archeology of knowledge. New York: Tavistock.
- [31] Foucault, M. (1980). Power and knowledge. New York: Pantheon.
- [32] Freire, P. (1972). Pedagogy of the oppressed (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- [33] Freire, P. (1998). Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage (P. Clarke, Trans.). Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- [34] Gramsci, A. (1971). Selection from the prison notebooks. New York: International Publishers.
- [35] Giroux, H. (1988). Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey.
- [36] Gumperz, J. (1982). Discourse strategies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- [37] Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). An introduction to functional grammar. London: Edward Arnold.
- [38] Hornby, A. S. (1954). Guide to patterns and usage in English. London: Oxford University Press.
- [39] Hornby, A. S. (1959). The teaching of structural words and sentence patterns. London: Oxford University Press.
- [40] Howatt, A. P. R. (1984). A history of language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [41] Howatt, A. P. R. (with Widdowson H. D.) (2004). A history of language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [42] Hutcheon, L. (1989). The politics of postmodernism. London: Routledge.
- [43] Jameson, F. (1984). Foreword, In J. F. Lyotard, *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- [44] Janson, H. W., & Janson, A. (1995). History of art. London: Prentice Hall.
- [45] Keeves, J. P., & Lakomsky, G. (1999). Issues in educational research. Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- [46] Kelly, L. (1969). 25 centuries of language teaching. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- [47] Krashen, S., & Terrell, T. (1983). The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom. Oxford: Pergamon.
- [48] Kumaravadivelu, B. (1992). Macrostrategies for the second/foreign language teacher. *Modern Language Journal*, 76 (1), 41-49.
- [49] Kumaravadivelu, B. (1993). Maximizing learning potential in the communicative classroom. *ELT Journal*, 47, 12-25.
- [50] Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 27-48.
- [51] Kumaravadivelu, B. (1995). The author responds. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 177-180.
- [52] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35, 537- 560.
- [53] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language learning. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- [54] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006a). Understanding language teaching: from method to postmethod. Mahwah, N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- [55] Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006b). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, challenging methods. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40 (1), 59-77.
- [56] Larson-Freeman, D. (2005a). A critical analysis of postmethod. *ILI Language Teaching Journal*, 1(1), 21-25.
- [57] Larson-Freeman, D. (2005b). On the appropriateness of language teaching methods in language and development. *ILI Language Teaching Journal*, 1 (2), 1-14.
- [58] Liu, D. (1995). Comments on B. Kumaravadivelu's "The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching": "Alternative to" or "addition to" method? *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 147-177.

- [59] Lozanov, G. (1978). *Suggestology and outline of suggestopedy*. New York: Gordon and Breach.
- [60] Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- [61] Mackey, W. F. (1965). *Language teaching analysis*. London: Longman.
- [62] Marshal, J., & Peters, M. (1999). Postmodernism. In J. P. Keeves, & G. Lakomsky (Eds.), *Issues in educational research* (pp. 242-245). Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- [63] Maslow, A. (1967). Self-actualization and beyond. In J. F. T. Bugental (Ed.), *Challenges of Humanistic Psychology* (pp. ). New York: McGraw Hill.
- [64] Miegge, G. (1685). *Nouvelle Methode pour apprendre l'Anglois, avec une Nomenclature, Francoise Angloise; un Recueil d' Expressions familiares; et des dialogues, familiers et choisis*. London: for Thomas Bassett (Scholar Press 152, 1969) [cited in Howatt, 2004].
- [65] Noddings, N. (1998). *Philosophy of education*. Oxford: Westview Press.
- [66] *Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories*. (2002). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [67] Pennycook, A. (1989). The concept of method, interested knowledge, and the politics of language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23, 589-618.
- [68] Piaget, J. (1951). *Psychology of intelligence*. London: Routledge and Kegan.
- [69] Piaget, J. (1971). *Biology and knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [70] Prabhu, N. S. (1990). There is no best method—why? *TESOL Quarterly*, 24, 161-176.
- [71] Richards, J. C. (1990). Beyond methods. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), *The language teaching matrix*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [72] Richards, J. C. (2001). Beyond methods. In C. N. Candlin & N. Mercer (Eds.), *English language teaching in its social context* (pp. 167-179). London: Routledge.
- [73] Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [74] Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [75] Roger, C. R. (1968). Interpersonal relationship: USA 2000. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences*, 4, 265-280.
- [76] Savignon, S. (1991). Communicative language teaching: State of the art. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15, 261-277.
- [77] Savignon, S. (2007). Beyond communicative language teaching: What's ahead? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 207-220.
- [78] Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, R. M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [79] Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal Behavior*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- [80] Solomon, R. C., & Higgins, K. M. (1996). *A short history of philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [81] Stern, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [82] Swaffar, J. K., Arens, K., & Morgan, M. (1982). Teacher classroom practices: Redefining method as task hierarchy. *The Modern Language Journal*, 66, 24-23.
- [83] Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [84] Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- [85] Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- [86] Wodak, R. (1989). *Language, power and ideology: Studies in political discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- [87] Wolfreys, J. (1998). *Deconstruction. Derrida*. London: McMillan.



**Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi** is Head of Research & Planning Department at the Iran Language Institute. He has a BS in civil engineering and an MA in TEFL. He is currently perusing a PhD in TEFL at University for Teacher Education, Tehran, Iran. He has published papers on materials development and task-based language teaching. He has taught research methods in applied linguistics and language testing at University for Teacher Education and Allameh Tabatabai'i University in Tehran. His areas of interest are materials development and language testing.

# Chinese Tour Guides' Strategies in Intercultural Communication—Implications for Language Teaching and Tourism Education

Ying Huang

School of Foreign Languages & Literature, Yunnan Normal University, Kunming, China  
Email: nancyhuang1207@yahoo.com.cn

**Abstract**—This paper presents Chinese tour guides' strategies in intercultural communication. It is based on a research carried out in Yunnan Province of China to explore intercultural communication of professional English-speaking tour guides with their tourists from various cultural backgrounds. Findings indicate that faced with the prospect of conflict with tourists, or between tourists, guides will adopt varied strategies according to which roles, identities and relationships they choose to identify as most appropriate in the particular situation. Role, identity and relationship are important; context is important, and individual perceptions of appropriateness are also strong influences on the guides' responses. What influences tour guides' choice of strategies and leads to their perceptions is a complicated issue. It has to be understood and explained with due consideration of personal, cultural and contextual perspectives.

**Index Terms**—tour guides, strategies, intercultural communication, context

## I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In China, communication between tour guides and their international tourists has drawn attention of researchers in recent years for two reasons: Firstly, the number of international tourists coming to China has been increasing rapidly; Secondly, intercultural communication studies has been identified as an important research area. The importance of this has become obvious, particularly in China where tourism is booming and the number of tourists coming from other cultures has been increasing rapidly in the past 20 years. Aroused by the interest and demands to find out the answers on how tour guides are communicating with their international tourists to achieve their perceived effective and appropriate communication and what are the relevant factors in relevance to their strategies, a research was conducted focusing on professional tour guides in Yunnan province of P. R. China. Many interesting findings have emerged from the research, which have good implications for developing intercultural communicative competence and tour guide training in China.

Yunnan as the gateway to Southeast Asian countries has experienced rapid tourism development in the past 20 years or so. The increase of international tourists to the province adds to the demand for foreign language speaking tour guides. In international tourism context, tour guides are playing multiple roles when communicating with international tourists. Meanwhile their communication with tourists takes place in a complicated and multiple contexts characterized as professionalism, commercialization and Chineseness (Huang, 2008). This makes their work quite challenging and places them in front of choices from time to time.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of grounded theory was used to the extent that new themes are allowed to emerge in the research process. Grounded theory is a qualitative approach that generates theory from data. It was developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967). This approach provides the structure often lacking in other qualitative approaches without sacrificing flexibility or rigour. One essential characteristic of this methodology is that the knowledge or theory emerges from the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It allows whatever is salient to the area being studied to emerge. It also stresses the importance of the researcher's role as an interpreter.

Data for this study was drawn by three means: semi-structured interview, participant observation and document analysis. Interviews are widely regarded as an appropriate means to acquire data in qualitative research (Denzin, 1989). Fontana & Frey (2000) identify interviews as the most common and powerful ways that people try to understand their fellow human beings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 Chinese English-speaking tour guides and 5 tourism educators to find out their perceptions of the issue being explored.

Participant observation was also employed as a complementary approach for data collection. This method is regarded as one that is suitable for a study of people. The aim of this method is "to generate practical and theoretical truths about human life grounded in the realities of daily existence, and by this the researcher is able to experience or observe the meanings and interactions of people from the role of an insider" (Jorgensen, 1989: 14). It is used as a supplementary tool to compare what tour guides talked about with what happens in reality, and to cross validate interviews. Six tour

guides were observed when they conducted their 131 international tourists from America, Australia, Britain, Sweden, Poland and Holland. The total length of observation is 13 days. Analysis of the findings has many implications for improving intercultural communicative competence, language teaching and tourism education.

### III. STRATEGIES TOUR GUIDES USED IN THEIR COMMUNICATION WITH INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

Findings of the research has indicated that tour guides' strategies to achieve their goals of effective and appropriate communication are based on context, tourist and perception of roles. The major ones are labeled as: adaptation to cultural differences; adopting appropriate skills; creating similarities; maintaining appropriate relationships and conflict resolution strategies.

#### A. *Adaptation to Cultural Differences*

Tour guides have to work with tourists from varied cultural backgrounds. The guides unanimously identified a common approach—adaptation to the differences between themselves and the tourists, and to differences among the tourists. From their perspective it was the tour guides rather than the tourists who adapted.

Several guides indicated that this adaptation was not based on knowledge of professional roles or intuition. To adapt successfully requires knowledge of cultural differences. This knowledge revolves around two aspects: adaptation to style and to interests. Adaptation to cultural styles is influenced to some extent by group size, but mainly by cultural differences and ways of communicating such as ways of talking, e.g. the appropriate use of words, and the style of communication. In accordance with the group and tourists, some tour guides emphasised the effectiveness of giving systematic introductions to tourists who are travelling long-distances. On these occasions, they usually organised her interpretation as a series of special topics. Their style is more like lecturing in a classroom. However they always made sure that their body language matched the requirements of tourists, and that tourists' needs were catered for.

The guides' comments suggest they are fully aware that understanding cultural differences is quite helpful for effective and appropriate communication. This understanding helps tour guides adapt to tourists' interests and needs when giving speeches or interpretations, and to other factors such as age and educational background. One guide used a Chinese idiom to describe its importance: "zhi bi zhi ji" (know both our adversaries and ourselves). By this he emphasised that tour guides should know both Chinese culture and tourist culture, and that only by this adaptation could the two sides understand each other and have in-depth communication.

With this perception, tour guides used strategies to discover tourists' interests and then to adapt to them as far as is practical. Some took into consideration what their coming tour groups would be interested in when they received the itinerary.

Nevertheless, the guiding strategy of adaptation does not mean abandoning the principles relating to the proper roles and identities of tour guides. Some strongly emphasised that adaptation to cultural difference does not mean to totally "give in" or "surrender with no principle". This is especially so for adaptation to tourists' interests.

Data from the research suggests that the younger tour guides saw adaptation as about practical strategies such as matching their styles of dress and skills, while the more experienced tour guides emphasised adaptation from a deeper level, which includes knowledge and attitude. This difference in styles of adaptability was reflected in the generational tension over what it means to be sensitive to differences among tourists, in an unexpected way. A senior tour guide, when commenting on the younger generation, stressed that in his time tour guides never sat down while delivering a speech on the coach. He mentioned how hard they worked at that time when the road conditions were bad. In the early years it took them about three hours travelling from Kunming to the Stone Forest, a journey which only takes 90 minutes at present. At that time, the road was very bumpy and zigzagging. Tour guides started delivering their speech soon after they got on the coach. Sometimes they stood for more than two hours, giving interpretations about what they saw along the road, introducing the culture of Yunnan, and organising activities to entertain the tourists. He complained that the younger tour guides would too often relax by sitting down with their backs to the tourists if they sensed that particular tour groups did not demand constant information through lectures lasting the duration of the coach ride.

#### B. *Developing a Wide Repertoire of Communication Skills*

Being aware that they have to adapt to cultural differences in order to have effective and appropriate communication with international tourists, both tour guides and tour educators argued that developing a wide array of appropriate and varied communication skills was essential. These skills include the areas of language, motivation, entertainment and engaging tourists, and dealing with embarrassing situations.

The guides are careful about language skills, including different vocabulary, tones and speed to communicate with varied tourists. Interviews and participant observations indicate that most tour guides had developed these skills to a high degree. One tour guide conducting an American group presented her good skills in communication. Her language was very effective in arousing interest and engaging tourists. For example, she said, "Yi people, after they get married, only use two colours for clothes, blue and black. ... If you touch their triangles and don't want to marry them, you offend them and have to labour for three years for the family. You don't want to marry them, do you?". Tourists burst into laugh.

There are also occasions when tour guides have to fabricate stories or words in order to achieve their goal, but at the

same time cover their real purposes. This often happens when they are heading for tourist shops, which is mandatory for tour guides and tour companies. Sometimes shopping is included in the itinerary, so tour guides must take tourists there, for they have to sign a paper in the shop to prove they have visited. It is a sensitive issue because it is concerned with taking commissions. Realizing that most tourists are sensitive to this arrangement, and that some of them might have negative attitudes towards it, some tour guides use techniques in their communication to make tourists happy and to cover this up.

### C. *Creating Similarities*

One common factor in tour guides' strategies is their awareness of the need to create perceived similarities between people from different cultures in order to cross cultural boundaries and to engage tourists in communication.

To contrast and compare is also a suggested effective strategy to help tourists understand Chinese culture. To some extent, it is a way to create similarities between cultures, making it easier for mutual understanding. For example, one tour guide realised it was hard to explain and make tourists understand Buddhism which is widely practised in China, so he compared the doctrines and practice of Buddhism with Christianity and other religions. This made things easier for both tourists and tour guides. On this point of comparison and contrast, guides again raised the importance of knowledge of cultural differences, which helps to create similarities and to cross boundaries between cultures.

Some tour guides use anecdotes and legendary stories in their cultural interpretation. Yunnan is a province with 26 ethnic groups, each of which has its legendary stories concerned with customs and culture. Many touching love stories are concerned with local residential construction, festivals and customs. Some tour guides usually drew comparisons between Chinese and western love stories such as Romeo and Juliet, making it easier for tourists to understand.

### D. *Maintaining Appropriate Relationship*

The informants in this research have indicated their emphatic attitudes towards relationships with tourists. In particular, they emphasised different relationship with domestic and international tourists.

One tour guides said that to set up a good relationship with the person who had the role of leader was very important with both international and domestic tourists. However, this strategy was more critical with Chinese tourists. Once a good relationship was set up with the head of the group, it was easier to deal with the whole group; hence one of her effective strategies was to identify the key person in a group. She is smart to rely on that "powerful person" to exercise her own power on the group. She said that strategy was not quite as effective with international tourists because their relationships were less hierarchical, even though they might come from the same company. With domestic tourists she was concerned not only for her relationship with them, but also for the relationships among tourists themselves, and their subtle psychological differences.

To maintain good relationships through such strategies does not always work, because other people's needs and power sometimes intrude into the equation. Some tour guides, especially the younger ones, talked about their problematic relationship with coach drivers, who they were forced to be careful of not offending. They sometimes have to give in to the drivers at the expense of good communication with the tourists.

Tour guides understand that maintaining appropriate relationships involves skills. Some use much singing and stories to engage tourists. One guide said that she understood that "ren qing wei" (human feeling) between tourists and tour guides helps to initiate effective communication.

### E. *Conflict Resolution*

As presented in the previous section, tour guides contend there are not many conflicts with their tourists. This is because it is mandatory that they minimise conflicts and avoid them before they appear. Nevertheless, there are occasions when conflicts do occur and manipulation of them demands a negotiation. When the conflict occurs, two strategies are often used: to find safe topics and avoid touchy ones. However, once confronted with conflicts, there are different strategies — to give in or to confront.

To sum up, tour guides' perceptions indicates that effective and appropriate communication is context-based. This context is relevant to the profession, the social context and personal perception of roles, identities and relationships. In addition it concerns expectations of the results of communication. To a large extent, these tour guides are trying to achieve their expectations through effectiveness and appropriateness. This involves varied choices. These choices relate to negotiating cultural differences, perceiving professional appropriateness, targeting communication, managing identity conflicts and maintaining relationships.

Consciously or subconsciously, tour guides are trying to build up a third culture in which both sides could share some temporary similarities with which they are to communicate effectively and appropriately within a certain period of time. To build up a third culture not only includes creating common interests, emphasising similarities, and sharing professional rituals. It also requires politeness, face and respect. These components can interact at several levels. First, this third culture should be acceptable to both sides for at least the duration of the tour; both sides agree on content and itinerary and shared interests; they cooperate to achieve their goals of communication; both sides accept the commercial base, including rules of good service and payment. Second, this third culture should be one in which both sides try to appreciate and understand the others, both from the perspective of professional tourists and guides, and also through personal qualities and politeness.

#### IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The findings of this research have generated some implications for both tour guide training and tourism education, and in improving intercultural communicative competence. In particular, they make one ponder on questions such as: Can tour guides be trained in the knowledge and behaviour required to meet tourists' demands? What should be included in the training and what approaches are effective in training? And this research has implications for training and education in Yunnan and in China. This is summarised in the following seven points:

(1). Mindfulness, context-based communication and third culture creation imply that we should go beyond skill-based and competence-based training towards an education that develops abilities in perception and attribution. The final goal is a mindful communication. This is particularly necessary for tour guides working with international tourists who are varied in values, customs, behaviours and communication styles. For tour guides to have good communication skills, they should first of all understand tourists as human beings, at least the general or universal characteristics of human beings. This includes tour guides understanding themselves as human beings.

Equally important is developing a proper attitude towards this profession, which is also a process that takes time and energy. It is hard to achieve through short-term training. If tour guides could see their intercultural communication as an interactive process in which they could learn real-life communicative competence by offering good service and sincerity, they would better enjoy the work.

(2). Training should involve a change from content-based or information-focused teaching to one that not only provides students with information, but also a way of thinking, and a way of solving problems. Effective and appropriate communication requires communicators to acquire knowledge of different cultures. Tour guides understand this. However, on many occasions, cultural teaching is a teaching of stereotypes with an absence of context and an ignorance of individual differences.

The acquisition of cultural general and cultural specific knowledge, however, not only includes foreign but also Chinese culture. An analysis of tour guides themselves as human beings, an understanding of their own culture and the behaviour brought about by this culture will benefit tour guides in many ways. Tour guides would have a chance to think about themselves, who they are and what they are actually expecting from this profession. It would also be a chance for tour guides to bravely face their own shortcomings, especially those that they might perceive in their own compatriots. They would feel shame at the some of the behaviours shown by domestic tourists, especially when they get the chance to compare and contrast with international tourists, who in some aspects, behave in ways they perceive to be polite, respective and cooperative. If tour guides are mindful of these differences, they are more likely to have reasonable attributions when problems and conflicts occur. They might be more motivated to find ways to cooperate and adapt to domestic tourists.

These suggestions, however, do not mean that the essential competencies should be ignored. On the contrary, this research indicates a need for a strong emphasis on these basic competencies and skills. It suggests that language is essential in contributing to a good trip. For tour guides, language should also include training for tourism and hospitality purposes, because how to make guests feel welcome and well-attended is an art. They should learn how to speak clearly to guests, how to engage tourists with appropriate language skills, and how to use language as a professional skill for self-presentation and impression management, although success in communication goes beyond skill-based competence.

(3). There should be some consideration from educators and trainers about their ways and methods, or methodology in training and education. Approaches such as contextualising the problem and applying theory to practice should be used. This research has indicated a gap between practice and teaching or, in another words, a divorce of theory and practice. Many tour guides pointed out that what they had learned at school was not applicable in reality. This is a common problem existing in the Chinese education system. Schools offer courses and design their curricula according to educators' wishes instead of employers' demands and what learners need to succeed after graduation (Xiao, 2000). Educators emphasise content and language competence. While this is definitely essential, there are also other perspectives that they should include such as contexts for conducting the tour. Unfortunately, the basic universal human needs and expectations are usually neglected. But effective communication ideally involves satisfying the expectations of both sides (Ting-Toomey, 1999). More cooperation and communication between educational providers and tourism industries should be developed to make sure that they are moving in a reasonable direction.

(4). Training strategies appropriate for Chinese culture and Chinese students for communicating with international tourists should be developed. In order to be a top class, competent professional tour guide, one needs to work from a solid basis of knowledge of himself or herself. It is important to know oneself as Chinese. This is not a similar notion to western identity, but to know oneself as Chinese. They need that to develop a fully professional code of ethics and a notion of treating people mindfully. Then they are able to treat Chinese tourists mindfully, not just international tourists.

(5). Professional ethics should be enhanced. The respondents have pointed out some misunderstandings in social attitudes towards the tour guiding profession. However, these people also indicated that ethics was a concern for the profession. Some tour guides used inappropriate, even illegal, approaches to obtain financial benefit. The older generation blames the younger tour guides for targeting financial reward with no consideration of identity and professional ethics. They attribute the decay to the social environment and managerial system. None of the younger tour guides talked about their own professional ethics except that some blamed their peers for bad behaviour. They isolated

some tour guides as “hai qun zhi ma” (black sheep), who damaged their professional reputations. The implication is that whoever is to blame, professional ethics deserves more attention, although it is the most difficult issue to be dealt with. It is not a problem which can be solved through short training or lecturing: it is an issue involving education, understanding and social support.

(6). This research also implies challenges for tourism educators. Being involved in an industry which demands competencies, attitudes and knowledge, tourism educators have to face challenges from a rapidly developing and changing society. They need to envision the change, be engaged in the changing process, update their knowledge, and be open to the ever-changing world. On the one hand they cannot impose their ideas on their students. The paradox appears when they have to convince their students of the importance of the profession. They cannot convince their students or understand their worldview until they themselves develop this insight, and be ready to accept and respect the diversity. Globalisation has forced China to change some forms of teaching, both academically and methodologically. For example, the training should not only be the traditional content-oriented, but also process-oriented, such as the process of communication, how to be mindful communicators, how to ask questions and how to reflect.

## V. CONCLUSION

In sum, the research indicates that in-service professional training is very important, but should be treated as a long-term strategic plan for cultivating personnel for the tourism industry and the whole society. There is the distinction between training and education. Hence the question whether we should teach tour guiding as an educative process or just as training for communicative skills and professional competence.

The findings in respects of strategies adopted have many implications for both language teaching and tourism education. It has helped to draw a conclusion that to face the development of tourism industry and globalization, we should go beyond training to education. This is because for service industries, competence and skills are necessary, in which case both long-term and short-term training are essential. However, competence-based and skill-based training are not enough for good communication with people of individual and cultural difference. Proposing education as the means to meet the demands of the market and society does not mean advocating professional training in order to satisfy employers' or trainees' short-term demands. Rather, education should be advocated as a process for cultivating good tour guides in the long term. Students should not only understand the nature of this profession, but also understand tourists as human beings. It is more important that teachers teach students the rationale of “why” some principles should be followed and why some techniques should be used. Then students could apply them in their practice.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is supported by Yunnan Provincial Department of Education Research Fund (Project No. 08Y21045).

## REFERENCES

- [1] Huang, Y. (2008). A Study of intercultural communication of professional tour guides in China. Yunnan People's Publishing House.
- [2] Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherston.
- [3] Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- [4] Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The Research Act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- [5] Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The Interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, pp645-672.
- [6] Jorgensen, D. L. (1989). *Participant Observation: A methodology for human studies*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE, p14.
- [7] Xiao, H. (2000). China's tourism education into the 21st century. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(4), 1052-1055.
- [8] Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communication across Cultures*. New York, London: The Guilford Press.

**Ying Huang** was born in Yunnan, China in 1968. She received her M.A. degree in 1997 in Applied Linguistics and her Ph. D degree in 2005 in Intercultural Communication, both from La Trobe University in Australia.

She is currently an associate professor in School of Foreign Languages & Literature of Yunnan Normal University, Kunming, China. Her research interest is intercultural communication and EFL.

# Applying the Reader-response Approach in Teaching English Short Stories to EFL Students

Sarvenaz Khatib  
Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran  
Email: Sarvenaz\_khatib@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—This article argues about the practicality of introducing the reader-response approach to teaching English literature to Iranian EFL students. The conventionally used traditional method and the newly introduced reader-response approach to teaching English short stories were implemented in two different groups of college students. It was of the interest of the researcher to observe any differences in the reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and motivation for further reading of English literature amongst the students of the two groups. The findings revealed that students directed with the reader-response approach could give aesthetic responses to literature without impairing their comprehension of the literary text. However, there were no significant differences revealed in the level of vocabulary acquisition or degree of motivation of the students of the two groups to read English literature in the future, deliberately and on their own.

**Index Terms**—the Reader-response Theory, the traditional method, aesthetic response, transaction, motivation

## I. USING LITERATURE IN EFL CLASSES

Although the importance and efficiency of the application of literature in language teaching classes had long been neglected by language educators, language teaching researchers and theorists, there has been a new wave of inviters of literature into EFL pedagogy since the early 1980s. It is agreed by most of these supporters that there is a noticeable superiority in the numerous advantages of the use of literary texts in comparison to other teaching materials (Brumfit & Carter, 1986; Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993; Lazar, 1994; Duff & Maley, 1991; Maley, 2001; McRae, 1991; Spack, 1985; Widdowson, 1975; 1984; 1992).

The availability of a generous resource of written material, the existence of fundamental and general themes shared by the majority of people of different cultures as universals, the presence of the potential to be related to by readers and to be associated with personal thoughts, emotions and experiences, the genuine authenticity of it and the vivid illustration of the lifestyles, cultures, beliefs and behaviours of the people of the target society are only some of the numerous and immeasurable advantages of using literature in EFL contexts.

However, The most significant reason for using literature in EFL classes is that through reading it, readers are emotionally and personally involved with the text and the characters, a fact that can distant learners from the merely mechanical ordeal of language learning. Using literature in teaching a target language can provide an enjoyable and yet equally educational context from which language classes can take advantage.

### A. *The Reader-response Theory in Language Teaching*

It is strongly held by the advocates of the application of the reader-response theory in ELT that there is an apparent superiority in the advantages it can bring about in language teaching contexts in comparison to the traditional approaches (Carlisle, 2000; Hirvela, 1996). Having a long history of being practiced in language classes, the traditional approach devises the role of the sole conductor of the flows in the class to the teacher and it seems apparent that in such an atmosphere, and particularly while dealing with literary texts, students have the part of rather passive recipients, unable to exercise interpreting and analysing a given text with much creativity or diversity from what is aimed at by the teacher. On the contrary, in the reader-response theory, the act of reading is considered as an active, dynamic process, constantly prone to change in which readers are in charge of the creation and development of meaning. In such a context, the paramount role of readers in the process of meaning making of a text cannot be neglected or undermined by any means and thus, the interaction between the reader and the text is viewed as having utmost importance. This is the reason that in this approach to literature a variety of personal interpretations and analyses, based on not only the textual elements but also the reader's personal views, experiences and feelings, are welcomed (Diyanni, 2000; Kirszner and Mandell, 2001; Padley, 2006; Tyson, 2006). A fact strongly agreed on by psychologists is that learners can experience optimal learning while participating, and the reader-response approach provides a chance for the students' active involvement and full engagement in reading a text and class discussions on it.

However, in spite of its influential and innovative characteristics and promising perspectives, not many scholars or educators have realised the beneficial practicality of the reader-response theory in EFL contexts. This situation is either a result of this approach's yet unknown potentials or the aftermath of the language educators' reluctance to diverge

from their routines. In either case, the vast domain of the reader-response theory is yet to be explored specifically in foreign language teaching.

### *B. Purpose of the Study*

This study aims to introduce a reader-response approach to teaching English short stories to Iranian EFL learners. This is of considerable importance as EFL students must be granted with the chance to experience an enjoyable reading process in which reflection and expression of inner feelings and thoughts is made possible before, during and after the reading.

Being exposed to a reader-response approach to reading literary texts in the target language, the language learners could view reading English literature as a pleasurable and thought-provoking practice through which the horizon of their outlooks could be broadened. This was hoped to be achieved through using unlimited roots of self-expression, being exposed to the versatility of others' perspectives on a subject being discussed and getting to discover various touched emotions both within themselves and others.

In this study the researcher was interested in investigating probable differences in the reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition the motivation for the further reading of English literature between students experiencing the reader-response approach in reading short stories and those going through the traditional method. Moreover, it was aimed to observe the possibility of students' giving aesthetic responses to literary texts without their reading comprehension being impaired.

## II. METHOD

### *A. The Participants*

Two intact English classes, one with 24 students and the other with 21 at Allameh Tabataba'i University with their ages varying between 18 and 24 provided the participants for the study. These were all students of the second academic semester, majoring in English translation and their performance on a reading comprehension quiz, a vocabulary test, and a motivation questionnaire were further evaluated.

These participants were from two different classes of Reading Comprehension courses being held at different hours and days of the week, going through the exact same academic ritual devoted to that course and both being taught by the same instructor. The students in neither of the two classes had been asked to read any English literary texts as a requirement for their previous courses and therefore, this was their first serious academic encounter with English literature.

The selected short stories to be read by the participants were supposed to be covered as a side-programme along with the other reading materials assigned by their own instructor. These short stories were all gone through with the researcher, being their instructor for 2 hours of the four-hour reading programmes of the week.

The students of these two classes were assured to be of a homogeneous level of English proficiency and Reading Comprehension skill via a TOEFL reading comprehension test. Afterwards, one class was randomly chosen as the experimental group while the other as the control group, both directed by the researcher in the first two hours of the four-hour reading comprehension classes. These classes were then followed by a two-hour session instructed by their own instructor, concentrating on their routine reading programme.

### *B. Instrumentation*

The following instruments were used to serve the purpose of the research study:

-The reading section of a TOEFL test to ensure that all of them would approach the chosen short stories with homogeneous levels of reading comprehension skill. The test consisted of five reading passages and the overall of 50 comprehension questions.

-A pre-reading questionnaire, containing 20 questions mainly in order to help have a general idea of what the participants' attitude towards reading literature in general, and English literary texts in particular was. This would also enable the researcher to compare any possible changes in the participants' attitude and motivation for further reading of English literature after the completion of the study. It must be mentioned that this questionnaire had been previously piloted on a group of undergraduate students of English translation. The reliability of it was calculated as being (.89), a high reliability index for a questionnaire and the validity verified by asking some of the researchers' professors' professional opinions.

-A Vocabulary quiz, consisting of 80 words, all extracted from the short stories that were supposed to be read during the course. The vocabulary items were chosen to ensure that none of the students were already acquainted with any of them. In this case, after the completion of the study, the acquisition of the vocabulary items could directly be attributed to the reading of the short stories. Words with which the students were familiar were consequently excluded from the researcher's consideration and the post-test.

-A Post-experiment vocabulary quiz, consisting of 50 items, designed to check the vocabulary acquisition of participants after reading the short stories. All the vocabulary items were chosen from the six short stories covered during the study and the questions were divided into different forms, varying from multiple-choice questions and fill in the gaps to the giving the meaning of the words in translation.

-A Reading Comprehension exam in which ten questions were asked concerning the six short stories focused on throughout the experiment. These questions were designed to evaluate the participants' overall comprehension of the short stories. All short stories were taken into account and the students were not informed of this upcoming exam, in order to prevent any pre-exam reviewing or revising.

-A Post-reading Questionnaire, with 20 questions similar to the pre-reading questionnaire with a slight modification, designed to observe any probable changes in the participants' attitudes towards English literature and their motivation for the further reading of English literary texts.

### C. *The Short Stories*

After reviewing several collections of English short stories, six short stories were chosen by the researcher in order to be covered in both the experimental and control groups throughout the course. These short stories were all selected as they were supposed to evoke a suitable amount of emotional response and were promising to provoke students to express their versatile opinions and interpretations of the short stories.

The short stories, in the order of their presentation were: "*The chaser*" by John Collier, "*The Story of an "Hour"*" by Kate Chopin, "*A Jury of Her Peers*" by Susan Glaspell, "*The Use of Force*" by William Carlos Williams, "*The Necklace*" by Guy de Maupassant, and "*The Misery*" by Anton Chekov. All the above stories were originally written in English, with the exception of *The Necklace* and *The Misery*, the former translated from French and the latter from Russian into English.

Taking numerous short stories in English into consideration, the researcher selected the chosen six, hoping that because of their plots, characterisation, suspense and ironies they could attract the attention of the students and drive them into the free expression of their personal interpretations and opinions. Moreover, these short stories were short enough to be read in a one week's time by the students and discussed in the limited class time. The themes were also framed in a manner with which participants could relate and interact according to their ages and status.

It is worth mentioning that the selection of short stories rather than plays, novel or poetry was first due to the fact that, regarding the consideration of time constraint, reading short stories seemed more practical and possible and second, the genre was generally considered to be easier for the students to go through in comparison with poetry, for example, as it has been the participants' first serious encounter with English literary works.

## III. THE DESIGN

In this study, the researcher desires to investigate the differences in motivation, reading comprehension skill and vocabulary acquisition of two intact groups after the process of treatment. According to Best and Kahn (2006), because random assignment to the participants in the two groups was not applied, the students falling in each of these groups were determined prior to the beginning of the experiment, and they were naturally assembled, a quasi-experimental design was implemented.

## IV. THE PROCEDURE

As aforementioned, a reading part of a TOEFL test was administered among them with the objective of measuring the students' degree of homogeneity and afterwards the students whose scores were one standard deviation below and above the mean were selected as those whose performances were of the interest of the researcher. There remained the total of 42 students, 23 in the experimental group and 19 in the control; the excluded members were not considered for data analyses.

As the study of the vocabulary acquisition and motivation for reading English literature in the participants were also other concerns of the researcher, before introducing the first assigned short story to the student the vocabulary quiz was taken and in addition to it, the pre-reading motivation questionnaire distributed amongst the students.

In both the experimental and control groups the short stories were given to the participants not all together, but one at a time. They were asked to read a short story for the following session. In order to facilitate the reading process for the students and save them the time and energy spent on looking up new vocabulary, a word list was accompanied by each short story with the definition of all unfamiliar words on it. At the end of each session, the story to be read for the upcoming class, together with its vocabulary list, was distributed among the students.

### A. *Procedure in the Control Group*

In this group the traditional method of teaching literature was pursued and the main focus of attention here was the writer's intention of writing the story. Therefore throughout the class discussions of the stories the instructor was the centre of the class, directing students to reach the one supposedly "correct" interpretation of the story. The debate started with the researcher asking about the summary of the story, followed by analysis of the characters, themes and other literary aspects of the story. Participation of all students was called upon, asking them to express what they thought about the domineering themes, character development, and the "message" of the story; however, it was the instructor who stated the final correct interpretation and explanation.

After each phase of the discussion, the researcher elaborated on the matter being discussed, for example characters, themes, setting, point of view, irony, tone and symbolism. She emphasized what has allegedly been the author's intended meaning and message lying beneath every aspect of the story.

During the class, particular sections of the story were brought to attention by the researcher to support and validate the views expressed, by conveying the fact that there is only one possible interpretation of specific passages of the story. In this class, the students were rather passive recipients of the teacher's instructions without having the influence to affect or change the path of instruction determined by the teacher.

### *B. Procedure in the Experimental Group*

In the experimental group, the reader-response approach to reading short stories was implemented. The crucial difference this group entailed was that the complete versions of the short stories were not given to the students; this was done in a way that the ending was not apparent, something that created the opportunity for the students to express their own predictions about the upcoming events or plausible changes in the path of the stories.

In this class the instructor took the role of a conductor only, controlling the turn takings, posing thought provoking questions and initiating discussions. Students voiced their versatile opinions about the main characters of the story, whether they liked them or not and if they knew anyone with familiar personality traits in their real lives. The instructor asked participants about the mood or feeling the atmosphere of the story created in them and asked them to read aloud specific passages from which these feelings were evoked in them. Another question was whether they would have chosen a different setting, ambience or environment to write the same story had they been the author. The students were also asked to talk about any similar life experience they had had; and then, they proposed their idea of what the ending to that story would be.

Overall, the main debates were carried on amongst the students, expressing their internal thoughts and feelings to a single aspect and reacting to others' viewpoints. The questions or statements put forward by the researcher were meticulously chosen in order to fuel the free, non-restricted overflow of the participants' reactions, ideas and inner-most feelings.

At this point, the final section of the story was given to the participants and they were given time to read it silently. Afterwards, the class discussion was directed towards the expression of the students' reactions to the ending, how they favoured it or if they would have chosen a different ending for the story. Any probable changes in their prior interpretations or feelings towards characters or event were also talked about, reflecting the fact that anyone's initial approach to various aspects of a story could undergo a gradual transformation as readers move on in the story and is shaped fully only when they reach the ending.

After the completion of discussions on all six short stories, the reading comprehension test based on the stories and a vocabulary quiz constructed from the vocabulary items existing in the word lists of all short stories were administered. This was done in order to compare any probable difference in the experimental and control groups, resulting from different approaches to teaching the short stories implemented in the two classes. A post-reading questionnaire was also prepared, containing almost the same questions of the pre-reading questionnaire with a slight modification. It aimed to take into account any changes in the participants' motivations for the further reading of English literature, and to compare the impact each teaching methodology had had on the attitude and approach of the students to reading English literature.

## V. RESULTS

After the implementation of the study and the collection of data, an independent t-test was run to compare the means scores of the control and experimental groups on the Pre-experiment Reading Comprehension test. Based on the results obtained, it was concluded that there was not any significant difference between the experimental and control groups' reading comprehension ability prior to the administration of the treatment.

An independent t-test was run to compare the means scores of the two groups on the Pre- Reading questionnaire. The mean scores for the control and experimental groups were 35.60 and 32.94 respectively. These results indicate that the control and experimental groups are selected from the same population of students with no marked difference between their variances. The result of the evaluation of the pre-experimental questionnaire displayed no significant differences between the control and experimental groups' mean scores on the motivation questionnaire; this indicated that the two groups' motivations were almost at the same level and that any probable discrepancy in the results of the post-experimental questionnaire can be directly attributed to the difference in teaching approaches.

An independent t-test was run to compare the means scores of the control and experimental groups on the Post-Reading questionnaire. The descriptive statistics for the two groups are presented in Table 1. The mean scores for the control and experimental groups are 7.78 and 37.16 respectively.

TABLE 1:  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS POST- READING MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Group Statistics					
	GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post Reading Questionnaire	EXPERIMENTAL	19	37.789	3.224	.7397
	CONTROL	18	37.166	2.895	.6824

Based on the results, it was concluded that there was not any significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the post-experiment motivation questionnaire. Thus, revealed that the students who read literature using the reader-response approach were not more motivated to read literature in the target language than those trained by traditional methods. In other words, the reader-response approach did not improve the Iranian EFL students' motivation to read literature in the target language.

In order to compare the means scores of the control and experimental groups on the vocabulary retention test an independent t-test was run. Below comes the descriptive statistics for the two groups presented in Table 2. The mean scores for the control and experimental groups are 44.31 and 43.52 respectively.

TABLE 2:  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS VOCABULARY RETENTION THROUGH THE READER-RESPONSE APPROACH

Group Statistics					
	GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary Retention	EXPERIMENTAL	22	44.318	3.859	.822
	CONTROL	19	43.526	4.101	.940

Based on these results, it could be concluded that there was not any significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the vocabulary retention test. Thus it was found out that the vocabulary retention of the students who read literature using reader-response approach did not exceed more in comparison to those experiencing literature with traditional methods. In other words, the Reader-Response approach did not improve the Iranian EFL students' vocabulary mastery in the target language.

Moreover, an independent t-test was run to compare the means scores of the control and experimental groups on the post-experiment reading comprehension test. The descriptive statistics for the two groups are presented in Table 3. The mean scores for the control and experimental groups are 8.33 and 7.52 respectively.

TABLE 3:  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS POST-EXPERIMENT READING COMPREHENSION TEST

Group Statistics					
	GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-Experimental Reading Comprehension Test	CONTROL	18	8.333	1.644	.3877
	EXPERIMENTAL	23	7.521	1.728	.3604

Based on these results, not any significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the post-experiment reading comprehension test was revealed. Thus it was concluded that the Iranian EFL students using reader-response approach could indeed give aesthetic responses to English short stories without sacrificing the comprehension of the story. To put it in other words, the Reader-Response Approach did not impair the reading comprehension ability of the Iranian EFL students.

## VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As earlier mentioned, the major focus of this study was to observe, describe and interpret how Iranian EFL students respond to a literary text and how different their responses would be in the traditional and the reader-response approaches.

The aim of this research was to take into consideration the readers' reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and motivation for the further reading of literature in the future and to compare the findings in the traditional and the reader-response approaches. Based on the findings of the study, several conclusions can be drawn upon, below is the thorough explanation of each.

The first concern of the researcher in this study was to investigate the probability of any influence the application of the reader-response theory could have on the improvement of students' motivation for the further reading of literature.

The results of the performed statistics revealed that the reader-response approach cannot significantly improve the students' motivation for reading English literature. It is, however, noteworthy that the effect the reader-response approach to reading literary texts might have on the enhancement of students' motivation to read literature in the target language can be influentially different if tested over a longer period of time.

Moreover, neither of the two groups had any experiences with English literary texts in an academic context prior to the experiment. Hence, the superiority of the reader-response theory to the traditional method in improving students' motivation can indeed be proved if this approach is used with students with a prior experience of reading literary texts through other approaches.

The second matter this study sought to find an answer to was whether there is any difference between the amount of vocabulary acquisition in the students who read the short stories with a traditional approach and those taught with a reader-response tendency.

It is important to note again that neither of the two groups of control and experimental were exposed to a direct teaching of vocabulary, nor have their attentions been explicitly directed towards specific vocabulary items. As the matter of fact, the mere difference between the two approaches of teaching that could be somewhat relevant to the acquisition of vocabulary would be the concurrent demand from the students of the experimental group to point out and read aloud specific lines or passages of the story by which particular responses and reactions of them were aroused. This way there would be an opportunity in which readers could have extra, however subconscious, encounters with passages containing some of the chosen vocabulary items.

The conclusion of the carried out statistical procedures revealed that the application of the reader-response approach in reading literary courses did not lead to a noteworthy improvement in the acquisition of vocabulary items in the target language.

Thus, there is not enough evidence that can lead educators to the selection of the reader-response approach to reading literature over the traditional method if the sole or main objective of a course is the improvement of the students' mastery of vocabulary items in the target language.

The examination of the participants' written responses to comprehension questions based on the six taught short stories aimed at evaluating and comparing the degree to which readers had comprehended the reading passages. Another significant concern in this study was the investigation in the possibility of readers giving aesthetic responses to a literary text without risking the comprehension of the text to be sacrificed.

In order to receive adequate knowledge for drawing such a conclusion, different approaches were conducted in classes taught with traditional and the reader-response methods. While in the traditional method short stories were approached by the teacher as the director, in the reader-response method the cooperation of the students in the process of interpretation of the stories led to various, at times quite contradictory, interpretations and analyses of a single short story.

In the control group, in which the traditional method of teaching short stories was applied, the students were directly directed towards accepting one unified interpretation of the story, namely the correct or most agreed upon analysis of it. In this case readers had no chance to relate the sequence of events, characters or the current atmosphere of the story to their personal experiences or to study any factor of the story by taking them into the zone of their inner feelings. It is, therefore, apparent that all students were taught to acquire very close, if not entirely identical, interpretations of the read short story.

On the other hand, being taught by the reader-response approach, the experimental group viewed and analysed the given short stories by practicing a far more active involvement in the stories. In this case, at times the readers responded to the short stories aesthetically, personalising the themes, moods and atmosphere of the story. In doing so, more weight was placed on the discussion of the moral of the stories. Throughout the process of reading the short stories, the readers were provided with a chance to associate ideas, characters and incidents to their personal lives, engaging the knowledge, emotions and experiences they had prior to the experiment.

In assessing the written responses of the students of both classes to the reading comprehension questions and comparing the outcomes by running an independent t-test, it came out that there was no significant difference between the reading comprehension results of the control and experimental groups. This led us to believe that the students could in fact give aesthetic responses to literature without endangering the comprehension of it.

It is apparent from the findings that students trained with a reader-response approach to reading literature are able to comprehend a literary text as fully as those experiencing the conventional method of the traditional approach. This indicates that while having full engagement and involvement in the literature under consideration, relating and connecting it to their most personal experiences and worldviews and attaching emotions to their interpretation of the text, the readers can still have quite acceptable understanding of the text.

Participants in the control group passed almost the same path the teacher guided them through, and as previously mentioned there was little space left for them to exercise individual varied interpretations of the text. Whereas, students participating in the reader-response group each formed and gradually developed their own personal analysis and interpretation of the text, resulting in a multitude of dimensions and aspects of the story.

The statistical analysis revealed that while the application of the reader-response approach to teaching short stories did not significantly improve the comprehension skill of the students in comparison with the traditional method, yet it displayed an equal level of understanding of a literary text in students of both groups.

This conclusion well indicates that the long used traditional approach to teaching literature can securely be replaced by the promising reader-response approach without endangering the adequate comprehension of a text. Being exposed to a reader-response method of teaching literature, EFL readers can enjoy a free atmosphere of self-expression, the experience of emotional and attitudinal involvement in the vast world of literature and a journey in the endless realm of interpretations.

The most fundamental concern of this study was to examine the extent to which the reader-response theory and the practices associated with it can be applicable in Iranian EFL classes. A very important dimension of the target of the researcher was the observation of how this theory would succeed if practiced in EFL reading classes with literary texts being justified alternatives for ordinary conventional texts.

A few parameters can be pointed out, assumed by the researcher as being effective in the formation of the study's findings, below comes a short notification.

This study was carried out during eight consecutive sessions of 1- hour and thirty minutes each. It is noteworthy that the first and last sessions were devoted to the accumulation of necessary data and the administration of pre-experimental and post-experimental tests and questionnaires.

As students of both the experimental and control groups were sophomores of English Language Translation they had not had any academic encounters with literary texts at university prior to the experimentation. Having pointed out this fact, it seems obvious that to students of the experimental group, the reader-response theory by which they were instructed was a very new and exciting experience they were quite unfamiliar with. The entire instruction they had always been exposed to throughout their education was based on the traditional method. In this context, most naturally the students of the control group felt more at their comfort zone as the majority of practices and the flow of discussions were all in the same format they were used to.

Due to the pressure of the time constraint faced with by the researcher, the students could not be given sufficient time and opportunity to adjust to the innovative, newly introduced approach. Moreover, as their major of choice had been English Translation, it seems just normal that they were not as keen on or drawn to reading English literature by nature as can be expected from students of English literature.

However, it was noticed and vividly felt by the researcher that as the sessions of the class went by there appeared a more welcoming, more eager involvement in the approach on the part of the participants. With all intimidating factors being dimmed into the excitement of heated discussions in the class, the students clearly felt more comfortable expressing their innermost feelings and stating their personal viewpoints.

Still, in the context of university courses and with these students of English translation, the mentality of the majority of them favoured the mere passing of the course with an acceptably good mark and subconsciously, even students of the experimental group shifted their attention to what could be expected in the conventional recurring system of university quizzes. In this mood, it is apparent that the optimal devotion on the part of the participants to the practices of the reader-response could not be expected.

Furthermore, reading short stories was only a part of the requirements of this course, because as determined by their main instructor, the participants had to go through a textbook, mostly focusing on non-literary articles. This also, takes away the full concentration and attentiveness of the participants in adapting their reading literature with the unconventional approach of reader-response, as desired by the researcher.

Having mentioned all the above facts, it must be wholeheartedly emphasised that the researcher found the experimental experience a wholly rewarding and successful one. It must be concluded that the researcher witnessed the students' expression of their great excitement about the new intriguing experience and how they looked forward to having more literary texts incorporated in their curriculums.

## VII. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Numerous strongly supported advantages of placing literature in language pedagogies have been called upon by many EFL educators and theoreticians (Carter & Long, 1991; Duff & Maley, 1991; Lazar, 1993; 1994). In addition to all the aforementioned, the findings of the present research can also inspire language educators to invite literature, in general, and reader-response theory of teaching it in particular, into their language teaching curriculums.

This study was implemented in a reading course in which non-literary texts and articles are customarily worked on. It is generally believed by the instructors that non-literary texts are written in a much less complicated language in comparison with the literary ones, and thus practicing reading them is a reasonably effective strategy in order to prepare students for the higher complexity of literature they would encounter in the following semesters.

While this belief has been widely accepted and examined in reading courses at university levels in Iran, it is beneficial to highlight some of the spectacular advantages of placing literature, even in the general reading courses of EFL students.

Students of both control and experimental groups in this study had the chance to experience both non-literary texts and short stories as consisting parts of their reading course requirements. The textbook they had to cover throughout the

course—taught by their own instructor- consisted of general or scientific articles and texts, previously devised for the reading courses at university levels.

The six selected short stories brought to the class had all been meticulously chosen by the researcher as being appropriate materials for both the proficiency level of the participants and containing discussable themes and moods. In this case the students did not face any considerable difficulties while reading the stories, nor did they find the stories contrastingly abstract according to their own cultural, religious, or historical codes.

The stories had all very general relatable themes with which the students were not totally unacquainted. Therefore, the discussions and debates on the short stories were triggered easily by some initiating questions on the part of the researcher and the rest was left to the enthusiasm of the appealed students.

It can be concluded from all the above mentioned points that if dedicated and determined to use literature in EFL classes, language educators shall without doubt find appropriate literary texts, in harmony with their students' level of proficiency, interests and needs. Having done that, language instructors can create a non-threatening ambience in which each and every individual finds the themes of the story discussable and relatable and can, hence, express his own viewpoint and feelings about them freely.

It was reported to the researcher by a multitude of participants in both experimental and control groups that they were extremely thrilled by and content of reading short stories in their reading course and that they were highly motivated to participate in all class discussions as the result of their familiarity with the themes of the stories and the existence of general events and atmospheres.

They found short stories far less tiresome and monotonous than the scientific, non-literary texts they were used to reading in their courses prior to the experiment. Moreover, many students claimed that the short stories kept them thinking and exploring even after the class was over and that the chain of events and characters held their minds captivated. This well indicated the influential and effective nature of literature not only in the enhancement of general English but also in developing the potentials of students' mentality and power of critical thinking.

It is strongly held by the advocates of reader-oriented theories and the researcher as well, that this approach to teaching literature outweighs the routines of traditional methods of working on literary texts. This view can be generalised to teaching in EFL classes as well, whether the objective of the instruction is teaching literature or the expansion of language proficiency in learners via reading the target language's literature.

In the experimental group, instructed by the reader-response approach, a number of different questions were prepared, each of which addressing a specific aspect of the story, the characters or the themes in order to mine out the engraved sparkles of thought and emotion in the students.

In such an environment, the students were given clues to assist them in stating their ideas and touched upon feelings without the probable intimidations that could be felt in classes run by the traditional method. In reader-response approach due to the fact that there is no single correct interpretation or analysis of a piece of literature, the diversity and versatility of opinions and criticisms are welcomed and appreciated.

It is advisable to apply this method in classes focusing on literary texts in order to eliminate the usual drawbacks the traditional method can bring about, such as the fright of being criticised for offering a less than accurate interpretation.

A further advantage of reader-response approach over the traditional method is that in the former, readers are required to read the literary text in specified sections and, thus, they are asked to share their understandings, interpretations and predictions after each section. In such a case, the students can maintain dynamic and attentive roles in the gradual and step by step process of meaning making.

The students can share their surprises, favouritisms, likes and dislikes and all feelings and ideas of the same nature. As a result, with the dominance of the reader-response approach in a class, not only is there a friendly, warm and enjoyable atmosphere created, but the students also can listen to and think about other interpretations and both learn the appreciation of differences in opinions and the art of critical thinking.

In Iranian EFL classes, as in many other countries, students are trained to agree on a single interpretation, usually provided by the instructor. Implementing the reader-response approach in EFL classes can enhance many qualities in the learners far beyond the mere improvement of their language proficiency. This method can alter our students into better and more skilled readers, equipped with broader views and more appreciative of diversity in tastes and worldviews.

While in the traditional method usually the comprehension of a literary text alone suffices, in the reader-response approach constant and dominant attention is focused on aesthetic reading of literary texts. Therefore, equal significance is attached to and devised for both comprehension and active transaction with the text. However, educators should be alarmed to beware of pursuing either of the extremes; attaining a wholly comprehension-based or totally response-based classroom.

#### VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study opens up a few possibilities for those interested in the implementation of literature in EFL. The first suggestion to language educators or researchers is to replicate the design of this study in different courses and with different literary genres. This way, the practicality and efficacy of the reader-response method in teaching different genres of literature can be studied and compared.

Another suggestion would be to increase the allocated time to the implementation of this approach in order to achieve optimal result. Being used to the traditional method of reading literature, the students might be benefitted from being exposed to the newly introduced approach of reader- response. In this case they are given the opportunity and adequate time to become familiar with and used to the requirements and practices of the reader- response theory and thus play a more active and influential part in it.

Moreover, when provided with more time, instructors can devise more group activities and pair works to place responsibility on groups rather than individuals. This way, each individual will be given the chance to express his feelings and ideas in pair or groups at first, and then gradually share views with the whole class, a technique that will logically reduce strains of stress and self-consciousness.

One other suggestion is to study the discrepancy between the responses and reactions of male and female students and to observe the degree they welcome or adapt themselves to the reader-response theory. The parameters studied in this research, namely reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and motivation for further reading of literature can be separately investigated and compared among male and female participants.

This study was performed with groups of students who had not had academic encounters with literary texts prior to the experiment and their major had not been English literature. In further researches, it is advisable to conduct classes of students majoring in English literature or those who have already had experience in reading the target language literature. Instructing his class with reader-response theory, a researcher will have the privilege of gaining experiences in teaching literature via both the traditional and the reader-response methods which provide the chance of comparing the efficiency and success of both according to his students' needs and interests.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Best, J. W. & Kahn, J. V. (2006). *Research in education*. (10th ed.). USA: Pearson Education Inc.
- [2] Brumfit, C.J. & Carter, R.A. (Eds). (1986). *Literature and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [3] Carlisle, A. (2000). Reading logs: an application of reader-response theory in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 54 (1): 12-19.
- [4] Carter, R. & Long, M.N. (1991). *Teaching literature*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- [5] DiYanni, R. (2000). *Literature: reading fiction, poetry, and drama*. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- [6] Duff, A. and Malay, A. (1991). *Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [7] Hirvela, A. (1996). Reader-response theory and ELT. *ELT Journal*, 50 (2), 127-134.
- [8] Kirszner, L. G. & Mandell, S. R. (2001). *Literature: reading, reacting, writing*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. USA: Harcourt College Publishers.
- [9] Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and Language Teaching: a guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Lazar, G. (1994). Using Literature at lower levels. *ELT Journal*, 48 (2): 115-124.
- [11] Maley, A. (2001). Literature in the language classroom. In Carter, R. and Nunan, D. (Eds.). *Teaching English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [12] McRea, J. (1991). *Literature with a small 'l'*. MEP/Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- [13] Padley, S. (2006). *Key concepts in contemporary literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [14] Spack, R. (1985). Literature, reading, writing and ESL: Bridging the gaps. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19 (4), 703-725.
- [15] Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Routledge.
- [16] Widdowson, H.G. (1975). *Stylistics and the teaching of literature*. London: language Group Ltd.
- [17] Widdowson, H.G. (1984). *Explorations in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [18] Widdowson, H.G. (1992). *Practical stylistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Sarvenaz Khatib** was born in October 11, 1984 in Tehran-Iran. She holds a B.A. in English Literature and an M.A. in TEFL both from Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran-Iran. She has been teaching English at various levels of proficiency since 2002 and is currently a lecturer at Allameh Tabataba'i University, teaching literature courses to undergraduate students.

# On Cultural Differences and Translation Methods

Hongmei Sun

College of Foreign Languages, Qufu Normal University, Shandong Province, China

Email: tom3164@126.com

**Abstract**—Nowadays translation is regarded essentially as a cross-cultural communication, and cultural differences pose major barriers in translating. After a brief overview of cultural differences in translation, this paper mainly explores foreignizing and domesticating methods in dealing with cultural differences and those possible factors affecting the choice of them.

**Index Terms**—cultural differences, foreignizing and domesticating method, factor affecting the choice of translation methods

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the field of translation studies, scholars' understanding of translation in traditional sense has shifted along with the popularity and prosperous development of cultural studies in the past decades. Translation is no longer regarded as merely a cross-linguistic activity but essentially cross-cultural communication. Most people assume that if a person speaks two or more languages well, he or she should be able to translate with ease, but this is not always the case. Actually, proper understanding and rendering of a text is more likely to be a problem of cultural diversity than that of linguistic differences. Nida (1981) argues that difficulties arising out of differences of cultures constitute the most serious problems for translators and have produced the most far-reaching misunderstandings among readers. To explore cultural differences and then decide how to deal with them most appropriately has become one of the essential issues that current translation studies should deal with.

## II. AN OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND TRANSLATION

Though one cannot face fairly the problems of translation without reckoning with the many and often striking differences between any two cultures involved, it would be quite wrong to exaggerate the diversity. Without cultural similarities and universals there is no way for people of different cultures to communicate with each other and translation would be impossible. However, there are no absolute cultural universals or cultural similarities.

Generally speaking, for two sentences from different languages to be translationally equivalent they must convey the same referential, pragmatic and intralingual meanings. However, due to differences between two cultures semantic equivalence are limited to some degree. For those cultural-specific terms and expressions, we cannot find their referents in the target culture. For example, *hippies* are well-known products of American society. Neither 希比士 nor 希比派 in Chinese convey anything about the young people of the 1960's. 嬉皮士 might be a better word, but still might be misleading, because some hippies were serious-minded, even though their lifestyle appeared unusual to most people. Sometimes the cultural differences are striking and obvious. They may involve conflicting values attached to the same objects. For example, in the Orient the *dragon* suggests good luck and fortune while in the western world, it is a threatening animal, symbolic of overwhelming evil power. Obviously the pragmatic meanings of *dragon* differ in two cultures. *Dog*, on the contrary, which has a positive connotation in the west, usually carries a negative meaning in Chinese culture. Non-equivalence in intralingual meaning can often be found due to cultural differences. The intralingual meaning is mainly determined by the resources of language. Sound, rhythm, unique patterns of phrase order, techniques for linking clauses into sentences may all carry semantic values. If the form in which a message is expressed is an essential element of its significance, then there is a very distinct limitation in communicating this significance from one language to another. For example, “一个人躺在地上, 伸展四肢, 仰面朝天, 像个‘大’字”。From the character “大”, Chinese readers can easily image what kind of posture the man has. But the English version “A man is lying on his back with arms and legs wide spread, facing the vast universe” can hardly give readers the vivid picture as “大” conveys.

## III. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND TRANSLATION METHODS

### A. Foreignizing and Domesticating Methods

Traditionally, when translation methods are concerned, the central problem of translating has always been whether to translate literally or freely. Since translation is mostly interlingual communication in its translational sense, the main points under dispute between literal and free translation are actually the linguistic differences in the way of expression. Nowadays, it is generally agreed that translation is inevitably influenced by the source language culture and the target

language culture, then how to comply with cultural norms involved becomes one of the major problems in actual translating. A translator must decide which of the norms take priority--whether the cultural norms of the source language community, the cultural norms of the target language community, or perhaps a combination of the two. Correspondingly, foreignizing method and domesticating methods are put forward. The choice of foreignizing method will result in a SL Culture-oriented translation while the choice of domesticating method will result in a TL Culture-oriented translation. Both of them are termed from the cultural perspective and differences between them indicate different views on the transferences of cultural elements in translation.

Domestication and foreignization are often regarded as contradictory to each other and have evoked endless debates. Quite often one favors one and negates the other, but as a matter of fact, each of them has its unique features and advantages and the contrast between them has been primarily a matter of focus.

Foreignizing translation is based on the assumption that literacy is not universal, that communication is complicated by cultural differences between and within linguistic communities. As translation serves as an important means of cultural exchange, it's the translator's responsibility to introduce other cultures to the target language community and this is usually most of the target language readers' purpose of reading. Therefore in actual translating, the translator aims to preserve the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text and a maximum number of source-language culture structure and words are usually borrowed and introduced into the target-language culture. Lefevere Venuti is a firm advocator of foreignizing method both in theory and in practice. For him, "a translated text should be the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of a culture other, and resistancy, a translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, can best preserve that difference, that otherness." (Venuti, 1995, p. 306) But what should be mentioned is that by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language, foreignizing translation usually shows features that somehow seem "strange" or "foreign" for the receiving culture. These features, however, are not the result of a lack of translational competence or examples of translationese, but they are evidence of conscious decisions by the translator.

By contrast, for those who are in favor of domestication translation, the aim of translation is to bring back cultural others as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar. The greatest possible effort is made for the reader, who must not be put off by a text perceived in any way as foreign; the result is a greater or lesser degree of "normalization", where all the source language culture-specific traces are made to disappear. In this way, *shed crocodile tears* should be translated into "猫哭老鼠" instead of "鳄鱼眼泪". Nida is a representative of those who firmly advocate domesticating translation. "A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression," states Nida, "and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture" (Nida, 1964, p.159). For Nida, "the receptors of a translation should comprehend the translated text to such an extent that they can understand how the original receptors must have understood the original text" (Nida, 1964, p.36)

#### B. Factor Affecting the Choice of Translation Methods

Both of these two methods have their merits and defects and both are valid in their own way. In actual translation practice, some people may prefer the foreignizing method while others may like the domesticating one. Newmark (1988) once compared a text to be translated to a particle in an electric field attracted by the opposing forces of the two cultures and the norms of two languages, the idiosyncrasies of one writer (who may infringe all the norms of his own language), and the different requirements of its readers, the prejudice of the translator and possibly of its publisher. Therefore, we can see that there are many factors that a translator has to take into consideration before he finally decides which method or methods he will use in actual translating. Guo Jianzhong(1999) once points out that four factors which are likely to influence the choice of cultural method. They are the purpose of translation, the type of text, the intention of the author and the readership. But there are still some other factors which should be taken into account, such the economic and political situation, the translator's attitude towards the target and the source language cultures or even some deep-rooted cultural presuppositions of the translator, to name just a few. The fact is that the series of choices that one translator makes will be an interconnected one and most of the time a version is a result influence by a combination of many factors.

Let's take some examples from *The Dream of Red Mansion*. As a Chinese classical novel, it is surly full of highly culture-loaded phrases and expressions. Lets compare two versions, one is translated by two famous translator Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (version 1), the other is by and American translator David Hawkes (version 2). From the examples in the following, you can see the manner in which two different translators have rendered the Chinese novel in significantly different ways.

(1)真是“天有不测风云，人有旦夕祸福”。

Version 1: Truly, "storms gather without warning in nature, and bad luck befalls men overnight".

Version 2: I know "the weather and human life are both unpredictable".

Obviously, version 1 is a literal translation for the purpose of maintaining the source cultural elements and the style, while in version 2, the original figurative meaning is transferred to the target language culture, but the image in Chinese culture has to be sacrificed.

(2)巧媳妇做不出没米的饭来，叫我怎么办？

Version 1: Even the cleverest housewife can't cook a meal with rice. What do you expect me to do?

Version 2: and I don't see what I am supposed to do without any capital. Even the cleverest housewife can't make bread without flour.

Rice in China is just like bread in English-speaking country; both of them are traditional food in their respective culture. Therefore, the image of "rice" in Chinese culture is changed into "bread" by Hawkes in order to ease the foreign readers' understanding.

(3)至于才子佳人等书, .....

Version 1: As for books of the beauty-and-talented type, .....

Version 2: And the "boudoir romances" .....

Chinese four-character words are a unique feature of Chinese language. Mr Yang insists on literal translation so that this linguistic feature can be maintained. Hawkes, however, neglects this feature and translates them much more freely.

After the analysis of the above examples, we may come to the following conclusions about the factors affecting the choice of translation methods.

### 1. The Purpose of Translation

From the examples we know that generally speaking, Yang Xianyi adopts the foreignizing method while Hawkes uses the domesticating method. The underlying reason may be firstly due to the different purposes deep in the translator's mind. As Nida once said, "the particular purpose of the translator are important factors in dictating the types of translation" (Nida, 1964, p.157). If a translator aims to introduce to his readers foreign customs, exotic culture or different expressions in another language culture, he will use foreignizing method to keep the original expressions largely. Readers of such a version can get vivid pictures of the foreign expressions and a better understanding about how the people with the original language think. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang are Chinese translators. It's their desire to introduce Chinese cultural heritage to foreign readers and that's why they adopted foreignizing method. By contrast, Hawkes, being an American translator, intends to entertain his readers, so he uses the traditional expressions of English to "explain" the original ones. Because once the readers get the message from the version and, thus, are pleased, the translator gets the achievement of his object.

### 2. Readership of the Translation

As Newmark (1981) points out, "A translation is normally written and intended for a target language reader even if the source language text was written for no reader at all, for nothing but it's author's pleasure." (p.128) When a translator starts to work, readers should always be kept in his mind, for a translation without readers seems meaningless. Firstly, the characteristics of readers are important, as they may differ both in decoding ability and in potential interests. Obviously, a translation designed for children can not be the same as one prepared for specialists, nor can a translation for children be the same as one for a newly literate adult. Secondly, prospective readers differ not only in decoding ability, but perhaps even more in their interests of purpose of reading. For example, a translation designed to stimulate reading for pleasure will be quite different from one intended for a person anxious to learn how to assemble a complicated machine. Moreover, a translator of African myths for persons who simply want to satisfy their curiosity about strange peoples and places will produce a different piece of work from one who is more interested in the linguistic structure underlying the translation than in cultural novelty. Generally speaking, if the version is made for general kinds of readers, domestication is acceptable, because their interests are in the plot, but not in the source language culture. Such is the case with Hawkes' version. It is even easier for the Chinese students of English who do not have a solid foundation in ancient Chinese to understand the text. But as for those academics, for example, college professors or writers of literary comparison, domestication will not be considered as equivalence between the target language and the source language. For these readers, the translator is highly responsible to act as a go-between to transmit two cultures. So Yang's version will be of great help for those who want to have a deep study of Chinese or those who intend to make a comparison between Chinese and Western cultures.

### 3. The Text Type to Be Translated

The text type can also be a determining factor in choosing translation method. Usually the text type is associated with the main functions of language, namely expressive function, informative function, and vocative function. Newmark claims that "before deciding on the translation method, the translator may assign his text to the three general categories, each of which is dominated by a particular function of language" (Newmark, 1988, p.35). Generally cultural components tend to be transferred intact in expressive texts, transferred and explained with culturally neutral terms in informative texts, and replaced by cultural equivalence in vocative texts. When a professional text is to be translated, such as a medical book, usually the name of some medicine such as NYQuil should be transliterated or the translator just borrows the form from the original. But if this medicine appears in a novel and is of little importance for the meaning of the text, domestication is much more proper. Quite often some translators just render it as a common word, for example:

I want to watch TV with her, and go to the supermarket with her, and *give her NyQuil on a spoon when she has a cold.*

Version: 在她感冒时, 我要亲手用汤匙给她喂药。

### 4. The Translator's Attitude towards Source and Target Cultures

According to Christina Schaffner (1995), the receiving culture may adopt a defective attitude (to enrich its own culture with foreign elements) or a defensive attitude (rejecting the "otherness" and doing everything to stop it) towards

the source language culture. Usually there is a hidden political, economic or ideological agenda governing the acceptance of the foreign language culture and eventually affects translators' decisions.

Comparatively speaking, some language culture (called strong culture) may have political or economic superiority over some other language culture (called weak culture). Translators of strong culture will more likely adopt the domesticating method in their translating of weak cultural texts. For example, Venuti, after a careful investigation of the translation history of both the US and the Great Britain, points out that ever since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, fluency, an important feature of domesticating translation, has been gaining a dominance in English-language translation (Venuti, 1995). But if the translation is from a strong language culture into a weak one, the choice will be much more complicated and most of the time the purpose of the translation becomes a more influential factor. Usually the foreignizing method is adopted in weak cultures with the purpose of learning from others and forging their national constructions. Special reference should be made here is that final decision is usually made in accordance with concrete situations and contexts.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The intimate relations between language and culture have long been the hot point of discussions by scholars and experts in many fields and disciplines, especially during recent years when talking a lot about intercultural communication or exchange has become a fashion. Any language can be seen as a sign system representing a particular culture as well as a part of it; therefore, one is inevitably introducing the culture it embodies while he/she translates a source language text. Whether to take foreignization or domestication for cultural elements in translation is a complicated problem. But we can convincingly summarize that both of the two methods may be justified in their own right if we take into consideration the differences in the purpose of translation, the type of texts, the intention of the author, the readership, the translator's attitude towards the source and target language cultures. Foreignization and domestication are indispensable and supplementary to each other and the idea that truly successful translation will depend on the unity of the two methods should be kept as a golden mean in every translator's mind. Keeping a good balance between the two extremes might be an ideal for dealing with the cultural elements.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Guo Jianzhong. (1999). The ten-year (1987-1997) Development of Translation in China. *Journal of Foreign Languages* 2, 247-265.
- [2] Hawkes, David. (1980). *The Story of the Stone*. Vols.1-3, Penguin Books.
- [3] Newmark, Peter. (1981). *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- [4] Newmark, Peter. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. London: Prentice Hall.
- [5] Nida, Eugene A and C.R. Ward. (1981). *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translation*. Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- [6] Nida, Eugene A. (1993). *Language, Culture and Translating*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [7] Nida, Eugene A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- [8] Schaffner, C & Kelley-Holmes. (1995). *Cultural Function of Translation*. Clevedon Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- [9] Venuti, Lawrence. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge.
- [10] Yang Xianyi & Yang, Gladys. (1994). *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press.

**Hongmei Sun** was born in Zoucheng, China in 1975. She received her M.A. degree in foreign linguistics and applied linguistics from Qufu Normal University in 2001.

She is currently a lecturer in the College of Foreign Languages, Qufu Normal University, Qufu, China. Her research interests include applied linguistics, vocabulary teaching, translation theories and practice.

# A New Approach to Teaching English Poetry to EFL Students

Mohammad Khatib  
Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran  
Email: mkhatib27@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—Poetry like other literary genres exists to be enjoyed and appreciated. The difficult task facing any instructor is to develop this sense of appreciation and enjoyment in students who are not interested in poetry. For a long time, literature in general and poetry in particular, was purged from the teaching programmes on the ground that it made no contribution to learning a foreign language for practical purposes. Fortunately, in the past few decades there has been a renewed interest in using literature in the language classroom. Despite the renewed interest in teaching literary texts in the classroom, little has been written about teaching poetry to college-level students in Iran. Many English instructors along with many university students do not enjoy English poetry. Even a majority of them express a negative attitude towards poetry. No one can deny that poetry is difficult not only for EFL students, but also for native speakers. My long experience in teaching poetry to Iranian college students has forced me to come to the conclusion that the students' negative attitude towards poetry can be ascribed, among many other facts, to (a) inappropriate selection of the texts and (b) ineffective teaching methodology. This study suggests a new approach to teaching English poetry in EFL situations. The purpose of this study was to determine the relative effectiveness of this approach in improving the students' attitude towards English poetry at college level at Allameh-Tabataba'i University in Tehran-Iran.

**Index Terms**—traditional approach, language-based approach, attitude

## I. INTRODUCTION

English poetry has been taught in many non-native countries as well as in Iran for many years, but what has dominated the teaching of poetry is the traditional approaches. Teachers lecture about the things that will prepare the students for a particular exam and will not encourage them to share their own views with their peers and teachers.

The main objective of teaching literature in the undergraduate departments of Iranian universities is to acquaint students with various literary genres, and consequently introducing them to the social, cultural, literary and intellectual backgrounds of other nations. Although instructors vary slightly in their treatment of literature, a common tendency can be traced out in their approaches. Adopting a traditional approach to teaching poetry, many instructors devote most of the valuable time of the class to “extrinsic” properties of literary texts imparting biographical, historical, aesthetic and philosophical information to the students. A large number of students will manage to pass the final exams by memorising the critical reviews of the poems. How many students brought up by this method will be the voluntary readers of poetry after they graduate from the college? Undoubtedly many of them will regard their literature classes as boring, monotonous and uninteresting.

Although the attitude of many instructors towards teaching poetry has changed considerably in the past years and even some ESP teachers believe that a well-chosen approach to the teaching of literature has some benefits for their students, there are very few teachers who advocate the inclusion of a new methodology to teaching poetry in their syllabus. Some instructors are ready to teach novels, short stories, plays and even essays, but very reluctant to teach poetry because they are well aware that with the old methods they cannot make poetry come alive for their students.

Thus, if the methodology currently used in the poetry classes is not effective and successful, it is worthwhile experimenting with other methods and finding out whether they will yield significantly different result both on educational and the attitudinal levels.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The teaching of poetry to EFL students has always been a very demanding task. It is commonly assumed that English poetry is too difficult for foreign students to cope with and therefore it will be out of their reach. For almost two or three decades, literature, in general, and poetry in particular, which had played an essential role in foreign language teaching in many countries has been excluded from language classrooms. The significant role of literature faded gradually as linguistics became the focal point of language programmes. The upheaval created by American structural linguists played a crucial role in this change of attitude. Linguists such as Topping (1968, quoted from Spack, 1985) argue that “literature should be excluded from the ESL curriculum because of its structural complexity, lack of conformity to standard grammatical rules and remote cultural perspectives” (p. 704).

Widdowson (1975) and Povey (1967) among many others discuss the unfortunate consequences of separating English language from English literature in EFL/ESL schools. Luckily, in recent years, there has been an increasing interest among scholars, in both Iran and other countries, in reviving literature as a means of acquiring language proficiency. Scholars, searching for new resources to decrease the monotony of the classes, have stressed the benefits of using literary texts as the basis for imaginative, interactive activities. Widdowson (1975; 1984) raised the fundamental issues and these have been examined, developed, modified and amplified by Brumfit and Carter (1986), Duff and Maley (1989), Lazar (1993), Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) and many other scholars of note.

If we review a number of surveys dealing with the situation of English literature in EFL/ESL situations, we can see striking similarities in the negative attitudes that students express towards learning poetry. Hirvela and Boyle (1988) report that only 6% of the Hong Kong Chinese students who were involved in the survey favoured poetry more than other literary genres and 73% of them found poetry the most difficult and intimidating literary form.

Povey (1979), a vehement advocate of teaching poetry in EFL situations, believe that instructors of poetry are somehow responsible for causing the negative attitude of students towards verse:

Ironically, often one of the most difficult things about teaching poetry to foreign students in handling the teacher's own deeply wrought unhappiness with verse, the result of experiences he or she has suffered (p. 164).

Arthur (1968) ascribes the aversion of students toward literature to ignoring the students' response and their private exchange with the literary text. "If literature is to become a successful part of an ESL programme, ways must be found to make literature both useful and enjoyable" (p. 200).

My long experience in teaching poetry to Iranian college students has impelled me to come to the conclusion that the major reasons of students' failure in understanding and appreciating English poetry are (a) inappropriate selection of texts and (b) ineffective teaching methodology.

The advocates of the traditional approaches to teaching literature consider students as empty containers to be filled by the knowledge imported by an omniscient teacher. The practitioners of these approaches normally bombard students with biographical information about the author, political, religious and philosophical ideas related to the text and explaining rhetorical devices and figures of speech such as metre, rhyme, metaphor, alliteration, assonance and the like. But the proponents of the language-based approach believe that studying the language of literary text will help to integrate the language and literary syllabus more closely. Students can develop a response to literature through examining the linguistic evidence in the text. Rather than being passive recipients, the techniques used in this approach urge them to be active participants expressing their own conclusions and interpretations of a literary text.

The primary aim of the "new approach" proposed in this study is to stimulate students to read and to encourage their responses. The main focus of attention in this approach is the text itself, not commentary or background information about the text. This approach emphasises vocabulary expansion, reconstruction, reduction, replacement, matching, reading loud by instructor, silent and oral reading by students, writing poetry and many other techniques. To this end the following research questions were formulated:

1. Will the students improve their attitude towards English poetry after being taught with the new approach?
2. Will the new approach to teaching poetry yield significantly better results in motivating the students to read more poems than the traditional approach?

### III. METHOD

#### A. Participants

The subjects of this study were 200 students (106 females and 94 males) majoring in English Translation and English Literature at College of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages of Allameh Tabataba'i University. There were 6 groups altogether, three groups were randomly chosen as the control and three as the experimental groups. The number of students was approximately the same for all groups. All the participants were in their third semester of college education, having passed the average of 40 credits in their previous semesters. All the students had Persian as their native language and knew no other foreign language except English. They had taken no poetry courses in English prior to the experiment.

#### B. Materials

Sixty-five poems were used in this study. Forty-two of them served as teaching materials during the time this study was being carried out. Twenty-three poems were given to the students to be read on their own. Various themes such as childhood, love, old age, loneliness, fidelity, nature, etc. were explored in the selection. Some of the poems had the same or related themes, offering students the possibility of comparing and contrasting the ideas expressed in them as well as concentrating on their language. Utmost care had been taken to select poems to be enjoyable and interesting and not to offer any cultural gap to make them difficult to understand.

#### C. Procedures

##### a. The Control Groups.

Since in the traditional approach to teaching poetry the "extrinsic" factors are normally emphasised rather than the "intrinsic" elements, to teach the control group the following steps were used:

1. The instructor distributed the poems to be covered at the beginning of each session.
  2. He read the poem aloud once with the voice colouring.
  3. The students were asked to read the poem a few times and then were asked to express the poet's intentions.
  4. A short biography of the poet was given to the students.
  5. The historical, political, and/or social background against which the poems had been written was discussed.
  6. The figures of speech and other literary devices were explained.
  7. The instructor would paraphrase the difficult lines and would talk about the central idea expressed in the poem.
  8. One or two students were invited to read the poem aloud to the class.
  9. The students were given some poems to read on their own with no activities attached.
- b. The Experimental Groups.
1. The seating arrangement was changed from traditional style of rows to a complete circle. This seating arrangement prepared the scene for small-group learning.
  2. The activities varied greatly in length. Some took two or three minutes and some took half an hour to finish.
  3. The activities in the experimental groups followed the same general design for all the sessions. There were four main parts:
    - a) Pre-reading activities
    - b) While-reading activities
    - c) Follow up
    - d) Reading alone
  4. The activities of the Pre-Reading section were designed to awaken initial interest in the poem, to familiarise students with the possible contents of the poem they were to read.
  5. In the While Reading section each poem was followed by activities aimed at helping the students to be involved with the text as much as possible. Some of the most important activities used in this section are the following:
    - a) Replacement Activities: students removed certain elements and replaced them with others. They changed active verbs into passive forms, present tense into past tense or vice versa.
    - b) Ordering Activities: The poem was presented in an incomplete or defected form and the students were required to restore it to its original or most plausible form.
    - c) Completion Activities (Cloze): certain elements from a poem were removed and the students were required to complete it with one appropriate word or phrase.
    - d) Comparison and Contrast Activities: The students were given two poems having the same or related themes. Then they were asked to note points of similarities and differences between the two poems.
    - e) Choosing the Best Paraphrase: The students were asked to choose between the two paraphrases of a poem and to express their reasons for their choice.
    - f) Expansion Activities: In this activity, the students were asked to add one or more lines to a poem, or to render a poem into a short story or a short play.
    - g) Reading the Poem Aloud: Reading aloud is one of the classroom techniques having its cons and pros among the language-teaching experts. Certain texts such as drama and poetry can come to life and can be more easily appreciated when read aloud.
  6. Follow up Activities: Poetry writing is often ignored as a creative tool for learning many aspects of a foreign language. It is believed that poetry writing can serve as a way of enhancing the learner's feel for the language. In this part the students were asked to produce a short poem, either individually or more often in groups.
  7. On Your Own: A few poems were given to the students to be read alone at home without following any kind of activities.

#### *D. Instrumentation*

For this study the following instruments were used:

1. The TOEFL was administered to the control and the experimental groups to make them homogeneous.
2. The Likert Attitude Scale was given to both control and experimental groups twice, before and after the treatment, to measure the students' attitude towards poetry.
3. A second questionnaire containing 25 items was distributed to both groups at the end of the experiment to assess their attitude toward English poetry as a complement to the Likert Attitude Scale.
4. Two Final tests were used in this study. One consisting of 20 items based on the materials given to the students to be read alone. The second final test consisting of 50 items was based on the material covered during the treatment sessions.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

As a longitudinal study, it took about 11 weeks to conduct the research experiment. Data consisting of attitude surveys, poetry and language proficiency tests was gathered from control and experimental groups before and after the treatment. To ensure the homogeneity of the groups in terms of their language proficiency the TOEFL was administered to all the groups in this study. A t-test was run to determine whether the difference between the groups was significant

or not. The result of the t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between the groups as far as language proficiency was concerned before the experiment began. The Likert Attitude Scale was distributed to all the students in both the control and the experimental groups twice, once prior to and once after the experiment. Table 1 shows that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of the students toward the English poetry before the experiment began.

TABLE 1:  
STUDENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS POETRY BEFORE THE EXPERIMENT

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
ATTIT 1				
Experimental	100	52.2100	6.381	.638
Control	100	52.2300	5.550	.555
Mean Difference= -.200				
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F=1.451 P=.230				
t-test for Equality of Means				
Variances	t-value	df	2-tailed Sig	SE of Diff CI
95% for Diff				
Equal	-.02	198	.846	.846 (-1.688, 1.648)
Unequal	-.02	194.27	.846	.846 (-1.688, 1.628)

After the treatment the Attitude Scale was distributed again to find out whether there had been any changes in the students' attitude towards English poetry. The two groups were compared on their scores on the Attitude Scale using the t-test procedure. The .05 level of significance was employed. Table 2 shows the result of the analysis which indicates that there was significant difference between the groups on their change of attitude toward poetry.

TABLE 2:  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS POETRY AFTER THE TREATMENT

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
ATTIT 1				
Experimental	100	52.210	6.381	.638
Control	100	52.230	5.550	.555
Mean Difference= -.200				
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F=1.451 P=.230				
t-test for Equality of Means				
Variances	t-value	df	2-tailed Sig	SE of Diff CI
95% for Diff				
Equal	-.02	198	.846	.962 (-1.688, 1.648)
Unequal	-.02	194.27	.846	.962 (-1.688, 1.628)

Besides the Likert Attitude Scale, a 25-item questionnaire was constructed and administered at the end of the treatment. The result obtained from the questionnaire as shown in Table 3 indicated that the change in the experimental group was statistically significant.

TABLE 3:  
RESULT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
ATTIT 1				
Experimental	100	17.420	3.37	.338
Control	100	14.400	3.99	.339
Mean Difference=				
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 3.354 P= .069				
t-test for Equality of Means				
Variances	t-value	df	2-tailed Sig	SE of Diff CI
95% for Diff				
Equal	5.78	198	.000	.523 (1.989, 4.051)
Unequal	5.78	192.72	.000	.523 (1.989, 4.051)

As mentioned earlier, at the end of each session the students were supplied with a few poems to be read at home for their own pleasure. Utmost care was taken to hide the idea of their being tested on these poems. The result of the test as depicted in table 4 showed a tremendous difference between the groups. The experimental groups performed much better simply because they were more involved in poetry than the control groups.

TABLE 4:  
RESULT OF THE TEST ON "READING ALONE"

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
ATTIT 1				
Experimental	100	8.600	4.932	.493
Control	100	8.860	3.005	.401
Mean Difference=				
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .200 P= .963				
t-test for Equality of Means				
Variances	t-value	df	2-tailed Sig	SE of Diff CI
95% for Diff				
Equal	5.89	198	.000	.635 (2.487, 4.993)
Unequal	5.89	190	.000	.635 (2.487, 4.993)

As a result of having positive attitude towards English poetry, the students in the experimental groups were more motivated to study for their final exam and obtained better scores than the control groups. The result is shown in table 5.

TABLE 5:  
THE RESULT OF THE FINAL TEST

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
ATTIT 1				
Experimental	100	38.160	8.235	.823
Control	100	34.710	7.216	.722
Mean Difference= 3.4500				
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 3.351 P= .554				
t-test for Equality of Means				
Variances	t-value	df	2-tailed Sig	SE of Diff CI
95% for Diff				
Equal	3.15	198	.002	1.095 (1.290, 5.610)
Unequal	3.15	194.64	.002	1.095 (1.290, 5.610)

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The traditional approach to teaching English poetry emphasises the single meaning principle and encourages disassociation of the self during reading. In this approach, the teacher analyses the imagery, the figurative language, poetic devices with the precision of a laboratory technician. The control groups taught by the traditional method in this study were not encouraged to express their personal understanding of the poem and lack of involvement prevented them from going beyond the superficial level of meaning to a more adequate understanding. They considered the facts, events and people of the poems in isolation of their feelings. The overemphasis on the technical aspects along with negligence of the students' personal reaction to meaning prevents enjoyment and leads to dislike of poetry.

So long as the teacher considers himself as the conductor of the orchestra and the students as players, the literary appreciation would not occur. Unless the students are involved in the process of reading and writing poetry, the literary experience is not possible and to foster this, the teacher should forget this role of the conductor and be one of the players.

The new approach to teaching poetry was designed to offer students ample opportunity to react to the poems based on their own experiences, emotions and ideas. The method provided them with tremendous encouragement to express their personal understanding of a poem rather than wait for the teacher's ready-made explanation. The students were told that a poem might offer various interpretations and that their ideas were as valid as anyone else's and that there was no absolute correct response with regard to literary meaning. These facts along with the various activities exploited in the study caused them to be more involved with the poems and urged them to read and reread them to find new meanings and interpretations. In the control groups the students did not volunteer to express their impressions of the poems and always waited for the teacher's final remark to memorise for the final exam.

Much of the pleasure of poetry lies in the creative reading that is caused as a result of involvement with the text which the new approach seeks to establish. This involvement with the poem serves as stimulation for further study, and consequently a change of attitude towards poetry. The findings of this study show a pre to post improvement in the experimental groups. The following findings were not reached through empirical comparison of the groups, rather they were noticed by the researcher during the treatment.

1. The number of students in the experimental groups who absented themselves from the class during the study was fewer than that of the control group.
2. The number of the poems composed by the experimental groups was not at all comparable to the few poems written by the students in the control groups.
3. The atmosphere of the classes in control and experimental groups was very different. Whereas I had active, lively and responsive students in the experimental groups, the students in the control groups were non-participants.

The findings of this study and my long experience in teaching poetry to college-level students force me to conclude that using the New Approach to teaching poetry to EFL students will put them on the right track to appreciate poetry.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Arthur, B. (1968). Reading Literature and Learning a Second Language. *Language Learning*, 18/4 and 4.
- [2] Brumfit, C. J. And Carter, R. A. (1986). *Literature and Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [3] Duff, A. and Maley, A. (1989). *The Inward Ear*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Hirvela, A. and Boyle, J. (1988). Literature courses and student attitudes. *ELT Journal*, 42/3.
- [5] Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Parkinson, B. and Thomas H. R. (2000). *Teaching Literature in a Second Language*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- [7] Povey, J. F. (1967). Literature in TESOL Programs: The Language and the culture. *TESOL Quarterly*, 1/2.
- [8] Povey, J. F. (1979). The Teaching of Literature in Advanced ESL Classes in Celce Murcia, M. And McIntosh, L. (eds.).
- [9] Spack, R. (1985). Literature, Reading, Writing and ESL: Bridging the Gaps. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19/4.
- [10] Widdowson, H. G. (1975). *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*. London: Longman.
- [11] Widdowson, H. G. (1984). *Explorations in Applied Linguistics 2*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Mohammad Khatib** is Assistant Professor of TEFL at Allameh Tabataba'i University. He holds a Ph.D. in TEFL (Allameh Tabataba'i University, 1999), an M.A. and a B.A. in English Literature from Tehran University (1977 and 1972 respectively).

He began teaching at Allameh in 1981 and presently offers graduate and post-graduate courses in SLA Theories, Methodology, Literature in EFL Classes and English Literature.

His main areas of interest include SLA Theories, language learning strategies, culture and the integration of language and literature. He has published some articles on TEFL in Iranian Journals of Applied Linguistics. He has translated a book of short stories from famous writers of the world and published a guidebook on Shakespeare's selected sonnets.

# A Feasibility Study of Error Analysis on the Teaching of Chinese-English Translation—A Case Study of Non-English Major Freshmen in BUPT

Yunhong Zhang

School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing, China

Email: zhangyunhong3656@sina.com

Baoling Wang

School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing, China

Email: baolingwang2006@gmail.com

**Abstract**—Error Analysis is one of the most common methods in statistics. According to Corder S. P (1967) error is significant to learners. This paper applies it to the teaching of Chinese-English translation. Taking a whole class as a research unit and by analyzing the common errors made by students in their homework, the researcher records the error types, numbers of each type of error as well as the corresponding frequencies separately. Then the researcher lists out the top six errors and calculates the total frequency of them (total percentage of the six errors occupied in the class). After the analysis, the teacher feedbacks the results to the students as well as explains the methods of error identification and correction. This paper compares two non-English major classes with 60 freshmen; one has adopted “Error Analysis” in the teaching of Chinese-English Translation, while the other has not. Finally after one semester, the class which has applied “Error Analysis” makes greater progress than the class not. From some aspects, the research does show that “Error Analysis Teaching Method” could promote the Chinese-English translating skills of non-English major freshmen. Though this research has its limitations, it is valuable in improving the traditional translation teaching strategies.

**Index Terms**—error analysis on translation teaching, error analysis, Chinese-English translation, teaching experiment

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of globalization, English is becoming more and more important. English has penetrated into every aspect of our life. Our products have English introduction and instructions in the packages, our road signs are written in two languages and our mobile service platforms provide English help. It is necessary to learn English well in order to adapt to the society.

Most Chinese students begin to learn English in their primary school, but due to the significant differences of the two languages, they can not do well in English even after they have become freshmen, especially in translating Chinese into English.

The present paper is devoted to analyzing the common errors made by freshmen in translating Chinese into English and tries to apply error analysis method to classroom in order to find out whether it is feasible or not.

The current paper is divided into five parts: (1) Introduction; (2) Literature Review; (3) Research Design; (4) Data Analysis; (5) Conclusion, Limitation and Implications.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Previous Studies on Translation Error Analysis for Students*

Many scholars have published their books and papers on student translation error analysis. Some even have proposed their own error correction strategies in their text.

In the current book market, there are plentiful of books named the common errors made by Chinese in Translating Chinese into English or something alike, such as the book by Chen Dezhang and Wang Fengxin. There are also some handbooks in this field, like Yang Guanghui's *A Handbook for Analyzing the Errors Made by Middle School Students*.

The research papers in this field are plentiful, too, such as “Some Enlightenments for Translation Course for Non-English Major Postgraduates from the Analysis of Their Errors in Translation”, “Error Analysis and Strategies Research on Translation of Higher Vocational-Technical Schools” by Li Zhuqing and Wang Lei, “Analyzing the

Common Errors Made by Non-English Major Freshmen” by Xing Chunxiao and Huang Xiuli, “Try to Analyze the Reasons that Cause these Errors in College English Translating Study” by Zhong Huilian), and “Analysis on Mistakes Often Made in College Chinese-English Translation” by Wei Dan, etc.

In conclusion, many achievements on translation error analysis for students have been made by scholars, and they have found some fundamental reasons of such errors and applied such analysis into classroom as well as put forward certain effective strategies that can help improve the traditional translation teaching.

Based on the former researches, the current paper will continue the research in its own way. This research adopts a quantitative research method. It not just analyzes the error types, but also analyzes the numbers and frequencies of each type of error clearly. It is a systematic research. The following chapters explain the research in detail.

*B. Theoretical Basis of this Research*

This paper is based on the theory of Translation Error Analysis and Statistic Contrastive Analysis.

Li Zhuqing and Wang Lei (2009) defined the two approaches as following:

Error Analysis is to analyze the common errors easily made by students and by a thorough and systematic analyzing, Error Analysis try to discover the regularities of foreign language learning process which is affected by Universal Grammars. One of the approaches is to analyze the error types, numbers and the corresponding frequencies based on the data collected.

As for Translation Error Analysis, it is to analyze the common errors made by students in language translation. By a thorough and systematic analysis, it will discover the regularities of language translation and put forward better translation strategies.

In this research, the writer takes the above-mentioned approach and analyzes the error types, numbers and the corresponding frequencies.

In statistics, contrastive analysis is to compare two or more different data groups in every aspect. It may compare two or more different objects, or just compare two or more different stages of the same object. Through comparison, it tries to find out the relationship between them

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Together with the statistical process of Christopher D. Manning & Hinrich Schütze (1999) as well as the contrastive analysis and error analysis approaches of Gao Yuan (2002) in Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, this research will adopt the research approach introduced by Gary D. Bouma and G.B.J. Atkinson in *A Handbook of Social Science Research*.

*A. Research Objective*

The present research is to analyze the common errors made by freshmen in their homework in translating Chinese into English and then apply the error analysis approach to the classroom in order to find whether it is feasible or not. The variables selected are error types, error number and error frequency. The fourteen types of errors on articles, possessives or pronouns, subject-verb agreement, the singular or plural form of nouns, uninterrupted sentences, passive voice, conjunction, infinitive, -ing form, Chinglish, or verb tense, and spelling mistakes, the misuse of vocabulary and errors on preposition. During the research, the researcher has recorded the numbers of each type of error appearing and calculated the corresponding frequency. Table1 is the data summarization form.

TABLE 1  
DATA SUMMARIZATION FORM ON ERROR RECORDING AND ANALYSIS  
CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ SCORE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Error Types	Error Number	Error Frequency
1. Article errors		
2. possessive / pronoun errors		
3. subject-verb agreement errors		
4. errors in singular or plural form of nouns		
5. uninterrupted sentences		
6. passive voice errors		
7. conjunction errors		
8. infinitive errors		
9. -ing errors		
10. Chinglish		
11. verb tense errors		
12. spelling errors		
13. vocabulary misuse		
14. preposition errors		
total		

*B. Research Measurement and Design*

The research is carried out in one month in Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications during the first

semester of 2009-2010 academic years.

The unit of this research is class. Two classes are selected, and they are freshmen. Class One is a typical top-class and Class Two is typically at the opposite end. Each class has 30 non-English major students with same male-female ratio. In order to promote the validity of the research, the students selected are taught by one teacher with the same textbook and they do the same exercises. The times the teacher spends on each class are the same and the times that each student selected spends on learning and doing exercise are the same.

The research is achieved by collecting homework of the two classes for two times. Once the two classes were selected, they are assigned to do the same homework immediately and no copying is permitted.

TABLE 2  
THE FIRST HOMEWORK

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 虽然已搬出旧街区很多年了，我仍然同他们保持着联系。</li> <li>2 一听说销售部有职位空缺，我马上写信通知他。</li> <li>3 那首歌总使我想起学生时代。</li> <li>4 这家报纸详细报导了这一事件，但并没有指出消息的来源。</li> <li>5 有人要求他推迟在晚会的出场，这使她多少有点儿生气。</li> </ol>
--

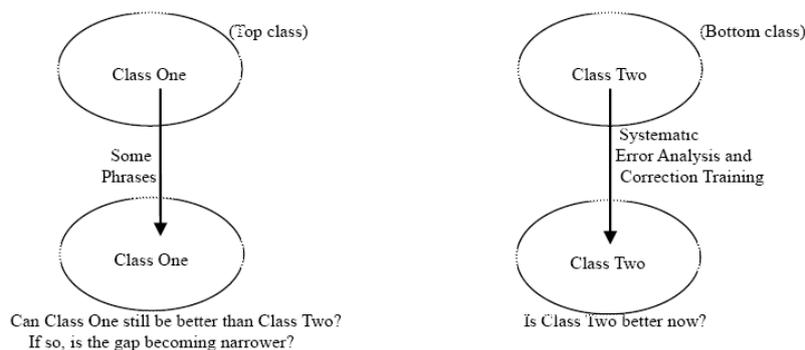
The researcher records the average score of each class as additional information and calculates the common errors made by the freshmen in their homework and fills the numbers in **table1**. Then the teacher takes Class One as Control Group and Class Two as Experimental Group. During one semester, the teacher just tells Class One the reference answers of the translation and offers them some phrases; while she hands off the translation error recording and analyzing forms as well as the bar diagrams and pie charts to Class Two with explanation and requires them to be aware of such errors all the time, especially the errors they are most likely to make. The teacher spends two hours on each class every three days and each student is required to do exercise for half an hour every day. Students in Class One cannot communicate with students in Class Two and copying answers is unacceptable.

The teacher assigns homework every other week (all together eight times for the whole semester), and with different methods in the two classes. The following table is the final homework:

TABLE 3  
THE FINAL HOMEWORK

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 许多外国留学生对京剧很痴迷。</li> <li>2 他决定动身寻找印第安人的住处。</li> <li>3 每当读学生的来信时，这位老师的脸上总会绽放笑容。</li> <li>4 这个研究小组完全投入到工作中，并提前完成了科研项目。</li> <li>5 那个模特非常漂亮，苗条，长着一双水汪汪的大眼睛。</li> </ol>
---

Similarly, the researcher records the average score of each class as additional information and calculates the errors and keeps the record separately for the two classes. After data collecting, it is time to do a thorough and systematic data analyzing.



#### IV. DATA ANALYZING

The data collected are: (1) the first and last homework of the two classes, together 600 sentence of sixty students; (2) Error recording and analyzing forms; (3) the average score of each class.

##### A. Data Analysis of the First Homework

The error recording and analyzing results for the first homework are as follows:

TABLE 4  
DATA SUMMARIZATION FORM ON ERROR RECORDING AND ANALYSIS FOR THE FIRST HOMEWORK  
CLASS ONE SCORE 8.7 DATE: OCT. 12, 2009

Error Types	Error Numbers	Frequency (%)
1. Article errors	18	12.86
2. possessive / pronoun errors	10	7.14
3. subject-verb agreement errors	5	3.57
4. errors on singular or plural form of nouns	6	4.28
5. uninterrupted sentences	4	2.86
6. passive voice errors	0	0
7. conjunction errors	9	6.43
8. infinitive errors	3	2.14
9. -ing errors	4	2.86
10. Chinglish	14	10.00
11. verb tense errors	20	14.29
12. spelling errors	15	10.71
13. vocabulary misuse	21	15.00
14. preposition errors	11	7.86
total	140	100%

CLASS TWO SCORE 7.3 DATE: OCT. 12, 2009

Error Types	Error Numbers	Frequency (%)
1. Article errors	35	12.20
2. possessive / pronoun errors	11	3.83
3. subject-verb agreement errors	14	4.88
4. errors on singular or plural form of nouns	9	3.14
5. uninterrupted sentence	11	3.83
6. passive voice errors	3	1.04
7. conjunction errors	14	4.88
8. infinitive errors	7	2.44
9. -ing errors	9	3.14
10. Chinglish	25	8.71
11. verb tense errors	37	12.89
12. spelling errors	31	10.80
13. vocabulary misuse	50	17.42
14. preposition errors	31	10.80
total	287	100%

From table 4, we can see the error numbers and frequencies of each type of error separately. The average score of the first homework of Class One is 8.7 and Class Two is 7.3. The total errors of them are 140 and 287 separately. The following Bar charts and Pie charts can help us analyze the data better. (See Figure 1, 2)

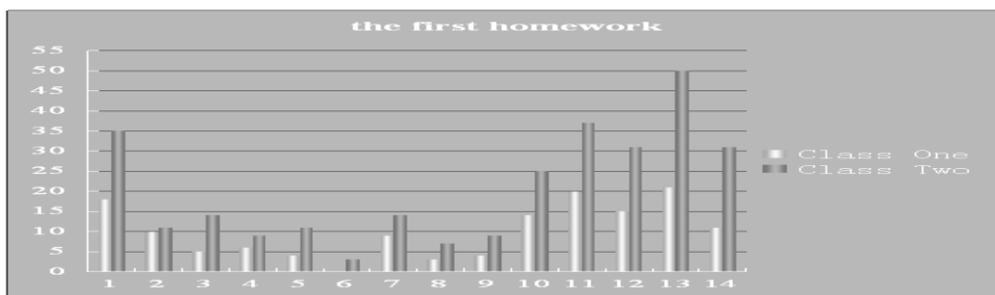
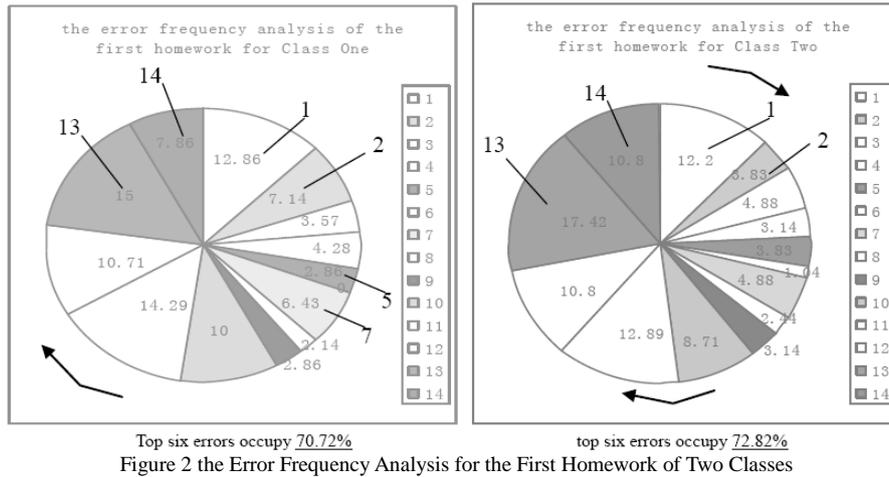


Figure 1. The Error Number Analysis of the First Homework for the Two Classes

In Fig. 1, the numbers 1-14 of x-line represent the fourteen types of errors (the same hereinafter) and the white bars represent errors of Class One, while the black Class Two. The higher the bar is, the more the errors are. We can see that Class Two has more high bars than Class One and some bars of Class Two are even much higher than Class One. The total errors of Class Two are much more than that of Class One. So Class One does much better than Class Two as a whole.

From Fig. 2, we can see that the percentages of each type of error in the two classes are similar. The most common errors in Class One are vocabulary misuse, verb tense errors, article errors, spelling errors and Chinglish as well as proposition errors. They have the total percentage of 70.72. The most common errors in Class Two are also the six error categories, and the total percentage is 72.82. But Class Two students make more preposition errors than Chinglish errors.



**B. Data Analysis of the Final Homework**

When doing the final homework, Class One doesn't introduce error analysis approach to translation teaching, while Class Two has applied error analysis to the translation lectures. The error recording and analyzing results for the final homework are as follows:

TABLE 5  
DATA SUMMARIZATION FORM ON ERROR RECORDING AND ANALYSIS FOR THE FINAL HOMEWORK  
CLASS ONE SCORE 8.9 DATE: NOV. 15, 2009

Error Types	Error Numbers	Frequency (%)
1. Article errors	15	12.93
2. possessive / pronoun errors	9	7.76
3. subject-verb agreement errors	4	3.45
4. errors on singular or plural form of nouns	4	3.45
5. uninterrupted sentence	4	3.45
6. passive voice errors	0	0
7. conjunction errors	8	6.90
8. infinitive errors	2	1.72
9. -ing errors	0	0
10. Chinglish	13	11.21
11. verb tense errors	16	13.79
12. spelling errors	12	10.34
13. vocabulary misusE	18	15.52
14. preposition errors	11	9.48
total	116	100%

CLASS TWO SCORE 8.7 DATE: NOV. 15, 2009

Error Types	Error Numbers	Frequency (%)
1. Article errors	12	8.11
2. possessive / pronoun errors	7	4.73
3. subject-verb agreement errors	5	3.38
4. errors on singular or plural form of nouns	7	4.73
5. uninterrupted sentence	9	6.08
6. passive voice errors	5	3.38
7. conjunction errors	13	8.78
8. infinitive errors	7	4.73
9. -ing errors	5	3.38
10. Chinglish	19	12.84
11. verb tense errors	22	14.86
12. spelling errors	5	3.38
13. vocabulary misusE	21	14.19
14. preposition errors	11	7.43
total	148	100%

From table5, we can see the error numbers and frequencies of each type of error separately. The average score of the final homework of Class One is 8.9 and Class Two is 8.7. The total errors of them are 116 and 148 separately. The following Bar charts and Pie charts can help us analyze the data better. (See Figure 3, 4)

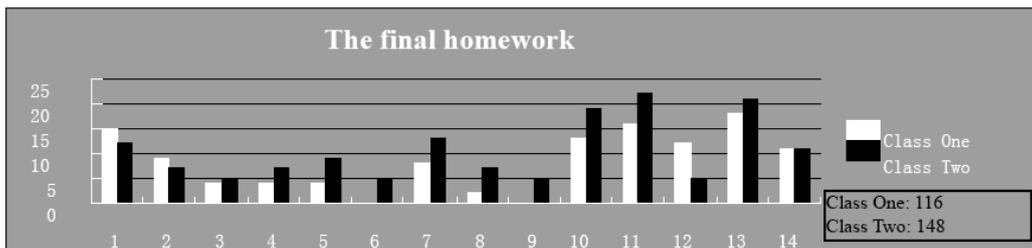


Figure 3 the Error Number Analysis of the Final Homework for the Two Classes

In Fig. 3, we can see that though Class Two has more high bars than Class One, every pair of the bars share similar heights. In some areas, students in Class Two do better than the students in Class One. The total numbers of errors are similar. So students in Class Two almost do the homework as well as the students in Class One as a whole.

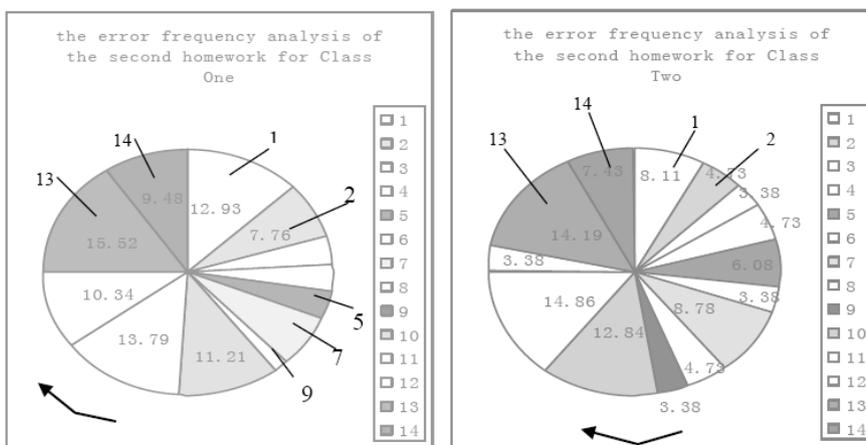


Figure 4 the Error Frequency Analysis for the Final Homework of Two Classes

From Fig. 4, we can see that the percentages of each type of error in the two classes are different. The most common errors in Class One are vocabulary misuse, verb tense errors, article errors, and Chinglish, spelling errors and preposition errors. The total percentage of them is 73.27. While the most common errors (in order) in Class Two are verb tense errors, vocabulary misuse, Chinglish, conjunction errors, article errors and preposition errors. The total percentage is 66.21, which is less than Class One. The order of the error types is different for the two classes. Students in Class One are more likely to make spelling mistakes, while students in Class Two are more likely to make conjunction mistakes.

C. An Integrated Data Analysis

We have analyzed the data separately, now it is time to make an integrated analysis.

a. An Integrated Average Score Analysis

Both Table 6 and Fig. 5 are the average scores of the two homeworks for the two classes.

The Average Score	The first time	The last time
Class One(Control)	8.7	8.9
Class Two(Experiment)	7.3	8.7

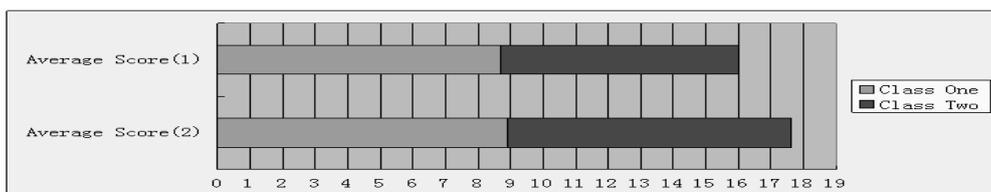


Figure 5 Four Average Scores

From the above table and bar chart, we can see that Class Two has made greater progress than Class One.

b. An Integrated Error Analysis

The above subsection has showed the integrated analysis on average scores, while this subsection will focus on the integrated analysis on **errors**.

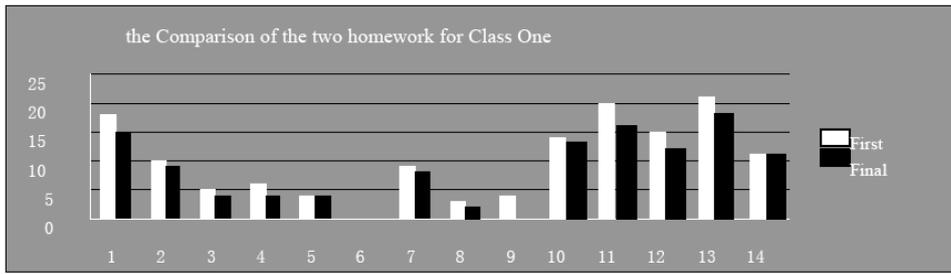


Figure 6 the Error Comparison of the Two Homework for Class One

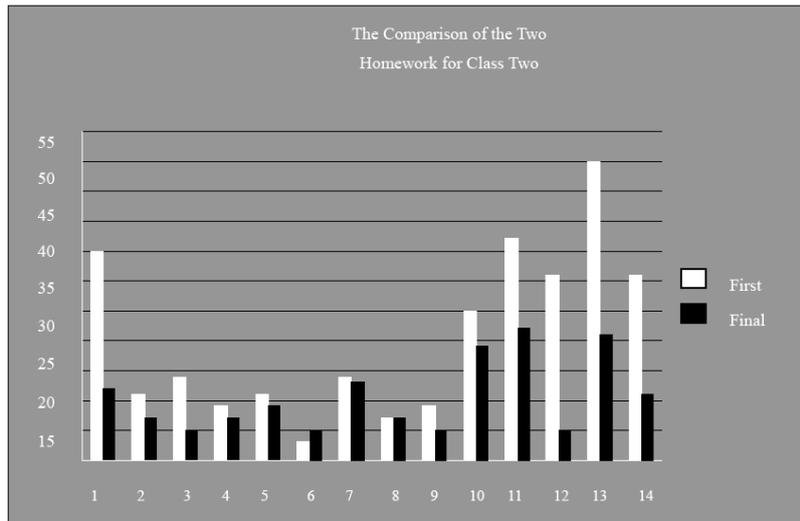
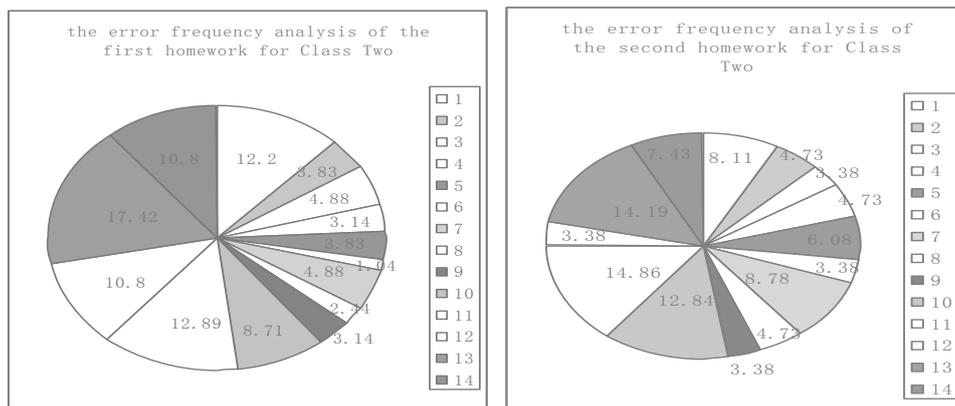


Figure 7 the Error Comparison for Class Two

From Fig. 6, we can see that the performance of students from Class One is relatively stable. But From Fig. 7, we can see that Class Two which has been taught with error analysis method in Chinese-English translation has made greater progress in their final translation homework.

c. An Integrated Error Frequency Analysis



Top six errors occupy **72.82%** top six errors occupy **66.21%**  
 Figure 8 Comparison of Error Frequency Analysis for Class Two

From Fig. 2, 4 and Fig. 8, we can see that for Class One, in the two assignments, the top six errors and the correlated frequencies are relatively stable, but for Class Two, the top six errors have some changes. The spelling errors of the final homework reduce sharply and this type of error has dropped out of the top six. Conjunction errors occupy a place in the top six. Besides that, the error frequencies of the two assignments of Class Two have more obvious changes than Class One. The total percentage of top six errors of the final homework has dropped obviously.

V. CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research has mainly adopted the Quantitative method. In an attempt to analyze the common errors made by freshmen, it applies the error analysis approach to translation teaching in order to find out whether such an approach is feasible or not. By purposive sampling, it chose two typical classes with 60 non-English major freshmen in Beijing

University of Posts and Telecommunications.

After a semester, the research reveals that the class which is taught with error analysis approach has made greater progress in Chinese-English translation. Thus error analysis could be applied to Chinese-English translation teaching area.

However, some factors unknown may affect the result of this research. Even the researcher has emphasized the importance of isolation, some students may still ask his/her classmates for help, or they may copy or help to revise others' answers. Other factors like carelessness, learning ability, etc. may affect their results.

Besides that, the samples in this research are selected by a non-random sampling procedure. Two classes cannot represent all freshmen in universities.

In spite of the limitations of it, this research still has its own values. When such issue is being discussed, this research could provide precious data for the researchers.

Finally this research may serve as an exploration for translation teaching strategies. With other approaches, error analysis method could improve the traditional teaching strategies. However, further researches are needed in this field, such as how to design a perfect environment and avoid the interference of other factors.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On the completion of my thesis, I should like to express my deepest gratitude to all those persons whose kindness and advice have made this research possible.

My sincere gratitude goes first to Professor Liu Aijun who has instructed me how to do a research and how to write an excellent research paper.

And I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Professor Wang Baoling who has given me valuable instructions and provided sufficient materials to me. With her guidance, I could analyze the materials and finish the research smoothly.

I am grateful to all the instructors who have instructed me with paper writing skills.

Last but not least, my gratitude is to my roommates, who have shared their ideas with me and constantly encouraged me when I felt frustrated.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Christopher D. Manning & Hinrich Schütze. (1999). *Foundations of Statistical Natural Language Processing*. London: the MIT Press.
- [2] Corder S.P. (1967). The Significance of Learners' Errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 5, 161-169.
- [3] Gary D. Bouma & G.B.J. Atkinson. (1995). *A Handbook of Social Science Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [4] Gao Yuan. (2002). *Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis*. Beijing: Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics Press.
- [5] Li Zhuqing & Wang Lei. (2009). Error Analysis and Strategies Research on Translation of Higher Vocational-technical Schools. *Journal of Shanxi Radio & TV University* 6, 71-72.

**Yunhong Zhang** was born in Hebei, China in 1986. She is currently a master student in Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. Her major is English Translation.

**Baoling Wang** was born in Qingdao, China in 1970. She received her M.A. degree in English Linguistics and Literature from Shandong University, China in 1996. She is currently an associate professor in the School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing, China. Her research interests include English Teaching and E-C/C-E Translation.

# Mnemonic Instruction: A Way to Boost Vocabulary Learning and Recall

Mohammad Amiryousefi  
ACECR, Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran  
Email: M.Amiryousefi@Yahoo.com

Saeed Ketabi  
Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran  
Email: Ketabi@fgn.ui.ac.ir

**Abstract**—Traditionally, vocabulary was neglected in language teaching programs and curriculums for the sake of grammar and other parts of language. Nowadays, however, researchers have realized that vocabulary is an important part of language learning and teaching and worthy of attention and research. A proliferation of studies done on vocabulary can be taken as a proof to it. Students are, however, reported to frustrate when they face with new words, since they have difficulty retaining them. This paper provides information on how mnemonics devices can be used to solve this problem and to improve vocabulary learning, boost memory and enhance creativity.

**Index Terms**—mnemonic devices, VLS, linguistic mnemonics, spatial mnemonics, visual mnemonics, the verbal method, physical responses methods

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the literature of English language teaching and learning a recurring theme has been the neglect of vocabulary. It was often given little priority in language programs and was often left to look after itself and received only incidental attention in textbooks and language programs (Hedge, 2008; Richards and Renandya, 2002). French (1983) believes that vocabulary has been neglected in the past decades because 1) those who were involved in the teacher-preparation programs during the past few decades felt that grammar should be emphasized more than vocabulary, 2) specialists in methodology believed that students would make mistakes in sentence construction if too many words were learned before the basic grammar had been mastered, and 3) those who gave advice to teachers said that word meanings can be learned only through experience and can not be taught in the classroom. More recently, however, a number of researchers have become interested in vocabulary instruction. They have wakened to the realization that vocabulary is an important area worthy of effort and investigation. It has, consequently, gained popularity in the general field of English language teaching and learning (Coady and Huckin, 1997; Richards and Renandya, 2002; Hedge, 2008). There is now general agreement among vocabulary specialists that it is at the heart of communicative competence (Coady and Huckin, 1997).

Vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) is an approach which facilitates vocabulary learning and has attracted considerable attention. It is a movement away from teaching-oriented approach toward one that is interested in seeing how actions of learners might affect their acquisition of vocabulary (Schmitt, 2002). Strategies can help learners both in discovering the meaning of a word, and consolidating it and are specially needed when they are encouraged to learn independently (Celce-Murcia, 2001). One of the problems that students mostly face is that they easily forget the newly learned words. To solve this problem, researchers have attempted to examine different VLSs. Mnemonic devices or strategies have proved to make substantial contribution in this regard (Farjami, 2007). They, however, have not been researched in any depth and English teachers are not usually aware of their effectiveness and do not know how to use them. This study, therefore, intends to discuss mnemonic devices in depth.

## II. MNEMONICS: DEFINITION

The word *mnemonic* is derived from the Greek word *Mnemosyne*, referring to the ancient Greek goddess of memory. The use of mnemonic dates back to 500B.C (Yates, 1966). The first used mnemonic device was an earlier form of the modern day method of loci and since then, numerous other devices have been developed (Higbee, 1987). Memory has a key effect on eventual vocabulary and grammar achievement. There are two basic types of memory: short-term memory and long-term memory. Short term memory keeps the information which is being processed (a new word which is encountered for the first time). It is fast but it can hold information for a very short time due to its small storage capacity. Long term memory, on the other hand, has an unlimited storage capacity but is relatively slow. The aim of vocabulary learning and teaching is to transfer the lexical information from the short term memory to the long term memory

(Schmitt, 2000, 129-131). Aitchison (2002), however, believes that our mind is like the London Underground System. By this he means that information stored in the brain is linked in different ways. Accordingly, the general picture of the mental lexicon is one in which there a variety of links between words, some strong, some weak. The main way, to transfer the vocabulary items from short term to long term memory and create a strong connection there is by finding some elements in the mental lexicon to attach the new lexical item to (Schmitt, 2000). Mnemonic is a memory enhancing instructional strategy that involves teaching students to link new information taught to information they already know.

According to Solso (1995), mnemonics are techniques or devices, either verbal or visual in nature, that serve to improve the storage of new information, and the recall of information contained in memory. Mnemonics have been proven to be extremely effective in helping people remember things (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1989; Bulgren, Schumaker & Deshler, 1994). If material is presented in a way which fits in or relates meaningfully to what is already known, then it will be retained for relatively long periods of time and thus retrieval through verbal or visual clues becomes quite easy. In other words, by using mnemonic strategies, teachers can relate new information to information students already have stored in their long-term memory. For vocabulary learning, they are used to relate the word to some previously learnt information, using some form of imagery or grouping (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1991). Thompson (1987) similarly acknowledging the usefulness of mnemonic devices by stating that they can help learners learn faster and recall better by integration of new material into existing cognitive units and by providing retrieval cues. Mnemonic devices are proved to be effective in all ages. They are, however, more useful for low level students because they are involved mostly in activities requiring them to remember and recall information (Levin, 1993).

### III. MNEMONICS: CLASSIFICATION

Mnemonic devices have been differently classified by different scholars. Thompson (1987), for example, arranges mnemonic strategies into five classes; linguistics, spatial, visual, physical response and verbal methods. Oxford (1990), on the other hand, identifies four major strategies namely, creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action. While Baddeley (1999) believes that mnemonic devices are classified into visual imagery strategies and verbal strategies. This study, however, adopts the one presented by Thompson which sounds to be more comprehensive.

#### A. Linguistic Mnemonics

##### 1. Peg word method

Through peg word method unrelated items can be remembered easily by relating them to easily memorizable items which act as pegs or hooks. Peg word method has two stages. At first students are asked to remember 10 number-rhyme pairs like *one is bun or john, two is shoe, three is tree* ( in my classes I usually continue it in this way: *four is door, five is hive, six is cheeks, seven is heaven, eight is gate, nine is pine, ten is hen*). In the second stage the students are asked to visualize the word and try to link it to rhyming words. The words are, therefore, learned in a composite picture of the given word and the peg (Roediger, 1980; Groeger, 1997; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007). For example if the first word to be learned is "exploration", its peg can be "John" and after its meaning is defined to the students, they can form a mental picture in which "John is doing oil explorations", if the second one is "feature", its peg according to the rhyme pairs can be "shoe" and the students can form a mental picture in which some people are talking about the features of a kind of shoe.

##### 2. The key word method

Key word method according to Hulstijn (1997) requires three stages. At first An L1 or L2 word that has acoustic similarity to the target word is given to the learner to act as the key word. In the second stage the learner is asked to make an association between the target word and the keyword. Finally he is asked to make a mental image of the combination of the keyword and the target word. For example the word "shear" means *to cut the wool off a sheep* and it is acoustically similar to the Persian word شیر (*shir*), *lion in English*. It can be given to the learner as the keyword and then he is asked to associate them in a mental picture. The learner may associate them in this way: A Shir (lion) is shearing a sheep.

#### B. Spatial Mnemonics

##### 1. The loci method

Loci method is actually the oldest mnemonic device. Using this method entails imagining a very familiar place like a room or a house and then associating each new word to a part of it to be remembered (Eysenck, 1994; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007). In other words, the students take an imaginary walk along their familiar places, and retrieve the items they have put there. As people's experiences are different, students may come up with different pictures (Thomson, 1987). For example if the new words to be learned are *era, artificial, mission, sample, mass, density, disturb, distant*, the familiar location can be the moon and the mental picture formed may be ( as an example from my own class): "It is the robot era. There are some robots with artificial hands and legs. They are on a mission on the moon. They are collecting a mass of sample rocks to examine their features and density. No one can disturb them because they are in a distant area". They all must be seen as a mental and imagined picture by the students.

## 2. Spatial grouping

The idea behind this method is that instead of writing words in a column, students can be asked to form patterns like a triangle with them. Writing words in the form of patterns help them recall the words better (Holden, 1999). As they remember the pattern, they can remember the parts which are signed by the words.

## 3. The finger method

Through this method students can be asked to associate each word with a finger. This method is especially useful with children to learn numbers, days of the week and month of the year (Holden, 1999).

### C. Visual Mnemonics

#### 1. Pictures

New words are usually paired with their definitions or equivalents. They can be, however, better, learned if they are paired with pictures (Thompson, 1987). Gians and Redman (1986) believe that objects and pictures can facilitate recall. Wright (1989) also believes that meaning can not be derived only from verbal language. Pictures and objects not only can be used to give meaning and information but they also can be used to the motivation and interest of the students. Using this method, a picture can be used to make the meaning of the word clear. It can sometimes be accompanied by its definition. This method can, however, be used with concrete words and usually with elementary or pre-intermediate students.

#### 2. Visualization or imagery

Instead of using real pictures, this method allows a word to be visualized. The learner imagines a picture or a scene which is associated with the target word. Abstract words can be learned through this method by relating them to a visual picture (Holden, 1999; Thompson, 1987; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007). Visualization can be an aid in vocabulary learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). If the new word is "exploration", the learner may come up with this mental picture "A scientist is using special drills for oil exploration" by relating it to the picture of a scientist. Again the students may come up with different pictures because people's experiences are different. Its difference with the method of loci is that in visualization for each word a picture or a scene is imagined while in the method of loci all of them are related to a familiar place and seen as an imaginary walk through that place.

### D. The Verbal Method

#### 1. Grouping or semantic organization

As organized materials are easier to store in and retrieve from long-term memory, to organize the words in some fashion will enhance their recall (Anderson, 2000; Thomson, 1987). If the target words to be remembered are, for example, dog, cat, chair, sofa, table, milk, eggs and butter they can be organized and remembered under three categories: animals ( for dog and cat ), furniture ( for chair, sofa and table) and food ( for milk, egg and butter). In this way learners have the advantage of better recall than when they all are learned in a list, because if they can remember one word, they will be able to remember the rest (Mirhassani and Eghtesadei,2007).

#### 2. Story-telling or the narrative chain

In this method the learner links the words together by a story. At first he should associate the target words with a topic or some topics, then he should connect them by making up a story containing the words (Thompson, 1987; Holden, 1999; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007). This method is especially useful for high level students.

### E. Physical Responses Methods

#### 1. Physical response method

According to this method the learner should move his body or parts of his body in a certain way that illustrates the meaning of the word. If the target word is *tiptoe*, for example, the student can get up on his tiptoe and move across the room. It can be imaginary too. It means that he can imagine the action of moving on his tiptoe (Thompson, 1987; Holden, 1999). Thompson (1987) especially believes that if the information of a word or a sentence is enacted it can yield better understanding and recall.

#### 2. Physical sensation method

This strategy is devised by Oxford and Scarcella (1994). Through this method the learner associates the new word to a physical sensation. For example he can feel cold when he learns the word *frigid*.

## IV. COMMENTS ON THE USE OF MNEMONIC DEVICES

Mnemonic devices can be very effective and can make the students motivated and the classroom more interesting (Georger, 1997). There are, however, some points that interested teachers should consider: 1) learners themselves should be encouraged to find their mnemonic devices. If they can not the teacher can offer one; 2) it is not often possible to use certain mnemonic devices with certain words. It is, for example, difficult to find a key word for certain words. The students also vary in their abilities. For some imagery techniques can be more effective while for others verbal strategies, for example. Worthen and Hunt (2008), accordingly, suggest that a specific combination of processes is necessary for the effectiveness of mnemonic instruction and use. The teachers should, therefore, use several techniques at the same time; 3) the use of certain devices entails a certain level of proficiency. Students with different

levels of proficiency may need different techniques. High-level students may, for example, benefit more from verbal than from visual devices; 4) students should be encouraged to evaluate their own techniques and finally 5) when certain strategies are agreed upon, the teacher should instruct the strategy and its importance and effectiveness (Hulstijn, 1997; Thompson, 1987; Holden, 1999; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007).

#### V. STUDIES DONE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MNEMONIC DEVICES

A lot of studies have focused on the recognition and instruction of language learning strategies in general and vocabulary in particular. There are, however, a few studies done on mnemonic devices. Those focused on mnemonic devices have consistently indicated that the use of mnemonic devices substantially enhances higher levels of retention in immediate and delayed recall of second language vocabulary words in comparison with other learning strategies. For example, Raugh and Atkinson (1975) compared the keyword method with various control procedures for learning a Spanish vocabulary. In all cases, the keyword method proved to be highly effective, yielding in one experiment a final test score of 88% correct for the keyword group compared to 28% for the control group. Moreover, Pressly et al (1981) studied on children 3 to 6 years of age learning simple Spanish vocabulary items through keyword method. The results showed that children who used the keyword method remembered more vocabulary than children who were not instructed in keyword method usage. Carlson, Kincaid, Lance, and Hodgson (1976), however, found significantly better recall when a group trained on the method of loci was compared to a control group. Another study by Roediger (1980) looked at the method of loci along with three other well-known mnemonic methods. Results of the study revealed that all four mnemonic groups recalled the 20-word list better than the control group. However, the method of loci and the peg word system were found to be better methods to use when the order of words remembered was important. Erten and Tekin (2008) investigated the effects of semantic organization on vocabulary recall on a group of 60 fourth graders. They were taught 80 carefully selected words either in semantically related sets or semantically unrelated set. The statistical analysis, however, revealed that learning words in semantically unrelated sets yields better results than learning vocabulary in semantically related sets. The study indicated that, contrary to frequent practice in many course books, presenting new vocabulary that belongs to the same semantic set together may cause interference due to cross-association and may even hinder vocabulary learning. Atay and Ozbulgan (2007) investigated the effects of memory strategy instruction along with learning through context on the ESP vocabulary recall of Turkish EFL learners. The study showed that memory strategies or mnemonic strategies can improve vocabulary learning. The result of the study also illustrated that first; strategy instruction should be integrated into contextual vocabulary learning. After discovering the meaning of a word through different contexts, students should be guided to recall it via different memory strategies. Secondly, rather than providing the learners with one or two strategies, the instruction should focus on the whole array of strategies, and students should be asked to choose the most effective one(s) for themselves. To do so teachers should be instructed about the use and instruction of different strategies.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

One of the most challenging parts of every language learning is the acquisition of vocabulary items. Students, however, complain that they can not remember the words they have learned. To solve this problem, teachers can attempt to include mnemonic devices into their classes. Mnemonic devices are useful ways of enhancing vocabulary learning and recall. Such memory techniques should not replace other approaches to vocabulary learning, but should complement them. Research on the effectiveness of mnemonic strategies has consistently proved their usefulness, it, however, recommends language teachers not to present words in isolation, but rather use these devices in contextual vocabulary learning. The choice of strategies, however, depends on the students' proficiency and learning style (Coady and Huckin, 1997; Thompson, 1987; Holden, 1999; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007).

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Aitchison, J. (2002). *Words in the Mind: An Introduction to the Mental Lexicon* (3rd Ed.). Blackwell Publishers: Great Britain.
- [2] Anderson, J. R. (2000). *Cognitive psychology and Its Implication* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.
- [3] Atay, D. & Ozbulgan, C. (2007). Memory strategy instruction, contextual learning and ESP vocabulary recall. *English for Specific Purposes*, 26, 39–51.
- [4] Baddeley, A.D. (1999). *Essentials of Human Memory*. East Sussex: Psychology Press Ltd.
- [5] Bulgren, J. A., Schumaker, J. B., & Deshler, D. D. (1994). The effects of a recall enhancement routine on the test performance of secondary students with and without learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 9, 2–11.
- [6] Carlson, R.F., Kincaid, J.P., Lance, S. & Hodgson, T. (1976). Spontaneous use of mnemonics grade point average. *Journal of Psychology*, 92(1), 117-122.
- [7] Carney R. N. & Levin J. R. (1988). Do Mnemonic Fade as Time Goes By? Here's Looking Anew! *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 23, 276–297.
- [8] Carney, R. N., & Levin, J. R. (2000). Mnemonic instruction with a focus on transfer. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(4), 783–790.
- [9] Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. USA: Heinle and Heinle.
- [10] Coady, J. & Huckin, T. (1997). *Second language Vocabulary Acquisition*. USA: Cambridge University Press.

- [11] Erten, I.H. & Tekin, M. (2008). Effects on vocabulary acquisition of presenting new words in semantic sets versus semantically unrelated sets. *System* 36, 407–422.
- [12] Eysenck, M.W. (1994). *Principles of Cognitive Psychology*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum Association.
- [13] Farjami, H. (2007). Picture production and picture perception: comparing two modes of practicing concrete vocabulary. *IJAL*, 10(1).
- [14] French, A.V. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [15] Gains, R., & Redman, S. (1986). *Working with Words: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [16] Groeger, A. J. (1997). *Memory and Remembering: Everyday Memory in Context*. New York: Longman.
- [17] Hedge, T. (2008). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [18] Higbee, K. L. (1987). Process mnemonics: Principles, prospects, and problems. In M. A. McDaniel & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Imagery and Related Mnemonic Processes: Theories, Individual Differences, and Applications* (pp. 407-427). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- [19] Holden, W. R. (1999). learning to learn: 15 vocabulary acquisition activities. *Modern English Teacher*, 8 (1), 42, 47.
- [20] Husltijn, H. J. (1997). Mnemonic methods in foreign language vocabulary learning: Theoretical considerations and pedagogical implications. In J. Coady, & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second language vocabulary acquisition* (p. 203-224). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [21] Levin, J.R. (1993). Mnemonic strategies and classroom learning: A twenty-year report card. *The Elementary School Journal*, 94(2), 235-244.
- [22] Mirhassani, S.A. & Egtesadei, A.R. (2007). Improving vocabulary learning through mnemonic devices. *ILI Language Teaching Journal*, 3(2), 91-98.
- [23] Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (1989). Mnemonic social studies instruction: Classroom applications. *Remedial and Special Education*, 10(3), 40–46.
- [24] Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York: Newbury House publishers.
- [25] Oxford, R. L. & Scarcella, R.C. (1994). Second language vocabulary learning among adults: State of the art in vocabulary instruction. *System*, 22, 231-243.
- [26] O'Malley, M. & Chamot, A. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [27] Pressley, M., Samuel, J., Hershey, M.M., Bishop, S.E.L. & Dickinson, D. (1981). Use of a mnemonic technique to teach young children foreign language vocabulary. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 6(2), 110- 116. Raugh M. R. & Atkinson, R.C. (1975). A Mnemonic Method for Learning a Second-Language Vocabulary. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67(1), 1-16.
- [29] Richards, J.C. & Renandya, W.A. (eds.) (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [30] Roediger, H.L. (1980). The effectiveness of four mnemonics in ordering recall. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, 6(5), 558-567.
- [31] Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [32] Solso, R. L. (1995). *Cognitive Psychology* (4th Ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- [33] Thompson, I. (1987). Memory in language learning. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. (pp. 15-30). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- [34] Worthen, J. B. & Hunt, R. R. (2008). Mnemonics: Underlying Processes and Practical Applications. *Learning and Memory: A Comprehensive Reference*. 2, 145-156.
- [35] Wright, A. (1989). *Pictures for language learning*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- [36] Yates, F. A. (1966). *The Art of Memory*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.



**Mohammad Amirousefi** is currently a Ph. D student at the University of Isfahan and the manager of the English department at ACECR, Isfahan University of Technology. He has published some articles on TEFL in national and international journals. His areas of interest include metadiscourse analysis, discourse analysis, CDA, SLA and vocabulary.



**Saeed Ketabi** has a Ph. D in Applied Linguistics from the University of Cambridge, England. He teaches various ELT courses at the University of Isfahan, Iran. He has published many books and articles.

# An Empirical Study on the Relationship between Metacognitive Strategies and Online-learning Behavior & Test Achievements

Yuhui Liu

Beijing University of Technology, Beijing, China  
Email: liuyuhui@bjut.edu.cn

Hao Feng

Beijing University of Technology, Beijing, China  
Email: fenghao@emails.bjut.edu.cn

**Abstract**—By using Wen Qiufang's Questionnaire on English Learning Strategies, 93 students from thirteen different majors in Beijing University of Technology are surveyed about their use of metacognitive strategies and self-learning on line. Based on the survey, the relationship between metacognitive strategies and online-learning behavior & test achievements is analyzed with suggestions for strategy training and ability development.

**Index Terms**—metacognitive strategies, online learning behavior, test achievements, self-learning ability

## I. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

*College English Curriculum Requirements* (*Requirements* for short) was issued by Higher Education Department of Education Ministry in 2004, which specifies “the objective of college English is to develop students’ ability in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China’s social development and international changes.” To achieve the teaching objective, college English teaching reform has begun in Beijing University of Technology (BJUT for short) since September, 2004 through reforming course design by analyzing students’ needs and social needs, and reforming teaching modes by adopting “Computer- and Classroom-Based College English Teaching Model” recommended by *Requirements*. In addition, a matching language learning center has been founded; local area network has been established which can provide students with opportunities of self-learning by using computers, or to do net discussion, testing and so on. The new teaching model, especially self-learning on line, aroused the students’ interest in learning English and provided them with better learning environment in developing their ability, especially the ability of listening and speaking by listening to, viewing and imitating the native speakers on line. The reform measures have been applied and tried out on the college English teaching of four grades from 2004 to 2007, with good teaching results achieved by cultivating a group of students with strong ability and excellent achievements. A case in point is that there are more and more students in the university enjoying practice activities such as speaking and debating, resulting in the first prize of “FLTRP cup” national English debate contest in 2007, the second prize of “CCTV cup” national English speaking competition in 2006 and many other national and international prizes and awards.

However, it has been discovered during the teaching process that there are some students who hardly benefit from the new teaching model. Their achievements and ability have little improvement. Therefore, the authors propose that external conditions such as computers and network are not enough to improve the achievements and ability of the majority of the students. What is more important is to develop and improve students’ self-learning ability. Therefore, the investigation and training of learning strategies, especially metacognitive strategies have been conducted.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Researches on Learning Strategies Abroad

Researches on second language and foreign language learning strategies have begun since mid 1970s. Rubin from America and Nunan from Canada were pioneers in this field. Later, researches on learner-centered foreign language learning strategies gradually became heated. Early researches mainly focused on successful foreign language learners. Strategies such as to grasp practice opportunity, to control one’s emotion or to learn a foreign language systematically and so on are regarded by researchers as common features of all successful learners. Research data from Chamot &

Kuper (1989) showed that all learners use strategies, while the difference is whether they can use them flexibly and properly, which lies in learners' ability of self-evaluation and regulation of study. Self-evaluation and regulation ability is an important part of metacognition. Skehan (1989) believes that reflection, supervising and evaluation are key factors to use learning strategies. Otherwise, learners may just obtain some scattered skills which have no good to the whole learning. Succeeding related researches approve that metacognition is underlying reasons to reveal difference in test achievements.

#### B. *Researches on Learning Strategies at Home*

Domestic researches on foreign language learning strategies have begun since the beginning of 1980s, while overall start was after 1993, which has been undertaken by scholars such as Wen has reached many achievements. So far, there are six national scientific research projects in English learning strategy field with six monographs (Cheng & Zheng, 2002, Wen, 1996, 2003, Wu, 2002, Xiao, 1997, Yin, 2002) and two thesis collections (Wen & Wang 2003a, 2003b) published. Many scholars have begun to do further researches about metacognitive strategies. Ma et al. (2003) classified strategies into six groups of sub-strategies when studying influences of strategy application on language level, that is, memory, cognition, compensation, metacognition, emotion, and society. Their researches indicate that the language level changes from high to low according to the variation of application frequency of metacognitive strategies from high to low. The research of Yu et al. (2003) has found that among college students as well as high school students, good English readers generally have better metacognitive strategy awareness, which supports previous researches. Wei & Zou (2003) found through investigation that students who are good at English reading can adopt proper learning strategies effectively, especially metacognitive strategies during reading process. Based on the research *On Method Difference of Successful and Unsuccessful English Learners* by Wen (1995), Mei (2003) proposes that the difference between good and poor students is, in fact, the difference of metacognitive level. Wu & Wang (1998), Yang & Zhang (2002) approve that metacognitive strategies have a positive influence on vocabulary learning, reading comprehension and writing.

#### C. *Wen Qiufang's Research on English Metacognitive Strategies*

Wen's research on English metacognitive strategies shows that there is a great difference between successful and unsuccessful English learners in the use of metacognitive strategies (Wen, 2003). The former have stronger awareness to use metacognitive strategies and show initiative in English learning, while the latter have comparatively weaker awareness in using metacognitive strategies and are aimless and passive in English learning. Wen (2003) classifies strategies into management strategies and language learning strategies. The management strategies are connected with learning process, including plan making, strategy selecting, self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-adjustment, which are metacognitive strategies; the management strategies include not only cognitive management process, but also emotional management process. The language learning strategies are closely connected with language learning material, and merely used in language learning. Wen (2003) agrees with O'Malley & Chamot (1990) that whether a learner can achieve success or not in learning depends greatly on the use of metacognitive strategies.

The above researches prove that metacognitive strategies function and have great influence on English learning in the aspects such as vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, writing and so on. But the research on how metacognitive strategies function in teaching and learning English by adopting "Computer- and Classroom-Based College English Teaching Model", especially when online self-learning becomes an necessity, is mostly limited to the investigation based on questionnaires and tests (Xiao & Cao, 2005, He & Wang, 2007). Besides the questionnaire and the test, the research of this paper is based on more specific statistics of online self-learning behavior of self-learning and self testing to further reveal the relationship between metacognitive strategies, online self-learning behavior and test achievements of students.

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### A. *Subjects*

The population of the research is 1724 students from grade 2008 in BJUT. The sample of 93 students from 13 colleges of the university, including colleges of engineering, science and humanities respectively, are randomly chosen. All the students are in their first year of college English study.

#### B. *Questions*

- (1) Is there any difference in the use of metacognitive strategies between the low mark group and the high mark group of test achievements of the subjects?
- (2) Is there any difference in the time and frequency of online self-learning and testing between groups different in using metacognitive strategies?
- (3) Is there any relationship between the time of online self-learning, the frequency of online self-testing and the final test achievements?

#### C. *Instruments*

A questionnaire of 9 items about cognitive management strategies (metacognitive strategies) selected from the fourth part (item1-7, 9, 12) of Wen 's Questionnaire on English Learning Strategies is adopted in this research (Wen, 2006). In this part, Likert Scale is used, in which five scales are chosen to indicate the informants' degree of agreement to the items with 1 indicating completely disagree and 5 indicating completely agree. The nine metacognitive strategies included in this study constitute three sets, which include three strategies for self-planning, self-evaluation and self-monitoring respectively.

The subjects' online self-learning record is adopted. The students were encouraged rather than demanded to learn autonomously on line. The time they spent (hours) was recorded for one semester.

The subjects' online self-testing record is adopted. The students were encouraged rather than demanded to do online self-testing, which consisted of 16 sets of test questions, including 8 sets of listening questions and 8 sets of reading and writing questions respectively. The sets of the tests they had finished (times) were recorded for one semester.

The test achievements of the subjects are adopted. The students took the final examination, the test paper was chosen randomly from the test bank used for regular final examinations for all the students in the university, and the scores were collected and analyzed.

*D. Data Analysis*

There are 4 variables (X) in this study. Test achievements (scores) X1 is taken from the final examination of the first semester, sorting X1 by low mark group, mid mark group and high mark group. Online self-learning record (hours) X2 is taken from the first semester online record; the most is 45 hours and the least is 4. Online self-testing record (times) X3 is taken from the first semester online record; the most is 16 times, and the least is 0. Level of using cognitive strategies (scores) X4 is taken from mean score of each cognitive strategy item, sorting X4 by low mark group, mid mark group and high mark group.

The data collected were put into LSAS (Learning Strategies Analysis System) developed by Wen & Wang (2006) in the website of <http://www.jyw.cn>, which has all the functions of SPSS. Mean score and standard deviation were employed to describe the application level and tendency of variables. Independent sample mean score difference "t" test was done to test the difference between variables. Pearson correlation coefficient was done to find the correlation degree between online self-learning, online self-testing and test achievements.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*A. Difference in Using Metacognitive Strategies*

Table 1 presents a summary of the analysis of data obtained from the results of the final examination and the results of the strategy analysis.

TABLE 1  
T-TEST RESULTS OF USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Classification	Low mark group (25 students)		High mark group (25 students)		"T" value	Significance level
	X	S	X	S		
Metacognitive learning strategies	3.11	0.694	3.548	0.796	2.152	0.05

Based on the results of the final examination, 25 subjects constitute the low mark group and another 25 the high mark group. Mean scores (X) and standard divisions (S) in using metacognitive learning strategies between the two groups are compared. The results show that there is a significant difference between high and low mark groups in metacognitive strategies. The high mark group uses more metacognitive strategies in average. The result agrees with that of the research done by Han &Liu (2007).

*B. Difference in Online Self-learning, Online Self-testing and Test Achievements*

Table 2 presents a summary of the analysis of data obtained from the results of the strategy analysis, online self-learning, online self-testing and final test achievements.

TABLE 2  
T-TEST RESULTS OF ONLINE SELF-LEARNING, ONLINE SELF-TESTING AND TEST ACHIEVEMENTS

Classification	Low mark group (31 students)		High mark group (30 students)		"T" value	Significance level
	X	S	X	S		
Online self-learning (hours)	16.774	7.766	21.467	9.316	2.134	0.05
Online self-testing (times)	7.429	4.912	11.767	4.89	3.456	0.01
Test achievements (scores)	74.387	7.855	79.367	9.551	2.220	0.05

Based on the results of the strategy analysis, 31 subjects constitute the low mark group and another 30 the high mark

group. Mean scores (X) and standard divisions (S) in online self-learning (hours), online self-testing (times) and final test achievements (scores) between the two groups are compared. The results show that there is significant difference between high and low mark groups in online self-learning. Online self-learning time can be considered one of the aspects which suggest one's self-learning ability. While other means of self-learning, such as disc, text books and other learning materials can also help to promote one's test achievements, it is true that the students in high mark group of metacognitive strategies spend more time in average in online self-learning than those in low mark group.

Compared with online self-learning, online self-testing is much more persuasive because the tests must be done and handed in online. Therefore, there is extremely significant difference between high and low mark groups of cognitive strategies in online self-testing record (times). The high mark group students have done many more times of online self-testing in average. The online self-testing content and scores are not included in the statistics, for, besides metacognitive strategies, they involve other cognitive learning strategies, which are not within the discussion of this paper.

According to the above two statistic results, it is obvious that there is significant difference between high and low mark groups of metacognitive strategies in test achievements, and the high mark group has better average final test achievements, which has also been approved by Table 1.

### C. Correlation between Online Self-learning, Online Self-testing and Final Test Achievements

Table 3 & Table 4 present a summary of the correlation analysis of data obtained from the results of online self-learning, online self-testing and final test achievements.

TABLE 3  
CORRELATION ANALYSIS RESULTS OF ONLINE SELF-LEARNING AND FINAL TEST ACHIEVEMENTS

Classification	Test achievements	Online self-learning (hours)
Test achievements	1.00	0.599
Online self-learning (hours)	0.599	1.00

TABLE 4  
CORRELATION ANALYSIS RESULTS OF ONLINE SELF-TESTING AND FINAL TEST ACHIEVEMENTS

Classification	Test achievements	Online self-testing (times)
Test achievements	1.00	0.498
Online self-testing (times)	0.498	1.00

The results show that online self-learning and final test achievements are positively correlated (0.599), with extremely significant difference in total zero correlation; that is, the more online self-learning students have, the better their test achievements are. Online self-testing and test achievements are positively correlated (0.498), with extremely significant difference in total zero correlation; that is, the more online tests students do, the better their test achievements are.

The results of the above three analysis suggest that students who are better aware of the use of metacognitive strategies show initiative in learning, having better self-learning ability and test achievements. It agrees with Wen's research result. Therefore, we can train metacognitive strategies accordingly by analyzing students' efforts first, hoping to improve test achievements of poor learners and develop their ability.

## V. CONCLUSION

### A. Major Findings

The results of the research have answered the research questions with the findings.

(1) There is a significant difference between the low mark group and the high mark group of the subjects in the use of metacognitive strategies. The students in the high mark group of test achievements use more metacognitive strategies.

(2) There is an extremely significant difference in the time and frequency of online self-learning and testing between groups different in using metacognitive strategies. The students in the high mark group of cognitive strategies spend more time in average in online self-learning and do more online tests than those in the low mark group.

(3) There is a positive correlation between the time of online self-learning, the frequency of online self-testing and the final test achievements. The students who spend more time in online self-learning and do more online tests achieve higher scores in average in the final examination.

In conclusion, metacognitive learning strategies function in students' online learning behavior and test achievements.

### B. Suggestions for Further Research

The results of the research prove statistically that metacognitive strategies function in students' online learning behavior and test achievements. Therefore, it is desirable that the further researches focus on strategy training. Strategy training has been done and studied quite a lot even in recent years, but mostly for listening, reading and writing (Shen &

Song, 2008). Strategy training for online self-learning is a new area for study and practice. Learning strategies, especially metacognitive strategies are important for online self-learning, for facing the vast amount of learning resources, learners need the ability to plan, monitor and evaluate in order to acquire learning efficiency and develop self-learning ability.

In summary, learning strategies, especially metacognitive strategies, are basis to train and improve self-learning ability, and in turn self-learning ability can help students improve test achievements and train language using ability. Therefore, it is imperative to strengthen the training of students' learning strategies, especially metacognitive strategies.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Chamot. A. U. & L. Kupper. (1989). Learning strategies in foreign language instruction. *Foreign Language Annals* 22, 13-24.
- [2] Cheng, Xiaotang & Zheng, Min. (2002). English learning strategies. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [3] Han, Shuguang & Liu, Yuhui. (2008). The correlation between metacognition and English achievement of college English students in the context of on-line self-learning. *China Electric Power Education* 4, 178-180.
- [4] He, Mingjia & Wang Guan. (2007). Autonomous learning strategies and efficiency & aptitude of English learners. *Teaching English in China* 30, 111-117.
- [5] Ma, Xiaomei et al. (2003). On learning style of college English learners. In Liu, Runqing & Dai, Manchun (eds.), *Researches on College English Teaching Reform and Development Strategies in China*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 183-197.
- [6] Mei, Jianeng. (2003). Metacognition and after-class learning of college students. *Guangxi Social Sciences* 5, 186-187.
- [7] Nunan, D. (1997). Strategy training in the language classroom: An empirical investigation. *RELC Journal* 26, 56-81.
- [8] O'Malley, J. M., & A. U. Chamot. (1990). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly* 9, 41- 45.
- [10] Rubin, J. (1981). Study of cognitive process in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics* 11, 117-31.
- [11] Shen, Yanxia & Song, Julei. (2008). A review of English learning strategy in China. *English Language Teaching* 1, 116-120.
- [12] Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual Differences in Second Language Learning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [13] Wei, Ruyao & Zou, Aimin. (2003). Cognitive Strategies and Reading Comprehension. *Shan Dong Foreign Languages Journal* 3, 47-49.
- [14] Wen, Qiufang. (1995). Differences between successful English learners and unsuccessful English learners in learning methods. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research* 3, 61-66.
- [15] Wen, Qiufang. (1996). *On English Learning Strategies*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [16] Wen, Qiufang. (2003). *A Successful Road to English Learning*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [17] Wen, Qiufang & Wang, Lifei. (2003a). *Empirical Researches on English Learning Strategies*. Xi'an: Shaanxi Normal University Press.
- [18] Wen, Qiufang & Wang, Lifei. (2003b). *Theoretical Researches on English Learning Strategies*. Xi'an: Shaanxi Normal University Press.
- [19] Wen, Qiufang & Wang, Jiong. (2006). *Learning Strategies Analysis System*. <http://www.jyw.cn/Index.html>
- [20] Wu, Benhu. (2002). *English Learning Strategies*. Hefei: Anhui Education Press.
- [21] Wu, Xia & Wang Qiang. (1998). Vocabulary learning strategies of non-English college students. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research* 1, 53-57.
- [22] Xiao, Jianzhuang. (1997). *English Learning Strategies*. Beijing: Modern Publish Press.
- [23] Xiao, Wuyun & Cao, Quning. (2005). Teaching research on metacognitive strategies and learner autonomy. *Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University* 5, 108-111.
- [24] Yang, Xiaohu & Zhang, Wenpeng. (2002). The correlation between metacognition and EFL reading comprehension of Chinese college students. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research* 3, 213-218.
- [25] Yin, Fulin. (2002). *On English Learning*. Heifei: China Science and Technology University Press.
- [26] Yu, Ping et al. (2003). On metacognition and English reading. *Journal of Yunan Normal University* 5, 40-44.

**Yuhui Liu** is a professor in College of Foreign Languages, Beijing University of Technology, Beijing, China and has published more than 30 academic papers on English teaching & learning and on conversation analysis, and more than 20 textbooks and workbooks on vocabulary, listening, reading and writing as the first author or chief editor; she has been in charge of more than 10 academic research projects about teaching methodology, teaching reform, and conversational analysis & teaching of listening and speaking.

**Hao Feng** is currently a graduate student in College of Foreign Languages, Beijing University of Technology, Beijing, China. Her main interests include conversation analysis and language teaching.

# Field-dependence/independence as a Factor Affecting Performance on Listening Comprehension Sub-skills: the Case of Iranian EFL Learners

Shiela kheirzadeh

Sobh-e-sadegh Institute of Higher Education, Isfahan, Iran  
Email: Sh\_kheirzadeh\_2006@yahoo.com

Zohreh Kassaian

University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran  
Email: zkassaian@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—The purpose of this study was to determine if field-dependence/independence (FD/I) cognitive style was related to the performance of Iranian EFL learners on listening comprehension sub-skills. More specifically, the study attempted to focus on three listening comprehension sub-skills, namely listening for main idea, listening for specifics, and making inference. The choice of these sub-skills was based on Weir' (1993) taxonomy. The study also tried to investigate the effect of FD/I on listening comprehension in general. In the first stage of the study eighty freshmen students majoring in English literature in Isfahan University took the First Certificate of English (FCE) test, the listening section. A homogenized group of fifty two students were selected as the sample group for the study. To determine the degree of FD/I, the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) was run and based on the results of this test the subjects were divided into two groups, FD and FI. The results of the t-tests showed that there was no difference in the performance of FD and FI students on general listening comprehension; furthermore, no difference was observed in the performance of the two groups, FD vs. FI, considering the listening comprehension sub-skills which were the focus of this study.

**Index Terms**—field-dependence, field-independence, listening comprehension sub-skills, listening for specifics, listening for main idea, making inference

## I. INTRODUCTION

Students bring different cognitive styles with them to their learning experience. These styles may play an important factor in how effective they learn the language. Kang (1999) believed that students can enhance their learning power by being aware of style areas in which they feel comfortable and by working on the development of these areas, they can foster their intellectual growth. He also believed that teachers should identify strong style patterns in their classes and devise lesson plans which accommodate individual learning style preferences. Graham (2006) mentioned that all learners face difficulties when listening in target language; nevertheless, the type and the extent of difficulty differ and much listening comprehension research must be conducted to investigate the differences. She also believed that before teachers can hope to improve learners listening skill, they need to be aware of the beliefs learners hold. In her study, she found that many learners see themselves less successful in listening than in other language areas. To be aware of and find about the differences among learners, one may focus on individual differences, one aspect of which is the differences in cognitive styles.

Ngeow (1999) summarizes three main benefits of knowing cognitive styles:

1. Learners who are conscious of their style make better use of their learning opportunities.
2. Learners learn better when they are provided with learning opportunities that enhance and extend their learning preferences.
3. Learners work better with new learning styles when they are given guided opportunities to practice them.

These principles suggest that learning is enhanced and enriched when cognitive styles are properly addressed both before and during instruction.

Chapelle (1995) believed that with the advent of learner-centered approaches, future teachers have the responsibility of training students to be capable of deciding what their best learning path is. They should be ready to assist and guide students through the process of reflecting on how they learn best. "Teachers should make learners aware of the need of strategic, autonomous learning and should train them in the effective use of those strategies" (p. 161).

The purpose of this study is to focus on field-dependence/independence, as one part of cognitive styles, and its effect on listening comprehension sub-skills. Witkin *et al.*, (1962) stated that a field-independent person tends to experience his surrounding analytically, with objects experienced as discrete from their backgrounds, while a field-dependent person tends to experience his surroundings in a global fashion. Based on the specification mentioned here for the two groups, it can be supposed that the FI will be better at hearing specific points while their FD counterpart will be better at general point of a listening text. So, these characteristics of field-dependent/independent learners are the base of making hypotheses in this study.

Considering the aforementioned problems, the present study was an attempt to provide plausible answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference in the performance of field-dependent/independent students on FCE listening test?
2. Is there any difference in the performance of field-dependent/independent students on listening for the main idea?
3. Is there any difference in the performance of field-dependent/independent students on listening for the specifics?
4. Is there any difference in the performance of field-dependent/independent students on making inferences?

Based on the aforementioned research questions and the related literature, the following research hypotheses were made:

1. There is no difference in the performance of field-dependent/independent students on FCE listening test.
2. Field-dependent students outperform field-independent students on listening for main idea.
3. Field-independent students outperform field-dependent students on listening for specifics.
4. There is no difference in the performance of field-dependent/independent students on making inferences.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The history of the study of the individual differences in second language learning comes back to the first teacher of a second language in the history who noticed some differences in L2 learning by different learners Gass *et al.* (1994). This means that the variation in L2 learning was noticed a long time ago. Nevertheless, Stern (1983) refers to the early seventies as the starting point of scientific research into the role of learner factor in SLA. This attention to the learner factor was probably due to the fact that success or failure in L2 learning was consistently observed to be dependent on learner variables, Stern (1983). During the past decades, especially during the seventies and eighties, a large number of studies were conducted by researchers to find out in what ways L2 learning was influenced by learner variables. Krashen (1975), Hansen (1984), Carter (1988), Ellis (1990), Larsen-Freeman (1997)

One of the categories of learner variables in Ellis (1985) classification is cognitive styles. He defined this characteristic as “the manner in which people perceive, recall, and organize information” (p. 114). Brown (2000) defined cognitive styles as the joint function between personality and cognition that helps us learn things in general. Other researchers have defined cognitive styles rather similarly. Ausubel (1968) defined this attribute as “self-consistence and enduring individual differences in cognitive organization and functioning.” (p. 170). Aiken (1985) defines cognitive styles as “the strategies or approaches to perceiving, remembering and thinking that a person comes to prefer in attempting to understand and cope with the world (p. 455).” Also, Wenden (1988) has categorized cognitive variables as a part of metacognitive knowledge of learners about their ability to achieve specific learning goals.

Educators and psychologists have identified numerous cognitive styles. Hill (1972), for instance, defined 29 different factors that make up the cognitive style map of a learner. Ausubel (1968) identified at least 18 different types. Stern (1983) stated that such a superfluity may be due to the fact that people’s cognitive styles are determined by the way they internalize their total environment, and since the internalization process is not strictly cognitive, we find that physical, affective and cognitive domains merge in cognitive styles.

Among the possible number of cognitive styles, only a few have received the attention of second language researchers. These are ambiguity tolerance, left/right brain functioning, reflectivity/impulsivity and field-dependence/independence Brown (2000). Of these only field-dependence/independence (FD/I) is the focus of this study.

The notion of Field-dependence/independence (FI/D) came out of the cognitive science of literature and referred to the extent to which a person can perceptually separate an object from the surrounding field rather than treating it as embedded within the field Gass and Selinker (1994). Messick (1989) believed that FI refers to a consistent way of processing the environment, whether analytically or globally, within the field. Brown (2000) pointed out that the field may be perceptual or it may be more abstract in referring to a set of thoughts, ideas or feelings. He argued that a person may show a tendency to perceive specific relevant subsets more easily than the whole field in a unified way and *visa versa*. The tendency of distinguishing parts from a whole, a field-independent style, makes it possible for us to concentrate on something, and to analyze separate variables without the contamination of neighboring variables, Brown (2000). A field-dependent style on the other hand, is the tendency to be dependent on the total field such that the parts embedded within the field are not easily perceived, Brown (2000). People perceive the whole picture, the large view, the general configuration of the problem, idea or event. As Gass and Selinker (1994) have put it, the FD people tend to pay great attention to context. Ehrman *et al.*, (2003) mentioned that field-independence (FI) addresses the degree to which an individual focuses on some aspects of experience and separate it from the background and conducts abstract cognitive operations on the materials that receive focus. Saracho (1989) pointed that FD students tend to be more global or undifferentiated while FI students tend to be more articulated. Morgan (1997) believed that when the field is not

clearly organized, individuals who tend to field-independence are relatively likely to impose their own structures on materials whereas a FD often accepts it as it is. Ehrman (1997) indicated that a FI learner is adept at focusing a spotlight on data, distinguishing and focusing deeply on some specific aspects of materials being learnt. Such learner can look at a forest and pick out exactly the kind of tree in which she/he is interested. He believed that since FD is always measured by the test of field-independence, it can safely be defined as the absence of field-independence or awareness of the entire field. In his idea, a field-dependent learner makes a skilled use of floodlight to maintain awareness of the entire forest, registering the moment to moment changes in the environment. The cognitive characteristics of field-dependence/independence have attracted researchers for a long time. It was firstly in 1970s when scientific studies suggested that field-dependence/independence may play a potentially important role in second/foreign language acquisition Tucker, Hamayan & Genesee (1976), Seliger (1977). Based on some researches and the intuitive appeal of a cognitive style relationship with second language acquisition, field-dependence/independence continued to be discussed and included in research throughout 1980s and 1990s.

Genesee and Hamayan (1980), in their study of first grade English speaking students in a French immersion program in Canada, reported significant and positive correlations between field-independence and both general achievement in French and French listening comprehension skills. Chapelle and Roberts (1986) investigated the relationship between two learners' characteristics: ambiguity tolerance and field-independence and adult learners' acquisition of English as a second language in the United States. The results indicated that students who were highly field-independence did better on all of the language measures; moreover, the correlation between field-independence and the end of semester scores were typically stronger than the correlation between field-independence and the beginning semester scores, thus indicating that field-independent students were likely to score higher on the proficiency measures after a semester of L2 study. Jamison (1992) designated a study in which the results showed that field-independence was moderately related to high scores for all of the language measures. The analysis of the results indicated that field-independence was a more important contributor to proficiency rather than reflectivity/impulsivity. Boutin and Chinien (2005) in a quasi-experimental longitudinal study about field-dependence/independence and ICT mediated testing of listening and speaking ability in L2 found that, "it appears that there is no interactive effect of learners' cognitive style (FD/I) and ICT mediated testing of listening comprehension and speaking ability" (p. 7). Altun and Cakan (2006) in a study of undergraduate students' achievement, field-dependence/independence cognitive styles and attitudes toward computers found no significant association between academic achievement of students and their cognitive styles and also they found that students' attitudes toward computers seem to be independent of cognitive styles. Vahabi (2006), in a study of the relationship between EFL learners FD/FI cognitive style, proficiency, and communication strategies in writing concluded that there is not any relationship between Iranian English language learners FD/FI cognitive styles and the number and the type of conceptual strategies they use in writing. Salmani (2006), in his study attempted to account for the probable effects of FD/FI cognitive style on subjects' scores on task-based reading comprehension tests. The results showed that cognitive styles imposed their strongest effects on test performance when test takers were most proficient. Also he found that holistic tasks correlated positively with FD style and negatively with FI style; analytic tasks, by way of contrast, correlated positively with FI style and negatively with FD style.

Another factor important in this study is listening comprehension sub-skills. "Listening comprehension is a complex, multidimensional process and a number of theorists have attempted to describe it in terms of taxonomies of sub-skills that underlie the process. However, it should be stressed at the outset that the empirical support for those taxonomies is usually lacking" Buck (2004). While there is no doubt that many of the components are crucial in listening, there is no evidence to suggest that any of these taxonomies constitute a complete unified description of the listening process. Buck (2004) believed that "Collectively they are useful because they tell us what scholars in the field have come to think is important in listening comprehension." (p. 51). As it was mentioned, the taxonomy used for this study was the one developed by Weir (1993). The rationale for the selection of this taxonomy is that the taxonomy is from among communicative taxonomies. Other types of the communicative taxonomies were either too detailed or too general to be used as a base in a research. He divided listening sub-skills as follows:

*Direct meaning comprehension*

1. Listening for gist
2. Listening for main idea(s) or important information; and distinguishing that from supporting detail, or examples
3. Listening for specifics, including recall of important details
4. Determining a speaker's attitude or intention towards a listener or a topic

*Inferred meaning comprehension*

1. Making inferences and deductions
2. Relating utterances to their social and situational contexts
3. Recognizing the communicative function of utterances
4. Deducing the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context

*Contributory meaning comprehension*

1. Understanding phonological features
2. Understanding grammatical notions such as comparison, cause, result, degree, etc.
3. Understanding discourse markers

4. Understanding the main syntactic structure of clauses or idea units
5. Understanding cohesion, especially reference
6. Understanding lexical cohesion, especially lexical set membership and collocations
7. Understanding lexis

*Listening and taking notes*

1. Ability to extract salient points to summarize the text
2. Ability to select relevant key points

Since it was not possible to deal with all the sub-skills in just one study, three of them namely listening for main idea, listening for specifics, and making inferences were selected for the purpose of the present study. The reason for the selection of these three sub-skills not others was that the difference between the FD/I is in dealing with the whole, main idea, or the specifics, specific questions. Also considering inference, which in the idea of the researcher and considering the definitions provided by the scholars is the ability in using available information to guess the meaning of the new items, predict outcomes or fill in missing information, it would not make a difference for the two groups since both are equipped with tools to use the information in a text, whether analytically or holistically.

### III. METHODOLOGY

80 freshmen students, both male and female with the mean age of 22, majoring in English literature in Esfahan University who had passed a listening comprehension course were selected. They were familiar with listening skill and at the time of the research they were passing their second listening course. All 80 students took part in the FCE test. But 52 homogenized were chosen as the participants of the study. The reason for having a homogenized group is to control for the effect of the differences in the performance due to different proficiency levels. In other words, proficiency level was controlled to just observe the effects of FD/I. To find the homogenized group, the mean score of all those who took the tests was calculated and those who scored above the mean participated in the study.

The instruments used for the present study were:

1. Buck (2004) wrote that "The First Certificate of English (FCE) is published by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES). It is a typical representative of the British language-testing tradition. It is a general English test, and 80 percent of the test takers take the FCE at the end of a course in English study. The test has come to define the English curriculum for a considerable number of English language schools world-wide" (p. 223). The June 2002 version of this test was used in this research. Of the total 30 questions, five questions dealt with main idea, 17 questions dealt with specifics, and eight questions were testing inference sub-skill.

The Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) was used to identify subjects' FD/FI cognitive styles. The GEFT instrument has been developed by Oltman, Raskin, and Witkin (1971). They reported a Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient of 0.82 for their instrument. The GEFT instrument contains three sections with 25 complex figures from which participants are asked to identify eight simple forms (labeled A to H). Section one of GEFT includes seven complex figures and sections two and three include nine complex figures each. The respondents are asked to find the simple forms (A to H) in the complex figures, and to trace them in pencil directly over the lines of the complex figures. The simple forms are present in the complex figures in the same size, the same proportions, and facing in the same direction as when they appear alone. The total number of questions or better to say figures were 18 since the seven beginning figures were for the purpose of practice and familiarizing students with the test. So the maximum score would be 18. The criterion for the dichotomization of the participants into either FD or FI was 11. Above 11 were FI students and below it were FD students.

2. To collect the data, the freshmen students majoring in English literature in Isfahan University were selected as the participants. After the selection of the participants, two tests were administered. First, the listening comprehension section of the FCE test, version June 2002, the time of the test was fixed and determined in the test itself so no more time was devoted to the test. The second stage was administration of the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT). This test has 14 pages and the two first pages are for the test instruction; for a better and easier understanding of the test procedure, the first two instruction pages were translated into Persian, the subjects' first language. The time devoted to the test was 15 minutes which was again fixed. The scoring procedure was the same for the two tests. For every correct answer, they got one point. There was no penalty for the wrong answers.

To analyze the data, four independent samples t-tests were run to find the answer to the research questions.

### IV. FINDINGS

To find the answer to the first question, an independent sample t-test was run.

In the independent-samples t-test output box, the results of Levene's test for the equality of variances are presented (table 1). Levene's test shows whether the variance of scores for the two groups (FI and FD) is the same. Because the Sig. value of Levene's test is .337 which is larger than .05, the first line of the table which refers to Equal variances assumed should be considered. Under the section labeled t-test for equality of means, the column labeled Sig. (2-tailed) shows the value of .165. It means that there was no significant difference in the performance of either FD or FI groups

considering FCE listening comprehension scores. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (Eta squared=.03). So the first research hypothesis was confirmed.

TABLE 1:  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR FEC TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
scores	Equal variances assumed	.941	.337	1.410	50	.165	1.09595	.77738	-.46545	2.65736
	Equal variances not assumed			1.401	46.149	.168	1.09595	.78219	-.47837	2.67028

To confirm or reject the second hypothesis, another t-test was used.

In the independent-samples t-test output box, the result of Levene's test is .979, so the Sig. (2-tailed) for equal variances which is .471, should be taken into account. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in the performance of either FD or FI groups considering main idea. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (Eta squared=.01). So the second research hypothesis was rejected.

TABLE 2:  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR LISTENING FOR MAIN IDEA

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
mainidea	Equal variances assumed	.001	.979	.726	50	.471	4.66267	6.42381	-8.23993	17.56527
	Equal variances not assumed			.732	48.590	.468	4.66267	6.37364	-8.14837	17.47371

The results of the t-test for the third hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the performance of either FD or FI groups considering specifics (table 3), since Sig value of the Levene's test was .413 and the Sig. (2-tailed) for equal variances assumed was .250. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (Eta squared=.02). So the third research hypothesis was rejected.

TABLE 3:  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR LISTENING FOR SPECIFICS

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
details	Equal variances assumed	.683	.413	1.165	50	.250	4.60510	3.95291	-3.33455	12.54474
	Equal variances not assumed			1.185	49.587	.242	4.60510	3.88634	-3.20246	12.41265

Considering the last research hypothesis, since the Sig value of the Levene's test, which is .571, is larger than .05, the results on table 4 revealed that there was no significant difference in the performance of the two groups considering making inference. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (Eta squared=.03). So the fourth research hypothesis was confirmed.

TABLE 4:  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR MAKING INFERENCES

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
inference	Equal variances assumed	.326	.571	1.315	50	.195	5.97301	4.54251	-3.15089	15.09692
	Equal variances not assumed			1.289	43.060	.204	5.97301	4.63360	-3.37115	15.31717

V. DISCUSSION

The first research question addressed the differences in the performance of FD/I students on FCE listening test. In response to this question, t-test was used to analyze the data. The results showed no difference in the performance of FD/I students on the FCE listening test (see table 1).

The finding of this research question is in line with Boutin and Chinien (2005). In a quasi-experimental longitudinal study about field-dependence/independence and ICT mediated testing of listening and speaking ability in L2, they found that, "it appears that there is no interactive effect of learners' cognitive style (FD/I) and ICT mediated testing of listening comprehension and speaking ability" (p. 7).

Salamian (2002) on a study of the relationship between FD/I and performance on listening comprehension global and local questions found no relationship between FD/I and the students' performance on the listening test.

Seliger (1977) on the study of interaction patterns and L2 competence found no significant correlation between FD/I and 7<sup>th</sup> grade French learners listening comprehension ability. Also Bialystok and Flöhlich (1978) in the study of variables affecting classroom achievement in second language learning found no significant correlation between FD/I and French high school students listening ability. The difference may be due to the differences between EFL and ESL students.

Contrary to the findings of the aforementioned researchers and also the findings of this study, Chapelle & Roberts (1986) in a study of ambiguity tolerance and field-independence as predictors of English proficiency found a significant correlation (r=.73) between TOEFL listening test and college ESL students who were FI. In line with the finding of Chapelle & Roberts (1986), Hwang (1997) in the study of FI and English listening comprehension of Taiwanese students, found a significant positive relationship between listening comprehension and FI.

The discussion now turns to the second question focusing on the differences between the performance of FD/I students on the listening for the main idea.

Saracho (1989) believed that FD students tend to be more global or undifferentiated while FI students tend to be more articulated.

Brown (2000) stated that FD style is the tendency to be dependent on the total field so that the parts embedded or hidden in the field are not easily perceived. So the total field is perceived as the unified whole. He also believed that FD individuals are able to perceive the whole picture, the large view, or the general configuration of the problem or event.

Based on the literature mentioned, the research hypothesis was that FD students outperform FI counterparts on listening for main idea. But the results of t-test showed no difference in the performance of the two groups on listening for the main idea (see table 2).

The finding of the second question may be in line with Olson (1984) on the study of interaction of cognitive style and auditory learning. He concluded that FD is not significantly related to listening comprehension although FD subjects generally scored lower than FI subjects. Salamian (2002) in the study of the relationship between FD/I and performance on global and local questions found no significant relationship between FD/I and the students performance on global questions.

The third research question aimed to uncover the differences between FD/I students on listening for specifics.

Messick (1976) stated that the traits associated with FI would enhance listening comprehension. The hypothesis for this research question was that FI students outperform FD students on listening for specifics. The rationale for stating this hypothesis was, as Messick (1976) stated, that FI students are likely to approach the environment in analytical as opposed to global terms. This means that FI persons have tendency to perceive figures as discrete from the backgrounds and the facility in differentiating objects from the embedded context.

Contrary to the available literature, the answer to this question was negative. In other words, there was no significant difference in the performance of FD/I students on listening for specifics (see table 3). Maybe the theories of FD/I and the specifications proposed for each group need more research.

The final research question of this study tried to find whether there is any difference in the performance of FD/I students on making inferences.

Brown (2000) defined inference as the ability in using available information to guess the meaning of the new items, predict outcomes or fill in missing information.

In the same way, Chastain (1988) defined inferencing as the process of arriving at the meaning on the basis of the context; furthermore, this is an especially valuable skill for language learners to develop, and language teachers should include inferencing exercises and activities in their classes. Moreover, Brown and Yule (1983) described inference as "the process which the reader/hearer must go through to get from the literal meaning of what is written/said to what writer/speaker intended to convey" (p. 256).

Based on the definitions provided above, inferencing is using context to find the intention of the speaker or writer. Based on this idea, the hypothesis was that there is no difference in the performance of FD/I students considering making inferences. The results of the t-test confirmed the hypothesis (see table 4). In other words, both groups performed the same on inferencing since both groups could use the context whether analytically or globally to make inferences.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

In sum, the results of the present study offered that field-dependence/independence did not affect listening comprehension in general and listening comprehension sub-skills in special.

The results seem to be against Brown (2000)-cited in Salmani (2006)-ideas that field-dependence is a cognitive style in which an individual tends to look at the whole of the learning task which contains many items. The FD individuals have difficulty studying a particular item when it occurs within the field of other items. Field-independence, on the other hand, refers to a cognitive style in which an individual is able to identify and focus on particular items or events and is not discredited by other items in the background. The results also seem to be against Witkin (1977) ideas that consider FI learners as analytical versus global FD learners.

In this study, the main idea sub-skill needs a global understanding of the text or what called by Brown (2000) and Witkin (1977) field or event. So based on their ideas FD learners should be better at global or wholistic abilities and this may help them to deal with the main idea sub-skill of listening comprehension better than FI students, but as some other researchers mentioned, these definitions and classifications of the specifications of each group are theories and need more experimental and practical research. Morgan (1997), Ehrman (1997). Their claims were rejected in this study and no difference was observed between the two groups. The same was true about listening for specifics. Based on the claims proposed by Witkin (1977), FI learners are analytic and highly detailed. So, they might be able to perform better on listening for specifics sub-skill. It seems that more research should be done to confirm or reject the theories.

It is worth mentioning that these findings could be perceived in the light of participants seemingly high level of listening ability since the participants were all those who got the highest score on listening test. In other words, proficiency may affect their performance; a high level of proficiency is a tool that helps learners to compensate for the cognitive differences exists.

On the whole, the results were consistent with Salamian (2002) and Boutin and Chinien (2005) in such a way that there is no interactive effect of learners cognitive styles (FD/I) and listening comprehension.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Aiken, L. R. (1985). Psychological testing and assessment. USA: Allyn and Bacon.
- [2] Altun, A., & Cakan, M. (2006). Undergraduate students' academic achievement, field-dependent/independent cognitive styles and attitudes toward computers. *Educational technology and society*, 9(1), 289-297.
- [3] Ausubel, D.A. (1968). Educational psychology: A cognitive view. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- [4] Bialystok, E., & Flöhlich, M. (1978). Variables of classroom achievement in second language learning. *Modern language journal*, 32, 327-336.
- [5] Boutin, F., & Chinien, Ch. (2005). Cognitive style and ICT mediated testing: listening comprehension and speaking ability in L2. Paper presented at IT.
- [6] Brown, H.D. (2000). Principles of language learning and teaching (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- [7] Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). Discourse analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Buck, G. (2004). Assessing listening. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Carter, G. (1988). The relationship of field-dependent/independent cognitive style to Spanish language proficiency. *Modern language journal*, 72(5), 21-30.
- [10] Chapelle, C. (1995). Field dependence/independence in L2 classroom. In J, Raid (ed.). *Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- [11] Chapelle, C., & Roberts, C. (1986). Ambiguity tolerance and field independence as predictors of proficiency in English as a second language. *Language learning*, 36, 27-45.
- [12] Chastain, k. (1988). Developing second language skills: theory and practice (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- [13] Ehrman, M.E. (1997). Field-dependent, field-independent and field sensitivity. In: Reid, J. (ed.). *Understanding learning styles in second language classroom*. Regents Prince Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- [14] Ehrman, M.E., Leaver, B.L., (2003). Cognitive styles in the service of language learning. *System*, 31, 393-415.
- [15] Ellis, R. (1985). Understanding second language acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [16] Ellis, R. (1990). Instructed second language acquisition: Learning in the classroom. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

- [17] Gass, S.M., & Selinker, L. (1994). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- [18] Gensee, F., & Hamayan, E. (1980). Individual differences in second language learning. *Applied psycholinguistics*, 1, 95-110.
- [19] Graham, S. (2006). Listening comprehension. *System*, 34, 65-82.
- [20] Hansen, L. (1984). Field-dependence/independence and language testing. *TESOL quarterly*, 18, 21-27.
- [21] Hill, J. (1972). *The educational sciences*. Detroit, Oakland Community College.
- [22] Hwang, W. (1997). Field-independence and English language listening comprehension of Taiwanese university students. Unpublished Ph. D dissertation, University of Kansas.
- [23] Jamison, J. (1992). The cognitive styles of reflective/impulsive and field-dependence/independence and English as the second language success. *Modern language journal*, 76, 79-85.
- [24] Kang, S. (1999). Learning styles: implications for ESL\EFL instruction. *Forum*, 37, 132-140.
- [25] Krashen, S. (1975). *Language learning and language acquisition*. Unpublished manuscript, Queens College, New York.
- [26] Larson-Freeman, D. (1997). Chaos/complexity science and second language acquisition. *Applied linguistics*, 18, 141-165.
- [27] Messick, S. (1976). Individuality in learning. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass.
- [28] Messick, S. (1989). The nature of cognitive styles: problems and promise in educational practice. *Educational psychologist*, 19, 59-74.
- [29] Morgan, H. (1997). *Cognitive styles and classroom learning*. Praeger, west port, CT.
- [30] Ngeow, K. (1999). Classroom practice: enhancing and extending learning styles through computers. In J. Egbert & E. Hanson-Smith (eds.). *CALL, environment, research practice and critical issues*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- [31] Olson, J.S. (1984). The interaction of cognitive style and auditory learning via rate modified speech. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology.
- [32] Salamian, V. (2002). The relationship between field-dependence/independence and performance on LC global and local questions. Unpublished MA thesis, Shiraz University, Iran.
- [33] Salmani, M.A. (2006). Cognitive styles as a factor affecting task-based reading comprehension test scores. *TESL Canada journal*, 24, 1.
- [34] Saracho, O. N. (1989). Cognitive style: individual differences. *Early child development and care*, 53, 75-81.
- [35] Seliger, H. (1977). Does practice make perfect? A study of interaction pattern and L2 competence. *Language learning*, 24, 363-375.
- [36] Stern, H.H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [37] Tucker, G., Hamayan, E., & Genesee, F.H. (1976). Affective, cognitive and social factors in second language acquisition. *Canadian modern language review*, 32, 214-226.
- [38] Vahabi, Sh. (2006). The relationship between EFL learners FD/FI cognitive style, proficiency, and communication strategies in writing. *ILI language teaching journal*, 2, 145-150.
- [39] Weir, C. (1993). *Understanding and developing language tests*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- [40] Witkin, H. A., Moore, C. A., Goodenough, D. R., & Cox, P. W. (1977). Cognitive styles and their educational implications. *Review of educational research*, 47, 1-64.
- [41] Wenden, L.A. (1988). Metacognitive knowledge and language learning. *Applied linguistics*, 19(4)515-537.
- [42] Witkin, H. A., Ruth, B. D., Hanna, F., Faterson, D.R., Goodenough, D. R., & Karp, S.A. (1962). *Psychological differentiation*. New York: Wiley.

**Shiela kheirzadeh** was born in Khoozestan, Iran. She received her BA degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from Islamic Azad University of Najafabad, Isfahan, Iran in 2002 (as the top student) and her MA in TEFL from the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran in 2007.

She is the lecturer in the English Department at the Sobh-e-sadegh Institute of Higher Education. She is the permanent academic member and has held this position since 2007. She has participated in a conference in Tehran University and has published and presented an article in the University of Isfahan research week periodical. Her subjects of interest are Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics, and issues in Applied Linguistics.

Ms. Kheirzadeh has been a member of the graduate society of Najafabad University for two years.

**Zohreh Kassaian** was born in Isfahan, Iran. She received her BA degree in English Language and Literature from The University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran in 1973 (as a top student); her MA in Teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Shiraz, Shiraz, Iran in 1987; and her PhD in Teaching English as a Second Language from Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran in 1996.

She is an assistant professor in the English Department of the Faculty of Foreign languages at the University of Isfahan. She is a permanent academic member and has held this position since 1978. She has participated in more than 20 national and international conferences and has more than 20 articles and several books published. Her subjects of interest are Psycholinguistics, Neurolinguistics, Applied Linguistics, Phonetics, and Translation.

Dr. Kassaian has been a member of several professional societies including International Systemic Functional Linguistics, Iran Society of Teaching English Language and Literature, and The International Society of Scientific Collaboration for Iran Recognition.

# On Implicit Mode of Speech Reporting in Chinese Advertisements

Jianwu Peng

Foreign Languages School, Shandong University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China

Email: pengjw2000@hotmail.com

**Abstract**—The use of reported speech is a very important aspect of persuasion in advertisements. This paper is intended to analyze how implicit mode of reported speech is employed in the sale or marketing of products. It is argued that reported speeches in advertisements are shaped by the interplay of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge, and their meaning can be best accounted for in the framework of knowledge-for-use. The analysis of Chinese advertisements has proved how useful implicit reporting is in enhancing persuasiveness in advertising.

**Index Terms**—reported speech, implicit mode, advertisements, persuasiveness, Chinese

## I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising communication is a social activity which functions to facilitate the selling of products or services. Effective advertisements can draw the consumers' attention to the products, change their mind and persuade them to take the action of purchasing, no matter their actual needs. To lead consumers into buying, copywriters have to organize the advertisements into meaningful patterns for their audience. Relying primarily on personal observations, the author finds that there are some non-canonical uses of reported speech whose source is more or less muffled or implicit. The use of these reports can be a very important aspect of persuasion in the sale or marketing of a product.

## II. PREVIOUS STUDIES OF REPORTED SPEECH

The initial studies place emphasis on direct and indirect speech and the transformational relationship between them. In grammar books and language textbooks, there seems to be a general agreement that reported speech refers to a clear linguistic category which needs little definition. However, there are many other cases in which speakers or writers report language events using forms and structures which receive virtually no coverage in traditional studies. Voloshinov(1973) is right in arguing that any attempt to treat indirect speech solely in terms of mechanical transformations is bound to distort the picture. Dixon (1991) starts from verbs which signal reports and examines the structures in which they function, whether or not the structure includes a separate reported clause. Thompson (1996) says, "A lexical approach (with some formal extensions to cope with, for example quotes signaled only by inverted commas) seems more promising, since a very large number of language reports are associated with the presence of clearly identifiable lexical signals such as reporting verbs"(p.506). Leech and Short (1981) proposed a model of speech and thought presentation to cope with the analysis of real texts. As Thompson (1996) argues, this model "is comprehensive in its coverage, and, although it starts essentially from functional considerations, it sets out linguistic criteria by which the different categories can be identified" (p.504). In recent years, some scholars turned their attention to the conversational and pragmatic functions of reported speech. Tannen (1989) explores the conversational functions of reported speech in oral communication. Baynham (1996) suggests us to study reported speech in a specific discourse or context. Collins (2001) regards reported speech as a category of discourse analysis which requires reference to the larger discourse. Operating within a pragmatic framework, he examines the factors that motivated the choice of some reporting strategies at the expense of other equally possible forms. For him, the varieties of reported speech present a continuum with indeterminate boundaries between the individual types and with many instances of deliberate slippage from one form to another, a phenomenon quite common universally. Thompson (1996) argues that reported speech can "be best approached from a functional rather than structural angle, although it is desirable to draw on- as far as possible- a list of the structural and lexical features which may be used to signal the reports"(p.502). He has established a framework which is able to describe the reported speech identified in a survey of naturally-occurring texts and include the major features that emerged from these data as needing to be accounted for. By drawing on a large corpus of written English (the COBUILD Bank of English), he argues for an analytical taxonomy that is based on the speaker's decision whether or not to include another voice. Thompson regards reported speech as signalled voices in the text which include "any stretch of language where the speaker or writer signals in some way that another voice is entering the text, in however muffled or ambiguous a fashion" (Thompson, 1996, p. 506). This definition includes as wide a range of types of reported speech as possible, which can help us to capture more fully the nature of reporting phenomenon and of the choices made by users of the language in any particular context.

### III. IMPLICIT MODE OF SPEECH REPORTING

According to Sinclair (1988), the choice made by users of the language in any particular instance is between averral and attribution. The text is taken as averring anything which is not specifically attributed to another source. In contrast, any case of attribution can be seen as a marked option, encouraging an investigation of the reason why the speaker has chosen it. That is, it makes a difference whether a person’s speech is explicitly or implicitly reported. In the case of explicit reports, reported speeches can be easily recognized because it can be attributed to the person by means of reporting signals, such as reporting verbs or quotation marks etc. However, there are other examples which clearly reporting someone else’s speech but which do not fall into these categories. Thompson (1996) proposes five functional options for speech reporting according to whose voice is entering the text: self, specified other(s), unspecified other(s), community, unspecifiable other(s). However, in saying “another voice is entering the text”(p.506), Thompson seems to think that the text is there first and serves as a frame in which a stretch of language can be embedded; otherwise, there is nowhere for another voice to *enter*. In fact, reported speeches may involve those utterances that, as a whole, represent “another voice”. That is, an utterance itself constitutes the “text” from another source rather than something which enters some other text being studied.

(1) Development is a hard Principle!

This is a banner hung in front of Foreign Languages Bookstore, Fuzhou Road, Shanghai, China. Our cognitive flexibility can help us to attribute this utterance to our late chairman Deng Xiaoping, that is, this utterance represents his voice, rather than the banner designer, who acts here as a reporter. The banner writer here does nothing but report Deng’s guiding lines. Therefore, Thompson’s definition of language reports needs expanding to incorporate those reports whose source is more or less ambiguous or implicit. The problem which is worth investigating here is: What knowledge resources lie behind the use of it? Which processes operate on the knowledge resources? What motivates the reporter to omit the source of the reported information? Akatsuka (1985) claims in his two-stage model of information incorporation that human information storage can be divided into two domains, one called Realis and the other called Irrealis, as shown in Figure.1:

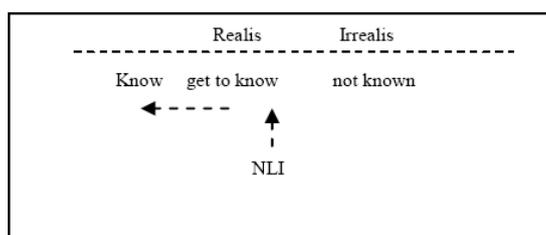


Figure1. Akatsuka’s conception of information incorporation

According to Akatsuka, NLI ( Newly Learned Information) first enters the domain of Irrealis and only after a certain amount of information processing, does it move into the domain of Realis, thus becoming established as a piece of knowledge. For this example, Deng’s remark must be first expressed with the source specified, like “Deng Xiaoping said, ‘Development is a hard Principle!’”. This usage persists until a considerable amount of information about Deng’s remark has been accumulated in our mind. Only when, for example, we have already read or heard various news reports and know for sure that it is Deng who uttered this sentence, can the direct form “Development is a hard Principle!” be used. This is because through repeated activation, this information has become “entrenched” (that is, well-established and readily activated), in our mind. Obviously, in some cases, unspecified voices(s) can be identified, depending on shared knowledge rather than explicit reporting signals. Thus, if one wants to go deeply into the domain of reporting, one has to introduce socially or culturally shared knowledge beyond purely linguistic ones. In fact, there are many cases in which one really reports what other people say, but he or she intentionally omits the reportive markers for the purpose of achieving specific communicative goal.

### IV. THE PERSUASIVE ROLE OF IMPLICIT REPORTING IN CHINESE ADVERTISEMENTS

Miller (1980) defines a persuasive act as a message that is intended to shape, reinforce, or change the response of another, or others. Generally speaking, persuasiveness can be achieved by presenting reasonable arguments, examples, testimony, and so on to provide good evidence with better organization of the message. The observations of Chinese advertisements have pointed to some of the complexities inherent in the use of reported speech, and to the displays of creative agency that it frequently involves. Making decisions about when and how to use reported speeches can challenge any copywriter. When used properly, they will add strength to the persuasive force of advertisements.

#### A. Quoting from Authorities or Celebrities

In daily life, people often show respect and worship towards authorities or celebrities. So the copywriter can quote experts, film star, etc to evaluate and comment on the products advertised. Their opinions can attract the consumer’s attention and interest and arouse their desires to take “buying” action. The authority can also be fictive, as in:

(2) Chinese herb has quick and lasting tonifying effects on kidney. (*Guangzhou Daily*, 2001.12.27)

Our world knowledge (script) serves as a trigger for another voice. In this advertisement, the utterance may evoke MEDICAL CONSULTATION Script, which is illustrated in the Figure below:

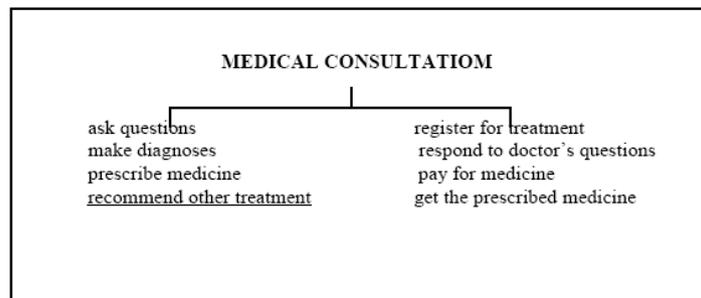


Figure 2. Medical Consultation Script

Usually it is the doctor, rather than the patient who makes recommendations or suggestions for one's recovery from illness. That is, "making suggestions" (underlined part) is one of many components inherent to the doctor's role. Thus it is very likely that the reader associates it with doctor's voice. In fact, the reported utterance of this type frequently occur in advertisements. Here the identification of doctor's voice coincides with the expectation that the doctor often give suggestions for further treatment. Usually, the reader or hearer is not a rational agent. The above sentence is deliberately created to convey a persuasive message under the doctor's mask so that the receiver gets a delusive impression that it is the doctor's suggestions for the patient, rather than copywriter who reports this news, since the script of hospital evokes such interpretation. This may be the copywriter's strategy for advertising purpose, because the attribution may bypass consumers' consciousness and lead them into believing it also voices the authority's opinion.

#### B. Quoting from Popular Lyrics

The copywriter can resort to other texts to persuade customers or consumers by associating the message to other cultural artifacts, although they originate outside the current text. However, since this interrelationship is not worded, copywriters must resort to very well-known texts (Fuentes-Olivera et al, 2001, p.1303). For example, popular songs appeal much to young people. Copywriters can also quote a line from these songs to get the consumer's attention.

(3) I want to have a house, which doesn't need 100,000RMB to decorate. (*Morning News*, 2002.10.28)

The above advertisement resembles some lines of the song "I want to have a family, which doesn't need gorgeousness" by Pan Meichen, a popular singer in Taiwan, China, only with some modifications. This deviant use of the popular lyrics can serve as a kind of "hook" to facilitate memory. In this way, this advertisement can be easily memorized and make a lasting impression on consumers. In fact, the linguistic forms departing from the conventions or rules of language have the function of attracting notice and promoting long-term purchase. In this example, the deviant use of the lyrics can serve as a kind of "hook" to facilitate memory. In this way, this advertisement can be easily memorized and make a lasting impression on consumers.

#### C. Another Voice as Mouthpiece

Tejera (1995) argues that as the addressee with whom the writer wishes to communicate is absent and even unknown, the writer has to enter into a dialogue with himself, shifting his position back and forth between the speaking subject and the assumed addressee in the process of writing. We may consider the some expressions in advertisements as reportive in nature in the sense that they represent another voice. That is, the verb of saying is unexpressed, but is implied in the construction and meaning of the sentence. For example, the manipulative purpose can lead the copywriter to identify himself with consumers who participating in the purchase, which makes it possible to bring "empathy" into play, for empathy means "the speaker's identifying himself with, in varying degrees, persons who participating in the event he describes in a sentence" (Ransom, 1997, p.424). In this way, the copywriter can induce consumers to accept him as their mouthpiece, thus preparing for "buying" act.

(4) Xinhua desirable residence. Down payment of 96000 RMB. Easy buy. Very cheap. (*Shanghai Property Market Weekly*. 2001.02.22)

The copywriter uses the last utterance "Very Cheap!" to represent the voice from a would-be house purchaser. The voice must remain unspecified, since each reader is in fact being implicitly encouraged to accept it as his own voice. It is irrelevant for the reader to ask whose voice is from. Here the speaker echoes purchasers' voice; however, if the voice is explicitly specified, the manipulative effect the advertiser intends to achieve will lose force. Tannen (1989: 109) points out, when a speaker represents an utterance as the words of another, what results is a constructed dialogue, which represents an active, creative, transforming move which expresses the relationship not between the quoted party and the topic of talk but rather the quoting party and the audience to whom the quotation is delivered.

#### D. Nonhuman Reported Speaker

Thompson (1994) points out that in most cases, reported speeches have humans as the speaker. However, we also find there is something non-human used as the reported speaker. In the advertisement below, the printer advertised serves as the speaker, who says:

(5) If you don't want to go to printing factory, please employ me. (*Reference News*, 2002.09.05)

It seems that the copywriter is identifying himself with the printer. Here the printer seems to act as a job-seeker, expecting the boss (e.g. "consumer") to accept "him" as an employee. It can be seen that the construction of a voice which is recognizably wise or foolish, serious or unserious, and so forth, depends upon the imitation of such voices as they are found in actual human affairs or as they are thought to be within various social milieux. We can say that fictive voices are modeled upon voices typically associated with the speech of persons fulfilling certain functions or occupying certain positions in a social order: e.g. persons of high or low social status. In real discourse, there are utterances which imitate the manner or the style normally used in real communication. The copywriter pretends to report, in some way or another, by imitating everyday oral conversation. In fact, various kinds of invented utterances draw their force from directly mimicking real-life communications, but also from borrowing from the rich source of other texts, with regard to its techniques as well as with regard to its "spirit". Generally speaking, all imaginary reported speech should be fitted into familiar stereotypes. It is woven of stereotypical cultural narratives, drawing on those texts that are most familiar in our culture.

#### E. Quoting from Common People

In advertising, the testimonial comment can be made by people, either real or fictive. The utterance in the following example may be produced by a trainee who has indeed benefited from designer training; however it may also be a fictive character, invented by the copywriter for persuasive purpose. In either of these two cases, this utterance represents another voice other than from the copywriter.

(6) After completing practical designer training course, I can process orders on my own! (*Global times*, 2001.12.07)

Anderson (1986) points out, "when the speaker (first person) was a knowing participant in some event, the knowledge of that event is normally direct and the sources of information are then often omitted" (p.277). In this example, the speaker "I" is a knowing participant in training, so the reporting signal such as "I say" is omitted. In some advertisements, using the testimonial words provided by the fictive or imaginary people is more appropriate and persuasive than using the real people; however, the testimonial words must conform to the identities of the people described. That is, the advertised people should be qualified to make comment, evaluation on the product or service. Only in this way can the persuasive force be achieved.

#### F. Reports of Formulaic Language

Formulaic language is a cover term for ready-made constructions, such as proverbs, idioms, collocations, set phrases, etc. Thompson (1996) argues, "both speaker and hearer know that these words have been used before. There is no need to specify the source" (p.509). According to Tatira (2001), proverbs and other witty sayings permeate virtually all economic activities and can be employed to promote retail businesses, industrial products, the transportation industry, preventive health practices, and many other ventures. The powerful images and succinct nature of indigenous proverbs make them especially suited for advertising. The fact that proverbs often comment on widespread human experiences enables them to remain relevant; they fit any place, time, and function in spite of the technological advancement of a particular community. They can be used to establish a familiar and authoritative context for giving advice and establishing business relationships; they can be employed to invite new or continued interest in products and companies.

(7) A man of noble character acquires his wealth by honorable means. Please read Nanfang Financial Report. (*Public Health Newspaper*, 2002.10.23)

The formulaic expression "A man of noble character acquires his wealth by honorable means" is so entrenched in the Chinese mind that the use of it may make this advertisement noticeable, and meaningful. According to Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995), people rely on familiar, memorized phrases and expressions, and on the set of meanings and cultural values that are associated with words when the discourse context requires it. In some cases, formulaic language can also be used in deviate form, which defeats the receiver's expectations for the regular choice. The intentional choice of deviation is based on the speaker's knowledge of the expectations of a specified listener and it is motivated by communicative functions of foregrounding and/or enriching meanings of discourse. The linguistic forms departing from the conventions or rules of language have the function of attracting notice, sustaining memory, arousing interest of the consumers and thus promoting long-term purchase.

Taking into account the interplay of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge necessary in the implicit use of reported speech, we have illustrated the persuasive role and the causes that underlie the different varieties of reported speech. We have also examined how the conditions of context reflect purposive use of speech-reporting strategies, showing how these reports contribute to the overall meaning construed by the text. It can be seen that the copywriters have available a wide range of ways in which they can choose to introduce reported speeches into their advertisements. However, the choice of specific reporting form is subject to their communicative goals. To get the consumer to do purchasing, they must determine what they will like their audience to receive, then create some texts with reported speeches they find most persuasive and effective. In fact, advertisements often have complex sets of addressers and addressees. Rather than one single voice in a text sending a message to a single group of people, there might be several voices and audience groups.

The norms of appropriateness in an individual text must ultimately be determined by the successful deployment of such choices and combinations within the text itself.

It should go without saying that this paper offers only the barest beginning of an account of reported speeches in advertisements. To paint a complete picture of reported use of language in advertisements, we need a far larger database than was possible. With a larger database it would be possible to isolate and compare the frequency and distribution in advertisements where language events are reported, which may add to the depth of the discussion. In conclusion, in the analysis of reported speech, the cognitive, psychological, contextual (situational, social and cultural) and linguistic knowledge do combine and they are reflected through advertising discourse. A comprehensive account of reported speech needs not only to explain why people appeal to another voice in the first place, it must also be able to deal with the reasons why people should adopt one reporting strategy over another in a particular discourse context and what functions such reporting fulfils in a particular context of use.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Akatsuka, N. (1985). Conditionals and epistemic scale. *Language* 61, 625-639.
- [2] Baynham, M. (1996). Direct speech: What's it doing in non-narrative discourse? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 25, 1, 61-81.
- [3] Cacciari, C. and S. Glucksberg. (1995). Imaging idiomatic expressions: literal or figurative meanings? *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 124: 3-21.
- [4] Collins. D. E. (2001). Reanimated voices: speech reporting in a historical-pragmatic perspective. *Pragmatics & Beyond New Series* 85. John Benjamins.
- [5] Dixon, R.M.W. (1991). *A New Approach to English Grammar, on Semantic Principles*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- [6] Fuertes-Olivera, P. A. et al. (2001). Persuasion and advertising English: Metadiscourse in slogans and headlines. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33, 8.
- [7] Leech, G. N. & M. Short. (1981). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*. London: Longman.
- [8] Miller, G. (1980). On being persuaded: some basic distinctions. In G. Miller and M. Roloff, *Persuasion: New Directions in Theory and Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- [9] Ransom, E.N. (1997). Definiteness, animacy, and NP ordering. Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society Berkeley.
- [10] Sinclair, J. M. (1988). Mirror for a text. *Journal of English and Foreign Languages* 1.
- [11] Tannen, D. (1989). Oh talking voice that is so sweet: Constructing dialogue in conversation// In *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 93-133.
- [12] Tannen, D. (1993). What's in a frame? Surface evidence for underlying expectations. In Tannen, D (ed.) *Frame in Discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 15-56.
- [13] Tatjra, L. (2001). Proverbs in Zimbabwean advertisements. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 38, 3, 229-241.
- [14] Thompson, G. (1994). *Reporting: Collins Cobuild English Guides 5*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- [15] Thompson, G. (1996). Voices in the text: Discourse perspectives on language reports. *Applied Linguistics*, 17, 4, 501-526.
- [16] Versteergaard, T & K. Schroder. (1985). *The Language of Advertising*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- [17] Voloshinov, V. N. (1973). *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. (trans. Matejka, L. & I. R. Titunik). New York: Seminar Press

**Jianwu Peng** was born in Shandong, China in 1964. He received his Ph. D degree in linguistics from Fudan University, China in 2003.

He is currently a professor in the School of Foreign Languages, Shandong University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis.

# The Presence of Turkish Accent in the Iranian Turkish Speaking People's Farsi Contrasted with its Absence in Their Speaking English: Minimal Overwhelms Maximal Bilingualism

Ataollah Maleki

English Language Department, Faculty of Medicine, Zanjan Medical Sciences University, Zanjan, Iran  
Email: atamaleki@hotmail.com

**Abstract**—The terms minimal and maximal bilingualism are respectively defined as incipient and native like ability to use a second language. The presence of Turkish accent in the Iranian Turkish speaking people's Farsi, with its absence in their speaking English contradicts the contrast between minimal and maximal dichotomy in bilingualism. These people do not speak Farsi, which is deeply rooted in their culture and way of life, as fluently as English to which they are lightly exposed. A five point Likert scale analysis of ten attitude statements about Farsi and English checked off by 49 out of 490 Iranian Turkish speaking students showed that attitude was the main cause of the problem. Thus, positive or negative attitude toward a second language can facilitate or hinder learning it.

**Index Terms**—bilingualism, maximal and minimal bilingualism, Turkish, Farsi, attitude, Likert scale

## I. INTRODUCTION

The term bilingualism has many different meanings. On individual level it refers to consecutive or simultaneous learning/acquisition of a second language and involves issues of language competence, performance, ability, proficiency, and achievement. On a societal level it refers to complex phenomena of minority and migrants. The latter concerns with concepts such as diglossia and domain that are helpful in understanding the different ways in which linguistic resources are organized in multilingual communities, including phenomena such as borrowing, interference, transfer, and code switching.

Another important distinction is between ability (competence) and use, sometimes referred to as the difference between degree and function. Bilingualism and multilingualism often involve different degrees of competence in the languages involved. A person may control one language better than another, or a person might have mastered different languages better for different purposes, using one language for speaking, for example, and another for writing. Skutnab Kangas (1984) distinguishes four categories within bilingual ability: maximal (native like) and minimal (incipient) bilingualism, balanced bilingualism (dual language proficiency), semilingualism, and double semilingualism.

Separate from bilingual ability is a person's use of their two languages, referred to as functional bilingualism (Baker, & Jones, 1998) that concerns the contexts (domains) and targets (people), that is, when, where, and with whom people use their two languages.

Iran is a multilingual country. There are three major languages spoken by the people on the land. Farsi (Persian) is the most widespread and the national language. Turkish is the second widespread language with Kurdish the third. Farsi as a second language is the language of education for all minorities from primary school to higher education. It is the official language of radio, TV, and the press. There are, however, few local radio and TV stations broadcasting in Turkish or Kurdish. There are also few local newspapers and magazines, because only a limited number of Turk minorities can read Turkish script. Therefore, these ethnic groups should rely on Farsi for their communication and correspondence purposes. A majority of the members of these minority groups learn Farsi when they are young children, and use it throughout their lives. The situation may be described as true or maximal bilingualism.

English in Iran, on the other hand, is taught as a foreign language at second year of junior secondary school and continues throughout the university years. Exposure to English is limited, and there is little opportunity to use it. In general, the teaching of English does not enjoy high quality with systematic planning and proceeding. This is especially true for the minorities. Hence, knowledge of English is generally poor among ethnic groups. Here, the situation of English in relation to minority languages such as Turkish and Kurdish can be described as minimal or incipient bilingualism. As it stands, maximal bilingualism is normally more forceful than minimal (incipient) bilingualism. However, in the case of Farsi and English as additive languages there is an opposite situation. Turkish learners of English speak English with little or no trace of Turkish accent. Conversely, in their speaking Farsi, Turkish accent is obvious, and one can immediately guess their nationality. This is an intriguing problem which needs an investigation. It

overwhelms the set rules of bilingualism psychology and raises the question whether the problem arises from psychological factors.

#### A. *Review of Literature*

People use the term "bilingualism" in different ways. For some, it means an equal ability to communicate in two languages. For others, it simply means the ability to communicate in two languages, but with greater skills in one language. In fact, it is more common for bilingual people, even those who have been bilingual since birth, to be somewhat dominant in one language. The term bilingualism has opened up new discursive space of linguistic in betweenness, and, hence, has furnished several neologisms: bilinguality, diglossia, regionalism, semilingualism, double semilingualism, balanced bilingualism (dual language proficiency), maximal bilingualism, minimal bilingualism, etc.

Hamers and Blanc (2000) have defined bilinguality as the psychological state of an individual who has access to more than one linguistic code as means of social communication. The degree of access will vary along a number of dimensions which are psychological, cognitive, psycholinguistic, sociocultural and linguistic. There has been a tradition of research into bilingualism since the mid 20th century. However, whether this research belongs to the fields of neuropsychology, developmental psychology, experimental psychology, cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, social psychology, sociolinguistics, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, political and economic sciences, education or linguistics, the underlying issue remains undoubtedly the same: the use of at least two languages.

In considering bilingualism as a privileged form of language contact, a great number of linguists have argued over exact meaning of this inferred usage of two languages. Bloomfield (1933) believes that bilingualism is the native control of two languages. Recently, however, second language acquisition studies have contested this as all encompassing view of bilingualism. For example, Selinker (1971) argues that only five percent of second language speakers have absolute success in their second tongue. Others such as Bley Vroman (1989), Birdsong (1992), and Cook (1993) have rejected monolingual competence as a frame of reference for bilingualism. Still others contend to subscribe to some extent to the two extremes. Toribio (2001), for instance, thinks that bilingualism is, in fact, a native like ability in two languages based on the standard of an idealized bilingual native speaker's competence.

Another controversial question is the issue of control and proficiency. Proficiency can be maximal (Haugen, 1953) or minimal (MacNamara, 1967). Haugen (1953) thinks that bilingualism is the point where a speaker can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language. MacNamara (1967), on the other hand, argues that a bilingual is anyone who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills: listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. It has also been claimed that the use of two languages is informed by behaviour and, as such, a question of performance. Weinreich (1966) discussed bilingualism in terms of alteration. According to him, the practice of alternatively using two languages will be bilingualism. In turn, Mackey (1976) spoke of the separation of two languages. In speaking to identify bilingualism with code switching, these researchers inspired others to study bilingualism in relation to interference, code mixing, borrowing and interlanguage. Beyond this, bilingualism was linked with translation ability and metalinguistic awareness. Weinreich (1966) writes that when speaking to a monolingual, the bilingual is subject to interlocutory constraint which requires that he or she limit interferences, but when speaking to another bilingual, there is hardly any limit to interferences; forms can be transferred freely from one language to the other and often used in an unadapted way. Hasselmo (1970) notes that there are two extremes in the behaviour of certain bilinguals: one involving minimal and the other maximal code switching. Baetens Beardsmore (1982) believes that bilinguals in communication with other bilinguals may feel free to use both of their language repertoires. However, the same bilingual speakers in conversation with monoglots may not feel the same liberty and may well attempt to maximise alignment on monoglot norms by consciously reducing any formal interference features to a minimum.

Another related topic is the question of attitude. As a theoretical construct, attitudes are said to contain various dimensions. The dimensions of attitude are grounded in the area of social psychology, which have been identified by researchers as cognition, affect, and behaviour (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960; Shaw and Wright, 1967). Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) developed a model of attitude. According to these researchers, the cognitive element of attitude concerns perceptions, concepts, and beliefs regarding the attitude object. For example, a stated belief about the importance of a language and its value may contribute to a favourable attitude. The affective component of attitude includes feelings toward the object of the attitude, such as the language itself. Affect may include love or dislike of the language or anxiety over learning the language. Cognition and affect are not necessarily in harmony with one another. That is, a person may express a positive attitude toward a bilingual situation, but may covertly have negative feelings toward it. The third factor is the action or behaviour component. This aspect of attitude concerns a predisposition or intention to behave in a certain way. For example, a person with a positive attitude toward the English language may send their child to an English teaching institute or may attend English classes themselves. The researchers suggest that evaluation of the affective component has been central to the understanding of attitude.

In Rosenberg and Hovland's model, the three dimensions or intervening variables of attitude are displayed along the same plane. Shaw (1967), however, argues that the nature of the three dimensions of attitude is not arranged as Rosenberg and Hovland suggest. Rather, Shaw defines attitude as, "A set of affective reactions toward the attitude object, derived from the concepts or beliefs that the individual has concerning the object, and predisposing the individual to behave in a certain manner toward the attitude object" (p. 13).

Other researchers such as Gardner (1985) and Baker (1992) have teased out the various dimensions of attitude. Gardner's 1985 work in the area of social psychology specifically explores attitude toward second language acquisition. He suggests that measuring attitude is more straightforward for attitude objects or referents than it is for abstract ideas. According to Gardner, attitude is only one component of motivation, where motivation is also comprised of effort and desire to learn.

Similarly, Baker (1992) differentiates the various facets of attitudes that are related to language. For example, Baker suggests that attitudes can be measured as attitudes toward a particular language itself, toward language groups, toward language use, features, cultural associations, or learning; and toward bilingual education, either as process or product.

Language attitude can be measured using a variety of techniques, either quantitative or qualitative in nature (Baker, 1992; Fowler, 1993; Henerson et al., 1987). These techniques may include surveys, document analyses, interviews, case studies, and autobiographies. Among the most common measures of attitude are surveys. Surveys can employ a variety of measures including Likert, Guttman, or Semantic Differential Technique.

*B. The Research Question*

Does minimal bilingualism overwhelm maximal bilingualism?

*C. The Hypothesis*

Minimal bilingualism overwhelms maximal bilingualism.

II. METHODOLOGY

*A. Participants*

49 Iranian Turkish speaking students took part in the experiment. They all had taken general English as part of the courses they were majoring in. They were randomly selected out of 490 male and female Turkish speaking students studying in Persian and Turkish based universities. Their age ranged between 18-25 years. Their first language was Turkish and were exposed to Farsi from childhood.

*B. Materials and Procedures*

At first, the subjects were asked to learn by heart and to orally reproduce English stories which were selected from Hill's (1979) "Elementary Stories for Reproduction: Series 2." Later, they were asked to orally reproduce Persian stories found in old and modern Persian literature. All were recorded and compared. This was done to make sure that the stated problem was consistent and widely distributed among the subjects.

Next, two questionnaires based on a five point Likert Scale were given to the subjects to complete. They were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with the statements in the questionnaires regarding the status, general acceptability, and attractiveness of English and Farsi (Appendixes A & B). Each degree of agreement was given a numerical value from one to five. Then the total value of all responses was converted to percentages. The percentages of response to each statement about Farsi and English were then compared to find the differences. Finally, the Chi square test was used to see if the differences were not due to chance occurrence.

There was also a group statistical analysis. The mean value of all responses to each statement was computed, and all the means were compared for responses to each statement about Farsi and English. A 2 tailed t test for equality of means was applied to see if the mean differences were not due to chance.

Cronbach Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the statements. Cronbach Alpha value (0.8944) proved the consistency and reliability of the statements (Table 1).

TABLE 1  
CRONBACH ALPHA ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENTS

Item-total statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
S1	32.4839	72.8581	.5937	.8868
S2	32.2581	73.9312	.5122	.8922
S3	31.5484	73.1226	.6862	.8820
S4	32.0000	71.3333	.6239	.8849
S5	31.8387	67.8065	.8142	.8717
S6	32.1935	69.6280	.7113	.8789
S7	32.0968	84.9570	.0403	.9159
S8	31.9677	70.0323	.7891	.8748
S9	32.6774	65.0258	.8404	.8685
S10	32.6129	63.7118	.7674	.8747
<b>Reliability Coefficients</b>				
N of Cases= 31.0				
Alpha= .8944			N of Item= 10	

### III. RESULTS

Data analysis of the responses to the first statement, that is, "I'd like to speak Farsi/English all the time" showed that 38.8% of the subjects strongly agreed to speak English all the time; whereas only 6.1% of them strongly agreed to speak Farsi all the time (Table 2).

TABLE 2  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 1

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S1	Strongly disagree	10 20.4%	2 4.1%	12 12.2%
	Disagree	18 36.7%	6 12.2%	24 24.5%
	Neither agree nor disagree	14 28.6%	4 8.2%	18 18.4%
	Agree	4 8.2%	18 36.7%	22 22.4%
	Strongly agree	3 6.1%	19 38.8%	22 22.4%
Total		49 100.0%	49 100.0%	98 100.0%

Chi Square Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	37.434	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.594	4	.000
Linear by Linear Association	30.332	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	98		

The difference between the two, which was confirmed by Chi Square test, was significant ( $P= 0.0005$ ). The difference between the responses to the second statement, that is, "Learning Farsi/English is a privilege" was also significant ( $P= 0.016$ ). Only 12.5% strongly agreed with English. The Chi Square test confirmed the result (Table 3).

TABLE 3  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 2

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S2	Strongly disagree	8 16.7%	5 10.4%	13 13.5%
	Disagree	7 14.6%	3 6.3%	10 10.4%
	Neither agree nor disagree	10 20.8%	8 16.7%	18 18.8%
	Agree	17 35.4%	11 22.9%	28 29.2%
	Strongly agree	6 12.5%	21 43.8%	27 28.1%
Total		48 100.0%	48 100.0%	96 100.0%

Chi Square Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	12.134	4	.016
Likelihood Ratio	12.688	4	.013
Linear by Linear Association	6.501	1	.011
N of Valid Cases	96		

Responses to the third statement indicated that for the subjects English was a more attractive language than Farsi (61.2% to 34.7% strongly agreed) ( $P= 0.042$ ). Table 4 presents the data.

TABLE 4  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 3

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S3	Strongly disagree	6 12.2%	1 2.0%	7 7.1%
	Disagree	2 4.1%	1 2.0%	3 3.1%
	Neither agree nor disagree	8 16.3%	3 6.1%	11 11.2%
	Agree	16 32.7%	14 28.6%	30 30.6%
	Strongly agree	17 34.7%	30 61.2%	47 48.0%
Total		49 100.0%	49 100.0%	98 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	9.907	4	.042
Likelihood Ratio	10.437	4	.034
Linear by Linear Association	9.174	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	98		

There was a strong agreement with statement No.4. 56.3% compared with 12.2% of the subjects strongly agreed that knowing English helps them get a better job (0.0005) (Table 5).

TABLE 5  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 4

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S4	Strongly disagree	6 12.2%	1 2.1%	7 7.2%
	Disagree	15 30.6%	0 0.0%	15 15.5%
	Neither agree nor disagree	8 16.3%	5 10.4%	13 13.4%
	Agree	14 28.6%	15 31.3%	29 29.9%
	Strongly agree	6 12.2%	27 56.3%	33 34.0%
Total		49 100.0%	48 100.0%	97 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	32.655	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	39.934	4	.000
Linear by Linear Association	29.347	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	97		

With the statement No.5 agreement was also strong (P= 0.0005) for English (Table 6).

TABLE 6  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 5

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S5	Strongly disagree	9 18.4%	1 2.0%	10 10.2%
	Disagree	7 14.3%	0 0.0%	7 7.1%
	Neither agree nor disagree	7 14.3%	3 6.1%	10 10.2%
	Agree	17 34.7%	16 32.7%	33 33.7%
	Strongly agree	9 18.4%	29 59.2%	38 38.8%
Total		49 100.0%	49 100.0%	98 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	25.557	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.817	4	.000
Linear by Linear Association	23.287	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	98		

The ratio was 59.2% to 18.4%. Differences between responses to statement No. 6 was highly significant ( $P= 0.0005$ ). 49.0% of the subjects believed that English gives them new insights into the world (Table 7).

TABLE 7  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 6

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S6	Strongly disagree	8 16.7%	1 2.0%	9 9.3%
	Disagree	5 10.4%	1 2.0%	6 6.2%
	Neither agree nor disagree	13 27.1%	3 6.1%	16 16.5%
	Agree	19 39.6%	20 40.8%	39 40.2%
	Strongly agree	3 6.3%	24 49.0%	27 27.8%
Total		48 100.0%	49 100.0%	97 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	30.713	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	34.455	4	.000
Linear by Linear Association	25.713	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	97		

For statement No.7 the trend reversed, which was significant ( $P= 0.117$ ). 42.6% of the subjects strongly agreed that Farsi has a great literature (Table 8).

TABLE 8  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 7

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S7	Strongly disagree	4 8.5%	5 10.2%	9 9.4%
	Disagree	4 8.5%	4 8.2%	8 8.3%
	Neither agree nor disagree	9 19.1%	17 34.7%	26 27.1%
	Agree	10 21.3%	14 28.6%	24 25.0%
	Strongly agree	20 42.6%	9 18.4%	29 30.2%
Total		47 100.0%	49 100.0%	96 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	7.373	4	.117
Likelihood Ratio	7.520	4	.111
Linear by Linear Association	2.931	1	.087
N of Valid Cases	96		

Regarding statement 8, 34.7% of the subjects compared with 20.4% of them strongly believed that English pronunciation is beautiful. This was not significant ( $P= 0.09$ ). Only 2% rejected the idea that English has beautiful pronunciation (Table 9).

TABLE 9  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 8

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S8	Strongly disagree	7 14.3%	1 2.0%	8 8.2%
	Disagree	2 4.1%	4 8.2%	6 6.1%
	Neither agree nor disagree	11 22.4%	7 14.3%	18 18.4%
	Agree	19 38.8%	20 40.8%	39 39.8%
	Strongly agree	10 20.4%	17 34.7%	27 27.6%
Total		49 100.0%	49 100.0%	98 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	7.896	4	.095
Likelihood Ratio	8.499	4	.075
Linear by Linear Association	4.632	1	.031
N of Valid Cases	98		

Difference between responses to statement 9 is again large (P= 0.0005). 38.8% of the subjects compared to only 2.0% of them strongly believed that English is the language of science (Table 10).

TABLE 10  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 9

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S9	Strongly disagree	10 20.4%	1 2.0%	11 11.2%
	Disagree	22 44.9%	6 12.2%	28 28.6%
	Neither agree nor disagree	10 20.4%	5 10.2%	15 15.3%
	Agree	6 12.2%	18 36.7%	24 24.5%
	Strongly agree	1 2.0%	19 38.8%	20 20.4%
Total		49 100.0%	49 100.0%	98 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	40.373	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	46.030	4	.000
Linear by Linear Association	38.249	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	98		

Finally, largest of all is the difference of opinion expressed about statement No. 10, where 71.4% compared to 4.1% strongly agreed that English gives them access to the Internet (P= 0.0005) (Table 11).

TABLE 11  
ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT 10

		Group		Total
		Farsi	English	
S10	Strongly disagree	18 36.7%	1 2.0%	19 19.4%
	Disagree	21 42.9%	0 .0%	21 21.4%
	Neither agree nor disagree	5 10.2%	0 .0%	5 5.1%
	Agree	3 6.1%	13 26.5%	16 16.3%
	Strongly agree	2 4.1%	35 71.4%	37 37.8%
Total		49 100.0%	49 100.0%	98 100.0%

Chi Squared Tests	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi Square	76.893	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	97.018	4	.000
Linear by Linear Association	67.621	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	98		

Group statistical analysis showed that all the means of responses to the statements about English, except for the means of responses to statements 7 and 8, were higher for English than Farsi (table 12).

TABLE 12  
GROUP STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value	
S1	Farsi English	49	2.43 3.94	1.099 1.162	.000
S2	Farsi English	49	3.13 3.83	1.299 1.342	0.10
S3	Farsi English	49	3.73 4.45	1.319 .867	.020
S4	Farsi English	49	2.98 4.40	1.266 .844	.000
S5	Farsi English	49	3.20 4.47	1.399 .793	.000
S6	Farsi English	49	3.08 4.33	1.200 .851	.000
S7	Farsi English	49	3.81 3.37	1.313 1.185	.087
S8	Farsi English	49	3.47 3.98	1.276 1.010	.310
S9	Farsi English	49	2.31 3.98	1.004 1.090	.031
S10	Farsi English	49	1.98 4.65	1.051 .694	.000

This was confirmed by a 2 tailed t test for equality of means (Table 13).

TABLE 13  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		t-test for equality of means				
		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Mean	Equal variances assumed	-8.202	96	.000	-1.1331	.13816
	Equal variances not assumed	-8.202	83.673	.000	-1.1331	.13816

Overall, group comparison of the means was 4.1388 for English and 3.0057 for Farsi, which was significant ( $P=0.0005$ ) (Table 14).

TABLE 14  
GROUP STATISTICS

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Mean	Farsi	49	3.0057	.80445	.11492
	English	49	4.1388	.53680	.07669

#### IV. DISCUSSION

By all accounts, the results confirmed our hypothesis that attitude is the main cause of the problem under investigation. Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggest that both instrumental and integrative orientations affect language learning and motivation. The orientation is integrative when the student has a genuine interest in a specific cultural community and the intention of eventually being accepted into that group. Included are the appropriate behaviours that accompany acceptance into that language community. Instrumental orientation is characterized by the utility of language and the potential to gain economic advantages and/or increase social position through acquisition of that language.

Scholars of language motivation have suggested that integration orientation may be more important in successful

second language acquisition than is instrumental orientation (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and Lambert, 1972). However, in this study it was indicated that this is not the case. Findings of this study showed that although Turks learn Farsi for integration purposes, and their learning English is mainly instrumental, they are more successful English language learners. Therefore to be a successful second language learner, one not only needs to have integrative orientation toward learning the language, but also needs to have a positive attitude toward the language itself.

Maximal vs. minimal distinction (Skutnab Kangas, 1984) has also been questioned by the findings of the study. Farsi as the most widespread and dominant language in Iran creates a maximal bilingualism situation for Turkish speaking people here. Therefore, it is assumed that they should be fluent in every aspect of Farsi. However, we showed that this is not the case. The most obvious deficiency is the pronunciation, where Iranian Turks do not let Turkish pronunciation go while speaking Farsi. The situation was compared with English learned by Turkish speaking students as an additive language. This may be considered as minimal bilingualism. English learning starts at only second year of junior secondary school and continues through the university years. Although exposure to English is very limited outside school, students speak it fluently with little trace of Turkish accent. Apparently true bilingualism takes root during childhood, and the child will have native command of the second language. In other words, as Bloomfield (1933) thought, the bilingual could be pictured as sum of two monoglots. The findings of the current research rejected the idea. After years of exposure to Farsi, the Iranian Turkish speaker did not turn to a new monoglot to be mixed with his first. Selinker (1971) may be right here that only five percent of second language speakers have absolute success in their second tongue.

Language proficiency has been a topic of discussion for many years. If language proficiency can be maximal (Haugen, 1953) or minimal (MacNamara, 1967), then, the former must dominate the latter. However, our study could not separate the border between maximal and minimal proficiency. Turkish learners of Farsi in our study did not display maximum proficiency in Farsi despite many years of exposure and learning. Their better command of English disturbed the balance between the opposite concepts of maximal/minimal proficiency. Here, MacNamara (1967) may be right that a bilingual is anyone who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills.

The findings of the current research showed that attitude plays an important role in SLA. According to the model of attitude developed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960), the cognitive element of attitude concerns perception, concepts, and beliefs regarding the attitude object. For example a stated belief about the importance of a language and its value may contribute to a favourable attitude. The affective component of attitude includes feelings toward the object of the attitude, such as the language itself. Affect, according to Rosenberg and Hovland (1960), may include love or dislike of the language or anxiety over learning the language. Bringing answers to all statements in the questionnaires together supports the idea that perceptions, concepts, beliefs, love or dislike of a second language contributes to unbiased and free of anxiety learning of it. The findings of the research are also in line with Gardner's (1985) work in social psychology, where it is stated that attitude is only one component of motivation, and motivation is comprised of effort and desire to learn. Also, Baker's (1992) distinction of the various facets of attitude in relation to language supports the thought that positive attitudes toward a particular language paves the way for better learning.

## V. CONCLUSION

Bilingualism classified as minimal and maximal was questioned by observing the presence of Turkish accent in the Iranian Turkish speaking people's Farsi. This was contrasted with the absence of Turkish accent in these people's English. The findings of the research proved that positive attitude toward a second language is an important determinant in the learning outcome. Although Farsi is a second language for Turks in Iran and described as maximal in bilingualism terms is not a psychologically dominant second language. Contrasted with it, English considered as minimal or incipient for most Iranians, particularly for Turkish speaking Iranians, seems to be psychologically dominant. Such dominance could be a result of positive attitude towards the latter.

## APPENDIX A

For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement by placing a tick in the appropriate column.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I'd Like to speak Farsi all the time.					
2. Learning Farsi is a privilege.					
3. Farsi is a very attractive language.					
4. Knowing Farsi will help you get a better job.					
5. Learning Farsi is a great pleasure.					
6. Farsi gives me new insights into the world.					
7. Farsi has a great literature.					
8. Farsi pronunciation is beautiful.					
9. Farsi is the language of science.					
10. Farsi gives me access to the Internet.					

## APPENDIX B

For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement by placing a tick in the appropriate column.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I'd Like to speak English all the time.					
2. Learning English is a privilege.					
3. English is a very attractive language.					
4. Knowing English will help you get a better job.					
5. Learning English is a great pleasure.					
6. English gives me new insights into the world.					
7. English has a great literature.					
8. English pronunciation is beautiful.					
9. English is the language of science.					
10. English gives me access to the Internet.					

## REFERENCES

- [1] Baetens Beardsmore, H. (1982). *Bilingualism: Basic principles*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- [2] Baker, C. (1992). *Attitudes and Language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- [3] Baker, C. & S. P. Jones. (1998). *Encyclopedia of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- [4] Birdsong, D. (1992). Ultimate Attainment in Second Language Attainment. *Language*, 68, 706-753.
- [5] Bley Vorman, R. (1989). The logical problem of second language learning. In S. Gass & J. Schachter (eds.), *Linguistic Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Bloomfield, L. (1933). *Language*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- [7] Cook, V. (1993). *Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- [8] Fowler, F. J. (1993). *Survey research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- [9] Gardner, R. C. & W. E. Lambert (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publications.
- [10] Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Bungay: Suffolk Edward Arnold.
- [11] Hamers, J. & M. Blanc. (2000). *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [12] Hasselmo, N. (1970). Code switching and modes of speaking. In G. Gilbert (ed.), *Texas studies in bilingualism*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 179-210.
- [13] Haugen, E. (1953). *The Norwegian language in America*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [14] Henerson, M. E., L. L. Morris & C. T. Fitz Gibbon. (1987). *How to Measure Attitudes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- [15] Hill, L. A. (1979). *Elementary. Stories for Reproduction: Series 2*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [16] Mackey, W. F. (1976). *Bilingualism et contact des language*. Paris: Klicksiek.
- [17] MacNamara, J. (1967). The bilingual's linguistic performance: A psychological overview. *Journal of Social Issues*, 23, 59-77.

- [18] Rosenberg, M. J. & C. Hovland. (1960). Cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of attitudes. In C. Hovland & M. J. Rosenberg (eds.), *Attitude organization and change*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- [19] Selinker, L. B. (1971). Interlanguage. *IRAL* 10, 3.
- [20] Shaw, M. & J. Wright. (1967). Scales for the measurement of attitudes. New York: MCGraw Hill.
- [21] Skutnabb Kangas, T. (1984). Biligualism or Not: The Education of Minorities. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.
- [22] Toribio, A. J. (2001). On the Emergence of Bilingual. Code switching competence. *Bilingualism: Language and cognition* 4.3, 203-232.
- [23] Weinreich, U. (1966). *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Mouton.



**Ataollah Maleki** is currently Associate Professor of TEFL at Zanzan Medical University, IRAN. His main interest of research is communication strategies, EFL teaching, teaching and testing, ESP, discourse analysis, and phonetics. He has been engaged in teaching English and applied linguistics for more than twenty years. He holds a Ph. D degree in TEFL, an MA in TEFL, and a postgraduate diploma in applied linguistics and phonetics. He has published a number of books and articles in his areas of interest in academic journals.

# A Probe into Chinese Learners' Negative Cultural Transfer in EFL

Honglin Zhu

School of Foreign Languages, Changzhou University, Changzhou, China

Email: zhl57921@yahoo.com.cn

**Abstract**—Modern linguistics considers culture learning as one of the most important processes in learning a foreign language. The present article explores a list of the negative cultural transfers caused by Chinese EFL learners owing to the cultural differences between Chinese and Western culture, with a focus on the negative transfer manifested on surface and deep structure.

**Index Terms**—EFL learning, cultural difference, cultural transfer, negative transfer

## I. INTRODUCTION

The study of negative cultural transfer can be traced back to the 1950s. Whorf (1956) and other linguists conducted many studies of the relationships between culture and language. They held that culture and language are inseparably interwoven, and that sociocultural values and beliefs determine the way people think and speak. In *Linguistics across Cultures*, Robert Lado (1957) made his point clear that native cultural transfer was one of the main barriers to second language learning. Later, more researchers carried out the further study on negative cultural transfer. For example, by examining the significance of understanding the sociocultural values of the target language for those engaged in both second language learning and intercultural communication, Damen (1987) and Kramsch (1993) found that the mastery of second language patterns alone does not ensure effective communication in the target language, and cultural education is absolutely essential for both second language acquisition and effective intercultural communication. By employing speech act theory, Beebe (1988) and Wolfson (1989) further examined the ways second language learners typically attempt to use speech patterns from their native language to accomplish speech acts in the second language.

## II. TYPES OF NEGATIVE CULTURAL TRANSFER

Generally speaking, the study of the negative transfer can be specified as the study in the scope of surface-structure transfer and deep-structure transfer. The surface structure transfer, according to Beebe (1988), refers to the practice “socialcultural transfer” and this type of transfer can be easily observed. The deep structure is integrated into our thinking at such a basic level that we take it for granted. Joseph Shaules (2010) holds that deep culture influences our thinking and values in ways that we generally aren't aware of. We rely on it in everyday life to interact, communicate, and interpret what people do. Therefore, a further study on both the surface and deep structure of negative cultural transfer is of great importance to Chinese EFL learners.

## III. NEGATIVE CULTURAL TRANSFER ON SURFACE STRUCTURE

The following aspects are listed to illustrate the influence of negative transfer committed by Chinese learners on the surface structure.

### A. *The Influence of Negative Transfer on Pragmatic Forms*

Practice in EFL teaching and learning revealed problems and addressed needs in carrying out the study on the negative pragmatic transfer. Here are some examples:

#### 1. No smoking please.

This sign can be found in many public sites in China. Grammatically speaking, there is nothing wrong with it. However, if analyzed from the pragmatic angle, this sentence is inappropriate in at least two ways. First, the use of “please” often depends on the relationship between the interlocutors and the intention of the speech act. If it is uttered by a superior, the word “please” is often not desired; if it is spoken by a subordinate to his superior, the word “please” is often compulsory. Second, it also depends on whether we want to conduct a request or a suggestion. However, many Chinese learners overlooked the use of “please” in English and over-generalized the use of this word due to the fact that in Chinese the word ‘please’ is used without any distinction as it does in English (Liu, 2000). Liu (1991) and Chen (1992) also found the following sentence in their students' composition:

#### 2. Our English teacher has peaches and plums everywhere in China.

In this sentence, the English words “peach” and “plum” both refer to fruits. However, Chinese learners use them to mean “students”. This is a typical negative transfer from Chinese to English, because English vocabulary “peach” and

“plum” do not contain such connotative meaning.

Transfers like this can be found frequently by Chinese learners whether in written or spoken form and our explanations are often inadequate if we take these sentences simply as errors or pragmatic failures.

#### B. *The Influence of Negative Transfer on Translation*

In EFL learning, quite a number of Chinese learners like to find Chinese equivalents for their English counterparts, which is likely to entail a negative transfer. For example, someone translates “注意身体”(take care of yourself) as “notice your body”; translate “日光浴”(sunbathe) as “shine the sun”. These translations made by the speaker leave the native speaker of English unable to understand appropriately.

There are other similar cases that many English words are translated into Chinese literally. However, owing to the different cultural background, people may have a subconscious standard and values of their culture to guide conduct and thought. Take the word “favorite son” as an example. Most Chinese learners would translate it as “宠儿”. However, the translation is inaccurate, because the word “宠儿” is a derogatory term in Chinese. In English, “宠儿” should be translated as “favorite”. “Favorite son” is a commendatory title given to George Washington by American people for the reason that George Washington led American people to the victory of the War of Independence. In order to express the respect and love for him, American people call him “favorite son”.

#### C. *The Influence of Negative Transfer on Connotative Meanings*

Language is the carrier of culture, so the same word or expression set in different cultural contexts might have different connotation. “Peacock”, “yellow”, and “seagull” with their respective English connotative meaning of “vanity”, “cowardliness”, and disaster” are, in Chinese, symbols of “auspiciousness”, “obscurity”, and “braveness” correspondingly. Other words or expressions like “blue room”, “swan song”, and “let the cat out of the bag” make no sense at all if translated literally into Chinese. Still others like “Pandora’s box”, “the apple of the eye”, and “baker’s dozen” fall into another category that draws heavily on the reader’s knowledge of the Bible, Greek and Roman myths, western literary works and history.

The connotative meaning is the emotional reaction of vocabulary in people’s minds, and it varies in different cultural background and customs. Take the color word “red” as an example. The Chinese people like red and they often associate red with the sun and the color of fire. As the sun and fire bring people brightness, warmth and happiness, “red” then implies joyousness, auspiciousness, happiness and animation, and so on. In western culture, however, because of the traditional culture “bullfight”, people always treat “red” as “red for danger”. So in English, “red” is used to express fire, blood, violence, etc. For instance, “red ruin” refers to “火灾” and “red battle” in Chinese is “血战”.

Like color words, animal words also tend to be negatively transferred. In China, tiger is regarded as the king of the forest. People appreciate tiger because they think it is the most mighty and powerful animal. On the contrary, this laurel should be given to lion in western culture, which symbolizes a person who is brave and full of valor, and who enjoys a high position. “The British Lion” refers to England and “a literary lion” is the expression of a famous person in literature.

#### D. *The Influence of Negative Transfer on Speech Act*

As one of the most important components in pragmatics, *speech act* theory serves as a key to the phenomenon of cultural transfer. According to Austin (1962), on any occasion, the action of producing an utterance involves three related acts: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act. An analysis of the illocutionary force of an utterance can help people understand its cultural meaning. For example, in a Chinese context, “Where are you going?” often functions as greeting. In a Western context, however, it may be mistaken for an intrusion of privacy. Later, J. Searle (1969, 1979) revised and developed the theory of speech act and further divided the speech act into *direct* and *indirect* speech act. In a direct speech act, there is a direct relationship between form and function, when an imperative is used to perform a request (for example, “close the door!”), while in an indirect speech act, the illocutionary force of the act is not derivable from the surface structure as when an interrogative form serves as a request (for example, “Could you close the door?”). Without doubt, indirect speech acts tend to show greater politeness in English than direct speech acts. Searle (1979) also holds that in indirect speech acts, the speaker tries to convey more implicit meanings by means of the shared verbal or non-verbal background information between the him and the hearer, as well as the reasonable inference of the hearer. However, if the speaker and the hearer of the conversation come from different cultures, communicative failures are likely to occur. For example, Chinese EFL learners often use such imperative structures as “Teacher, explain it to me (in the classroom)!”, “Let me look at that watch (in the shop)!” which may be considered as impolite in western social communication.

### IV. NEGATIVE CULTURAL TRANSFER ON DEEP STRUCTURE

Living in or visiting other countries often brings us into contact with people who have different deep-culture settings. Deep culture, according to Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars (2000), refers to “the unconscious meanings, values, norms and hidden assumptions that allow us to interpret our experiences as we interact with other people. These shared meanings form a framework that acts as a starting point for our sense of what it means to be human, what constitutes

normal behavior, how to make moral/ethical choices, and what we see generally as reasonable". Dai Weidong and Zhang Honglin (2000) hold that negative transfer of deep culture is not easily perceived because of the existence of social culture and value systems at the psychological layer. However, it is these cultural values that have an impact on people's thoughts and behaviors and are liable to cause misunderstanding or ineffective communication.

#### A. *Negative Transfer on Thought Patterns*

Different cultures give birth to different thought patterns. Based on the logic system of Greece, western thought patterns are quite different from those of Chinese. The western line of argument is generally deductive, with a topic introduced at the beginning and followed by the minor or supporting arguments. This pattern contrasts with the Chinese inductive pattern, in which minor points of the argument are placed first and then the main point is presented.

Another point is that westerners tend to be "analytic" (beginning with the separate parts and piecing them together to make a whole) as opposed to the Chinese "global" tendency (beginning with the picture) (Nelson, 1995). Besides, in western culture, being straightforward is regarded as an acceptable manner in communication, while in Chinese culture, being implicit is more appreciated, and the following dialogue is an example.

*Mr. Jones: It looks like we're going to have to keep the production line running on Saturday.*

*Mr. Wu: I see.*

*Mr. Jones: Can you come in on Saturday?*

*Mr. Wu: Yes. I think so.*

*Mr. Jones: That'll be a great help.*

*Mr. Wu: Yes. Saturday's a special day, did you know?*

*Mr. Jones: How do you mean?*

*Mr. Wu: It's my son's birthday.*

*Mr. Jones: How nice. I hope you all enjoy it very much.*

*Mr. Wu: Thank you. I appreciate your understanding (Storti, 1994).*

The dialogue between an American employer and a Chinese employee indicates that although Mr. Wu is good at English, due to the negative transfer of thought patterns, he experienced a failure in cross-cultural communication. His real intention was that he wanted to give the hint that he didn't want to work an extra shift on Saturday, because in Chinese culture, direct refusal is considered impolite, so he chose to refuse implicitly by saying "I see." However, the boss didn't understand him and further forced him to land in a desperate situation. In order to save the boss's face, he had to answer "Yes, I think so", which, in Chinese context just meant "I hear what you say, but I am reluctant to come".

#### B. *Negative Transfer in Value Systems*

The value system is one of the key factors that shape the behavior of the members of a culture. These value systems are influenced by a variety of factors and it has the characteristic of being unique, enduring, and relatively stable. Due to the striking contrast in these value systems, negative cultural transfer is very likely to occur.

For example, western people resent the invasion of their privacy by other people and this can be embodied by the proverb such as "an Englishman's home is his castle". The basic reason is that they respect privacy, would try every means to protect privacy; while the concept of "privacy" is rarely perceived by Chinese EFL learners because what is regarded as "privacy" in the west is not necessarily thought of as such in Chinese cultural setting. Therefore, it is not unusual for Chinese to inquire about an individual's age, salary, marriage status, etc. to show their concern, friendship and intimacy even when they meet for the first time.

Another contrast can be reflected in their view about collectivism and individualism. China is a nation deeply marked by collectivism which lays greater emphasis on the views, needs and goals of the in-group (relatives, clans, and organizations) rather than oneself (Triandis 1990). A famous saying from Confucius that "*if one wants to establish himself, he should help others to establish themselves at first*" best shows the Chinese collective thought. Although a derogatory term in Chinese, individualism is highly valued in the west, especially by American people, who put high premium on success through personal efforts. Many English proverbs that reflect the respect for individualism are embraced by Americans, for instance, "*every man is the architect of his own fortune*", or "*pull yourself up by your own boot straps*".

Different value orientations can also be noticed in their views about friendship. In Chinese culture, such proverbs as "*At home you count on your parents, outside on your friends*" and "*All men are brothers within the world*" indicate how important friendship is. With this orientation in mind, Chinese people are often irritated at the American "transient friendship" In fact, it is social mobility and the desire for change that make Americans devalue long-term friendship.

#### C. *Negative Transfer in Ethical System*

In a broad sense, Ethics refers to judgments that focus on "degrees of rightness and wrongness, virtue and vice, and obligation in human behavior" (Johannesen 1996). Ethics is an elusive topic. But as far as intercultural interaction is concerned, we find that there is no universally acceptable moral code. In other words, most ethical norms are products of specific cultures. Therefore, it is not surprising that the ethical norms appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another. For example, as a tradition, Chinese people value the virtue of respecting the old, including showing filial

obedience to parents, senior relatives, and addressing the old with respect. Chinese often address the elderly “Old Wang”, “Old Grandpa” etc. in daily life, in which “old” represents “respectable”. This addressing, however, is rarely adopted by western people because in western culture, “old” may mean “useless” and “out of date”.

## V. CONCLUSION

After discussing some typical negative transfers in EFL, we may find that culture has a great influence on people’s concept and behavior in communication and EFL learning involves developing learners’ understanding of their own language and culture in relation to target language and culture. In fact, it is a dialogue allowing for reaching a common ground for negotiation, where various differences are recognized, mediated, and accepted.

On the other hand, both EFL teachers and learners are expected to pay attention not only to the negative transfer but also to the fact that the cultural difference may raise great barriers to EFL. Especially for Chinese learners of English, they need to develop sensitivity to explicit and implicit western culture and their impact on communication, and to acquire the skills of discovering and interpreting cultures, values, beliefs and even behaviors which lie beneath the surface of western culture. It is no easy task for English learners to acquire empathy with the people and culture of second language, and it is hard to avoid thoroughly pragmatic errors in EFL learning. However, an awareness of such differences will certainly help learners better understand the different cultural connotation, pave the way for a better understanding and finally help learners achieve communicative objectives.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- [2] Beebe, L. M. (1988). *Issues in Second Language Acquisition: Multiple Perceptives*. New York: Newbury House.
- [3] Chen, Jiangping (1992). *The Chinese Students’ Mother Tongue Transfer Phenomenon in English Learning*. Changsha: Hunan Education Press
- [4] Dai, Weidong & Zhang, Honglin (2000). The Negative Cultural Transfer in Foreign Language Communication and Its Implication for English Teaching Reforms. *Foreign Language World*. 2
- [5] Damen, L. (1987) *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.
- [6] Hampden-Turner, C., & Trompenaars, F. (2000). *Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- [7] Johannesen, R.K. (1996). *Ethics in Human Communication*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- [8] Joseph, S. (2010). *A Beginner’s Guide to the Deep Culture Experience: Beneath the Surface*. London: Intercultural Press.
- [9] Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [10] Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- [11] Liu, Dilin. (1995). Sociocultural Transfer and Its Effect on Second Language Speakers’ Communication. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. vol.19
- [12] Liu, Shaozhong. (2000). A Comparative Study of “please” between Chinese and English: An Example of Negative Pragmatic Transfer. *Journal of Foreign Languages*. vol.5
- [13] Searle, J. (1969). *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Searle, J. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [15] Storti, C. (1994). *Cross-Cultural Dialogues*. Yarmouth: International Press.
- [16] Triandis, H. C. (1990). *Cross-Cultural Studies of Individualism and Collectivism*. In J. J. Berman, (ed). *Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- [17] Whorf, B.L. (1956). *Language Thought & Reality*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- [18] Wolfson, N. (1989). *Sociolinguistics*. New York: Newbury House Publishers.

**Honglin Zhu** was born in Nanjing, China in 1957. He received his B.A in English from Hangzhou University, China in 1982.

He is currently an associate professor in the School of Foreign Languages, Changzhou University, Changzhou, China. His research interests include second language acquisition and college English teaching.

# Reading-writing Connections in EAP Courses: Cross-linguistic Summary Protocols

Abbas Emam

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran

Email: sa\_ab\_emamrood@yahoo.co.uk

**Abstract**—At higher education settings, summarization skills are essential to academic success. However, research on summarization appear to have been relatively neglected, and consequently "many more are needed ... [and] a re-examination of summarization from a reading-writing perspective merits more attention" (Grabe, 2003, pp. 252-253). To this end, 120 EFL students of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran were selected: the three experimental groups were subjected to the task-based language teaching principles in the treatment. Two reading comprehension texts (one as a pre-test, the other a post-test) were assigned to the four groups involved, and they were all required to write up two summary protocols for each text they read, one in English, and another in Persian. In the experimental groups, summary writing was mediated by a particular teaching task while for the control group there was no mediating task. Afterwards, the performance of all subject groups was evaluated based on a cross-linguistic evaluation scale to determine a) if task-based language teaching had any significant effect on learners' reading comprehension and b) if the L1 of the subjects contributed to a better comprehension of the texts they read. Finally, the conclusions and pedagogical implications of the research for EAP courses were highlighted.

**Index Terms**—reading-writing connections, EAP, reading comprehension, summary writing, mediating task

## I. INTRODUCTION

In everyday use of language, we are continually integrating the language skills or switching from one skill to another. It is best to reflect this integration when teaching a second or foreign language (Davies & Pearse, 2000, p. 99). As far as the integration of reading- writing skills is concerned, it is admittedly an old, established technique to ask EAP students of reading comprehension courses to present or produce brief statements of the main ideas in a text or reading passage, either while reading or after completing reading the text. The ability to produce a summary (alternatively known as synopsis, or précis) is referred to in TEFL literature as summarizing, or summary skills, and has been a focus of instruction in the teaching and testing of reading comprehension skills.

At academic settings in particular, summarizing skills or techniques are essential to academic success. Students are usually required to produce study summaries, to complete various types of summary assignments, and to complete tasks that call for the incorporation of a written source material in term papers or any other similar presentation (Johns & Mayes, 1990; Kirkland & Saunders, 1991; Nunan, 2003; Brown, 2004). However, this is not an activity to be expected to be carried out with the same degree of success by all language learners. After all, some more proficient language learners outperform the others and some others, with less background and practice in these skills, lag behind.

Reading-writing connections and interactions can be studied from different perspectives, and with regard to a number of relevant factors and variables. Researchers have elaborated on the numerous approaches to the study of reading-writing connections in EAP courses and have reported on the findings, in theory, research as well as in practice (See, for example Farahzad & Emam, 2010).

This empirical study in its own turn was intended to find answers to the following questions based on a comparison of the content of the source reading texts with the English summary protocols (ESPs) and Persian summary protocols (PSPs) produced under three mediating task conditions.

1. Did the presence of mediating tasks in the three experimental groups, and their absence in the control group lead to any significant difference in reading comprehension among the Iranian EFL learners?
2. On which set of summary protocols did the subject groups outperform the others in terms of the selection of the topic(s) in their summary protocols, the ESPs or the PSPs?
3. On which set of summary protocols did the subject groups outperform the others in terms of the selection of the sub-topic(s) in their summary protocols, the ESPs or the PSPs?
4. Did the summary protocols written in the L1 of the subjects (Persian) manifest a significant difference from those produced in their target language (English) in terms of reading comprehension ability?

## II. METHODOLOGY

The cornerstone of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the role of the "mediated tasks" of "group discussion", "personalizing", and "clustering" in reading comprehension of EAP students as manifested in their written

summaries (i.e. the interface of reading-writing connections).

*A. Participants*

The study involved 120 Iranian EFL, male (30) and female (90), undergraduate students majoring in psychology at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran. The subjects who were in four classes of 30 students each included sophomores who had already passed the basic course of general English. The reason for adopting such a policy in selecting the subjects was to make sure they were sufficiently familiar with strategies, techniques and mechanics (the necessary pre-requisites) needed for carrying out the tasks envisioned for their specific groups.

*B. Treatment*

The participants of the study were exposed to special treatment for one semester. Since the main objective of the study was to evaluate the reading comprehension ability of the subjects as reflected in a "Persian written summary task" as well as an "English written summary task", all the four groups were exposed to identical reading texts both during the semester and at the final exam session. However, the mediating tasks between the input (the reading text) and the outcomes (two written summary protocols in each session) were different for each group.

1. The DTG (the discussion-task group)

For the first experimental group, the mediating task to follow reading was a "group discussion" of the content of the text among the members of the group who were subsequently required to write two summaries for the passage they had just read.

2. The PTG (The personalizing-task group)

As far as the second experimental group was concerned, the mediating task to be made use of, after the reading selection was read by the learners, was the "personalizing task". A highly recommended task in communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, cooperative language learning, and content-based instruction, personalizing is thought to draw on the learners' experiences and opinions and make the teaching material more real and accessible to them.

3. The CTG (The clustering-task group)

The mediating task envisioned for use in the third experimental group was "clustering". At times, referred to as "webbing", "word mapping", "semantic mapping", or "visual brainstorming", "clustering" task is recognized and recommended as an effective reading comprehension and pre-writing teaching/learning activity (Brown, 2001; Nunan, 2003; Broukal, 2004; Rodriguez Kessler, 2006).

4. The NTG (The no- mediating-task group)

However, the fourth group (the control group) received no specific task-based treatment. Learners in this group were simply asked to read the text (the input) and summarize it in Persian and in English within the time limit of the class hour, as they were considered most appropriate for completion of the two protocols.

TABLE 3-1:  
GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

Groups (n=120)	Input	Mediating Task	Outcome
Grp. 1 (n=30)	Reading text	Group Discussion Task	1. A Persian written summary 2. An English written summary
Grp. 2 (n=30)	Reading text	Personalizing Task	1. A Persian written summary 2. An English written summary
Grp. 3 (n=30)	Reading text	Clustering Task	1. A Persian written summary 2. An English written summary
Grp. 4 (n=30)	Reading text	None	1. A Persian written summary 2. An English written summary

*C. Materials*

The main criteria for selecting, analyzing and assigning the reading materials for this specific EAP course (used during the treatment period) were in line with what Nuttal (1996, pp. 170-178) suggests: suitability of the content, exploitability, readability, variety, and authenticity. To that effect, of the many English reading comprehension textbooks available in the Iranian book market, the present author chose to concentrate on Academic Encounters (Reading, study skills, and writing: content focus, human behavior) by Bernard Seal, published by Cambridge University Press in 1997. The source which consists of 40 authentic reading passages taken from regular North American college textbooks aims to develop reading and study skills among EFL/ESL students.

*D. Measurement Instruments and Procedure*

Three instruments were used in this study:

1. On administering the independent measure of proficiency (the TOEFL) to all subject groups, it was found out that they were sufficiently homogenous with regard to their scores (of 100): DTG = 61.35, PTG=60.5, CTG=62.1, and NTG=61.25.

2. A pretest which consisted of an English reading passage of both medium length (approximately 800 words) and level of readability (Flesch – Kincaid Grade Level 11). The subjects were required to read it first and subsequently write

two summaries (one in Persian and another in English) in 60 minutes (see Appendix I) after being exposed to the particular treatment task envisioned for their particular treatment group. The reason this pre-test was administered was firstly to do with the fact that "summary writing tests writing skills as well as reading skills" (Nuttal, 1996, p.225), and it secondly had to do with the final objective of the research, i.e. to analyze the content of the written summaries that subjects produced as measurement protocols for reading comprehension assessment. As for the rationale of recourse to the Persian language in writing the summary protocol, it is argued that "students who are permitted to use their L1 in responding will explore the text more accurately and thoroughly than those who are restricted to target language responses, [thus] it is important not to dismiss the use of the mother tongue out of hand. Some students may never need to express themselves in the target language. Why should they not respond in the language that most clearly enables them to show that they understand, or to explain where their problems lie?" (Nuttal, 1996, p. 187). Similar opinions have also been expressed by a number of other researchers (e.g., Shohamy, 1985; Lee, 1986, 1987; Wolf, 1993; Hock & Poh, 1997).

3. The third instrument was a post-test which actually served as the final exam of the course. This particular test (corresponding and parallel to the pre-test above) was supposed to serve as the main measurement instrument in the assessment of the reading comprehension ability of the subjects before and after receiving the particular treatments to which they were exposed. The full text of the post-test reading comprehension (Flesch– Kincaid Grade Level 12) is reproduced in Appendix I.

### III. DESCRIPTIVE AND INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

The performance of each of the four subject groups (the DTG, the CTG, the PTG, and the NTG), on both English and Persian summary protocols are cross-tabulated below. To make the comparison and contrast of the results easier, in each case tables representing the descriptive indices of performance (Means and SDs) of each particular group on both the pre-test and the post-test and the resultant difference(s) are juxtaposed. Here, the tables are identified as those for ESPs (English Summary Protocols) and their corresponding PSPs (Persian Summary Protocols). Meanwhile, in each pair of tables under the designation "variable" a number of Ps (P1, P2, P3, ... p'1, p'2, p'3, ...) are introduced, each to stand for a particular point (P) targeted on the English and Persian Evaluation Scales (See Appendix II), and these Ps and P's are taken into account in the design of this dissertation as the dependent variable(s).

To more clarify the descriptive statistical indices and hence the performance of each paired subject groups identified as ESPs and PSPs—the resultant figures were then further subjected to inferential indices of performance.

To illustrate, as far as the first research question is concerned, the descriptive statistics yielded the following results:

**TABLE 1-A:**  
TOTAL MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR ESP<sub>s</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE  
PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices → Groups	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
Total ESP <sub>s</sub>	Pre – test	DTG	80.67	30.147	30
		CTG	65.41	25.532	30
		PTG	64.88	21.480	30
		NTG	69.78	30.945	30
	Post - test	DTG	83.02	30.888	30
		CTG	88.26	31.640	30
		PTG	68.50	29.918	30
		NTG	60.07	38.996	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	-2.35	32.3875	30
		CTG	-22.85	30.086	30
		PTG	-3.62	26.999	30
		NTG	9.71	36.9705	30

**TABLE 1-A':**  
TOTAL MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR PSP<sub>s</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE  
PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices → Groups	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
Total PSP <sub>s</sub>	Pre – test	DTG	87.96	26.319	30
		CTG	76.41	22.442	30
		PTG	72.43	40.557	30
		NTG	78.56	42.141	30
	Post - test	DTG	86.92	33.818	30
		CTG	85.87	31.655	30
		PTG	85.92	17.242	30
		NTG	63.73	41.358	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	1.04	31.8185	30
		CTG	-9.46	28.0485	30
		PTG	-13.49	30.1495	30
		NTG	14.83	43.7495	30

As it can be seen in the paired tables above, the total differences in mean scores of all Ps in the ESPs indicate that the highest level of performance is observed in the CTG (-22.85) and the lowest level in the NTG (9.71). As for the total differences in mean scores of all P's in the PSPs, it is also clear that the highest level of performance is observed in the PTG (-13.49) and the lowest level in the NTG (14.83). This may tempt one to tentatively conclude that the absence of any mediating tasks in the control group (NTG) led to the lowest level of performance. However, this does not seem to be statistically warranted.

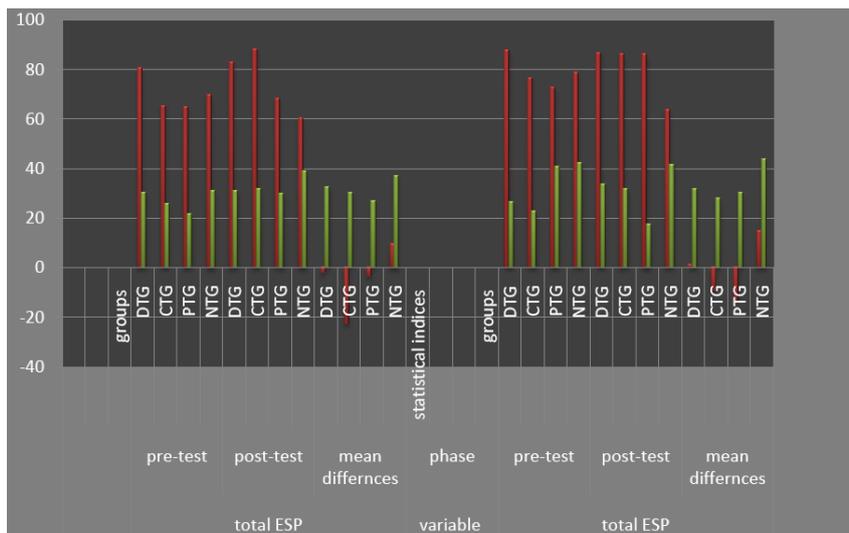


Figure 1: Graphic Representation of the Performance of the Subject Groups on ESPs Vs PSPs

In order to see whether or not the differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was run. The results of the ANOVA procedure for the ESPs and the PSPs are given below in tables 3-1-b and 3-1-b'.

TABLE 1-B:

THE RESULTS OF TOTAL ANOVAS ON ESPs POST – TESTS

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	15159.426	3	5053.142	4.624	.004
Within Groups	126756.17	116	1092.726		
Total	141915.60	119			

TABLE 1-B':

THE RESULTS OF TOTAL ANOVAS ON PSPs POST– TESTS

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	11415.548	3	3805.183	3.665	.014
Within Groups	120451.19	116	1038.372		
Total	131866.74	119			

The results of total ANOVA on ESPs post-tests as reflected in their F-ratio (4.624) and significance (0.004) belonging to the means of the groups indicate that because the level of significance is lower than %5, it follows that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups. To locate the differences between the groups, the post-hoc Tukey's HSD was applied resulting in table 1-c. A similar survey of the results of the total ANOVAs on PSPs post-tests with F-ratio (3.655) and statistical significance 0.014 belonging to the means of the groups indicate that here again because the level of significance is lower than %5, it can be inferred that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups of PSPs as well. To locate the differences between the groups, the post-hoc Tukey's HSD was applied which resulted in table 1-c'.

TABLE 1-C:

THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON TOTAL ESPs POST – TESTS

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	-2.35	-	-	-	*
CTG	-22.85	-	-	-	*
PTG	-3.62	-	-	-	-
NTG	9.71	*	*	-	-

TABLE 1-C':

THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON TOTAL PSPs POST – TESTS

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	1.04	-	-	-	*
CTG	-9.46	-	-	-	*
PTG	-13.49	-	-	-	*
NTG	14.83	*	*	*	-

The differences among the ESPs and PSPs thus confirmed, one more procedure was required to demonstrate on which set did the subject groups outperformed the other, on the ESPs or on the PSPs? This demanded applying the T-test to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the means on the two paired sets of scores. Once the T-test was applied to the two paired sample groups (Tables 1-d and -1-e, below), it turned out that the

difference in means between the two sets (ESPs vs. PSPs) were 16.9056 vs. 18.4778 with significance levels of 0.043 and 0.043, respectively. This clearly signifies the higher performance of the subject group producing PSPs. Thus, as far as these particular sets of groups are concerned, the first research question is safely answered positively in favor of the experimental groups in which particular tasks were used.

TABLE 1-D:  
PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Total ESPs PTs	74.96	120	34.534	3.152
	Total PSPs PTs	80.61	120	33.288	3.039

TABLE 1-E:  
PAIRED SAMPLE TEST

	Paired Differences Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total ESPs PT – Total PSPs PT	-5.650	-1.914	119	.041

TABLE 2-A:  
MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR ESP<sub>2</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices Groups	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
P <sub>2</sub>	Pre – test	DTG	15.56	4.004	30
		CTG	14.30	4.584	30
		PTG	12.81	4.966	30
		NTG	13.27	7.311	30
	Post - test	DTG	19.31	13.194	30
		CTG	18.91	6.184	30
		PTG	16.24	5.139	30
		NTG	12.93	7.494	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	-3.75	10.489	30
		CTG	-4.61	6.384	30
		PTG	-3.43	6.0525	30
		NTG	0.34	9.4025	30

TABLE 2-A':  
MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR PSP<sub>2</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices Groups	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
P' <sub>2</sub>	Pre – test	DTG	16.43	4.492	30
		CTG	14.99	3.951	30
		PTG	16.69	20.315	30
		NTG	14.98	13.340	30
	Post - test	DTG	20.46	14.003	30
		CTG	21.51	11.688	30
		PTG	20.59	8.718	30
		NTG	12.51	7.687	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	-4.03	10.4975	30
		CTG	-6.52	8.8195	30
		PTG	-3.9	16.5165	30
		NTG	2.47	12.2635	30

Regarding the second research question, the figures contained in Tables 2-a vs. 2-a' representing the differences in mean scores of all Ps in ESP2 demonstrate that the highest level of performance in selection of the topic(s) of the post-test reading passage belongs to the CTG (-4.61), and the lowest level to the NTG (0.34). As for the differences in mean scores of all P's in PSP2, it is also evident that the highest level of performance is observed in the CTG (-6.52) and the lowest level in the NTG (2.47).

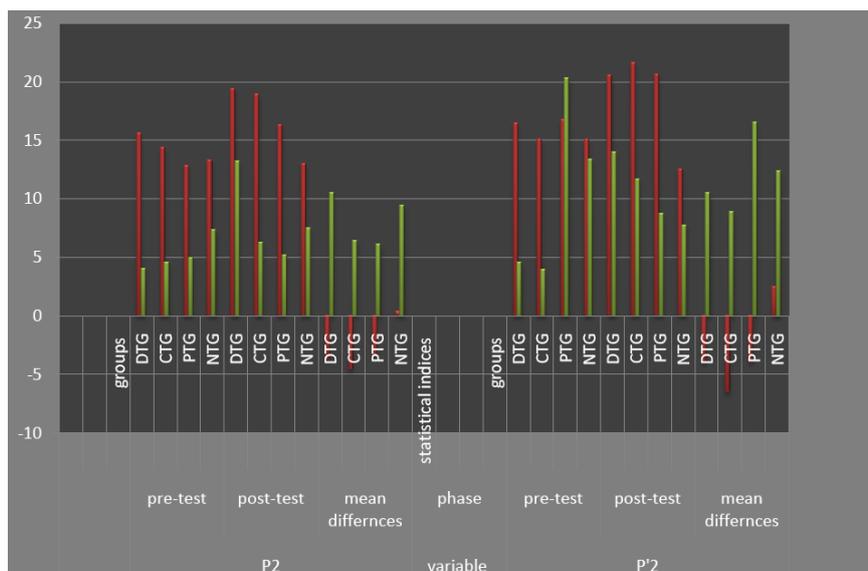


Figure 2: Graphic Representation of the Performance of Subject Groups on ESP2 vs. PSP2

Nevertheless, in order to see whether or not the differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was run. The results of the ANOVA procedure for the ESP2 and PSP2 are given below in Tables 2-b and 2-b'.

**TABLE 2-B:**  
THE RESULTS OF ANOVA ON ESP<sub>2</sub> POST – TEST

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	780.367	3	260.122	3.528	.017
Within Groups	8552.044	116	73.725		
Total	9332.411	119			

**TABLE 2-B':**  
THE RESULTS OF ANOVA ON PSP<sub>2</sub> POST – TTEST

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	1585.104	3	528.368	4.518	.005
Within Groups	13565.919	116	116.948		
Total	15151.022	119			

According to table 2-b,the results of ANOVA procedure on mean differences of ESP<sub>2</sub> post-test as reflected in the F-ratio of 3.528 and significance level of 0.017 (sig<%5) reveals that because the level of statistical significance is lower than %5,it can logically be argued that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups. To locate where the differences between the groups lie, the post-hoc Tukey's HSD was applied resulting in table 2-c. A similar examination of the results of ANOVA on PSP<sub>2</sub> post-test with F-ratio of 4.518 and statistical significance 0.005 belonging to the means of the groups indicate that in this case too because the significance level is lower than %5, it can be asserted that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups of PSP<sub>2</sub>.To locate the differences between the groups, the Tukey's HSD was applied which led into Table-2-c'.

**TABLE 2-C:**  
THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON ESP<sub>2</sub> POST – TEST

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	-3.75	-	-	-	*
CTG	-4.61	-	-	-	*
PTG	-3.43	-	-	-	-
NTG	0.34	*	*	-	-

**TABLE 2-C':**  
THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON PSP<sub>2</sub> POST – TEST

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	-4.03	-	-	-	*
CTG	-6.52	-	-	-	*
PTG	-3.9	-	-	-	*
NTG	2.47	*	*	*	-

The differences between the ESP<sub>2</sub> and PSP<sub>2</sub> thus confirmed one more procedure was required to prove on which set did the subject group outperformed the other, on the ESP<sub>2</sub> or on the PSP<sub>2</sub>.This demanded applying the T-test to determine the statistical difference between the means on the two paired sets of scores. Once the T-test was applied to the two paired sample groups (Tables 2-d and 2-e, below), it was discovered that the difference in means between the two sets (ESP<sub>2</sub> vs. PSP<sub>2</sub>) were 16.85 vs. 19.42 with significance levels of 0.048 and 0.049. This indicates that there is a significant difference in performance between ESP<sub>2</sub> vs. PSP<sub>2</sub>. Thus, as far as these particular sets of groups are concerned, the second research question as to the selection of the topic(s) is answered in favor of the subject groups in PSP<sub>2</sub>.

**TABLE 2-D:**  
PAIRED SAMPLE STATISTICS

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	ESP2(PT)	16.85	120	8.856	.808
	PSP2(PT)	18.77	120	11.284	1.030

**TABLE 2-E:**  
PAIRED SAMPLE TEST

	Paired Differences	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean			
Pair 1Past Q2 - Past N2	-1.917	-2.261	119	.026

**TABLE 3-A:**  
MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR ESP<sub>3</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
		Groups			
P <sub>3</sub>	Pre – test	DTG	14.54	4.109	30
		CTG	12.50	5.227	30
		PTG	11.32	4.772	30
		NTG	12.79	6.446	30
	Post - test	DTG	13.87	4.962	30
		CTG	18.13	6.230	30
		PTG	15.83	7.183	30
		NTG	12.28	6.030	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	0.67	5.7655	30
		CTG	-5.63	7.5185	30
		PTG	-4.51	7.8275	30
		NTG	0.51	8.238	30

**TABLE 3-A':**  
MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR PSP<sub>3</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
		Groups			
P' <sub>3</sub>	Pre – test	DTG	15.08	4.328	30
		CTG	16.00	4.883	30
		PTG	12.99	4.446	30
		NTG	13.12	7.969	30
	Post - test	DTG	20.30	8.657	30
		CTG	18.30	5.621	30
		PTG	18.84	5.075	30
		NTG	13.32	7.597	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	-5.22	7.7425	30
		CTG	-2.3	6.252	30
		PTG	-5.85	5.7605	30
		NTG	-0.2	9.783	30

With respect to the third research question, the figures contained in tables 3-a vs. 3-a' representing the differences in

mean scores of all Ps in the ESP3 reveal that the highest rate of performance in selection and identification of subtopic(s) of the reading passage belongs to the CTG (-5.63), and the lowest rate of performance to the NTG (-0.2). As for the differences in mean scores of all P's in the PSP3, it is clear that the highest level of performance is observed in the PTG (-5.85) and the lowest level in the NTG (-0.51).

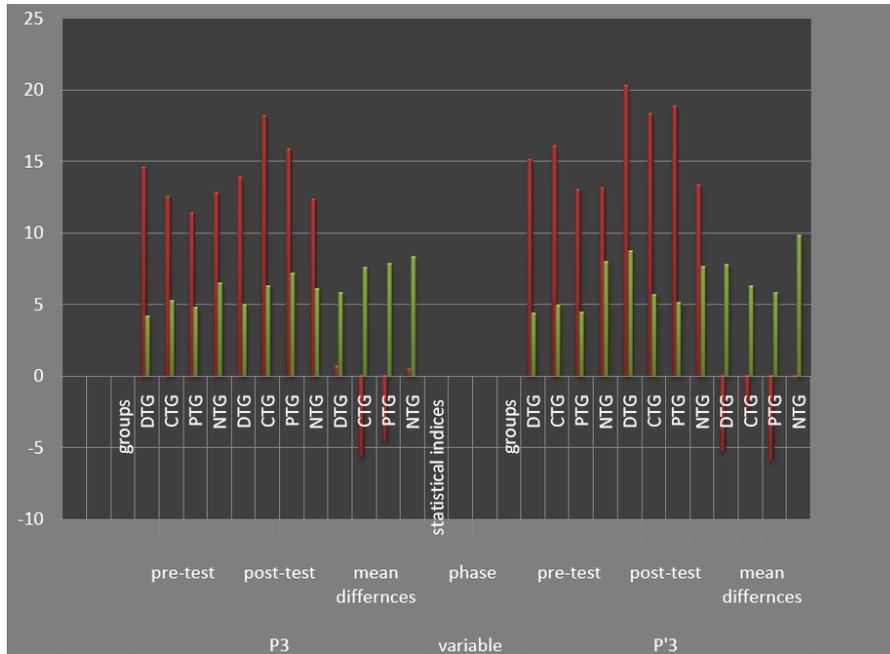


Figure 3: Graphic Representation of the Performance of Subject Groups on ESP3 vs. PSP3

However, in order to see whether or not the differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was run. The results of the ANOVA procedure for the ESP3 and PSP3 are given below in Tables 3-3-b and 3-3-b'.

TABLE 3-B:  
THE RESULTS OF ANOVA ON ESP<sub>3</sub> POST – TEST

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	576.122	3	192.041	5.074	.002
Within Groups	4390.452	116	37.849		
Total	4966.574	119			

TABLE 3-B':  
THE RESULTS OF ANOVA ON PSP<sub>3</sub> POST – TEST

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	827.832	3	275.944	5.809	.001
Within Groups	5510.426	116	47.504		
Total	6338.258	119			

According to Table 3-b, the results of ANOVA procedure on mean differences of ESP3 post-test as reflected in the F-ratio of 5.074 and the significance level of 0.002 (sig<%5) indicate that because the level of statistical significance is lower than %5, it can logically be argued that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups. To locate where the differences between the groups lie, the post-hoc Tukey's HSD was applied resulting in Table 3-c. A similar examination of the results of ANOVA on the PSP3 post-test with F-ratio of 5.809 and the statistical significance of 0.001 belonging to the means of the groups reveal that in this case because the significance level is lower than %5, it can be asserted that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups of PSP3. To locate the differences between the groups, the post-hoc Tukey's HSD was applied which resulted into Table 3-c'.

TABLE 3-C:  
THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON ESP<sub>3</sub> POST – TEST

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	0.67	-	-	-	-
CTG	-5.63	*	-	-	*
PTG	-4.51	-	-	-	-
NTG	0.51	-	*	-	-

TABLE 3-C':  
THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON PSP<sub>3</sub> POST – TEST

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	-5.22	-	-	-	*
CTG	-2.3	-	-	-	*
PTG	-5.85	-	-	-	*
NTG	-0.2	*	*	*	-

The difference between the ESP3 and PSP3 thus confirmed, one more procedure was required to prove on which set did the subject groups outperformed the other, on the ESP3 or on the PSP3. This demanded applying the T-test to determine the statistical difference between the means on the two paired sets of scores. Once the T-test was applied to the two paired sample groups (Table3-d and 3-e, below) it was found that the difference in means between the two sets (ESP3 vs. PSP3) were 15.03 and 17.69 with significance levels of 0.003 and 0.003. This indicates that there is a

significant difference in performance between ESP3 vs. PSP3. Thus, as far as these particular paired sets of groups are concerned, the third research question as to the selection of the sub-topic(s) is answered in favor of the subject groups in the PSP3.

TABLE 3-D:  
PAIRED SAMPLE STATISTICS

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	ESP3(PT)	15.03	120	6.460	.590
	PSP3(PT)	17.69	120	7.298	.666

TABLE 3-E:  
PAIRED SAMPLE TEST

	Paired Differences Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
ESP3(PT) – PSP3(PT)	-2.664	-3.926	119	.000

TABLE 4-A:  
TOTAL MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR ESP<sub>3</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
		Groups			
P <sub>5</sub>	Pre – test	DTG	80.67	30.147	30
		CTG	65.41	25.532	30
		PTG	64.88	21.480	30
		NTG	69.78	30.945	30
	Post - test	DTG	83.02	30.888	30
		CTG	88.26	31.640	30
		PTG	68.50	29.918	30
		NTG	60.07	38.996	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	-2.35	32.3875	30
		CTG	-22.85	30.086	30
		PTG	-3.62	26.999	30
		NTG	9.71	36.9705	30

TABLE 4-A':  
TOTAL MEANS AND STD<sub>s</sub> OF SCORES FOR PSP<sub>3</sub> ACROSS SUBJECT GROUPS ON THE PRE – TEST AND POST – TEST

Variable	Phase	Statistical Indices	Means	Std. Deviations	N=120
		Groups			
P <sub>5</sub> '	Pre – test	DTG	87.96	26.319	30
		CTG	76.41	22.442	30
		PTG	72.43	40.557	30
		NTG	78.56	42.141	30
	Post - test	DTG	86.92	33.818	30
		CTG	85.87	31.655	30
		PTG	85.92	17.242	30
		NTG	63.73	41.358	30
	Mean Differences	DTG	1.04	31.8185	30
		CTG	-9.46	28.0485	30
		PTG	-13.49	30.1495	30
		NTG	14.83	43.7495	30

To answer the fourth and in fact the last research question, a careful look at Tables-4-a vs.4-a' above representing the differences in mean scores of all P<sub>s</sub> in the ESPs reveals that the highest level of performance is observed in the CTG (-6) and the lowest level in the NTG (1.03). As for the differences in mean scores of all P<sub>s</sub> in the PSPs, it is evident that in this set of groups the highest performance belongs to the CTG (-4.19) and the lowest to the NTG (0.14).

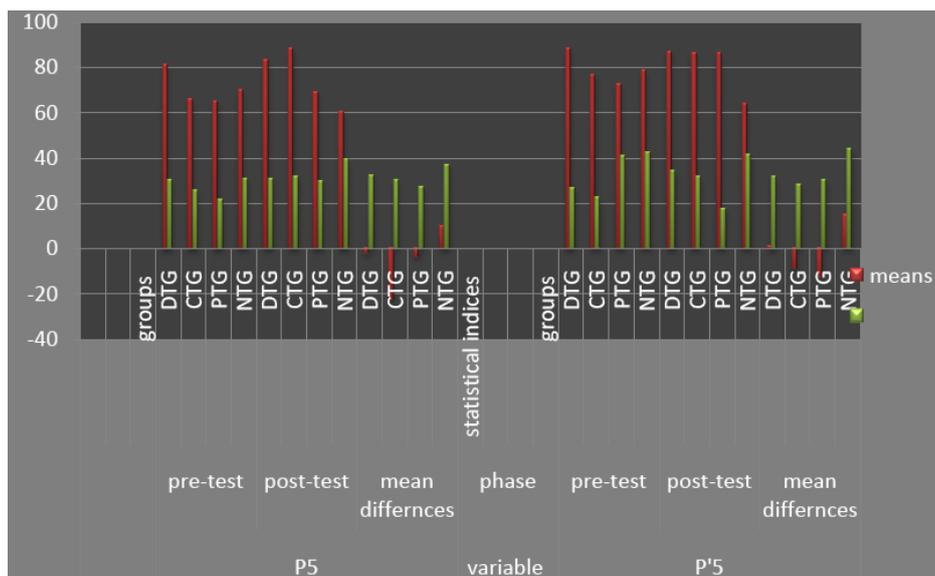


Figure 3-4: Graphic Representation of the Performance of the Subject Groups on ESP4 vs. PSP4

Nevertheless, in order to see whether or not the differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was run. The results of the NOVA procedure for the ESPs and PSPs are given below in Tables-4-b and 4-b'.

**TABLE 4-B:**  
THE RESULTS OF TOTAL ANOVAS ON ESP<sub>s</sub> POST – TESTS

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	15159.426	3	5053.142	4.624	.004
Within Groups	126756.17	116	1092.726		
Total	141915.60	119			

**TABLE 4-B':**  
THE RESULTS OF TOTAL ANOVAS ON PSP<sub>s</sub> POST- TESTS

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - ratio	Sig
Between Groups	11415.548	3	3805.183	3.665	.014
Within Groups	120451.19	116	1038.372		
Total	131866.74	119			

According to Tables 4-b, the results of total ANOVA procedure on the mean differences of the ESPs post-tests as reflected in the F-ratio of 6.624 and significance level of 0.004 (sig<%5) reveals that because the level of significance is lower than %5, it can reasonably be inferred that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups. To locate the differences between the groups, the post-hoc Tukey's HSD was applied resulting in Table 4-c. A similar examination of the results of ANOVA on PSPs post-tests with F-ratio of 3.665 and the statistical significance 0.014 belonging to the means of the groups indicate that in this case too because the significance level is lower than %5, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference among the subject groups of PSPs. To locate the differences between the group, the Tukey's HSD was applied which resulted in Table 4-c'.

**TABLE 4-C:**  
THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON TOTAL ESP<sub>s</sub> POST – TESTS

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	-2.35	-	-	-	*
CTG	-22.85	-	-	-	*
PTG	-3.62	-	-	-	-
NTG	9.71	*	*	-	-

**TABLE 4-C':**  
THE RESULTS OF TUKEY'S HSD ON TOTAL PSPS POST – TESTS

Groups	Mean	DTG	CTG	PTG	NTG
DTG	1.04	-	-	-	*
CTG	-9.46	-	-	-	*
PTG	-13.49	-	-	-	*
NTG	14.83	*	*	*	-

The differences between the total ESPs and total PSPs thus confirmed, one more procedure was required to demonstrate on which set did the subject groups outperformed the other, on the ESPs or on the PSPs. This demanded applying the T-test to determine the statistical difference between the means on the two paired sets of scores. Once the Tukey test was applied to the two paired sample groups (Tables 4-d and 4-e, below), it was found that the difference in means between the two sets (ESPs vs. PSPs) were 16.9056 vs. 18.4778 with significance levels of 0.043 and 0.043, respectively. This clearly indicates that there is a significant difference in performance between the total ESPs vs. PSPs. Thus, as far as these particular paired sets of groups are concerned, the fourth research question regarding the degree of difference in reading comprehension ability of the ESPs vs. the PSPs (as reflected in their total difference indices) it can safely be claimed that the summary protocols produced in the L1 of the subjects (Persian) demonstrated a higher degree of reading comprehension ability vs. those protocols written in the TL (English). As a result, the last research question is answered positively in favor of the groups writing their summaries in their L1 (Persian).

**TABLE 4-D:**  
PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Total ESPs PTs	74.96	120	34.534	3.152
	Total PSPs PTs	80.61	120	33.288	3.039

**TABLE 4-E:**  
PAIRED SAMPLE TEST

	Paired Differences Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total ESPs PT – Total PSPs PT	-5.650	-1.914	119	.041

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### A. Research Findings Corresponding to Research Question 1

Overall, the experimental groups (DTG,CTG, and PTG) outperformed the control group (NTG) .This implies that the groups in which particular mediated-tasks were used did much better (in varying degrees) on both ESPs and PSPs in comparison with the group in which no mediated-tasks were used between reading the passage and the written summary protocols that ensued. One can also argue that particularly in PSPs, gains were significantly higher than those for the ESPs and this is again confirming the viewpoint that summarizing in one's L1 tends to result in a better performance than summarization in an L2. Furthermore, the efficacy of a task-based language teaching approach to contributing to improving reading comprehension is also confirmed.

##### B. Research Findings Corresponding to Research Question 2

With respect to the difference in performance of the same sample population on ESPs vs. PSPs (regarding the identification of the topics in the reading passage), it was found that the difference in means between the two sets (ESP2 vs. PSP2) were 16.85 vs. 18.77 with significance level of 0.026. This indicated that there was a significant difference in performance between ESP2 vs. PSP2. Thus, as far as the particular sets of groups were concerned, the second research question as to the selection of the topic(s) was answered in favor of the subject groups in PSP2. This is a finding in support of an argument put forward by Nuttal (1982, p. 187) to the effect that students who are permitted to use their L1 in responding will explore the text more accurately and thoroughly than those who are restricted to target language responses.

#### C. *Research Findings Corresponding to Research Question 3*

The difference in performance of the same sample population on ESPs vs. PSPs (on identification of the subtopic(s) in the reading passage assigned), it was discovered that the difference in means between the two sets (ESP3 vs. PSP3) were 15.03 vs. 17.69 with significance level of 0.000. This indicated that there was a significant difference in performance between what happened on the ESP3 vs. PSP3. As a result, with respect to these particular sets of subject groups, the third research question as to the selection of the subtopics was answered in favor of the subject groups in PSP3. This is again a finding confirming the fact that in identifying the subtopics too performing in one's mother tongue contributes to better performance than performing in a target language.

#### D. *Research Findings Corresponding to Research Question 4*

As far as the last research question regarding the degree of difference in reading comprehension ability of the same sample population on the ESPs vs. PSPs is concerned (as reflected in their total mean difference indices) the following findings need to be taken into account. The difference in means between the two sets (ESP3 vs. PSP3) were 47.96 vs. 80.61 with the significance level of 0.041. This clearly indicates that the summary protocols produced in the L1 of the subjects (Persian) demonstrated a higher degree of reading comprehension ability vs. those protocols written in the L2 (English). As a result, the last research question is answered positively in favor of the groups writing their summaries in their L1 (Persian).

In sum, of the four research questions formulated above, it can be stated that according to the findings available:

1. Across the subject groups in the study, the experimental groups (in which particular mediated tasks were used between the reading passage and the written summary protocols) outperformed the control group.
2. Across the subject groups in the study, the experimental groups whose summary protocols were written in Persian outperformed the other groups whose summary protocols were written in English.

### V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings mentioned above, from particular groups of EAP subjects and with a particular elicitation technique (cross-linguistic summary protocol) and under particular task conditions, a number of conclusions may seem warranted. First of all, the facts and figures related to the first research question highlight the facilitating effect of the mediating tasks in improving reading comprehension of a source text. In addition, it was empirically established that the L1 of the foreign language learner is not necessarily a hampering factor in improving reading comprehension among the adult second/foreign language learner in EAP courses. Furthermore, as far as the integration of reading and writing skills aimed at assessing reading comprehension of EAP students is concerned, an integrative orientation in teaching and learning English and in syllabus design was sufficiently justified. The two skills, if made use of appropriately, can be mutually supportive.

Looked at from another perspective, the outperformance of the subjects on the PSPs (and their relative poor performance on the ESPs) may suggest that we need to make a reasonable distinction between the "reading comprehension ability" and the "language proficiency" of the learners. To clarify the point, failing to write a well-developed summary protocol in the TL, by and in itself, does not imply insufficient reading comprehension ability on the part of the foreign language learners. They may not be well-versed in productive aspects of the TL (text length, syntactic complexity, lexical familiarity etc.); however, they may demonstrate that their reading comprehension ability is not flawed as might be expected in such cases. This conclusion appears to be in line with the view expressed by Koda (2005, p. 249) to the effect that "language-production skills generally lag behind comprehension capabilities, and task performance, if required in L2, can be seriously constrained by production, rather than comprehension liabilities." In another study, American college students studying Spanish produced, on average, longer and more accurate protocols in their L1 (Lee, 1986) than a comparable group who conveyed their recall in L2 (Carrell, 1983).

As such, post reading response construction subsumes comprehension, and it does not seem unlikely that successful achievement can be a reliable indicator of comprehension competence. Unsuccessful performance, on the other hand, reveals little about comprehension per se, because failed efforts, Koda (2005, p. 249) argues can be attributed to comprehension or to production limitations. In sum, language selection for auxiliary non-text elements is a unique problem in L2 reading assessment, particularly when the intent is gauging comprehension rather than language proficiency. Therefore, appearing incompetent in expressing oneself in L2 writing can not be taken as the sole determinant in reading comprehension. The current production-based techniques of reading comprehension assessment

with their preoccupation with production (e.g. summary protocol) apparently fail to fully tap the reading comprehension ability of L2 learners.

A corollary of the same issue is that based on the research findings reported here, it appears that in EAP courses, as far as reading comprehension in L2 is concerned, language learners typically tend to look at a text as a "vehicle for information", not as a "linguistic object". To them, the focus is predominantly on the information contained in the text rather than concentrating on every details of any linguistic significance. As a result, recourse to the L1 in reading comprehension in any L2 (whether receptively or productively) is not a phenomenon to frown upon.

## VI. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The pedagogical implications from this research are hoped to be of potential and/or practical value to the practitioners involved in EAP, in particular to those dealing with the instruction of reading comprehension skill or writing. Theoreticians in the relevant field may also find some useful hints and clues to boost further research. More specifically, the findings of the research are assumed to contribute to a better and more profound understanding of the following topics as well as to addressing them in curricular planning: a. task-mediation, b. skills-integration, c. summarization, d. cross-linguistic approach to EAP, e. content-based, and ESAP instruction.

## VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The present study suffered from a number of limitations, some arising from the complexity and dynamics of the nature of reading-writing interconnections, and others from the limitations probably imposed by the conceptual framework adopted, sampling procedure, variables selected for the study, instrumentation, etc. Such factors clearly restrict the generalizability of the results. Some of these factors can be listed as follows:

To measure the reading comprehension ability of the EFL learners, summary protocols are not the only diagnostic tools for researchers to rely on. Other task formats, from discrete-point response modes, such as matching, true-false, multiple-choice and cloze deletion items, to global response modes such as recall protocols are among the other tools serving researchers. The present study aimed to concentrate on analyzing summaries as "products" of reading-writing connections; therefore, the "processes" involved in this respect were consciously excluded from the research design, because that can be the subject of another independent study.

Because of the time- limitation the researcher faced with, it is believed that a longitudinal study of the same issue may arrive at results partly or totally different from those obtained here. The number of participants had to be limited to around 120 to enable the researchers to take into account the problems of manageability and practicality. Therefore, care must be taken as to the comprehensiveness of the conclusions reached because they may not be applicable to a wider representative population.

### APPENDIX I THE FULL TEXT OF THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST READING COMPREHENSION PASSAGES

#### A. *The Full Text of the Pre-test Reading Comprehension Passage*

##### WHAT IS STRESS?

The term stress has been defined in several different ways. Sometimes the term is applied to stimuli or events in our environment that make physical and emotional demands on us, and sometimes it is applied to our emotional and physical reactions to such stimuli. In this discussion, we will refer to the environmental stimuli or events as stressors and to emotional and physical and physical reactions as stress.

Many sorts of events can be stressors, including disasters such as hurricanes or tornadoes, major life events such as divorce or the loss of a job, and daily hassles such as having to wait in line at the supermarket when you need to be somewhere else in ten minutes. What all these events have in common is that they interfere with or threaten our accustomed way of life. When we encounter such stressors, we must pull together our mental and physical resources in order to deal with the challenge.

How well we succeed in doing so will determine how serious a toll the stress will take on our mental and physical well-being.

##### REACTING TO STRESSORS

The Canadian physiologist Hans Seyle has been the most influential researcher and writer on stress. Seyle has proposed that both humans and other animals react to any stressor in three stages, collectively known as the general adaptation syndrome. The first stage, when the person or animal first becomes aware of the stressor, is the alarm reaction. In this stage, the organism becomes highly alert and aroused, energized by a burst of epinephrine. After the alarm reaction comes the stage of resistance, as the organism tries to adapt to the stressful stimulus or to escape from it. If these efforts are successful, the state of the organism returns to normal. If the organism cannot adapt to continuing stress, however, it enters a stage of exhaustion or collapse.

Seyle developed his model of the general adaptation syndrome as a result of research with rats and other animals. In rats, certain stressors, such as painful tail-pulling, consistently lead to the same sorts of stress reactions. In humans, however, it is harder to predict what will be stress- full to a particular person at a particular time. Whether a particular

stimulus will be stressful depends on the person's subjective appraisal of that stimulus. How threatening is it? How well have I handled this sort of thing in the past? How well will I be able to handle it this time? For one person, being called upon to give a talk in front of a class is a highly stressful stimulus that will immediately produce such elements of an alarm reaction as a pounding heart and a dry mouth. For another person, being called on to give a talk is not threatening at all, but facing a dead-line to complete a term paper is extremely stressful. In humans, more-over, the specific stress reaction is likely to vary widely; some stressful situations give rise predominantly to emotions of fear, some to anger, some to helplessness and depression

*B. The full Text of the Post-test Reading Comprehension Passage*

**SIMILARITY**

If people could construct heir mates, the mates would look, act, and think very much like themselves. By being attracted to people like ourselves, we are in effect validating ourselves, saving to ourselves that we are worthy of being liked, that we are attractive. Although there are exceptions, we generally like people who are similar to ourselves in nationality, race, ability, physical characteristics, intelligence, attitudes, and so on. We are often attracted to mirror images of ourselves.

**THE MATCHING HYPOTHESIS**

If you were to ask a group of friends, "To whom are you attracted?" they would probably name very attractive people; in fact, they would probably name the most attractive people they know. But if we would find that they go out with and establish relationships with people who are quite similar to themselves in terms of physical attractiveness. Useful in this connection is the matching hypothesis, which states that although we may be attracted to the most physically attractive people, we date and mate with people who are similar to ourselves in physical attractiveness. Intuitively, this too seems satisfying. In some cases, however, we notice discrepancies; we notice an old person dating an attractive younger partner or an unattractive person with a handsome partner, in these cases, we will probably find that the less attractive partner possesses some quality that compensates for the lack of physical attractiveness. Prestige, money, intelligence, power, and various personality characteristics are obvious examples of qualities that may compensate for being less physically attractive.

**ATTITUDE SIMILARITY**

Similarity is especially important when it comes to attitudes. We are particularly attracted to people who have attitudes similar to our own, who like what we like, and who dislike what we dislike. The more significant the attitude, the more important the similarity. For example, it would not make much difference if the attitudes of two people toward food or furniture differed (though even these can at times be significant), but it would be of great significance if their attitudes toward children or religion or politics were very disparate. Marriages between people with great and salient dissimilarities are more likely to end in divorce than are marriages between people who are very much alike.

Generally, we maintain balance with ourselves by liking people who are similar to us and who like what we like. It is psychologically uncomfortable to like people who do not like what we like or to dislike people who like what we like. Our attraction for similarity enables us to achieve psychological balance or comfort. The person who lies what we like in effect tells us that we are right to like what we like. Even after an examination it is helpful to find people who wrote the same answers we did.

Notice the next time you have an examination how you prefer the company of others who have given the same answers as you!

**APPENDIX II**

**(a)The Evaluation Scale of English Summaries**

- points
1. Identification of the main idea(s) of the reading text targeted. (0)—————→ ( 30)
2. Identification of the subtopic(s) of the reading text-targeted. (0) —————→ (30)

**(b)**

**مقیاس ارزشیابی خلاصه نوشت فارسی**

**امتیاز داده شده**

- 1 - شناسائی موضوع / موضوعات اصلی متن خواننده → ( 30 )  
( 0 )
- 2 - شناسائی موضوع / موضوعات فرعی متن خواننده → ( 30 )  
( 0 )

## REFERENCES

- [1] Broukal, M. (2004). Weaving it together 4 (Connecting reading and writing). Boston: Thomson (Heinle).
- [2] Brown, H. D. (2001). Teaching by principles (An interactive approach to language pedagogy (2nd edition). New York: Longman (Pearson Education).
- [3] Brown, H. D. (2004). Language assessment (Principles and classroom practices). New York; Pearson Longman.
- [4] Carekkm P. L. (1983). Three components of background knowledge in reading comprehension. *Language Learning*, 33, 183-207.
- [5] Davies, P. & Pearse, E. (2000). Success in English teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [6] Farahzad, F. & Emam A. (2010). Reading-writing connections in EAP courses: implications and application. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. 1(5), 596-604.
- [7] Grabe, W. (2003). Reading and writing relations: second language perspectives on research and practice, In Kroll, B.(Ed.). *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing* (pp. 242-262). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Hock, S.T., & Poh, C.L. (1997). The performance of a group of Malay-Medium students in an English reading comprehension test. *RELC Journal*, 10, 81-89.
- [9] Johns, A., & Mayes, P. (1990). An analysis of summary protocols of university ESL students. *Applied Linguistics*, (11), 253-271.
- [10] Kirkland, M. R. & Saunders, M. A. (1991). Maximizing student performance in summary writing: Managing cognitive load: *TESOL Quarterly*, 25, (1).
- [11] Koda, K. (2005). Insights into second language reading (a cross-linguistic approach). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [12] Lee, J.F. (1986). On the use of the recall task to measure L2 reading comprehension. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12, 25-41.
- [13] Lee, J.F. (1987). Background knowledge and L2 reading. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 350-354.
- [14] Nunan, D. (Ed.) (2003). Practical English language teaching. New York: McGraw Hill.
- [15] Nuttall, C. (1996). Teaching reading skills in a foreign language. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.
- [16] Rodriguez, K. E. (2006). Contemporary issues and decisions (Reading, writing, and thinking in today's world). Longman (Pearson Education).
- [17] Seal, B. (1997). Academic encounters (Reading, study skills, and writing). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [18] Shohamy, E. (1985). A practical handbook in language testing for the second language teacher. Tel Aviv, Israel: School of Education. Tel Aviv University.
- [19] Wolf, D.F. (1993). A comparison of assessment tasks used to measure foreign language reading comprehension. *The Modern Language Journal*, 77(4), 473-488.

**Abbas Emam** holds a PhD in TEFL from Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran. He has been teaching at the English Department of Shahid Cahmaran University of Ahvaz, Iran since 2001. His main field of interest is translation studies, and has been extensively writing and translating on different aspects of translation issues in Iranian magazines and journals, e.g. Motarjem (The Translator), The Iranian Journal of Translation Studies.

# Length-based Bilingual Sentence Alignment in Different Literary Forms

Jun Zhao

School of Foreign Languages, Tianjin University of Technology, Tianjin, China

Email: junzhao.tj@gmail.com

**Abstract**—Text alignment can be a useful practical tool for assisting translators. We use length-based method to calculate and try to find out the estimated correlation between different literary forms. Also the findings can be revealed from the modern and classical Chinese texts. At last we get a potential lexical pattern from different texts following the basic lexical-based method.

**Index Terms**—sentence alignment, length-based method, literary form, content-focused text, form-focused text, classical Chinese

## I. INTRODUCTION

The possible units of translation are phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences and entire texts. Chinese-English sentence alignment method taking word as length computation unit gets the best alignment result. The Chinese-English corpora that are translated literally are suitable to be aligned on sentence level with statistical method. The following experiments are carried out through POS tagging, frequency and rank detecting. We use length-based method to calculate and try to find out the estimated correlation between different literary forms. Also the findings can be revealed from the modern and classical Chinese texts.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the available length-based Chinese-English sentence alignment methods take Byte as their sentence length computation unit. The Chinese-English corpora that are translated literally are suitable to be aligned on sentence level with statistical method. But the method used to compute the parameters in processing Indo-European language must be adjusted before applying to Chinese-English corpora. Zhang Xia, Zan Hongying and Zhang Enzhan (2009) proposed six different sentence length computation methods which take verb, noun, adjective, content word, byte and all the word of a sentence is proposed as the sentence length. The experiment results illustrate that Chinese-English sentence alignment method taking word as length computation unit gets the best alignment result, and the precision and recall are 99.01% and 99.5% respectively. Lv Xueqiang, Li Qingyin, Huang Zhidan, Shen Yanna and Yao Tianshun (2008) presented five evaluation functions based on the former two evaluation functions, and then seven functions are researched comparably. Lai Maosheng and Qu Peng (2009) analyzed the query logs from search engine. Pos tagging is used to get the characters of high frequency POS (part of speech) results. Web users' use nouns to do concept focused retrieval and keywords are still the primary method to search on the Web.

## III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Translation is not only a science with its own laws and methods but also an art of reproduction and recreation. Good translation conforms to the principles—faithfulness in content, expressiveness in wording and closeness in style. The possible units of translation are phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences and entire texts. The possible units of translation are phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences and entire texts. 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. (Eugene A. Nida) A word is a world. It is history in the briefest form. It is a spot on a page but often a story of great events and movement. You can't examine a word and learn it well without learning more than a word. (Charles W. Ferguson)

Indeed it is difficult to align translations based on the words, for it is more difficult to decide which words in an original are responsible for a given one in a translation and some words apparently translate morphological or syntactic phenomena. But text alignment can help us dealing with EST translation and reduce the burden on human by first aligning the old and revised document to find out changes, then aligning the old document with its translation, and finally splitting in changed sections in the new document into the translation of the old document, in which way the translators only have to translate the changed sections. The commonest case of one sentence being translated as one sentence is referred to as a 1:1 sentence alignment. Studies suggest around 90% of alignment are usually of this sort. But sometimes translators break up or join sentences, yielding 1:2 or 2:1, and even 1:3 or 3:1 sentence alignments.

The following experiments are carried out through POS tagging, frequency and rank detecting by ICTCLAS developed by Chinese Academy of Sciences and CLAWS (Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System) developed by Lancaster University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language. CLAWS has consistently achieved 96-97% accuracy (the precise degree of accuracy varying according to the type of text). And the corpora are the latest (WEO) world economic outlook projection released at July 8, 2010 from World Bank, several chapters from *The Importance of Living* and *Quiet Dream Shadows* by Lin Yutang. Dr. Lin was very active in the popularization of classical Chinese literature in the West, as well as the general Chinese attitude towards life. His informal but polished style in both Chinese and English made him one of the most influential writers of his generation, and his compilations and translations of classic Chinese texts into English were bestsellers in the West. *The importance of living* published in 1937 was an outstanding translation work expressing the disposition culture to help westerners get better knowledge of Chinese culture. It was originally written in modern Chinese by Lin Yutang. *Quiet Dream Shadows* by Zhang Chao, a well-known writer from Qing Dynasty, was translated by Lin Yutang. The results show the similarity and disparity through the comparison between different literary forms, practical writings and literary works. Also the findings can be revealed from the modern and classical Chinese texts. There are about 150 pairs of sentences of each category in this experiment. We use length-based method to calculate and try to find out the estimated correlation between different literary forms. At last we get a potential lexical pattern from different texts following the basic lexical-based method.

#### IV. METHODS AND FINDINGS

The principal kinds of text in the content-focused type would include press releases and comments, news report and other technical fields such as EST (English for Science & Technology or Technical English of Scientific English). It has its own stylistic features due to the specialty in content, field and discourse functions, and partly due to the unique habits of writers, which are mostly represented in lexical level and syntactical level being simply put as lengthy words (compounds, abbreviations, pseudo-technical terms and logic connectors), nominalization, the present and the perfect tense, the passive voice, the antecedent 'it' construction and double or triple propositions. We categorize the four groups, namely full words (content words), adjectives, verbs and nouns as different standards to identify the correlation between the English and Chinese texts. Adjectives are the least closely correlated tagging group next to verbs and nouns. The scatter plot can be perfectly described under the full words analysis.

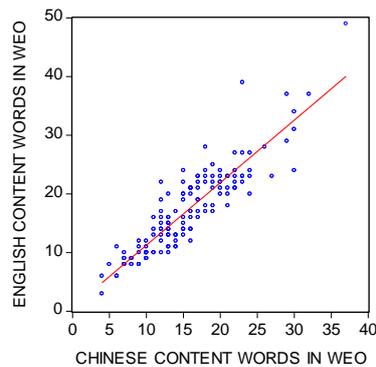


Figure 1. English Content Words in WEO vs. Chinese Content Words in WEO

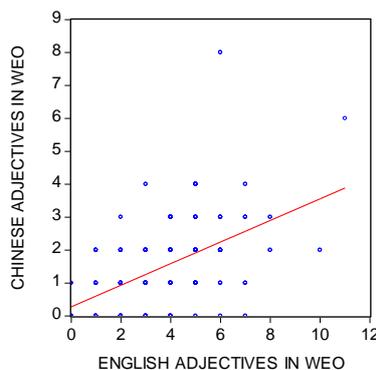


Figure 2. English Adjectives in WEO vs. Chinese Adjectives in WEO

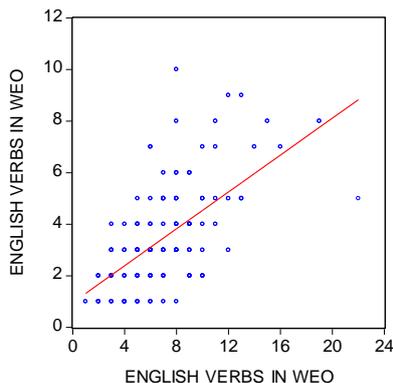


Figure 3. English Verbs in WEO vs. Chinese Verbs in WEO

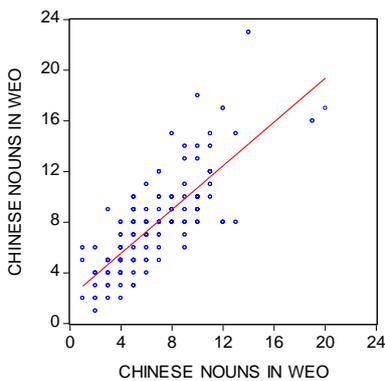


Figure 4. English Nouns in WEO vs. Chinese Nouns in WEO

Form-focused texts include literary prose, imaginative prose, and poetry in all its forms. Except for the adjectives which are the most irregular group, the verbs are now less highly correlated compared to the neatly plotted verbs WEO text. The first of all full words plot is less strongly correlated which is fitted in form-focused texts. As a transition part of the experiments, we mostly focus on the several literary forms and language revolutions results.

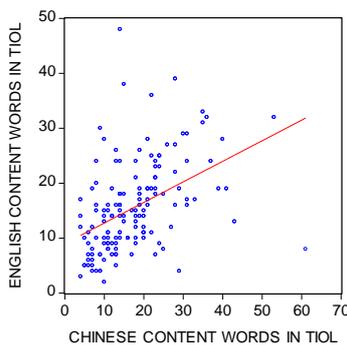


Figure 5. English Content Words in TIOL vs. Chinese Content Words in TIOL

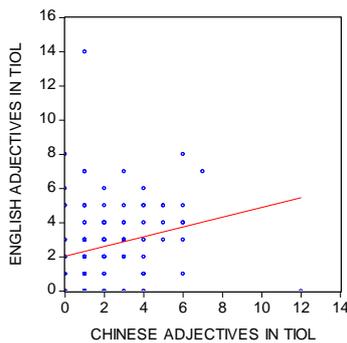


Figure 6. English Adjectives in TIOL vs. Chinese Adjectives in TIOL

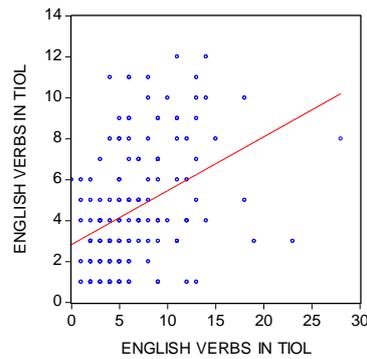


Figure 7. English Verbs in TIOL vs. Chinese Verbs in TIOL

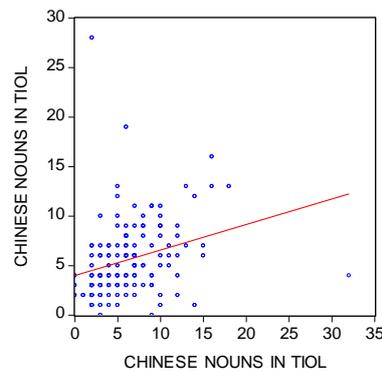


Figure 8. English Nouns in TIOL vs. Chinese Nouns in TIOL

Classical Chinese has no development of a prescriptive grammar and only by imitating earlier models rather than by obeying explicit rules as in Latin. Full words, also called content words and empty words are two major categories in Classical Chinese. The full words include nouns, verbs, adjectives, numerals and unit words, also known as expressions of quantity. On the contrary, the empty words relates to particles with its main function carrying grammatical meanings. The foreigners beginning their own research or learning often find themselves at a loss reading “real” texts, in which such problems abound. Much more important than any of the secondary literature, however, is to read the sources themselves, in translation at first and later in the original. With the exception of the subject and predicate part which both are the necessary parts of the sentences, in Chinese there are some special features among the sentences. Some of the verbs are used as noun-like words whereas other words are placed as preposition usage in English but called co-verbs. Numerals and expression of quantity also behave syntactically like verbs.

The last group in our analysis is the following estimation. It tells us that in this section verbs and nouns are sparsely scattered and the dots which are decentralized around the regression line increase. On the contrary, the full words plot seems much better applicable to the prediction than the form-focused texts. According to the diverse characteristics of the languages and authors, the Classical Chinese works had better be co-translated by both translators at home or abroad. Since it is also difficult when we translate Classical Chinese into modern Chinese, there are more considerations should be taken into account when we translate or interpret Classical Chinese into English. Similar to the Old English, lexical and syntactical traditions must be the two misleading factors through the translation. A more detailed classification could be set into the Classical literature as to the everyday usage and literary usage and then a more useful conclusion could be drawn.

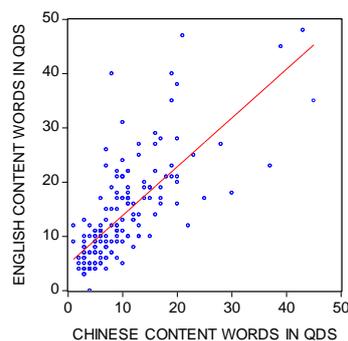


Figure 9. English Content Words in QDS vs. Chinese Content Words in QDS

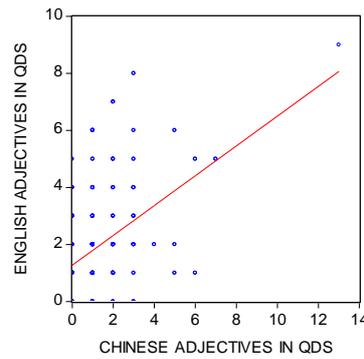


Figure 10. English Adjectives in QDS vs. Chinese Adjectives in QDS

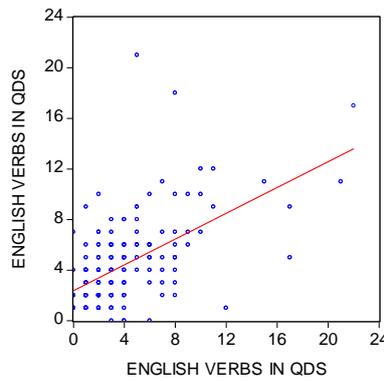


Figure 11. English Verbs in QDS vs. Chinese Verbs in QDS

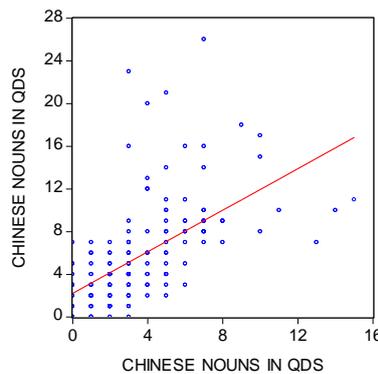


Figure 12. English Nouns in QDS vs. Chinese Nouns in QDS

Zipf’s law states that given some corpus of natural language utterances, the frequency of any word is inversely proportional to its rank in the frequency table. It is not known why Zipf’s law holds for most languages. However, it may be partially explained by the statistical analysis of randomly-generated texts. We only make the Classical Chinese rank-frequency analysis in order to get a specific result under our assumption. The distribution applies to the law under various empirical estimations. The graph shows rank on the X-axis versus frequency on the Y-axis. The Zipf’s law graph corresponds to Zipf’s prediction that the frequency of the most frequent words is lower. Here we only present the regular graph rather than the doubly logarithmic axes which approximates the second best result. In the future, a further analysis related to the Chinese poetry maybe conducted but only with the improvement of the tagging or other tools.

$$f \propto \frac{1}{r}, \tag{1}$$

or, in other words:

There is a constant k such that

$$f \cdot r = k. \tag{2}$$

$$f = (r + \rho)^{-B} \text{ or } \log f = \log P - B \log(r + \rho).$$

Here P, B and ρ are parameters of a text, that collectively measure the richness of the text’s use of words.

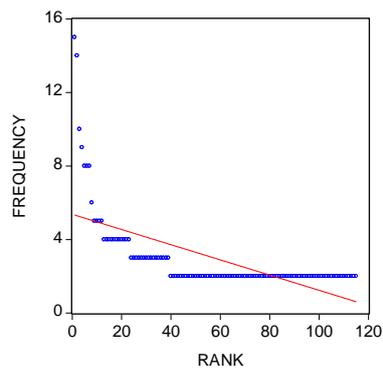


Figure 13. Frequency vs. rank

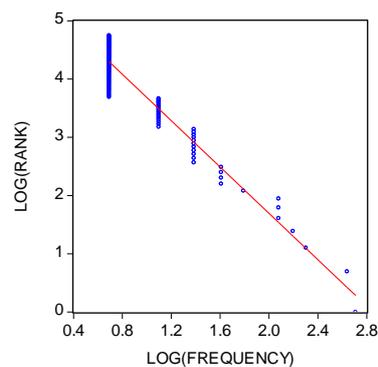


Figure 14. Log (rank) vs. log (frequency)

## V. CONCLUSION

The results show the similarity and disparity through the comparison between different literary forms, practical writings and literary works. Also the findings can be revealed from the modern and Classical Chinese texts. Except for the adjectives which are the most irregular group, the verbs are now less highly correlated compared to the neatly plotted verbs WEO text. The first of all full words plot is less strongly correlated which is fitted in form-focused texts. Verbs and nouns are sparsely scattered and the dots which are decentralized around the regression line increase in Classical Chinese texts. On the contrary, the full words plot seems much better applicable to the prediction than the form-focused texts. Chinese-English sentence alignment method taking word as length computation unit gets the best alignment result. The Zipf's law graph corresponds to Zipf's prediction that the frequency of the most frequent words is lower.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to thank Prof. Xu for his kindness and help.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Catford, J. C. (ed.) (1965). *A linguistic theory of Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [2] Chris, Manning & Hinrich Schütze (eds.) (1999). *Foundations of statistical natural language processing*. MA: MIT Press.
- [3] Free CLAWS WWW trial service. (2010). <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/trial.html> (accessed 8/8/2010).
- [4] Halliday, M. A. K. (ed.) (2006). *Studies in Chinese language*. New York: Continuum International Publishing.
- [5] Lai, M. S. & P. Qu. (2009). The POS and mining study on search engine's query log. *Knowledge Organization and Knowledge Management* 177.4, 50–56.
- [6] Lin, Y. T. (ed.) (2009). *The importance of living*. BJ: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [7] Lin, Y.T. (ed.). (2009). *The importance of understanding*. BJ: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [8] Lin Y. T. (ed.) (2010). *The importance of living*. BJ: Qun Yan Press.
- [9] Lv X. Q., Q. Y. Li, Z. D. Huang, Y. N. Shen & T. S. Yao. (2004). Towards Chinese-English sentence alignment based on statistical method. *Mini-micro Systems* 25.6, 990-992.
- [10] Kay, M. & M. Rscheisen (eds.) (1993). Text-translation alignment. *Computational Linguistics* 19.1, 121-142.
- [11] Nida, A. Eugene (ed.) (2001). *Language and Culture: Contexts in translation*. SH: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [12] Nida, A. Eugene (ed.) (2003). *The theory and practice of translation*. MA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- [13] Pulleyblank, E. G. (ed.) (1996). *Outline of Classical Chinese grammar*. CA: UBC Press.
- [14] UCREL CLAWS7 Tagset. (2010). <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws7tags.html> (accessed 10/8/2010).

- [15] Wang, F. (ed.) (2008). *Quiet dream shadows*. BJ: Zhong Hua Book Company.
- [16] Wang, J. Q. & K. F. Wang. (2008). Translation studies from the perspective of computational linguistics. *Journal of Foreign Languages* 31.3, 78-83.
- [17] World economic outlook update. (2010). <http://www.worldbank.org/> (accessed 20/8/2010).
- [18] World economic outlook update. (2010). <http://www.worldbank.org.cn/Chinese/> (accessed 20/8/2010).
- [19] Yang, Y. & G. Ma. (eds.) (2008). *A practical study on EST translation*. CN: Xi'an Jiaotong University Press.
- [20] Zhang, X., H. Y. Zan & E. Z. Zhang. (2009). Study on length computation method of Chinese-English sentence alignment. *Computer Engineering and Design* 18, 4356-4359.

**Jun Zhao** was born in Tianjin, China in 1983. She has been working on her M.A. degree in translation in Tianjin University of Technology, China in 2008.

She worked as a graduate assistant, assisting and collaborating in academic teaching or research activities in China. Her research interests include translation ecology and natural language processing.

# Analysis on the Main Factors Affecting the Reliability of Test Papers

Jiang Zhu

School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Science and Technology, Changchun, China  
Email: zhujiang98@163.com

Lemeng Han

School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Science and Technology, Changchun, China  
Department of Common Foreign Language Teaching, Guanghua College of Changchun University, Changchun, China  
Email: hanlemeng1982@sina.com

**Abstract**—Reliability is an important factor to evaluate test papers. This paper analyzes the factors which affect the reliability of test papers and discusses the methods to increase the reliability of test papers.

**Index Terms**—reliability, test paper, factor

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reliability refers to a measure which is reliable to the extent that independent but comparable measures of the same trait or construct of a given object agree. Reliability depends on how much variation in scores is attributable to random or chance errors.

It seems that it is difficult for us to trust any set of test scores completely because the scores will be different if the test has been administered on different situation. What can we do to reduce the declination of the tests? On one hand, we can construct and administer the score tests in such a way that scores actually obtained on a test on a particular occasion are similar to those which are obtained when the test is administered to the same students with the same ability, but at a different time. The more similar the scores are, the more reliable the test is. In this way the more reliability is obtained in the test.

On the other hand, we can give the candidates the same paper for many times. If the candidates get approximate scores on the same test paper regardless of the factors of time, place and so on, we can say that the paper has a high reliability. Reliability is a very important and necessary feature of test papers. Any paper without reliability can not reflect the true ability and level of the candidates.

## II. THE MAJOR FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE SCORES OF TEST PAPERS

To analyze the factors which affect the reliability based on scores, let us see the factors which can affect the scores of test papers. Bachman (1997) considers that the scores of test papers are determined by the following four factors: the language ability of candidates, testing methods, personal features and random factors.

The scores will be decided by the language ability of the candidates, which is a basic factor. If candidates take the same language test over and over again and their performance is not affected, we may estimate their language ability through their scores. The scores are called true scores of a test paper. The more true scores we can get the more reliability the test paper will achieve. Testing methods mainly refer to testing environment, testing arrangement, or time division, which can also influence the testing scores. For example, if we use direct testing, we can get the marks on the spot, but the candidates may be affected psychologically by the circumstantial factors and can not show their real ability. If we use indirect testing, the candidates may get higher scores because of the relaxation. Personal features refer to some personal characteristics which are irrelevant to the language ability of candidates, like the teacher's point of view or the students' attitude. Even though the teacher is objective, the candidates themselves will be influenced by their own factors psychologically and physically. Random factors refer to the factors which can not be predicted beforehand. The last three factors are not as popular as the first one, for they disturb the reflection of how candidates achieve their scores. Therefore, we can reduce the effect of the last three factors in a language test.

## III. THE MAJOR FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE RELIABILITY OF TEST PAPERS

In the previous part I analyze the factors which affect the scores of test papers. In this part I will discuss the factors which affect the reliability of test papers: the change of candidates, the process of testing, the features of tests and the methods of gong over test papers.

### A. *The Effects on Reliability through the Change of Candidates and Process of Testing*

The change of candidates themselves can affect testing scores by two methods. One is to change true score. The other is to mislead testing results. The former method can reflect the change of candidates' language ability. The latter one can affect candidates' real language level (Davies, 1990). For example, some factors such as sickness and emotions will interfere with the candidates' normal testing level so that the consistency of a test is reduced. Although these factors are unpredictable and there are also some accidents which are out of control, we still have to reduce the effects of these factors. We should inform candidates to rest instead of studying hard before they take tests. We should also improve the validity of the test paper (Liu, 2000). The content of the test paper should meet the needs of testing major students. No matter how perfect a test paper is it will still lose its consistency if there are some problems during the process of testing. This phenomenon often occurs and is easy to be neglected, such as testing environment and plagiarism.

Time distribution is also very important to reliability. In some tests which aim to test the speed of reading comprehension, scores not only reflect the candidates' comprehensive ability but also their reading speed. However, in some tests which aim at candidates' language ability, candidates have to prove their ability on a certain task. If time is not enough in such tests, the reliability of the tests will be influenced. Testing environment is also very important. Natural environment without noise and pollution will be the best choice. Candidates often work better on tests in the morning than in the afternoon.

### B. *The Effects of Testing Features on Its Reliability*

Some features such as length and difficulty on the test paper itself will also affect its reliability. No matter whether the standard level of testing is norm-referenced or criterion-referenced, longer papers always show more reliability than short ones. This is because the more contents there are in the test paper, the bigger scale there is in it. In fact, if there are more representative contents in the test paper, the reliability of the paper will be more complete. Therefore, important tests should be longer papers instead of short ones. Of course the content of test papers can not be over-sized, or the reliability of the papers will also be affected.

Some research shows that when the quantity of testing content surpasses a certain degree of asymptote, the quantity of the paper can not make effects on its reliability anymore. The degree of testing difficulty and division will also affect testing reliability. To some candidates, some easy and simple questions in the test seem to be difficult. If the questions in the test are either very difficult or very easy, the reliability of test paper will both be influenced. Therefore, researchers suggest that the difficulty of tests must be during 0.33-0.67(Harrison, 1983). The difficulty of test papers is a relative notion. We can not make all tests by one standard. For example, a high qualified TOEFL test paper may not be very appropriate as a mid-term exam for middle school students.

### C. *The Effects of Going over Test Papers on the Reliability of Tests*

No matter how well we have done in organizing test papers, the tests will also be unsuccessful if we make mistakes during the process of going over test papers. Objective questions don't require any subjective judgment so that it can achieve a high reliability and consistency. However, some subjective questions which need our subjective judgment will influence reliability of the tests for there are some differences between questioners and questionnaires.

In order to keep the reliability of the tests, we have to make a standard to go over the papers. If there is no such standard, a tester will make different comments on the same test paper in different time and place. For example, when we go over the writing part of a test paper, we may neglect some faults on grammar at the very beginning. But we will gradually notice the faults and focus more attention on its correctness. Finally we will change our attitude and be more critical with it (Heaton, 1988). Besides, personal attitude, ability and experience will also influence the consistency of going over a paper.

As far as we know, testing results are often influenced by the above four major factors. In order to keep the reliability of a test, we should be more careful of every point which is related to a test paper. Teachers should have some basic testing knowledge and trainings so that they can use test papers to test students' ability properly and effectively.

## IV. HOW TO INCREASE THE RELIABILITY OF TEST PAPERS

The reliability of a test paper is affected by some factors. In this part I will discuss the methods to increase the reliability of a test paper.

### A. *Do Not Allow the Candidates Too Much Freedom*

The range of the possible answers should be restricted in the questions of a test paper. In some language tests there is a tendency to offer candidates a choice of questions and allow them to answer the questions they have chosen with a great deal of freedom. The disadvantages are that the more freedom the candidates can get, the more difficult it is to estimate the levels of the different candidates for their performance. A good test paper should control the freedom and require the candidates to do the similar or the same task so that we can make the results of the test more objective and easy to make comparison (Madsen, 1983).

### B. *Do Not Write Ambiguous Items in Test Papers*

It is important for the candidates to get the items whose meanings are clear. The best way to get unambiguous items is to draft and check the items, and then subject them to the critical scrutiny of colleagues, who should try as hard as they can to find alternative interpretations to the ones intended. In this way most of the problems can be identified before the test is administered. The testers should also provide the explicit instructions to make sure that the candidates can understand the request and they should write the answers clearly. The test papers should be typed well so that the candidates can see the papers clearly.

#### *C. The Scorers Should Get Some Training*

This point is particularly important when the scoring is very subjective. The scoring of the composition, for example, should not be assigned to anyone who has not learned to score compositions accurately before. After going over test papers, patterns of scoring should be analyzed (Bachman, 1989). Individuals whose scoring deviates markedly and inconsistently from the norm should be told how to do it correctly. In addition, a detailed scoring key should be provided. It should be the outcome of efforts to anticipate all possible responses and should be subject to group criticism. Items can also be used to permit the scoring as objective as possible, such as those in multiple choices.

#### *D. Identify Candidates by Number Instead of Names*

Scorers inevitably have expectations of candidates whom they know. Except in purely objective testing, this will affect the way by which they score. Facts have shown that even when the candidates are unknown to the scorers, the name on a script will make a significant difference to the scores given (Henning, 1987). For example, a scorer may be influenced by the gender or nationality of a name and may make predictions which can affect the score given. The identification of the candidates by number will reduce such effects.

### V. CONCLUSION

In this paper I first mention the notion and importance of reliability. Then I discuss the main factors which affect the reliability of test papers. At last I analyze the way to increase the reliability of test papers. I hope that testers will make more and more reliable test papers in the future.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Bachman, L. F. (1997). *Fundamental Consideration in Language Test*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [2] Bachman, L. F. & Palmer A. S. (1997). *Language Test in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [3] Bachman, David. (1989). *Language Testing: A Critical Survey and Practical Guide*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [4] Davies, Alan. (1990). *Principles of Language Test*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [5] Harris, David. (1969). *Testing English as a Second Language*. New York: McGraw.
- [6] Harrison, Andrew. (1983). *A Language Testing Handbook*. London: Macmillan.
- [7] Heaton, J. B. (1988). *Writing English Language Test*. New York: Longman.
- [8] Henning, Grant. (1987). *A Guide to Language Test*. Cambridge: Newbury House.
- [9] Madsen, Harold S. (1983). *Techniques in Test*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [10] Liu Runqing. (2000). *Language Test and Its Methods*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

**Jiang Zhu** was born in Changchun, China in 1971. He received his M.A. degree in linguistics from Changchun University of Science and Technology, China in 2003.

He is currently an associate professor in School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Science and Technology. His research field is applied linguistics.

**Lemeng Han** was born in Changchun, China in 1982. She works in the Department of Common Foreign Language Teaching, Guanghua College of Changchun University.

She is now studying to get her M.A. degree in linguistics in School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Science and Technology. Her research field is applied linguistics.

# Investigating the Construct Validity of the FCE Reading Paper in Iranian EFL Context

Elahe Tavakoli

Higher Education Institute of Sobhe Sadegh, Isfahan, Iran

Email: Tavakoli.elahe@yahoo.com

Hossein Barati

University of Isfahan, Iran

Email: h.barati@gmail.com

**Abstract**—Validity studies on language proficiency tests have attracted many researchers in the last decades. Most of such studies try to investigate skills assessed by the items in the tests, hence the construct validity of the test. The present study took the same approach and therefore aimed to investigate the construct validity of the reading paper of the First Certificate in English (FCE) in the Iranian EFL context. The research addressed the following three questions: (1) Do the majority of the Iranian EFL expert judges agree on the skills measured by the items in the FCE reading paper? (2) Do the majority of the Iranian EFL undergraduates come to agreement on the skills measured by the items in the FCE reading paper? (3) Does exploratory factor analysis support that the FCE reading paper assesses the same reading skills claimed by its developing board, i.e. UCLES, in the context of Iranian EFL undergraduates? The present study deployed triangulated approach in collecting and analyzing the data. It attempted to use both qualitative (i.e. experts' and test takers' judgment) and quantitative (i.e. Factor Analysis) approaches to address the above questions. The findings revealed that there was not a substantial agreement among expert judges on the skills claimed to be assessed by the items in the FCE reading paper nor could any significant agreement be observed amongst the test takers on the skills being measured by such items in the FCE reading paper. Finally, exploratory factor analysis revealed similar findings as those in the judgmental phase of the study. The individual items in the FCE reading paper did not confirm the claims by the test developers.

**Index Terms**—reading skills, construct, construct validity, inter-rater reliability, identifiability of reading skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

The notion of construct validity emerged out of efforts made in the early 1950s by the American Psychological Association to address the adequacy of psychological tests (Cronbach, 1988). Construct validity, as Bachman (1990, p. 255) defines, concerns “the extent to which performance on tests is consistent with predictions that we make on the basis of a theory of abilities, or constructs.” Messick (1992), further, states that construct validity measures how much of something an individual displays or possesses. More specifically, Alderson (2000, p. 1) maintains “construct validity in reading as the ability we wish to test”. It has also been strongly recommended by language testing researchers (e.g. Alderson, 1990a, Weir et al., 2000) that if reading skills are to be empirically operationalized, standardized tests of reading skills should be used. This seems to be more evident when it comes to administering universal tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, EAP, ESP and the FCE in a foreign language context. Although these tests claim to be standardized and widely used in many countries around the world, there has not yet emerged any reported evidence as to whether they assess the same skills claimed by their developers in their context of administration and whether score interpretation in various EFL contexts indicate similar results. Iran is one of the places where one of these universally administered tests (FCE) is frequently used. No study has been reported so far in the literature on the validity evidence of the FCE test in the Iranian EFL context. The present study, therefore, aims to investigate how such a test is viewed by Iranian candidates and whether the items in the reading paper of the FCE measure the same skills claimed by its developing board (i.e. UCLES).

University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) has devised a set of five examinations at 5 levels of proficiency. The FCE is at level 3 within the series and corresponds with what is referred to as an intermediate stage of proficiency (FCE handbook 2001). The FCE was originally offered to the field of language testing and teaching as the “Lower Certificate of Proficiency” in 1939. In 1974, it was renamed as the “First Certificate in English” by UCLES. It is now one of the most widely taken Cambridge EFL examinations and its annual worldwide candidature is in excess of 250,000 (FCE handbook, 2001). The FCE comprises 5 different sub-tests/papers: (I) Reading, (II) Writing (III) Use of English (IV) Listening (V) Speaking. There are 4 sections within paper 1- the reading paper (the paper under focus of this research) with a total of 35 reading comprehension questions. The FCE handbook (UCLES 2001) claims that the primary concern for the test reading paper is to focus on various reading skills such as identifying the main points, details, opinion and gist, deducing meaning and identifying text structure through a gapped text. The first subtest in the

FCE reading paper, therefore, is believed to measure the test takers' ability to recognize main idea, of the text at paragraph level. In this section, the candidates are asked to match headings from a list with individual paragraphs in a long text. The second is claimed to assess detailed as well as global understanding of the text, the ability to infer meaning and lexical reference. Part 3 also is suggested by the developing board to assess the test takers' understanding of how texts are structured. And finally the fourth part requires the test takers' to locate specific information in the text comprising individual paragraphs. The task in this last part requires the candidates to scan and skim the text and while doing that, look for the appropriate paragraphs in the text to match them with the related statements (FCE handbook 2001).

Bachman, Ryan and Choi (1995), investigated the construct validity of a set of examinations including the FCE and TOEFL. They focused on the abilities measured in each test battery in two ways: (i) the qualitative content analysis of the two tests, including the specific language abilities and the type of the test task employed and (ii) the quantitative investigation of patterns of relationship in examinees' performance on the tests, both at the level of total test scores, and, where appropriate, at the item level.

Furthermore, in order to compare the abilities measured by the FCE and the TOEFL, Bachman and his colleagues (1995) examined the correlation coefficient between (i) the scale scores for the five versions of the FCE paper, (ii) the standardized scores for ETS measures, and (iii) all the thirteen of these measures. For the first and the second stages, exploratory factor analysis was employed and the results indicated that:

In the case of the FCE papers, all loaded most heavily on the general factor, which accounted for slightly over half of the total variance in the test... This suggests that the FCE papers all tend to measure a single language ability, with specific abilities measured by paper 3 (use of English) and 5 (speaking), to a lesser degree by papers 1 (Reading), 2 (Writing) and 4 (Listening) (Bachman *et al.*, 1995, p. 65).

Moreover, the correlation coefficient between all the thirteen measures of the FCE and the ETS tests, together with exploratory factor analysis indicated that:

Although the scree test suggested that only two or three factors should be extracted, the parallel factors should be extracted; the parallel factors extracted indicated five. ... The first factor can be interpreted as 'SPEAK' factor, the second on 'ETS structure', 'reading' factor and the fourth a 'listening and integrative speaking' factor (For more information see Bachman *et al.*, 1995, pp.69-72).

Finally Bachman and his colleagues concluded that "the large portions of variance accounted for by the general factors in our analysis suggested that the FCE papers and the ETS tests appear to measure, to a large degree, the same common aspect of the language proficiency of the subjects in our sample."

The purpose of this study is therefore to scrutinize the construct validity of the FCE reading paper within the context of Iranian test takers. The study focuses on the skills claimed by the FCE developing board as assessed by the test items and the EFL expert judges and what the individual test takers believed to be assessed by the FCE reading paper test items. Finally a large scale test administration will be conducted to examine if exploratory factor analysis confirms what the FCE developing board states in relation to skills under focus by the individual items in the FCE reading paper. The notion of 'identifiability of the FCE reading skills' will be dealt with through both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection. The study, therefore, addresses the following research questions:

1. Do the Iranian EFL expert judges come to a substantial agreement on the skills measured by the items in the FCE reading paper?
2. Do the Iranian EFL undergraduate test takers come to agreement on the skills measured by the items in the FCE reading paper?
3. Do items in the FCE reading paper assess the same reading skills claimed by the test developing board, i.e. UCLES, in the context of Iranian EFL undergraduates?

## II. METHOD

### A. Participants

The construct of the FCE reading paper was validated in three stages:

- (1) against the EFL expert judgment
- (2) against the EFL undergraduate test takers' decision
- (3) through large scale test administration and running exploratory factor analysis on the scores

In order to address the first research question, 6 university lecturers were asked to complete the FCE reading paper as EFL learners. They were selected from the Isfahan state University and Islamic Azad University of Najafabad. They had teaching experience for more than 5 years. Three of the lecturers held Ph. D in teaching English; the other three held Master's degree in TEFL or translation studies who had similarly more than 5 years of teaching experience to EFL learners of the same characteristics as those participating in the study.

As for the third stage, the quantitative phase of the study, the FCE reading paper was administered among 150 Iranian Junior and senior students studying in the third and fourth year of their university. The participants in this stage had similar characteristics with those of the second stage.

### B. Materials

1. The FCE reading paper of the UCLES' back issues

The 35-item reading paper (March 2002) was used in the present study. The scoring procedure followed the guideline provided by the FCE handbook (UCLES 2001). The maximum test score for the FCE reading paper was 56. The time allowed for the completion of the reading paper, as determined by UCLES and confirmed in a pilot study, was 75 minutes.

2. The EFL taxonomy of reading skills

The second material deployed in this research was a taxonomy of EFL reading skills (Barati 2005) (appendix A). This taxonomy was categorized based on the levels in the Weir (1997) checklist. The present study used the same taxonomy (Barati 2005) since it was thorough and had been validated qualitatively against the experts' judgments.

C. Procedure

The procedure of the study comprised three phases. First, 6 university lecturers were asked to contribute to this study as expert judges. They were especially asked to take the FCE reading paper as the EFL learners and decide on the correspondence between individual test item in the FCE reading paper and the skills in the EFL taxonomy of reading skills (Barati 2005). The judges were allowed to take the test home and complete the tasks required, thus there was no cooperation among the judges.

Second, 6 undergraduate students were asked to complete the FCE reading paper. Similar to the previous group, these students were provided with the FCE reading paper and the taxonomy of skills (Barati 2005). They were required to match the skill they thought was assessed by each test item in the FCE reading paper on the EFL reading taxonomy of reading skills.

Finally, the FCE reading paper was administered to 150 male and female undergraduates. The test was administered to 5 different groups. In all the test sessions, attempts were made to follow the same procedures.

In every test session and before distributing the test, the aims of the researcher were briefly outlined. The participants were informed of the significance of the proficiency tests including the FCE. To give the test takers more motivation, they were also informed that the results of their performance would be presented to them later to make them aware of their own level of reading ability.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

To answer the first and the second research questions, the frequency of the experts' and learners' judgments over skills/item correspondence was investigated. Also inter rater reliability of experts' judgment and learners' decisions was employed to make sure there was no significant discrepancy in the decisions made.

To quantitatively analyze the data, exploratory factor analysis was run on the scores obtained through large scale test administration. In so doing, first, descriptive data analysis was conducted to examine the normal distribution of the variables across the FCE reading paper. Secondly, the reliability estimates of the FCE reading total and its subparts were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. Finally the reading skills were identified by running exploratory factor analysis. The assumption was that items which loaded on the same component or factor were testing the same skill/s (Alderson 2000).

Normality and the Reliability

The normality of variables, expressed in terms of 'skewedness' and 'kurtosis', is significant to any quantitative data analysis (Bradley 1982). The analysis of normality at item level for the FCE reading paper indicated most of the items within the recommended normal range (+2 and -2) yet few items (2,5,6,10,19,23,32) with the normality above 2.

Following the idea that without the reliability the validity of the test is threatened (e.g. Alderson 1990a, Chapelle 1999), Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was estimated for both the total FCE reading paper and each of its subtests since each subtest in the FCE reading paper is claimed to assess a different set of traits/skills (Table 1).

TABLE 1:  
RELIABILITY ESTIMATES, THE FCE READING PAPER: ITS TOTAL AND SUB-TESTS AND TOTAL

Subtest	No. of items	Items	Alpha
1	7	1-7	.694
2	7	8-14	.331
3	7	15-21	.640
4	14	22-35	.857
Total FCE reading paper	35		.839

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of .83 showed a reasonably high internal consistency. However, two of the FCE reading sub-tests (1 and 3) met a moderate alpha coefficient and the second subtest (the subtest with multiple choice items) showed a low alpha coefficient index (Cronbach 1951).

IV. RESULTS

A. EFL Expert Judges and the Identifiability of the FCE Reading Skills

The responses of the expert judges' over skill/item correspondence were put into more quantitative analysis by conducting the inter rater reliability between every pair of the judges' decisions. The results revealed that there was not a significant agreement amongst the majority of the expert judges (i.e. more than half of the paired expert judges). Only 3 of the paired judges (out of 15 pairs) showed an agreement on the skills to be assessed by the FCE reading paper (Table 2). Table 2 shows the inter-rater reliabilities at a moderate level (i.e. correlations between .50 and .75).

TABLE 2:  
EXPERT JUDGES' INTER RATER RELIABILITY

Experts	Inter-rater reliability
Judge 1 &2	.51
Judge 2 &4	.68
Judge 3 & 5	.57

The present study also adopted frequency measures to analyse the agreement of the EFL expert judges on the individual FCE items. The frequency of the experts' decisions on the skill assessed by each item also indicated that the majority of the judges (half+1) did not come to an agreement on the skill to be assessed by the majority of the items of the FCE reading paper. Only 6 items of the FCE reading paper (items 4, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 21) (3) could show an agreement of the majority of the expert judges.

TABLE 3:  
FREQUENCY OF THE EFL EXPERTS' DECISIONS ON THE ITEM/ SKILL CORRESPONDENCE

FCE items	The selected skill from the EFL taxonomy	The frequency of the skill	Percentage
item 4 (part 1)	3 (getting the main idea)	4	66.7%
item 15 (part 3)	12 ( attempting to find the relationship between ideas in the passage)	5	83%
item 16 (part 3)	12	4	66.7%
item 17 (part 3)	12	5	83%
item 18 (part 3)	12	4	66.7%
item 21 (part 3)	12	4	66%

#### B. EFL Test Takers and the Identifiability of the FCE Reading Skill

In order to obtain EFL learners' opinions on the skills being tested by the FCE reading paper, the same procedures as those used for the expert judges were applied. This phase of data analysis revealed that there were no pairs of the test-takers with a considerable inter-rater reliability. The frequency of the test-takers' decisions on the skill assessed by each item indicated that the majority of them (66.7%) agreed on the skill identified (skill 12) only for item 18 of the FCE reading paper. In other words, the majority of the EFL test-takers could only come to an agreement on 2.8% of the items in the FCE reading paper (i.e. 1 out of 35 items in the FCE reading paper) and therefore they showed no significant agreement on the skills measured by the FCE reading skills.

The frequency of test-takers' decisions on the individual FCE reading item could only show few similarities with the findings of the expert judges. Both groups: the EFL experts and the EFL test-takers agreed on the skill 22 to be assessed by item 11 (in part 2) and skill 12 for item 18 yet, this agreement could not be significant considering all the test items. In the same way, neither the inter-rater reliability estimates nor the frequency measures showed the majority agreement between the EFL expert judges or the EFL test takers.

#### C. Quantitative Factor Analysis and the Identifiability of the FCE Reading Skills

It is commonplace in research on reading skills that identifiability of skills is addressed by applying factor analysis (FA) on the data (e.g. Rost, 1993, Alderson, 2000). The idea is that items loaded on the same factor, assess the same skills. Before conducting FA; however, the test items were inspected for the correlation matrix and the correlation coefficients of .3 or above. The results revealed that there were some correlation coefficients of .3 or above. Furthermore, the test of factorability of data (i.e., The Kaiser Meyer Oklin) exceeded the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974) and the Barlett's test of sphericity (Barlett, 1954) reached statistical significance (Table 4), therefore the factorability of the correlation matrix is supported.

TABLE 4:  
TEST OF FACTORABILITY OF DATA, FCE (KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.797
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1445.564
	df	595
	Sig.	.000

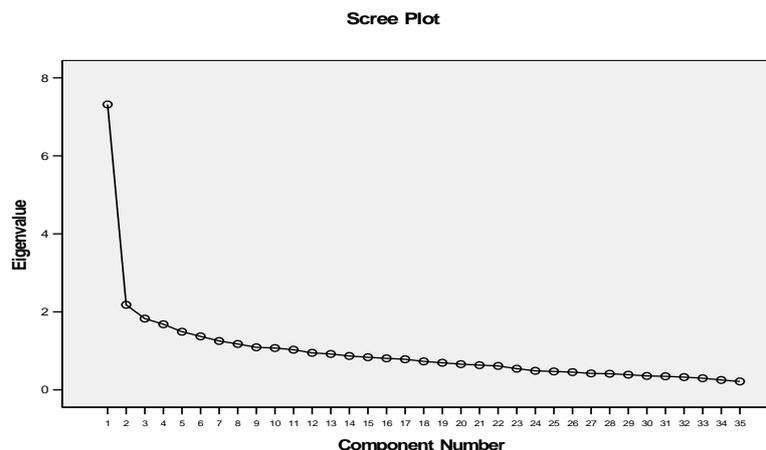
The application of factor analysis at this stage resulted in 11 components with eigenvalues of 1 or above, explaining 79.3% of the total variance (Table5). As it is indicated in Table 5, 21 items of the FCE reading paper were loaded on the first factor. The remaining 14 FCE reading items did not load with a significant variance.

TABLE 5:  
COMPONENT MATRIX FOR THE FCE READING PAPER

	Component										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
FCE35	.684										
FCE31	.660										
FCE25	.653										
FCE27	.646										
FCE34	.627										
FCE3	.612									.342	
FCE33	.599										
FCE23	.582										
FCE24	.582										
FCE22	.552										
FCE12	.530			.308							
FCE1	.521	-.350									
FCE26	.511										
FCE32	.504									-.337	
FCE7	.466		.344					.458			
FCE29	.463								-.415		
FCE4	.455		.348								
FCE30	.443									-.396	
FCE5	.425				.352						
FCE16	.353	.549									
FCE21	.335	.478									
ECE18		.437	.425								
FCE19	.308	.433									
FCE20		.454	.521								
FCE9	.323		-.439			-.339					
FCE6	.377		.382								
FCE8				.690							
FCE10				.560			-.451			.354	
FCE11					-.521	.384	.375				
FCE15	.392			-.319	.455						
FCE17	.342	.304			.424						
FCE2					.377	.500			.329		.315
FCE14		-.331		.377		-.416					
FCE13	.373						.424	-.412			
FCE28	.383								-.397		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, 11 components extracted

The Screeplot, similarly, revealed that there was a clear break after the first component. This factor/component was responsible for 20.90% of the total variance. Thus no further rotation was conducted on the data.



The aforementioned findings suggested that the FCE reading paper is not such a robust measure for distinguishing among skills. It, therefore, did not provide a clear picture of assessing the skills for which the sub-tests were developed. In other words, the items in the FCE did not identify among the skills in the Iranian EFL context. Thus, the findings obtained from running FA did not support the identifiability of the reading skills in the Iranian context and rejected the third hypothesis.

## V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study did not show a significant agreement among the majority of the Iranian expert judges nor the EFL test takers on the skills to be assessed by the items in the FCE reading paper. The qualitative judgmental findings of this study were, therefore, in line with what many other researchers have concluded (e.g. Alderson and Lukmani 1989, Alderson 1990a and 1990b). The first two studies had applied the same two-phased methodology, judgmental and empirical, to address identifiability of skills. However, despite Alderson and Lukmani (1989), Alderson (1990a) conducted his research on two standardized tests, TEEP and ELTS). Alderson (1990b), recognizing the inadequacy of traditional methodologies, attempted to use think aloud and retrospection and identify what really happened inside the test-takers' head as they responded the reading comprehension items. His conclusion resembled those of his previous two studies and the present study. They could not prove the existence of separate skills.

The findings of the first research question were against Lumley (1993) and Barati (2005). Unlike the present study which focused on a standardized high-stake reading test, having been developed by a specialized examination board, Barati's (2005) test was partly adopted from Alderson (2000), and Weir (1993) and partly developed by himself. Lumley (1993), however, initiated his project with the test items and then developed the reading skill to describe them. Both studies clearly supported the judges' agreement on the skills to be measured by their reading items through judgmental approach.

The assumption was that if the test-takers could agree on identifying individual skill associated with each item or the total FCE reading paper, the skills would be seen as identifiable and hence the reading paper could be identified as a valid test in Iranian EFL undergraduate context. Alderson (2000, p. 97) interpreted test takers' different approaches in taking the test as a problem to the validity of the test.

If different test takers respond differently to an item, and yet get the item correct, there is a real problem in determining what the item and the test is testing. The validity of a test relates to the interpretation of the correct responses to items, so what matters is not what the test constructors believe an item to be testing, but which responses are considered correct by the test-takers, and what process underlies them (p. 97).

The inter-rater reliability coefficient estimated between 15 pairs of the EFL undergraduate test-takers showed no agreement among them on the skills they employed when completing the FCE reading paper. The results of the second research question were in line with what Li (1992) concluded (Cited in Alderson, 2000). Li (1992) asked a group of test-takers to introspect on the skills assessed by items in his reading test. He concluded (i) seldom did the test-takers report using one skill alone in answering test items (ii) when the skills used corresponded to the test constructor's intentions, the students did not necessarily get the answer correct and (iii) students answered correctly whilst using skills that the test constructor had not identified. Thus items in Li's reading comprehension test did not necessarily assess what the constructor claimed his study showed no agreement on the skill the test-takers employed to answer individual items.

Following the common assumption that reading skills are identifiable by applying factor analysis (FA) (e.g. Rost, 1993, Alderson, 2000), the data obtained from the FCE administration was put into exploratory Factor Analysis. The results revealed empirically that most of the items in the FCE reading paper (21 items out of 35) loaded on one component (variable) and only measured one skill, in other words, 60% of the FCE reading items loaded strongly on

one component and the FCE reading paper was shown to be unitary in its construct. The unitary nature of the FCE reading paper in the Iranian EFL context contradicts UCLES' claims about the various skills and in turn is contradictory with different interpretations that are made based on the test results in the Iranian context.

The fact that the FCE items in this study didn't assess different skills does not seem surprising. A few other studies provided evidence for the unitary nature of the reading construct in the EFL tests such as TEEP and IELTS (Alderson, 1990a, 1990b). However the question is: how is it possible for a standardized test which is administered universally and its scores are interpreted on the basis of the specifications of its items and the skills (the FCE handbook 2001) not to assess what its developers claim to?

The application of Factor Analysis on the data from this study indicated that the standardization of the FCE reading paper does not guarantee 'universal' interpretation of its scores. A test may be standard in relation to a certain group of test takers with a specific language background and system of education but not in relation to another group of test takers with different language background and system of education. This seems in concert with Bachman, Davidson, Ryan, and Choi's (1995) suggestion in relation to their comparative study of the tests of Educational Testing Service (ETS) and UCLES specially TOEFL and the FCE.

The quantitative findings of Bachman *et al.* (1995) showed a significant difference in their test takers' performance due to their preparation or familiarity with the tests. The US test-takers in their investigation performed higher on the TOEFL whereas the UK test-takers performed higher on the FCE and CPE.

The quantitative findings of the present study supported Bachman *et al.* (1995) findings. Although their study did not focus on the validation of the FCE in particular, they came to over half of the total observed variance in the test loaded heavily on one general factor. In other words, they report that the FCE papers- involving the reading paper- tended to measure one single language ability.

Language proficiency tests tap heterogeneous populations as their test takers' target population. The FCE is not an exception, although it is claimed to be an intermediate test. This is what Woods (1993) refers to as the heterogeneity of the FCE tasks and the candidates. He suggests:

Communicative language tests- such as the FCE- which are task based, may be heterogeneous in two ways: (i) the tasks tap a broad range of language skills; and (ii) the candidates bring very different profiles of skills to bear, which may be taken to represent equally valid expressions of ability (Woods 1993 cited in Weir 2005: 32).

According to UCLES (2004), the consequence of these heterogeneities would be that items take longer time to complete, and hence fewer items can be accommodated within practical time constraints. This may bring about a small reduction in the estimated reliability of the FCE reading paper when compared with tests such as TOEFL and IELTS (UCLES, 2004).

However, despite the aforementioned factors which, according to UCLES (2004), bring about the reduction in estimated reliability, the total FCE reliability estimates in this study tends to be reasonably high ( $r=.86$ ). The reason for the high reliability of the test could be attributed to the large scale administration of the test to 150 participants in the study.

The important point to make is that, the FCE reading paper like many other Cambridge examinations is claimed to be heterogeneous in the tasks and the skills although they might not show a high index of reliability (Woods, 1993). The FCE reading paper in the present study could; however, show a reasonably high estimate of reliability, though it could not distinguish various skills in the Iranian EFL context.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study, adopting qualitative and quantitative approaches, has examined the identifiability of the FCE reading skills with a focus on the construct validity of the reading paper. The quantitative phase of the study involved the analysis of 150 adult EFL undergraduate test-takers' responses on the FCE reading paper and the application of FA. The qualitative phase of the study involved EFL expert judges' and the EFL test takers' decisions on the correspondence between the reading skills in the EFL taxonomy and the individual items in the FCE reading paper.

The key findings of the present study, as discussed in 2.7 above, indicated that the FCE reading skills were not identifiable whether quantitatively via FA or qualitatively by EFL experts and learners. Hence the findings are against UCLES' claims, that the FCE reading paper assesses different skills. In other words, the findings of the present study degraded the construct validity of the FCE reading paper in the Iranian context and rejected all the three research hypotheses.

The judgmental phase of the present study could support the findings of the quantitative phase (FA). In the qualitative phase of the study, the majority of the EFL expert judges and the test-takers did not agree on the skills to be assessed by the FCE reading items. In other words, the FCE reading skills were not similarly identified by the expert judges and the test-takers to be assessing heterogeneous list of skills. Neither were the skills identified when Factor Analysis was run. The results of the Factor Analysis did not show the items in the FCE reading paper to be loaded on different components. Neither the qualitative nor the quantitative phase of this study could identify different skills for the construct of the FCE reading paper, hence, the construct of the FCE reading paper was known to be unitary in the context of Iranian EFL learners

APPENDIX A: THE EFL TAXONOMY OF READING SKILLS ACCORDING TO LEVELS IN WEIR'S (1997) CHECKLIST, (BARATI 2005)

Level A: Reading Expeditiously for Global Comprehension

1. Looking at the topic, title and sometimes the first sentence of the paragraph to skim the text
2. Reading the first and the last sentences of the paragraph
3. getting the main idea
4. attempting to find the gist of the passage

Level B: Reading Expeditiously for Local Comprehension

5. scanning
6. looking for specific information

Level C: Reading Carefully for Global Comprehension

7. reading everything carefully
8. paying attention to components of a paragraph: topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentences
9. reading details
10. evaluating the text in order to find its implications
11. being able to answer the questions which concern key information from text (without which the comprehension of the text would be hampered)
12. attempting to find the relationships between ideas in the passage
13. being able to distinguish between major and minor points in the text
14. understanding implications
15. understanding facts and major points
16. inferential analysis of text
17. being able to answer detailed questions about inferences and reasoning

Level D: Reading carefully for Local Comprehension

18. Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words
19. knowing how to attack lexical difficulties (finding the stems, word etymology, using context, etc)
20. paying attention to sentence structure to guess the meaning of unknown words
21. paying attention to context to guess the meaning of unknown words
22. identifying the syntactic relationship between the items in a text to comprehend it better (the pronoun and its referents, conjunctions and other elements)
23. understanding the key words, key structures
24. structural analysis of text
25. identifying words synonyms and antonyms
26. knowing the vocabulary and the connection with the sentence
27. knowing grammatical terms, verbs, adjectives,... to understand the text
28. realizing what the words do in the text
29. knowing the grammatical structure of the text to assist understanding
30. being able to answer detailed questions about words and phrases
31. being able to use the structure of the word to get its meaning
32. decomposing the word

REFERENCES

- [1] Alderson, J. C., & Lukmani, Y. (1989). Cognition and reading: Cognitive levels as embodied in test questions: *Reading in a foreign language*, 5(2), 253-270.
- [2] Alderson, J. C. (1990a). Testing reading comprehension skills. *Reading in a foreign language*, 6(2), 425-438.
- [3] Alderson, J.C. (1990b). Testing reading comprehension skills. Getting students to talk about a reading test (A pilot Study). *Reading in a foreign language*, 7 (1), 465-503.
- [4] Alderson, J. C. (2000). *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [5] Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [6] Bachman, L. F., Davidson, F., Ryan, K., & Choi, I. C. (1995). *An investigation into the comparability of two tests of English as a foreign language: The Cambridge TOEFL comparability study: Final Report*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [7] Barati, H. (2005). *Test taking strategies and the assessment of reading skills: An approach to construct validation*. Unpublished Ph. D Thesis. University of Bristol.
- [8] Barlett, M. S. (1954). A note on the multiplying factors for various chi-square approximations. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 16 (2), 296-298.
- [9] Chapelle, C. (1999). Validity in language assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 19, 254-72.
- [10] Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16, 292-334.
- [11] Cronbach, L. J. (1988). Construct Validation after thirty years. in Robert L. Linn (ed.). *Intelligence, Measurement, Theory, and Public Policy*. Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press.
- [12] Li, W. (1992). What is a test testing? An investigation of the agreement between students' test taking processes and test constructors' presumptions. In J. C. Alderson. (2000). *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- [13] Lumley, T. (1993). The notion of sub-skills in reading comprehension tests: an EAP example. *Language Testing*, 10(3), 211-234.
- [14] Messick, S. A. (1992). Validity of test interpretation and use. *Encyclopedia of educational research (6<sup>th</sup> edition)*. New York: Macmillan.
- [15] Rost, D. H. (1993). Assessing the different components of reading comprehension: Fact or Fiction. *Language Testing*, 10(1), 79-92.
- [16] UCLES. (2001). First Certificate in English (FCE) handbook. Cambridge: UCLES.
- [17] UCLES. (March 2002). First Certificate in English (Past Examination Papers). Cambridge: University of Local Examination Syndicate.
- [18] UCLES. (2004). EFL research notes1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [19] Weir, C. J. (1993). Understanding and developing language tests. London: Prentice Hall.
- [20] Weir, C.J. & porter, D. (1994). The multi-divisibility or unitary nature of reading: The language tester between Scylla and Charybdis. *Reading in a foreign language*, 10(2), 1-19.
- [21] Weir, C., J. (1997). The testing of reading in a second language. In C. Clapham., & D. Corson., (eds.) *Encyclopedia of language and education. Language testing and assessment*, 7, 39-49.
- [22] Weir, C.J., Huizhong, Y., & Yan, J. (2000). An Empirical Investigation of the Componentiality of L2 Reading in English for Academic Purposes: Studies in language testing 12. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [23] Weir, C.J. (2005). *Language testing and validation*. UK: Macmillan.
- [24] Woods, R. (1993). Assessment and Testing. In C.J. Weir., (2005). *Language testing and validation*. U.K: Macmillan.



**Elahe Tavakoli** was born in Isfahan, Iran in 1980. She received her M.A. degree in TEFL from University of Isfahan in 2007.

She is currently a lecturer in the higher Education Institute of Sobhe Sadegh, Isfahan. Her research interests include Reading Skills and strategies, and Testing.



**Hossein Barati** works in the English department, University of Isfahan, where he is assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics. He has a PhD in 'Language Testing' from University of Bristol and has been involved in research in language testing, programme evaluation, reading strategies, and classroom discourse. Before becoming a university lecturer in 1992, he worked as a language teacher at Ministry of Education, Isfahan, Iran. He has published in areas of language testing and assessment, and language programme evaluation. He is a member of a research project on *Developing a new model of teaching to adult English non-majors at University of Isfahan*, funded by University of Isfahan.

He has also co-authored some publications on DIF in Iranian National University Entrance Exam (INUEE), 2007; Linguistic constraints and language teaching, 2008; and Cultural differences in EFL performance on cloze tests, 2010. Further a text-book *A step forward in English for intermediate EFL learners* is among his latest publications.

Hossein is currently working on 'New plans for Teaching English to Iranian adult non-majors', 'Teaching English to Iranian young learners, and 'The consequential validity of high stakes tests in the Iranian context'.

# On Adding Cultural Contents to English Teaching

Yanping Huang

Dezhou University, Dezhou, China

Email: xiongmei\_yan@163.com

**Abstract**—In order to put the achievement of Cross-cultural Communication reaches into foreign language teaching practice as soon as possible and to increase the cultural contents to English teaching, this paper would put forward the following three respects: Why to increase the contents of culture in English teaching, Which contents of culture should be added and how to increase cultural contents to English teaching.

**Index Terms**—cultural contents, English teaching, practical foreign language teaching, teaching reform, culture factor

Since the eighties of the 20th century, a lot of linguists and foreign language workers have begun to research on the relations between culture and languages and the influence produced by communication and culture in order to solve the problem between different cultures. At present, more gratifying progress have been made. Therefore it gradually formed a new developing multi-subjects and crossing nature discipline—Cross-cultural Communication. Though there is no direct relationship between the rise and development of Cross-cultural Communication and foreign language teaching, its research results have a great impact on foreign language teaching. Especially in recent years, Cross-cultural Communication has already become a hot issue in foreign language teaching in china's education circle. If the researches in the past few years were staying at the theory aspect, now it has already entered into the field of foreign language teaching. At the same time, it has aroused the attention of more and more foreign language educators. In order to put the achievement of Cross-cultural Communication into foreign language teaching practice as soon as possible and to increase the cultural contents into English teaching, here I am going to put forward the following three respects to defence my point, hoping to discuss with those who are interested in this field.

## I. WHY TO ADD THE CONTENTS OF CULTURE TO ENGLISH TEACHING?

### A. *To Meet the Need of the Social Development in the 21st Century.*

Economic globalization and the information integrations have made the earth become smaller and smaller, which also formed a global village. We are not just the citizens of China, but also the global villagers. The future of the earth and the destiny of the whole world have already connected us tightly with people of other countries.

China's entering into the WTO indicated that the reform and opening-up of China had reached a new stage. As the economy of China is included in the track of the international economy progressively and various kinds of cross-cultural communications are made by people more frequently day by day, we have to face and solve the following issue. First, improving the level of foreign language rapidly, to strengthen the consciousness and the global idea. Secondly, understanding the whole world and the culture all over the world have already become one of the urgent tasks which all trades and professions face. Meanwhile it is a new demand and a new goal that put forward the foreign language teaching of our country with the development of the society.

### B. *To Meet the Need of Practical Foreign Language Teaching in China.*

Language is a carrier of the culture. Any kind of existing language implies the cultural intention of the people who use this kind of language in the course of long-term historical development. Only when one acquaints himself with those imply in the cultural intension behind this kind of language, can he "return the flesh and blood of the language and comprehend the concrete meaning of the cultural issues"(China, Liguangkun). Then we can understand the language thoroughly and therefore use it as a tool properly.

In view of the above, Chinese linguistic Huwenzhong proposed that to study a kind of language can develop two kinds of abilities at the same time: Ability of the language (linguistic competence) and social ability (social competence or cultural ability). Then gradually form the ability of cross-cultural communication.

### C. *To Meet the Need of Chinese English Teaching Reform*

In a sense, the ability of using English synthetically lower and in the lack of knowledge of foreign country culture are two major matters existing in China's English teaching at present. As for the former one, we are making great efforts to improve by every possible means; as for the latter one, we have just begun our work and it is no doubt that we should spare much more effort to probe into it.

As we can't fully understand the culture of foreign country especially those of the English speaking country, most of the Chinese who are learning English short of the insight into the differences between English and Chinese culture. The negative results are as following: On one hand, they fail to understand the language phenomenon that imply the cultural

intension accurately and even misunderstand them. On the other hand, while using these languages in cross-cultural communication, they often express what they thought according to the habit of the Chinese culture which would lead to unable to use English appropriately. To make matters worse, they even enable to exchange ideas with the foreigners, which then would obstruct communication and cooperation.

In view of this, in the teaching goal of "English syllabus" (revised probation edition) revised in 2000, the junior middle school proposes to "find out something related to cultural difference" and "obtain the ability to appliance English tentatively"; The high school proposes "promotes to know more about foreign cultures, especially those of English speaking countries", "raise the ability to use English communication tentatively". "The Standard of English course" which Chinese Ministry of Education makes in 2001(the experiment draft), add that the item of "culture" is required. Among them "cultural knowledge and preliminary communication ability" are also mentioned. All these have offered us abundant of policy base on studying the subject probing into and increase the contents of culture to English teaching.

## II. WHICH CONTENTS OF CULTURE SHOULD BE ADDED?

In brief, two major aspects should be included. The first is the cultural factors that influence the semantics; the second is the cultural factors that influence the pragmatics.

### A. *The Culture Factors that Influence the Semantics.*

Some English words imply certain cultural intensions. If one does not understand these words and hoping to guess their meaning from the word itself according to Chinese culture, he will certainly make mistakes. The following are some examples.

"Adult books" literally means "books for the adults". In the western countries, many books, periodicals and video-tapes are usually marked with the age bracket that can read or watch them. Generally the age bracket can be divided into three sections: 16 years old, 18 years old and grown up. Adult books are only served for adults because they include obscene and pornographic contents.

"Blue Monday" mean "depressed Monday". In English, "blue" usually indicates "melancholy", "depressed", and "unhappy". After the happy weekend, Monday arrives. The adults need to begin their work and the children need to go to school. The spirit will no doubt become worse naturally. The similar word has "in the blues", which means depressed. In the culture of Chinese, "blue" does not have this kind of meaning.

"Busy boy" is a compound word. Here "boy" refers to some certain kinds of people, and here "busy" have a cultural intension. Therefore this compound word possesses a new meaning--people who always likes to interfere others' things". Make sure to keep in mind not to comprehend the compound words by putting two simple words` meaning together. There are some other examples:

In some English dictionaries, some English words have the commendatory sense, derogatory sense or the neutral sense. Because there are differences between Chinese culture and western culture, the meanings they each choose are not the same. While understanding and using these words, people should pay more attention to this aspect.

In Chinese, "aggressive" has a derogatory sense and it is used to describe someone who "is apt or ready to attack, quarrelsome. On the contrary, in English it is used to describe those who are not afraid of gossips and keeping ahead.

"Dragon" in Chinese is a commendatory word, which means "successor", "lively and vigorous", "full of life and energy"; But native English speakers treat dragon as an evil symbol and the bizarre entity of fierce and cruelty. So it is often used to frighten the crying children.

The Chinese meaning of "intellectual" is "brain worker with certain science and culture knowledge". It can be divided into two kinds: general intellectual and high level intellectual. It is a commendatory term. In English "intellectual" contains two meanings-- "clever, full of wisdom" and "only probes into the theory but can do nothing to the practical problems". So it implies the derogatory sense.

"Peasant" in Chinese means "people work in the field" and it is a commendatory term. For example: Learn from lower-middle peasants. English gives "peasant" a derogatory sense. It always refers to "people form the countryside", or "people have rough refined manners". The "peasant" we always mentioned is relatively close to the word "farmer" in English.

### B. *The Cultural Factors that Influence the Language Uses.*

As there are differences existed in many aspects such as values, mode of thinking, moral standard and social etiquette between Chinese culture and western culture, these differences certainly will influence the application of English and formed different cultural stipulations and speaking stipulations. While people are talking, they always follow their own ways of speaking automatically. At the same time, they will understand others in his own way and respond to it. This is why some usages of words appeared to be false in cross-cultural communication. And it is the major obstructions during the communication.

As Chinese culture "regard colony as the center" and the western culture "regard individual as the center" are different from each other on the value system, they have different attitudes towards other people's concern about them. Chinese praise highly on caring about the group, caring about the others and taking pleasure in helping people. On the

contrary, Americans and British men emphasize self-confidence. They live on by themselves and bear responsibility of themselves. So they don't need the others to concern too much about them. The following instances can show these two kinds of different attitudes obviously.

Chinese culture sings high praise of "benevolence, justice, good manners, intelligence, honesty and modesty". "Modesty makes one progress, pride makes one lags behind". So most of the Chinese are implicit, introversive and regard modest as honor. The western culture, such as those of Great Britain and America are emphasized the culture which regard individual as the center. They advocate obtaining success by themselves. So they are self-confident and willing to display themselves.

Therefore, the above two kinds of people have obvious different attitudes towards compliments. According to the "modest principle", Chinese will refuse and deny the compliment. According to "polite principle", British men and Americans will agree and accept the compliment.

### III. HOW TO ADD CULTURAL CONTENTS TO ENGLISH TEACHING?

First of all, we should believe that various kinds of cultures in the world are equal to each other. As long as they can exist and be accepted, it is proved that they both have its advantages and disadvantages. So, we can't say that this culture is better or worse than that one. Just because there are different kinds of cultures in the world, the world is so colorful and beautiful. While we are trying to promote and develop Chinese splendid culture, we should try to get familiar with the culture of other countries and inherit their advantages. By doing this, we will form an advanced culture that suit for Chinese conditions and develop with the rest of world.

Secondly, while making teaching target for a unit or a class, besides deciding the educating points and language points, the teacher should decide the culture contents that the students should know. The choice of cultural points that to be taught in the class are mainly revolve around the cultural contents that will influence the meaning and usages of the language. These cultural points include the cultural intensions that will influence the meaning of the words; cultural backgrounds that imply in the language; the names of people, places of cultural intension; and the grammatical rules that are influenced by culture.

Thirdly, the infiltration of cultural knowledge should be carried on with other practices, making them get along swimmingly with each other and combining organically. By doing this can not only help the students to understand the language accurately and deeply, but also give the language flesh and blood and make the abstractly stiff language symbol alive. Then English teaching maybe filled with enough information and become more interesting and colorful.

Finally, in order to include cultural knowledge in English teaching, teachers must find the culture to be mentioned at first, then he should develop the ability to explain them. This is to put forward higher request to the teachers. They are required not only to have accurate themselves with sturdy English language basic knowledge, but also have high artistic appreciation. They should understand the culture of China; they should be familiar with those of other countries, especially the culture of English speaking countries; they should find out the differences between the Chinese and Western culture; they should know about the cultural influences on the semantics and usage of the language. In the hope of managing to do the above, three suggestions are put forward here:

English teachers should learn to improve his own artistic appreciation by himself and enlarge his own cultural knowledge;

Enhance the status of the two courses— "Introduction to Great Britain and America" and "Culture of Great Britain and America" in higher teacher education and try to improve the contents of the courses and the teaching method;

The linguists should encourage the more foreign language educators to study the relations between culture and language, culture and communication, culture and foreign language teaching; to offer more research results for the content of culture that added into the foreign language teaching.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Lian shuneng. (1993). *A Comparison of English and Chinese*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- [2] Wang fuxiang & Wu hanying. (1994). *Culture and language*. Beijing: Foreign language teaching and studying Press.
- [3] Hu wenzhong. (1990). *Study the selected readings in cross-cultural communication*. Hunan: Educational publishing house of Hunan.
- [4] Barry Tomalin & Susan Stemplesk. (1993). *Cultural Awareness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [5] Hu wenzhong. (1995). *Great Britain and America's culture dictionary*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing House.

**Yanping Huang** was born in Guangxi, China in 1980. She received her M.A. degree in journalism from Guangxi University, China in 2007. She is currently a lecturer in Dezhou University, Shandong, China.

# On the Translation of Children's Literature

Yu Zhang

School of Foreign Languages, Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China  
Email: zhangyu\_qust@163.com

**Abstract**—This paper aims at exploring the history of the translation of the children's literature in the four periods, that is, the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republican China, the May Fourth period, the Anti-Japanese War period, and the period after 1976, and finds that each period has its own characteristics in the translations. The paper also studies some strategies that the translators usually adopt and illustrates the accordant merits.

**Index Terms**—children's literature, translation, domestication, foreignization, strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Children's literature is a generic term of literary works written according to children's psychology and ability of reading on three levels: preschoolers' literature, children's literature and youth's literature.

As a result of society's concept of childhood, children's literature, unlike adult literature, is considered an important vehicle for achieving certain aims in the education of children. Therefore in translating the children's literature, the translators usually manipulate the original texts to some extent with the intention of serving different purposes. Accordingly, from the very beginning up till now, the translations of children's literature in China have different characteristics.

## II. CHARACTERISTICS

### A. *Translations of the Children's Literature in the Late Qing Dynasty and the Early Republican China*

According to the statistics by some scholars, there were about 120 translations, 59 translators, 18 publishing companies and 29 magazines in this period. Most of the translations were translated from English and Japanese. The center of the translating was in Shanghai. The translations of the children's literature in this period have the following characteristics. First, the purpose of translating was to realize the revolution of novels. Translating was just a tool to reform the society. Secondly, in most of the translations, the target language was the ancient Chinese instead of modern Chinese. Thirdly, the translation method differed from person to person. For example, While Lin Shu deleted much scenario and phraseology, as a result of which his translations were not faithful to the original work, Zhou Zuo-ren and Zhou Gui-sheng took to literal translation and ancient Chinese to reflect the original style.

### B. *Translations of the Children's Literature in the May Fourth Period*

In this period, many foreign works were translated in China, which were mainly of three kinds: folk tales and artistic tales, animal tales and fables, and some non-children literature fit for children's reading. Besides Lu Xun, Zhou Zuo-ren, Liang Shi-qiu, Xu Zhi-mo and other litterateurs began falling over themselves for the translation of children's literature. They aimed at publicizing science, love and beauty by expressing the intellectual's yearn for originality, honesty, nature and lively life.

More echoism and mimesis words were used in the translations of this period. The uncommon nouns had remarks; both literal translation and free translation were adopted though literal translation was more colloquially popular than free translation. Colloquialism had already replaced the classical Chinese so that children could read more conveniently. The translators paid attention to the way of translating, printing, decorative art and illustration with a view of children's personality and characteristics.

In the May-fourth movement period, children's literature translators accumulated rich experience through practice and made the children's literature turn to mature. Although the strategies of domestication and foreignization were in dispute, they played a positive role in the development of children's literature. No matter what kind of strategy was adopted, the translators reached a consensus that the translation should serve the children.

### C. *Translations of the Children's Literature in the Anti-Japanese War Period*

According to Wen Jun and Wang Chen-shuang (2008), during the 14 years from September in 1931 to August in 1945, there were 369 translations of the children's literature, including 201 fairy tales, 143 children fiction and children stories, 12 fables, 9 pantomimes, 3 children poems, 1 theory book about the children's literature, etc. The counties concerned were mainly Soviet Russia, Britain and America.

The translations of this period had a great impact on expediting the Chinese children's literature.

a. The influence of children-oriented sense in the translated versions boosted the right understanding of Chinese

traditional beliefs on children, and speeded the maturity and modernization of children literature style. The translators of this period were both earnest introducers and originators. Their creative practice was affected by the foreign children's literature directly or indirectly.

b. The children's literature of Soviet Russia greatly influenced Chinese modern children literature. The translations from the Soviet Russia did not only help Chinese children learn the new images of children in the new world, but also brought new effects to Chinese creative writing.

c. The translating and instructing enriched the style of modern Chinese children's literature. Modern Chinese children's literature draws lessons from foreign tales in thought, form and skills.

#### D. *Translations of the Children's Literature after 1976*

Since 1976, scholars and educationalists have changed their ideas of the purposes of children's literature. What the translators are concerned over is whether the children can understand the translations instead of the adults' willing or the educational function of the children's literature. They grant themselves great liberties regarding the text because of the polysystem and manipulate the text in various ways, as a result of which, the translations are children-oriented indeed.

In the 1980s, the translators paid much more attention to the strategy of foreignization, and reflected in the variety of translation practice. With the improvement of China's international status, the exchanges between China and other countries in the world become increasingly frequent, readers' thinking changed much. They held more open attitudes to the foreign languages and cultures. 1980s saw the upsurge of learning foreign languages and the strong impact of the foreign films, cartoons and translations of the children's books, one result of which was the capacity that Chinese children accepted western literature and culture greatly increased.

### III. STRATEGIES OF THE TRANSLATIONS

Just as Shavit (1981) states, the translator of children's literature can permit him/herself great liberties regarding the text because of the peripheral position children's literature occupies in the polysystem, in translating the children's literature, the translators usually adopt the following strategies:

#### A. *Use of Lively and Interesting Language*

It is an important aim to make the children readers happy by producing and translating interesting versions. The translators resort to the changes in wording and sentence patterns. For example:

And she went on planning to herself how she would manage it. "They must go by the carrier," she thought; "and how funny it'll seem, sending presents to one's own feet! And how odd the directions will look! ..."

接着她自己就盘算起来, 怎样才能把靴子给它们送去。"一定得请邮递员送去,"她想, "这看来多滑稽, 给自己的脚送礼物! 还有这姓名和地址也显得多奇怪!" (translated by Chen Fu'an, p17)

In the translation, the two "ands" are turned respectively into "接着" and "还有", which read more suitable than "而且"; the passive voice is turned into action one, which is more acceptable in Chinese.

#### B. *Use of Simple and Colloquial Words*

Wording is a key point because usually one foreign word can be rendered into many different Chinese words. The children do not have great vocabulary or experience. Thereafter, the translator should take the children's ability of understanding and cognition into account, and use as simple and colloquial words as possible. For example,

"Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "Why, you might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!"

"压根儿不是一回事!" 帽匠说, "那样的话, 你倒满可以说'我吃的我都看见'和'我看到的我都吃', 是一回事!" (translated by Chen Fu'an, p103)

The original is colloquial, and the translator uses colloquialism such as "压根儿", "倒" and "满" etc. to reflect the vivid expression of the persona's characteristics.

#### C. *Use of Simple and Straightaway Sentence Patterns*

There are more long and complex sentences in the foreign literature than in Chinese literature, especially in children's literature. The translators usually transform the long and complex sentences into short and simple sentences in case that the children may lose the interest of reading. For example:

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeping into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

阿丽思和姐姐一起坐在河岸上, 没事可干, 坐得腻味了; 她向姐姐正看着的书瞄了一两眼, 可那上面没有图画, 也没有对话。阿丽思想道: "一本书没有图画, 又没有对话, 那有什么用啊?" (translated by Chen Fu'an, p3)

The original sentence is a very long one with 57 words; the Chinese translation turns it into 3 parts with 2 sentences, in which case the Chinese children can read the translation with great ease.

#### D. *Use of Interjections*

Interjections, a very special lexical category which have no sense of independent entity, are usually put at the end of the sentences, or the pause of the sentence, to show the speaker's tone and mood, and therefore endow the text with some additional feelings and emotions. The use of interjections mainly expresses the notion of the original text, the phatic function, and acts as a kind of cohesion device. Pragmatically, interjections are used to add some shade to the speaker's tone, or soften the tone of the speaker, make the subject prominent, propose the supposition and thus attract the listener's attention. Interjections can make the translations more vivid and readable for the young children. For example:

"My name," said the spider, "is Charlotte."

"我的名字嘛，"那蜘蛛说，"叫夏洛。" (translated by Ren Rongrong, p186)

Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end?

掉啊，掉啊，掉啊！这一跤怎么一辈子摔不完了吗！ (translated by Zhao Yuanren, p7)

#### E. Addition of Onomatopoeic Words

In dealing with the children's books, the translators sometimes add onomatopoeic words to vividly reflect the children's language:

However, this bottle was not marked "poison," so Alice ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice, (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pine-apple, roast turkey, toffy, and hot buttered toast,) she very soon finished it off.

然而这一回瓶子上并没有“毒药”的字样在上，所以阿丽思就大着胆子尝它一尝，那味儿倒很好吃（有点像樱桃饼，又有点像鸡蛋糕，有点像菠萝蜜，又有点像烤火鸡，有点像冰淇淋，又有点像芝麻酱），所以一会儿工夫就唏哩呼噜地喝完了。(translated by Zhao Yuanren, p16)

不过不管怎么说，这个瓶子并没有标明“有毒”，所以爱丽丝斗胆尝了一口，并且发现味道挺不错（事实上，瓶子里的东西含有一种樱桃馅饼、牛乳蛋糕、菠萝、烤火鸡、太妃糖，以及热奶油烤面包片一起混合起来的味道），于是她咕嘟咕嘟一下子全喝光了。(translated by Wu Juntao, p11)

不过，这个瓶子上没有标着“毒药”的字样，所以爱丽丝就壮着胆子尝了一点儿。她觉得那味道很美，像是把樱桃馅饼、奶油蛋糕、菠萝、烤火鸡、奶糖和热奶油面包的味道混合在一起似的。她很快就把它喝得精光。(translated by Jia Wenhao and Jia Wenyan, p8)

Compared with the last translation which does not have onomatopoeic words, the tone of the first two translations sounds more like that of the children, and therefore there is no doubt that the translations with onomatopoeic words have higher readability.

#### F. Intercultural Transfer

Eugene A. Nida holds that it is more important for a successful translator to acquaint him/herself with two cultures than to know two languages because the words achieve their meanings in their own cultural backgrounds. The translation of children's literature is no exception. There are two strategies in translating the cultural factors in children's literature: Foreignization and Domestication. The former requires that we reserve the original exoticism to make the readers know more about the source language and the culture. The latter caters to the target language and culture. Mostly translators apply the latter strategy in order that the children readers can understand the corresponding factors easily. Sometimes translators resort to the literal translation and then add some annotation. For example:

尤利西斯的归来（尤利西斯是古希腊荷马史诗《奥德修纪》中的一位大英雄）(translated by Ren Rongrong, p188)

尤利西斯归来（尤利西斯归来：故事出自古希腊荷马的史诗《奥德赛》。名将尤利西斯在攻打特洛伊城胜利之后乘船回家，经过种种磨难，终于回到家里，惩治了以向他妻子求婚为名想霸占他产业的坏人。本章也是打回老家，故名。）(translated by Sun Fali, p212-213)

The addition of the annotation provides the children readers with enough cultural information, and therefore the children can understand the novel much better.

The translations which are chosen accurately and translated appropriately can offer a good chance for children to have acquaintance with the foreign cultures and enlarge their knowledge. Anyhow, the translations should not confuse the children. To some extent, the reappearance of the foreign cultures and linguistic features can be reached by the harmony and unity between the language and individuality.

## IV. CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the above, every period has its own characteristics in terms of the translation of the children's literature, and what most of the translators keep in mind is that the translation of the children's literature should be based on the special cognition and understanding characteristics of the children, and children's acceptance should be taken into consideration. Most of the translators know clearly that they are translating for the children and that the translation of the children's literature is different from that of the adults. Nowadays there are more and more foreign works translated into China, in which case the Chinese children are becoming international. The translated versions of the children's literature provide Chinese children with good literature, broaden the horizon of the children's vision and

promote the development of the Chinese children's literature.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Chen Fu'an. (1981). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. China Translation & Publishing Corporation.
- [2] Jia Wenhao, Jia Wenyuan. (2006). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Beijing: Yanshan Publishing House.
- [3] Qin Gong. (2004). Characteristics of the Translation of Children's Literature during May Fourth Period. *Journal of Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*, 4 p114-118
- [4] Ren Rongrong. (2008). *Charlotte's Web*. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- [5] Ren Rongrong. (2008). *The Wind in the Willows*. Juvenile and Children's Publishing House.
- [6] Shavit, Zohar, (1981). Translation of Children's Literature as a Function of Its Position in the Literary Polysystem. *Poetics Today*.
- [7] Sun Fali. (2002). *The Wind in the Willows*. Anhui: Literature and Art Publishing House.
- [8] Wen Jun, Wang Chenshuang. (2008). Translation of Children's Literature during the Sino-Japanese War. *Comparative Literature in China*, 4, p11.
- [9] Wu Juntao. (2008). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- [10] Zhao Yuanren. (2004). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. China Translation & Publishing Corporation.

**Yu Zhang** was born in Baishan, China in 1965. She received her M. A. degree in linguistics from Dalian Maritime University, China in 1999.

She is currently an associate professor in the School of Foreign Languages, Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China. Her research interests include translation theory and practice.

# Analysis of Power and Threat Manifestation in the Discourse of Traffic Police Officers: A CDA Perspective

Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi  
English Department, the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran  
Email: h\_vahid@yahoo.com

Mehdi Latifi  
The University of Isfahan, Iran  
Email: smm\_latifi@yahoo.com

Elham Mohammadi  
The University of Isfahan, Iran  
Email: Elham.m@fgn.ui.ac.ir

**Abstract**—The present study was an attempt to capture the relationship between the role of social status and discourse in relation to choice of words and tone of the speakers. The way people put the words together and express it can sometimes be the source of coercion, threat and somehow extorting the others. In this article, the discourse of traffic police officers and drivers was precisely scrutinized in order to analyze the discriminatory or oppressive linguistic usage observable in exchanges among given social actors. In so doing, the study's focal point was on instances of illegitimate conversation exchanges between drivers plying highways and the traffic police officers who were controlling the drivers' speeding and traffic violations. A critical discourse analysis of such conversations, recorded through interview with the fined drivers, unveiled that illegitimate dealings are committed, and that whenever the monetary demand of officers is resisted, there are undesirable consequences for the drivers. In addition, the traffic police officers displayed their power in the language they used and, consequently, they were bribed on the sly by the drivers.

**Index Terms**—bribery, critical discourse analysis, oppressive linguistic usage, power

## I. INTRODUCTION

In this article an effort is made to present a critical analysis of discourse exchanges between drivers and traffic police officers at traffic police stations on Isfahan-Tehran highway in Iran. The procedure taken for analysis is framed within the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodologies which are used to touch upon the exhibition of dominance, power and control in exchanges that make the traffic police officers the superior interlocutor. To this end, first of all, an introduction to CDA would be in order.

One of the rather new techniques of investigation used in qualitative research is critical discourse analysis. Foucault (1972) in his influential work on the ontology of knowledge, purported that a discourse includes not only written and spoken ideas and knowledge, but also attitudes, the way topics are addressed, the terms of reference used and the social practices embedded in conventions. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) expands textual discourse analysis by including conversations, interviews, observations, written materials and visuals. CDA is accordingly a mixture of linguistic and social theory that focuses on discourse within social practice. Historically, CDA was used to study everyday activities and social interactions within discrete settings including asylums, and prisons (Gubrium and Holstein, 2000). Current applications of CDA have turned out to include more settings. However, in 1970s there was the emergence of a type of discourse analysis which was later known as the role of language in forming power relations in society (Anthonissen, 2001). The approach was based on Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Critical Linguistics followers such as Trew (1979, p. 155) focused on "isolating ideology in discourse" and demonstrating "how ideology and ideological processes are manifested as systems of linguistic characteristics and processes." This end was pursued by developing CL's analytical tools (Fowler & Hodge, 1979). Theoretically, this approach is characterized by a realist social ontology (which regards both abstract social structures and concrete social events as parts of social reality), a dialectical view of the relationship between structure and agency, and of the relationship between discourse and other elements or 'moments' of social practices and social events.

Followers of Critical Linguistics see the language in use as performing three functions together: ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. According to Fowler (1991, p. 71), and H (1995, p. 25), whereas the ideational function refers to the experience of the speakers of the world and its phenomena, the interpersonal function embodies

the insertion of speakers' own attitudes and evaluations about the phenomena in question, and establishing a relationship between speakers and listeners. During the course of time CL and what lately is more normally referred to as CDA (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; van Dijk, 1998) has been further developed. Van Dijk (2001) considers 2 levels for CDA: Macro and Micro. He believes that the use of language, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication are classified in the micro level of the social order. However, power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that entail the macro level of analysis. This means that CDA has to theoretically cover the well-known "gap" between micro and macro approaches, which is of course a distinction that is a sociological construct in its own right (Alexander, Giesen, Munch & Smelser, 1987; Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel 1981). It can thus be claimed that the present study basically fits into the macro level.

Critical Discourse Analysis sees language as social practice (Fairclough & Wodak 1997), and takes into account the context of language use to be of crucial importance (Wodak, 2000; Benke, 2000). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) state:

Critical Discourse Analysis sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular happening and the situation or social structures which include it. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to changing it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of *power*. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help, produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, and ethnic/ cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people (p. 258).

Such unequal power relations, they add, are manifested in many social encounters unavoidable in some professions (e.g. traffic police officers' job- the focus of the present study to touch upon).

According to Van Dijk (2001), a key concept in most critical studies on discourse is that of power, and more specifically the *social power* of groups or professions. In a nutshell, based on complex philosophical and social analysis, the social power is defined in terms of *control*. Thus, groups have power if they are able to control the acts and minds of the other groups. This ability assumes a *power stand* of advantaged access to limited social properties, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, "culture," or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication (see, e.g., Lukes 1986; Wrong 1979). Different *types of power* may be distinguished according to the various resources employed to use such power: the coercive power of the military (traffic police in the present study) will rather be based on force and threat and the rich will have power because of their money. But, it is worth mentioning that power is seldom absolute since it depends on situation and context, and this power can change from one place to another. Groups may more or less control other groups, or only control them in specific situations or social domains. Moreover, dominated groups may more or less resist, accept, comply with, or legitimate such power, and even find it "natural." The power of dominant groups may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even a quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci (1971) calls "hegemony". By means of this hegemony, some of the traffic police officers abuse their social status.

Hence, CDA is considered an apt tool for the purpose of the present study, as it reveals the subtle relationships that exist between social structures and discursive events (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). CDA as a critical procedure is actually meant to investigate social inequalities which are illustrated in social interactions and are legitimized by language use (Wodak, 2001).

By CDA, the inter-relationships of social structures and discursive microstructures as defined by Van Dijk (1997) can be revealed by analyzing discriminatory or oppressive linguistic usage that is noticeable. CDA is also a means to unveil the implicit and explicit discrimination, oppression, and power-wielding manifest in written or spoken conversations (Dellinger, 1995). This issue is of major importance since it shows how social interactions influence people and their measures in the complex social encounter that eventually may end up in the creation of a discourses.

It can therefore be stated that the objective of CDA is, among other things, to reveal dominance relations between groups, expose the legitimating of power and the manufacture of consent (Kress, 1990).

The present study deals with a sociolinguistic phenomenon which is considered as an appalling problem with chief level of importance to the community. It is hoped that the following analysis and the findings thereof would persuade those in charge of certain jobs in society not to abuse their power any longer either in action or in talk.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The data collection in this article was carried out during two months in three different traffic police stations on different highways. The conversations between the drivers and the police officer were transcribed immediately after the interview with the drivers. Since tape recording or a noticeable presence in the traffic police station office would endanger the true nature of the data, and the officers would not have their actual conversation in the presence of an observer (due to the fact that they were afraid of being reported), the fined or extorted drivers were interviewed shortly after leaving the police stations. Also, during the transcription task the drivers were asked to verbalize the motive behind articulating some of the sentences to let the researchers interpret the dialogues more accurately.

In addition, some of the drivers were interviewed at their destinations which were rather close to the cities' traffic police stations, since a long presence in such areas could be given rise to suspicion of police officers and possible problems for the data collectors.

As for the traffic police officers, the data collectors travelled in their personal cars, pretending either a vehicle break down or stopping in order to take rest at different traffic police stations (5 in total) at various locations along highways (about 410 kms). Also, different data collectors were preferred because this would lead to randomness in the data collection procedure and prevent possible detection which might, among other things, affect the natural setting of the interview and the ease with which responses were obtained. In addition to the present articles' researchers, some of their colleagues were asked to participate as data collectors while they were traveling the target highways. This could add to the validity of the data collection procedure and reduce the risk of identification by the police officers.

### III. DATA ANALYSIS

The existence of widespread traffic police stations on highways is first because of the prevalent violation of speed limit on highways and second, due to the fact that some of the vehicles produced in some countries enjoy a low security level and hence in an accident may be severely damaged. Such police stations are set up close to each city. In addition some mobile police patrols lurk in some blind spots to fine the drivers who trespass the speed limit. Although traffic police officers' specific instructions are crystal clear to them, some officers usually go beyond these and perpetrate illegal deeds which will be discussed later on in the following section. The officers usually display and use a superior tone and diction in their discourse with drivers.

As for data analysis, after encountering and examining 50 different situations in total by the data collectors, the analysis revealed three main categories of conversational interaction, i.e. three major patterns of discourse exchange between the drivers and the traffic police officers were spotted after analyzing the entire transcriptions in all different situations. In the transcriptions many of the conversation wordings and styles were more or less repeated with similar patterns. However, there were three general patterns of systematic recurrence of certain expressions that point to the same issue of asking for bribe and the manifestation of power in the language used by the traffic police officers. Each distinguished pattern identified in the data analysis will be discussed under different headings, to be elaborated on and discussed comprehensively. This would be more suitable for an ample microanalysis of the discourse exchanged between the two parties. The three categories can be explained under these headings: 1.) indirect techniques to request money, 2.) direct techniques to request money, and 3.) making some excuses to extort money of the drivers. Each of these is discussed below. It is to be noted that for the sake of brevity, just one sample of the collected data is presented for each category.

#### A. *Situation One: Indirect Techniques to Request Money*

In this section those propositions which were made by traffic officers to indirectly ask for money will be discussed. The drivers here were caught for violating the speed limit and were stopped by the traffic police officers to get a fine ticket for speeding. Extract A below shows one sample dialogue exchanged between the two parties. From now on the police officers are abbreviated as PO and the drivers are shown by D in all the extracts.

Extract A:

1. PO: pull over
2. D: (after stopping the car and going towards the officer). Good job officer, something wrong?
3. PO: You were over speeding (PO is frowning)
4. D: Are you sure? Oh no, please neglect it I am in such a hurry, if I get late there, I will miss something very important. Just this time, please.
5. PO: Your ticket would be about 20 \$, so what should we do?
6. D: Ok, please check my documents (money is included)
7. PO: Everything is fine, go.

Here, at first, the driver pretended that he knew nothing about the reason that he was stopped (2). By this he wanted to send an indirect message to the police officer showing that he was not aware of breaking the speed limit due to some distractions. This trick may have influenced the officer to feel pity for the driver. However, in (3) the police officer attributed blame to the driver for violating the speed limit. The accusation is grave in that it entails an illegal act to the driver and indirectly imposes the power of police officer over the driver. This immediately prompts the reaction of the driver as if he did not know it and it was only negligence. After that, in (4) the seemingly surprised driver tried to make some excuses to alleviate the punishment. The conversations included in this category usually contained excuses such as having someone waiting for drivers or losing a very important appointment. But, the traffic police officer disregarded the exchanges so far and in (5) he mentioned the amount of penalty for over speeding. In the next sentence, the PO made his point indirectly by raising a question and hesitating to see the reaction of the driver- what should we do? In (6) the driver got the point and secretly bribed the officer. To avoid the direct bribing the driver put the money in the documents. Usually, giving the document to the PO voluntarily is the sign of bribing in the conversations. Finally, in (7) the officer accepted the offered money by giving the documents back and letting the driver move on.

#### B. *Situation Two: Direct Techniques to Request Money*

## Extract B:

1. PO: Park your car and take your documents to the office.
2. D: Ok sir, something wrong?
3. PO: You were reported for over speeding by our cameras.
4. D: There must be a mistake. I was driving with low speed. I have never exceeded the speed limit.
5. PO: Really? You were reported by your license plate. The documents are available inside the office. Your vehicle should be stopped here and your driver's license must be attached. Shake a leg, we are running out of time.
6. D: Please sir, I am really busy these days.
7. PO: None of my concern, but there might be another way to pay it in cash.
8. D: Sure, thank you.

In this situation, in (1), again after parking the car and the request to check the documents the driver pretended that he knows nothing about the reason that he was stopped (2). The PO accused the driver of over speeding but in (4) the driver evaded the officer's blame tactic by ignoring the accusation and countering it with a cordial and polite verbal move. The driver wanted to deny any charge against him. However, in (5) the PO insisted on over speeding issue and mentions to the availability of some documents to justify his word. In so doing, he used the word 'really' to start his sentence that shows he is talking from a superior position and to make fun of the driver. Thereafter, he became even more aggressive and threatened the driver to stop his vehicle. In such conversations there are instances in which drivers make conversational moves to appease, for example, by using deferential expressions whenever there is a hint of threat from POs. In (6), it can be seen that the driver's resistance to plead not guilty was not successful and did not stop the extortion from being carried out. Hence, the driver tried to appease the tone of the PO by trying to show his desperation. Finally, in (7) the police officer directly made his point and asked for money with audacity. It seems that the additional threats to stop the car and attach the driver's license were an introduction to get the money. This was done without any apparent resistance on the part of the driver and thus, the PO got bribed by the driver. This direct technique to extort money is becoming more prevalent. Actually, in 20 (out of 50) of the situations the police officers asked for money in this manner.

### C. *Situation Three: Extorting Money by Making Some Excuses*

This situation usually happens to the truck drivers.

## Extract C:

1. PO: Park your car.
2. D: Ok, but is there a problem?
3. PO: Let me take a look at your documents and waybill to see what you are carrying...Ok, the documents are fine but I should check your truck load, it takes time, you should wait for a while.
4. D: Sir I should keep going. I am sure there is nothing wrong.
5. PO: But, I should do my duty. I told you it takes time. I think the truck is overloaded.
7. D: Here, please double check my documents. (Money is placed in the documents).
8. PO: Ok no problem. You can go. I don't like to keep you waiting.

In this situation, there is no over speeding accusation and the truck driver is asked to pull over for normal checking. However, in (3) the police officer started to send indirect signals to the driver that he is expecting money. After the approval of the documents by the PO, he started to make some excuses for still keeping the driver. But in (4) the driver's response was somehow different. Such cases are indicators of a kind of resistance by some drivers and an attempt to challenge the authority and power of the traffic officers. But, if drivers suffer from undue control and intimidation, then police officers suffer from the pressure of making their point. The confident tone of the driver was of no use and in (5) the PO still insisted on his argument and sent the second signal by mentioning the time parameter and the fact that the driver must wait there for a while. This shows the abuse of power on the part of the PO. So entrenched is the inclination to demand money that the driver's tactic has to change from pleading not guilty to accepting the indirect request for bribe. And so, the driver gave back the document accompanied by the indirectly requested money. Thereafter, the PO allowed the truck driver to pass. It can be said that by making some excuses the PO easily succeeded to extort the driver.

## IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

CDA is concerned with a thorough analysis of language used in relation to many factors such as power and social inequalities. Specifically, it takes a particular interest in the relationship between language and power. It can assist to construct and reconstruct unequal power relations (Wodak, 2002). In critical discourse analysis, language is not powerful on its own. It gains power by the use that the powerful people make of it. Wodak (2001) also argues that power is signaled not only by grammatical forms within a text, but also by a person's control of a social occasion which by using Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics) it is possible to uncover linguistic structures of power in texts. By using CDA, the analysis of conversations in this article revealed the exercise of power by the traffic police officers, while exploiting some sophisticated linguistic techniques to get paid by the drivers.

It can be stated that the findings of the present study are in line with Van Dijk (2001) proposition that different *types of power* may be distinguished according to the various resources- language as one of them- employed to exercise such power (p. 355). Different groups such as military forces use language to exercise their coercive power. He adds that the exercise of power is not only limited to the control over what to say (content) but also over how to say (structure). Concerning text and context, members of powerful groups may decide on the (possible) discourse genre(s) or speech acts of an occasion as it was obvious in the analysis of the extracts. The PO's discourse and tone would change the way the drivers would pick their words and the tone of their responses. Also, in agreement with McGregor (2003) in CDA, discourse in the data of this study was analyzed to uncover hidden or implied meanings of the exchanges.

The present study's analysis also shares a common result with Laminu Mele and Bello (2007). They examined the abuse of power of security personnel in Nigeria in their language usage as a mean of extortion. In line with their analysis, this study demonstrates a coercive and threatening discourse adopted by the police officers to be paid money by the drivers. Besides, Van Dijk (2001) states that the military forces would use a kind of language that may confirm or legitimate their abuse of power. For instance, they would repeat the drivers' violation of law on and on and charge them with some extra penalties to make their point to be bribed. This supports the findings of the present study too.

In a nutshell, in the conversations between traffic police officers and drivers, the powerless party (drivers) mostly had to surrender, since the drivers could not afford to waste time and there would be severe consequences for them in case of resistance. In short, while some police officers abuse their power to extort the drivers, the drivers sometime paid bribe in order to avoid a tougher penalty whenever they were guilty. However, these social practices (bribery and extortion) are largely assisted through the use of language, which is exploited and manipulated to suit certain ends. CDA critically unveils these facts.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Alexander, J. C., Giesen, B., Munch, R., and Smelser, N. J. (eds). (1987). *The Micro—Macro Link*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- [2] Anthonissen, C. (2001). *On the Effectivity of Media Censorship: An Analysis of Linguistic, Paralinguistic and other Communicative Devices used to defy Media Restrictions*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Vienna.
- [3] Benke, G. (2000). Diskursanalyse als sozialwissenschaftliche Untersuchungsmethode. *SWS Rundschau* (2), 140-162.
- [4] Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- [5] Dellinger, B. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Available [accessed 15 jun 2009]: <http://brett.-dellinger.tripod.com/>
- [6] Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [7] Fairclough, N. L. and Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T. A. van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse Studies. Multidisciplinary Introduction, vol.2. Discourse as Social Interaction* pp. 258-84). London: Sage.
- [8] Fowler, R. and B. Hodge. (1979). Critical linguistics. In R. Fowler et al (Eds.). *Language and Control*. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul. pp. 185-213.
- [9] Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.
- [10] Fowler, R. (1991). Critical Linguistics. In: Halmkjaer, K. (ed.), *The Linguistic Encyclopedia*. London/ New York: Routledge. 89-93.
- [11] Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- [12] Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein. (2000). Analyzing Interpretive Practice. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 487-508.
- [13] Halliday, M.A.K. (1994). *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [14] Knorr-Cetina, K. and Cicourel, A. V. (1981). *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology. Towards an Integration of Micro- and Macrosociologies*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- [15] Kress, G. (1990). Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 11, 84-99.
- [16] Laminu Mele, M and Bello, B.M. (2007). Coaxing and coercion in roadblock encounters on Nigerian highways. *Discourse & Society*. 18(4), 437-452.
- [17] Lukes, S. (1986). *Power*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- [18] McGregor, S.L.T. (2003). Critical Discourse Analysis – A Primer. *Critical Science and Critical Discourse Analysis* 15(1).
- [19] Trew, T. (1979). Theory and ideology at work (pp. 94-116). In: Fowler, R., Hodge, B., Kress, G. and Trew, T. (Eds) *language and control*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- [20] Van Dijk, T.A. (1997). *Discourse as Social Interaction*. London: Sage.
- [21] Van Dijk, T.A. (1998). Opinions and Ideologies in the Press. In Bell, Allan and Peter.
- [22] Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In Tannen, D./ Schiffrin, D./Hamilton, H. (eds.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- [23] Wodak, R. (2000). Recontextualisation and the transformation of meaning: a critical discourse analysis of decision making in EU-meetings about employment policies. In Sarangi, S./ Coulthard, M. (eds.): *Discourse and Social Life*. Harlow: Pearson Education, 185-206.
- [24] Wodak, R. (2001). The Discourse-Historical Approach. In Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Eds.) *Methods of CDA*. London: Sage.
- [25] Wodak, R. (2002). Critical Discourse Analysis. In Schiffrin, D. (ed.) *Handbook in Discourse Analysis*. Oxford, Blackwells.
- [26] Wrong, D. H. (1979). *Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses*. Oxford: Blackwell.



**Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi** (b. 1955, Isfahan, Iran) teaches in the English Language Department at the University of Isfahan, Iran. He is associate professor of applied linguistics and has taught courses of variegated character, including translation courses, for years. He has been a fellow of the English Centers at the universities of Isfahan and Shiraz where he has investigated into issues related to materials preparation for GE. and ESP. courses. He is the author of a number of books in this respect. He has also published a good number of articles on discourse, testing and translation in local and international journals.

Dr. Vahid's current research interests include testing, materials development, translation, the metaphoricity of language, discourse analysis, pragmatics and critical discourse analysis. He is presently involved in a number of projects concerning translation studies as well as figurative language use.

**Mehdi Latifi** (b. 1983, Isfahan, Iran) is currently a Ph. D. candidate at the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. He received his M.A. in TEFL from the University of Isfahan. His area of interest is listening comprehension.

**Elham Mohammadi** (b. 1985, Isfahan, Iran) is currently an MA student at the University of Isfahan. Her area of interest is Task-based language teaching.

# Towards the Abolition of Hierarchy—On O'Connor's Racial Ideas in her Works

Jiping Yang

School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunication, Beijing, China

Email: amy yang77@bupt.edu.cn

**Abstract**—An unavoidable problem in Southern American history is the racism. Racial relationship is under Flannery O'Connor's consideration in several stories. By examining the protagonists' process of self-transformation and their different ways of looking at the white-black relationship, O'Connor tries to demonstrate that only by truly abolishing the hierarchy between races can the white and the black achieve their harmonic relationship, that is, the black workers have to remove the "inferiority complex", the "paternalism" and the white farm owners have to remove "superiority complex". Otherwise, the disaster will definitely follow as before although the blacks have been emancipated politically for such a long time. Only by truly abolishing the racial hierarchy can American society set up a cozy atmosphere between the races based on true acceptance and understanding.

**Index Terms**—Flannery O'Connor, racial relationship, hierarchy, abolition, harmony

As one of the important members of Southern American Renaissance, Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964) is claimed as "America's greatest post-World War II short story writer" (Getz, 1980, p. x). Although all of her fictional works add up to only two novels and 31 short stories, O'Connor was even identified as "American South's best fiction writer" and named among "the nation's ten best women writers of all time" (Getz, 2000, p. x). As "a complete original" (Hendin, 1970, p.1), O'Connor produced works unlike many other writers of her generation by fusing the lessons of the New Critics with her other various identities such as Southerner, Catholic, female and modern intellectual. As a Southern woman writer, racial relationship, an unavoidable problem in Southern history, is unavoidably under O'Connor's consideration in several stories. O'Connor's first published story, "The Geranium", its revised version "Judgement Day", her posthumously published story "Everything That Rises Must Converge", and "Revelation", O'Connor tries to demonstrate that only by truly abolishing the hierarchy between races can the white and the black achieve their harmonic relationship, that is, the black workers have to remove the "inferiority complex", the "paternalism" and the white farm owners have to remove "superiority complex" (Mitchell, 1930, p.114). Otherwise, the disaster will definitely follow as before although the blacks have been emancipated politically for such a long time. Only by truly abolishing the racial hierarchy can American society set up a cozy atmosphere between the races based on true acceptance and understanding.

"The Geranium" and its revision "Judgement Day" demonstrate the transition in American people's treatment of the racial problem. Through the protagonists' process of self-transformation in the two versions, the writer shows the social changes in the white-black relationship. The most striking difference between the two versions is the old men's attitude toward the racial relationship, but the most striking similarity is the old men's similar tragic destiny. In both of the stories, the protagonists, named Old Dudley and Tanner respectively, live with their daughters in a Northern city. Both Old Dudley and Tanner often recall their past in the South when they live with a nigger. In "The Geranium," Old Dudley often thinks of his past together with the nigger named Rabie. He is the "boss" of the nigger (O'Connor, 1986, p.5) and between them is the "equal but separate" principle. The hierarchy between them is clear. The verb "explain" is used when the old man speaks to the nigger as if he were teaching the one who is inferior to him in intellect: he "would explain the mechanism to him" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 6). In his eyes, the nigger is inferior and unable to be independent. The ridiculous state of the black is full of his memory. In this story, Old Dudley's connection with Rabie is still built upon the master-slave pattern. The nigger Rabie is still childlike in the eyes of the white man and should be protected by his master. This is the basic pattern composed by the southern white in their Southern family romance. For many Southern thinkers, especially those in the Southern Renaissance, the society-as-family is the ideal toward which Southern society should strive. The region is conceived of as "a vast metaphorical family, hierarchically organized" (King, 1980, p.27). The influence of the southern tradition on Old Dudley is reflected in his attitude to the blacks. The way he behaves shows that he has internalized the values. He has come to the north and lives with his daughter, but he has never questioned white supremacy. In his eyes, the blacks are in their "dependence and helplessness" and "unquenchable happiness" (Taylor, 1963, p.283). His feelings of supremacy make it impossible for him to accept the black as intellectually and emotionally equal to him. There is no real communication between them. For him, although the nigger named Rabie politically emancipated, he is still psychologically dependent. In this way, the gap between the races exists.

While "The Geranium" implies that the relationship between Dudley and his southern black friend Rabie follows a southern pattern, "Judgement Day" is an attempt to demonstrate a desire for racial understanding. Whereas in "The

Geranium" Dudley and Rabie live separately, in "Judgement Day" the two friends live together happily for years before Tanner moves to the North. "Judgement Day" presents a weaker and weaker notion of the southern white supremacy in Tanner/Coleman relationship. In "Judgement Day," the protagonist, Tanner, intends to make closer connection with blacks although he fails to either make friends with the blacks in the North or go back to the blacks in the South. First, he decides that he will return to his black friend, Coleman, in Georgia. Tanner desires to be back with Coleman. The old man will achieve all that is worth achieving. He gives his return a religious dimension. He imagines that upon his return he will pretend to be dead, and his fantasy also suggests a faith in his resurrection. He dreams that he jumps out of a coffin and announces Judgment Day to Coleman. Tanner has a vision about his return to the south:

Once he got in the freight car, he would lie down and rest. During the night the train would start South, and the next day or the morning after, dead or alive, he would be home". "Dead or alive," He adds, "It was being there that mattered; the dead or alive did not." (O'Connor, 1986, p. 532)

He provides his reunion with Coleman with the spirit of a rebirth, his resurrection from his tomb. This spiritual connection shows the preliminary acceptance between the two.

Through the two versions of the same story, we can discover the transition from the racial hierarchy to the gradual equality in thinking, not only in politics. However, in "The Judgement Day", although there are changes in the white old man's attitudes toward his relationship with his black farmhand, real friendship is being recognized, and even the old man and his black friend live together, yet, "[t]he old Negro was curled up on a pallet asleep at the foot of Tanner's bed" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 534). This detail shows that it is not completely equal between the old man and his black "friend" in some sense. This is the paradox in the white people's dealing with the problem. For many white people, in the area of race, a special effort is called for to improve race relations and for the abandonment of the notion of black inferiority, but this does not mean that segregation will be abolished, only that the "inequalities" will be taken out of the biracial system. For many whites, this can be done "without destroying the integrity of the races" (King, 1980, p. 487). This is the very reason why the old man dies before he comes back to the South and reunites with Coleman. If the old man cannot recognize what is real equality between them, he cannot be really together with his black friend. Another image that O'Connor repeats in her two versions of the story is the black neighbor of the old man's daughter, who the old man meets on the stairs. In "Geranium", after Old Dudley moves to the North with his daughter, when a black neighbor of her daughter helps him upstairs and "patted Old Dudley on the back," "[t]he pain in his throat was all over his face now, leaking out his eyes" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 13). For the old man, this is more torture than help. It is an insult. "His throat was going to pop on account of a nigger--a damn nigger that patted him on the back and called him 'old-time'" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 13). Then he decides, "He wouldn't go down and have niggers patten' him on the back" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 14). The old man's rejection of the help from his black neighbor further demonstrates his prejudice against the black. In "Judgement Day", the old man changes his attitudes toward the black neighbor of his daughter. He tries to show his friendship, but he does not know what to do. That he addresses his as "Preacher", which is considered as an insult by the black, brings the fatal disaster to the old man. He was thrown between the stairs and died. This story tells the reader that if the white don't get rid of his sense of superiority to the blacks, they will be misunderstood and only violence will be provoked by their misused friendliness. The very root of the violence between the races is from the racial hierarchy, especially that from their deep mind.

In "Everything That Rises Must Converge," O'Connor returns to the subject of white attitudes toward the Negro. In this story, O'Connor shows her ideas about the racial relationship more directly, that is, racial superiority between the white and the black can only lead to violence and even death. Julian's mother, Mrs. Chestny, comes from the prominent Chestny family which has already declined. One day, she asks her son to accompany her to a reducing class. On the bus, she sees a black woman who is wearing the same hat as hers and coincidentally they get off at the same stop. Out of her social superiority she offers the woman's child a shiny penny from her pocketbook, and, in turn, gets from the boy's mother a pocketbook swung in her face. She is knocked down by the black woman, violently stunned and dies of a heart attack.

Julian's mother has been holding the anachronistic attitude that the blacks' struggle for equality is a sure sign that the world has gone terribly awry. She believes that it is a threat to her own status. The defense of this hierarchy is clearly a defense of the protagonist's own sense of "place" in it and her racist beliefs are an integral part of her code of life: "I know who I am" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 407). The mother recalls her "darker" nurse, Caroline, with nostalgic fondness. Julian's mother can see the brutality of the slavery and the kindness of her "darker" nurse, but the ideology of the plantation society blinds her to the fact that neither of them is superior to the other in nature and spirit. She feels now, with the onset of unfamiliar integration, that "they [blacks] should rise, yes, but on their own side of fence" (p.407), although there is "no better person in the world" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 409). So Julian's mother still holds the rule of "Equal but Separate" which comes from white supremacy directly. O'Connor uses the setting of an everyday familiarity to expose feelings hidden beneath the surface of our daily lives. Julian's mother's adjustments to the race question reflect a common reaction among the Southerners to the issue, which is elaborated by James Dickey (1961): "[F]or the Southerner, buses have been transformed into small, uncomfortable rolling arenas wherein the forces hidden for a hundred years in the structure of his society threaten to break loose and play themselves out each time a bus pulls away from a corner" (p. 2). O'Connor story provides a fascinating embodiment of Dickey's argument.

The story is firmly rooted in the exacerbations of racial relations in the South. Julian's mother's life has been "a struggle to act like a Chestny without the Chestny goods" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 411). While she has fallen from the land owner class, "her eyes, blue-sky, were as innocent and untouched by experience as they must have been when she was ten" (p. 406). Julian's mother still remains preoccupied with defending the social hierarchy against all of its enemies. And without the inherited home and land, all Julian's mother has inherited from her former sense of empowerment is her breeding—particularly her ability to be gracious to those she believes to be social inferiors, especially to the Negroes. In Julian's mother's mind, her ability to engage in conversation with those whites on the bus who are clearly "not our kind of people" and to be patronizingly kind to black children is her badge of social superiority; her sense of identity enables her to be "gracious to anybody" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 407). As Julian's mother is wont to point out, she is related to the Godhighs and the Chestnys, prominent families of the Old South whose former status is conveyed nicely by the high-ceilinged, double-staircased mansion which Julian has seen as a child, and which "remain[s] in his mind as his mother had known it" although the double stairways "had rotted and been torn down" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 408). But with the end of the plantation system, the mother's glorious ancestry is meaningless: she has had to work to put her son through a third-rate university, and she lives in a poor neighborhood which was fashionable forty years earlier. One of the most telling and subtle indicators of her loss of socioeconomic status is her participation in a program at the YWCA. "A reducing class at the Y" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 405) is a "bourgeois event" (Maida, 1970, p. 549), but more than this, it suggests how much Julian's mother, and the socioeconomic system she represents, have declined by the early 1960s. She is simply another poor, native country woman trying to survive in a hostile urban environment. And the hat and gloves she pathetically wears to the Y—those emblems of wealth and respectability—serve only to underscore her socioeconomic decline because of the fact that it resembles the hat of a black woman. However, Julian's mother is not able to accept the fact. And the black woman who kills her accidentally is not able to accept the idea of white supremacy, either. Thus, violence follows.

The two women are actually the victims of racism. The tragedy happening to Julian's mother results from her social superiority to the black woman under racism. Julian's mother has internalized the notion of the white supremacy and considers herself superior to the black, which of course leads to the attack from the black woman. They represent their race respectively. These racial biases have affected black and white women's images of themselves as well as their images of each other. As a result, in "interracial encounters, racial stereotypes may constrain behavior in ways to cause both blacks and whites to behave in accordance with those stereotypes" (Rothenberg, 1988, p. 266). Thus social role segregation prevents them seeing each other as victims of the same patriarchal system. Julian's mother and the black woman have both internalized the social prejudice of their own race against each other. Their reactions toward each other are based on their respective racial base. Julian's mother's firm belief in her own elevated position in the hierarchy, evidenced by her ability to graciously interact with her inferiors in the manner of a true Southern lady, entitles her to denigrate her fellow human beings; the persistence in her own racial dignity in the black woman leads to her violent reaction to Julian's mother.

Recognition of any similarities between black and white women has been rendered difficult in the South by a history of slavery and segregation, which has caused blacks and whites to define themselves in opposition to each other, to see difference as innate rather than socially constructed because "the white plantation society, because of its economic and social dominance, makes established conventions of behavior of women, both black and white" (Rothenberg, 1988, p. 257-62). Only when people from different classes and races accept each other as spiritual equals, deprive themselves of their internalization of the patriarchal and racialist ideology can they reach a harmonic relationship. The political liberation can not lead to their spiritual liberation.

Then, in "Revelation", O'Connor frankly depicts her vision of ideal racial relationship in the reality. The hierarchy developed under the assumptions of superiority complex is completely deconstructed and the racial hierarchy is subverted.

Mrs. Turpin, the protagonist, is another female character who holds the idea of hierarchy strongly. Mrs. Turpin reveals an overwhelming pride in her position within the community and in relation to God. Mrs. Turpin's most distinguishable hobby is "naming the classes of people" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 491). Although she readily admits to herself that her envisioning of a hierarchy based upon race, class and money is flawed, as it fails to account for richer people who are morally or racially inferior to herself, she still insists upon defending it. What makes Mrs. Turpin different from other characters holding the notion of hierarchy is that she thinks and questions. She questions God. She begins to think and speak in face of God, although it is only in her fantasy. She no longer lives in her past. She has the courage to see and to speculate. This is the beginning of her rebellion and liberation. In a fantasy, she wonders: If Jesus had said to her before he made her, "There's only two places available for you. You can either be a nigger or white-trash," what would she have said? "Please, Jesus, please," she would have said, "Just let me wait until there's another place available," and he would have said, "No, you have to go right now and I have only those two places so make up your mid." She would have wiggled and squirmed and begged and pleaded but it would have been no use and finally she would have said, "All right, make me a nigger then—but that don't mean a trashy one." And he would have made her a neat clean respectable Negro woman, herself but black (O'Connor, 1986, p. 491).

Mrs. Turpin has such a fantasy and makes such a choice because she realizes that the hierarchy is changed, even turned upside down in some aspects, which puzzles her and sends her thinking at the same time. There is a colored

dentist in town who has two red Lincolns and a swimming pool and a farm with registered white-face cattle on it. Usually by the time she falls asleep all the classes of people are moiling and roiling around in her head, and she will dream they are all crammed in together in a boxcar, being ridden off to be put in a gas oven (O'Connor, 1986, p. 491-92). The stable hierarchy is not available in her fantasy. The stability of hierarchy is not accessible. This she makes clear in her waiting room conversation, where she brags about her crops and livestock and bemoans her inability to find good help: "You can't get the white folks to pick [cotton] and now you can't get the niggers—because they got to be right [up] there with the white folks" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 493).

Definitely, Mrs. Turpin's fantasy displays her prejudice against the low-class whites and her desire to maintain her social superiority. But the fantasy also explains that Mrs. Turpin is already getting ready for the collapse of the established hierarchy. In her mind, the traditional hierarchy is being dissolved little by little and she is involved in breaking it sometimes unwittingly and unwillingly. This vision shows that Mrs. Turpin imagines herself on the way to her banal hierarchy which is to be collapsed. She has been holding an ideal of hierarchy but she questions it herself and she is puzzled at what is happening in the changing society. She is waiting for the collapse. She is thinking about her own situation and she even questions God about this. Turpin gains her redemption through her abandonment of patriarchal hierarchy at the end of the story, which shows O'Connor's ideal of breaking the racial hierarchy and achieving real racial equality.

Mrs. Turpin's revelation comes from her dealing with the girl named Mary Grace in the waiting room when she is waiting to see a doctor. From the gathering in a physician's waiting room, Mrs. Turpin generates a preferential hierarchy of people: The rich, home-and-land owners, those who own home but not land, white trash, and blacks. Basically, it is an economic hierarchy. Mrs. Turpin is thankful to be on the upper end. She talks with another descent-looking woman complacently about her social position. As she is rejoicing to herself that things are not different, Mary Grace, an ugly girl in the room who is reading a book, grows more and more outraged at the self-satisfied remarks of Mrs. Turpin and hurls her book across the room at Mrs. Turpin's head. Then she tells Mrs. Turpin, "Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 500). The remarks of the girl break Mrs. Turpin's complacency and set her thinking about the hierarchy that she gives to different people. Thus she begins to move toward transformation.

When Mary Grace becomes destructive, Mrs. Turpin is absolutely convinced that the girl should be listened to. Apparently, destruction and truth are closely tied in Mrs. Turpin's mind. Even after Mary Grace throws the book at her, Mrs. Turpin makes an extra effort to ask the disturbed, partially sedated girl for a message. And when she receives that absurd message that she is a hog from the hell, she decides it is true, so true that she fears even her husband will agree that she is a hog from hell. Besides, although the previous insult from the white-trash woman insults Mrs. Turpin almost as nastily as Mary Grace does, she accepts. The conversation Mrs. Turpin has with the white-trash woman shows her weakness in terms of protecting the hierarchy she has set up. As Mrs. Turpin describes the operation of the Turpin farm, she mentions that the Turpins have hogs and that she is tired of "buttering up niggers" to get them to work (O'Connor, 1986, p. 494). The white-trash woman's response is to place herself above Mrs. Turpin: "Two things I ain't going to do: love no niggers or scoot down no hog with no hose" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 493). And she lets out a bark of contempt. Mrs. Turpin and Mary Grace's mother agree, however, that "you had to have certain things before you could know certain things" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 492). Thus they agree that social elevation depends upon relationships with humans on the lowest social level and even with nonhumans. Even as she defends herself against the white-trash woman's opinions, Mrs. Turpin senses disruptions of the hierarchy. In response to the complaint about hogs, Mrs. Turpin quickly points out, of course, that her hogs are far from the "nasty stinking things" the white-trash woman considers them. The Turpins' hogs' feet "never touch the ground" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 493). The angelic associations of a hog whose feet never touch the ground are a displacement of the natural hierarchy; she calls the white-trash child a "poor nasty little thing" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 493) and holds that he is dirtier than the Turpins' hogs. The seemingly casual ease with which Mrs. Turpin rejects the white-trash woman's criticism suggests that she has nothing specific to refute the disturbance caused by the uprising of the lower class and she is unconsciously ready for the collapse of the hierarchy in spite of her possible unwillingness.

First, when she tries to complain to her black farm hands about her tragic encounters, she knows clearly that she won't get real sympathy from them, which is an improvement on the protagonists in the above stories who never really know why they fail in their relationships with the blacks. She desires to complain to someone who will refute the assertion of Mary Grace, but she knows that she will not believe the refutation. This attitude shows that Mrs. Turpin herself has already questioned her own identity though she does not realize it consciously. As she gives the black workers water, Mrs. Turpin knows that they will flatter and defend her excessively and maddeningly if she tells them what happens to her in the doctor's waiting room, but she knows what the fact is like: "Mrs. Turpin knew exactly how much Negro flattery was worth and it added to her rage" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 505). As she expects, when she tells the black workers on the farm what Mary Grace does, they respond with praise for herself, which Mrs. Turpin herself will reject: "She pretty too," the other two said. "Stout as she can be and sweet. Jesus satisfied with her!" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 505). She receives no satisfaction from her disclosure. Afterwards she goes alone to the pig parlor. Mrs. Turpin asks God, "Who do you think you are?" (O'Connor, 1986, 507) and her question "returned to her clearly like all answer from beyond the wood" (O'Connor, 1986, 508). Facing the revelation from Mary Grace, Mrs. Turpin does not merely ask

how she is like a hog, but asks, “How am I a hog and me both? How am I saved and from hell too” (O’Connor, 1986, 506)?

Mrs. Turpin finds in Mary Grace the disruption of hierarchy that she has already sensed. When she receives her curse from Mary Grace, she becomes completely serious, and she spends the rest of the time in the story bringing up to consciousness the full expression of the revelation she has been speculating upon and even waiting for. Her conscious protests confirm her real convictions: “I am not,” she said tearfully, “a wart hog from hell”. But “the denial had no force” (O’Connor, 1986, p. 502). Mrs. Turpin is so convinced that she is a wart hog that it is not until she has returned home that it occurs to her to recall that others also deserve condemnation: “She had been singled out for the message, though there was trash in the room to whom it might justly have been applied. The full force of this fact struck her only now” (O’Connor, 1986, p. 502).

Mrs. Turpin questions God and has a vision that, in essence, “the first shall be last and the last, first” (O’Connor, 1986, p. 508). She dreams repeatedly that all the social classes are “crammed all together” (O’Connor, 1986, p. 492), and in her final vision she manages to see herself on a fiery pathway to heaven. So it is interesting to note that Mrs. Turpin’s redemption is a process. Her redemption is the result of her thinking and questioning of the existing hierarchy. Before Mrs. Turpin reaches the point in her fantasy when the collapse of the hierarchy occurs, she refers to the people she is categorizing as a “heap,” a word that implies that the collapse into a mass is inherent in categorizing people. Consequently, when Mrs. Turpin finds herself in the doctor’s office and, carefully noting the quality of everyone’s shoes, begins to build the hierarchy again, her thoughts and actions in the waiting room do indeed reveal an unconscious desire to disrupt the hierarchy she has created. One violation of the class hierarchy in Mrs. Turpin’s system of belief is her agreement with a gospel hymn on the radio in the doctor’s office. When she hears the line “When I looked up and He looked down,” her mind supplies the last line: “And wona these days I know I’ll we-ear a crown” (O’Connor, 1986, p. 490). Here Mrs. Turpin envisions for herself an eventual displacement from her position in her imagined hierarchy. In this instance Mrs. Turpin imagines that a disruption of the hierarchy will move her up. The final vision is of a “vast horde...rumbling toward heaven” (O’Connor, 1986, 508). Mrs. Turpin is like a hog from hell, and she is going back where she came from, but her real origin is heaven. Mrs. Turpin may seem fully conscious of her redemption. She does, after all, hear “the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah” (O’Connor, 1986, p. 509) even after her vision fades.

Patriarchy is “a multi-layered system of domination, centered in men’s control of women, but including class, race, and generational hierarchies, clericalism, war, and the domination of nature” (Ruether, 2002, p. 4). The thinking reflected in Mrs. Turpin’s story is unique among O’Connor’s stories. This is the only story in which the character has possessed the ability to question and has reached her answer. The collapse of the hierarchy and the tendency toward real equality between different classes and races in Mrs. Turpin’s mind is the result of her thinking and understanding and it is also O’Connor’s thinking and understanding. For O’Connor, misunderstandings arise on both sides because of racial differences. In her stories, O’Connor shows that racial prejudice will definitely lead to violence between two parties no matter whether the violence is directly or indirectly from racial conflicts. The fates of O’Connor’s white characters demonstrate that only when they really accept the blacks as equal partners can they really live together harmoniously and get their revelation and redemption and only a shared humanity can make them coexist harmoniously.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study is the product of the Humanities & Social Science Research Project Flannery O’Connor Study (09YJC752002) supported by Ministry of Education P.R.C.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Daly, Mary. (1973). *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- [2] Dickey, James. (1961). “Notes on the Decline of Outrage.” *South*. Eds. Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and Robert D. Jabobs. Garden City: Doubleday, Anchor, p.1-20.
- [3] Getz, Lorine M. (1980). *Flannery O’Connor, Her Life, Library, and Book Reviews*. New York: E. Mellen Press.
- [4] Getz, Lorine M. (2000). *Flannery O’Connor, Literary Theologian: the Habits and Discipline of Being*. New York: E. Mellen Press.
- [5] Hendin, Josephine. (1970). *The World of Flannery O’Connor*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- [6] King, Richard H. (1980). *A Southern Renaissance: the Cultural Awakening of the American South, 1930-1955*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [7] Maida, Patricia Dinneen. (1970). Convergence in Flannery O’Connor’s “Everything That Rises Must Converge”. *Studies in Short Fiction* 7, p. 543-564.
- [8] Mitchell, Broadus and George. (1930). *The Industrial Revolution in the South*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- [9] O’Connor, Flannery. (1986). *The Complete Stories*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous.
- [10] Rothenberg, Paula S. (1988). ed. *Racism and Sexism*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- [11] Ruether, Rosemary Radford. (2002). *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. London: SCM Press.
- [12] Taylor, William R. (1963). *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character*. New York: Doubleday.

**Jiping Yang** was born on April 29, 1971, Siping, Jilin Province, China. She got her Ph.D. in American Literature from Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China, 2006. Her academic interests are in Twentieth-Century American literature and Southern American Women writers with special interest in Flannery O'Connor.

She is an Associate Professor of Literature at BUPT. She published *The Subversion and Reconstruction of Western Theology and Sexual Relationship* and over 20 academic papers. She has finished the projects Flannery O'Connor Study and Transformation of the China Images in American Literature supported by Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunication. Currently, she is hosting the Humanities & Social Science Research Project Flannery O'Connor Study (09YJC752002) supported by Ministry of Education P.R.C., Network Literature under the Perspective of Feminism supported by Chinese Universities Scientific Fund (BUPT 2009RC1116) and Cyber Literature Study under a Feminist Perspective by Chinese Universities Scientific Fund (BUPT 2009RC1116), and A Study of Transversing Novels supported by Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunication.

# Validity Considerations in Designing an Oral Test

Wei Li

School of Foreign Languages, Henan University of Technology, Lianhua Street, Zhengzhou City, China  
Email: gracie.lee@163.com

**Abstract**—A language test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what it is intended to measure. Qualities of tests involve validity considerations such as validity, reliability, authenticity, intractiveness, impact and practicality, which should also be taken into account in designing an oral test.

**Index Terms**—language test, validity considerations, oral test

## I. INTRODUCTION

Whether for educational uses or for researches information about people's language ability is nowadays often very useful and sometimes necessary. It is difficult to imagine, for example, British and American universities accepting students from overseas without some knowledge of their proficiency in English. They certainly need dependable measures of language ability. The same is true for organizations hiring interpreters or translators. Then it comes to the requirement of dependable measures -- the use of language tests. Language tests refer to instruments used to measure language ability or aptitude. A defining feature of language tests is that they consist of "specified tasks through which language abilities are elicited" (Daves, 2002, p. 107). Hughes (2000) believed that "a test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what it is intended to measure"(p. 22). But too often language tests have a harmful effect on teaching and learning; and they fail to measure accurately what they are intended to measure. The effect of language tests on teaching and learning is known as backwash. Backwash can be positive or negative. For example, the use of an oral interview in a final examination may encourage teachers to practice conversational language use with their students. And if a test is regarded as important, then preparation for it can come to dominate teaching and learning activities. Good tests can be supportive of teaching whereas tests with poor quality which lack test techniques and reliability would have harmful effect on teaching and learning. Therefore tests with qualities are necessary.

## II. VALIDITY CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGNING AN ORAL TEST

Qualities contributing to designing a valid test involve validity considerations such as validity, reliability, authenticity, interaction, impact and practicality. The same is true with an oral test which aims at testing how efficiently language speakers could interact in that language. These validity considerations should be taken into account in designing an oral test to make it a valid one.

### A. Validity

Validity in general refers to the appropriateness of a giving test or any of its component part as a measure of what it is supposed to measure. It is the quality which most affects the value of a test, prior to, though dependent on, reliability. However, validity is related to the content and construct of a test while reliability is related to the score.

The concept of validity reveals a number of aspects as mentioned above, each of which deserves attention. The most commonly referred to types of validity are face validity, content validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity and construct validity. A test is said to have face validity if it looks as if it is supposed to measure.

To achieve face validity, an oral test may use direct method such as picture tasks, dialogues, group discussion, role play, interpreting, imitation or pair work with the attempt to duplicate as closely as possible the setting and operation of the language use situations; meanwhile, direct method makes oral tests authentic for it is reciprocal in nature and there's more interaction between the task and the test taker.

An oral test is said to have content validity only if it includes a proper sample of the relevant structures, whether dialogue, discussion, role play or pair work. While designing an oral test, testers should above all make clear the purpose of it, to set tasks that form a representative sample of the population of oral tasks that candidates are able to perform, whether for educational purpose such as achievement, oral proficiency, etc, or for occupational purpose such as job competency. The tasks should elicit behavior which truly represents the candidates' ability and which can be scored validly and reliably. And test takers' background knowledge, levels of language should also be considered.

Concurrent validity refers to the comparison of the test scores with some other measures for the same candidates taken at roughly the same time as the test intends to. Since it is impractical to reflect test takers' oral proficiency within a refined time, testers may choose at random a sample of all the students taking the oral test and rank their performance, then compare the two rankings--students' test results and their performance. The more similar the two groups of marks are, the higher concurrent validity the oral test has.

Predictive validity measures how well a test predicts performance on an external criterion. An oral test is said to have higher predictive validity if performance on the test correlates highly with performance (e.g. as measured by grades) on a subsequent oral course which is taught through the language under test (Daves, 2002).

The construct validity of a language test is an indication of how representative it is of an underlying theory of language learning. A language test is said to have construct validity if it can be demonstrated that it measures just the ability which it is supposed to measure. "Construct validation involves an investigation of the qualities that a test measures, thus providing a basis for the rationale of a test" (Daves, 2002, p. 33). According to Hughes (2000), "the word 'construct' refers to any underlying ability (or trait) which is hypothesized in a theory of language ability" (p. 33). To establish construct validity of an oral test, one may hypothesise that speaking ability (or construct) involves a number of traits (or subconstructs) such as grammar, accent, fluency, and comprehension. An oral test with those traits constructed may be administered to a group of students as a pilot test. Then testers score them reliably and find out the internal correlations of subconstructs, the relationship between each subconstruct, and the relationship between subconstruct and construct. If coefficients between various traits of speaking ability are low but those between the total construct and each subconstruct are high, the oral test is said to have a high construct validity.

### *B. Reliability*

Reliability is also an absolutely essential quality of tests which means consistency in scores regardless of when and how many times a particular test is taken. The more similar the scores would have been, the more reliable the test is said to be (Hughes, 2000). There are two components of reliability: the performance of candidates from occasion to occasion, and the reliability of the scoring. In the same way, to make an oral test reliable, testers should try out to achieve consistent performances from candidates and to achieve scoring reliability.

Then how to make candidates perform consistently in an oral test? There are some ways of achieving consistent performances from candidates. Firstly, use more items in an oral test, for the more items a test has, the more reliable that test will be. "It has been demonstrated empirically that the addition of further items will make a test more reliable" (Hughes, 2000, p. 36). However, one thing to bear in mind is that the additional items should be independent of each other and of existing items. And each additional item should as far as possible represent a fresh start for the candidate. In an interview used to test oral ability, the candidate should be given as many 'fresh starts' as possible. By doing so additional information on the candidates may be gained which will make the results of the oral test more reliable. Secondly, provide clear and explicit instructions so that candidates can avoid introducing confusion. Thirdly, candidates should be familiar with the format and testing techniques. Thus efforts must be made to ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to learn just what will be required of them. Fourthly, uniform and non-distracting conditions of administration should be provided.

Score reliability is the other essential component to test reliability. Score reliability consideration of an oral test involves scoring and criterial levels. Criterial levels are specified to obtain valid and reliable scoring. For example (Hughes, 2000), in the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) test of the Communicative Test of English as a Foreign Language, criterial levels such as accuracy, appropriacy, range, flexibility, and size are used to evaluate test takers' oral ability. Moreover, the operationalisation of criterial levels has to be carried out in conjunction with samples of candidates' performance. To make an oral test have a higher score reliability, global scoring (or holistic scoring) and discrete scoring (or analytic scoring) method may be adopted. Comparably speaking, discrete scoring is more detailed and more feasible while holistic scoring tends to be general. It is better to use one method as a check on the other. In the end, administration should standardize oral procedures and raters of an oral test should be trained regularly to make it more reliable.

Actually, validity and reliability are quite interrelated with each other but they have different focuses. Validity focuses on test content such as test purpose or use while reliability focuses on the result or response or score. Validity is rather more comprehensive while reliability is much narrower. Reliability is a necessary condition for validity but it alone is not sufficient. Hence a balance should be made between validity and reliability in designing an oral test.

### *C. Other Validity Considerations*

Besides validity and reliability, practicality is often quoted as the third consideration in test design. Its inclusion as a major concern stems from the recognition that however valid and reliable a test may be, if it is not practical to administer it in a specific context then it will not be taken up in that context (Daves, 2002). Practicality means the extent to which the demands of the particular test specifications can be met within the limits of existing resources such as human support (raters, examiners, etc.), technical support (lab facilities, recording facilities, etc.) and logistics support (computers, rooms available, etc.). These practicality considerations should also be taken into account in designing an oral test. If personnel are in short, labs may be used to solve the problem. And it certainly makes sense to make the best use of existing logistics in designing a valid and reliable oral test.

Still other aspects are important for a valid oral test. Authenticity refers to the extent or degree of correspondence between characteristics (form and skill) of TLU (target language use) tasks and those of test tasks. As mentioned above, direct testing method may be used in an oral test such as picture tasks, dialogues, group discussion, role play, interpreting, imitation or pair work to make it authentic and interactive.

Interactiveness means the extent and types of involvement of the test takers' individual characteristics in

accomplishing a test task. If a face-to-face interview procedure is adopted in an oral test, it would be highly interactive for it involves a lot of interaction (comprehension as well as production) between testers and testees and would have a close resemblance to real language behavior.

Impact refers to the extent or degree to which a particular test influences society and educational systems and the individuals within these systems. There can be high-stake tests and low-stake tests. High-stake tests' scores will have great influence on test takers, schools, institutions and even the society such as CET. A test may have a significant impact on the career or life chances of individual test takers, particularly if it has a gatekeeping function. Other stakeholders (e.g. teachers, employers, course admissions officers) may also be affected by the introduction, administration or results of a test. A test can affect society on a larger scale when used to make decisions about, for example, immigration (e.g. oral interview in IELTS), certification for professional practice or the amount and kind of instruction to be given to school children (Daves, 2002). Test makers certainly hope an oral test to have a positive effect or beneficial backwash on pedagogy and speakers' ability as well as the society.

### III. SUMMARY

The accurate measurement of oral ability is not easy. It takes considerable time and effort to obtain valid and reliable results. Nevertheless, where backwash is an important consideration, the investment of such time and effort may be considered necessary. The appropriateness of content, descriptions of criterion levels, and elicitation techniques used in oral testing should depend upon the needs of individual institutions or organizations.

Validity considerations mentioned above are indispensable in designing an oral test. Specifically, oral test makers should set tasks that form a representative sample of the population of oral tasks that they expect candidates to be able to perform. The tasks should elicit behavior which truly represents the candidates' speaking ability and which can be scored validly and reliably. In that way could testers design a valid oral test with the expectation of a beneficial impact on teaching and learning and on the society.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Alderson, C. et al. (2000). *Language Test Construction and Evaluation*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.
- [2] Bachman, Lyle F. & Adrian S. Palmer. (1996). *Language Testing in Practice*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [3] Brown, J.D. (2001). *Understanding Research in Second Language Learning*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.
- [4] Daves, A. et al. (2002). *Dictionary of language Testing*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.
- [5] Heaton, J.B. (2000). *Writing English Language Tests New Edition*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.
- [6] Henning, Grant. (2000). *A Guide to Language Testing*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.
- [7] Hughes, Arthur. (2000). *Testing for Language Teachers*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.
- [8] Shen Zou. (2005). *Language Test*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

**Wei Li** was born in Zhumadian, China in 1971. She received her M.A. degree in English language and literature from Central China Normal University in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in 2003.

She is currently an associate professor in the School of Foreign Languages, Henan University of Technology, Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, China. Her research interests include pragmatics and literature.

Ms. Li has published more than ten academic papers on journals in Canada and China such as *Different Communication Rules between the English and Chinese Greetings in Asian Culture and History* and *Different Interpersonal Relationships Underlying the English and Chinese Greetings in Asian Social Science*.

# Deepening ESP Reading Comprehension through Visualization

Seyyed Mahdi Erfani  
Damghan University, Iran  
Email: smerfani@yahoo.com

Abutaleb Iranmehr  
Shahrood University of Technology, Iran  
Email: airanmehr946@yahoo.com

Hossein Davari  
Tarbiat Modares University (TMU), Tehran, Iran  
Email: hdavari1358@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—Teaching through visualization or in Tomlinson's (1998) terms "the ability to build mental pictures or images while reading" is known as an efficient strategy in language learning. Thus, this research was done to investigate the role of this strategy on ESP reading comprehension ability of Iranian students whose syllabus mostly focuses on this skill. To do so, two homogeneous groups of thirty served as the experimental and the control groups. Before treatment, pretest was performed in both groups. The participants in the experimental group were taught through visualization and the ones in the control group were taught through the conventional method common in Iranian ESP setting by the same teacher. At the end of the treatment which took twenty-four sessions of two hours during twelve weeks, a test of 30-item multiple choice in ESP reading comprehension was administered to both groups. Finally, drawing on t-test at the 0.05 level of significance, the researchers compared the participants' performances to study such an effect. The findings revealed the significant advantage of using visualization in promoting ESP reading comprehension ability of university students.

**Index Terms**—visualization, ESP, reading comprehension

## I. INTRODUCTION

The essential position of reading comprehension in EFL settings has turned this skill to the most important one needed for the learners' success, in a way, it is often known as the main goal of English language learning in such contexts. Undoubtedly, ESP as a trend in the framework of ELT (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) is not an exception to the rule and obviously the framework of ESP textbooks in such contexts reveals that the most important skill is reading.

Glancing at the current ESP textbooks in Iranian academic setting also indicates that reading comprehension has been the main skill for learners' success (Erfani, et al., 2010; Farhady, 2005). But, In spite of the prominent presence of this skill in Iranian ESP trend, the available findings in this scope show that focusing on reading based on traditional approaches has been the source of many problems. In Shokouhi's words (2005) inadequate approaches, including Grammar Translation Method (GTM), have been the basic approaches and frameworks for ESP textbooks, thus significant approaches, strategies and techniques which have shown to be effective in enhancing learners' reading comprehension ability, have mostly been neglected in these books.

While in such traditional approaches, reading has been considered as a receptive skill, thanks to the new findings it is strongly believed that reading comprehension cannot be confined to a receptive skill and like other skills is a productive and interactive one. In Ghazanfari's terms (2009) reading is now considered as an interactive skill as a process of active and internal thinking in which meaning is constructed through interactions between the printed page and the reader. In other words, the important role of reader in meaning construction is so essential that Braunger and Lewis (1998) maintain that readers do not take in print and receive words off the page, but they actively engage with the text and build their own understanding. Thus, to meet this end, visualization (sometimes also referred to as visualizing, sensory imaging or imaging process) or the result of forming mental images while reading and recalling texts has been assumed to be one of the efficient strategies in reading comprehension. As Tomlinson (1998) asserts, visualization is functionally significant in L2 as well as L1 reading comprehension and recall.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

ESP courses favor a great deal of attention and emphasis among the EFL practitioners and learners especially at universities. Due to the problems with traditional approaches applied in ESP textbooks and classes from one side and

the importance of reading comprehension in academic studying of English from the other side, it seems necessary to investigate whether visualization as a reading comprehension strategy has any effect on improving ESP reading comprehension ability of university students. Therefore, this study aims to investigate such an effect.

### III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

McNamara (2007) defines visualization as a metacognitive reading strategy which results in comprehension gains. Pressley (2000) introduces visualization as the fifth strategy along with prediction, questioning, clarification and summarization. As an advocate of multicomponential approaches to comprehension instruction, he maintains that visualization which is based on generative learning could be used effectively in reading comprehension. Johnson-Laird (1983) believe that the ultimate act of reading is the creation of a mental model and in this regard, McNamara (2007:298) asserts "although not all mental models are visual, research on the importance of imagery and visualization during information processing and reading has a long and respected history."

Moreillon (2007) provides visualization as a strategy which relies on the effective use of senses in making meaning. Defining it as a strategy that goes beyond the text, McNamara (2007) introduces visualization or imagery as a useful way of going beyond the text, because visualizing induces the reader to draw on prior knowledge and thus ground ideas discussed in the text. In fact, visualization as the ability to build mental pictures or images while reading would greatly depend upon our prior knowledge and engagement with the topic (Keene and Zimmermann, 1997). Findings of Gambrell and Jawitz (1993) reveal that if we are able to construct any mental image from what we read, it is likely that our understanding of the material will be greater than had we not. According to Keene and Zimmermann (1997), using mental images while reading helps students immerse in rich details. In their words, reader's prior knowledge on the topic of the text can make learners become more engaged and make the text for them more impressive.

The available research on the topic of visualization proves that learners who create visual images before, during and after reading improve their comprehension (Douville, 1999; Fillmer & Parkay, 1990; Sadoski & Paivio, 2001). Wood (2002) maintains that while reading, good readers use sensory images. In this regard, Tomlinson (1998) believes that for many L1 readers, visualization plays a major role in helping them to achieve involvement, comprehension, retention and recall. Therefore, there is little doubt that visualization is functionally significant in L1 reading and there is a strong possibility that it could play a beneficial role in L2 reading, too. In his words (1997), this ability can increase the comprehension of a text. He asserts that it can enable the reader to make hypotheses which can be retained visually until they are confirmed or revised as new information becomes available from the text.

Moreillon (2007) also maintains that students who can make connections between their sensory experiences and language can then use their senses to comprehend a text. According to Willis (2008), visualization could facilitate connections to their stored patterned prior knowledge. Findings of Harris and Sipay (1990) also reveal that visualization connect new vocabulary to previous knowledge. In this regard, Rosenblatt (1978) believes that this strategy encourages students to make a personal connection to the text.

In McNamara's (2007) words, research in the area of visualization has been promising: "participants who are asked to visualize text contents remembered and comprehended more than control students." In his words, the available literature on the topic reveals that numerous studies report important comprehension gains by experimental groups that were either encouraged or taught to visualize while reading. As noted in some studies like Bell (1991), Center, et al (1999), Gambrell and Jawitz (1993), Mayer & Sims (1994) and Oakhill & Patel (1991), the effect of visualization have been investigated and their findings revealed that it can be used as an efficient strategy for meaningful learning, but its effects on ESP reading comprehension has not been studied so far.

Now, conceiving the efficacy of this strategy as well as observing the paramount presence of reading comprehension as the main skill in Iranian ESP textbooks as well as the inefficiency of the traditional methods and strategies used in such classes, the researchers attempted to integrate visualization as a key efficient reading strategy in ESP classes.

Since it is known that visualization is often easiest to explain and toughest to really use effectively, there are a variety of activities to make the learners familiar with. For example, reading the text aloud and at each stopping point, have students sketch what they are picturing in their minds is known as one of the basic procedures applicable for different settings or as Moreillon (2007) writes, inviting students to close their eyes and imagine the text as it is read aloud, and then asking them to share the pictures in their heads, is the best technique used to teach visualization.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

In line with the attempt to determine whether visualization has any effect on improving ESP reading comprehension ability, the following null hypothesis was formulated: Visualization does not have any effect on the improvement of ESP reading comprehension ability of Iranian students majoring chemistry.

#### A. Participants

This study involved 60 students, of males and females, majoring chemistry at Damghan University. They were enrolled in ESP course. They were randomly chosen to serve as the experimental and control groups.

#### B. Design

The research method followed was a quasi-experimental and research design was pre and post test with control group. Two homogeneous groups of intermediate students served as the control & experimental groups. Visualization as a treatment was offered to the experimental group. Two tests as pretest & posttest were administered in each group.

### C. Procedure

After randomly assigning the participants to two equal groups, the experimental group was encouraged to visualize before, whilst and after reading the ESP texts in the class. They were taught through visualization for twelve weeks and during this time, participants of control group were taught through the conventional method. After instruction, a posttest was performed for both groups. In a more precise word, this group was not asked or encouraged to apply this strategy in the process of reading the ESP passages.

## V. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

To accept or reject the null hypothesis, the data obtained through pretest and posttest was analyzed through t-test. As mentioned the design of the study was pretest-posttest control group design, thus the researchers administered a pretest to both groups. The results can be presented as follows:

TABLE 1:  
THE T-TEST FOR THE PRETEST SCORES

Group	N	M	SD	t-observed = 1.12
Ge	30	18.26	2.09	
Gc	30	18.20	2.17	
P < 0.05			d.f. = 58	t-critical = 2.00

At the end of the study, the posttest was given to the groups and to conform or reject the hypothesis, a t-test was used. The results of the posttest are as following:

TABLE 2:  
THE T-TEST FOR THE POSTTEST SCORES

Group	N	X	SD	t-observed = 5.00
Ge	30	24.76	1.96	
Gc	30	21.93	2.40	
P < 0.05			d.f. = 58	t-critical = 2.00

Considering (t-observed = 1.12 < t-critical = 2) at the pretest and (t-observed = 5.00 > t-critical = 2.00) at the posttest shows that a remarkable difference between the two groups at the posttest stage is obvious. After comparing the two mean scores through t-test calculations, the researchers felt justified that the null hypothesis could be rejected. While the two groups were not significantly different at the outset of the study, they scored differently on the posttest and the difference was statistically significant. Thus, the researchers are satisfied to claim that the final calculated t-test (5.00) at 0.05 level of probability is due to the independent variable i.e. visualization.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The current findings seem to complement and lend support to the related available findings. The present study has focused on the extent to which visualization can enhance ESP reading comprehension of university students. Finding revealed that it could be cogently argued that this strategy do aid ESP reading comprehension of Iranian students. To put it simply, the visualizers outperformed the non-visualizers on the ESP reading comprehension posttest.

In sum, based on the results of this research, the following pedagogical implications might be presented:

First, visualization as a key effective reading comprehension strategy can be a useful alternative for university ESP classrooms.

Second, The instructor's observations revealed that the procedures used in the experimental group triggered off the students to participate more actively in discussions and devoted more attention and interest to the topic.

Third, strategies like visualization might remove the strictness and formality of language learning classrooms and allow students, as one important side of ESP instructional transition, to engage more actively.

The last but not least, the instructors' creativity to use efficient strategies like visualization might cover some obvious shortcomings of textbooks.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bell, N. (1991). Gestalt Memory: A Critical factor in language comprehension. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 41, 246-260.
- [2] Braunger, J. & Lewis, J. (1998). Building a knowledge base in reading, 2nd edition. Newark, NJ: International reading Association.
- [3] Center, Y., Freeman, L., Robertson, G., & Outhred, L. (1999). The effect of visual imagery training on the reading and listening comprehension of lower listening comprehenders in year 2. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 22, 241-256.

- [4] Douville, P. (1999). "It's like a video camera in my head": reading and multi-sensory imaging within a constructivist framework. Presentation for the national Reading Conference, Orlando, Florida.
- [5] Dudley-Evans, T & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Erfani, S. M., Iranmehr, A. & Davari, H. (2010). Using task-based instruction as an alternative approach in ESP materials development in Iranian academic context. *Proceedings of the First Conference on New Perspectives in ELT, Linguistics and Literature*, Sanandaj: Iran.
- [7] Farhady, (2005). Farhady, H. (2005). Reflections on and directions for ESP materials development in SAMT, in Kiani & Khayamdar (eds.) *Proceedings of the First National ESP/EAP Conference*, vol.3, Tehran, SAMT Publication.
- [8] Fillmer, H. T. & Parkay, F.W. (1990). Imagery: A neglected correlate of reading instruction. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, Atlanta, Georgia.
- [9] Gambrell, L. B. & Jawitz, P. B. (1993). Mental Imagery, text illustrations, and children's story comprehension and recall. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 28 (3), 265-273.
- [10] Harris, A. & Sipay, E. (1990). *How to increase reading ability: A guide to developmental and remedial methods*. New York: Longman.
- [11] Ghazanfari, M. (2009). The Role of Visualization in EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension and Recall of Short Stories. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies* Vol.1 - No.1.
- [12] Johnson-Laird, P. (1983). *Mental Models*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- [13] Keene, E. O. & Zimmermann, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought: Teaching reading comprehension in a reader's workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- [14] Mayer, R. E. & Sims, V. K. (1994). For Whom is a Picture worth a thousand words? Extension of a Dual-Coding Theory of Multimedia Learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86 (3), 389-401.
- [15] McNamara, D. S. (2007). *Reading Comprehension strategies: Theories, Interventions, and Technologies*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [16] Moreillon, (2007). *Collaborative Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension: Maximize Your Impact*. American library Association, Chicago.
- [17] Oakhill J. V. & Patel, S. (1991). Can imagery training help children who have comprehension problems? *Journal of Research in reading*, 14, 106-115.
- [18] Pressley, M. (2000). What should comprehension instruction be the instruction of? In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume III* (pp. 545-561). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [19] Riazi, A. (2005). Features of quality EAP textbooks: insights from literature and book reviews, Kiani, G. R & Khayamdar, M. (Eds.) *Proceedings of the First National ESP/EAP Conference*, vol.1, Tehran, SAMT Publication.
- [20] Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literacy work. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- [21] Shokouhi, H. (2005). A New Discourse Plan for the Iranian University ESP Textbooks. In Kiani G. R & Khayamdar, M. (Eds.) *Proceedings of the First National ESP/EAP Conference*, vol.3, Tehran, SAMT Publication.
- [22] Sadoski, M. & Paivio, A. (2001). *Imagery and text: A dual coding theory of reading and writing*. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [23] Tomlinson, B. (1997). The role of visualization in the reading of literature by learners of a foreign language (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham). Microfilmed version: The British library, British Thesis Service.
- [24] Tomlinson, B. (1998). Seeing what they mean: helping L2 readers to visualize, in B. Tomlinson (ed.), *Materials development in language teaching*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 265-78.
- [25] Willis, J. (2008). *Teaching the brain to read: strategies for improving fluency, vocabulary and comprehension*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum development. Alexandria, Virginia, USA.
- [26] Wood, K. D. (2002). Aiding comprehension with the imagine, elaborate, predict, and confirm (IEPC) strategy. *Middle School Journal*, retrieved March 16, 2009 from [http://www.nmsa.org/research/res\\_articles\\_ian202b.htm](http://www.nmsa.org/research/res_articles_ian202b.htm).

**Seyyed Mahdi Erfani** received his MA in linguistics in 1993 from Ferdousi University, Mashad, Iran. He is currently a lecturer of Damghan University, Iran. His interests include ESP, machine translation, materials development & sociolinguistics and has published and presented papers in these areas. He has co-authored two books for university students which are currently taught nationwide.

**Abutaleb Iranmehr** received his MA in TEFL in 1998 from Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran. He is currently a lecturer of Shahrood University of Technology, Iran. His interests include ESP, materials development, teaching methodology and psycholinguistics and has published and presented papers in these areas. He has co-authored two books for university students which are currently taught nationwide.

**Hossein Davari** received his MA in linguistics from Tarbiat Modares University (TMU), Tehran, Iran, and his MA in TEFL from Payame Nour University (PNU) and currently is a PhD candidate in linguistics at TMU. He is a lecturer of PNU, Damghan, Iran. His interests include materials development, sociolinguistics, lexicography & ESP and has published and presented papers in these areas. He has co-authored two books for university students which are currently taught nationwide.

# Three Models of Equivalence in English Translation of Chinese Classics in the Light of the Theory of Translation as Selection and Adaptation

Guodong Zhao

Foreign Languages Department, Inner Mongolia Finance and Economics College, Huhhot, Inner Mongolia, China  
Email: godwin1116@sohu.com

Xiao Liu

Foreign Languages Department, Inner Mongolia Finance and Economics College, Huhhot, Inner Mongolia, China  
Email: zhaoliu1116@163.com

**Abstract**—Many researches have been done to justify that equivalence is the supreme target of translation. However, so far, no research has ever figured out some applicable methods as to how to achieve “equivalence”. This paper, based on the theory of “Functional Equivalence” and the Theory of Translation as Selection and Adaptation (TASA), formulates three ways of translation for the translation of Chinese classics into English, namely, integrated model, style oriented model and information oriented model.

**Index Terms**—equivalence, TASA, Chinese classics, translation models

## I. INTRODUCTION

English Translation of Chinese Classics is much demanding due to the distinct differences between the two languages structures and the heavily loaded cultures as well. Equivalence between the source text and target text has long been the pursuit of many translators and translation theorists, but such equivalence is only an ideal. This paper is dedicated to work out specific guidelines—some workable translation models based on the principle of adequacy and acceptability in translation — concerning English translation of Chinese classic novels.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In history, many scholars have put forward many standards for translation practices. Alexander Fraser Tytler (2007) raises three translation principles in the essay *On the Principles of Translation*, which can be generalized as “a translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; the style and manner of writing in a translation should be of the same character with that of the original; a translation should have all the ease of original composition”.

The three source text oriented principles formed the cornerstone of western translation theory. Nida’s theory (1964) — dynamic equivalence — emphasizes the response of the readers of the source text in the source culture. Later the German translator Juliane House (1977) gives a definition of functional equivalence in terms of sociolinguistic dimensions in the source text. So, these scholars all regard equivalence as a matter of quality of translation. As to either Nida or House, the assessment of translation only concerns the determination of equivalence between the translation and the source text. They both neglect the possible position of translation as a member of target literary system, as text among texts in the target culture. Peter Newmark (1980) states that the meaning of the source text gets lost due to over-translation or inadequate-translation. His statement emphasizes that equivalence in translation is a matter of degree rather than a state. Hu Gengshen (2006) also believes there is no absolute equivalence between the source text and target text. The so called equivalence is only the closest match to the source text in form, style and function. Translation, in his opinion, is a selection among many alternatives, and the best selection should fit the translation environment consisting of many factors such as the authors, the source text, the source culture, the source language structure, the target readers, the target text, the target language and culture. This theory is applicable for it puts the translators at the center of the whole translation practice and emphasizes translation as a multi-dimensional selection and adaptation. This paper tries to figure out a translation model for the English translation of Chinese classic novels based on the above mentioned theories and the translation of *The Outlaws of the Marsh* and *The Dream of Red Mansion*.

## III. RESEARCH METHODS AND SCHEME

By analyzing different translation situations with regard to different texts, this paper classifies the texts into three types, namely style oriented text, information oriented text and ordinary text which centers the style and information equally. Based on different texts the paper deducts three translation models theoretically, i.e. style oriented model, information oriented model and the integrated model, which all should take functional equivalence as the final target. In order to illustrate the three models, the paper raises some example to show the application of the models in the translation of Chinese classics into English.

The first part of the paper is the introduction. Part two deals with the literature review, aiming to explain the concerned translation theories in history, and attempts to work out the problems remained. Part three is about the research method and scheme of the paper. Part four explains the relationship between the meaning, style and function in a text, and accordingly raises three models. Part five is the illustration of the three models with case study. Part six draws a conclusion.

#### IV. APPLICABLE MODELS OF TRANSLATION

##### A. *The Interrelationship between Meaning, Style and Function in Translation*

The classic novels like *The Outlaws of the Marsh* and *A Dream of Red Mansion* are the representatives of ancient Chinese literature. They contain a rich and colorful cultural heritage. Both the language structure and the style are heavily culture-loaded. The meaning, style and the function of the language are as a whole in the source text. The meaning of the text lies in the style of the language, and the special style of the language in turn fulfills certain functions, and the function of the language is intermingled with the meaning. But anyway, no matter what kind of style the text is manifested in, it must emphasize certain functions.

Jakobson (1960) establishes a framework of language functions based on six key elements of communication, namely referential function, poetic function, emotive function, conative function, phatic and metalingual functions. Accordingly, any language form must have one or few of these functions and the referential function which mainly focuses on the semantic aspect of the language, is only one of many functions that language can achieve. No matter what kind of function it is, it must be achieved through the use of certain style, whether plain or special. Halliday (2000) makes it even simpler, and he states that there are basically three functions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The functional translation theorist Katharina Reiss (1971) points out that the functions of the text should be listed as one of the standards by which to judge a translation work, and the basis of the standard is supposed to be the relationship between the functions of the source and target text. That is people can judge a translation work by the relationship between the functions of the source text and the target text.

##### B. *Adequacy in Understanding the Source Text and Acceptability in Target Text*

So far this paper has discussed in the above sections the relationship between the style, meaning and functions of a text. It can be easily concluded that the three factors, the meaning, style and function of a specific text can not be treated in isolation. However, a specific text does not totally possess the three factors equally, rather, it has certain emphasis. Sometimes, the text mainly contains some information, and sometimes it pays due attention to the interpersonal functions it can achieve, and in very few cases, the text is applied for the sheer purpose of amusing and the style is the most emphasized factor. A good translator needs to have a deep understanding of the text and tries to figure out what the source text is oriented. If equivalence can be achieved, it is only equivalence of the possibly emphasized factors between the source and target text. An adequate understanding is very demanding to the translators. The translator needs to grasp the purposes of the author in the source text, and needs to be sensitive to the differences between the two languages and cultures. Then a rational selection can be made based on such knowledge.

The next step goes to the organization of the target text. By acceptability I mean that the target text should to a large extent fit the author's purpose in composing the source text, the major functions of the source text, the style and the function of the style in the source text, the equivalence possibilities between the source and target texts, the habit of expression of the target, which as a whole is what Hu Gengshen (2006) called the translation ecological environment. If there is no absolute equivalence between the source and target text, a translator's work should be focused on striving for selections among possible alternatives. This selection is supposed to be made based on: an adequate understanding of the source text; an overall consideration of the translation environment (an ecological system consisting of the source language, source text, source culture, target language, target text, target culture, the target readers, etc); acceptability of the target text among the target readers.

##### C. *Models of Translation*

What has been discussed above comes to the conclusion that there is seldom complete equivalence between the source text and target text. The absolute equivalence is nothing but an ideal. It is better to use the term "functional equivalence" to describe the range of adequacy and acceptability in translation. Just as Nida put it: "the equivalence means the readers of a translated text should be able to comprehend it to the point that they can conceive of how the original readers of the text must have understood and appreciated it" (Nida, 2001)

So, if there is no complete equivalence in translation, the translator's major job would be striving for the closest match in the target text concerning functions. As to the actual translation, there are basically three models to follow.

#### a. An Integral Model

The first model is the most common one. Equivalence can be achieved totally from the three factors, namely, style, meaning and function. The basis for this model is as following: (1) The style applied in the source text has a closest match in the target text, and the style in both texts has similar or identical functions. (2) The meaning conveyed in the source text can be expressed in the target text with the style mentioned in (1). (3) Both the style and meaning in the target text can contribute to the fulfillment of the functions that the original work aims to achieve. If perceived in the light of the theory of translation as selection and adaptation proposed by Hu Gengshen, (Hu Gengshen: 2006) the selection is made in style, meaning and functions totally, and such a selection is most adaptable one in the translation ecological environment and accordingly, the effect of the translation in target environment is identical with what it is in the original. In this case, equivalence is gained both in form and in function. As an integrated unit, the three factors of the original text are totally transferred to the target text. The translated version is not only a good match of the original but is well accepted by the target readers.

To be noted is this model is different from literal translation. Literal translation does not regard the style and meaning as a whole, or as an integrated unit. It will either transfer the style merely or the meaning in isolation. The result is that the translated version can not have identical functions as the original version has. However, this model emphasizes the interrelationship between the style and the meaning it conveys, and emphasizes the same functions to be achieved in both languages and both cultures. It is called an integrated model in that it treats the three factors of the text as a whole in translating process.

#### b. Style Oriented Model

If the original text focuses on the style rather than the literal meaning of the words or sentences to achieve certain functions, the translation of the text is supposed to center on the style of the text to achieve similar functions in the target text on the condition that equivalence can be obtained at the level of style. In this case, the literal meaning in both the original and target texts is superficial, and it serves the expression of certain function by means of particular style of the language. So the literal meaning can be shifted in the process of translation while the functions can not. If the closest match can be found concerning style, a style oriented model is applied.

We know that the complete equivalence is an ideal state of translation. However, when such equivalence can not be achieved, translators need to make selection among the three factors. The selection is the best if it can to the greatest extent has the same function and effect as the original text has. A style oriented is a best alternative giving that (1) the literal meaning is not substantial and (2) the main function is achieved by means of the style, and (3) there is the closest match in style in target language.

#### c. Information Oriented Model

Yanfu once put forward three difficulties in translation “faith, readability, and elegance.” Nida (1974) points out that translation means to re-produce the closest and most natural expression of the source information in semantics and style in the target text. Wang Dongfeng (2004: 9) once explains “being faithful” as “being close to” rather than “being identical”. Yanfu’s theory is supreme guideline of translation activity, but still, “faith” does not mean “being identical”. If the original text is not elegant, the translated version should not be elegant; otherwise the standard of being faithful will be violated. Nida emphasizes information equivalence in translation, and he agrees that such equivalence is a matter of degree. The information oriented model of translation is a compromise made in the target language in that the aesthetic effect and style of the original text could hardly find a match in the target language due to linguistic and cultural differences. For instance, Chinese is rich in idioms consisting of four Chinese characters. These idioms are condense in meaning and regular in form. The aesthetic effect is special in context. Furthermore, the meaning contained in the idioms is very deep and heavily cultural loaded. There are seldom English matches to these idioms. In translation, an information oriented model is better applied than others. To be exact, in translation, translators tend to interpret but not to find the match.

Based on the above discussion, I conclude that an information oriented model is applied under the condition that (1) heavily culture loaded style of the source text has no match in the target language; (2) the aesthetic effect of the source text can not be similarly achieved in the target language; (3) the major purpose of the source text is to convey some information through the use of the unique style of the language.

## V. CASE STUDY

So far, the paper has worked out three tentative translation models. They are all micro methods concerning specific translation work. In translation practice, many translators consciously or unconsciously follow these guidelines. Shapiro’s translation of the Chinese classic novel *The Outlaws of the Marsh* and the different translation versions of *A Dream of Red Mansion*, *Monkey King* and *Romantic of Three Kingdoms* and other novels can well illustrate the three models above. For example:

Eg. 1 *linChong chi le ba jiu bei jiu, jiu yao xiao yi, qi shen dao: “wo qu jing shou le lai”*. *Lin Chong xia dei lou lai, chu jiu dian men, tou dong xiao xiang zi qu jing le shou.* (Chinese version)

Lin Chong downed eight or nine cups. Soon he had to relieve himself. He got up and said, “I have to wash my hands”. He went downstairs, left the tavern, and attended to his business in a small lane to the east. (*Outlaws of the Marsh* chapter 7 translated by Shapiro)

Eg. 2 *WuYong xiao dao*: “*bu xu xiong zhang gua xin, WuMou zi you cuo zhi, zi gu dao: ‘shui lai tu yan, bing lai jiang ying’*”. (Chinese version)

The teacher laughed. “There is nothing to worry about. I have a plan. Earth can stop the flow of water, generals can cope with the enemy troops.” (*Outlaws of the Marsh* chapter 20 translated by Shapiro)

Eg. 3 *Pu di zhi yi quan, zheng da zai bi zi shang, da de xian xue beng liu, bi zi wai zai ban bian, que si kai le ge jiang you pu, xian de, suan de, la de, yi fa dou gun chu lai.* (Chinese version)

He landed a punch on Zheng’s nose that flattened it to one side and brought the blood flowing like sauces in a condiments shop — salty, sour, and spicy. (*Outlaws of the Marsh* chapter 3 translated by Shapiro)

In example 1, the Chinese expressions “*xiaoyi*” and “*jingshou*” are both used as euphemism. Both the style and the meaning have equal expressions “relieve himself”, “wash my hands”, and “attended to his business” in English, which is the basis of literal translation. The style and the meaning thus can be treated as an integrated unit in translation and be transferred directly to the target text. Example 2 indicates the translation of some proverbs can be done literally with the style and meaning kept similarly in the target text. The reason for this kind of translation is that although there is no absolute equivalence in style in English, direct transferring of the original style can still be understood and accepted by the target readers. An integrated model is applicable in that the flavor of the original version can be simultaneously felt in the target text. Example 3 represents a common phenomenon in translation. Most of the similes used in Chinese can be treated directly in English translation, for superficial similarity can be similarly felt by any people in the world, which reflects the common cognition of the world of human beings. In addition, the three English words “salty, sour, and spicy” vividly depict the situation on that occasion. The three words form the most suitable correspondence to the source text “*xian de, suan de, la de*”. So, the above three examples show that in translation the translatable elements — style and meaning are selected as an integrated unit to deal with. And such selection is the most suitable one in that the target text is adaptable to the target language environment and can fully express the functions of the original text. But the following example is different and the second model is applied.

Eg. 4 *er ren zheng shuo zhe, zhi jian Xiang Yun zou lai, xiao dao: ‘ai ge ge, Lin mei mei, ni men tian tian yi chu wan, wo hao bu rong yi lai le ye bu li woer’*. *DaiYu xiao dao: ‘pian shi yao she zi zi ai shuo hua, lian ge er ge ge ye jiao bu chu lai, zhi shi ‘ai’ ge ge, ‘ai’ ge ge de, hui lai gan wei qi, you shuo ni nao yao ‘ai’ san le’*.

“couthin Bao, couthin lin: you can thee each other everyday. It’th not often I get a chanthe to come here; yet now I have one, you both ignore me!” Dai-yu burst into laughing: “lispings does not seem to make you afraid of talking! Listen to you: ‘couthin’, ‘couthin’! Presently, when you’re playing Racing Go, you’ll be all ‘thicktheth’ and ‘theventh’!” ( *A Dream of Red Mansion* translated by David Hawkes)

In the novel, Shi Xiang-yun is depicted as lisping. By using two pronunciations “er” and “ai”, means the second in Chinese, the Chinese version vividly portrayals a lisping girl. Here, the meanings of both “er” and “ai” are not emphasized, however the style of the two is typical. In order to reflect the functional style of the source text, Hawkes purposefully chooses two consonants in English /s/ and /θ/. So, the counterparts of the words like “*Bao Gege*,” (cousin Bao) and “*Lin Jiejie*,” (cousin Lin ) in English are replaced by “couthin Bao” and “cousin Lin”. The words uttered by Xiang-yun such as “see, chance, sixth, seventh” become “thee, chanthe, thichtheth, theventh”. Thus, a lisping girl’s feature is vividly presented on the paper for readers to appreciate. By using English consonants to replace the Chinese vowels, the translator makes the functions of the target text equals that of the source text with regard to the styles. So in this example, it is the style that is selected as the major point in translation. It is not necessary to translate the source language word by word, but the style is strictly kept in the target text.

The third model is used when the style is plain but the meaning or information conveyed is more important. Let’s look at the following few sentences.

Eg. 5 *Ning rong liang fu shang xia nei wai ren deng, mo bu huan tian xi di.* (Cao Xueqin *A dream of Red Mansion* Chapter16)

Then high and low alike in both mansions were filled with joy. (Translated by Yang Xianyi)

Eg. 6 *Na xiao si huan tian xi di, da ying qu le.* (Cao Xueqin *A dream of Red Mansion* Chapter 39)

The boy assented and made off in high spirits. (Translated by Yang Xianyi)

Eg. 7 *liang ge xiao tou mu ting le zhe hua, huan tian xi di, shuo dao: ‘hao le, zhong ren zai ci shao dai yi shi’*. (Shi Nai’an *The Outlaws of the Marsh* Chapter 17)

The junior officers were delighted. “Excellent,” they said. “Just wait here a little”. (Translated by Shapiro)

Eg. 8 *De meng cai qian, huan tian xi di, shou shi dao qiang.* (Shi Nai’an *The Outlaws of the Marsh* Chapter 36)

Happy, with their mission, they gathered their weapons. (Translated by Shapiro)

Eg. 9 “*Ya nei shi si xiang na shuang mu de, zhe cai ru he?*” (Shi Nai’an *The Outlaws of the Marsh* Chapter 7)

“Lin Chong’s wife. How is that for a guess?” (Translated by Shapiro)

Examples from 5 to 8 indicate that the Chinese idiom “*huan tian xi di*” has different translations in different contexts. The style is not what to be emphasized. If the meaning is expressed, translators can use various form to cope with the same structure. The reason for such a treatment is that the source text pays much attention to the meaning to be expressed rather than what style it takes. So, in order to achieve equivalence in function, varieties in style are possible only if the varieties can best suit the target language and also can achieve the same effect among the target readers. Example 9 demonstrates that the style of the original text has no identical structures in the target text. However, the

source style has very deep and special meanings in the source text which can hardly be matched in the target text. “shuang mu” in Chinese makes another character “lin” which refers to “Lin Chong”. English translation of such a structure is impossible to guarantee equivalence both in style and in meaning. In this case, a meaning oriented model is the most applicable selection, for one thing, it can to the largest extent match the meaning of the original text, and for another, it could be easily accepted by the target readers. Such selection actually is a passive one in that the translators have no other better choice to guarantee the closest equivalence between the target and source texts. To cast the original style basically is to protect the expression of the meaning.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The first conclusion to draw according to the above three models is that equivalence is the highest standard of translation. But however perfect the standard of equivalence is, it is only an ideal pursuit of the translators. Objectively, there are no absolute equivalent expressions even in the same language.

Another point to be noted is translation in nature concerns a process of selection. The original text contains many factors which would be typical in the source text, but unfortunately, such factors do not always have corresponding counterparts in the target text. Translators however, need to figure out which factor or factors should be and can be selected and then transferred to the target text. The selection should be considered reasonable if the selection can well be adaptable to the translation environment.

With the above two points, translators can well solve a big problem in translation— non-translatability. By non-translatability, we mean the translators cannot find totally equal points in style, meaning and function. The translator’s job, in this case is to figure out the closest match of the source text in the target text. Sometimes, to select means to cast for the sake of the highest equivalence. So we can conclude with safety that any text is translatable. The only difference between different translations lies in the degree of equivalence. The best translation is the best selection; the best translation is the one which is adaptable to the translation environment.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Halliday, M. A. K. (2000). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [2] Hu Gengshen. (2009). Translation as Adaptation and Selection. *Perspective: Studies in Translatology*, 11 (4): 283-291
- [3] Hu Gengshen. (2006). To Look at Translation Theory from the Translated Version. *Foreign Language teaching* (4) :50-54
- [4] Hu Gengshen. (2006). Examples to Show the Principle and Methods of Translation. *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching* (3): 49-52.
- [5] Jakobson. (1960). *Linguistics and Poetics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- [6] Juliane House. (1977). *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment: A Mode Revisited*. Tübingen: Narr.
- [7] Nida, E.A. (1964). *Toward the Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill.
- [8] Nida, E.A. (2001). *Language and Culture: Contexts in Translation*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [9] Newmark, Peter. (1980). *Approaches to Translation (Language Teaching Methodology Series)*. Phoenix ELT.
- [10] Reiss, Katharina. (1971). Possibilities and Limitations of Translation Criticism. *Categories and Criteria for a Fair Evaluation of Translations*. Munich: Hueber.
- [11] Tytler, A.F. (1790). *Essay on the Principles of Translation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- [12] Wang Dongfeng. (2004). *Deconstructing Loyalty-the End of the Myth of Translation*. China Translation.

**Guodong Zhao** was born in FengZhen, Inner Mongolia in 1975. He got his Master’s degree of Art at Foreign Languages College, Inner Mongolia University, Huhhot, Inner Mongolia, P. R. China, in 2008.

He is currently a lecturer in Foreign Languages Department of Inner Mongolia Finance and Economics College, Huhhot, Inner Mongolia, teaching Linguistics.

His major Publications include *An Understanding of Pidgen from the Perspective of Chaos Theory* at English Language Teaching, published by CCSE, Canada, June, 2010. His current research interest is Translation and linguistics.

**Xiao Liu** was Born in Bao Tou, Inner Mongolia in 1976, majoring in Linguistics. She got her Master’s degree of Art at Foreign Languages College, Inner Mongolia University, Huhhot, Inner Mongolia, P. R. China, in 2008.

Now she is working as a lecturer in Foreign Languages Department of Inner Mongolia Finance and Economics College, Huhhot, Inner Mongolia, teaching English Literature.

# Exploring Cultural Knowledge in EFL Teaching in an EAVSC\*

Leijuan Hou

School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing, China  
Email: houleijuan@yahoo.cn

Zhihong Lu

School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing, China  
Email: zhihonglu2002@yahoo.com.cn

**Abstract**—Teaching cultural knowledge of the target language has been an ever-increasing focus in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching in China during the last two decades. Apart from cultivating students' four basic skills, more and more attention has been paid to the enhancement of their cross-cultural competence. To achieve the goal, EFL teachers and researchers have been exploring both reasonable theoretical frameworks and effective practical measures. This paper aims to analyze a way of teaching cultural knowledge based on an English audio-video speaking course (EAVSC) at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT). It presents the specific teaching modal from five aspects: the teaching material, the teaching context, the teaching principles and approach, students' speaking activities (both in-class and off-class speaking tasks), and the method to evaluate students' achievement. Through such a systematic organization and arrangement, this case study proves to be an effective way of cultural teaching.

**Index Terms**—teaching culture, cultural teaching model, cultural input

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, 'culture' has raised a growing attention in foreign language teaching (FLT) and learning in China. The teaching goals have developed from 'linguistic ability' to 'communicative ability', and recently to 'intercultural communication competence' (Gao, 2002). Consequently, more and more studies have been conducted from the perspective of culture. These studies can be roughly categorized into three types: the teaching of culture in FLT; the cultivation of learners' cross-cultural competence; the influence of learning culture on FLT (Xu, 2004). Theoretically, culture is often regarded as a part of one's communicative ability, which is often termed as cross-cultural ability; in practice, the common methods suggested and adopted is to 'input' the teaching of culture in language teaching. Hence studies concerning 'cultural input' or other concepts alike sprang up (Lin, 1996; Han, 2002; Li, 2005; Liu, 2009).

Despite the above number of studies, there is still a long way to go to into the very core of teaching cultural knowledge. Although many scholars illustrated the importance of teaching culture in FLT, and provided some suggestions as to how to do it in practice, their implications seem somewhat general and few empirical cases are available for analysis and reference. This article, therefore, presents a case study of teaching culture based on an EFL audio-video speaking class at BUPT. By describing and explaining the operational links during the teaching procedures, it is expected that this study can shed some light on further exploration of cultural teaching.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Before approaching the question of 'cultural teaching', it is necessary to review some basic concepts related to 'culture'.

### A. The Nature of Culture

Language and culture are intimately related. Language is both the carrier and main manifestation of culture. Scholars have provided a framework to identify the nature of culture, be it native culture or target language culture.

In Kohls' eyes, culture is an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. It refers to the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does and makes – its systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from one generation to the next (Kohls, 1996).

---

\* This study is a part of the Beijing city-level research project, "Research on the Teaching Model in English Audio-video Speaking Class (EAVSC) in CALL Environments" (2008-2010), supported by Beijing city government. During the process of paper composition and revision, the authors received great help from the Dartmouth-BUPT "Video Interaction-Based Education (VIBE) Language Exchange" Program.

For Goodenough, “culture...consists of standards for deciding what is, standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it” (1963: pp. 258-259).

According to Straub, what educators should always have in mind when teaching culture is the need to raise their students’ awareness of their own culture, to provide them with some kind of meta-language in order to discuss culture, and ‘to cultivate a degree of intellectual objectivity essential in cross-cultural analyses’ (1999: p. 5).

### B. *Language Teaching and Cultural Teaching*

Scholars only began to delve into the dynamics of culture and its vital contribution to ‘successful’ language learning in the 1980s (Byram, Morgan et al., 1994). Culture has, either implicitly or explicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom since then. Researchers and teachers endeavored to arouse students’ cultural awareness and develop their intercultural competence through incorporation of culture in language teaching.

One frequently adopted framework is the ‘language input model’, a theory which posits that learners’ cultural competence can be fostered by such methods as: annotation, incorporation, practical activities, comparison, and lecturing (Shu, 1996). Similar studies were conducted consecutively (Lin, 1996; Han, 2002; Li, 2005; Liu, 2009).

Combining cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics, scholars proposed a cognitive-cultural model for teaching culture. Cognitive models, as the term suggests, represent a cognitive, basically psychological, view of the stored knowledge concerning a certain field; they depend on the culture in which a person grows up and lives, or the so-called cultural models. Cultural models can be seen as cognitive models that are shared by people belonging to a social group or subgroup (Ungerer & Schmid, 2001). One’s language acquisition process cannot be isolated to the cultural knowledge of the target language. Culture in language learning is also an essential part of knowledge that should be included along with rather than an extended skill to the teaching of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, the authors in this article think that teaching culture should not be treated as an independent unit and cannot be fully infiltrated into students’ knowledge systems simply by some external, discrete and deliberate practice of ‘inputting’ combined. Culture is more an internalized entity, which calls for an implicit, systematic and periodical internalizing permeating-oriented teaching process. This study is a tentative attempt at exploring the cultural knowledge in EFL in an EAVSC guided by this teaching ideology.

## III. A CASE STUDY: A SPECIFIC MODEL FOR TEACHING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE IN AN EFL AUDIO-VIDEO SPEAKING CLASS AT BUPT

In this section, the authors will elucidate the model for teaching culture involved in the case study. Viewing the model as a systematic infiltration process, the authors will expound it from five dimensions, namely, the teaching material, the teaching environment, the teaching principles and teaching approach, in-class activities and outside class assignments, and the evaluation method.

### A. *The Teaching Material*

The course set at BUPT is called ‘*Situational English*’, which is a relatively speaking more advanced speaking course with those students who scored high in CET<sup>1</sup>-4 as the teaching objects. The teaching objectives of the course conformed to the intermediate and higher requirements stated in College English Curriculum Requirements (Department of Higher Education, 2007). The teaching material for the course is ‘*Learning English through Culture: Viewing, listening, speaking*’, which was published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. This book was co-written by the course-instructor, the second author, during her three years’ life experience in America, a time when all the scenes in the textbook were taped by the second author.

The focus of the book is learning English through culture. It provides a considerable amount of cultural knowledge about both the target language and the students’ mother tongue. Topics like holidays, food, entertainment, libraries and so forth were covered in the book, introduced in the form of audio clips or videos. All the videos of cultural background information and situational dialogues in each unit were based on authentic scenes in America, ranging from campus life to larger social activities. Since the course-instructor was totally involved in the photographing process, she was able to explain every location in each video at length to the students in class. In addition, she could tell them some additional information.

To summarize, as the author of the textbook, the course-instructor is able to manage the teaching links methodically with ease. The teaching content is not confined to the textbook only; instead, as an experienced teacher with bountiful western and eastern cultural knowledge, she can supplement any cultural tips when necessary. This greatly aroused students’ interests and motivated them to learn more, which is an essential prerequisite for successful teaching.

### B. *The Teaching Environment*

<sup>1</sup> CET is the abbreviated form of “College English Test”. The national College English Test Band Four CET-4 in China aims to evaluate non-English majors’ comprehensive language proficiency. Apart from CET-4, there is also CET-6, which is widely used to evaluate above-average students’ language proficiency. More than half of the students in this study, except for the Japanese majors, had passed CET-6 before taking the course. SET is the abbreviated form of “Spoken English Test”, which is a portion of CET.

The macro teaching environment can be described as a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) environment. The class was conducted in a language lab, which is equipped with a digital network operating system (WE-LL6000). Each computer is connected with one another through this system and under the manipulation of the teacher’s computer. Therefore, the teacher and the students were able to communicate with one another via the network. When the teacher wants to show something to the whole class, she can use the headphone and a control screen on the teacher’s panel; when she wants to let the students perform tasks, the panel is switched to a mode in which students are divided into different groups either randomly, or according to set rules. This environment guarantees that each student is equipped with an equal opportunity: a condition which cannot be fully satisfied in traditional classrooms. The specific WE-LL6000 operating system makes it possible for students to freely exchange ideas with different group members in different tasks without changing their seats. In addition, the teacher can join students’ discussion either as either participant or knowledge provider. Therefore, this learner-friendly teaching environment creates a good communication platform between the teacher and students, which ensures an effective external support for further teaching activities.

*C. The Teaching Principles and Teaching Approach*

This course is a “student-centered” audio-video speaking class, which is theoretically based on Bachman’s theory of communicative language ability (CLA) and hence adopts the communicative language teaching method and interactive teaching patterns. CLA consists of three parts: language competence, strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms. In Bachman’s eyes, “language competence comprises essentially a set of specific knowledge components that are utilized in communication via language” (Bachman, 1990, p. 84). The interactions of these components of CLA with the language use context and language user’s knowledge structures are illustrated in the following two figures.

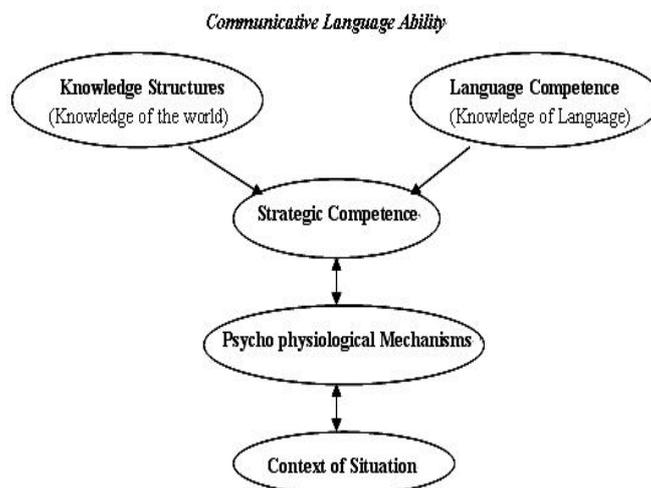


Figure 1. Components of communicative language ability in communicative language use (Bachman, 1990, p. 85)

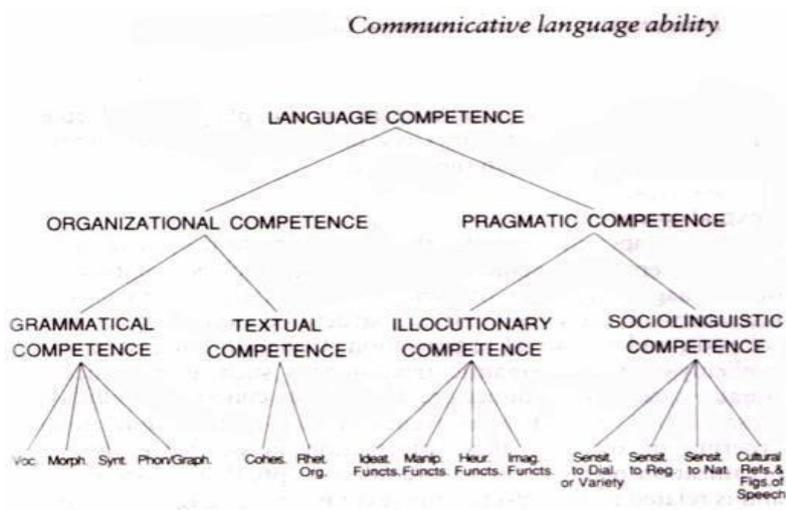


Figure 2. Components of language competence (Bachman, 1990, p. 87)

Apart from language competence, strategic competence, psycho-physiological mechanisms and context of situation, one’s ‘knowledge structures’ – knowledge of the world, also plays a decisive role in constituting one’s communicative

ability. For a long time, the main purpose of teaching and learning English in China is to develop students' ability to use the target language as a tool under international contexts. It goes without saying that language is primarily used for interpersonal communication. However, at a higher level, language remains a system of signs unless it is endowed with certain content. In FLT classrooms, the teacher should be clear that in order to enable students to communicate in the target language in the full sense, it is indispensable to equip them with sufficient cultural knowledge in various areas. Only by doing this can students be both communicatively competent and culturally competent.

To achieve these two goals, the course-instructor taught the class in two stages. First, she showed a video about the topic of the class, as a lead-in. After that, the students were asked to finish tasks concerning the specific cultural topic introduced, either through working in pairs, or group discussion. The textbook was available for students to look up useful words and expressions. Occasionally, the teacher arranged rounds of debates over controversial issues, such as, 'Do you think one day the e-book will eventually replace traditional books?' or 'Shall western festivals be encouraged in China?' Through working in pairs, discussion or debate, students are expected to exchange opinions and deepen their cognition of certain topics, so that their knowledge of the world can be enriched.

Remarkably, the course-instructor not only aroused students' cultural awareness about the target language, but more importantly, she emphasized the importance of knowing about our own country. For example, when telling students about cuisine in the western world, she also let the whole class review the eight styles of cooking in China; when presenting traditions and customs from English-speaking countries, she also gave chances for students from different nationalities to introduce their own customs; when discussing art forms, she invited students to share their experience and knowledge with their classmates. After that, the teacher gave feedback on their input. This way, the interactions between teacher and students, and between the students in the class, were realized effectively. Finally, students were asked to summarize their attitudes or opinions over the given topic in one minute. In this section, they could express their original viewpoint, or add anything he/she deemed important or interesting that he acquired during the whole class. In this sense, students progressed in terms of communicative competence as well as intercultural competence.

#### *D. In-class Activities and Outside Class Assignments*

Two main in-class activities are pair-work dialogues and group discussions. Pair-work dialogues usually last for about five minutes, carried out between desk mates. Group discussions are about six minutes, conducted among three or four persons each time. They discuss certain cultural topics or social phenomena that they are interested in. Language accuracy is emphasized less than fluency, because the main purpose is to enhance students' communicative ability. Therefore, the students were trained to employ useful communicative strategies to enhance the interaction. In this learner-centered class, students actively acquired knowledge through the co-operation of the class as a whole. Apart from pair-work dialogues and group discussions, debates are also organized over some controversial issues. This is an effective means for training students' logical ability as well as the ability to see things from two angles. For instance, in a debate over the same topic, students are expected to take opposite standpoints on different rounds. Sometimes role-playing is also included on appropriate occasions. For example, when enjoying the world-famous movie—*Roman Holiday*, the teacher asked volunteers to imitate one dialogue between the princess and the reporter. All the students were impressed by their classmates' excellent performance, and everyone enjoyed this course a great deal.

At the end of each class, the teacher tells the class what they are going to discuss next time, and asks them to prepare enough information beforehand. In this way, even if students know little about the given topic originally, various resources are available to help them. This procedure, which is regarded as a means of autonomous learning, makes it possible for further effective development of working in pairs and group discussion. In addition, in the classroom, the students are also encouraged to bring up any topic that they are interested in. They can take full advantage of the platform created by the course-instructor. In addition, there is a CD-ROM of the teaching material available to everyone, so students can spend their spare time studying the content that could not be covered in class due to the time limit; or go over those cultural tips and videos covered in class.

#### *E. The Evaluation Method*

For the evaluation of this course, three parts constitute the students' final score. The first part – the final examination, includes a one-minute personal statement on a given topic, five-minutes of working in pairs on some authentic topics, and a three- or four-person group discussion in which everyone chairs a topic for about two minutes. The one-minute personal statement tests students' logical ability and organizational competence to express his/her opinion or attitude towards a given topic, and to use two or three reasons to support it. The five-minutes of working in pairs and group discussion takes similar forms that students have become accustomed to after one semester's practice. The topics in pair work are based on students' real-life experiences, with the purpose of testing their communicative ability; the topics in group discussion are chosen by students themselves from the textbook in each unit, which serve as an parameter for checking whether students' cultural perspective have been widened and their logical ability has been distinctively improved. All three parts in the final examination were recorded with the help of the WE-LL6000 system, in order to assess students' performance, and for further research purposes.

The second part focuses on students' behavior in class, and the third part is more focused on students' effort on cultural acquisition. About three weeks before the final examination, all the students were asked to fulfill a task either on their own or through cooperation with partners. They can choose one cultural aspect that interests them, and give a

presentation on the topic to the whole class. The contents and forms are flexible as long as one can bring it into full play. For example, one student researched the origin and development of Chinese opera and combined it with its cartoon versions, adding fresh elements to the seemingly 'abstruse' art form; others chose a certain film star or famous singer and gave a comprehensive introduction to his/her career and representative works; some boys showed their enthusiasm for jazz, rock and roll; a few girls discussed their favorite novelists. Through this format, everyone exhibited their understanding of certain cultural phenomena of their own country, as well as their knowledge of others'. Hence, it is a good means of assessing the cultural teaching and learning in this course.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

After a detailed illustration of the cultural teaching model in this case study, this specific way of teaching culture proves to be valid. Taking into account the teaching materials, the teaching environment, the teaching principle & teaching approach, in class activities as well as outside class activities, and the evaluation form, a well-organized cultural system has been built. Culture is not an independent and external factor; instead, it should be grounded into the learners' mind. Only by perceiving authentic target cultural knots and upgrading one's cognitive understanding towards them, can students grasp the essence of the target language culture inherently. Another important point is that, while acquiring western cultural knowledge, Chinese students should be aware that one should not forget his/her own culture. This is also in accordance with one important FLT principle, which is to raise the students' awareness of patriotism. We hope that this study can serve as a reference for English language teachers and scholars. In the meantime, further theoretical investigations are needed to improve this model.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Bachman, Lyle F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 84-85.
- [2] Byram, M., Morgan, C. and Colleagues. (1994). *Teaching and learning language and culture*. Great Britain: WBC.
- [3] Gao, Yihong. (2002). Developing intercultural communication competence: Going across and beyond, *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*. (10): 27-31
- [4] Goodenough, W. H. (1963). *Cooperation in change*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- [5] Han, Xiaoling. (2002). On embedding language teaching in culture teaching, *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*. (12): 29-56
- [6] Kohls L. R. (1996). *Survival kit for overseas living*. Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc. 1-23.
- [7] Li, Chuan. (2005). The research on the culture ducting problem of the language teaching, *Education Exploration*. (8): 63-64
- [8] Lin, Ruchang. (1996). Three layers of foreign language teaching and cultural input. *Foreign Language World*. (4): 1-6
- [9] Liu, Liqiu. (2009). Incorporation of cross-cultural teaching in English teaching. *Journal of Wuhan Institute of Shipbuilding Technology*. (2): 23-32
- [10] Lu, Zhihong, & Steele, Loren. (2006). *Learning English through culture: viewing, listening, speaking*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [11] Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education. (2007). *College English curriculum requirements*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [12] Shu, Dingfang. (1996). On the relationship of language and culture and the issue of cultural input in the basic English teaching. *Foreign Language World*. (1): 11-17
- [13] Straub, H. (1999). Designing a cross-cultural course. *English Forum*, vol. 37: 3, July-September.
- [14] Ungerer F, & Schmid H J. (2001). *An introduction to cognitive linguistics*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 51
- [15] Xu, Jian. (2004). Cultural perspective in researches on foreign language teaching and learning. *Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University*. (4): 115-117

**Leijuan Hou** was born in Zhangjiakou, China in 1986. She is pursuing her M.A. degree in Applied Linguistics at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, China, registered in 2008.

She is currently an M.A. student in the School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing, China. Her research interests include applied linguistics, computer-assisted language learning, sociolinguistics and language testing.

**Zhihong Lu** was born in Urumchi, China in 1963. She received her B. A. degree of English Education from Capital Normal University, China in 1985. She attended the Graduate Training Program at Beijing Foreign Studies University during 1993-1994, specializing in applied linguistics.

She is currently a professor and supervisor of master students in the School of Humanities, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing, China. Her research interests include applied linguistics, computer-assisted language learning, sociolinguistics and language testing.



# Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

## Aims and Scope

Journal of Language Teaching and Research (JLTR) is a scholarly peer-reviewed international scientific journal published bimonthly, focusing on theories, methods, and materials in language teaching, study and research. It provides a high profile, leading edge forum for academics, professionals, consultants, educators, practitioners and students in the field to contribute and disseminate innovative new work on language teaching and research.

JLTR invites original, previously unpublished, research and survey articles, plus research-in-progress reports and short research notes, on both practical and theoretical aspects of language teaching, learning, and research. These areas include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Language teaching methodologies
- Pedagogical techniques
- Teaching and curricular practices
- Curriculum development and teaching methods
- Programme, syllabus, and materials design
- Second and foreign language teaching and learning
- Classroom-centered research
- Literacy
- Language education
- Teacher education and professional development
- Teacher training
- Cross-cultural studies
- Child, second, and foreign language acquisition
- Bilingual and multilingual education
- Translation
- Teaching of specific skills
- Language teaching for specific purposes
- New technologies in language teaching
- Testing and evaluation
- Language representation
- Language planning
- Literature, language, and linguistics
- Applied linguistics
- Phonetics, phonology, and morphology
- Syntax and semantics
- Sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics
- Discourse analysis
- Stylistics
- Language and culture, cognition, and pragmatics
- Language teaching and psychology, anthropology, sociology
- Theories and practice in related fields

## Special Issue Guidelines

Special issues feature specifically aimed and targeted topics of interest contributed by authors responding to a particular Call for Papers or by invitation, edited by guest editor(s). We encourage you to submit proposals for creating special issues in areas that are of interest to the Journal. Preference will be given to proposals that cover some unique aspect of the technology and ones that include subjects that are timely and useful to the readers of the Journal. A Special Issue is typically made of 10 to 15 papers, with each paper 8 to 12 pages of length.

A special issue can also be proposed for selected top papers of a conference/workshop. In this case, the special issue is usually released in association with the committee members of the conference/workshop like general chairs and/or program chairs who are appointed as the Guest Editors of the Special Issue.

The following information should be included as part of the proposal:

- Proposed title for the Special Issue
- Description of the topic area to be focused upon and justification
- Review process for the selection and rejection of papers
- Name, contact, position, affiliation, and biography of the Guest Editor(s)
- List of potential reviewers if available
- Potential authors to the issue if available
- Estimated number of papers to accept to the special issue
- Tentative time-table for the call for papers and reviews, including
  - Submission of extended version
  - Notification of acceptance
  - Final submission due
  - Time to deliver final package to the publisher

If the proposal is for selected papers of a conference/workshop, the following information should be included as part of the proposal as well:

- The name of the conference/workshop, and the URL of the event.
- A brief description of the technical issues that the conference/workshop addresses, highlighting the relevance for the journal.
- A brief description of the event, including: number of submitted and accepted papers, and number of attendees. If these numbers are not yet available, please refer to previous events. First time conference/workshops, please report the estimated figures.
- Publisher and indexing of the conference proceedings.

If a proposal is accepted, the guest editor will be responsible for:

- Preparing the "Call for Papers" to be included on the Journal's Web site.
- Distribution of the Call for Papers broadly to various mailing lists and sites.
- Getting submissions, arranging review process, making decisions, and carrying out all correspondence with the authors. Authors should be informed the Author Guide.
- Providing us the completed and approved final versions of the papers formatted in the Journal's style, together with all authors' contact information.
- Writing a one- or two-page introductory editorial to be published in the Special Issue.

More information is available on the web site at <http://www.academypublisher.com/jltr/>.



---

The Presence of Turkish Accent in the Iranian Turkish Speaking People's Farsi Contrasted with its Absence in Their Speaking English: Minimal Overwhelms Maximal Bilingualism <i>Ataollah Maleki</i>	201
A Probe into Chinese Learners' Negative Cultural Transfer in EFL <i>Honglin Zhu</i>	212
Reading-writing Connections in EAP Courses: Cross-linguistic Summary Protocols <i>Abbas Emam</i>	216
Length-based Bilingual Sentence Alignment in Different Literary Forms <i>Jun Zhao</i>	229
Analysis on the Main Factors Affecting the Reliability of Test Papers <i>Jiang Zhu and Lemeng Han</i>	236
Investigating the Construct Validity of the FCE Reading Paper in Iranian EFL Context <i>Elahe Tavakoli and Hossein Barati</i>	239
On Adding Cultural Contents to English Teaching <i>Yanping Huang</i>	248
On the Translation of Children's Literature <i>Yu Zhang</i>	251
Analysis of Power and Threat Manifestation in the Discourse of Traffic Police Officers: A CDA Perspective <i>Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi, Mehdi Latifi, and Elham Mohammadi</i>	255
Towards the Abolition of Hierarchy—On O'Connor's Racial Ideas in her Works <i>Jiping Yang</i>	261
Validity Considerations in Designing an Oral Test <i>Wei Li</i>	267
Deepening ESP Reading Comprehension through Visualization <i>Seyyed Mahdi Erfani, Abutaleb Iranmehr, and Hossein Davari</i>	270
Three Models of Equivalence in English Translation of Chinese Classics in the Light of the Theory of Translation as Selection and Adaptation <i>Guodong Zhao and Xiao Liu</i>	274
Exploring Cultural Knowledge in EFL Teaching in an EAVSC <i>Leijuan Hou and Zhihong Lu</i>	279

---

Linguistic, Ideological, and Cultural Issues in Chinese and English Argumentative Writings <i>Jie Zhang</i>	73
The Influence of Incidental and Intentional Vocabulary Acquisition and Vocabulary Strategy Use on Learning L2 Vocabularies <i>Minoo Alemi and Alireza Tayebi</i>	81
Formative Assessment in Classrooms: Operational Procedures <i>Liqiu Wei</i>	99
The Relationship between Critical Thinking Ability of Iranian EFL Learners and Their Resilience Level Facing Unfamiliar Vocabulary Items in Reading <i>Zahra Kamali and Mansoor Fahim</i>	104
Types of Explication within the Texts in Chinese-English Translation—A Case Study on the Translation of Chapter Titles of <i>Hong Lou Meng</i> <i>Hong Guo</i>	112
The Effect of Social Status and Size of Imposition on the Gratitude Strategies of Persian and English Speakers <i>Vajiheh Ahar and Abbas Eslami-Rasekh</i>	120
Corpus-based Stylistic Analysis of Tourism English <i>Ning Kang and Qiaofeng Yu</i>	129
(Post)-Methodism: Possibility of the Impossible? <i>Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi</i>	137
Chinese Tour Guides' Strategies in Intercultural Communication—Implications for Language Teaching and Tourism Education <i>Ying Huang</i>	146
Applying the Reader-response Approach in Teaching English Short Stories to EFL Students <i>Sarvenaz Khatib</i>	151
On Cultural Differences and Translation Methods <i>Hongmei Sun</i>	160
A New Approach to Teaching English Poetry to EFL Students <i>Mohammad Khatib</i>	164
A Feasibility Study of Error Analysis on the Teaching of Chinese-English Translation—A Case Study of Non-English Major Freshmen in BUPT <i>Yunhong Zhang and Baoling Wang</i>	170
Mnemonic Instruction: A Way to Boost Vocabulary Learning and Recall <i>Mohammad Amiryousefi and Saeed Ketabi</i>	178
An Empirical Study on the Relationship between Metacognitive Strategies and Online-learning Behavior & Test Achievements <i>Yuhui Liu and Hao Feng</i>	183
Field-dependence/independence as a Factor Affecting Performance on Listening Comprehension Sub-skills: the Case of Iranian EFL Learners <i>Shiela kheirzadeh and Zohreh Kassaian</i>	188
On Implicit Mode of Speech Reporting in Chinese Advertisements <i>Jianwu Peng</i>	196

---