Journal of Language Teaching and Research

ISSN 1798-4769

Volume 4, Number 5, September 2013

Contents

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 885-899, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.885-899

A Metalinguistic Awareness Test for ASL/English Bilingual Deaf Children: The TASLA-R*

Adonia K. Smith
ASL Rose Company, Silver Spring, USA

Jean F. Andrews
Lamar University, Beaumont, USA

Melissa Ausbrooks
Mississippi School for the Deaf, Jackson, USA

Mary Anne Gentry
Lamar University, Beaumont, USA

E. Lynn Jacobowitz
ASL Rose Company, Silver Spring, USA

***Abstract*—In this study, the researchers examined how deaf children could demonstrate their awareness of ASL by evaluating the correctness of ASL signs, sentences and discourse presented in stories in American Sign Language (ASL) signed by deaf native signers. To this end, a metalinguistic awareness test--the Test of American Sign Language—Receptive (TASLA-R), was created with eight short stories. The test consisted of 40 items presented in a multiple choice format test. Each of the 40 test items presented correct and incorrect statements about ASL formation using phonology, semantics, morphology, syntax and pragmatic aspects. One hundred and forty deaf children between the ages of 5 and 21 from four state schools for the deaf were administered the TASLA-R. Significant findings were as follows: 1) As the children got older, there was an increase in their ASL metalinguistic awareness and ability to identify incorrect ASL structures; 2) the deaf children of deaf parents group outperformed the deaf children of hearing group on the TASLA-R; 3) comparisons of TASLA-R scores between the junior high group and the high school were not significant; 4) scores on the TASLA-R showed moderate correlation to the English language, vocabulary and reading comprehension subtests on the Stanford Achievement test, 9th Hearing Impaired edition. These findings were discussed in relation to Ellen Bialystok's (2001) theories of metalinguistic uses of language in cognition and language development and in relation to the learning of ASL of bilingual deaf children.**

***Index Terms*—deaf, American Sign Language (ASL), ASL assessment, bilingual, metalinguistic awareness, reading, early childhood**

"As they enter the school years, children's words become increasingly complex and interconnected, and children also gain a new kind of knowledge: metalinguistic awareness. This new ability makes it possible for them to think about their language, understand what words are, and even define them." (Berko-Gleason, 1997, p. 4)

I. Introduction

Hearing teachers frequently encounter a young deaf child who corrects their signs. Apart from the humbling nature of the event, what the deaf child is exhibiting is metalinguistic use of language. Indeed, when the hearing teacher's signs do not match the deaf child's internalized American Sign Language (ASL) knowledge, the deaf student uses her internal knowledge of ASL, senses it does not match, and attends to the incorrectness of the teacher's sign production, grammar, and discourse. Such metalinguistic awareness is a cognitive and linguistic ability that allows deaf children think about their language and judge the correctness of signs around them.

As such, metalinguistic uses of language provide children with the tools to think about and use language structures to increase their cognitive and linguistic development (Bialystok, 2001; 1991). The purpose of this study was to examine how deaf children could evaluate the correctness of ASL signs, sentences, and discourse when presented entertaining

* This project was supported by Department of Education (OSERS) Student-Initiated Competition (Grant #H324BO20084), Training Doctoral Level Leaders in Deaf Education (Grant #H325E980050) and William C. Stokoe Scholarship under the National Association of the Deaf. This paper was based in part on the first author's doctoral dissertation completed at Lamar University.

stories in ASL by native deaf signers. A test of metalinguistic knowledge--the Test of American Sign Language—Receptive (TASLA-R) was constructed and presented to 140 deaf children in 4 state schools for the deaf to examine their metalinguistic knowledge.

This study addressed three questions:

1. Was there a developmental pattern of TASLA-R scores across different age groups, different grade levels and with parents of different hearing status?
2. Was there a relationship between students' TASLA-R scores and other background language-learning variables?
3. Was there a relationship between TASLA-R scores and English achievement as designated by three subtests on the Stanford Achievement Test—9th edition?

II. Review of the Literature

Defining the Construct—Metalinguistic Uses of Language

In the early 1970's at about the same time Ursula Bellugi, a developmental psycholinguist, and Edward Klima, a linguist, were describing American Sign Language (ASL) milestones of deaf children of deaf parents and discovering that ASL was processed in the left part of the brain (Klima & Bellugi, 1979), the cognitive construct, metalinguistic awareness came into focus in the child language literature. Metalinguistic awareness was first applied to various cognitive functions such as metacognition and metamemory (Bialystok, 2001).

Bialystok (2001) defined the construct of metalinguistics according to three different aspects: knowledge, ability and awareness. She differentiates each as having different cognitive processing demands. Metalinguistic knowledge refers to *having knowledge* of the general principles of language (ie. word ordering, morphological patterns). Bialystok claimed that metalinguistic knowledge is related to understanding that there are "universal templates of language structures" such as similar categories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, adverbs with which children learn to facilitate their language acquisition (Bialystok, 2001).

The second context proposed by Bialystok (2001), that of metalinguistic ability refers to a skill where the child can *use knowledge* about language as distinct from the ability to use language for communication (Bialystok, 2001). And in the third context, metalinguistic awareness refers to the child's *attention to language forms* and their ability to make abstract representations of language described below.

Metalinguistic awareness for hearing monolingual children can encompass a variety of skills, such as judging grammaticality in sentences and having the ability to correct them (Cairns, Schlisselerg, Waltzman & McDaniel, (2006). Other researchers have focused on the hearing children's ability to develop phonological awareness through rhyming, alliteration, blending and elision as they begin to learn to read (Adams, 1990). As children progress in their grades at school, they are required to attend to more forms of their language. For example, they are required to write a sentence or paragraph, tell a story, answer comprehension questions, explain how things work, and give definitions of words (Snow, 1990).

For a signing deaf child, metalinguistic awareness, knowledge and abilities can refer to their ability to determine if a sign is made correctly with the correct handshape, movement of orientation. A deaf child may comment that a signing adult (such as a parent or teacher) uses "hearing sign." What they may not be able to articulate but intuitively know is that the hearing person is making signs that are more like the English language and that some signs are even being made inaccurately. This demonstrates their metalingusitic awareness, knowledge and abilities as they are focusing on the form of the language, and not just the communication aspect. This topic is virtually unexplored in the literature with signing deaf children.

Metalinguistic Awareness, Cognition and Bilingualism

Both Vygotsky (1962) and Leopold (1939-49) (cited in Bialystok, 2001) hypothesized that bilingual children could manipulate language symbols earlier in life than monolingual children and this played a part in their language knowledge as well as their mental or cognitive, social and language development (Grojean, 2010; 2008; Bialystok, 2001; 1991).

Other researchers have also noted how metalinguisitic uses of language played a part in the developing the "mental mind" of the child and point to added advantages (Bialystok, 2001). For instance, Grosjean (2010; 2008) summarizes studies that report on cognitive advantages of bilingualism on concept formation, creativity, and Piagetian conservation tasks, and visual-spatial abilities, classification skills and analogy reasoning. Furthermore, executive functioning was found to be enhanced when children are bilingual (Bialystok, 2001). Executive functioning refers to the child mastering the ability to control attention, inhibit distraction, monitor a set of stimuli, expand working memory, and shift between tasks. Studies show that bilingual children perform these tasks better than monolingual children (Bialystok, 2001; Diaz & Klinger, 1991).

Bilingual children are also believed to have more opportunities to develop both awareness of and control of language processing to a greater extent than monolingual children, particularly in the areas of codeswitching from one language to another as well as during problem solving tasks (Bialystok, 2001; 1991).

Assessing the Metalinguistic Construct in ASL

The impetus for this study to construct a metalinguistic test in ASL arose from the lack of such a tool available for teachers. For the most part, the documentation of ASL on the deaf child's Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) has been

in the form of checklists or descriptions (French, 1999). Most diagnosticians, speech-language pathologists as well as teachers don't know how to or what to assess with ASL, nor have they had any training in ASL linguistics or ASL assessment (Gonzales, Covell & Andrews, 2005). However, there have been attempts to develop ASL assessments for the classroom and the research laboratory.

The most comprehensive review of signed language assessments used in different countries including the U.S., is found on website created by Tobias Haug (1999). Haug's website underscores that the majority of these tests do not have psychometric properties, nor are they commercially available or easy for teachers and other non-linguists to administer, score and interpret.

Metalinguistic Uses of L1 And L2 Learners

It has been debated in the field whether deaf children's metalinguistic awareness in ASL will assist them in their learning of English literacy, given that both languages are fundamentally different in structure and in modality (Valli & Lucas, 2000). ASL is a visual-spatial language that codes grammar simultaneously in signs, facial expressions, space and body movements, whereas English is an auditory linear-sequential language (Valli & Lucas, 2000). Evidence from studies of deaf adults show that ASL proficiency assists them in reading English (Freel, Clark, Anderson, Gilbert, Musyoka & Hauser, 2011; Ausbrooks, 2007). For young deaf children, some argue that ASL can be directly bridged or mapped onto the learning of English print using codeswitching (Andrews & Rusher, 2010), fingerspelling (Baker, 2010; Haptonstall-Nykaza & Schick, 2007) and bridging strategies (Ausbrooks-Rusher, Schimmel & Edwards, 2012). Others counterclaim that an English-based mediating system such as Cued Speech, manual codes of English or Visual Phonics must be used to link meaning with print (Mayer & Wells, 1996; see reviews in Trezek, Wang & Paul, 2010). Further it is not clear from these studies that the users of English-based mediating systems are also including ASL lexical signs and structures in their interventions in order to lay down conceptual meanings prior to using their English systems, thus adding confounding factors to their studies. Clearly more empirical studies are needed to fully describe the effectiveness of these interventions as well as measure their effectiveness.

III. Method

Participants

Participants were 140 deaf students between the ages of five and twenty-one who were recruited by contacting superintendents from four residential schools for the deaf. All were prelingually and severely to profoundly deaf and were enrolled in one of four state schools for the deaf. Deaf students' ages in high school often exceed hearing youths' ages (14 to 18 years). Deaf youths typically need more time to catch up due to their hearing loss and being in a language-deprived home environment. Consequently, deaf youths are entitled to a free and appropriate education until their 21st birthday.

In this study, language-learning background variables related to individual characteristics (i.e., age, ethnicity), family characteristics (i.e., parent hearing status, number of deaf siblings), and clinical variables (i.e. hearing loss, etiology) were collected, as these variables have been shown to affect language learning in the deaf school-age population (Andrews, Leigh & Weiner, 2004; Quigley & Kretchmer, 1982). See tables 1, 2, and 3.

TABLE 1
INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF 140 STUDENTS WHO TOOK THE TASLA-R (AGE, GENDER, IQ, ETHNICITY, EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT, AND SCHOOL DESIGNATED BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Variable	N	Percent
Age		
5 – 9 yrs	29	21
10 – 14 yrs	60	43
15 – 21 yrs	51	36
Total	140	100
Gender		
Males	66	47
Females	74	53
Total	140	100
IQ[1]		
80 or below	10	10
Average (81 – 115)	69	71
Above average (116+)	18	19
Total	97	100
Ethnicity		
White	98	70.0
African-American	22	15.7
Hispanic	16	11.5
Asian	2	1.4
Biracial	2	1.4
Total	140	100
School Designated by Location		
South	32	22.8
Midwest 1	33	23.6
Midwest 2	43	30.7
West	32	22.9
Total	140	100

TABLE 2
FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS VARIABLES

Variable	**N**	**Percent**
Parents Hearing Status		
Hearing Parents	78	55.7
At Least One Deaf Parent	61	43.6
Total	140	100
Presence of Deaf Siblings		
Yes	56	42.1
No	77	57.8
Total	133	100
Mother's ASL Skills		
None	6	4.5
Poor	29	21.7
Fair	14	10.5
Good	25	18.6
Outstanding	60	44.7
Total	134	100
Father's ASL Skills		
None	12	9.1
Poor	33	24.9
Fair	16	12.0
Good	11	8.2
Outstanding	61	45.8
Total	133	100

[1] The IQ tested used with deaf children in this study and reported by school were the following: WISC-III (n=26), WISC-IV (n=6), TONI-2 (n=8), WAIS-III (n=4), UNIT (n=16), WIAT (n=1), Leiter-R (n=3), WPPSI (n=2), TONI-3 (n=7), C-TONI (n=1), WISC (n=4), TONI (n=1).

TABLE 3
DEAFNESS CLINICAL VARIABLE

Variable	N	Percent
Hearing Loss (in better ear)		
90+dB (profound)	72	59.0
71-90 dB (severe)	29	23.8
43-70 dB (moderate)	21	17.2
Total	122	100
Etiology		
Unknown	37	28.9
Other[2]	31	24.2
Genetic/hereditary	60	46.9
Total	128	100

Note: totals do not equal 140 in every category because of lack of response.

Instrument: Description and Development of the TASLA-R

The Test of American Sign Language—Receptive (TASLA-R), developed by Smith (2007) for this study, is a diagnostic tool designed to be used by teachers to assess the receptive metalinguistic awareness of deaf students, ages five to twenty-one. The TASLA-R was made up of eight stories signed by eight different native ASL storytellers. The ASL storysigners were from a diverse group of deaf native signers from different ethnic backgrounds (i.e., African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American) (Smith, 2007). The eight stories incorporated elements of both ASL literature and Deaf literature in which the storytellers used ASL poetry, jokes, and narratives that play with the handshapes, the use of space and other linguistic structures of ASL (Peters, 2000; Valli & Lucas, 2000).

The structure and administration of the TASLA-R was similar to other language tests that present stories or paragraphs, then require students to respond to questions in a multiple choice format. A similar structure is found in the vocabulary, reading comprehension and language subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test – 9th edition. For example, the TASLA-R required the student to "attend" to a story in ASL on a DVD, then answer questions presented in ASL and respond to a set of four choices that could be presented in an ASL movie clip or also or in a picture format. After a warm-up practice story to ensure the students understood the directions of the test, the eight stories were presented to each student either individually or in a group setting. After viewing each story, the students answered 5 questions for a total of 40 questions (8 stories X 5 questions = 40 items). The test took approximately 90 minutes to complete. The TASLA-R scores yields one total score related to the student's metalinguistic functioning in ASL across five domains: phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. See Appendix 1 and 2.

The initial development and pilot testing of the TASLA-R was conducted in 2004 as part of the first author's doctoral dissertation (Smith, 2007). The test item questions were developed for each story that corresponded to five aspects of ASL linguistic structure: phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. Thus, the test assessed the students' metalinguistic abilities about the formation of ASL signs and ASL structures. For example, one test item showed the students an ASL handshape from a sign in the story. In the multiple choice items, the student had to choose which sign had a similar handshape. Other test items were created which tapped into the students' linguistic knowledge of ASL after having seen the complete story.

The 40 test items were created using the authors extensive background teaching reading to signing deaf children, the first author's native fluency in ASL, the second, third and fourth author's experiences of having learned ASL as a second language for the past 30 years, and the fifth author who spent over 30 years teaching ASL as a second language. Also enlisted were a panel consisting of five experts and a panel of 10 deaf graduate students studying the literature on ASL linguistics and ASL language learning of deaf students.

After the items were created, the students were presented to a focus group--a panel of experts consisting of a psychologist with experience in language and psychological testing, two ASL linguists and two experienced teachers of deaf students. The panel provided commentary on the difficulty of the items and the difficulty & appropriateness of the distracters on the test items. For example, some items and distracters on the test items were considered vague, confusing, too easy or too difficult, so changes were made. Next the eight stories were presented to a panel of 10 native Deaf signing graduate students who were students in the Masters Degree program in Deaf Studies/Deaf Education. The panel arranged the stories in order, from simplest to more complex.

The final version of the TASLA-R, both stories and test questions, was placed on a DVD. This enabled the examiner to show the tests to the Deaf participants using a computer and an LCD for single-subject as well as group administration. See Appendixes 1, 2 and 3.

TASLA-R Psychometric Characteristics

A spread of scores, discriminating power, and high internal consistency are features that demonstrate the reliability of test scores achieved by students (Gronlund, 1981). The mean was 23.33, and the standard deviation of the 140 subjects' scores was 6.748.

Internal Consistency

[2] Other categories of etiologies included the following: Meningitis, maternal drug use, cytomegalovirus, rubella, high fever, lack of oxygen, prematurity.

The Cronbach's Alpha estimates the reliability test whether the items in the tests are homogeneous—that is, whether each test item measures the same quality or characteristic as every other. For the 140 deaf subjects, the Cronbach Alpha was .724, thus showing a moderate degree of internal consistency.

Content Validity

Content validity is important when the researcher aims to describe how an individual performs on a domain of tasks that the test is supposed to represent (Gronlund, 1981). In the construction of the test, it was decided to ask questions related to the five parameters of ASL as designed by ASL linguists (Valli & Lucas, 2000). In other words, in the forty item TASLA ─ R, five items related to phonology were asked, five to semantics, five to morphology, five to syntax, and five to pragmatics, thus ensuring that a representative sample of the domains of ASL tasks were considered in the test construction.

The researcher also established content validity by asking a panel of ASL linguists, ASL/English bilingual educators, teachers of ASL as a second language, a deaf interpreter-trainer, and a psychologist who reviewed and commented on the TASLA ─ R test items. Two deaf ASL linguists were involved in all steps of the test development and provided comments on stories, questions and answers from earlier to later versions. Revisions were made based on the recommendations of the ASL linguists, ASL/English bilingual educators, and the interpreter-trainer.

Criterion Validity

Criterion validity was determined using a test of American Sign Language developed for research purposes by Dr. Ursula Bellugi and her colleagues at the Salk Institute (Poizner, Klima & Bellugi, 2000). The researcher selected ten items from the Bellugi test. This was a picture test in which the deaf subject was signed a sentence, then asked to pick out the right answer from four pictures in a multiple-choice format. One ASL structure tested was decomposition. The deaf subjects had to select a similar handshape to the sign they were presented. For instance, the subject was signed NAME. The five pictures were a) an egg, b) an onion, c) a dog, d) a ship. The correct answer was a) egg. The signs NAME[3] and EGG share the same handshape. Two different items tested for decomposition or identification of a similar handshape.

The other ASL structures included noun-verb comprehension, nominal establishment, verb agreement with pictures, and verb agreement without pictures but with shifting framework. For instance, the deaf subject is shown a picture of a girl in the signer's space (left) and a boy in the signer's space (right). The directional verb, HIT (from right to left) shows which person is hitting the other. The deaf participant can choose, a. a picture of a boy hitting the girl or a picture of a girl hitting the boy. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the TASLA ─ R and the Bellugi ASL test was .515 ($p < .01$), showing a moderate but statistically significant correlation.

Item Level of Difficulty

According to Gronlund (1981), we can estimate a desirable average difficulty for a domain-referenced test by taking the point midway between the expected chance score and the maximum possible score. Thus, for a test like the TASLA ─ R, which is a forty-item test, the average difficulty would be 30 (midway between 20 and 40). The mean score of the total group of deaf participants was 23.33, and the standard deviation was 6.748. Given that a perfect score would be 40 points, it can be determined that the TASLA ─ R has a reasonably average level of difficulty. In other words, the average score is between 20 and 40, showing that the TASLA ─ R was able to discriminate between high and low achievers in ASL. See Appendix 3.

Item Order of Difficulty by Test Item

The researcher demonstrates the forty test items in order of difficulty as computed based on the students' responses. The test item number, the number of students who scored the item correctly (raw score and percent), the name of the story, and the ASL structure were also calculated.

Item Order of Difficulty by Story and ASL Structures

The number of students who answered correctly each of the test items as categorized by type of ASL structure (e.g., phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics) is presented below. The highlighted numbers show that less than fifty percent of the students (n = 123 students) could answer that particular item correctly, thus showing the difficulty of these items across the areas of phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics. See Appendix 3.

TASLA-R Instructions

Deaf student participants were enrolled in state school for the Deaf that used an ASL/English bilingual philosophy as their language policy. The examiner (the first author) for the TASLA-R is a native deaf person who is fluent in ASL. The examiner met with the school personnel and was directed to the files of the students where she collected the background variables and entered them on a spreadsheet. She then met with the students, either individually or in a group.

The students were first shown the first practice warm-up story to ensure they understood the directions. The examiner then walked them through five practice test items, making sure the students understood what was expected of them. After they viewed each question, they entered their responses (A, B, C, D. E) on a paper in front of them. (Efforts to computerize the whole test were not accomplished during this administration of the test due to technical difficulties.)

[3] We use the convention of capital letters to designate a manual sign.

After completing the practice story and five items and when the experimenter was sure the students understood the directions, then the eight stories with 40 test items were then administered.

Procedures and Scoring

The TASLA-R was administered to all 140 participants individually or in groups of three to five students, following the instructions outlined above. The students' responses were scored on paper, and then their score (1 to 40) was entered into an SPSS database for analysis.

IV. Results

The data was analyzed by making comparisons of judgment scores for 1) all age groups, across parent hearing status and grade levels, 2) the number of correct judgments on the TASLA-R taking into account other background language-learning variables, and 3) the number of correct judgment scores compared to performance of the students' on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-HI 9) on three subtests: reading vocabulary, reading comprehension and language subtests.

Research Question #1: Is there a relationship with TASLA-R scores and age when tested, grade level, parent hearing status and the five aspects of ASL linguistics?

Comparison of TASLA-R Judgment Scores Across Ages: A Development Picture

Table 4 presents mean scores for each age of student and total score on the TASLA-R. Recall that scores ranged from 0 to 40 on the complete TASLA-R. Examination of the data in table 4 reveals a difference overall on the TASLA-R performance across the age groups. See Figure 1 to see this relationship graphically displayed. As the deaf bilingual child grew older, he or she increased their metalinguistic knowledge in ASL. There appears to be some dips in the six-to-ten age range.

TABLE 4:
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF TASLA-R JUDGMENT SCORES ACROSS AGE IN YEARS WHEN TEST WAS TAKEN (N=140)

Age in Years	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
5	10.00	1	
6	21.33	3	6.51
7	17.78	9	6.66
8	14.75	4	6.60
9	20.25	12	7.59
10	19.88	16	6.78
11	22.92	12	6.21
12	23.87	8	4.08
13	25.33	15	4.88
14	24.44	9	5.96
15	24.5	10	6.39
16	26.6	10	6.38
17	30.67	3	1.15
18	27.52	21	5.12
19	21.33	6	7.50
20	23.00	1	

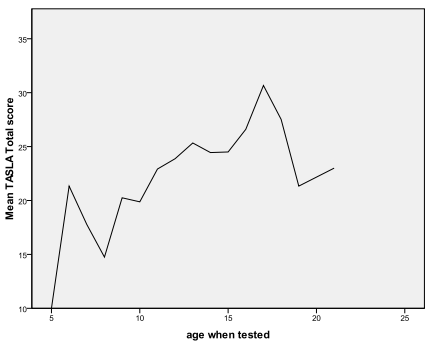


Figure 1: Mean TASLA-R Scores of 140 students and Age in Years When Tested
(range from 5 years to 21 years)

A one-way ANOVA was used to test the differences in TASLA-R scores among the age levels. TASLA-R performance differed significantly across the age levels: $F(13, 137) = 3.402$, $p < .05$. Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the different age groups indicated that the 18 year-olds ($M = 27.2$, 95% CI [25.19 – 29.86]), $p < .05$ scored significantly higher than the 7 year olds ($M = 17.78$, 95% CI [12.65-22.90]), the 8 year olds [$M = 14.74$, 95% CI 4.25-25.25]), and the 10 year olds [$M = 19.88$, 95% CI [16.26-23.49]). The 17 year olds ($M = 30.67$, 95% CI [27.80-33.54]) scored significantly higher than the 8 year olds ($M = 14.75$, 95% CI [4.25-25.25]). Other age group comparisons showed differences in mean scores but the differences did not reach statistical significance.

Comparison of TASLA-R Scores Across Age, Grade Level and Parent Hearing Status

Table 5 displays the average number of correct judgments across the ages of the students taking the TASLA-R examining the parent hearing status (deaf and hearing). As expected because of early and more language exposure to ASL, the deaf children of deaf parents group outperformed the deaf children of hearing parents group. The students with deaf parents demonstrated increased metalinguistic knowledge compared to the deaf children of hearing parents. See this relationship graphically displayed in figure 2.

TABLE 5:
TASLA-R TOTAL SCORES AND PARENTS HEARING STATUS (N=140)

Parent Hearing Status	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Group 1: At least one Deaf Parent	26.16	62	5.865
Group 2: Two Hearing Parents	20.90	78	6.605
Total	23.23	140	6.793

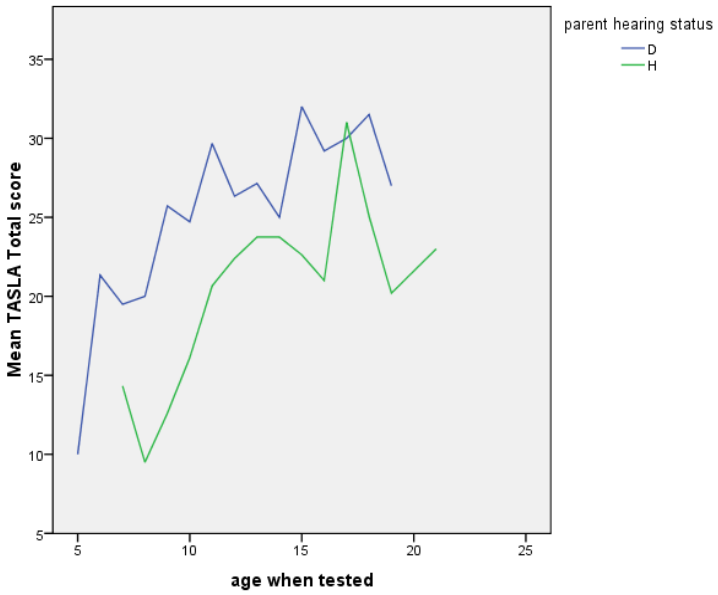


Figure 2: Mean TASLA-R Scores, Age in Years When Tested and Hearing Status of Parents (n = 140).

A t-test was used with parent hearing status as between groups variable and TASLA-R total score as the dependent measure. The between groups variable was significant was significant: $t(2, 136) = 5.248$, $p < .05$.

A one-way ANOVA was used to test the differences in TASLA-R scores among the three grade levels. Grade level performance differed significantly across the three grade levels (elementary, junior high and high school): $F(2, 137) = 22.640$, $p < .05$. Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicated that the high school level ($M = 26.31$, 95% CI [24.63, 28.00]) scored significantly higher on the TASLA-R than the Elementary level group ($M = 18.30$, 95% CI [16.21, 20.40]), $p < .05$. Comparisons between the junior high group and the high school were not significantly different.

TABLE 6:
COMPARISON OF TASLA-R SCORES ACROSS LEVELS OF SCHOOL (ELEMENTARY, JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL) AND PARENT HEARING STATUS (DEAF VS HEARING)

School Levels	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Deaf Parents			
Elementary	21.91	23	5.768
Junior High	26.53	19	4.501
High School	30.70	20	3.011
Total	26.16	62	5.86
Hearing Parents			
Elementary	14.15	20	5.480
Junior High	22.93	27	4.673
High School	23.48	31	5.750
Total	20.90	78	6.605
Total			
Elementary	18.30	43	6.809
Junior High	24.41	46	4.83
High School	26.31	51	5.995
Total	23.23	140	6.793

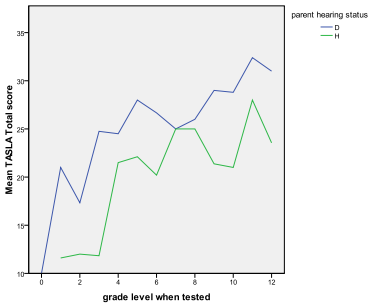


Figure 3: Comparison of TASLA-R Scores Across Levels of School (K to 12th grade) Elementary, and Parent Hearing Status (Deaf Vs Hearing) (n = 140)

Research Question #2: Does a relationship exist between students' background variables and metalinguistic abilities?

Researchers have pointed out the importance of describing the background variables of deaf students because many of these characteristics such as age of onset, degree of hearing loss, age, non-verbal IQ will have an effect on deaf children's language learning. To this end, efforts were made to give a comprehensive description of the background variables of the 140 children in this study. See tables 1, 2 and 3 above.

Student Background Characteristics

Correlation analyses were performed using the TASLA-R scores as the dependent measure and the predictor variables coded as categorical data: ethnicity, gender, educational placement, geographic location, mother sign skill, and etiology.

A Spearman Rho correlation was computed to assess the relationship between TASLA-R total scores and the six categorical variables: ethnicity, gender, educational placement, school, mother's signing skill, and etiology. There was a correlation between the variables TASLA-R scores and Ethnicity [r = .256, n = 140, p < .01] and Mother signing skills [r = .307, n = 140, p < .01]. No relationships were found between other background variables: gender, educational placement, school, etiology and secondary disabilities.

Since a relationship was found between ethnicity and TASLA-R scores and mother signing skill and TASLA-R scores, two additional one-way ANOVAs were carried out.

First, a one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences among the ethnic groups. See table 7.

TABLE 7:
TASLA-R TOTAL SCORES AND ETHNICITY GROUPINGS

Ethnicity Groupings	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
White	24.30	98	6.637
African-Am	21.41	22	5.901
Asian-Am	13.00	2	4.243
Hispanic-Am	22.06	16	6.577
Biracial	10.50	2	2.121
Total	23.23	140	6.793

Differences in group performances on the TASLA-R differed across ethnic groups: F (4, 135) = 4.398, p < .05. Tukey's post-hoc comparisons of the five groups indicated that the White group (M = 24.30, 95% CI [22.97, 25.63]) outperformed the biracial group (M = 10.50, 95% CI -8.56, 29.56). The other groups were not statistically significant at p < .05 level.

Secondly, another one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences among the teacher ratings of the mothers' sign skills. Performances on the TASLA-R differed across the different mothers' ratings of sign skills groups: F (4, 129) = 6.435, p < .05. Tukey's post-hoc comparisons of the five sign rating groups indicated that outstanding sign skill group (M = 25.50, 95% CI [23.94, 27.06]) outperformed the other group rated poor signer (M = 18.41, 95% CI [15.84, 20.98]). The other groups were not statistically significant at p < .05 level. See table 8.

TABLE 8:
TASLA-R TOTAL SCORES AND MOTHER'S SIGN SKILL (AS RATED BY TEACHERS) (N=132)

Mother Sign Skill	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Outstanding	26.75	59	5.722
Good	23.48	25	6.752
Fair	23.64	14	5.786
Poor	18.25	28	6.824
None	25.83	6	5.845
Total	23.52	132	6.747

A second multiple regression analysis was done with the TASLA-R as the dependent variable and the independent variable, coded as scaled variables: Pure Tone hearing loss in better ear and non-verbal IQ were coded as predictor variables. There was a correlation between the variables TASLA-R scores and IQ score was statistically significant [r = .518, n = 94, p < .05]. There was no relationship between TASLA-R score and the Pure Tone Average hearing loss in the better ear.

In the second analysis, the researcher used the TASLA ─ R as a predictor to determine how much variance was contributed by non-verbal IQ, and the Pure Tone Average in Better Ear. Using the enter method, a significant model emerged (F (2,92) = 16.827, p. < .05. Adjusted R square = .252. Thus, IQ variable accounted for 25% of the model. Significant variables are the following: For the Predictor variable, non-verbal IQ, Beta = .497, p <.01. The Pure Tone Average Hearing Loss in better ear was not significant predictor in this model.

Research Question #3: What is the relationship between ASL abilities and English- literacy achievement as measured by the three subtests of the SAT-9: reading vocabulary, reading comprehension and language subtests?

To address this question, the number of children who had SAT-9 scores for the three sub-tests: vocabulary, reading comprehension and language were examined. The Stanford Achievement Test-9th edition is a norm-referenced test for deaf students. The Stanford-9 published by Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement has these subtests normed on deaf students: reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, mathematics problem solving, mathematics procedures, spelling and language. Within these test content areas there are eight test levels that are vertically equated so that scores are reported on a single scale for each subtest. These "scaled scores" allow comparisons of scores from different test levels. Each test level was designed to measure curriculum content commonly taught to hearing students in specific grades. For instance, one can compare the scaled score of a student in third grade with another student in high school.

For purposes of this study, the three SAT-9 subtests: reading comprehension, reading vocabulary and language were utilized. The reading comprehension subtest consisted of 9 to 10 stories (short paragraphs of fiction, nonfiction, recipes, environmental signage) followed by 6 questions that assessed comprehension using literal and inferential kinds of questions. A multiple-choice format was used, with four possible answers that student could choose from. The reading vocabulary subtest consisted of 30 sentences with an underlined word and the student chose from four choices the word that best explained the underlined word. The language subtest consisted of approximately 30 items, also in multiple-choice format where the student was asked questions about punctuation, capitalization (mechanics of English) or word choice or word grammar such as filling in a noun or verb or adjective.

Of the 140 children who took the TASLA-R, these SAT-9 scores were available: Reading vocabulary (n = 73), reading comprehension (n = 74) and language (n = 63). Using the TASLA-R score and each of the SAT-9 subtest scores, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed to assess the relationship of the TASLA-R score and each of the three subtests.

The correctional was significant between the variables TASLA-R scores and Reading Vocabulary subtest scores [r = .491, n = 73, p < .01] and Reading Comprehension [r = .582, n = 74, p < .01] and Language [r = .402, n = 63, p < .01].

A second analysis was carried out, a multiple regression analysis to determine how much variance the three English literacy subtests contributed to the TASLA ─ R score. To this end, the researchers used the TASLA ─ R as a predictor to determine how much variance was contributed by SAT Vocabulary, SAT Reading Comprehension and SAT Language. Using the enter method, a significant model emerged (F (3,58) = 6.19, p. < .05. Adjusted R square = .204. Significant variables are the following. For the Predictor variable, the reading comprehension subtest score was significant, Beta = .765, p <.01. Reading vocabulary and the Language subtest scores were not significant predictors in this model.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are as follows:

1. As the children got older, their ASL metalinguistic awareness increased, as demonstrated on the TASLA-R, a 40-item test designed for this study (F (13, 137) = 3.402, p<.05).

2. On the TASLA-R, the deaf children of deaf parents group outperformed the deaf children of hearing group and this difference reached statistical significance: t (2, 136) = 5.248, p < .05.

3. Deaf students in high school outperformed deaf children in elementary and junior high on the TASLA-R. Grade level performance differed significantly across the three grade levels (elementary, junior high and high school): F (2, 137) = 22.640, p< .05. Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicated that the high school level (M = 26.31, 95% CI [24.63, 28.00]) scored significantly higher on the TASLA-R than the Elementary level group (M = 18.30, 95% CI [16.21, 20.40]), p < .05. Comparisons between the junior high group and the high school were not significant.

4. There was a statistically significant correlation between the variables TASLA-R scores and ethnicity [r = .256, n = 140, p < .01] and mother signing skills [r = .307, n = 140, p < .01]. Caucasians performed better and students with mothers who had more signing skills also performed better on the TASLA-R. No relationships were found between other background variables: gender, educational placement (residential only vs. day school + residential school), school, etiology and secondary disabilities. Differences in group performances on the TASLA-R differed across the ethnic groups: F (4, 135) = 4.398, p < .05. Tukey's post-hoc comparisons of the five groups indicated that the White group (M = 24.30, 95% CI [22.97, 25.63]) outperformed the biracial group (M = 10.50, 95% CI -8.56, 29.56). The other groups were not statistically significant at p < .05 level.

5. Performances on the TASLA-R differed across the different mothers' ratings of sign skills groups: F (4, 129) = 6.435, p < .05. Tukey's post-hoc comparisons of the five sign rating groups indicated that outstanding sign skill group (M = 25.50, 95% CI [23.94, 27.06]) outperformed the other group rated poor signer (M = 18.41, 95% CI [15.84, 20.98]). The other groups were not statistically significant at p < .05 level.

6. Children with higher IQs scored higher than those with lower IQs [r = .518, n = 94, p < .05]. There was no relationship between TASLA-R score and the Pure Tone Average hearing loss in the better ear.

7. Using the enter method, a significant model emerged (F (2,92) = 16.827, p. < .05. Adjusted R square = .252. Thus, IQ variable accounted for 25% of the model. Significant variables are the following. For the Predictor variable, non-verbal IQ, Beta = .497, p <.01. The Pure Tone Average Hearing Loss in better ear was not a significant predictor in this model.

8. Using the TASLA-R score and each of the SAT-9 subtest scores, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed to assess the relationship of the TASLA-R score and each of the three subtests. The correctional was significant between the variables TASLA-R scores and Reading Vocabulary subtest scores [r = .491, n = 73, p < .01] and Reading Comprehension [r = .582, n = 74, p < .01] and Language [r = .402, n = 63, p < .01].

9. The TASLA ─ R was used as the criterion, to determine how much variance was contributed by the predictors: the SAT Vocabulary, SAT Reading Comprehension and SAT Language. Using the enter method, a significant model emerged (F (3, 58) = 6.19, p. < .05. Adjusted R square = .204. For the Predictor variable, Reading Comprehension subtest score was significant, Beta = .765, p <.01. Reading vocabulary and the Language subtest scores were not significant predictors in this model.

V. Discussion and Recommendations

First, the TASLA-R needs to be administered to more children in order to further refine its psychometric properties. Secondly, on the whole, the older deaf children in this sample of 140 performed better on the TASLA-R than the younger members in the group, thus noting a developmental trend. That there were valleys and peaks along this development path suggests that there is some variability in deaf children achieving ASL metalinguistic awareness across the age groupings. The older deaf children were better able to judge whether a sign, a signed sentence or a signed discourse segment was correct or not than the younger children were. Clearly, these children received exposure to ASL from their deaf or hearing parents at home and from their deaf and hearing teachers who used ASL in their school environment and as they grew older, these skills increased.

The developmental progression as shown in this study has clinical importance as well. Clinicians working with ASL-delayed children can give them exposure to ASL stories and ask them questions about ASL structure. The structures in these 8 stories need to be further delineated (see Appendix 2) and added to the knowledge base of what we know about deaf children's ASL developmental milestones from birth to age five. From this list of developmental ASL structures, ASL standards and curriculum can be built.

Thirdly, the authors hypothesize that the use of whole stories to elicit student responses in making the correct judgments about sign correctness facilitated the students' ability to make metalinguistic judgments because it provided more context than a single sign or single signed sentence. Future studies that make the use of whole stories in the development of ASL assessments, rather than using only single sentences in order to tap deaf children's ability to attend to sign structure with the context of more ASL are recommended.

Fourth, while the three subtests—reading vocabulary, reading comprehension and language were significantly correlated to the TASLA-R scores, they were only moderately correlated. However when a multiple regression model was used, the subtest reading comprehension was found to predict TASLA-R scores. This finding needs to be further explored, as it concurs with studies showing a relationship between ASL proficiency and reading comprehension.

Future studies need to address this relationship between ASL proficiency and English reading comprehension. We still do not know the full extent how ASL supports reading comprehension. Do deaf children need a certain threshold of ASL skills and English skills before their bilingual transfer abilities start to enter into their language learning of reading? If so, ASL metalinguistic awareness is a strong predictor of English reading skills, if one supports the hypothesis that the same psycholinguistic processing operations are used in both, then future studies need to examine the phenomenon of sign-to-print mapping within an ASL/English bilingual setting. Clearly, language intervention studies are needed to clarify how using ASL and fingerspelling can enhance English reading instruction.

Based on Bialystok's model of metalingusitic development (2001), metalinguistic skills have been defined as the ability to reflect upon language, to attend to its form and structure apart from its content or meaning, and to make judgments or evaluate its correctness or incorrectness. As such, metalinguistic skills give deaf students a cognitive and linguistic tool to think about and analyze their ASL skills. As children get older, their ability to think about their ASL language increases. In this study, we interpret our data to suggest that deaf children, as they get older, develop psycholinguistic processing operations that access their internalized grammar of ASL so they can attend to and make judgments about abstract representations of ASL. How deaf children can recruit these psycholinguistic processing operations and use their "ASL language template" to manipulate ASL representations and to map them onto the learning of their second language English remains to be studied in future studies. Evidence from correlation research with deaf adults suggests that such a relationship exists between ASL proficiency and English reading ability (Freel,

Clark, Anderson, Gilbert, Musyoka & Hauser, 2012; Ausbrooks, 2007; Delana, Gentry & Andrews, 2007; Goldin-Meadow & Mayberry, 2001; see also reviews in Chamberlain, Morford, & Mayberry, 2000). However, additional studies are needed to clarify the ASL and fingerspelling to English print relationship at the reading comprehension and word analyses skill levels, test its usefulness and make it practical for the parents, pediatric audiologists and clinicians in early childhood education programs and K-12 programs. An instrument such as the TASLA-R can facilitate these efforts.

APPENDIX 1. THE ASL STRUCTURES PRESENTED IN THE TOTAL TASLA – R

Story Title and Test Item	**Linguistic Area**	**Comprehension based on Reception of ASL Structure**
Practice Warm-Up Story **Not Meant To Be**		
1	Phonology	Identify handshape of sign
2	Morphology	Identify Noun-verb pairs
3	Semantics	Recognition of object placement in hand
4	Syntax	Using spatial memory using three areas in space
5	Pragmatics	Use of role shifting to identify signer
Deaf Tree		
1	Phonology	Identify the group of signs which do not share the "5" handshape
2.	Morphology	Identify how to make a plural (reduplication)
3	Semantics	Identify the meaning of the sign "Y" handshape that circles near the nose.
4	Syntax	Identify the subject and the indirect object using spatial location and direction
5	Pragmatics	Identify role shifting with two characters and identifying the perspective of each.
Snake Flies		
6	Phonology	Identify the sign made using the four parameters correctly (handshape, location, movement, a palm orientation)
7	Morphology	Identify the meaning of the Non-manual signal (NMS) "ooo"
8	Semantics	Identify the meaning of the sign using appropriate classifiers
9	Syntax	Identify Past Tense in a sentence
10	Pragmatics	Identify role shifting with two characters planning an action.
Pagers for Sale		
11	Phonology	Identify the NMS "thh" when incorporated in a single sign
12	Morphology	Identify the meaning of the NMS (Non-manual signal) "cha"
13	Semantics	Identify the meaning of the sign (handshape: X) across the object.
14	Syntax	Identify possessive pronoun in signed sentence.
15	Pragmatics	Identify spatial arrangement of property
Deaflympics		
16	Phonology	From 4 groups of 3 lexical signs, identify which group of signs has similar parameters (handshape, movement and location) to the single lexical sign provided.
17	Morphology	Identify on-surface morpheme classifier handshape
18	Semantic	Identify meaning of the classifier
19	Syntax	Identify the correct sequence in several signed sentences.
20	Pragmatics	Identify the correct topic signed in beginning of the story.
The Haunted House		
21	Phonology	From 4 groups of 3 lexical signs, identify which group has the same handshape, location, and palm-orientation of the sample lexical sign presented.
22	Morphology	Identify which group of noun-verb pairs is not similar to the sample noun-verb pair provided.
23	Semantics	Identify the meaning of the sample sign given.
24	Syntax	Identify verb agreement with shifting reference (spatial syntax)
25	Pragmatics	Identify the character in front of the storyteller (first person vs. third person)
Three Deaf Indians		
26	Phonology	Identify the correct group of 3 lexical signs that has the same parameter location as the sample lexical sign provided.
27	Morphology	Identify the correct use of number incorporation, classifier predicates and movements that correspond to the storyline.
28	Semantics	Identify the correct meaning of the on surface morpheme with movement.
29	Syntax	Identify the topic/comment structure and facial grammar used correctly in the signed sentences.
30	Pragmatics	Identify turn-taking in discourse

The Golden Crown		
31.	Phonology	Identify which item is not an example of lexicalized fingerspelling
32	Morphology	Identify which sign pairs follows the rule: reduplication by movement
33	Semantics	Identify the meaning in the group of 2 pictures that use the appropriate descriptive classifiers
34	Syntax	Identify the correct directionality in the signed sentences
35	Pragmatics	Identify the correct signer in a discourse conversation
Heartbeat		
36	Phonology	Identify the incorrect classifier handshape from the following list of ASL lexical signs
37	Morphology	Identify the incorrect classifier predicate and signer perspective from the list of ASL phrases
38	Semantics	Identify the correct meaning of the signs
39	Syntax	Identify the incorrect signed sentence structure.
40	Pragmatics	Identify the discourse structure (poetic device) used in this poem

APPENDIX 2. ITEM IDENTIFICATION BY ASL SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE FOR THE TASLA – R

ASL Linguistic Structures	TASLA-R Item number
PHONOLOGY	1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36
MORPHOLOGY	2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32,37
SEMANTICS	3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38
SYNTAX	4, 9,14,19, 24, 29, 34, 39
PRAGMATICS	5,10,15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40

APPENDIX 3. LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY, ITEM NUMBER, NUMBER OF CORRECT RESPONSES AND INCORRECT RESPONSES, NAME OF STORY, AND TYPE OF ASL STRUCTURE FOR THE TASLA – R

Rank Order of Level of Difficulty (from MOST DIFFICULT item (1) to EASIEST item (34)	**Test Item #**	**# Correct Responses by Students (total students taking the TASLA-R, n = 140)**	**# Incorrect Responses by students**	**Story Title**	**ASL Structure**
1	16	28	105	Deaflymics	Phonology
2	21	30	103	The Haunted House	Phonology
3	11	34	106	Pagers for Sale	Phonology
4	32	30	93	The Golden Crown	Morphology
5	24	36	97	The Haunted House	Syntax
6	33	34	89	The Golden Crown	Semantics
7	29	43	90	Three Deaf Indians	Syntax
8	30	46	87	Three Deaf Indians	Pragmatics
9	22	51	82	The Haunted House	Morphology
10	39	50	73	Heartbeat	Syntax
11	40	57	66	Heartbeat	Pragmatics
12	25	75	58	The Haunted House	Pragmatics
13	37	61	62	Heartbeat	Morphology
14	27	92	41	Three Deaf Indians	Morphology
15	38 7	74 82	49 58	Heartbeat Snake Flies	Semantics Morphology
16	15 26	82 88	58 44	Pagers for Sale Three Deaf Indians	Pragmatics Phonology
17	31 20	74 82	49 51	The Golden Crown Deaflympics	Phonology Pragmatics
18	34	76	62	The Golden Crown	Syntax
19	6	95	45	Snake Flies	Phonology
20	35	84	39	The Golden Crown	Pragmatics
21	4	87	53	The Deaf Tree	Syntax
22	12	100	40	Pagers for Sale	Morphology
23	1	120	20	The Deaf Tree	Phonology
24	10	106	34	Snake Flies	Pragmatics
25	19 28	106 107	27 26	Deaflympics Three Deaf Indians	Syntax Phonology
26	8	112	28	Snake Flies	Semantics
27	5	111	29	The Deaf Tree	Pragmatics
28	3	111	29	The Deaf Tree	Semantics

29	2 36	120 105	20 85	The Deaf Tree Heartbeat	Morphology Phonology
30	13	118	22	Pagers for Sale	Semantics
31	14	109	31	Pagers for Sale	Syntax
32	18	121	12	Deaflympics	Semantics
33	23	126	7	The Haunted House	Semantics
34	17	125	8	Deaflympics	Syntax
	9	82	58		syntax

REFERENCES

[1] Adams. M. (1990). Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
[2] Andrews, J. F., Leigh, I. W., & Weiner, M. T. (2004). Deaf people: Evolving perspectives from psychology, education and sociology. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
[3] Andrews, J. & Rusher, M. (2010). Codeswitching Techniques: Evidence-Based Instructional Practices for the ASL/English Bilingual Classroom. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 155(4), 407-424.
[4] Ausbrooks, M. (2007). Predictors of reading success among deaf bilinguals: Examining the relationship between ASL proficiency and English. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Lamar University, Beaumont, TX.
[5] Ausbrooks-Rusher, M., Schimmel & Edwards, S. (2012). Utilizing Fairview as a Bilingual Response to Intervention (RTI): Comprehensive Curriculum Review with Supporting Data. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 2(7), 1317-1329.
[6] Baker, S. (2010, July). The Importance of Fingerspelling for Reading. Visual Language and Visual Learning Science of Learning Center. (Research Brief No. 1). Washington, D.C.
[7] Berko-Gleason, J. (1997). The Development of Language. Fourth edition, Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
[8] Bialystok, E. (2001). Bilingualism in Development: Language, Literacy & Cognition. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[9] Bialystok, E. (1991). Language Processing in Bilingual Children. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[10] Cairns, H., Schlisselberg, G., Waltzman, D. & McDaniel, D. (2006). Development of a Metalinguistic Skill: Judging the Grammaticality of Sentences. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 27(4), 213-220.
[11] Chamberlain, C., Morford, J., & Mayberry, R. (Eds.). (2000). Language acquisition by eye. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
[12] Delana, M., Gentry, M. & Andrews, J. (1997). The efficacy of ASL/English bilingual education: Considering Public Schools. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 152(1), 73-87.
[13] Diaz, R. M. and Klingler, C. (1991). Towards an explanatory model of the interaction between bilingualism and cognitive development. NY: Longman. In: Bialystock, E. *Language Processing in bilingual children*, pp. 167-192. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[14] Freel, B., Clark, M., Anderson, M., Gilbert, G., Musyoka, M. & Hauser, P. (.2010). Deaf Individuals' Bilingual Abilities: ASL Proficiency, Reading Skill and Family Characteristics. *Psychology*, 2011, 2(1), 18-23.
[15] French, M. M. (1999). Starting with assessment: A developmental approach to deaf children's literacy. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Pre-College National Mission Programs.
[16] Goldin-Meadow, S., & Mayberry, R. (2001). How do profoundly deaf children learn to read? *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 16*(4), 222-229.
[17] Gonzales, H., Covell, J. & Andrews, J. (2005). Language Acquisition: Where is the Sign Language Assessment on my son's IEP? *Endeavor*, Vol. 2, pp. 18-19, 20-21.
[18] Gronlund, N. (1981). Measurement and evaluation in teaching. New York: Macmillan.
[19] Grojean, F. (2008). Studying Bilingualism. New York: Oxford University Press.
[20] Grosjean, F. (2010). Bilingual: Life and Reality. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
[21] Haotinstall-Nykaza, T. & Schick, B. (2007). The Transition from Fingerspelling to English Print: Facilitating English Decoding. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 12(2), 172-183.
[22] Haug, T. (1999). Review of Signed Language Assessments Instruments. Retrieved March 13, 2011, http://www.sign-lang.uni-hamburg.de/intersign/workshop4/haug.html.
[23] Klima, E. & Bellugi, U. (1979). The Signs of Language. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
[24] Mayer. C. & Wells, D/. (1996). Can the Linguistic Interdependence Theory Support a Bilingual-Bicultural Model of Literacy Instruction for Deaf Students. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 1(2), 93-107.
[25] Menendez, B. (2010). Cross-modal bilingualism: contact as evidence of linguistic transfer in sign bilingual education. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 13(2), 201-223.
[26] Peters, C. (2000). Deaf American Literature: From Carnival to Canon. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.
[27] Poizner, H., Klima, E., & Bellugi, U. (2000). What the hands reveal about the brain. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
[28] Quigley, S. & Kretchmer, R. (1982). The education of deaf children: Issues, theory, and practice. Baltimore University Park Press.
[29] Smith, A.K. The Performance of Deaf Students on a Test of American Sign Language Abilities-Receptive (TASLA-R). (2007). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Lamar University, Beaumont, TX.
[30] Snow, C. (1990). The development of definitional skill. *Journal of Child Language*, 17, 677-710.
[31] Stanford Achievement Test 9th Edition for Hearing Impaired. (1996). New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.
[32] Trezek, B., Wang, Y. & Paul, P. (2010). Reading and Deafness: Theory, Research & Practice. Cengage Learning.
[33] Valli, C. & Lucas, C. (2000). Linguistics of American Sign Language: An introduction. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Adonia K. Smith has taught workshops and classes in Literacy, bilingual-bicultural methods, ASL, Deaf studies, ASL literature, ASL assessments at schools for the deaf, public schools and colleges/universities. She also has supervised and prepared teachers of deaf learners and has developed curricula and assessments for deaf learners. Dr. Smith is the vice-president of ASL Rose, a company that develops materials for deaf individuals and ASL learners.

Jean F. Andrews is professor of Deaf Studies/Deaf Education at Lamar University where she teaches in the graduate program and conducts applied research in language and literacy with deaf adults, children and youths and children in early childhood. She is a Texas certified teacher of the deaf and a Texas certified reading specialist.

Melissa Ausbrooks is the Director of Research at the Mississippi School for the Deaf in Jackson, Mississippi. She has been a classroom reading teacher, trained teachers of the deaf and trained educational leaders. She conducts applied research in ASL/English bilingualism for deaf children, youth and adults.

Mary Anne Gentry is professor at Lamar University and currently serves as the Director of the Masters Degree Program in Deaf Studies/Deaf Education. She has been training K-12 teachers in Deaf Education for the past 12 years. She also has 23 years of experience teaching elementary Deaf students. She is a Texas certified teacher of the deaf.

E. Lynn Jacobowitz is a teacher, researcher, scholar, and a performer. She has taught ASL, Deaf studies, ASL literature, and ASL curriculum/instruction for many years at Gallaudet University. She is the co-owner and president of ASL Rose, a company that develops Deaf-centered, Deaf-friendly materials for Deaf and hearing learners from Pre-K through college.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 900-913, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.900-913

Vocabulary Knowledge and Speaking Proficiency among Second Language Learners from Novice to Intermediate Levels

Rie Koizumi
Juntendo University, Japan

Yo In'nami
Shibaura Institute of Technology, Japan

***Abstract*—To remedy the paucity of studies on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency, we examine the degree to which second language (L2) speaking proficiency can be predicted by the size, depth, and speed of L2 vocabulary among novice to intermediate Japanese learners of English. Studies 1 and 2 administered vocabulary tests and a speaking test to 224 and 87 L2 learners, respectively. Analyses using structural equation modeling demonstrated that a substantial proportion of variance in speaking proficiency can be explained by vocabulary knowledge, size, depth, and speed. These results suggest the centrality of vocabulary knowledge to speaking proficiency.**

***Index Terms*—vocabulary size, depth, speed, L2 speech production, fluency, accuracy, syntactic complexity**

I. Introduction

Vocabulary has long been recognized as a vital component and a good indicator of second language (L2) performance and proficiency (e.g., Schmitt, 2010; Stæhr, 2009). However, compared to the numerous studies on associations between L2 vocabulary and reading (e.g., Qian, 2002; Van Gelderen et al., 2004), little research has been conducted into the relationships between L2 vocabulary and other L2 skills (Stæhr, 2009). Examples include Stæhr (2009) for listening, Schoonen et al. (2003) for writing, and De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, and Hulstijn (2012) for speaking. The current article focuses on the relationship between L2 vocabulary knowledge and L2 speaking proficiency among novice- to intermediate-level Japanese learners of English, by conducting two studies that use structural equation modeling (SEM).

A. Vocabulary Knowledge and Its Predictive Power

While researchers generally agree with regard to the multicomponential nature of vocabulary knowledge, various proposals have been put forward regarding what exactly constitutes vocabulary knowledge (e.g., Meara, 2005; Schmitt, 2010). One classification frequently employed involves the size and depth of vocabulary (e.g., Qian, 2002). Size, or breadth, expresses a quantitative dimension involving knowledge of a word form and a primary meaning, also described as the form-meaning link. Depth represents a qualitative dimension, defined as "how well a learner knows individual words or how well words are organized in the learner's mental lexicon" (Stæhr, 2009, p. 579), and includes knowledge of partial to precise meaning, word frequency, affix knowledge, syntactic characteristics, and lexical network.

In addition to size and depth, another lexical aspect that has recently attracted attention and been incorporated into vocabulary frameworks is speed of processing, or how fast learners can recognize and retrieve knowledge stored in the mental lexicon (e.g., Meara, 2005). Processing speed (often referred to as automaticity, efficiency, or fluency) of lexical access and retrieval is considered to play a crucial role in the use of vocabulary in real-life situations, as well as in L2 proficiency (e.g., Van Moere, 2012). This may be true especially of listening and speaking, which require on-line processing (Schmitt, 2010).

Of these multidimensional lexical aspects, size has been considered primary, because of the importance of the form-meaning link for vocabulary use (e.g., Laufer, Elder, Hill, & Congdon, 2004; Schmitt, 2010). A number of empirical studies have been conducted to examine the relative importance of size versus depth and speed in terms of predictive powers of L2 skills. Qian and Schedl (2004) investigated vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension among 207 L2 learners of English at intermediate and advanced levels, and reported that 57% of variance of L2 reading scores was explained by size, with an additional 4% of variance explained by depth. A similarly large variance (54%) predicted solely by size was indicated by Qian (2002), with an additional 13% explained by depth (n = 217). Finally, Stæhr (2009) provided further support for these results, showing that 49% of L2 listening variance was accounted for by size, but just 2% by depth (n = 115). In sum, previous studies suggest that size can predict much of reading and listening variance, while depth contributes relatively little.

It should be noted that the proportion of variance explained by variables changes, depending on the order in which

independent variables are entered into the regression equation. The results from the studies described above were derived when size was entered first, followed by depth. The effect of this is that depth is able to predict only the remaining variance, that is, whatever was not predicted by size. Since size was highly correlated with depth, sharing a large variance with it (49% in Qian, 2002, r = .70; 71% in Qian & Schedl, 2004, r = .84; 64% in Stæhr, 2009, r = .80), the variance that could have been predicted by depth was already predicted by size. As a result, the predictive power of depth appears much lower than size. Therefore, the small proportion of variance explained by depth does not indicate that depth is less important for predicting reading and writing skills. To the contrary, when depth was the first variable entered into the regression equation, it could predict a much higher proportion of reading and listening variance, while size added only a small percentage (59% depth and 8% size in Qian, 2002; 55% and 6% in Qian & Schedl, 2004; 42% and 9% in Stæhr, 2009). These results suggest that size and depth in fact predict reading and listening proficiency in similar ways. Unlike reading and listening, however, the relative contributions of size and depth to speaking and writing skills remain unclear. In the present article, this constitutes the basis for conducting Study 1.

An additional concern is that the three abovementioned studies—Qian (2002), Qian and Schedl (2004), and Stæhr (2009)—all used the Word Associates Test (WAT) format (Read, 1993), which is designed to assess synonyms and collocations. According to Schmitt (2012), relationships between size and depth can vary depending on what specific areas of depth researchers target. The similar relationships of size and depth to reading and listening skills that these studies suggest may be due to their use of the same test format, and perhaps also because the synonyms that the WAT assessed overlapped with the size aspect. Therefore, studies employing formats different from the WAT are desirable.

Regarding the predictive power of lexical processing speed in relation to size, Van Gelderen et al. (2004) showed that size and speed were both moderately correlated with L2 reading comprehension (r = .63 and –.47, respectively), and that size was more effective (40%) than speed (22%) in predicting L2 reading, when each was separately entered into the regression equation. This pattern has also been observed in studies of L2 writing (Schoonen et al., 2003) and L2 speaking (De Jong et al., 2012, in press). Previous studies suggest that, unlike the case of size and depth, where their degree of predictive power is roughly the same, the predictive power of speed, albeit still substantial, is smaller. One reason for this may be the existence of a threshold level of speed: Speed may be strongly related to reading, writing, and speaking proficiency until learners reach a certain threshold level of sufficient speed, after which point further increase in speed does not entail greater speaking proficiency.

To conclude, size seems to hold considerable power in predicting L2 proficiency, when it is the first variable entered into the regression equation, while depth and speed contribute limited predictive powers for the remainder of the proficiency. However, when depth or speed is entered into the regression first, depth tends to exhibit a predictive power similar to size, whereas speed may have a predictive power less than size. This indicates the complicated nature of the contribution that these three lexical aspects make to language proficiency; thus far, however, only a limited number of studies have investigated this issue. To our knowledge, only Uenishi (2006) has tested the three aspects separately in relation to speaking, and even Uenishi's study is limited to novice speakers, and furthermore does not report test reliability or details about the tests and analysis. Thus, the report of Study 2 presented in this paper, inspecting the relationships between the factors of size, depth, speed, and L2 speaking proficiency, fills a significant gap in current research.

B. Relationships between L2 Vocabulary Knowledge and L2 Speaking

The well-known models of the speaking process proposed by Levelt (1989) and Kormos (2006) describe three main stages of speech production: conceptualization, formulation, and articulation. During the first stage, speakers form preverbal messages in the conceptualizer. In the formulator, they search for and retrieve necessary vocabulary from the mental lexicon, which contains information related to vocabulary and syntactic structures, in order to produce utterances with syntactic and phonological information. In the final stage, they utter the speech that they have formulated. Levelt stated that L1 speakers conduct these processes in parallel and automatically, without using substantial cognitive resources. However, L2 speakers experience much greater difficulty in executing such processes, a fact that prompted Kormos (2006) to propose an L2 speaking model.

According to both models, vocabulary holds a central position in formulating an utterance with the appropriate meanings, although other types of knowledge, including syntactic, morphological, and phonological knowledge, as well as nonlinguistic world knowledge and communication strategies, are also indispensible. The models indicate further the necessity of size, depth, and processing speed of vocabulary knowledge in speaking, because speakers use both form-meaning links (i.e., size) and the syntactic and morphological information associated with each word in the mental lexicon (depth), and because automatic, or at least relatively fast, lexical retrieval (speed) is required for smooth and effective communication.

In addition to the theoretical importance of vocabulary for speaking, empirical studies have been conducted into the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking. Table 1 summarizes nine previous studies that have quantitatively investigated the relationships between L2 vocabulary knowledge and speaking. We did not include studies into the relationships between vocabulary knowledge and lexical complexity, because of the difficulty in identifying measures that can be interpreted with high validity when analyzing short texts (see Koizumi & In'nami, 2012).

TABLE 1.
PREVIOUS STUDIES ANALYZING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VOCABULARY AND SPEAKING

Study	L1; L2; L2 level	Vocabulary aspect; test format	Speaking aspect; measure [speaking task used]	Statistical method and main results
Ishizuka (2000), *n* = 26	L1: Japanese; L2: English; novice[a]	(a) Depth; Word Associates Test format (Read, 1993)[b]	(1) Overall scores; composite scores of analytic rating scales [Eiken interview format]	Correlation (a & 1): *r* = .43
Segalowitz & Freed (2004), *n* = 40	L1: English; L2: Spanish; novice to advanced[a]	(a) L2 speed of lexical access; reaction time (RT) with L1 speed partialled out[c] (b) L2 efficiency of lexical access; (*SD* of RT)/(that person's mean RT) with L1 efficiency partialled out[c]	(1) Speed fluency; mean run length containing no filled pauses (e.g., *um*, *ah*) (2) Whether or not there was a gain in terms of the Oral Proficiency Interview scores between pretest and posttest, with an interval of 13 weeks [oral interview]	(a & 1) *r* = .38 (b & 1) *r* = .38 (a) or (b) explained by (2): both η^2 = .12
Koizumi (2005), *n* = 138	L1: Japanese; L2: English; novice	(a) Size; write L2 forms corresponding to L1 meanings (α = .91)	(1) Overall scores; composites of analytic rating scales (e.g., Task fulfillment; α = .86) [e.g., self-introduction, picture description]	Correlation (a & 1) *r* = .77
Uenishi (2006), *n* = 36	L1: Japanese; L2: English; novice[a]	(a) Size; Eiken vocabulary section[d] (b) Depth (word association); Lex30[e] (c) Access speed; reaction time to utter L2 forms corresponding to pictures	(1) Overall scores; composites of analytic rating scales (e.g., Content, Fluency, and Pronunciation; interrater reliability = .54) [describing a picture sequence] (2) Overall scores (interrater reliability = .73) [talking about hobbies]	Correlation (a & 1) *r* = .53; (a & 2) *r* = .48; (b & 1) *r* = .30; (b & 2) *r* = .12; (c & 1) *r* = –.27; (c & 2) *r* = –.01
Funato & Ito (2008), *n* = 62	L1: Japanese; L2: English; novice to intermediate[a]	(a) Size; write L2 forms corresponding to L1 meanings (b) Size; write L1 forms corresponding to L2 meanings	(1) Overall scores; composites of analytic rating scales (e.g., fluency, volume, and grammatical accuracy) [describing a comic and a picture]	Correlation (a & 1) *r* = .35 (b & 1) *r* = .27
Hilton (2008), *n* = 47	L1 French, German, and others; L2: English, Italian, and French; novice to advanced[a]	(a) Size; DIALANG (probably yes/no format; no details provided)	(1) Speed fluency; words per minute (2) Speed fluency; mean length of run (3) Repair fluency; mean length of hesitation (4) Repair fluency; percentage of production time spent hesitating (5) Repair fluency; rates of hesitation (6) Repair fluency; rates of retracing (7) Syntactic complexity; mean length of utterance (8) Accuracy; errors per 1,000 words[f]	Correlation (a & 1) *r* = .58; (a & 2) *r* = .67; (a & 3) *r* = –.39; (a & 4) *r* = –.55; (a & 5) *r* = –.66; (a & 6) *r* = –.52; (a & 7) *r* = .43; (a & 8) *r* = –.66
Milton et al. (2010), *n* = 30	L1: Arabic, Chinese, and others; L2: English; intermediate to relatively advanced	(a) Size (orthographic size); *X_Lex*; present L2 forms and check if test-takers think they know the meaning; yes/no format (b) Size (phonological size); *AuralLex*; yes/no format[g]	(1) IELTS speaking scores [oral interview]	Correlation: (a & 1): r_s = .35; (b & 1): r_s = .71 Linear regression: (1) explained by (b): R^2 = .42 Binary logistic regression: (1) explained by (b): Nagelkerke R^2 = .61
De Jong et al. (2012), *n* = 181	L1: 46 different languages (e.g., German); L2: Dutch; intermediate to advanced	(a) Size and depth (collocation) combined[h] (b) Speed of lexical retrieval; time to utter L2 forms in the picture-naming task (both α > .86)	(1) One latent speaking proficiency, rated on functional adequacy (α > .86) [descriptive and argumentative tasks]	SEM: (a & 1) *r* = .79; (b & 1) *r* = –.49; SEM multi-group analysis: Analyzed for each High and Low groups (*n* = 73, each); (1) explained by (a): High: R^2 = .45; Low: R^2 = .34; (1) explained by (b): High: R^2 = .04; Low: R^2 = .08
De Jong et al. (in press), *n* = 179	Same as De Jong et al. (2012)	Same as De Jong et al. (2012)	(1) Breakdown fluency; No. of silent pauses per 100 words (α = .96); (2) Breakdown fluency; mean silent pause duration (α = .93); (3) Breakdown fluency; No. of filled pauses per 100 words (α = .97); (4) Repair fluency; No. of corrections per 100 words (α = .77); (5) Repair fluency; No. of repetitions per 100 words (α = .91); (6) Speed fluency; mean duration of syllable (α = .97)[i]	Correlation (a & 1) *r* = –.39; (a & 2) *r* = –.02; (a & 3) *r* = –.33; (a & 4) *r* = –.43; (a & 5) *r* = –.24; (a & 6) *r* = –.58; (b & 1) *r* = .20; (b & 2) *r* = .16; (b & 3) *r* = .32; (b & 4) *r* = .25; (b & 5) *r* = .16; (b & 6) *r* = .32

Note. [a]Not reported, but evaluated by the authors according to the tests used. [b]Select L2 synonyms or collocates corresponding to L2 forms presented. [c]Semantic classification task, selecting either living or nonliving for L2 forms. [d]Select L2 forms appropriate to the sentential context. [e]Write L2 forms associated with L2 forms. [f][describing a video sequence]. [g]Listen to L2 forms and check if test-takers think they know the meaning. [h]Write L2 forms appropriate to the sentential context. [i][descriptive and argumentative tasks].

For instance, De Jong et al. (2012) investigated to what degree "L2 knowledge skills" and "L2 processing skills" explain L2 speaking proficiency (specifically functional adequacy), and whether the contributions of linguistics skills are different between more and less successful L2 learners. They administered eight speaking tasks and nine tests of linguistic skills to 181 adult learners of Dutch at intermediate and advanced levels, including a test of vocabulary knowledge (combining size and depth) and another of speed of lexical retrieval. They assessed size by requiring participants to supply L2 single-word forms appropriate to the sentence context, with one letter provided as a hint (90 items), and depth (specifically collocation) through a format that elicited L2 "prepositional phrases and verb-noun collocations" appropriate to the sentence (p. 17; 26 items). However, although they combined two formats to produce the total vocabulary knowledge scores, the depth items accounted for only 22% (26/116). Thus, we consider that their vocabulary knowledge test assessed mostly the aspect of size. In addition, a test of lexical retrieval speed measured the time it took participants to produce L2 forms corresponding to pictures provided. SEM analysis showed that vocabulary knowledge (size and depth combined) and intonation rating predicted 75% of speaking proficiency, and that speed contributed little to the prediction.

Reviewing these studies, we found varied results that may be explained by three main factors. First, the nine studies in Table 1 differed in the tasks/tests they administered and the aspects of vocabulary knowledge and speaking that they targeted. In terms of vocabulary aspects, four studies assessed size only (Funato & Ito, 2008; Hilton, 2008; Koizumi, 2005; Milton et al., 2010), with two studies measuring depth or speed (Ishizuka, 2000; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) and three studies integrating size, depth, and processing speed (De Jong et al., 2012, in press; Uenishi, 2006). Regarding speaking aspects, six studies assessed overall speaking proficiency (De Jong et al., 2012; Funato & Ito, 2008; Ishizuka, 2000; Koizumi, 2005; Milton et al., 2010; Uenishi, 2006), while three assessed fluency (De Jong et al., in press; Hilton, 2008; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Strong correlations were found between size and overall speaking proficiency in three studies (e.g., r = .79 in De Jong, 2012) but not in two other studies (e.g., r = .27 in Funato & Ito, 2008). Additionally, weak or moderate correlations were found in some combinations: for example, between size and oral fluency in most studies (e.g., r = .67 in Hilton, 2008).

Second, some studies (e.g., Funato & Ito, 2008) failed to report their test and/or rater reliability, and a large measurement error may have led to underestimation of the strengths of relationships. SEM is a more appropriate tool than correlation or regression analysis for modeling relationships between variables with measurement error controlled for, in order to obtain rigorous and trustworthy results. Among the nine previous studies, only De Jong et al. (2012) used SEM, and they demonstrated strong relationships between size and overall speaking proficiency (r = .79).

Third, participants in the previous studies had different ranges of proficiency: novice only (e.g., Uenishi, 2006), novice to intermediate (Funato & Ito, 2008), novice to advanced (e.g., Hilton, 2008), and intermediate to advanced (e.g., De Jong et al., 2012). These differences in proficiency levels may have affected the results. For example, among five studies into associations between size and overall speaking proficiency, the two that used only intermediate and advanced learners showed high correlations (r = .79 in De Jong et al., 2012), whereas three that included learners at the novice level reported weak, moderate, or strong correlations (e.g., r = .53 in Uenishi, 2006). According to De Jong et al. (2012), a relatively wide range of proficiency levels should be incorporated when modeling proficiency, and studies dealing with only novice learners may not have sufficient variation, perhaps leading to weaker correlations. Further, the relative contribution model (e.g., Adams, 1980) posited that vocabulary plays a more important role in speaking proficiency among lower-level learners and that the impact of vocabulary becomes weaker as proficiency levels rise. This suggests that the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to speaking would be stronger among novice and intermediate than intermediate and advanced learners.

The mixed results generated by previous studies warrant further research into the relationships between L2 vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency, and particularly into the relative contribution of size, depth, and speed to L2 speaking proficiency. This article attempts to cover wider aspects of vocabulary knowledge (size, depth, and speed) and speaking (overall speaking, fluency, accuracy, and syntactic complexity [SC]), using SEM to account for measurement error, and including learners of a relatively wide range of proficiency levels. We employ novice- and intermediate-level learners, and compare our results with those of De Jong et al. (2012), who employed intermediate- and advanced-level learners, in order to examine the relative contribution model (e.g., Adams, 1980).

C. Present Study

Although vocabulary knowledge is only one among the many variables that affect oral production (De Jong et al., 2012, in press), the literature review above shows that it is theoretically indispensable. However, although empirical investigations have generally supported this, the limited number of studies conducted justifies further research. This study conceptualizes vocabulary knowledge according to three aspects: size, depth, and speed. We also followed Housen and Kuiken (2009) in regarding speaking proficiency as consisting primarily of fluency, accuracy, and SC.

We conducted two studies: Study 1 examines the relationships between size, depth, and speaking proficiency, while Study 2 adds speed to the design of Study 1. Our research question is to what extent L2 speaking proficiency is predicted by L2 vocabulary knowledge, in terms of overall knowledge, size, depth, and speed. Drawing on previous studies (e.g., De Jong et al., 2012; Milton et al., 2010; Qian & Schedl, 2004), we hypothesize that vocabulary knowledge contributes substantially to the prediction of speaking proficiency, and that size and depth predict speaking similarly to each other, and to a greater degree than speed.

II. Study 1

A. Method

1. Participants

The participants were 224 Japanese native speakers, who had studied English as a foreign language for two to five years. They were secondary school learners (from 14 to 18 years old), including 97 males and 127 females. They were judged to be proficient at novice and lower-intermediate levels ("below A1" to B1 levels), based on their self-reported grade in the Eiken Test, which was translated by means of the conversion table (STEP, 2012) into the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Out of a larger pool of data, we selected those who took vocabulary tests and a speaking test and uttered at least one clause for every speaking task.

2. Instruments

Vocabulary knowledge was elicited in a decontextualized, controlled manner using a paper-and-pencil format. Vocabulary tests covered four aspects: size, derivation, antonym, and collocation, with the latter three sections assessing depth (see Table 2 for test formats). The three aspects of depth were selected as follows: (a) since knowledge of word association is essential in activating words, connecting them, and forming an utterance, common and typical word association responses—antonym and collocation (Aitchison, 2003)—were selected; (b) derivation was chosen to encompass the wider aspects of vocabulary knowledge.

TABLE 2.
EXAMPLES OF VOCABULARY TEST ITEMS IN STUDY 1

Size Test (78 items)
Write the English word that best corresponds to the Japanese meaning on your answer sheet.
2. ネズミ [*nezumi*] (m) [Answer: *mouse* (*mice*)]
Derivation Test (20 items)
Change the form of each English word below according to the part of speech provided in [ ]. Write only one word. Do not write words with *-ing* or *-ed*.
10. supporter [Verb: do the action of …] ( ) [*support(s)*]
Antonym Test (17 items)
Write one word that has the opposite meaning to the word presented.
6. start ( ) [Example answers: *end, finish, stop, termination*]
Collocation Test (18 items)
Write one English word that fits ( ) (a noun).
4. wash (a/an/the) ( ) [e.g., *dish(es), hand, mouth, car*]

Note. The instructions were written in Japanese and included examples.

In the size test, 78 words were randomly selected from the 3,000 most frequent lemmas in the JACET8000, a word list specifically tailored for Japanese learners of English (JACET Basic Word Revision Committee, 2003). In the derivation test, 20 derivational suffixes were selected. In the antonym and collocation tests, the words selected had at least one possible answer belonging to the 3,000 most frequent lemmas in the JACET8000.

The 15-minute, tape-mediated speaking test required test-takers to produce real-time monologues. They were not given pre-task planning time. The test included five tasks: a self-introduction task (Task 1), two tasks describing a single picture (Tasks 3 and 4), and two tasks explaining the differences between two pictures (Tasks 2 and 5).

3. Procedures and Analyses

Test-takers took four vocabulary tests in the following order: size, derivation, antonym, and collocation. The speaking test was conducted a week before or after administering the vocabulary tests.

The vocabulary tests were dichotomously scored. Scoring criteria were developed for the depth tests using seven dictionaries. In the antonym and collocation tests, responses that did not match the criteria—unless completely incorrect—were judged by three raters. The internal consistency of the three raters was moderate and considered acceptable (α = .65 for antonym; α = .63 for collocation). Responses on which the three raters disagreed were evaluated by two additional raters and were scored as correct when three of the five raters agreed. The five raters comprised three native English speakers and two Japanese advanced English learners. The reliability estimates of the four vocabulary tests were high (α = .73 to .92).

Utterances produced in the speaking test were transcribed for 45 seconds for each task, and then coded in terms of features such as the number of AS-units (Analysis of Speech units; Foster, Tonkyn, & Wigglesworth, 2000). With regard to the number of error-free clauses, one third of the utterances were evaluated by four raters (i.e., two native English speakers and two advanced English learners). The reliability was high overall (α = .88 to .93). After clarifying the judgment rule for errors, the remainder of the transcripts were judged by two raters (α = .92 to .98). Points of disagreement were discussed until a consensus was reached.

Study 1 conceptualized speaking proficiency as consisting of fluency, accuracy, and SC, each element of which was represented by aspects of performance that were measured through the five tasks. Fluency can be classified into three fluency dimensions (Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005): speed fluency (measured by, for example, speech rate), repair fluency (assessed according to indices of self-correction, repetition, false starts, and replacements), and breakdown fluency (evaluated by pause-related measures). We focused on speed and repair fluency, because of the poor conditions of our recordings, and on the assumption that our decision would not greatly affect our results, as previous studies have shown

that speed fluency is often closely associated with breakdown fluency, and that the two load on the same factor in factor analyses (e.g., Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005).

We used four discourse analytic measures: the number of tokens per minute for speed fluency (where "tokens" refers to pruned tokens after the exclusion of dysfluency markers); the number of dysfluency markers (i.e., functionless repetitions, self-repairs, and filled pauses, such as *mm*, *ah*) per minute for repair fluency; the number of error-free clauses per clause for accuracy; and the number of clauses per AS-unit for SC. We selected these four measures because they have been used often in previous research (e.g., Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005), and because they were highly correlated with other, similar measures.

To perform SEM analyses, we employed syntax for EQS (Version 6.1; Bentler, 2010) and Amos (Version 7.0.0; Arbuckle, 2006) for visual display. Based on Byrne (2006), we checked univariate and multivariate normality by examining whether the *z* scores of skewness and kurtosis values were within |3.30| ($p < .01$; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and whether Mardia's normalized estimate values were 5.00 or less (Byrne, 2006). To estimate model parameters, the robust maximum likelihood method was employed, because some of the variables were nonnormally distributed. One factor loading from each factor was fixed to 1.00 for scale identification. The following model fit indices were used: the comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.90 or above (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1995), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.08 or below, and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of .08 or below (Hu & Bentler, 1999). We had no missing data, and obtained a sufficient sample size for SEM, that is, over 200 (Kline, 2010). Descriptive statistics of scores and measure values shows that there were some variations in vocabulary and speaking measures. Results suggest that all the variables were correlated to some degree ($r = –.13$ to .80) and that there were no very high correlations (more than $r = |.90|$), which cause problems of multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

B. Results

To examine the structures of each factor, two models of vocabulary knowledge were tested (see Figure 1). In Model 1, the vocabulary knowledge factor subsumed size, derivation, antonym, and collocation. Model 2 had one depth factor, which was correlated with the observed variable of size. Both models were equally acceptable (e.g., CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.07 [90% confidence interval: 0.00, 0.07]; SRMR = .01) and statistically indistinguishable. The correlation in Model 2 between the depth factor and the size variable was very high ($r = .94$), suggesting that size and depth can be considered one construct. Thus, we selected Model 1. This strong association between size and depth is in line with previous research (e.g., Akbariana, 2010). The high factor loadings from the factor to each observed variable (β = .72 to .94) indicated that the four vocabulary test variables effectively assessed vocabulary knowledge.

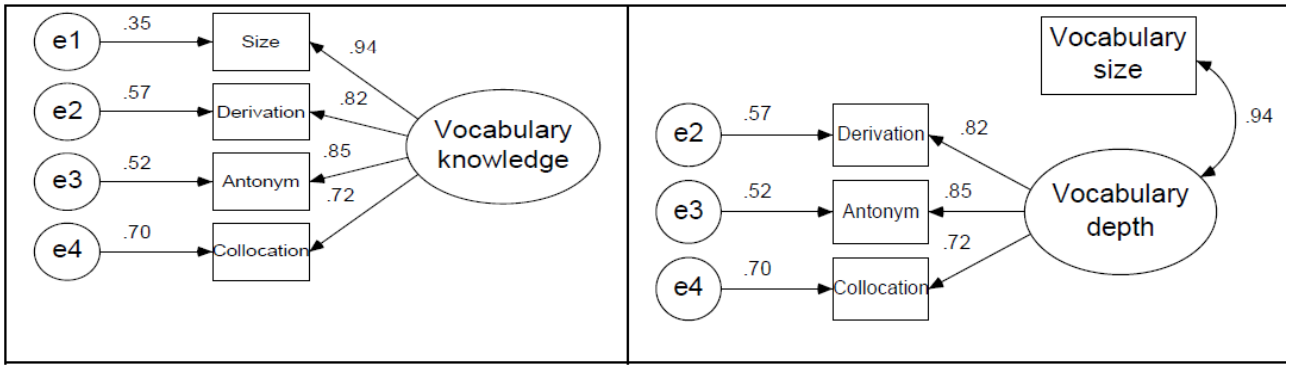


Figure 1. Model 1 (left): One-factor model of vocabulary knowledge. Model 2 (right): Size and depth model.

Regarding speaking proficiency, we tested a four-factor correlated model (Model 3), in which five observed task variables underlay four correlated factors representing the four aspects of speaking proficiency (i.e., speed fluency, repair fluency, accuracy, and SC). Model 3 fit the data well (e.g., CFI = .93; RMSEA = 0.05 [0.04, 0.06]; SRMR = .06). Other competing models did not fit the data well, such as one with a higher-order speaking proficiency factor represented by the four factors (e.g., CFI = .84; SRMR = .17) and another with a unitary speaking proficiency factor without any CAF factors (e.g., CFI = .73; SRMR = .10). In Model 3, there were substantial correlations between the four factors ($r = .35$ to .88), except for the relationship between repair fluency and accuracy ($r = .13$). Furthermore, we observed generally substantial factor loadings from each factor to each task variable (β = .40 to .88), with the exception of Task 2 Accuracy, Task 1 SC, and Task 3 SC (β = .20 to .30). This suggested that the factors of speed fluency, repair fluency, accuracy, and SC were, in general, effectively measured by the variables used.

Once the models of vocabulary knowledge (Model 1) and speaking proficiency (Model 3) had been found to fit the data, Model 4 (see Figure 2) was created to test the research question, in which (a) the vocabulary knowledge factor is hypothesized to predict the speed fluency, repair fluency, accuracy, and SC factors, and (b) there are hypothesized correlations between the measurement errors of four latent factors of speaking proficiency (represented by "D" in Figure 2), which can be interpreted as variances not explained by vocabulary knowledge. Hypothesizing correlations between the measurement errors was sensible because weak or moderate relationships between the four latent factors of

speaking proficiency (as found in Model 3) suggest the divisibility of the speaking components, with some of their variances unexplained by vocabulary knowledge. Model 4 showed the good fit (e.g., CFI = .95; RMSEA = 0.04 [0.03, 0.05]; SRMR = .06). An alternative model that is the same as Model 4 but without correlations between the errors did not fit the data well (e.g., SRMR = .10).

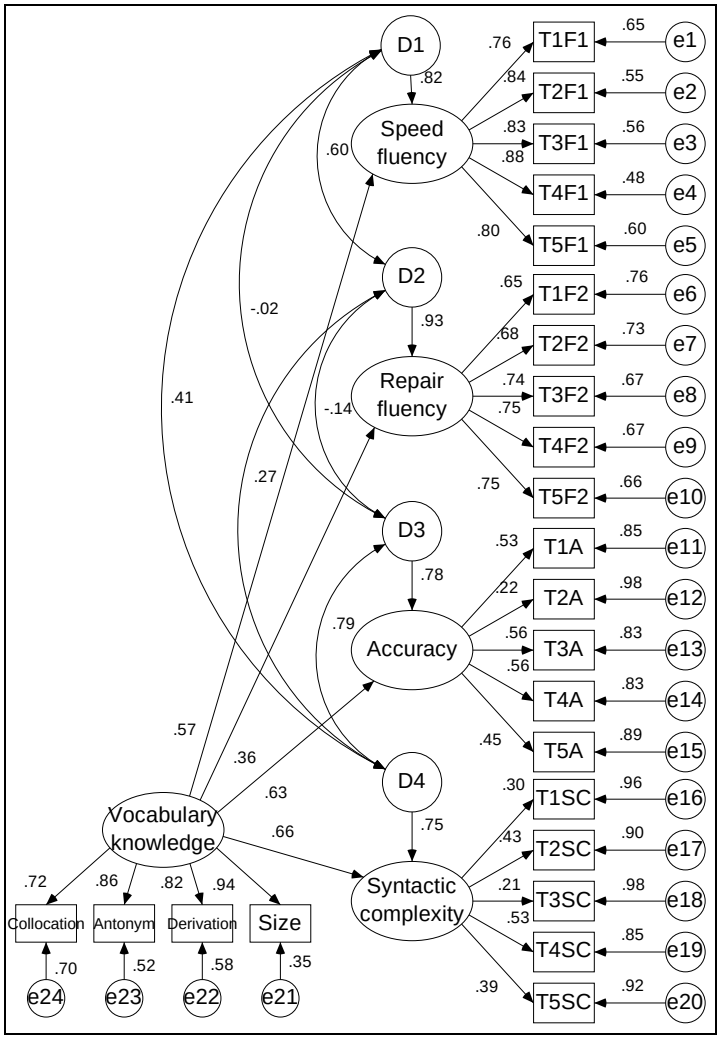


Figure 2. Model 4: Effects of vocabulary knowledge on speaking proficiency. All the testable path and correlation coefficients were significant, except for the correlation between "D1" and "D3" and between "D2" and "D3." F1 = Speed fluency. F2 = Repair fluency. A = Accuracy.

According to Model 4, vocabulary knowledge predicted aspects of speaking proficiency. It predicted speed fluency strongly (β = .57), explaining 32% of the speed fluency factor variance; repair fluency moderately (β = .36), with 13% explained; accuracy strongly (β = .63), with 40% explained; and SC strongly (β = .66), with 44% explained. Correlations between the errors varied from strong (i.e., *r* = .79, between errors of accuracy and SC), moderate (e.g., *r* = .60, between errors of speed fluency and repair fluency), to almost zero (e.g., *r* = –.02, between errors of speed fluency and accuracy). It should be remembered that these values suggest the strengths of relationships when other variables are held constant.

As for the relative contribution of size and depth, the following formula can be used to show the degree to which two variables are related: multiply the loadings of paths between the two variables. For example, the loading of the speed fluency factor, as predicted by the size variable, was β = .54, obtained by multiplying the loading from the vocabulary factor to the size variable (β = .94) by the loading from the vocabulary factor to the speed fluency factor (β = .57). The loading squared (.54*.54) indicates the proportion of the variance explained (29%; see Table 3). This means that the speed fluency factor was largely explained by size (29% out of 32%), with a small proportion (the remaining 3%) explained by other vocabulary variables. This trend applied for repair fluency (11% vs. 2%), accuracy (35% vs. 5%), and SC (38% vs. 6%) factors. Moreover, depth (derivation, antonym, and collocation) predicted similar proportions of variance of speaking proficiency, when it was considered first in the prediction (speed fluency: 17% to 24%; repair fluency: 7% to 10%; accuracy: 21% to 29%; SC: 23% to 32%).

The models used in Study 1 included size and depth variables. Study 2, meanwhile, added speed, in order to further examine the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency.

TABLE 3.
PROPORTIONS OF SPEAKING PROFICIENCY EXPLAINED BY VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE IN MODEL 4

Predicted variable	Predicted by	Vocabulary knowledge		Size		Deri-vation		Anto-nym		Collo-cation	
		β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2
Speed fluency		.57	.32	.54 (.94*.57)	.29 ((.54)^2)	.47	.22	.49	.24	.41	.17
Repair fluency		.36	.13	.34 (.94*.36)	.11 ((.34)^2)	.30	.09	.31	.10	.26	.07
Accuracy		.63	.40	.59 (.94*.63)	.35 ((.59)^2)	.52	.27	.54	.29	.45	.21
SC		.66	.44	.62 (.94*.66)	.38 ((.62)^2)	.54	.29	.57	.32	.48	.23

III. STUDY 2

A. Method

1. Participants

Study 2 analyzed 87 test-takers, who took three vocabulary tests and a speaking test, and who uttered at least one clause during an opinion-statement task (see below). All the participants were Japanese native speakers studying English, with 49 undergraduate (56%) and 38 graduate students, from 16 Japanese and 1 British university. There were 57 females (66%) and 24 males, with 72 English-majors (83%) and 15 non-English-majors (e.g., international relations). According to Pearson Education, Inc. (2008), 98% of the test-takers (n = 86) belonged to either novice or intermediate levels ("below A1" to B2), and one belonged to an advanced level (C1).

2. Instruments

Three computer-based vocabulary tests (Mochizuki et al., 2010; see Figure 3) and a telephone-based speaking test were used. One vocabulary test (JACET8000 Vocabulary Size Test; J8VST) aimed to assess size up to 5,000 lemma on the basis of the JACET8000. For each 1,000 lemma level, 25 words were randomly selected. This 125-item multiple-choice test required test-takers to select the L2 form that corresponded most closely to the L1 meaning provided. Each question included five options, one of which was labeled "I don't know," to reduce random guessing behavior.

A second vocabulary test, a Lexical Organisation Test (LOT; Flash Version), was designed to test lexical organization, or more specifically the strength of collocation, which was considered an aspect of depth in this study. Test-takers were asked to select the strongest collocation from three choices (e.g., *dark mouth*, *dark horse*, and *horse mouth*). Although all three combinations are possible, *dark horse* is the correct answer, since the two words are most strongly connected. The LOT contained 50 items. All the target word combinations were ones that native English speakers could usually identify by intuition but that L2 learners would have to learn. Each test item consisted of two collocations (identified by the Cobuild Collocation Sampler) and one two-word, non-collocation string. One of the two collocations became the answer on the basis of results indicating that at least 85% of 20 native English speakers agreed on a stronger connection between the two words. At least one word in the correct collocation belonged to the 1,000 most frequent lemmas in the JACET8000.

A third vocabulary test, a Lexical Access Time Test (LEXATT), was intended to assess how quickly test-takers could recognize word form and meaning. It consisted of two tasks for each of 40 items. First, reaction time was assessed by measuring the time from when a target word was presented until test-takers indicated that they recognized the form and meaning by releasing a pushed button. Second, test-takers selected one L1 meaning out of two options, corresponding to the L2 form they had seen. The second task aimed to ensure that they had actually understood the meaning of the L2 form. All the words presented had four letters and were selected from the 3,000 most frequent lemmas in the JACET8000. For the LOT and LEXATT, three and five practice items were presented, respectively, before the test.

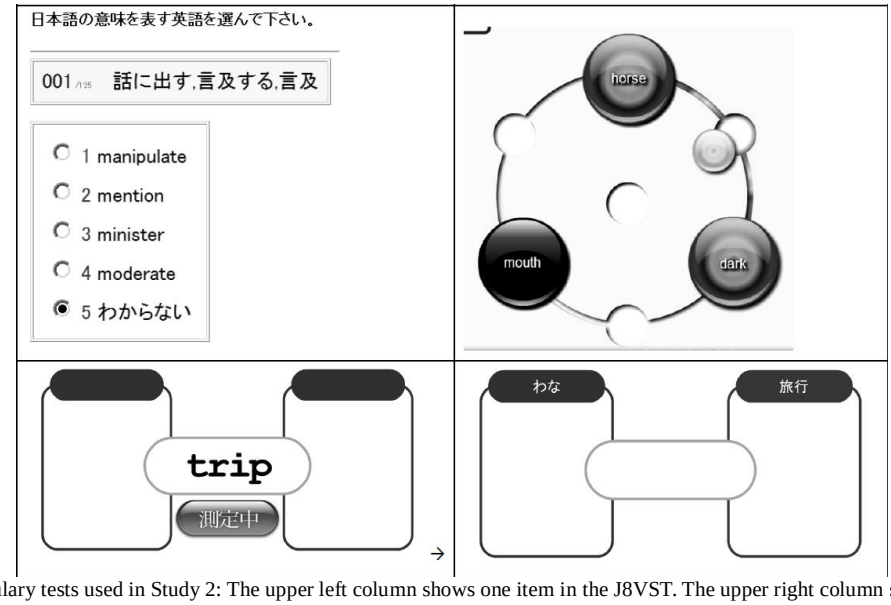


Figure 3. Vocabulary tests used in Study 2: The upper left column shows one item in the J8VST. The upper right column shows the LOT. The bottom left and right columns show the two tasks of the LEXATT.

In order to test speaking proficiency, the Versant™ English Test (Versant, hereafter; Pearson Education, Inc., 2008) was administered. This 15-minute, technology-mediated test included five tasks: (a) reading sentences aloud, (b) repeating sentences, (c) answering commonsensical questions with a few words, (d) reordering three blocks of phrases into an understandable sentence (e.g., test-takers hear "*was reading*," "*my mother*," and "*her favorite magazine*," and should respond, "*My mother was reading her favorite magazine.*"), and (e) stating opinions. For each task, test-takers both listened to questions and responded in English. Their responses were recorded, and scores were produced through an automated scoring system, on the basis of responses to the first four tasks. The Versant is designed to elicit "facility in spoken English" (Pearson Education, Inc., 2008, p. 7) and efficiency of processing spoken language, which is an essential aspect of speaking proficiency (Van Moere, 2012).

In Study 2, we used (a) the Versant Overall Score (ranging from 20 to 80), which was generated based on the first four tasks, and (b) the discourse analytic measures of speed fluency, repair fluency, accuracy, and SC, which were derived from utterances in the final task (opinion-statement). This task had an open-ended format, and required test-takers to listen to a prompt twice, before expressing their opinions regarding family life or personal choices for 40 seconds, without planning time. An example of the questions asked is, *Do you think television has had a positive or negative effect on family life? Please explain.* (Pearson Education, Inc., 2008, p. 6). While this task consisted of three prompts, we chose to analyze the second prompt only, for two reasons: First, some test-takers did not fully understand the format of the first prompt, and were unable to speak to the full extent; second, some test-takers, especially those with higher proficiency, tended to speak less in the third than in the second prompt, probably because they had grasped by this point how briefly they were required to speak. Hence, the second prompt elicited, on average, the longest and most varied speech.

For the second prompt, each test-taker responded to one of 48 questions presented in the Versant. Although the utterances did not seem to differ greatly, because of the similar nature of the topics, the fact that not all test-takers answered the same questions (e.g., student 1 answered question 1; student 2 answered question 3) may limit the generalizability of findings from Study 2.

3. Procedures and Analyses

Test-takers took three vocabulary tests in the following order: LEXATT, J8VST, and LOT. They also took the Versant within one month of the vocabulary tests. Before they took the Versant, they were instructed to read the instructions carefully and to practice the task formats by using the example questions.

The J8VST and LOT were scored dichotomously. For the LEXATT, the response time was analyzed only when test-takers selected the right answer in the second (meaning confirmation) task. The response time for each item was averaged; lower values for the LEXATT indicate a faster speed for recognition of word form and meaning. The internal consistency was high for both the J8VST (α = .96) and the LOT (α = .77), but could not be calculated for the LEXATT, on account of the lack of item level data.

After we had transcribed utterances for 40 seconds in the open-ended Versant task, we counted the number of occurrences of certain features (e.g., clauses). Two raters (Japanese advanced English learners) judged one-third of the utterances in terms of error-free clauses; interrater reliability was high (agreement ratio = .87; κ = .69, p < .001). We resolved rater disagreements through discussion, and then one rater judged the remainder of the transcripts. We computed four discourse analytic measures—the same as those used in Study 1—to assess speed fluency, repair fluency, accuracy, and SC.

In Study 2, we regard speaking proficiency as consisting of processing efficiency, speed fluency, repair fluency, accuracy, and SC, each of which was indicated by the Versant Overall Score and the four discourse analytic measures. While the Versant Overall Score is derived by using decontextualized tasks to elicit short, sentence-level utterances, the four discourse analytic measures were computed based on a contextualized task requiring topic-based, discourse-level performance. By using the two types of speaking tasks, we intended to capture wider areas of speaking proficiency. It is important to note that although the scores and utterances are based on integrated speaking tasks, and may reflect some degree of listening ability, we interpreted them purely in terms of speaking proficiency.

SEM was conducted in the same manner as in Study 1. Since univariate normality was and found to be violated, the robust maximum likelihood method was employed for estimation. The data included no missing values. The sample size was 87, which was smaller than the minimum sample size of 100 (Kline, 2010), but could be acceptable as judged by the power analysis we conducted. Power analysis of SEM models can provide evidence for whether the sample size is sufficient for a model to have adequate precision of parameter estimates and statistical power. This study applied Monte Carlo power analysis (Muthén & Muthén, 2002), using Mplus (Version 6.12; Muthén & Muthén, 2011). The results suggested that parameter bias, standard error bias, coverage, and power were all adequate. For example, Model 7 had a power of .94 to 1.00, which satisfied the criterion of .80 or above. Therefore, the sample size in Study 2 (n = 87) was considered to be satisfactory. We found moderate correlations between the variables (r = –.51 to .80), which were not high enough to cause problems of multicollinearity.

B. Results

We first constructed two models: One model expressed a vocabulary knowledge factor with three vocabulary variables (size, depth, and speed; Model 5), and the other a speaking proficiency factor, reflected by five speaking variables (processing efficiency, speed fluency, repair fluency, accuracy, and SC; Model 6). We were unable to test the appropriateness of Model 5, because it was just statistically identified (i.e., its degree of freedom was zero and we could not compute fit indices). Model 6 fit the data well (e.g., CFI = .99; RMSEA = 0.07 [0.00, 0.18]; SRMR = .05). We then constructed a model in which the vocabulary knowledge factor was hypothesized to predict the speaking proficiency factor (Model 7; see Figure 4). We adopted this model because of its good fit with the data (e.g., CFI = .97; RMSEA = 0.08 [0.00, 0.13]; SRMR = .06). The standardized regression coefficients (β) from the vocabulary factor to each vocabulary variable were substantial, ranging from –.58 to .87. The standardized regression coefficients (β) from the speaking proficiency factor to each speaking variable were also high, ranging from .43 to .91. This means that both vocabulary and speaking factors were measured well by the observed variables. One unexpected result was that the repair fluency variable loaded positively on the speaking proficiency factor (β = .43). Since this measure was computed by the number of *dysfluency markers* per minute, higher values indicated lower repair fluency. This result suggests that learners with higher speaking proficiency tend not only to speak faster, with more accurate and more syntactically complex sentences, but also to produce more filled pauses (e.g., *um*, *ah*) in the utterance, with *more* repetitions and self-repairs. This could be explained by the participants' limited proficiency, in that they were probably unable to avoid repairing their utterances while searching for and uttering words at rapid speed (Wood, 2010).

Table 4 shows that in Model 7, vocabulary knowledge predicted 84% of speaking proficiency, 70% of efficiency of processing spoken language, 64% of speed fluency, 16% of repair fluency, 20% of accuracy, and 21% of SC. Moreover, size was found to predict 63% of speaking proficiency when it was entered first into the regression equation, with 21% explained by depth and speed [84% – 63%]), 52% of processing efficiency, 48% of speed fluency, 12% of repair fluency, 15% of accuracy, and 15% of SC. Furthermore, depth predicted speaking similarly to size: 60% of speaking proficiency, 50% of processing efficiency, 46% of speed fluency, 11% of repair fluency, 14% of accuracy, and 15% of SC. In contrast, speed predicted speaking less than both size and depth: 28% of speaking proficiency, 23% of processing efficiency, 21% of speed fluency, 5% of repair fluency, 7% of accuracy, and 7% of SC.

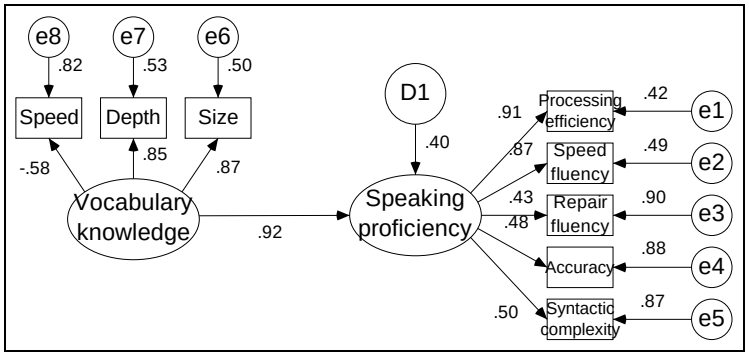


Figure 4. Model 7: Predicting speaking proficiency from vocabulary knowledge. All the testable path and coefficients were significant.

TABLE 4.
PROPORTIONS OF SPEAKING PROFICIENCY EXPLAINED BY VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE IN MODEL 7

Predictor variable	Predicted by	VK		Size		Depth		Speed	
		β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2
Speaking proficiency		.92	.84 ((.92)^2)	.79 (.87*.92)	.63	.78	.60	–.53	.28
Processing efficiency		.83 (.92*.91)	.70 ((.83)^2)	.72 (.87*.92*.91)	.52	.71	.50	–.48	.23
Speed fluency		.80 (.92*.87)	.64 ((.80)^2)	.69 (.87*.92*.87)	.48	.68	.46	–.46	.21
Repair fluency		.40 (.92*.43)	.16 ((.40)^2)	.34 (.87*.92*.43)	.12	.34	.11	–.23	.05
Accuracy		.44 (.92*.48)	.20 ((.44)^2)	.38 (.87*.92*.48)	.15	.37	.14	–.25	.07
SC		.45 (.92*.50)	.21 ((.45)^2)	.39 (.87*.92*.50)	.15	.38	.15	–.26	.07

IV. OVERALL DISCUSSION

In Studies 1 and 2, L2 vocabulary knowledge was generally found to substantially explain L2 speaking proficiency and its various aspects, with a constant exception being repair fluency. These results suggest that learners at novice and intermediate levels with greater vocabulary knowledge in terms of size, depth, and speed, are likely to have higher speaking proficiency, enabling them to produce more rapid, accurate, and syntactically complex oral performance. Furthermore, when other variables were held constant, size and depth could predict considerable amounts of the variances in speaking proficiency that were explained by vocabulary knowledge and speed could predict speaking proficiency less than size and depth.

The finding that L2 vocabulary knowledge considerably predicts L2 speaking proficiency generally accords with most previous studies of L2 speaking, especially the one previous study that has used SEM (De Jong et al., 2012). Moreover, the indication that size and depth almost equally predict L2 speaking proficiency, produced in both Study 1 and Study 2, corroborates previous research into L2 reading and listening (e.g., Stæhr, 2009). If we recall that both our studies used formats different from the WAT for assessing depth, it becomes clear that these consistent findings suggest greater generalizability regarding similarities of size and depth in predicting L2 proficiency.

The finding in Study 2, that speed explained L2 speaking less than size, was also in line with previous research into L2 speaking, reading, and writing (De Jong et al., 2012; Schoonen et al., 2003; Van Gelderen et al., 2004). However, no study, including the current one, has yet distinguished nonlanguage, general motor speed from L2 speed. Thus, measures of L2 lexical processing speed that partial out nonlanguage speed (see Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) would further clarify the relationship between L2 speed and speaking proficiency.

Furthermore, a large proportion of speaking proficiency being explained by size alone was consistent with previous studies on L2 speaking, reading, listening, and writing (e.g., Hilton, 2008). This indicates that size could be a powerful single predictor of L2 proficiency. The proportion of speaking proficiency explained by size in Study 2 (63%) was notably similar to the one in De Jong et al. (2012; 62%). Since both studies used SEM, with one speaking proficiency factor posed in the model and fairly consistent results obtained, this may suggest that the proportion of speaking proficiency predicted by size could be similar across both novice to intermediate learners, as in our study, and intermediate to advanced learners, as in De Jong et al. This seems to contradict Adams's (1980) relative contribution model, which predicts that vocabulary has a greater effect on speaking among lower-proficiency learners. In fact, De Jong et al. (2012) showed that the explanatory power of vocabulary knowledge was stronger among advanced rather than intermediate learners (43% vs. 34%, respectively) and that the same patterns were found for grammatical knowledge, speed of sentence building, and pronunciation. Our findings as well as those of De Jong et al. (2012) suggest the need to revise the relative contribution model on the basis of empirical speech production data.

Although the results of Studies 1 and 2 showed consistently that speaking proficiency was substantially predicted by vocabulary knowledge, size, and depth, some differences were observed. For example, speed fluency was predicted by vocabulary knowledge less in Study 1 (32%) than in Study 2 (64%), whereas the opposite trend was observed in terms of accuracy and SC (e.g., 40% vs. 20% regarding accuracy). However, these differences are difficult to explain, because the two studies differed in several aspects: the proficiency ranges of target learners (i.e., wider ranges in Study 2), the aspects of vocabulary knowledge assessed (i.e., size, derivation, antonym, and collocation in Study 1, vs. size, collocation, and speed in Study 2), and speaking tasks (e.g., simple speaking tasks related to familiar topics in Study 1 vs. more complex, cognitively demanding tasks that required test-takers to listen and respond to prompts in Study 2). Further studies with these variables controlled for would clarify the different predictive powers of vocabulary knowledge toward fluency, accuracy, and SC. Nevertheless, the consistency of the results of Studies 1 and 2, and of previous studies also, provides strong evidence for considerable relationships between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency.

The results from Study 1, Study 2, and previous studies (e.g., De Jong et al., 2012) suggest that vocabulary knowledge considerably contributes to speaking proficiency, including speed fluency, accuracy, and SC. This finding can be explained according to two different perspectives: proficiency and processing. First, learners who have higher overall L2 proficiency tend also to exhibit higher vocabulary knowledge and higher speaking proficiency. This allows them to produce faster, more accurate, and syntactically complex utterances. The second perspective can be explicated in terms of speaking models (Kormos, 2006; Levelt, 1989) and Skehan's (2009) theory. Skehan related fluency,

accuracy, and complexity of learner production to Levelt's speaking model, and argued that preverbal messages created at the conceptualizer stage affect complexity, and that operations at the formulator stage affect fluency and accuracy. He further explained that differences in speaking processes between native and nonnative speakers are partially attributed to the quantity and quality of vocabulary knowledge. The current study attempts to extend these frameworks, by explaining the relationships between vocabulary knowledge, fluency, accuracy, and SC.

Vocabulary knowledge and fluency may be associated with each other because L2 learners with larger and deeper vocabulary knowledge, and faster access to it, can perform lexical searches more easily and quickly. Learners with greater vocabulary knowledge can recall adequate words and use them for speaking through knowledge of antonyms and collocations (Aitchison, 2003). Consequently, processing will be smoother for them than for those with a smaller lexicon, although the speed of intermediate-level learners with greater vocabulary knowledge is still much slower than for high-proficiency learners, and their processing is far from automatic. On the other hand, learners with poorer vocabulary knowledge may not be able to find appropriate words, or may take longer to search for words at the formulation stage, resulting in reduced speed fluency.

The impact of vocabulary knowledge on accuracy and SC may be related to the ease of lexical searches. Since learners with larger and deeper vocabulary and faster lexical access can find words more easily, their cognitive resources, which are limited in terms of attentional capacity, remain available to attend to other areas, including processes in the conceptualizer and formulator. Cognitive processing space directed to the formulator enables speakers to produce more accurate utterances, while attention directed to the conceptualizer enhances SC. The latter scenario may require more explanation. Having some attentional resources available for areas other than lexical searches could possibly enable speakers to attempt to "formulate more complex ideas" (Skehan, 2009, p. 520), perhaps even prompting them to "repair for good language," or to monitor their language for "a more sophisticated manner of expression" (Kormos, 2006, p. 125). After comparing their capability to encode the language with the preverbal plan that they would like to express, they may create more complex preverbal messages, which are encoded in the formulator in more complex language. In contrast, those with smaller and less organized lexicons, and with slower access, tend to be occupied with retrieving appropriate words. Consequently, they may not be able to direct attention to speaking processes other than lexical retrieval (i.e., conceptualizing, formulating, articulating, and monitoring). This results in the production of less fluent, less accurate, and syntactically less complex utterances, and eventually of poorer speaking performance. This process highlights the importance of size, depth, and speed in speaking.

V. Conclusions

The research question concerned the extent to which L2 speaking proficiency is predicted by L2 vocabulary knowledge, size, depth, and speed, with a focus on Japanese learners of English at novice to intermediate levels. Across Studies 1 and 2, we found that speaking proficiency can be explained by vocabulary knowledge to a substantial degree (32% to 44% in Study 1, and 84% in Study 2), with the exception of for repair fluency (13% and 16%, respectively), and that a considerable degree of speaking proficiency can be explained by size alone (29% to 38%, and 63%, respectively) or by depth alone (17% to 32%, and 60%, respectively), and to a lesser degree by speed alone (28%). These results substantiate the importance of size, depth, and speed in speaking proficiency, and the effectiveness of size and depth, and of speed to a lesser degree, as predictors of speaking proficiency. Although this research showed that speaking proficiency could be effectively predicted by vocabulary knowledge, further experimental studies are necessary to examine whether enhancing vocabulary knowledge actually leads to an increase in speaking proficiency.

While this research presented evidence that vocabulary knowledge explains speaking proficiency, the results may be restricted to the design of the studies in this article, including the target learners, tests, and measures selected. Future research should include more aspects (e.g., ability to interact with interlocutors appropriately) and more measures (e.g., length of noun phrases and frequency of discourse markers, for SC measures).

The current study had four key strengths. First, rather than including a wide range of linguistic components hypothesized to affect speaking proficiency (like De Jong et al., 2012, in press), we focused on aspects of vocabulary knowledge as predictors, and separately assessed size, depth, and speed. This enabled us to investigate constructs of vocabulary knowledge in a more detailed manner. Second, we administered multiple tasks measuring distinctive aspects of speaking proficiency, reflected by fluency, accuracy, SC, and processing efficiency. Third, we modeled variables using SEM, while controlling for measurement error. Fourth, we targeted learners with a relatively wide range of proficiency, following the advice of De Jong et al. (2012), regarding the importance of including heterogeneous learner samples when constructing proficiency models.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by Grand-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan (No. 22720216 and 19320084), and Knowledge Technologies, Pearson. We are deeply indebted to Akihiko Mochizuki, Masamichi Mochizuki, Toshihiko Uemura, Kazumi Aizawa, Naoki Sugimori, Shin'ichiro Ishikawa, Tatsuo Iso, and Shin'ichi Shimizu for their invaluable comments on earlier versions of this paper.

REFERENCES

[1] Adams, M. L. (1980). Five coocurring factors in speaking proficiency. In J. R. Firth (Ed.), *Measuring spoken language proficiency* (pp. 1–6). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
[2] Aitchison, J. (2003). Words in the mind (3rd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
[3] Akbariana, I. (2010). The relationship between vocabulary size and depth for ESP/EAP learners. *System, 38,* 391–401. doi:10.1016/j.system.2010.06.013.
[4] Arbuckle, J. L. (2006). Amos (Version 7.0.0) [Computer software]. Spring House, PA: Amos Development Corporation.
[5] Arbuckle, J. L., & Wothke, W. (1995). Amos 4.0 user's guide. Chicago: SmallWaters Corporation.
[6] Bentler, P. M. (2010). EQS (Version 6.1) for Windows [Computer software]. Encino, CA: Multivariate Software.
[7] Byrne, B. M. (2006). Structural equation modeling with EQS (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
[8] De Jong, N. H., Steinel, M. P., Florijn, A. F., Schoonen, R., & Hulstijn J. H. (2012). Facets of speaking proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 34,* 5–34. doi: 10.1017/S0272263111000489.
[9] De Jong, N. H., Steinel, M. P., Florijn, A., Schoonen, R., & Hulstijn J. H. (in press). Linguistic skills and speaking fluency in a second language. *Applied Psycholinguistics.* doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0142716412000069.
[10] Foster, P., Tonkyn, A., & Wigglesworth, G. (2000). Measuring spoken language. *Applied Linguistics, 21,* 354–375. doi: 10.1093/applin/21.3.354.
[11] Funato, S., & Ito, H. (2008). An empirical study on basic requirements for Japanese EFL learners to achieve oral fluency in English. *Annual Review of English Language Education in Japan, 19,* 41–50.
[12] Hilton, H. (2008). The link between vocabulary knowledge and spoken L2 fluency. *Language Learning Journal, 36,* 153–166. doi: 10.1080/09571730802389983.
[13] Housen, A., & Kuiken, F. (2009). Complexity, accuracy, and fluency in second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics, 30,* 461–473. doi: 10.1093/applin/amp048.
[14] Hu, L.-T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6,* 1–55. doi: 10.1080/10705519909540118.
[15] Ishizuka, H. (2000). Goichishikino fukasato speakingnouryokuno soukan [Correlations between depth of vocabulary knowledge and speaking ability]. *STEP Bulletin, 12,* 13–25.
[16] Japan Association of College English Teachers. (JACET). Basic Word Revision Committee. (Ed.). (2003). *JACET List of 8000 Basic Words.* Tokyo: Author.
[17] Kline, R. B. (2010). Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
[18] Koizumi, R. (2005). Predicting speaking ability from vocabulary knowledge. *JLTA Journal, 7,* 1–20.
[19] Koizumi, R., & In'nami, Y. (2012). Effects of text length on lexical diversity measures. *System, 40,* 522–532. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2012.10.017.
[20] Kormos, J. (2006). Speech production and second language acquisition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
[21] Laufer, B., Elder, C., Hill, K., & Congdon, P. (2004). Size and strength. *Language Testing, 21,* 202–226.
[22] Levelt, W. J. M. (1989). Speaking. MA: MIT Press.
[23] Meara, P. (2005). Designing vocabulary tests for English, Spanish, and other languages. In C. S. Butler, M. Á. Gómez-González, & S. M. Doval-Suárez (Eds.), *The dynamics of language use* (pp. 271–285). Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
[24] Milton, J., Wade, J., & Hopkins, N. (2010). Aural word recognition and oral competence in a foreign language. In R. Chacón-Beltrán, C. Abello-Contesse, & M. D. M. Torreblanca-López (Eds.), *Insights into non-native vocabulary teaching and learning* (pp. 83–98). Bristol, U.K: Multilingual Matters.
[25] Mochizuki, M., Murata, M., Uemura, T., Aizawa, K., Tono, Y., Sugimori, N., Shimizu, S. (2010). Ginobetsuoyobi sogotekieigoryokuwo suiteisuru goitestnokaihatsu [Development of a vocabulary test battery estimating English skills and proficiency]. Report of the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B)(2007-2009), Supported by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Project No. 19320084.
[26] Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2002). How to use a Monte Carlo study to decide on sample size and determine power. *Structural Equation Modeling, 9,* 599–620. doi: 10.1207/S15328007SEM0904_8.
[27] Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2011). Mplus (Version 6.12) [Computer software]. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
[28] Pearson Education, Inc. (2008). Versant™ English Test.
[29] http://www.versanttest.com/technology/VersantEnglishTestValidation.pdf (accessed 1/12/2012).
[30] Qian, D. (2002). Investigating the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and academic reading performance. *Language Learning, 52,* 513–536. doi: 10.1111/1467-9922.00193.
[31] Qian, D., & Schedl, M. (2004). Evaluation of an in-depth vocabulary knowledge for assessing reading performance. *Language Testing, 21,* 28–52. doi:10.1191/0265532204lt273oa.
[32] Read, J. (1993). The development of a new measure of L2 vocabulary knowledge. *Language Testing, 10,* 355–371. doi:10.1177/026553229301000308.
[33] Schmitt, N. (2010). Researching vocabulary. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
[34] Schmitt, N. (2012, March). Size and depth of vocabulary. Paper presented at the American Association of Applied Linguistics 2012, Boston, MA, U.S.
[35] Schoonen, R., van Gelderen, A., de Glopper, K., Hulstijn, J., Simis, A., Snellings, P., & Stevenson, M. (2003). First language and second language writing. *Language Learning, 53,* 165–202. doi: 10.1111/1467-9922.00213.
[36] Segalowitz, N., & Freed, B. F. (2004). Context, contact, and cognition in oral fluency acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 26,* 173–199. doi: 10.1017/S0272263104262027.
[37] Skehan, P. (2009). Modeling second language performance. *Applied Linguistics, 30,* 510–532. doi: 10.1093/applin/amp047.
[38] Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP). (2012). Investigating the relationship of the EIKEN tests with the CEFR. http://stepeiken.org/research (accessed 1/12/2012).

[39] Stæhr, L. S. (2009). Vocabulary knowledge and advanced listening comprehension in English as a foreign language. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 31,* 577–607. doi:10.1017/S0272263109990039.
[40] Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). Using multivariate statistics (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
[41] Tavakoli, P., & Skehan, P. (2005). Strategic planning, task structure, and performance testing. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Planning and task performance in a second language* (pp. 238–273). Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
[42] Uenishi, K. (2006). Nihonjin eigogakushushano speakingryoku nikansuru jisshotekikenkyu [An empirical study regarding speaking ability of Japanese learners of English]. Eigo to eigo kyouiku tokubetsugo [English and English Language Education (Special ed.): Ozasa Toshiaki's retirement festschrift] (pp. 135–144). Hiroshima University.
[43] Van Gelderen, A., Schoonen, R., De Glopper, K., Hulstijn, J., Simis, A., Snellings, P., & Stevenson, M. (2004). Linguistic knowledge, processing speed and metacognitive knowledge in first and second language reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 96,* 19–30. doi: 10.1037/0022-0663.96.1.19.
[44] Van Moere, A. (2012). A Psycholinguistic Approach to Oral Language Assessment. *Language Testing, 29,* 325–344. doi: 10.1177/0265532211424478.
[45] Wood, D. (2010). Formulaic language and second language speech fluency. London, England: Continuum.

Rie Koizumi, Ph.D. (Linguistics, University of Tsukuba), is an Associate Professor at Juntendo University, Japan. She is interested in modeling factor structures of language ability and performance. Her website has supplementary materials for this article (http://www7b.biglobe.ne.jp/~koizumi/Koizumi_research.html).

Yo In'nami, Ph.D. (Linguistics, University of Tsukuba), is an Associate Professor of English at Shibaura Institute of Technology, Japan. He is interested in meta-analytic inquiry into the variability of effects and the longitudinal measurement of change in language proficiency.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 914-923, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.914-923

An Evaluation on a Team Teaching by University Students and Lecturers in Australia

Sook Hee (Susan) Lee
Faculty of Business, Charles Sturt University Study Centre (CSUSC), Darlinghurst, New South Wales, Australia

***Abstract*—This paper documents the results of an evaluation of 'Team Teaching' as an intervention strategy for international students enrolled in a university-level business course in Australia. The team teaching examined here aims to assist students with the successful completion of two assessment tasks: an argumentative/persuasive essay and a business report. Teaching was focused on structure, key language aspects and referencing. A survey was conducted of lecturers and students both at undergraduate and Master levels from six classes to identify their perceptions and to measure the evaluations of team teaching including that of the team teacher. Results show that both students and lecturers displayed positive attitudes towards the team teacher and the team teaching itself. While Master students displayed a less receptive attitude towards the content of team teaching than undergraduate students, they showed a positive attitude to the team teacher's expertise at a similar degree to the undergraduate students. While students and lecturers alike perceive many benefits in developing academic writing skills, some issues associated with team teaching have been identified and a few strategic measures are recommended.**

***Index Terms*—student and lecturer perceptions on team teaching, assessment tasks, intervention strategy, academic literacy, international students in Australia**

I. Introduction

It has been well documented that even if international students gain entry to Western academic universities legitimately by fulfilling the normal English language requirements, they encounter enormous problems doing their assignments (Barthel, 2008, 2012; Bayliss & Ingram, 2006). Their poor language proficiency can result in frustration for content-area teachers (Stewart & Perry, 2005). This has happened at a university in Sydney. The university offers business related-courses such as IT, Management, Accounting, and Business Law to mostly international students both at a undergraduate and postgraduate level. A general consensus has thus been reached among academic staff and the management at the university is that it is imperative to integrate effective English language programs such as team teaching into the subject pedagogy for the students. The underlying thrust of team teaching is to embed English language learning into discipline-specific courses.

While definitions of team teaching vary depending on context (Robinson & Schaible, 1995; Goetz, 2000; Sandholtz, 2000; Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001; CLIL-AXIS, 2004), in general, team teaching refers to a method where two or more instructors work together over planning, teaching/conducting/delivering and evaluating the learning activities for the same students at the same time for instructional purposes in a particular subject or combination of subjects (Buckley, 2000; Bess, 2000; Hwag, Hemandez & Vrongistions, 2002; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Dudley-Evans (2001, p. 266) developed a framework for defining team teaching in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context. She categorised three levels of interaction: *cooperation, collaboration* and *team teaching*, depending on the extent of the cooperative relationship and various types of cooperation that the EAP teachers can have with subject specialists. Cooperation refers here to a low level of cooperation where the EAP teacher consults the subject-specialist informant about aspects of the content or where the subject specialist consults the EAP teacher on language, writing skills or teaching-related questions. Collaboration occurs when the language teacher and the subject teacher work outside the classroom to devise materials together. Team teaching involves both teachers working together in the same classroom (Dudley-Evans, 2001).

Previous studies on the evaluation of team teaching in a language context have been conducted in two main settings: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). Much previous research on team teaching has been conducted in an EFL context indicating both negative and positive effects (e.g. Coonan, 2003; Hasegawa; 2008; Igawa, 2009). Team teaching in EFL is typically delivered bilingually. With the growing popularity of what is called 'content-based language teaching' (CBLT), team teaching has been thriving in non-English speaking countries such as Japan (e.g. McConnell, 2000; Stewart & Perry, 2005; Hasegawa, 2008; Igawa, 2009), and Hong Kong by combining L1 with L2 (e.g. Benoit & Haugh, 2001). European countries also utilise, 'content and language-integrated learning' (CLIL) where content is taught by both the L1 content teacher and the L2 native English speaker (language expert) (CLIL-AXIS, 2004).

In an ESL context, a small number of studies on team teaching seem to be conducted. For example, a course at the University of Birmingham in the UK has been taught by a content specialist, and a separate tutorial for dealing with problematic language is directly linked to it and led by a language teacher (Dudley-Evans, 2001). In an ESP field,

Northcott and Brown (2006) explored how a high degree of cooperation between the subject specialist and the English for Legal Purposes teacher can make a contribution to a very specific training need, in their case to assist legislative translation teams from Central and Eastern European countries involved in European integration related translation activities.

Despite the abundance of previous research on the effect of team teaching in various subjects and language areas of other countries, few studies have explored how team teaching is carried out and perceived by ESL students in Australia. The contributing factors for the lack of team teaching in the Australian context may be because of the lack of funding or local institutional structures. Nevertheless, some previous studies report students' positive evaluations of team teaching, highlighting several advantages (e.g. Hinton & Downing,1998; Buckley, 2000; Helms, Alvis & Willis, 2005; Yanamandram & Noble, 2006) even if some negative feelings of frustration and confusion have also been reported (Buckley, 2000; Goetz, 2000; Helms et al., 2005). However, as Joseph and White (2006, p.1) claim, 'team teaching across disciplines at Australian universities is rare'.

Further, few studies have focused on identifying both academic staff and ESL student perceptions of team teaching delivered by two different experts, one from the 'language' and one from the 'content' area. Most studies on the perceptions of team teaching in Australian tertiary contexts have been carried out on either content- or subject- related team teaching members rather than on a mixture of language and content teachers. For instance, Yanamandram and Noble (2006) examined student experiences and perceptions of team teaching of a large class of undergraduate marketing students at a regional Australian university. Six to ten subject- related teachers were involved in an effort to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the team teaching approach. The results reveal that the majority of the students like the concept of team teaching although it can hinder students' learning if a team fails to act as a cohesive unit and work together to adequately link learning concepts. Another example is seen in the research carried out by Joseph and White (2006). They examined the team teaching experience of two teacher educators at Deakin University who shared a 'deep subject–specific knowledge' in teaching two areas such as music and literacy in the Bachelor of Teaching degree. The study found that their team teaching experience provided the two teacher educators with the opportunity to jointly take on the responsibility for content, delivery and assessment. The teaching enabled both students and the educators to find a fun and a challenging way to link literacy and music and to make social connections (p, 174).

The present paper identifies the evaluations and perceptions of both ESL students at a undergraduate and postgraduate level and teaching staff at a university in Sydney, to evaluate both the team teaching and team teacher in terms of teaching academic writing skills. The team teaching was conducted by various subject lecturers and a study support coordinator who was then the team teacher (and the author). The teaching framework utilised by the team teacher was based on an Australian genre-based approach formulated within a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) orientation.

II. Nature and Process of Team Teaching in this Report

The nature of team teaching utilised at the university in Sydney is slightly different from the conventional models of team teaching. Team teaching (hereafter TTg) usually occurs when both the lecturer and the study support coordinator (hereafter team teacher: TTr) work with the same groups of students at the same time. However, here the teaching is planned and delivered quite independently at other times. The main content is delivered by lecturers during normal teaching hours and the language component is taught by the TTr during tutorials. Lecturers are present during the tutorials, supervising students' behaviour, inputting and reinforcing points pertaining to assessment tasks. Quite a 'weak end model' of TTg (Yanamandram & Noble, 2006, p. 51) is thus employed at the university in terms of the degree of collaboration, integration between team members and the level of engagement between the TTg and the students in the teaching and learning process. Strictly speaking, the nature of the TTg is 'cooperation' rather than 'co-teaching'.

Prior to team teaching (TTg), lecturers and the team teacher (TTr) briefly discuss and negotiate the time and the nature of assignments described in the course outline. The TTr prepares lessons such as analysing essay questions and organising teaching materials, then designs teaching derived from a SFL framework to help produce critical essays or reports including referencing. The framework enables the TTr to deconstruct the assessment tasks in terms of three aspects of aid or teaching: 'contextual' (i.e. the nature of audience, genre, purpose, and subject matter of the assignment), 'textual' (i.e. structure and the language of the assignment), and 'intertextual' (in-text and end-of-text referencing according to the APA system) (see details Lee, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). Finally, TTr delivers the material during tutorials while lecturers are present. Although lecturers can provide input with regard to the content and formats of the assignments, mostly they do not intervene, but simply listen to the TTr.

TTg is carried out in 2-3 sessions per semester for approximately an hour each session. Students are usually required to do two main assignments per subject. It is ideal to conduct the TTg two weeks prior to the due date of submission. The teaching targets subjects that rely heavily on typical essay and report formats of assessment tasks and also those which display a high failure rate. In particular, lecturers who teach the subject for the first time are encouraged to be involved in team teaching as they may be experts in their academic disciplines but not all lecturers seem to know about the linguistic needs of the ESL students enrolled in their courses. TTg is organised by either lecturers' or the team teacher's initiations. Finally, 'evaluations' on the TTg are carried out with lecturers using a survey to measure the results (see Appendix 1).

III. METHODOLOGY

As presented in Table 1, data were collected from 6 classes throughout the three semesters. A total of 127 students (93 undergraduate students and 34 postgraduate students) participated in the survey. Four lecturers were involved in the team teaching; Lecturer A for MGT 100; lecturer B for ITC 331, and 475; lecturer C for ITC 240 and 540 and lecturer D for MGT 230. The assessment tasks required using two main genres: a business report and a persuasive essay.

TABLE 1:
INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS AND THE NATURE OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Time	Subject code and name	Cohort of students	Assessment tasks (weighting)
The first semester, 2009 Lecturer A	MGT 100 Organisation and Management	21 UG (BAC)	A case study report Assessment 2 (35%) 3000 words
Lecturer B	ITC 331 Security Privacy and Ethics	27 UG (BIT)	A persuasive essay: Discussion Assessment 2 (25%) 2000 words
	ITC 475 Ethics and Information Technology	15 PG (MIT)	A persuasive essay: Problem- Solution Assessment 2 (30%) 1500 words
The second semester, 2009 Lecturer C	ITC 240 ITC Infrastructure Management	20 UG (BIT)	Report writing Assessment 2 (20%) 2000 words
	ITC 540 ITC Infrastructure Management	19 PG (MIT)	Report writing Assessment 2 (20 %) 2000 words
The first semester, 2010 Lecturer D	MGT 230 Ethics, Sustainability and culture	25 UG (BBS)	A persuasive essay: opinion Assessment 2 (20%) 2000 words
Total	6 classes	127	

The survey questionnaires were constructed and further refined and amended by the team teacher (see Appendix A). The survey consisted of two parts: The first was designed to identify demographic information such as gender, age, country of origin, major, and length of English education in both the students' country of origin and in Australia. The classes were male dominated, as respondents were 103 male and 24 female international students aged between 20-25 years. The postgraduate class had a much older demographic than the undergraduate class. The majority of students were from Nepal, India, and Vietnam, SriLanka, and China. Others were from the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Russia, Lebanon, South Korea and Indonesia. Most students were majoring in Accounting, IT and Business areas. An average length of study at CSUSC is one and a half years. The length of English education received back in their own country averaged six (6) years. After arrival in Australia, on average, students spent one year and three months learning English. Of the 34 Master students, 20 did not have any experience learning English in Australia, indicating that most Master students gained direct entry to CSUSC.

The second comprised three sections. The first aimed to identify student perceptions of the content of team teaching and contained 14 closed questions in relation to the degrees of improvement in contextual (Qs 1, 2); textual (Qs 3-8) and intertextual knowledge (Qs 11-14) along with overall perceived impressions on team teaching (Qs 9, 10). The second consisted of 8 questions designed to evaluate the manner of team teacher comprised of attitude towards students (Qs 1-3, 7), the appropriateness of delivering lessons (Qs 4, 5, 6) and the expertise of the teacher (Q 7). The response scale for the first and second sections was based on the 'Likert' scale containing five items with respect to the degree of agreement or disagreement. Participants were asked to indicate: Strongly Agree (1); Agree (2); Neutral (3); Disagree (4); and Strongly Disagree (5). The lower the number chosen, the more positive an attitude they showed. The third section comprised 5 open questions focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the team teaching and inviting suggestions. The survey questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

The survey was also conducted among the lecturers. The first part was the demographic survey which included disciplinary areas in which they taught during the study, the name of subject taught, the length of employment at CSUSC, the length of teaching experience at tertiary level and the type of employment (full time, casual). The second part also contained three sections with identical questions to those asked of the students, differing only in the third section, which consisted of 9 open questions. In that section, the questions were the same as those asked of the students (Qs 5-9). Lecturers were also asked about the perceived importance of team teaching (Qs 1), the differences between the classes or assignments taught by team teaching and the classes or assignments with no team teaching (Qs 2), the differences between the quality of student essays pre- and post- team teaching (Qs 3), and the degree of benefit that the lecturers gained from team teaching (Qs 4). Lecturers were also interviewed by the team teacher using open questions and the results were transcribed for the analysis.

After ethic approvals from the faculty, data were collected throughout three semesters with permission from the lecturers and students. The survey of students was conducted shortly after team teaching. The survey of lecturers was conducted after the final marking of students' assessments. Data from sections 1 and 2 were collated using MS Excel

and an overall average of mean scores was calculated to find any noticeable differences between sections, across and within the three approaches of contextual, textual, and intertextual as well as among the six classes. Regarding the open questions in section 3, thematic analysis of the data was manually carried out to categorise frequently recurring themes and words that students used and also to identify relationships among the categories.

IV. Student Perceptions

A. *Perceptions of the Content of Team Teaching (Section 1)*

As seen in Table 2, results indicate that student perceptions of the content of team teaching (TTg) and the team teacher (TTr) were quite positive in that a majority of students agreed with the questions (Average Mean (AM) score 1.9). Students evaluated the TTr's manner of delivering the teaching (AM 1.7) much higher than the content (AM 2.0). Students benefited most in gaining intertextual knowledge through TTg (AM 1.8) compared to other aspects of knowledge such as contextual (AM 2.0) and textual knowledge (AM 2.1). Students also expressed quite high degrees of satisfaction about overall TTg in that it helped boost their confidence about writing a report or a persuasive essay (AM 2.2) and helped to prepare them to do their assignments (AM 2.1). Among the six classes, ITC 331 undergraduate students were the most receptive towards TTg (AM=1.6), followed by ITC 240 (AM 1.9) and MGT230 (AM 1.9). Undergraduate students showed much higher satisfaction ratings (AM 1.9 = 2.0+1.8+1.9+ 1.9/4) compared to postgraduate students (AM 2.2 = 2.3+2.0/2) (see Table 2).

TABLE 2:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEAM TEACHING AND THE TEACHER

	Student perceptions on the content of team teaching	Student perceptions on the team teacher	Average
MGT 100 (UG): 21	2.0	1.9	2.0
ITC 331 (UG): 27:	1.8	1.4	1.6
ITC 240 (UG): 15	1.9	1.8	1.9
MGT 230 (UG): 20	1.9	1.8	1.9
ITC 540 (PG): 19	2.0	1.8	1.9
ITC 475 (PG): 25	2.3	1.7	2.0
Total: 127	Average 2.0	Average 1.7	Average 1.9

The greatest differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students can be found in the areas of giving confidence (UG1.9 vs. PG 2.7), helping to avoid plagiarism (UG1.8 vs. PG 2.4), audience awareness (1.9 vs. 2.4) and location of evidence in relation to overall structure (1.9 vs. 2.3). These differences arose because Master students agreed less that TTg helps to boost their confidence in writing their assignments (2.7) along with referencing (2.4) and report structure (2.3).

B. *Student Evaluations of the Team Teacher (Section 2)*

Students were overall very satisfied with the manner in which the team teaching (TTg) was delivered (AM 1.7). In particular, students most strongly agreed that the team teacher (TTr) seems to have professional knowledge (AM 1.4). The students believed that the TTr was well prepared for classes (AM 1.6). Students agreed less that the teacher presented the lessons clearly (AM 1.8) and made the lesson interesting (AM 1.8). The most noticeable result was that although Master students were the least receptive to the content of TTg, they displayed a significantly different attitude towards the TTr (PG AM 1.75= 1.7+1.8/2) indicating a similar degree of satisfaction as undergraduate students (UG AM 1.7=1.9+1.4+1.8+1.8/4) (see Table 2). The result that Master students are less receptive to the content but have a strong positive attitude towards the TTr can be interpreted in several ways. It is possible that, being older students, they are less receptive to acquiring new knowledge due to fossilization effect (Han, 2004). The fact that many Master students received English education only in their birth country indicates they are not well scaffolded for learning higher levels of language skills such as paraphrasing skills including referencing. They are deprived of being exposed to English preparatory courses in Australia. Further, as team teaching in this context is quite intensively condensed in terms of content, it requires high levels of assumed knowledge about essay writing skills Therefore, there is a possibility that the Master students were not well prepared to receive TTg and yet they are very novel about the pedagogy. This result is consistent with the course lecturer B's comments on the Masters' class. This lecturer mentioned that this class (ITC 475) was the least enthusiastic class that he has ever had. Although they are Master students, their levels of English and attitudes are far behind the undergraduate class. Again, the reason for this may be attributable to the big gap between the Master students' linguistic and rhetorical knowledge and the requirements of assignments. In other words, while lecturers have high expectations towards Master students, the students do not seem to be willing to acquire the skills necessary to fulfil these expectations.

C. Analysis of Open Questions (Section 3)

Hundred students responded to the open questions. Regarding Q 1which inquiries into their general feelings or challenges about the style of essay writing in Australia compared to their own countries, the most frequent answers included: being 'different' in terms of references, structure, formality, 'difficult', and 'challenging' relating to requiring more knowledge, ideas and learning. However, a number of students said that there seemed to be no differences between essay writing in English and their own countries but commented that the referencing is very different. The former is possible because quite a large number of students (64%) at the university are 'pathway' students who have already studied in institutions such as colleges and Technical and Further Education) (TAFE) in Australia which use English as a medium for instruction before enrolling at the university. The major differences and difficulties are attributable to referencing, structure, grammar and vocabulary, technicality or formality. Lecturers' high expectations are also seen as a minor contributor to their perceived differences. The response is consistent with the Likert-scale results that students received most benefits in the learning of referencing through team teaching. This confirms that a major concern for students is referencing alongside plagiarism because the referencing system is quite novel to the students. The following response from a student reflects the main difference between Australia and the student's native language in terms of referencing:

Essay writing is quite challenging here in Australia. Referencing is not really recommended in our country. But it is a major part which I have learned here (A student from ITC 475).

Students' perceived team teaching as assisting them to gain not only practical skills but also cognitive and social benefits. A majority of students answered that team teaching helped them to improve their skills practically and increased their writing skills. Answers are indicated in Table 3.

TABLE 3:
STUDENTS' PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF TEAM TEACHING

Reasons for benefits	Number
learn about "proper formats" of report and essay writing	(19)
"Referencing"	(13)
"improve writing skills and style" so that they can write essays more "easily" and "efficiently"	(12)
"understand better, clearly, and more thoroughly"	(10)
"gain in-depth knowledge" and a better idea about essay writing.	(8)
"learn different ways" of writing essays ,	(9)
learn "new" things about essay writing.	(9)
facilitates "interaction and group discussion"	(6)
"share their views and opinions"	(4)
"having fun" and encouragement.	(4)
Others	(6)
Total	(100)

The frequency of comments on learning new and different ways of writing essays implies that the team teacher's ways of teaching make good sense to these students in understanding and interpreting the nature of assessment tasks and how the tasks are addressed. Other benefits include learning better collectively, gaining maximum marks, building confidence, and identifying negative aspects of their writing problems, etc. Only one student said team teaching was "nothing more than making me confused with report writing and references".

The students' positive attitude toward TTg is supported by empirical data. MGT 230 can be taken as an example to demonstrate this claim. The course requires doing two main assignments: assessment 1 (Hereafter Ass 1) and assessment 2 (Ass 2). TTg was conducted on the Ass 2 only. Most students showed marked improvement in their assignments an average of 6 marks more than their score on Ass 1 (on average 58) for Ass 2 (on average 64). While acknowledging that many factors contributed to this increase, it is inferred that if TTg had not been offered, some students might have received fail marks. It is clear that those who utilised TTg improved a great deal but those who did not, tended to receive similar marks or reduced marks. After TTg, students were strongly encouraged to receive individual consultations by the lecturer. Along with TTg, those students who received individual consultations show remarkable improvement in their Ass 2, showing 14 marks difference on average (Ass 1, 52 vs. Ass 2, 66). Individual consultations are available by booking from the students who wish to have the drafts of their assignments checked by the team teacher before submission. Most students end up receiving at least two sessions to be able to produce a quality of their assignments at a presentable level.

With regard to the problems with TTg, although a large number of students (29) said they "could not find any problems" and it is "satisfactory", "interesting" and "fun", some weaknesses were identified with team teaching. Students' perceived weaknesses of team teaching include the "lack of attention to the individual needs" according to their levels, the classes being "noisy" and "distractive" because of "too many people" in the class and being "too lengthy", "without breaks". It also includes "being given too much knowledge at one time", "not enough time" and "resources" and students' having "little chance to make contributions". A couple of students note "understanding the team teacher's language" including communication problems in dealing with students from different cultures. Commonalities among the weaknesses seem to be associated with the teaching intensity due to time constraints.

Suggestions by students align with the limitations of TTg. While many students (15) expressed their views that team teaching was "satisfactory" with "overall a good learning experience", some specific suggestions were made. These include conducting team teaching more "frequently", "on a regular basis", "continuously" and with a shorter duration (25). Some students stated this quite strongly saying, "it should be compulsory for students to attend at least one class about essay writing" by "forcing students to attend the class". Similarly, they should receive more detailed knowledge by attending writing workshops. The second most frequent suggestion was "to divide the class into small groups" to "avoid unattentive students", to "share information", and to meet "students' individual needs" and levels (19). The next most frequent suggestion was that "more practice" is needed through "exercise", and "examples". Also more "handouts", "visual aids", "charts", "laptop videos", "more detailed line upon line concepts" (4) should be given and used to "help them to understand clearly" (3).

V. Lecturers' Perceptions

Two lecturers out of the four responded. They are from MGT100 (lecturer A) and ITC 331 (lecturer B) who taught in the first semester. Both are Australian native speakers of English. While A's length of employment at CSUSC is 2 years, B has more than 10 years. The findings were very similar to those in relation to students. Regarding the content of team teaching, overall the teachers' perceptions were much more positive than the students (1.1). A was more positive (1.0) than B (1.1).The lecturer A agreed strongly to all questions except one. B also showed a very positive attitude to most major questions but a slight reservation was made regarding questions 1, 2, 3, in section 2 which are all related to the contextual knowledge of essay writing. Both of them gave a most positive response towards the team teacher (1.0). A limitation which must be considered is the fact that the researcher/team teacher was involved in the team teaching project under examination and subsequently the conduct of the survey. Therefore, the results may not be a 100 % accurate reflection of their attitude.

Regarding Q1 in section 3 (How important do you think team teaching is in terms of helping students' to cope with assignments?), both lecturers perceived that team teaching was vitally important because it helped the students to be more "positive" and "confident" as well as "understand" the requirements of the assignment. It acted as a catalyst for students to utilise further assistance by realising "there is support available for them". Regarding Q2 (Are there any differences you can notice between classes with team teaching and classes with no team teaching in terms of students' improvement?), both lecturers agreed that students can improve significantly through team teaching. They discovered "positive differences in student grades" (A) and that "students do submit better assignments' (B). The ITC lecturer B stated that "after team teaching, on average, 10-15 % of student marks has increased because of the improvement in the formats compared to last year" when team teaching was not conducted. Regarding Q3 (Have you noticed any differences between before team teaching and after team teaching in terms of the quality of the assignments students provided?), differences were noticed in the referencing in particular but again students needed to "apply the new learning".

Regarding Q4 (How much does team teaching help you to learn some new skills or refresh your skills with regard to writing an essay and referencing?), both lecturers agree that team teaching can also bring some benefits to them by "learning interesting points and strategies", in "creating writers' voice". They stated that they would use "this learning in their teaching". In fact, based on personal experience, not all lecturers, especially casual lecturers, seem to know the finer points of academic integrity, in particular, with regards to the current and correct format of referencing along with academic literacy. Both lecturers pointed out that a major problem in students' writing was related to referencing associated with plagiarism (Q5). This result was also in accord with the students' responses that referencing is a key challenge for them and in turn, they learn the most about referencing through the team teaching. Regarding the strengths of team teaching (Q6), A answered that it teaches "relevant" and useful skills to help students improve the quality of their papers". Lecturer B answered that it gives "on the ground support" by following "where the students are and does not wait for the students to seek help". Regarding the weaknesses of team teaching (Q7), lecturer A noted that team teaching needs to provide more 'practical examples' and 'exercises', in particular, with regard to 'in-text referencing'. More frequent visits of a short duration by the team teacher would be a better intervention strategy. Both suggested giving mini assessments or small exercises so that students can practise the new skills they learned to ensure they understand the key points.

VI. Discussion and Issues

Results reveal that team teaching has been perceived as being fruitful by both students and staff although the 2-3 hours total sessions allocated are insufficient to claim the significant changes. While lecturers show more positive attitudes than students, they all appreciate the team teacher's personal expertise on academic skills more than the content itself (1.7 vs. 2.0). Such positive results are consistent with a number of advantages documented in the team teaching literature. These include its efficiency and self- efficacy by teaching students collectively (McDaniel & Colarulli, 1997). Variation in teaching styles and/or method of presentation by combined expertise of teachers motivates students to increase their interest in learning. It promotes collegiality among teachers in a school (Yanamandaram & Nobel, 2006; Team teaching, n. d; Richards & Farrell, 2005). It also appears that it provides lecturers with opportunities

to acquire and improve their teaching of academic writing skills, especially in referencing without losing face. Richards & Farrell (2005) point out that team teaching itself could be viewed as a teachers' professional development opportunity. The lecturers agree that team teaching helps them to better understand the assignment criteria from a linguistic perspective, which results in the subsequent development of effective guidance for student assignments. Most importantly, as team teaching is integrated into subject-related content, team teaching seems to be a catalyst for students' subsequent engagement in other study support programs such as workshops and individual consultations. Students in general are often not aware of the existence of the study support programs or even if they are aware, they are not well motivated to utilise the program. When they are given opportunities to develop 'rhetorical awareness' of their studies in general by being exposed to rhetorical and linguistic expectations through team teaching, they begin to adopt a more active role in seeking help (Dudley-Evans, 2001, p, 228).

Despite the relatively positive perceptions and the potential benefits for all concerned, some weaknesses were identified. These weaknesses, such as the classes being noisy and distractive and too long, and students being given too much knowledge at the one time and being given little chance to make contributions are possibly instrumental in contributing to the wide discrepancy between the input of the team teaching and the real output of the students, though other reasons can be cited for the gap. Although lecturers responded that improvement could be seen in students' results after team teaching, they identified a problem by saying "it all depends on the degree to which students can put their learning into practice". Students do not all learn at the same rate. Some students do not seem to be keen enough or to have the ability to fully utilise what they have learned. This is especially true of the Master levels of students who gained direct entry to the course. These students had only received English instruction/education in their own country. The English they learned often bears little resemblance to grammatically and rhetorically appropriate writing suitable for an academic genre. Yet they believe they are proficient in English. Further, because team teaching is intensive and requires strong 'shared assumptions' or 'scaffolding' about language learning, some students find it difficult to digest and implement the knowledge in their assignments.

One cause of the discrepancy is lack of direct engagement between students and the team teacher which can be a severe disadvantage of team teaching from the perspective of achieving pedagogical goals if 'joint construction' between a teacher and a student writer can be considered lacking in the process of the teaching/learning cycle (Burns, 2001). Team teaching is still seen as no more than a mechanism of the presentation phase in the 'presentation-practice-production (ppp)/teaching/learning cycle' (Nunan, 2004). In order for students to fully maximise their results, they have to go through the subsequent phases of practice and production and through individual interactions between students and the writing supporter.

Another related weakness was that team teaching leads some students to become confused. One source of confusion stems from the fact that lecturers and the team teacher occasionally contradict each other in interpreting assignments in terms of formats and referencing style. This tends to happen when assessment guidelines do not state clearly the required format such as a hybrid genre between a report and an essay. One student's response illustrates this point when he explains that he can become confused by the conflicting opinions of the team teacher and lecturer. Some lecturers, especially casual lecturers, do not seem to have a clear understanding of genre and referencing. Some of them are not flexible about the format required. This situation can be a source of conflict between the team teacher and the subject teachers. The conflict is exacerbated by the fact that the school uses a weak form of team teaching. Consequently, not much prior discussion about assignments is made between the team teacher and lecturers. As Yanamandram and Noble (2006) point out, losing trust and respect between lecturers and the team teacher can impede students' learning. Student confusion may also be caused by the condensed and intense nature of team teaching. The team teacher uses a relatively teacher- directed 'top-heavy approach' as there is often insufficient time in the classes to cover all aspects of writing skills in guiding assignments. .

Team teaching also can inadvertently encourage a form of plagiarism. This weakness may be due to the genre-based approach that the team teacher used. Despite its numerous benefits (e.g. Hyland, 2007; Bruce, 2008; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010), one main disadvantage is that its main focus is on structure rather than on content, "overlooking natural processes of learning and writers' creativity" (Badger & White, 2000, p.157; Bawarshi, 2003; Byram, 2004). This can result in a unified, fixed and product-focused model rather than encouraging a flexible, evolving and process oriented model (Johns, 2011). This method may thus lead poorly performing students to adopt 'helpless plagiarism' (Lee, 2010) where students resort to the team teacher's instructions without alteration due to their inability to rework others' work. Further, given time constraints, team teaching cannot cover all aspects of assessment criteria such as grammar in detail, or substantial content, which is a main contributor to the quality of an assessment.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper attempts to identify student and staff feelings about a study intervention program of team teaching as well as reporting students' suggestions for improvement. While implementing team teaching within an academic context is very useful in many aspects, the paper identified some major weaknesses such as lack of individual attention, exercise practice and distractions. Other weaknesses identified by students and lecturers include a gap between teaching and the students' inability to apply the teaching in assignments especially from poorly performing students, confusion, conflicts and plagiarism.

Given the issues identified and suggestions made by lecturers and students, the following recommendations can be made for the better implementation of team teaching.

- The less positive attitude shown by Master students indicates the need for the effective provision of team teaching resources and further language intervention strategy for those students, in particular, those who gain direct entry to the universities. The Master students' struggles seem to arise from the gaps between their existing levels of writing proficiency and high expectations and requirements of the university.
- To ensure the effective delivery of team teaching, more frequent contact with the team teacher together with a shorter duration of team teaching such as implementing a drop in session should be embedded into the teaching. Further, lecturers and the university authority strongly believe that study support programs such as essay writing workshops and individual consultations where students can have opportunities of hands on exercises and practices can improve their results and reduce plagiarism.
- To help reduce conflict between lecturers and team teachers and students, it is essential to run a teacher development program. For better team teaching, professional development is important (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Teacher development programs will enhance academic literacy and hone skills of lecturers such as learning metalanguages used for interpreting assessments, updating reference skills, and understanding genres and related marking criteria. The team teacher needs to work closely with content lecturers regarding the focus of the team teaching before class so that lecturers can be well informed of what will be covered by the team teacher. Explicit and clear articulations of assessment guidelines by convenors on the course outlines would also be helpful for easing the conflict.

More research is needed on the topic of team teaching including interviews over an extended research period to identify data for evaluation, in particular, targeting master students. Investigation of the differences in academic results between students exposed to team teaching and those who are not should be considered a priority for further research projects.

APPENDIX A. TEAM TEACHING EVALUATION ON THE REPORT WRITING-STUDENTS

Part I

Please tick √ boxes

Gender: F□ M□ Age: below 20 □; 20-25□ ; 26-30□ ; over 30□

Country of origin:

Major: BIT□; BB□; BAC□; MIT□; MB□; MAC□

Length of study at the university:

Length of English education in your country prior to coming to Australia:

Year ( ) and Month ( )

Length of English education in Australia prior to the entry of the university:

Year ( ) and Month ( )

Part II

Please answer questions on team teaching, as they will be confidential and will help us guide the revision of the content of team teaching in the future.

Circle the letters that correspond with your opinion for each statement.

SA=Strongly agree A=agree N=no opinion D=disagree SD=strongly disagree

A: About the content of team teaching

1. Was the purpose of writing a report clear. SA A N D SD
2. Are you aware of the audience and their expectations. SA A N D SD
3. Do you know about report structures. SA A N D SD
4. You have a better understanding of how to write an executive summary. SA A N D SD
5. I understand how to write an introduction to a report, recognizing the different functions between the executive summary and the introduction. SA A N D SD
6. I know how to write about methods, findings and conclusions. SA A N D SD
7. I know how to write a topic sentence (general claims). SA A N D SD
8. I can make recommendations persuasively in a formal manner. SA A N D SD
9. Team teaching gave me practice and confidence in my writing a report. SA A N D SD
10. Team teaching helped me prepare for my writing assignments (for a report). SA A N D SD
11. I can understand the importance of referencing appropriately in relation to the issues of plagiarism. SA A N D SD
12. I acquired a better understanding of both In-text and End-of-text referencing. SA A N D SD
13. Acquired knowledge and strategies would help to avoid being accused of plagiarism such as writing clear topic sentences (general claims). SA A N D SD
14. I know where evidence can occur in the overall report structure and the paragraph level of structure. SA A N D SD

B: About the team teacher

1. The teacher had a positive attitude towards the student. SA A N D SD

2. The teacher was well prepared for classes.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. The teacher was enthusiastic about teaching.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. The teacher's lessons were relevant to the assessment tasks and goals.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. The teacher presented the lessons clearly.	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. The teacher tried to make the lesson interesting.	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. The teacher cares about the students.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. The teacher has professional knowledge about essay writing.	SA	A	N	D	SD

C: Please use the space under each of the following questions for further comments:

1. Explain your general feelings or challenges about writing an essay in Australia compared to your country
2. What are your perceived benefits of this team teaching?.
3. Explain some of the problems associated with team teaching?.
4. Please provide suggestions as to how team teaching can be made better in the future.
5. Any other comments?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Director at Charles Sturt University Study Centre (CSUSC) Sue Bakir and my supervisor Dr. Jeffery Gosper for their strong support in my research. My thanks also extend to the academic staff and students at CSUSC for their cooperation in this research. I am also deeply grateful to John Magin for his proof reading of my paper**.**

REFERENCES

[1] Badger, R. & G. White. (2000). Product, process and genre: Approaches to writing in EAP. *ELT Journal*, 54.2, 153–160.
[2] Bailey, K.M., A. Curtis & D. Nunan. (2001). Pursuing professional development. Singapore: Heinle & Heinle.
[3] Barthel, A. (2008). 'Preparing for diversity: are universities ready?' AIEC2008, Brisbane Qld, 7–10 October. http://www.aiec.idp.com/pdf/Barthe_%20Fri_1140_M2.pdf (accessed 6/5/2012).
[4] Barthel, A. (2012). Integrated academic language and learning development for Charles Sturt University. A discussion paper.
[5] Bawarshi, A. (2003). Genre & the intervention of the writer. Longan: Utah State UP.
[6] Bawarshi, A. S. & M. J. Reiff. (2010). Genre: An introduction to history, theory, research, and pedagogy. Indiana: Parlor Press.
[7] Bayliss, A. & D. Ingram. (2006). 'IELTS as a Predictor of Academic Language Performance', AIEC2006, Perth WA, October 2006. http://www.idp.com/aiec (accessed 9/7/2009).
[8] Benoit, R. & B. Haugh. (2001, October). Team teaching tips for foreign language teachers. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *6*(10). http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Benoit-TeamTeaching.html (accessed 7/10/2010).
[9] Bess, J. L. (2000). Integrating autonomous professionals through team-teaching. In J. L, Bess. (ed.), *Teaching alone, teaching together: Transforming the structure of teams for teaching*, Jossey-Bass, SanFrancisco: WILEY.
[10] Bruce, I. (2008). Academic writing and genre: A systemic analysis. New York: Continuum international Publishing.
[11] Buckley, F. J. (2000). Team teaching: what, why and how? Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
[12] Burns, A. (2001). Genre-based approaches to writing and beginning adult ESL learners. In C. Candlin & N. Mercer (eds.), *English language teaching in its social context: A reader*. London: Routledge, 200–207.
[13] Byram, M. (2004). Genre and genre-based teaching. The Routledge Encyclopaedia of language teaching and learning (pp. 234–237). London: Routledge.
[14] CLIL_AXIS. (2004). Content & Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)-AXIS team teaching. http://www.cili-xis.net/potential_clil_definitions.htm (accessed 7/10/2010).
[15] Coonan, C.M. (2003, April). Some issues in implementing CLIL, *Information Bulletin 9*, April.
[16] Dudley-Evans, T. (2001). Team teaching in EAP: Changes and adaptations in the Birmingham approach. In J. Flowerdew & M. Peacock (eds.), *Research perspectives on English for Academic purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 225–238.
[17] Goetz, K. (2000). Perspectives on team–teaching, *Egallery*, 1, 4. http://www.ucalgary.ca/egallery/goetz.htm (accessed9/11/2009).
[18] Hasegawa, H. (2008). Non-native and native speaker teachers' perceptions of a team teaching approach: case of the JET programme. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*, 26, 42–54.
[19] Han, Z. H. (2004). Fossilization in adult second language acquisition. Church point; Australia, Multilingual Matters LTD.
[20] Helms, M. M., J .M. Alvis & M. Willis. (2005). Planning and implementing shared teaching: MBA team-teaching case study (master of business administration). *Journal of Education for Business*. September/October, 29–34.
[21] Hinton, S. & J. Downing. (1998). Team teaching a college core foundations course: Instructors and students' assessments. Richmond, KY: Eastern Kentucky University> ERIC documents NO ED 429469.
[22] Hwag, Y. S., J. Hemandez & K. Vrongistions. (2002). Elementary teacher education students' perceptions of team teaching. http://www. highbeam.com/doc/1G1-98248720.html (accessed 11/11/2010).
[23] Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: language, literacy and L2 writing instruction: *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16.3, 148–164.
[24] Igawa, K. (2009). EFL teachers' views on team-teaching: In the case of Japanese Secondary school teachers. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture, 47*, 145–172.
[25] Johns, A. M. (2011). The future of genre in L2 writing: Fundamental, but contested, instructional decisions. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 20, 56-68. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2010.12.003.
[26] Joseph, D. & S. White. (2006). Team teaching in teacher education: Towards an interdisciplinary approach. Proceedings of the 2006 Australian Teacher Education Association Conference.

[27] Lee, S. H. (2006). The use of interpersonal resources in argumentative/persuasive essays by East-Asian ESL and Australian tertiary students. PhD thesis, University of Sydney.
[28] Lee, S. H. (2008a). An integrative framework for the analyses of argumentative/persuasive essays from an interpersonal perspective. *Journal of Text and Talk*, 28.2, 23–9270.
[29] Lee, S. H. (2008b). The use of interpersonal resources in argumentative/persuasive essays: Cross-cultural and grade-based differences in academic essays by East-Asian ESL and Australian tertiary students. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr Műller.
[30] Lee, S. H. (2010). Attribution in high-and low-graded persuasive essays by tertiary students. *Journal of Functions of Language*, 17.2, 181–206.
[31] McConnell, D.L. (2000). Importing diversity: Inside Japan's JET program. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
[32] McDaniel, E., & Colarulli, G. (1997). Collaborative teaching in the face of productivity concerns: The dispersed team model. *Innovative Higher Education, 22*.1, 19–36.
[33] Northcott, J. & G. Brown. (2006). Legal translator training: Partnership between teachers of English for legal purposes and legal specialists. *Journal of English for Specific Purposes*, 25, 358-375. Doi: 10.1016/j.esp.2005.08.003.
[34] Nunan, D. (2004). Task-based language learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[35] Richards, J. C., & T. S. C. Farrell. (2005). Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[36] Robinson, B. & R. M. Schaible. (1995). Collaborative teaching reaping the benefits. *College Teaching*, 43.2, 57–60.
[37] Sandholtz, J. H. (2000). Interdisciplinary team teaching as a form of professional development. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 27.3, 39–54.
[38] Stewart, T. & B. Perry. (2005). Interdisciplinary team teaching as a model for teacher development. Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. *TESL-EJ*, 9.2, 1–16.
[39] Team teaching. (n.d.). http://www.answers.com/topic/team-teaching. (accessed 6/12/2011).
[40] Yanamandram, V. & G. Noble. (2006). Student experiences and perceptions of team-teaching in a large undergraduate class. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 3.1, 49–66.

Sook Hee (Susan) Lee was born in Busan, South Korea on 6 December 1957. She has a Masters degree in Educational Psychology from Busan National University. After she came to Australia in 1991, she also completed a Masters degree in TESOL at the University of Wollongong in 2000 in Australia. She obtained a Ph D degree in TESOL in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney in 2006.

After the completion of her PhD, she taught IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses at various colleges. She is currently working at Charles Sturt University Study Centre in Sydney as the Study Support Coordinator. Her main role is to teach students (mostly international) both at undergraduate and Masters' level how to write academic essays. Her main research interests are in the areas of functional grammar, interpersonal meaning including evaluation in essay writing, and intercultural rhetoric.

Dr Sook Hee (Susan) LEE is a member of Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The following is a list of some of her recent publications:

S. H. Lee (2010). Attribution in high-and low-graded persuasive essays by tertiary students. *Journal of Functions of Language.* 17(2), 181–206

S. H. Lee (2008a). Attitude in undergraduate persuasive essays. *Journal of Prospect.* 23 (3), 43–58.

S. H. Lee (2008b). An integrative framework for the analyses of argumentative/persuasive essays from an interpersonal perspective. *Journal of Text and Talk*. 28 (2), 239–270.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 924-931, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.924-931

Perceptions of Oral Errors and Their Corrective Feedback: Teachers vs. Students

Elżbieta Tomczyk
Department of English Studies, Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts, Kalisz, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Ploland

***Abstract*—Being interested in the whole process of teaching and learning a language, researchers and linguists have attempted to describe what errors and corrective feedback are, which together form an inevitable and indispensable part of instructed second and foreign language acquisition (Hendrickson, 1987). They have tried to define them in order to help learners and teachers in dealing with deviant forms that occur during speaking activities in the foreign language classroom (Nunan, 1996). Moreover, when it comes to error correction, one should not forget about a range of decisions that need to be taken into account after having noticed an error in a student's utterance (Long, 1977). As a consequence, explaining errors and proposing the ways of rectifying incorrect forms during speaking play a vital role in students' successes in language learning and teachers' practices. The major aim of this paper is to report and compare teachers' and students' perceptions of oral errors and their corrective feedback as an inseparable part of language acquisition. The participants of the study were 43 secondary school teachers and 250 learners of English as a foreign language, who filled out questionnaires and were observed in real-life situations occurring in the language classroom. As regards the decision-making process and corrective feed-back, the analysis of the data revealed both differences and similarities in the opinions of the two groups of respondents in comparison with the actual classroom conditions, which indicate that correcting students' erroneous forms is a complex issue meriting further investigation and consideration.**

***Index Terms*—corrective feedback, oral errors, beliefs, perception**

I. Introduction

There has been much discussion on errors and their correction in the foreign language classroom because of the fact that the attitudes towards errors of both teachers and students differ, as well as error correction diverge depending on the approaches that are applied. According to James (1998) language is said to be uniquely human, so an error is like-wise distinctive. But how can an error be defined? A typical definition includes the reference to the linguistic form which deviates from the correct one. However, what does it mean 'correct'? The term is very often identified with the native speaker norm (Allwright & Bailey, 1991) which is, however, controversial because native speakers' utterances vary too much and most of the language teaching takes place in a non-native context by non-native speakers. In order to analyze learner language in a proper perspective, it is crucial to distinguish between errors and mistakes. An error is a deviant form which results from lack of knowledge of a particular form and reflects a learner's current stage in the in-terlanguage development (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972). It is an attempt to try something out, even though a learner does not have sufficient knowledge to produce a given form or item correctly. A mistake, however, refers to a learner's temporary inaccuracy (Corder, 1967) and performance problems and takes place when a student is familiar with the rule but an incorrect form appears because of inattention, fatigue, or as a result of a shift from the initial plan or intention during speaking. Mistakes manifest themselves as hesitations, slips of the tongue, random ungrammaticalities and other performance lapses (Brown, 1994). In spite of many attempts of researchers and scientists to set a definition which still remains problematic, generally one can state that an error is the form of foreign language produced by a learner, which reflects his or her contemporary competence and which does not belong to the target language system.

In the process of learning and teaching a language an error has always been regarded as something negative, as a re-sult, both teachers and students have adopted a repressive attitude towards it. Such a belief was supported by behaviourists, such as Skinner (1957) who perceived the process of language learning as a habit formation and an error as an obstacle which should be avoided because it caused the formation of bad habits. A different point of view was presented by Chomsky (1959) who claimed that language learning is not a mechanical process but rather a mental one where learners test some previously formed hypotheses against positive evidence. This cognitive process of rule formation may be modified by negative evidence, that is correction. According to cognitivists a learner has its own language system, called Interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), which signifies a learner's contemporary stage of knowledge of the second language and it represents the continuum of stages that characterizes a learner's progress (Ellis, 1994). From this perspective, errors are the evidence of the development in the language learning process. Error making is stated to be an inevitable and necessary part of language learning (Dulay & Bart, 1974; Hendrickson, 1987), as it is a sign that the learner develops and assimilates the rules of language. Moreover, errors help teachers to verify what features of

language cause students learning problems and tell how far towards the goal learners have progressed and, consequently, what is to be acquired (Corder, 1981). A number of errors and the types of them serve not only as indicators of the proficiency level, but they also help teachers in applying appropriate steps to treat learners difficulties, as they are provided with feedback on the effectiveness of teaching materials and techniques adopted and receive information whether they can move on to the next item which is included in the syllabus. Corder (1967; 1981) highlights that teachers should not only notice errors but try to understand some psychological reasons for their occurrence as well.

Apart from the distinction between an error and a mistake, deviant forms can be ascribed to various categories de-pending on characteristics that are taken into account. A well-known taxonomy involves the specification of errors in terms of linguistic categories, in terms of the location of an error in the overall system of the target language "based on the linguistic item which is affected by the error" (Dulay et al., 1982; James, 1998, p. 104f). Taking into account this criterion one can distinguish the following types of errors: phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic and pragmatic. In the process of identifying and describing errors, the division between covert and overt errors has been made where the former are said to be unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level, whilst the latter are grammatically correct but cannot be interpreted within the context of communication (Corder, 1973). For example, "I'm fine, thanks." is a correct sentence but if it is given as an answer to the question of "How old are you?" it is a covertly committed error. Another criterion in classifying errors which has an influence on providing correction is whether a deviant form impedes communication or not, in other words, whether a sentence is comprehensible or not. Such a distinction has been proposed by Burt and Kiparsky (1974) who defined a global error as the one which affects the interpretation of the whole sentence (examples are: word order, missing or wrongly placed sentence connectors, and syntactic overgeneralizations), and a local error as a type which affects a single element in a sentence. It is important to define an error, its source, a type, since it has a considerable impact on further decisions that a teacher has to make, namely, the decisions concerning corrective feedback.

Generally speaking, error correction is defined as a reaction to a speaker's utterance by someone who has made an assessment that the utterance itself or at least the part of it is linguistically or factually wrong. James (1998) regards cor-rection as the improved version of what the first speaker aimed to say. It must be noted that researchers distinguish the difference between error correction and corrective feedback, however, for the purpose of this article, the author has de-cided to use both terms interchangeably. The notions of feedback and correction are very often presented in terms of evidence, which is the information that learners receive about the target language and their attempts at reproducing it. One can distinguish two main kinds of evidence, namely positive and negative. Positive evidence is the information about what is possible in the language, for example, listening to BBC, CNN or lectures gives the positive exposure of language (and this is authentic). In case of a teacher talking in the classroom, the language is modified because of sim-plifications or elaborations. Negative evidence (or feedback) is defined as the information about what is not possible in the language. In naturalistic contexts feedback is the result of negotiation, whilst in the language classroom it is pro-vided by the teacher owing to his or her superior knowledge and the communicative asymmetry that puts the teacher in the position of power (Pawlak, 2004).

The question arises whether error correction is needed and useful in the process of language acquisition. As the issue is rather controversial it has both proponents and opponents. One of the critical opinions is that very often error correc-tion is unreliable, vague and ineffective (Long, 1977). The similar statement is presented by Truscott (1999) who added that there is no proof that corrective feedback is helpful but teachers treat it as something always necessary in the lan-guage classroom. He also claimed that error correction is more of a hindrance rather than a useful tool. Some linguists, including Krashen (1982) have believed that language is acquired unconsciously and learning it formally is of little use in later real life situations, that is why concentrating on formal correction is rather counterproductive. Moreover, it is argued that "error correction puts learners on the defensive and, as a result, they tend to avoid using difficult structures and focus on form rather than meaning" (Pawlak, 2004, p. 47). Nonetheless, there are adherents of providing corrective feedback, including Lyster, Lightbrown and Spada (1999) who disagree with Truscott's paper claiming that correcting students' deviant forms rarely hurts their self-esteem and most of learners expect to receive corrective feedback. Fur-thermore, it should be borne in mind that learners' output is at the same time input for themselves and other students in the classroom, therefore lack of corrective feedback may cause that some hypotheses stay incorrect (Schachter, 1998). Another argument involves the assumption that corrective feedback is indispensable, since some grammatical structures are highly difficult to be acquired by means of positive evidence. Providing feedback may also foster learners' language awareness and the ability to notice gaps in their interlanguage. Consequently, both linguistic consciousness raising and noticing gaps result in learners' modifying their output in constructive and long-lasting ways (Pawlak, 2004).

What makes the issue of providing corrective feedback even more complicated is the fact that it requires a range of quick decisions that a teacher needs to make after having noticed an error in a student's utterance. The first decision concerns the question whether an error should be treated in any way. Certainly, such a choice is dependent on some factors, including the aim of a task, namely, if it is to develop fluency or accuracy, and also the proficiency level of stu-dents. Having already decided that an error should be the subject of treatment, a teacher is supposed to choose from three possible options when to deal with an erroneous item and these are immediate, delayed or postponed correction. In spite of the fact that all of them have some advantages and disadvantages, it has to be remembered that when to correct

is closely related with the decision of how to do that, meaning explicitly or implicitly. The last choice to be made concerns who is the person to provide corrective treatment. Obviously, it is a teacher who reflects a general assumption of who should be such a person, nevertheless, it can also be a learner himself or herself (self-correction) or other students in the classroom (peer correction).

As it has been stated earlier, the concepts of an error and its corrective feedback is a controversial issue because of complexity it is characterized with. There is no doubt that teachers have to face the ubiquity of errors among learners of the foreign language and the methods that are employed by them depend on their general views concerning errors and the corrective feedback. For this reason, the author of the article decided to conduct the research to find out how errors and their corrections are perceived by teachers and how students, who are always direct recipients of all the de-cisions in the classroom, feel about teachers' error correction practice during speaking activities.

II. Research: The Aim of the Study

The current study was undertaken to investigate the perception of errors during speaking activities as well as correc-tive feedback from both teachers' and students' perspective, and to check what techniques are used by teachers in or-der to repair erroneous forms created by their students. The researcher also aimed at exploring the actual decisions that are made in the classroom by the teachers and find some similarities and differences with the previously stated beliefs.

A. Participants

The research was conducted among students of English as well as teachers from secondary schools and technical colleges where English is taught as a foreign language. No criterion was adopted when selecting schools for data collec-tion, however, the researcher was confined to the schools where the teachers and their students agreed to assist in the study.

Forty three teachers of the secondary schools or technical colleges participated in the study whose teaching expe-rience varied from 2 to 25 years. For 15 of them it was less than 5 years, over half of the teachers had taught for almost 10 years, six teachers had the teaching experience more than 10 years, and the other 5 had been teachers for over 20 years. The majority of the respondents, that is 90.7%, declared to have university degrees where 23 of them (53.5%) had the MA degree, and 16 teachers (37.2%) stated to have the BA degree.

The number of participating students in the research is 250, which is the manifestation of the students who filled out and returned the questionnaires that were later used to analyse the data. All the respondents were the students of the secondary school level whose experience as the foreign language learners ranged from 2 to 13 years. The number of English lessons students were exposed to varied from 2 to 7 hours a week, where the mode is 3 hours. Surprisingly, the majority of the learners (60.8%) declared to have limited contact to English or no contact at all outside the classroom. The rest of the students (39.2%) had the opportunities to exposure to the target language and provided some examples, which are as follows: the Internet (including English websites as well as chat rooms with foreign language speakers), television, music (the lyrics of English songs), books and magazines, computer games, and journeys to foreign language countries where the medium of communication is English. The most frequent access to the target language outside the classroom included private lessons or classes in language schools. It was measured that 34 students (34, 69%) who de-clared to have a contact to English outside the classroom, attended additional classes.

B. Instruments

In order to make the study more comprehensive, the researcher decided to select two methods of data collection, namely: questionnaires and observations. The collected data were subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis taking into account the belief that the amalgamation of the qualitative and quantitative approaches can be beneficial when conducting classroom-oriented research (Brumfit & Mitchel, 1990).

Questionnaires were distributed among the teachers and some of their students in the foreign language classroom. The choice of this introspective instrument aimed at gathering the necessary data which would provide the researcher with the background information about the respondents and their beliefs and expectations concerning the phe-nomenon of corrective feedback during speaking activities. The collected questionnaires supplied the researcher with significant amount of crucial information which turned out to be invaluable when it came to describing and evaluating the repairing processes during a lesson. In order to avoid possible comprehension problems and to prevent potential dis-tortion of the results, the questionnaire was presented to all the subjects in the Polish version. The questionnaires admin-istered to the teachers and students consisted of both open-ended questions where the respondents were supposed to write their own answers and opinions to the given aspects, and closed-ended ones where they selected one or several of the specified answers. The decision to put the two sorts of questions was to obtain as many varied answers as possible, encouraging the subjects to provide their views or propositions the researcher might not have taken into account.

The further step to validate the research was to observe the lessons of the teachers who agreed to the presence of the researcher. Due to the opportunities for the observations, it was possible to verify the views and opinions stated in the questionnaires with the real decisions that the teachers had to make in the language classrooms. During the time of ob-serving the interactive processes in the classroom, the researcher attempted to maintain a low profile and always

took the seats at the back of the classroom. It must be highlighted that the purpose of the observations was explicated to the students who were also assured that the data would be available to the researcher, but not their teacher or the au-thorities of the school.

C. Results and Discussion

One of the objectives of the present study was to investigate the opinions about oral errors which affect the later decisions involving corrective feedback. The collected results of both the teacher's and the students' questionnaires were analysed and compared focusing mostly on similarities and differences between them.

On the basis of the data, the importance of corrective feedback seems to be unquestionable, since the majority of both teachers and students (81.4% of the teachers and 92.8% of the learners) agreed that errors have to be corrected. According to the teachers, a learner needs to receive the information of their errors, so that he or she does not commit the same error repeatedly in the future. What is more, corrective feedback helps teachers in controlling students' utter-ances and it also improves the effectiveness of them. It must be highlighted that students should be aware of their erro-neous forms, since in many cases error correction motivates to work on their deviant forms and, as a consequence, make a progress. As a result, the teachers use corrective feedback rather often, namely 55,8% of them declared to do that frequently. The learners answered similarly to the teachers, stating that the most crucial argument in favour of corrective feedback is that errors have to be eliminated as soon as possible, before the habit-formation takes place and wrong forms become part of the students' interlanguage.

As far as the distinction between global and local errors, which seems to be valuable in the further process of the teacher's decision making involving correction, the research project revealed that over half of the teachers (65.11%) al-ways decide to focus on global errors, and 15 of them (34.88%) do that frequently. As regards local errors, the teacher's severity seems to be of smaller scale, since most of them (53.48%) declared to correct local errors from time to time. All the results concerning the aspect of global and local errors from teachers' perspective are presented in the underlying table (Table 1):

TABLE I.
THE TREATMENT OF GLOBAL AND LOCAL ERRORS AMONG TEACHERS

Frequency of correction	Global errors (%)	Local errors (%)
Always	65,11	2,32
Often	34,88	20,39
Sometimes	9,30	53,48
Rarely	2,32	30,23
Never	0	0

The students taking part in the study were supposed to decide which of these two types of errors they perceive as the most crucial in the process of providing corrective feedback. Global were chosen by 30,4%, whilst 69,6% of students claimed that even local errors which do not impede communication should be treated.

As regards the types of errors, out of the three main sorts of errors (grammatical, pronunciation and lexical ones), grammatical and pronunciation errors tend to be the most important (see Diagram 1). The group of 37 teachers (86,04%) and 161 students (64,4%) chose pronunciation errors as the most crucial errors to be corrected. However, the other type with great importance are grammatical errors, since 72,09% of the teachers and 57,6% of the learners de-cided that they need to be focused on when providing corrective feedback. As regards lexical errors, both the teachers and the students consider them as valid in the process of language learning, however, they are perceived as the least important from all the types mentioned in the questionnaires (the group of 34,88 % of the teachers correct these types of errors, while 39,6% of the students claim that they should be corrected).

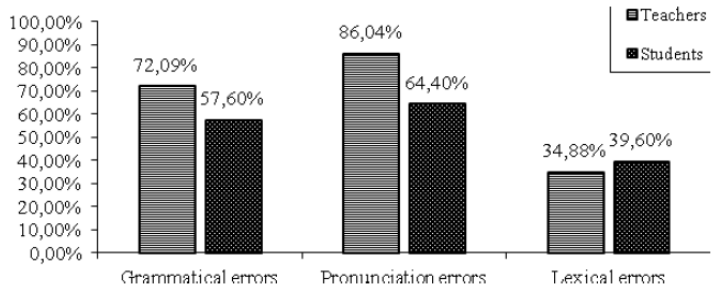


Diagram 1. The types of errors requiring corrective feedback.

Another corollary of cardinal importance in the process of the teacher's decision making is the question who should provide the correction. The findings are not very revealing, since it is a teacher who is perceived by students as a com-petent, non-erring and ultimate authority (92,4% of the learners consider a teacher as the person who is supposed to correct them). It has been proved as in the theoretical part of the thesis that peer correction is not appreciated by the learners (only 4 students out of 250 stated that it the other students who should provide correction), although the

teachers claim to give opportunities for such correction (36 claim to do that, obviously with different frequency). As far as self-correction is concerned, the teachers state to give a student a chance to correct himself, and the results are: 11 respondents (25,58%) always promote self-correction, 27 teachers (62,79%) do that frequently, 7 people (16,27%) sometimes allow students to correct themselves, and 2 teachers (4,65%) declare to promote self-correction rather rarely. On the contrary to the teachers' answers, the students do not seem to prefer self-correction, since only 17,2% of them would like to have the opportunities for this type of correction.

The decision concerning the time of providing corrective feedback is always the matter of a question, as a result, the respondents were asked to give information about this aspect with a short explanation to the selected option. The re-sults of both groups are shown below (Diagram 2).

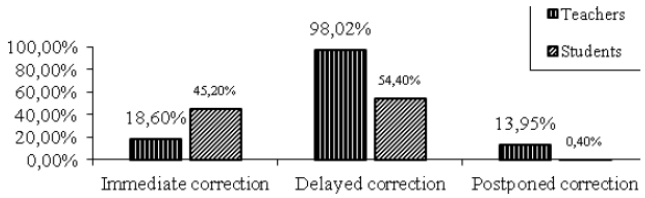


Diagram 2. The results of the time for providing corrective feedback.

As shown in the Diagram 2, delayed correction is especially favoured by the teachers (98.02%) who bear in mind that interrupting a student's utterance might have its negative consequences. The result between immediate and delayed correction among students is not as visible as in the teachers' case. The number of adherents of the immediate correction among the students is 45.20%, and 54,40% of the learners would like the teacher to delay his or her correction, so that the flow of the communication is not disrupted. The reasons why the delayed correction is so much favoured by both groups of respondents is that this kind of correction allows a learner to finish his or her utterance without the interruption for correcting the occurred errors. The students claim that in the case of immediate correction, they feel stressed out and very often forget their initial aim of speaking or answering a particular question in the classroom, as a result, 40,8% of the students do not like their teacher to correct them during speaking classroom activities. Some of them also stated that immediate correction makes them commit even more errors because of the feeling that they cannot perform in the target language. The group of 18,60% of the learners declared that the teacher's immediate correction is obtrusive for them, and surprisingly to the author, some even claimed this type of providing correction as ill-mannered.

Due to the observations in the classroom, the researcher may claim that both immediate and delayed corrections were the two most used types of remedial treatment in the foreign language classroom. As regards delayed correction, the teachers made notes of the students' performances and then provided them with the corrective feedback. The other correction that appeared was immediate correction which was particularly used to correct pronunciation errors, and unfortunately, some of the students did not wish to continue and claimed that they forgot what they wanted to convey because of the interruptions. In accordance with the results from the questionnaires, peer-correction was not widely used, in spite of the fact that some of the teachers encouraged their students to use this type of correction.

The researcher included some of the possible options to deal with the noticed errors, which might be undertaken after the previous decisions have been made, namely whether to correct or not, who should provide the correction, when the corrective should take place. Because of the number of the techniques, the similarities and differences are best presented in the Table 2 below:

TABLE II.
THE WAYS OF PROVIDING ERROR REPAIR

The ways of providing corrective feedback	Teachers		Students	
	Number	%	Number	%
Indicating of an error and correcting it	18	41,86	85	34
Indicating of an error by means of gestures and waiting for a student to correct it	25	58,13	83	33,2
Indicating of an error by repeating it and waiting for a student to correct it	21	48,83	74	29,6
Indicating of an error by asking a question and waiting for a student to correct it	16	37,20	59	23,6
Indicating of an error by using gestures, repeating the error, or asking a question and waiting for other students to correct it	6	13,95	16	6,4
Correcting an error and reintroducing a particular item (e.g. a grammar rule)	22	46,51	203	81,2
Indicating of an error and waiting for a student to correct it and give an explanation	14	32,55	64	25,6
indicating of an error and waiting for other students to correct it and give an explanation	15	34,88	25	10
Looking for an explanation of an error and ways to correct it in pairs or groups	6	13,95	41	16,4
Others	0	0	2	0,8

As the Table 2 shows, the most common technique used by the teachers is indicating the noticed error by means of gestures and asking for correction by the students who committed a given error. Another technique preferred by the teachers is indicating an error using repetition with a rising tone and waiting for the student who has made the error to correct it. The way of correcting an error which the teachers chose in the number of 46,51%, but the most favoured by the students (81,2%) is the indication of an error with the explanation of a particular language aspect which was used incorrectly. On the basis of the observations, such a technique is usually used concerning a grammatical aspect which needs to be reminded to the students because of occurring errors. The most common techniques used by the teachers were those where the learner was supposed to correct himself or herself, the teachers gave enough time for such correc-tion, and also encouraged the peers in the classroom to help in finding the solution to the given problem. The observed teachers very often used explicit forms of indicating that there was an error in the utterance, for instance, they used ris-ing intonation, or they showed it by means of gestures or mimes.

The last aspect to be measured was the learner's reaction to the corrective feedback they received from their teach-ers. The researcher proposed four most possible reactions that the teacher may encounter after having decided to pro-vide correction. Surprisingly, the study revealed that the students expect and even want to have their errors corrected (44% of the students admitted to be satisfied when the teacher corrects their ill-formed utterances). The second common reaction is the students' becoming nervous and angry because of committing an error or because the teacher provides the feedback generally. From the teacher's point of view, the results are not as explicit as in the student's case, since 34,53% of the teachers perceive students as rather being indifferent to error correction, the group of 32,55% of the teachers claim that their students react rather with anger or irritation when being corrected, and 30,23% of them state that students are satisfied with the corrective feedback they receive. The other propositions which the teachers suggested, but were not included in the questionnaire are that students sometimes ponder upon the errors they made, or they get a sort of enlightenment after having received correction that they know the erroneous form or the structure. All the results involving the students' reaction to corrective feedback are presented in the diagram below (Diagram 3).

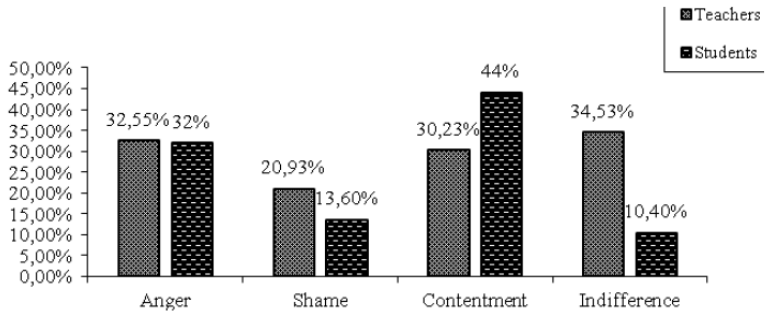


Diagram 3. The students' reactions to corrective feedback.

D. Limitations of the Study

In spite of making efforts to achieve as comprehensive research as it was possible, the study, however, has some limitations. The main limitation of the study is that the researcher was confined to do the research only in the schools where the principals agreed to take part in the study. Another difficulty that the researcher encountered was that many teachers did not want to fill in the questionnaire, as a result, a number of this questionnaire is not as high as it was pre-viously expected. What is more, many teachers refused the researcher to observe and their lessons.

As regards the questionnaires, it seems to be very likely that some of the respondents may not have been reliable be-cause of the unwillingness to admit to the real behaviours and preferences that would present them in an unfavourable light. The questionnaire also included some open-ended questions to obtain as much information as possible from both the teachers and the students, however, it proved to be the mistaken assumption, since in some cases the answers were very brief or there were no answers at all.

Although the research contains the limitations, the researcher has attempted to conclude and suggest some peda-gogical implications based on her findings.

E. Pedagogical Implications

As can be seen from the analysis, corrective feedback is an important part of the foreign language learning, since it considerably increases the accuracy of learner output. Obviously, the amount of corrective feedback should be adapted to the objective of the lesson, the activity and the needs of learners. If the objective is to develop accuracy, then, of course, corrective feedback is necessary. In this case, one may follow such an order: allow the students to correct himself or herself first, then in the case when it does not work, the teacher may allow for the correction from peers, and finally, if no one knows how to repair the erroneous form, the teacher can give correction. It may seem time-consuming at first sight, however, it helps to reduce the reliance on the teacher and at the same time, increase student autonomy. If the activity focuses on fluency, correction is not as frequent as in the case of the activities developing accuracy, since constant interruption of students' utterances may be perceived as disruptive or even irritating, especially when errors do

not hamper the meaning of communication. It is worth mentioning that certain amount of corrective feedback even during communication-focused activities might be indispensable, as it improves the quality of an utterance.

As regards the time of providing corrective feedback, teachers may think that it is better not to correct immediately and frequently, but students may assume that their teacher is not qualified enough to correct errors, or that teachers do not want or care of giving feedback. What is more, as noted in the analysis of the research, teachers prefer to provide delayed correction, which unfortunately has some drawbacks. Although, it is less disruptive and irritating than immedi-ate correction, it is more effective to give corrective feedback after erroneous forms have appeared, because the processing mechanisms of students are then more likely to be activated.

Self-correction is extremely important, since it indicates students' active engagement in the process of language learning. Such an active engagement appears when negotiating a form, or when a student is supposed to react or re-spond to the teacher's feedback, and moreover, when the teacher does not give the correct form, but rather provides some sort of hints, a learner is forced to reformulate his or her erroneous utterance. Consequently, one may even con-clude that the least effective technique for correcting students' error incorrect language use is to simply give them an-swer.

In order to rectify both teachers' and students' opposing expectations involving the correction of errors, mistakes and attempts, one should correct them in a positive manner, assuring that any kind of errors is the inevitable part of the foreign language learning. Positive attitude towards the students' mistakes makes students feel more comfortable and confident that they will manage to reduce their erroneous forms in the later process of language learning.

III. Conclusions

Learning a language involves testing out hypotheses about the system, as a result, some of the attempts might be er-roneous. Since errors form the inevitable part of a language, there might be various views concerning them. Some teachers regard errors as failures in teaching particular language aspects, and students perceive them as failures to ac-quire what they are supposed to know. However, errors might also be accepted as an indication of the learning taking place in a learner. The author has been especially interested in investigating the distinctions in opinions between teach-ers and students, and also in comparing their views declared in the questionnaires with the real-life situations occurring in the language classroom. In order to get a comprehensive picture of the aspects under investigation, a non-interventionist approach was adopted and the two different instruments were employed to collect the data.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis demonstrated that speaking in the classroom is perceived as the op-portunity to make errors, that is why so many students hesitate form taking part in the communicative activities. The study makes it clear that corrective feedback is considered to be a crucial part in the language learning, and it is even expected by most students. In addition, the majority of both teachers and learners declare grammatical and pronunciation errors as the ones which seem to be the most crucial as far as error correction is concerned. The findings also reveal that it is a teacher who is regarded as a competent, non-erring and ultimate authority, as a result, he or she is supposed to provide corrective feedback whenever deviant forms occur. Although peer correction and self-correction have many benefits and the majority of teachers declare to promote these types of correction in the classroom, the students seem not to appreciate them and they expect their teachers to rectify what they do not know. It has also been proved that contrary to immediate correction, which is usually regarded as disruptive or even irritating, delayed correction is used the most frequently by teachers, in spite of the fact that it is not as beneficial as it might be seen, since learners' processing mechanisms are less likely to be activated. Among many techniques that might be used in providing corrective feedback, teachers tend to use explicit forms of indicating the appearance of errors, for instance by means of gestures and mimes, or by using a rising tone. From students' perspective, the best option on giving corrective feedback is not only indicating that a student has committed an error, but also reintroducing rules or a definition for the wrongly used item. The study demonstrates that students might react to corrective feedback in a number of ways, however, the findings reveal that learners usually feel content when they receive corrective feedback, which prevents them from committing the same errors in the future.

Having considered the above comments, teachers should always concentrate on the purpose of the activity which frequently has a considerable impact on the decision whether to correct an error or not, and how much of corrective feedback should be provided to students. The activity might also influence the decision concerning when it is ap-propriate to correct the deviant forms. What is more, the neglected self-correction should be promoted among learners, since students are actively engaged in the process of language learning. It should not be forgotten that it is always beneficial to correct students' errors in a positive manner and assure them that due to the wrong forms, the correct ones will be better noticed and remembered in the further processes of learning a language.

References

[1] Allwright, D. and Kathleen M. Bailey. (1991). Focusing on Language Classroom. London: Cambridge University Press.
[2] Brown, H. Douglas. (1994). Principles of Language and Teaching. New York: Prentice Hall Regents.
[3] Burt, M. and Kiparsky, C. (1972). The Gooficon: A Repair Manual for English. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
[4] Chomsky, N. (1959). Review of Verbal behaviour by B.F. Skinner. *Language* 35, 26-58.
[5] Corder, S. P. (1967). The Significance of Learners' Errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 5, 161-170.

[6] Corder, S. P. (1973). Introducing Applied Linguistics. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
[7] Corder, S. P. (1981). Error Analysis and Interlanguage. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[8] Dulay, H., and Burt, M. (1974). Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 8.1, 129-136.
[9] Ellis, R. (1994). The Study of Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[10] Hendrickson, J. (1987). Error Correction in Foreign Language Teaching: Recent Theory, Research, and Practice. *Modern Lan-guage Journal* 62, 387-398.
[11] James, Carl. (1998). Errors in Language Learning and Use. New York: Longman.
[12] Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon.
[13] Lyster, R., Lighbown, P. M. and Spada, N. (1999). A response to Truscott's 'What's wrong with oral grammar correction'. *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 55, 457-467.
[14] Long, M. (1977). Teacher feedback on learner error. Mapping cognitions. In Brown, H. D., Yorio C. and Cymes, R. (eds). (1977), *Teaching and learning English as a second language: Trends in research and practice.* Washington, DC: TESOL, 278-93.
[15] Pawlak, M. (2004). Describing and Researching Interactive Processes in the Foreign Language Classroom. Konin: Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa.
[16] Schachter, J. (1988). Second language acquisition and its relationship to Universal Grammar. *Applied Linguistics* 9, 219-235.
[17] Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 10, 209-230.
[18] Skinner, B. (1957). Verbal Behaviour. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
[19] Truscott, J. (1999). What's wrong with oral grammar Correction. *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 55, 437-456.

Elżbieta Tomczyk is a lecturer at the English Department of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts of Adam Mickiewicz University in Kalisz, and a teacher of one of the high schools in Kalisz. Her interests include interactive processes in the foreign language classroom, corrective feedback, communication strategies and learner autonomy.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 932-938, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.932-938

Foreign Language Anxiety in Young Learners: How It Relates to Multiple Intelligences, Learner Attitudes, and Perceived Competence

Hui-ju Liu
Department of English, Da-Yeh University, Taiwan

Ting-han Chen
Graduate Institute of Applied Foreign Languages, Da-Yeh University, Taiwan

***Abstract*—This study explores language anxiety in young EFL students and how it relates to two other major learner variables, multiple intelligences (MI) and learner attitudes. Participants included 216 fifth and sixth graders from two elementary schools, and the findings indicate that the subjects experienced a fair amount of language anxiety. An analysis of student responses revealed that their top five worries were: (1) failing English courses, (2) feeling that other students have a better English speaking ability, (3) feeling that other classmates have better English performance, (4) being called on in English class, and (5) not being prepared in advance when the teacher asks questions. The results illustrate two major components of foreign language anxiety: general worry over language class performance and little confidence in speaking ability. Further, language anxiety was found to be significantly and negatively related to all variables studied. In order of decreasing association, these variables included: perceived English ability, learning attitude, years of taking extracurricular English lessons, length of studying the language, and MI. Out of the three major learner variables, language anxiety appeared to have a much stronger link with learning attitude than with MI. A more in-depth statistical analysis revealed that the anxiety of students classified as having low- and mid-level positive attitudes (lowest 25% and middle 50%, respectively) did not differ significantly. Nevertheless, students with high-level positive attitudes (top 25%) had significantly lower language anxiety than their counterparts. The implications of these results are discussed in this study.**

***Index Terms*—language anxiety, multiple intelligences, learning attitude**

I. Introduction

Due to a limited amount of exposure to English and native English speakers in Taiwan, for many students, opportunities to practice their foreign language skills, particularly speaking skills, only take place in the classroom. It would not be surprising if some learners admit that they only learn the language to complete their school requirements. Liu (2010) established that foreign language anxiety was prevalent among Taiwanese university students. Similarly, Chan and Wu (2004) reported that a certain amount of language anxiety existed among Taiwanese elementary school children. Various situations, such as taking English tests (Young, 1991), speaking in front of their classmates (Williams & Andrade, 2008), and being unable to understand questions from the instructors (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010), may all evoke anxiety. As Chen and Wu (2004) indicated, "to ensure the success of English education in primary school, foreign language anxiety is a significant issue which cannot be ignored" (p. 289). Therefore, this study aims to provide a wider range of insights into this affective variable by examining how it is related to multiple intelligences, learning attitudes, and self-perceived ability.

II. Literature Review

A. Language Anxiety

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) indentified three types of anxiety: trait anxiety (a personality trait), state anxiety (an emotional state), and situation specific anxiety (anxiety in a well-defined situation); foreign language anxiety refers to the third type. The results of language anxiety have been more consistently reported in literature since Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed the internationally well-recognized Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to assess anxiety in the language classroom. In Horwitz et al.'s study, subjects included students enrolled in an introductory Spanish course at an American university. The findings indicated that foreign language anxiety consisted of three subcomponents: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Student responses to some of the items, e.g., whether they felt more tense or nervous in language class than in other classes, led Horwitz et al. to conclude that foreign language anxiety is "a distinct set of beliefs, perceptions, and feelings in response to foreign language learning in the classroom" (p. 130).

Over the last few decades, the deleterious impact of language anxiety on student learning has been revealed in a number of studies (Awan et al., 2010; Aydin, 2008; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991b; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Sánchez-Herrero & Sánchez, 1992; Zhao, 2007; Wei, 2007). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) employed a three-stage model to describe the effects of anxiety on the three stages of language learning: input, processing, and output. Results showed that the influence of anxiety is "pervasive" and it can impair language performance at all three stages (p. 301). However, it should be noted that anxiety may negatively affect the language learning process in one stage, but not necessarily in the others. Aida (1994) found a moderate negative correlation coefficient (-.38) between the language anxiety measured by FLCAS and student grades. Analyzing the underlying structure of the 33 items among learners enrolled in a Japanese course at an American university showed that the first factor, "speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation," alone accounted for 37.9% of the total variance (Aida, 1994, p. 159). The second and third major factors were fear of failing the language class and comfortableness in speaking with native target-language speakers. Inconsistent with the results of Horwitz. et al.'s (1986) study, the existence of test anxiety was not supported by Aida's findings. In general, the researcher found that "a fair amount of anxiety" existed in the language classroom (p. 162).

According to Young (1991), various potential sources of language anxiety can be classified into the following categories. First, personal and interpersonal anxiety may result from problems such as low self-esteem, competitiveness, communication apprehension, lack of group membership, and self-perceived low ability level (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1999; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Young, 1990, 1999). Second, certain unrealistic learner beliefs, such as that one can become a fluent speaker in a certain period of time, can be a major source of language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1999; Young, 1990). Third, instructors' incorrect beliefs can also lead to frustration and apprehension; an example of an incorrect belief is that instructors should constantly correct student errors. Fourth, the interaction between instructors and learners can cause anxiety as well. For instance, correcting student errors in front of the whole class can be very anxiety provoking. Finally, classroom procedures and methods of testing can all be related to language anxiety. Out of these various factors, MacIntyre (1999) concluded that the "single most important source" of anxiety is related to the fear of speaking a foreign language in front of peers (p. 33).

B. Multiple Intelligences

Going against the traditional view of intelligence, Gardner (1983) redefined it by proposing multiple intelligences (MI), which include bodily-kinesthetic, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal/social, intrapersonal/introspective, visual/spatial, and naturalist. For example, linguistic intelligence refers to the ability to use words to explain complex meanings effectively. Interpersonal/social intelligence is the ability to communicate, interact, and understand others. Visual/spatial intelligence means the ability to perceive visual information accurately and to recreate images. Instead of conceptualizing intelligence as inherited and unitary, Gardner considered MI as eight distinct intelligences that may develop throughout a lifetime.

Over the past few decades, the theory of MI has had some profound effects on teachers and schools and has been applied in the classroom to satisfy the varied needs of students. According to Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson (1999), MI can be employed for problem-solving by learners in class. Nolen (2003) advised that school teachers instruct their students in a way that can engage the MI theory in classroom lessons. When school teachers pay more attention to learners' individual needs, students are more likely to develop to their full potential in class. The goal of applying MI in the classroom is to help students become more active and successful learners.

Tai (2001) explored the effects of employing MI in English instruction at a junior high school where the participants included two classes of students. The researcher provided lesson plans based on the MI theory and examined student reactions to varied activities and learning materials in English class. The findings reported that with the integration of MI, student motivation to learn English was enhanced; students enjoyed the activities more in an MI-based classroom.

Similarly, researchers such as Bas (2008), Haley (2004), and Teele (1994) incorporated MI theory into the language classroom in their studies. Bas (2008) suggested that the MI theory focused on cooperation during the learning process rather than on competition among peers. In addition, school teachers can provide activities using storybooks, songs, vocabulary, drama, and games to help students practice in the classroom and enhance their MI at the same time. With the participation of 23 teachers and 650 students from three countries, Haley (2004) concluded that teaching with MI made instruction more learner-centered and students in the experimental groups became more "enthusiastic" about learning (p. 171). One reason was due to the use of a wider variety of classroom activities by the teachers who practiced the MI theory in their instruction. In a qualitative study, Teele (1994) found a strong link between MI and the instructional process; receiving MI-based instruction enables students to become more involved in classroom activities and have greater opportunities to develop their potential. Teele (1994) considered the MI theory to be "the key to providing quality instruction" (p. 141). Based on this theory, teachers may seek out individual ways of helping learners in accordance with their dominant intelligences. Furthermore, MI was also found to be significantly and positively related to the self-efficacy (Shore, 2001) and learning strategy use of language learners (Akbari & Hosseini, 2008).

C. Research Questions

Although the negative impact of language anxiety on academic performance has been supported by a number of studies (Chen & Chang, 2004; Cheng, 2005; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Sparks & Ganschow, 2001), little has been done to understand the link between this construct and two

other important learner variables—MI and learning attitude. The purpose of this study is therefore twofold: to gain more insight into the extent to which language anxiety affects young English learners and to explore the relations between language anxiety and other important learner variables, including MI and learning attitude. Statistical analyses are performed to ascertain (1) the extent to which foreign language anxiety is experienced by EFL elementary school children, (2) which of the three learner variables, MI, learning attitude, or perceived English ability, has a stronger association with language anxiety, (3) whether language learning experience variables, such as years of taking extracurricular English lessons outside of school and length of learning English, are also significantly related to language anxiety, MI, and learning attitudes, and (4) whether students with varying degrees of positive attitudes toward learning English have significantly different levels of language anxiety.

III. Method

A. Participants

The subjects of this study consisted of 216 elementary school students, 55.6% being male and 44.4% being female, from two different schools in central Taiwan. Three classes of fifth graders and four classes of sixth graders were included. About 78% of the students had taken extracurricular English lessons outside of school, whereas 22% had not. Table 1 shows the percentages of (1) the young children with various extracurricular English learning experiences and (2) the varied lengths of English study of the full sample.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WITH VARIOUS ENGLISH LEARNING EXPERIENCES

	Years of Taking Extracurricular English Lessons	Length of English Study
Less than two years	21.3	17.1
2 – 4 years	50.0	27.3
5 – 7 years	19.9	38.0
Over 7 years	8.8	17.6

B. Instrument

The instrument used to assess learner foreign language anxiety was adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The scale was revised and translated into a 29-item Chinese version to be more appropriate for use with young Taiwanese EFL students. Four original FLCAS items were excluded from the revised version as they might cause confusion for the 5th or 6th graders. For example, one item asks the respondents whether they feel nervous when speaking English with native speakers. However, some children, e.g., those whose parents cannot afford to send them to cram schools, may never have had the opportunity to talk with a native speaker. Ratings for all of the items were made on a 6-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was .94.

The instrument adapted by Hsieh (2001), which was based on Gardner's (1983, 1995) MI theory, was modified and used in the present study to assess learner MI. The scale included five of the total nine subscales from the original instrument: logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, interpersonal/social, intrapersonal/introspective, and visual/spatial. The five MI subcategories were selected because they are more related to language learning and thus can be more appropriately used to suit the purpose of the study. The questionnaire consisted of 39 items, each of which was scored on a six-point Likert scale and had a reliability of .93.

Student attitude towards learning English was rated by an instrument based on the scale developed by Chen (2005). The current study modified it by deleting and adding some items in the original version, making it more appropriate for elementary school participants. Student responses to all of the 18 items were scored on a 6-point Liker-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The reliability for the attitude scale was .90.

IV. Results And Discussion

To ascertain whether the young English learners experienced a certain level of anxiety, the percentages and means of student responses to each FLCAS item were first analyzed, the results being displayed in Table 2. It should be noted that all positively worded items (2, 5, 8, 16, 20, and 26) were reverse scored before any of the statistical analyses were conducted. The results showed that all of the anxiety items were validated by a third or more of the participants. About 50% or more of the subjects responded to half of the scale items reflecting a certain level of language anxiety. Compared with Horwitz, et al.'s (1986) study, there seemed to be stronger evidence signifying a sense of language anxiety in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, the mean scores of the FLCAS items also indicated various degrees of anxiety. As shown in Table 2, all the means were above 3; any item with a mean score above 3 indicates some level of anxiety, as the questionnaire was built on a six-point Likert scale. These findings strongly support Chang and Wu's (2004) conclusion that language anxiety is prevalent among elementary school EFL learners.

TABLE 2.
TOTAL PERCENTAGES AND MEANS OF STUDENT RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL ITEMS ABOUT LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	Negative	Positive	Mean
1	23.1	12.0	11.1	21.3	14.8	17.6	46.3	53.7	3.45
2	21.8	10.2	10.6	18.1	15.3	24.1	42.6	57.4	3.67
3	20.4	8.3	14.4	19.4	17.1	20.4	43.1	56.9	3.66
4	23.1	13.4	17.1	17.6	10.2	18.5	53.7	46.3	3.34
5	23.6	11.6	12.5	17.1	11.6	23.6	47.7	52.3	3.52
6	28.7	13.4	11.6	15.7	9.3	21.3	53.7	46.3	3.27
7	15.7	10.2	9.7	17.6	16.7	30.1	35.6	64.4	4.00
8	25.5	19.0	17.6	13.0	8.3	16.7	62.0	38.0	3.10
9	19.9	8.8	16.2	19.9	13.4	21.8	44.9	55.1	3.63
10	22.7	6.0	5.1	14.4	14.8	37.0	33.8	66.2	4.04
11	31.5	13.0	14.4	17.6	9.3	14.4	58.8	41.2	3.03
12	24.5	12.5	11.1	18.1	13.0	20.8	48.1	51.9	3.45
13	27.3	12.5	19.9	17.6	10.2	12.5	59.7	40.3	3.08
14	19.9	14.4	11.6	23.6	13.9	16.7	45.8	54.2	3.47
15	28.2	13.9	15.7	13.9	12.0	16.2	57.9	42.1	3.16
16	26.4	9.3	15.3	20.8	10.2	18.1	50.9	49.1	3.33
17	28.2	9.7	17.1	17.6	11.6	15.7	55.1	44.9	3.22
18	18.1	9.3	6.0	19.4	20.8	26.4	33.3	66.7	3.95
19	29.2	11.6	15.7	16.7	10.2	16.7	56.5	43.5	3.17
20	30.6	10.6	14.4	13.9	12.0	18.5	55.6	44.4	3.22
21	17.6	8.8	7.9	18.1	13.4	34.3	34.3	65.7	4.04
22	24.1	12.5	15.3	13.9	13.9	20.4	51.9	48.1	3.42
23	25.9	12.0	13.0	17.1	13.4	18.5	50.9	49.1	3.36
24	29.2	14.4	15.7	12.0	11.6	17.1	59.3	40.7	3.14
25	27.8	12.0	13.4	19.0	12.5	15.3	53.2	46.8	3.22
26	24.5	14.8	17.6	17.1	8.8	17.1	56.9	43.1	3.22
27	21.3	11.6	15.7	19.4	13.0	19.0	48.6	51.4	3.48
28	28.2	13.9	12.0	17.6	9.7	18.5	54.2	45.8	3.22
29	22.2	6.9	12.5	15.3	18.5	24.5	41.7	58.3	3.75

Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree; Negative = total percentage of responses indicating disagreement with the anxiety items; Positive = total percentage of responses indicating agreement with the anxiety items

Table 3 presents the five most anxiety-provoking situations for the elementary school learners according to the ranking of the individual item mean scores. The results suggested that the young EFL students tended to be most anxious about (1) failing their English course and (2) being a less competent English speaker than their peers, with 37% and 34.3% of the subjects selecting "strongly agree" for the two anxiety items 10 and 21, respectively. Both items had an average score of 4.04. Items 10, 18, and 29 were more likely to reflect learner anxiety about general English classroom performance, whereas items 7 and 21 were indicative of low self-confidence and worry over negative evaluation from others (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999; Horwitz et al., 1986).

TABLE 3
THE FIVE MOST ANXIETY-PROVOKING SITUATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Rank Order	Item		Mean	SD
1	10	I worry that I will fail my English course.	4.04	2.00
1	21	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	4.04	1.88
3	7	I always think that my classmates are better at English than I am.	4.00	1.82
4	18	I can feel my heart pounding when I am called on in English class.	3.95	1.83
5	29	I get nervous when my English teacher asks me questions that I am not able to prepare for in advance.	3.75	1.88

To gain more insight into the relation between foreign language anxiety and other language learning related variables, Pearson correlations were computed and the results are reported in Table 4. The studied variables included MI, learning attitudes, self-perceived English ability, and two variables regarding student learning experience: length of taking extracurricular English lessons outside of school and length of English study. It is not uncommon for Taiwanese elementary school children to go to cram schools for extracurricular English lessons as there are limited opportunities to practice the target language in the regular classroom or in daily activities. Therefore, there tends to be a large variation in student English learning experience and English proficiency, and consequently, in self-perceived English ability. The results in Table 4 revealed that foreign language anxiety had a negative and significant relationship with all variables investigated, perceived ability having the strongest correlation (-.56), followed by learning attitude (-.49), length of taking extracurricular English lessons (-.24), length of learning English (-.18), and MI (-.15). The findings regarding the link between anxiety and self-perceived ability are consistent with those by Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (1999) and Kitano (2001). Among all of the variables, the highest correlation was identified between the two learning experience variables (.68), followed by that between perceived ability and learning attitude (.61). The only non-significant correlations were found between MI and the two learning experience variables. It is noteworthy that among the three

major learner variables, language anxiety, MI, and learning attitude, learning attitude had a much stronger association with language anxiety than MI did.

TABLE 4.
PEARSON CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LANGUAGE ANXIETY, MI, AND LEARNING ATTITUDE

Variable	MI	Attitude	Anxiety	Perceived	Length1	Length2
MI	—	.397**	-.149*	.354**	.103	.059
Attitude	.397**	—	-.486**	.614**	.300**	.260**
Anxiety	-.149*	-.486**	—	-.562**	-.237**	-.177**
Perceived	.354**	.614**	-.562**	—	.386**	.308**
Length1	.103	.300**	-.237**	.386**	—	.680**
Length2	.059	.260**	-.177**	.308**	.680**	—

Note. Perceived = Perceived English ability; Lengh1 = Length of taking extracurricular English lessons outside of school; Length2 = length of English study
* p< .05; ** p<.01

In order to further analyze the relation between learning attitude and language anxiety, ANOVA was performed on the data, with student anxiety scores as the dependent variables and levels of positive learning attitude as the independent variable (see Table 5). Before the statistical analysis was conducted, the elementary school children were classified into three levels based on their attitude scores. The findings indicated that students with low- and mid-level positive attitudes (lowest 25% and middle 50%, respectively) did not differ significantly in their anxiety level. Students with high-level positive attitudes (top 25%), however, had significantly lower foreign language anxiety than their counterparts. There is little doubt that students with the most positive attitudes toward learning are likely to develop higher interest and motivation than their peers. As Yan and Horwitz (2008) noted, when students feel more interest and higher motivation for learning, they may experience a lower anxiety level in the EFL classroom.

TABLE 5.
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE RESULTS FOR ANXIETY SCORES OF STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT DEGREES OF POSITIVE LEARNING ATTITUDES

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	49417.18	2	24708.59	30.92	.000 **
Within Groups	170189.92	213	799.01		
Total	219607.11	215			

** p<.01

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As revealed in a significant number of previous studies, foreign language learning is often accompanied by a specific type of anxiety (Chan & Wu, 2004; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999; Liu, 2006; Rodr ǵuez & Abreu, 2003; Wei, 2007; Wu, 2011; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). The findings of the present study further established that foreign language anxiety begins among young children over the course of language acquisition. Certain implications of these results should be noted.

First, low self-perceived ability level can become a potent source of anxiety among foreign language learners. Kitano (2001) suggested that students may have stronger feelings of anxiety as their self-perceptions of ability levels are lower. Likewise, MacIntyre, Noels, and Cl émment (1997) found that students who are susceptible to anxiety in the language classroom are more likely to underestimate their ability level, causing a discrepancy between their self-perceived and actual language performance. Before the relations between these variables can become a vicious cycle, it is imperative that language teachers make greater efforts to increase students' self-confidence in their own academic competence and to help them set more realistic goals about their own learning achievement.

Second, learning attitude is shown to have a relatively strong and significant association with language anxiety. As various sources may inflict anxiety (Awan et al., 2010; Young, 1991), a multitude of factors, e.g., incorrect learner beliefs about language learning and instructional procedures, can affect student attitude during the process of learning a language. To decrease learner anxiety, instructors need to help students build positive attitudes toward learning a language. To achieve this teaching goal, instructors can try a variety of activities or techniques in the classroom. For example, they can make learning a more positive experience by increasing student involvement with group activities. Teachers should also be more understanding and sensitive to students' apprehension when they make mistakes in front of their peers.

Finally, the various factors that exhibit significant correlations with language anxiety may have mutual effects on one another. In order to reduce language anxiety to a minimum level, any sources that will potentially cause debilitating effects on language acquisition should be identified, and more efforts should be made to meet the affective needs of the

learners. It should be noted that EFL students prone to anxiety need constant encouragement and positive feedback from instructors, as the language classroom may be more anxiety-producing than others (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1992). In order for students to become more actively involved in the language acquisition process, maintaining a non-threatening environment is essential.

REFERENCES

[1] Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(2), 155-168.
[2] Akbari, R., & Hosseini, K. (2008). Multiple intelligences and language learning strategies: Investigating possible relations. *System*, 36, 141-155.
[3] Awan, R.-u.-N. Azher, M., Anwar, M. N., & Naz, A. (2010). An investigation of foreign language classroom anxiety and its relationship with students' achievement. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 7(11), 33-40.
[4] Aydin, S. (2008). An investigation on the language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among Turkish EFL learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, 30(1), 421-444.
[5] Bas, G. (2008). Integrating multiple intelligences in ESL/EFL classrooms. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 14(5). Retrieved July 12, 2012, from the World Wide Web: http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Bas-IntegratingMultipleIntelligences.html.
[6] Campbell, B., Campbell, L., & Dickinson, D. (1999). Teaching and Learning through Multiple Intelligences, 2nd ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
[7] Chan, D. Y. C., & Wu, G. C. (2004). A study of foreign language anxiety of EFL elementary school students in Taipei County. *Journal of National Taipei Teachers College*, 17(2), 287-320.
[8] Chen, C.Y. (2005). A Study of English Learning Attitudes of Elementary School Students in Taichung City. Unpublished master's thesis, National Taichung University of Education, Taiwan.
[9] Chen, T. Y. & Chang, G. B. Y. (2004). The relationship between foreign language anxiety and learning difficulties. *Foreign Language Annals*, 37(2), 279-287.
[10] Cheng, Y.-s. (2005). EFL learners' listening comprehension anxiety. *English Teaching & Learning*, 29(3), 25-44.
[11] Cheng, Y. s., Horwitz, E. K., & Schallert, D. L. (1999). Language anxiety: Differentiating writing and speaking components. *Language Learning*, 49(3), 417-446.
[12] Gardner, H. (1983). Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences. New York: Basic Books.
[13] Gardner, H. (1995). Reflections on Multiple Intelligences: Myths and Messages. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(3), 198-209.
[14] Haley, M. H. (2004). Learner-centered instruction and the theory of multiple intelligences with second language learners. *Teachers College Record*, 106(1), 163-180.
[15] Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70 (2), 125-132.
[16] Hsieh, C. C. (2001). The relationships between multiple intelligences, thinking styles, and critical-thinking abilities of the fifth-and sixth grade students. Unpublished Master's thesis. National Sun Yat-Sen University, Taiwan.
[17] Kitano, K. (2001). Anxiety in the college Japanese language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85(4), 549-566.
[18] Liu, M. (2006). Anxiety in Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels. *System*, 34, 301-316.
[19] Liu, H. J. (2010). Foreign language anxiety in university classes: A study of its relationship with English reading performance. *Providence Forum: Language and Humanities*, 4(1), 173-194.
[20] MacIntyre, P. D. (1999). Language anxiety: A review of the research for language teachers. In D. J. Young (Ed.), *Affect in foreign language and second language learning: A practical guide to creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere*. Boston: McGraw-Hill College.
[21] MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1989). Anxiety and second-language learning: Toward a theoretical clarification. *Language Learning*, 39(2), 251-275.
[22] MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991a). Methods and results in the study of anxiety and language learning: A review of the literature. *Language Learning*, 41 (1), 85-117.
[23] MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991b). Language anxiety: Its relationship to other anxieties and to processing in native and second languages. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 513-534.
[24] MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language learning on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning*, 44(2), 283-305.
[25] MacIntyre, P. D., Noels, K. A., & Clément, R. (1997). Biases in self-ratings of second language proficiency: The role of language anxiety. *Language Learning*, 47(2), 265-287.
[26] Nolen, J. L. (2003). Multiple intelligences in the classroom. *Education*, 124(1), 115-120.
[27] Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Bailey, P., & Daley, C. E. (1999). Factors associated with foreign language anxiety. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20, 217-239.
[28] Rodr guez, M., & Abreu, O. (2003). The stability of general foreign language classroom anxiety across English and French. *The Modern Language Journal*, 87(3), 365-374.
[29] Saito, Y., & Samimy, K. K. (1996). Foreign language anxiety and language performance: A study of learner anxiety in beginning, intermediate, and advanced-level college students of Japanese. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(2), 239-251.
[30] Sánchez-Herrero, S. A., & Sánchez, M. D. P. (1992). The predictive validation of an instrument designed to measure student anxiety in learning a foreign language. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 52, 961-966.
[31] Shore, J. R. (2001). An investigation of multiple intelligences and self-efficacy in the university English as a second language classroom. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The George Washington University.
[32] Sparks, R., & Ganschow, L. (2001). Aptitude for learning a foreign language. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 90-111.
[33] Tai, C.Y. (2001). Application of a multiple intelligences model in English instruction in junior high school: Implication of an

alternative English instruction model in the nine-year education program. Unpublished Master's thesis. National Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan.
[34] Teele, S. (1994). The relationship of multiple intelligences to the instructional process. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of California, Riverside.
[35] Wei, M. (2007). The interrelatedness of affective factors in EFL learning: An examination of motivational patterns in relation to anxiety in China. *TESL-EJ*, 11(1), 1-23.
[36] Williams, K. E., & Andrade, M. R. (2008). Foreign language learning anxiety in Japanese EFL university classes: Causes, coping, and locus of control. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 5(2), 181-191.
[37] Wu, H. J. (2011). Anxiety and reading comprehension performance in English as a foreign language. *Asian EFL Journal*, 13(2), 273-307.
[38] Yan, J. X., & Horwitz, E. K. (2008). Learners' perceptions of how anxiety interacts with personal and instructional factors to influence their achievement in English: A qualitative analysis of EFL learners in China. *Language Learning*, 58(1), 151-183.
[39] Young, D. J. (1990). An investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety and speaking. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23(6), 539-553.
[40] Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75(4), 426-439.
[41] Young, D. J. (1992). Language anxiety from the foreign language specialist's perspective: Interviews with Krashen, Omaggio Hadley, Terrell, and Rardin. *Foreign Language Annals*, 25(2), 157-172.
[42] Young, D. J. (1999). Giving priority to the language learner first. In D. J. Young (Ed.). *Affect in foreign language and second language learning*. Boston: McGraw-Hill College.
[43] Zhao, N. (2007). A study of high school students' English learning anxiety. *Asian EFL Journal*, 9(3), 22-34.

Hui-ju Liu is an assistant professor in the Department of English at Da-Yeh University in Taiwan. She has a Ph.D. degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota. Her research interests include ability grouping and individual differences in foreign language learning. Her current publications focus on topics related to academic self-concept, motivation, and learner anxiety.

Ting-han Chen received his Masters degree from the Graduate Institute of Applied Foreign Languages at Da-Yeh University in Taiwan. His research interest is on language learning strategy and multiple intelligences. To complete the requirements for teacher certification, he is currently working as a teaching intern at Chih-Yung Senior High School in Taiwan.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 939-952, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.939-952

Scientific English in the EFL Classroom: Rethinking Our Pedagogies

Sara Djamàa
Department of English, El-Tarf University, El-Tarf, Algeria

***Abstract*—This paper critiques the prevailing approaches and methodologies Algerian faculty stick to when teaching scientific English to EFL university students. It urges a reformation of the existing pedagogies by offering practical considerations in the preparation of a challenging and engaging scientific English course. It further shares an innovative course outline that incorporates students' mini-lectures, role plays, Windows Live Movie Maker video projects, writing workshops, documentaries, guest speakers, and field trips and that uses games including crosswords, liar liar, scattegories, and flyswatter to enhance scientific vocabulary retention. A survey and interviews conducted with students report the overwhelming success of the course.**

***Index Terms*—scientific English, EFL classroom, Algerian University, skills integration, sample course map, interactive activities**

I. Introduction

Being the prevalent language of modern sciences makes it both a must and a necessity for EFL (English as a foreign Language) majors to seek a certain level of proficiency in scientific English if they are to achieve effective communicative skills and competencies that respond to international standards. Heading towards this goal, EFL students at El-Tarf University in Algeria take a mandatory course in scientific English to meet graduation requirements. Before the implementation of the LMD system[1] in the Algerian universities, such course offerings were lodged merely in the subject-area departments where English constitutes a crucial component of scientific curricular but is not the primary subject of study. The departments of English, however, were limited to housing a theoretical course in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) with exclusion of such practical courses as "English for Science," "Business English" and others. Thus, as a university post-graduate who studied under the classical system[2], I didn't have the opportunity to take a similar course in scientific English nor did my colleagues at El-Tarf University. In 2011, I was called on to give a course in scientific English for second year students for the first time in my career. I wouldn't hide that I was very worried about such a module attribution and the mission I was assigned seemed onerous to the extreme for I had no previous experience in teaching this subject and no clues about effective methods and pedagogies for tackling it. However, I had to go for it anyway for the course was left with no instructor. As a first reaction, I rushed to the staff room to beseech help from colleagues who already taught the course. I also conducted lengthy discussions and interviews with advanced level students who already took it. The results of my investigation reported a prevailing pedagogy that instructors stick to in teaching the subject throughout their courses. Attempting to objectively evaluate the existing approaches, I deduced that while the methodologies colleagues embrace might be effective and useful to a certain extent, they seemed to me antiquated, static, and lacking creativity -with respect to the efforts my colleagues deploy to provide a quality teaching-. Thus, I had to sit down and develop my own course content and my own approach to deliver it. Right from the very early class meetings, I was very surprised at the results. The course was a real success. In light of the encouraging results, I decided to share this outstanding experience for the benefit of my colleagues who are dedicated to the field of teaching English as a foreign language through the present paper which urges both an amendment and an enrichment of the existing pedagogies in teaching scientific English for EFL students. It unveils certain drawbacks, deficiencies, and misconceptions with regards to the existing instructional methods, on one hand, and offers key considerations in the preparation of a challenging and engaging scientific English course, on the other hand. While I hope the suggested guidelines might help individual instructors, they are by no means the "word" of scientific English instruction in the EFL classroom and remain open to constructive criticism.

II. Beyond Reading: Broadening the Scope of Course Objectives

A typical scientific English lesson at El-Tarf University consists of exposing students to short extracts from scientific texts. The instructor invites the class to delve into a silent reading activity for a few minutes followed by a discussion of reading comprehension questions that target an evaluation of students' understanding of both the content knowledge

[1] LMD: It is an acronym for Licence-Master-Doctorat which correspond to the BA, Master's, and PhD degree. The LMD system has been integrated into the Algerian University in 2004 as part of the educational reforms that seek compliance with the American and European higher education standards.

[2] The classical system: It is the Algerian higher education system that was superseded by the LMD system in 2004.

and scientific terminology. The focus, then, shifts to grammar and language points that are specific to scientific discourse. The lesson at times concludes with a brief written expression assignment that prods students into paraphrasing and/or summarizing the text they have at hands. The prevailing method might fit those science majors whose primary need is to be able to read articles for research purposes and to write at least abstracts of their published papers in English. For the case of EFL majors, however, the adapted method shrinks the objectives of a Scientific English course to the mere preparation of students for the reading of print scientific discourse and the acquisition of a certain dose of scientific diction with little room for writing activities. While these are key sought after goals, they remain part of a whole and reflect a limited sight of what EFL students need to further grasp from English for Science courses. Indeed, after graduation, many EFL students end up working as affiliate professors in discipline-based departments where they are required to lecture in English in a particular area of expertise. As part of their academic activities in graduate schools and professional ones after, they take part in national and international conferences, seminars, and symposiums where they need to resort to spoken scientific discourse to skillfully present an academic paper or research findings before an audience. Working for national or multi-national companies such as SONATRACH, SONELGAS, ARSELORMITTAL, ASMIDAL, and others necessitates from the EFL student the skill of verbally reporting technical problems on the work ground, discussing the progress of a project with the manager, exposing the financial status of the company in an official meeting, etc. Our pedagogy disdains verbal practice of scientific English. Besides, in a scientific English course, our conception and use of scientific texts is limited to print scholarship from scientific journals, magazines, books, and internet …etc. These text forms stand as the backbone of our instruction and the only means of presentation of scientific English while reading digital scientific texts including audio-recordings and documentary videos can be a very promising and rewarding material that offers an alternative way of acquiring scientific literacy in English. Students are more likely to gain better confidence to use scientific discourse in professional and non-professional situations if trained to consume and deconstruct spoken and written scientific discourse alike. Thus, Why not nudging them towards learning to listen to scientific English and listening to it to learn it? Indeed, a pedagogy that relies solely on reading material and a little bit of writing practice suggests that developing scientific English literate students is an exclusive rather than an inclusive process. It is my belief that a skillful amalgamation of the four language skills: Reading, writing, listening, and speaking is of paramount importance if we are to harvest the utmost benefit from the scientific English class.

III. Beyond Random Selection of Course Content: Towards a Thoughtful Mapping of the Course Road

After setting clear objectives that are likely to meet students' needs and remedy for their lacks, the next challenge is to create the course outline and build its content. In this respect, I decided to divide the course skeleton into what I chose to call "folders." Every folder bears the name of the target science and encompasses up to four files, each holding the name of the theme that constitutes the focal focus of study. By devoting a whole folder to a particular discipline, I drift away from the random unstructured selection of topics and from the routine practice of tackling merely one single text from a specific scientific field throughout the whole course such as exposing students to an excerpt on dialysis in a class as a sample of medical sciences texts and then teaching them another on atoms the following one. While giving more caliber to a given science before switching to another reduces the number of subjects students get to explore, the impracticality and impossibility of covering a myriad of scientific fields within a limited number of academic semesters remains a characteristic of both methods alike. Instead, by focusing on specific sciences, we are likely to gain the following:

1. Endow the course map with enough clarity and logic to guide students throughout their learning journey instead of a random selection of topics from differing scientific disciplines.
2. Help students acquire a fair load of scientific literacy in English in a given discipline.
3. Widen students' vocabulary repertoire in a particular scientific field.
4. Acquaint students with the characteristics and particularities of the scientific discourse of a specific science.
5. Initiating students for conducting research in English in the target scientific area.

The number of folders and files we chose to tackle is obviously tailored to the quantity of instruction devoted to the course –a 90 minutes class held once a week over 14 weeks. While we encourage our students to learn bits and pieces from every single scientific field with no exclusion or preference of one upon the other, the time frame remains a hurdle towards covering as much material as we want. Thus, we thought of privileging sciences that are very close to students' practical life and that would benefit and serve them even in their daily life. While it is quite common for a student to lead a conversation about a relative who has diabetes or blood pressure, a flu he caught, a throat infection, colon problems, and other health issues, it is rare to happen that he speaks about stars, planets, comets, nebulae, or galaxies. Although interesting, learning about astronomy might not be as useful and practical as learning about health sciences. A consideration of students' background and environment also is a key principle in folder selection. Most of our students, for instance, live in El Tarf, a rural state in Algeria famous for its fauna and flora as well as for El Kala national park which is recognized as a biosphere reserve by the UNESCO (Bougherara, 2010). Also, many families in this area breed animals including sheep, cows, chicken, and rabbits. This makes veterinary medicine and biology good targets for a scientific English course. In the event graduate students should be assigned teaching responsibilities in these academic departments, which are the oldest and largest in El-Tarf University, they will be prepared to sink their teeth in this

academic adventure. Having these considerations in mind when planning one's course content, engenders high levels of motivation, interest, curiosity, and involvement from the part of students who will be grateful to us for an outstanding and effective scientific English course.

IV. From Simple to Complex Material: Towards a Gradual Increase of the Difficulty Level

As we move from one folder to another and from one topic to another within the same folder, there is a hierarchy of difficulty to be respected so as to ensure that students digest well the material, harvest the utmost benefit from the course, and meet its objectives successfully. This complexity scale is with regards to the scientific notions and concepts as well as to the language and terminology we choose to introduce. In this respect, one important thing to bear in mind is that our classes comprise heterogeneous groups of students. Some of them were science majors in high school, hence, have a much more elaborate scientific knowledge and skills than groups of students who pursued a humanities or a foreign languages track. The latter, on the other hand, were more intensely exposed to the language and its structure and functions, although it is not always the case that they show better language skills than science majors. We need to cater for the differences in students' academic background and level of scientific literacy by starting with relatively simple yet challenging material and moving gradually towards a more complex content as the course progresses. With these key principles in mind, my course content for two semesters of study came out as follows:

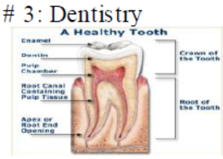
Folder#1: Clinical Psychology

- Depression
- Panic attacks and Panic disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive disorder
- Schizophrenia

Folder#2: Medicine

- The respiratory System
- Bronchitis
- Asthma
- Antibiotics (Augmentin)

Folder # 3: Dentistry

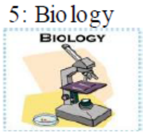


- Dental Crowns
- Dental Veneers
- Root CanalOrthodontics and aligners.

Folder #4: Veterinary Science

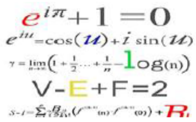
- Cats common diseases
- Dogs common diseases
- Cesarean section in cattle
- Artificial insemination

Folder # 5: Biology



- Otter
- The Osprey (Pandion haliaetus)
- Nuphar lutea (Yellow Water-lily)
- Eleocharis dulcis (The Chinese water chestnut)

Folder # 6: Mathematics



- Types of numbers and basic Algebraic manipulations.
- Solving equations and diverse Algebraic problems
- Basic geometry concepts
- Solving problems of angles and triangles.

V. Varying Classroom Activities, Course Materials and Assignments

An English for Science course is a rich arena for introducing a myriad of classroom activities and assignments beyond the routine reading and writing practice and for using a wide range of material other than print texts retrieved from books or online. In this section, I will expose how I tackled parts of the course content I chose to teach. To begin with, the detailed course syllabus, particularly the course calendar section that cites the required and suggested readings along with the assignments' due dates and course events was the main reference document to help students get a sense of the course map and prepare for classes upfront. A glossary of 10 to 15 key scientific terms is handed over to students before treating each new file. It is often accompanied by a reading assignment with comprehension questions as a warm-up for the class. Every folder culminates by a project to be produced by groups of students. Given that classes are usually large, comprising up to 40 students, it would be unpractical to have them come up with individual projects because the time allotted to the course will not allow it. Hence, we decided to divide the class into 8 teams with each comprising up to 5 students who are expected to prepare the projects together.

A. Folder #1: Clinical Psychology

For the first two files in the opening folder, I relied on lecturing as the main method of instruction and delivered a regular clinical Psychology course as though I was teaching psychology majors. I used slide shows with charts, diagrams, and videos. To my surprise, the class turned into a crucible. Students' motivation, engagement and participation seemed to have highly peaked for the topics were remarkably appealing to them. The careful choice of topics relevant to students' interests was meant to help them grasp the terminology easily and to benefit them not only academically and professionally but in their own personal lives as well. Strikingly surprising was the fact that 65% of the students I was teaching suspected that they themselves might have been suffering from depression after shedding light on the depression topic. Many of them attempted at identifying the type of depression they might be having. Manel, a second year student, declares:

For years, I used to get so blue in winter, with significant decrease in appetite, weight loss and insomnia but it never occurred to my mind that this is a health condition associated with a type of depression that can be taken care of. Now I think I know: It is the nightmarish Seasonal Affective Disorder and I will try to seek help from a physician before this coming winter looks upon us.

Leila, a colleague at the Biology department and a second year student at the department of English certifies: ***"This lesson is a turning point in my whole life. I now come to realize that I am a real example of a depressed person. Thank you for enlightening my path!"*** The third file of the clinical psychology folder also took the form of a lecture. However, this time it was given by a team of five students who were assigned it right from the start of the semester. Each group member was responsible for a particular portion of the lecture. They assumed the responsibility of preparing the glossary of terms and providing the class with a reading assignment prior to their lecture. In class, they took roles in introducing the OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) definition, signs and symptoms, causes, categories, diagnosis and treatment. They enriched their lecture with pictures and videos they retrieved from internet. This was a good oral practice for them and an invaluable opportunity to prepare them for teaching such courses in the target subject departments. At the end of the lecture, students were given feedback by their classmates. The lecture was videotaped after getting students' consent. A copy of it was given to the concerned team members as a self-assessment tool along with a detailed written feedback from the part of the instructor and another was left at the disposal of the group delegate for the rest of the class to make copies of it and save it in the course portfolio as the first product of students in the scientific English course. The OCD file proved interesting to a considerable number of students. Hamida, declared:

I have a brother who, since his childhood, used to perform the ritual behavior of washing his hands excessively whenever he touches the door handle or finishes eating. He wastes a huge amount of time taking several baths a day to ensure he is clean. My mom's vain attempts to impede him from over cleaning his clean body make him very anxious, at times very aggressive. The family's perception was that this is part of his personality. He now is a university student. As he grew up, my parents' worries grew with him because he tends to waste more and more time everyday making sure he cleans up himself. After today's class, I will rush home to explain to my family that my brother's sufferings and my parents' worries are summarized in the OCD. God! Years of torture before the question mark is answered, and where? In a scientific English course!

Soumia had a hand up and in a short statement, she confessed in front of the whole class with tears in her eyes: ***"Today and only today, I came to realize why I lost the love of my life: I simply couldn't stop the CD of the OCD!"*** The last file "schizophrenia" that belongs to the first folder was treated through a couple of texts that students were assigned to read at home followed by a thematic, structural and grammatical in-class discussion with focus on the features of scientific discourse. We chose to wrap up the first folder by assigning a role play project to another group of five students. In this assignment, the group was required to tackle a new clinical psychology-related topic by performing a scene at the counselor's office. The group chose to shed light on Autism and Bulimia nervosa. Just like students lecturers, this group assigned two texts for the class to read and distributed a glossary of key terms prior to performing the play. One of the team members assumed the role of the psychologist, another incarnated the role of a parent with the third student representing the autistic child and displaying some of the autism symptoms in the play. Likewise, the remaining couple of students represented a bulimic adolescent girl accompanied by her mother. Both parents separately detailed to the counselor the symptoms their kids exhibit while the kids worked on displaying some of those symptoms to the audience and interacted with the psychologist to answer his/her questions. For both cases, the counselor diagnosed the illnesses, carried discussions with the parents on potential causes, case management recommendations, and suggested treatment plan. After the role play concluded, the floor was open for discussion. The team attempted to answer most of their classmates' questions to the best of their knowledge and then listened to their feedback. As we proceeded with the students' lecture, we got students' consent to videotape their role play, gave them a copy of the recording with a detailed written feedback and made another copy available to the class to keep in the course portfolio. It is worth mentioning that both the lecturing and role play activities are an alternative way to have mainly the student-performers consume scientific texts, understand their underlying concepts and memorize the key vocabulary, an objective we used to seek achieving solely through engaging them in in-class reading and having them write summaries of texts.

B. Folder#2: Medicine

The medicine folder opens by an anatomy of the respiratory system as the founding brick of the folder pile to pave the path for the study of bronchitis and asthma, two common respiratory diseases. With the principle of bringing

something new to every class in mind, the discussion and analysis of the assigned readings was accompanied by charts and models of the respiratory tract and tertiary bronchi for both a healthy and sick person. I borrowed these for classroom use from a physician specialized in pulmonology who displays them in his office. The charts were big and to the course convenience, the terminology was written in English. I also used videos to make the sessions lively. We chose to use this material for our belief that it would be capturing to students' attention and interest and would result in a better understanding of the concepts imbedded in the texts. A medication leaflet is an authentic scientific text to take advantage of in this course and training students to read it is an important skill to acquaint them with when abroad or even in their country when encountering leaflets of imported medications written in English. For this purpose, I chose to introduce "Augmentin," an antibiotic prescribed for many illnesses inter alia lower respiratory tract infection. At the end of the folder, two groups of 5 students each were assigned the production of medical brochures presumably for the university's health center to display in the waiting room. One group chose to work on tuberculosis while the other opted for pneumonia. A third team of 5 members was assigned the translation of some sections of a medication leaflet along with its box and that will presumably be exported by the producing laboratory to an English speaking country. The team opted for Symbicort Turbuhaler, an inhaler produced in Sweden by AstraZeneca. The medication is abundantly available in the Algerian market and its leaflet is written both in Arabic, which is the native language of our students, and in French, the first foreign language studied in Algerian schools. Copies of the brochures, translated leaflet and medication box cover were handed over to students to read and add to the course portfolio.

C. Folder # 3: Dentistry

This folder was treated mainly through audiovisual texts retrieved from internet. From the study of a number of videos, a group of students were asked to summarize the key content of the folder in a written form by producing themselves a written scientific text while taking into account the characteristics of scientific discourse. Another group of students was assigned a video project to animate the waiting room of a dentist's office. The group used Windows Live Movie Maker and opted for a synopsis of dental problems and their management including: cavities, gingivitis, bad breath, wisdom teeth, dentures, teeth whitening, brushing, flossing, fill ins, crowns, bridges, aesthetic dental surgery and others. A final group was requested to produce two posters to be posted at the dentist's office. For both projects, students used images, charts, diagrams and dental models.

D. Folder #4: Veterinary Science

This folder was mostly taken care of by Dr. Kamel Miroud, a colleague majoring in veterinary sciences. A veteran of the veterinary school at El Tarf University and a graduate of royal veterinary college at the University of London, Dr. Miroud was formally invited to my course to give lectures on the two first files: cats and dogs common diseases. We invited him for we thought that having him in class as a guest speaker would endow the course with a creative flair and an interesting flavor. Students got exposed to a different approach to teaching scientific English as conducted in the department of the major and seemed to have appreciated the idea of breaking the routine by learning with a new teacher in presence of their own. Dr.Miroud's generosity extended to accepting my request to host students in the field to witness a cesarean section in a cow along with the artificial insemination process. The class stood fascinated by the spectacular procedure while listening to the explanation of Dr. Miroud in English and taking notes. Their retention of the terminology and understanding of the processes were strikingly remarkable and confirmed the magic of learning while doing. At the end of the folder, a group of students was asked to craft a scientific text on the cesarean section in cows while the other was assigned the same task for artificial insemination. The product was distributed to the class to read and keep in the course portfolio.

E. Folder # 5: Biology

Lake Obeira in El-Kala National Park, listed as a wetland of international importance by the Ramsar Convention (The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, no date), hosts the otter, a threatened species that is protected by the UNESCO. The Osprey, an endangered bird raptor species also dwells in the park and contributes to its faunistic richness. As you walk through the Park lakes or drive through El-Tarf national road, you cannot miss the eye catchy yellow-water lilies that cover the lakes' face while the underwater is rich by the rare aquatic plant named The Chinese water chestnut "Eleocharis dulcis." Located about 20 minutes away from El Tarf University, the fauna and flaura of El-kala National Park represented an appealing folder to tackle in the Scientific English course. Foci of the readings and audiovisual materials were on the scientific classification of selected fauna and flora (kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, and subfamily), nomenclature, life cycle, characteristics, habitat, nutrition, and threats. In addition to these aspects, the flora deserved a look at the potential pharmaceutical characteristics and culinary aspects. The biology folder culminated by two final projects: one asks a team to produce a tourists' guide to the Brabtia National park rare animal and plant species whereas the other assignment requires a different group to accomplish the same task in a documentary form. The two teams were asked to work in collaboration so that they introduce different species. The written guide displayed short ID cards of the Barbary stag (Cervus elaphus barbarus), also known as the Atlas deer, the spotted hyena (Crocuta crocuta), the caracal, the loggerhead sea turtle, the marbled duck or marbled teal (marmaronetta angustirostris), cedrus and myrtus (myrtle). The documentary, however, introduced bats, Monachus, the golden jackal (Canis aureus), the European Shag or Common Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis), the Purple Swamphen (Porphyrio porphyrio), the

Ferruginous Duck, Cistus, rosmarinus officinalis and the bay laurel. As usual, the projects were distributed to the class to accumulate the course portfolio. This folder is particularly important for those students who will end up majoring in English for tourism in their final year of the BA degree.

F. Folder # 6: Mathematics

While a Fulbright grantee to the United States of America, I considered applying for graduate schools to pursue my PhD studies. It was only when I went through the application process that I came to hear of the GRE test (Graduate Record Examination) for the first time and found myself in front of the challenging reality that I would need to study mathematics in English to be able to do well in the quantitative section of the exam. Hence, I joined the quantitative literacy Center at Hamilton College to help me prepare for the test. The mathematical notions we had to tackle were very basic to me. They centered mainly on middle school courses. However, the technical vocabulary was a real obstacle. I remember having failed to do a bunch of exercises in a sample test because I could not understand what such terms as "Isosceles" meant while I do perfectly know all of the geometrical rules and notions related to it in Arabic, my native language. As a former student of English, I would have appreciated having my ESP professor introduce us to basic mathematical concepts in English and initiate us for such an important test as the GRE. It is mainly why I chose to treat a folder on mathematics. I proceeded by teaching a regular mathematics class with problems that students worked in groups to solve. I concluded the folder by assigning sample quantitative sections of the GRE test to the whole class to work on at home. We then discussed the problems, corrected them and had students save their answers along with a copy of the answer key as part of the course portfolio. Besides, two groups of students were assigned the task of designing themselves mathematical problems and handing them to the remaining two groups to solve them as part of their project assignment.

VI. Language Games: Towards Boosting Technical Vocabulary Retention

"Fill in the blanks in the following paragraph using the technical terms from the word bank provided to you below." This is the routine exercise teachers of English for Science give their students to check their memorization of the key scientific terminology. Scientific English courses are indeed a rich arena for introducing a myriad of activities to both boost and test students' retention of high technical vocabulary. To begin with, the classical fill in the blanks exercise can be done in an alternative way by prodding the class into listening to an audiovisual text while providing them with its script and requiring them to fill in the gaps with key words that are muted in the video. By doing so, students get trained to guess the high technical vocabulary in its context and practice spelling it themselves correctly rather than providing them with the terms. Besides, studies indicate that students learn better while having fun. In this respect, teaching games spice up the course and aid better vocabulary retention. Here are some possible games to take advantage of in English for Science courses. For Liar Liar and flyswatter, full credit is granted to a colleague of mine who shared them with me after a workshop held at the Middlebury at Mills intensive Arabic summer program in the context of teaching Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) and thereby inspired me to import them to the English for science classroom.

A. Crosswords

Our students are familiar with this game as they used to play it on the daily newspapers. Importing it to the class bridges the gap between school instruction and cultural practices that take place outside the classroom walls which is an invaluable motivation factor. The principle of the game is providing students with definitions or hints of high technical vocabulary terms and having them create a crossword out of them. They can work on it individually or in groups. The more difficult the clues are, the more challenging the game becomes.

B. Scattegories

Scattegories is an effective game to bolster the retention and review of the high technical vocabulary of a whole file. It consists of dividing students into pairs, providing them with a theme, and having them write as many scientific terms related to the target theme as they can. Students score a point for every distinguished answer and no points are due for similar responses.

C. Liar Liar

This game is to be played orally. The teacher divides the class into teams that sit in circles. In every team, a student is assigned the third person singular pronoun "it" and asked to stand out of the circle. The teacher asks all students to close their eyes so that he/she taps at the heads of three of them whose mission would be giving wrong answers to the questions the "it" student is to ask. The latter has to discover the liars in the group and once he/she succeeds in unveiling them, another student is picked up to be the one asking questions and filtering the wrong answers from the correct ones. This game helps students put into practice the vocabulary they learnt and test both their retention of it and their grasp of scientific knowledge in English (Magidow, no date).

D. Taboo

This game consists of having pairs of teams facing the board with a representative student from every team facing his/her team members i.e. with his/ her back facing the board to impede him from seeing what the teacher writes, draws, or posts on it. The team is given words, drawings or pictures and is assigned the task of guiding the student through explanations, definitions, or hints towards finding the term. The group members then take turns in representing their team by unveiling the technical terms provided by their teacher. The team that wins is the one with the largest number of students figuring out the words first.

E. Flyswatter

The teacher writes on the board a list of scattered technical terms. Pairs of teams have a representative student each. The teacher gives a definition or a descriptive statement of a technical term and the first student to hit the right word using a flyswatter scores a point for his team (Magidow, no date).

VII. Evidence of Course Success

As a professor who designed and taught this course, I initially rated it as excellent, overwhelmingly successful. Students' tests, exams, projects, classroom participation, vocabulary retention, understanding of scientific notions, motivation, and engagement during the flow of the course were exceptionally outstanding. However, potential discrepancies might rise in some aspects of the course between my perception of it as an educator and their evaluation of it as learners. Hence, students' reaction to it is the word in assessing, and potentially absolutely confirming, its success. For this reason, we devised a survey of six categories which comprised a total of 42 Likert scale style items meant to assess students' evaluation of this scientific English course in comparison with previous courses they took. The two last questions of each category are somewhat summative of it. The survey was administered to a target pool of 134 students, ages 20 to 42 years, who constitute the whole population of second year students at the department of English in El-Tarf University and who all took my scientific English course. The participants were asked to voluntarily take part in anonymously answering the survey and were assured that no penalty is due for reluctance to contribute to the study and no extra credit will be given to respondents. Hard copies of the survey were distributed to them during a regular class session that took place three weeks before spring semester wrapped up. Extra copies were left with the delegate of every group in case some participants misplace their own copy of the survey. We made students aware that the day of the final exam, which was scheduled 5 weeks later, is the last possible chance for us to collect the respondents' answers.

Out of the 134 EFL students enrolled in second year, 53 returned the survey the following session i.e. a week later; 38 returned it two weeks after; 16 submitted it during the last session; 11 handed it to us immediately at the end of the final exam; while 16 didn't return it. This makes a total of 118 respondents.

The results of the survey (see Appendix B) revealed an overwhelming satisfaction with the course from different angles. Category 1 which targets an evaluation of structure-related elements yielded a very good rating with a weighted mean ranging from 4.5 to 4.73. The overall evaluation of the structure of the course deserved a mean of 4.57 which is very satisfactory while the structure of previous ESP courses taken by students deserved a mean of 1.60 which is interpreted as dissatisfied. Category 2 is meant to evaluate the course content. Students expressed their extreme satisfaction with the relevance of the course content to their background, environment and practical life (M = 4.12) as well as with the content originality, appeal, and engaging nature (M = 4.45). The hierarchy of difficulty in presenting the content deserved a relatively lower mean of 3.5 which is still interpreted as very satisfied in Likert scale. Overall, the relevance, appeal, and usefulness of the content of previously taken ESP courses yielded a mean of 1.52 which reflects the respondents' dissatisfaction while the content of the scientific English course was rated 4.20, which is a very good mean. Category 3 of the survey aims at evaluating the course activities, materials, and assignments. The lowest derived means in this category were 3.27< 3.65< 3.69< 3.75< 3.79, attributed respectively to students' lectures, the writing workshops, models and pictures, the lecturing method, and at-home reading and writing assignments. While low compared to other items in category 3, all these derived means fall within the range of a very satisfactory evaluation when referring to Likert scale interpretation. Students are used to most of these activities in other courses they take -- with the exception of students' lectures-- which might be an explanation for why they rated them relatively lower than other items in this part of the survey. Course portfolio (M = 4.26), guest speakers (M = 4.28), audiovisual materials (M = 4.29), video-projects (M = 4.33), role-plays (M = 4.42), language games (M = 4.45), and field trips (M= 4.65) proved to be very appealing and useful for students. This might partly be due to their originality in the context in which they were introduced. The two concluding items in this category of the survey strive at comparing the evaluation of the activities, materials, and assignments of the scientific English course with those of previously taken ESP courses. While the latter yielded a dissatisfactory mean of 1.47, the former deserved a very satisfactory mean of 4.41. Items 27 through 35 in category 4 assess the achievement of course objectives which resulted in a lower mean of 4.09 and a higher one of 4.52 which all fall within a very good range. This confirms that the course met students' needs, necessities, and lacks that's why it deserved an overall mean of 4.24. Previously studied ESP courses, however, proved to have done poorly in guiding students towards achieving the sought after goals (M = 1.60). Category 5 of the survey rates students' overall reaction to the course. ESP courses previously taken by students yielded a dissatisfactory mean of 1.60; the scientific English course deserved a very good mean of 4.41 when compared to other ESP courses and 4.37 when compared to

other courses students took in the undergraduate curriculum. Finally, in category 6 which aims at rating students' concluding impression about the course, the respondents recommend the course approach and methodology to other ESP teachers with an excellent mean of 4.31 while they recommend it to other students of English with a slightly higher mean of 4.43. A peek at these results reveals the astounding success of the course.

Besides the survey, we randomly assigned 21 respondents i.e. 7 from each group to an interviewer, a colleague of us, to proceed with a 10-15 minutes interview (see Appendix C for questions). We avoided doing the interviews ourselves to maximize the honesty and credibility aspect of the answers. This would ensure students are not put in a situation where they would be giving only compliments and not discussing the cons of the course out of embarrassment or intimidation caused by the presence of the professor who was responsible for the course. The interviewees agreed upon a meeting time with the interviewer. Answers were recorded and the participants were guaranteed the anonymity of their contribution. Once the interviews were over, the interviewer delved into transcribing students' answers and into correcting the language without affecting the meaning. Then, she gave every student his coded transcript to review and check if he/she wants to add anything to his/her answers. After this, I received the final version of the transcribed interviews. Below are selected answers that summarize students' responses:

"An ESP course has never been this enjoyable and engaging for me. I found myself unconsciously internalizing a good deal of the course content without deliberate efforts." Student E

In a culture where psychological and psychiatric conditions are a taboo, I was impressed by my classmates unveiling their sufferings and sharing them with us without complexes all along putting into practice the scientific knowledge and vocabulary we learnt. I think that was amazing, hard to imagine or expect before it did actually happen. I believe this is a testimony that the course definitely succeeded in motivating us and in increasing our engagement. Most importantly, it helped raise our awareness of certain things that have lifelong benefits beyond academia and the professional life. Student K

To be honest, I used to constantly skip the ESP course as a freshman student. For me, it was dull. I can read a text at home, write the summary of it and answer the comprehension questions. Once in class, I expect discussing the text and doing interesting and original activities. Class time is precious. Are you kidding me! I come to the ESP class and spend most of it reading a text! This class, however, was a totally different story. When I first attended it, I could tell from the syllabus and the assignments that this course is setting high expectations and will potentially meet my needs and wants as well. And yes! It did. Student F

As we did expect, some students complained about the demanding nature of the course both time and material-wise:

"The course was interesting and motivating. However, the assigned activities, especially the projects, were time consuming. We would have loved it more if we had enough time to yield better quality work. Helas! Time was an obstacle." Students A

Our team members found the assignments very beneficial and enjoyable. We learnt a good deal and had a lot of fun. On the other hand, we spent about 10 days trying to find a friend or a relative who can lend us a camera to shoot our video project. This impeded us from working smoothly. Our word goes to the administration of the department which should provide us with the necessary equipment. Otherwise, it is unfair to have us waste such an amount of time and energy just to find the equipment we need. It would also be a big pity if we cancel such invaluable learning assignments and activities because of the lack of equipment. Besides, for such courses with innovative design and assignments, we shouldn't be expected to pay from our own pockets for materials that should normally be provided by the university. Come on! We are students and all we get is a stipend of 4000 Algerian Dinars every three months. The administration should consider this factor as well. Student C

Another obstacle confronted by students is expressed in the following statement:

The originality of the teaching methods and activities in this course was met by the reluctance of the surrounding environment and certain target services to collaborate with us in our attempt to seek help with information or authorization to pursue some research in certain sites. This culture is unfortunately absent and the university has to strive at ingraining it to facilitate the learning process for us. Student G.

VIII. Conclusion

It is high time to rethink our pedagogies in teaching Scientific English to EFL students. We need to remedy for our outlandishly unstructured courses by designing a well-woven syllabus based on logical principles and practical considerations that meet students' learning necessities and needs. Limiting the course agenda to the reading of printed scientific texts and the writing of relevant summaries is sabotaging students' growth. Instead, integrating the four language skills in addition to viewing maximizes their learning and engagement. Incorporating students' mini-lectures, role plays, Windows Live Movie Maker video projects, documentaries, recorded lectures, guest speakers, and field trips into the course is very rewarding. Writing workshops that train students in producing scientific texts themselves inter alia medical leaflets, posters, and brochures break the routine and classical activity of summarizing texts. Studying Science and memorizing high technical vocabulary while having fun is possible through the integration of language games such as crosswords, scattegories, Liar Liar, taboo, flyswatter and others. These suggestions are only a few amongst a myriad of others that we can come up with to endow our classes with a creative flair and help guide students

towards achieving both the course objectives and career goals. Thus, Let us reflect on our teaching practices and methodologies; let us amend our current pedagogies!

APPENDIX A. THE ESP COURSE EVALUATION SURVEY

El-Tarf University
Djamaà S
Spring 2012

Dear respondents,

The present survey is meant to assess the effectiveness and success of the Scientific English course you took with professor Sara Djamaà throughout the 2011-2012 academic year. Your feedback is of great importance to us. Thus, we would really appreciate you devoting some of your precious time to completing it. The results we get will be released in scientific events and publications. The anonymity of the survey protects your identity and guarantees confidentiality. Please be advised that no penalty is due for reluctance to participate in this survey and no extra credit will be given to the respondents. Should you have any questions regarding the present survey, don't hesitate to contact Miss.Sara Djamaà via phone (o556619226) or e-mail dgimmah@yahoo.com

Thank you for your cooperation,

Sara Djamaà (Ph.D. student researcher at Badji Mokhtar-Annaba University)

Faculty of English at El-Tarf University

Part A:

This part is designed for statistical purposes. Please check the following boxes.

1. Respondent's ID: _____
2. Gender: Male ○ Female ○
3. Age: _____

Part B:

Instructions for categories 1 and 2:

For categories 1 and 2 below, indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement abiding by the following scale:

1. **Strongly disagree**
2. **Disagree**
3. **Neither**
4. **Agree**
5. **Strongly agree**

Category 1: Rating Course structure	**Scale**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. The course map was clear enough	○	○	○	○	○
5. I prefer to study a number of topics related to a particular discipline to the study of one topic from a bunch of sciences	○	○	○	○	○
6. ESP courses I took before were very well structured	○	○	○	○	○
7. Compared to former ESP courses I took, this scientific English course was more carefully woven and organized	○	○	○	○	○

Category 2: Rating Course Content	Scale 1	2	3	4	5
8. The course content was relevant to my background, immediate environment, and practical life	O	O	O	O	O
9. The selected course content was original, appealing, and engaging	O	O	O	O	O
10. The course content respected a hierarchy of difficulty suitable to my language proficiency level and to my scientific knowledge background	O	O	O	O	O
11. In terms of content relevance, appeal, and usefulness, previous ESP courses were effective	O	O	O	O	O
12. Compared to other ESP courses I have taken, this course content is more effective	O	O	O	O	O

Instructions for category 3:

For category 3 below, indicate how you would rate the effectiveness and success of the course activities, materials, and assignments abiding by the following scale:

1. **Not effective**
2. **Somewhat effective**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Effective**
5. **Very effective**

Category 3: Rating Course activities, Materials, and Assignments	Scale 1	2	3	4	5
13. The lecturing method	O	O	O	O	O
14. Students' lectures	O	O	O	O	O
15. At-home reading and writing assignments	O	O	O	O	O
16. The writing workshops	O	O	O	O	O
17. Audiovisual materials	O	O	O	O	O
18. Role-plays	O	O	O	O	O
19. Course portfolio	O	O	O	O	O
20. Course materials e.g., models, pictures, figures, and charts	O	O	O	O	O
21. Video projects	O	O	O	O	O
22. Guest speakers	O	O	O	O	O
23. Field trips	O	O	O	O	O
24. Language games	O	O	O	O	O
25. Overall, course activities, materials, and assignments of ESP courses I took before were	O	O	O	O	O
26. Overall, course activities, materials, and assignments of the scientific English course were	O	O	O	O	O

Instructions for category 4:

For categories 4, indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement abiding by the following scale:

1. **Strongly disagree**
2. **Disagree**
3. **Neither**
4. **Agree**
5. **Strongly agree**

Category 4: Rating the Attainment of Course Objectives	Scale 1	2	3	4	5
27. Course stirred my intellectual curiosity	O	O	O	O	O
28. Course increased my classroom participation and engagement	O	O	O	O	O
29. Course boosted my learning motivation	O	O	O	O	O
30. Course improved my reading of scientific texts	O	O	O	O	O
31. Course honed my skill of writing scientific texts	O	O	O	O	O
32. Course improved my skill of listening to scientific texts	O	O	O	O	O
33. Course improved my skill of speaking about scientific topics	O	O	O	O	O
34. Course deepened my understanding of scientific discourse and its characteristics	O	O	O	O	O
35. Course helped me acquire a considerable load of scientific terms in a range of disciplines	O	O	O	O	O
36. Previous ESP courses helped me achieve these objectives well	O	O	O	O	O
37. This course helped me achieve these objectives well	O	O	O	O	O

Instructions for category 5:

For category 5 below, indicate how you would rate this course:

1. **Very poor**
2. **Poor**
3. **Average**
4. **Very good**
5. **Excellent**

Category 5: Rating Students' Overall Reaction to the Course	Scale 1	2	3	4	5
38. How would you rate previous ESP courses you have taken?	O	O	O	O	O
39. Compared to other ESP courses, I would rate this course as	O	O	O	O	O
40. Compared to other courses I have so far taken during my Undergraduate studies, I would rate this course as	O	O	O	O	O

Instructions for category 6:

For category 6 below, indicate the extent to which you would recommend this course for other students of English and its approach to other ESP teachers using the following scale:

1. **Not at all**
2. **To a certain extent**
3. **Not sure**
4. **strongly**
5. **very strongly**

Category 6: Rating Students' Concluding Impression about the course	Scale 1	2	3	4	5
41. I recommend that other ESP professors adapt the approaches, methodologies, and activities used in this course	O	O	O	O	O
42. I recommend such a course for other students of English	O	O	O	O	O

-End of Survey-

APPENDIX B. STUDENTS' RATING OF THE SCIENTIFIC ENGLISH COURSE

Results

Category	Survey Item	Mean
1. Rating Course Structure	4. Clarity of the course map	4.73
	5. Preference for the study of a number of Topics in a given discipline over the Random selection of themes from Different sciences	4.5
	6. The structure of previously taken ESP courses	1.60
	7. The structure of the Scientific English course	4.57
2. Rating Course Content	8. Relevance of the course content to students' background, immediate environment and practical life	4.12
	9. Originality, appeal, and the engaging nature of the course content	4.45
	10. The suitability of the course's hierarchy of Difficulty to students' level of scientific knowledge and language proficiency	3.5
	11. Evaluation of the relevance, appeal, and usefulness of the content of previously taken ESP courses	1.52
	12. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Scientific English course content	4.20
3. Rating Course Activities, Materials, and Assignments	13. The lecturing method	3.75
	14. Students' lectures	3.27
	15. At-home reading and writing assignments	3.79
	16. The writing workshops	3.65
	17. Audiovisual materials	4.29
	18. Role-plays	4.42
	19. Course portfolio	4.26
	20. Course materials e.g., models, pictures, figures, and charts	3.69
	21. Video projects	4.33
	22. Guest speakers	4.28
	23. Field trips	4.65
	24. Language games	4.45
	25. Course activities, materials, and assignments of Previously taken ESP courses	1.47
	26. Course activities, materials, and assignments of the Scientific English course	4.41

4. Rating the Attainment of Course Objectives	27. Arousing intellectual curiosity	4.11
	28. Increasing classroom participation and engagement	4.19
	29. Boosting learning motivation	4.40
	30. Improving reading of scientific texts	4.41
	31. Honing the skill of writing scientific texts	4.09
	32. improving the skill of listening to scientific texts	4.50
	33. Improving the skill of speaking about scientific topics	4.25
	34. Deepening understanding of scientific discourse and its characteristics	4.45
	35. Acquainting students with a considerable load of scientific terms in a range of disciplines	4.52
	36. Previous ESP courses helped me achieve these objectives well	1.60
	37. This course helped me achieve these objectives well	4.24
5. Rating Students' Overall Reaction to the Course	38. Overall rating of previously taken ESP courses	1.60
	39. Overall rating of the Scientific English course Compared to previously taken ESP courses	4.41
	40. Overall rating of the Scientific English course compared to other courses of the undergraduate curriculum	4.37
6. Rating Students' Concluding Impression about the Course	41. Recommending the course approach and methodology to other ESP professors	4.31
	42. Recommending the course to other students of English	4.43

APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the pros of the scientific English course you took?
2. What are the cons of the scientific English course you took?
3. What obstacles did you encounter in this course?
4. Do you have any comments you want to add about the course?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A zillion thanks go to Dr. Kamel Miroud, a faculty member at the veterinary school of El-Tarf University who contributed to the success of the course by accepting to deliver two lectures and to host students in a field examination of the cesarean section and artificial insemination processes. We also acknowledge the help of our colleague Soumaya Aouaidjia who conducted interviews with students as well as the contribution of our colleague Alexander Magidow who served as a source of inspiration for certain language games.

REFERENCES

[1] Bougherara, A. (2010). Identification et suivi des paysages et de leur biodiversité dans la wilaya d'Eltarf (Algérie). *Revue Télédétection* 9. 3-4, 225-243. http://www.teledetection.net/upload/TELEDETECTION/pdf/Article5V1.pdf (accessed 23/11/2012).

[2] Magidow, A. (no date). Language teaching games. A blog for sharing language teaching games aimed at high school and college foreign language classrooms. http://languageteachinggames.blogspot.com/ (accessed 15/09/2012).

[3] The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. (no date). The Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance. http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-list/main/ramsar/1-31-218_4000_0__ (accessed 23/11/2012).

Sara Djamàa, was born in Annaba, Algeria on December 6, 1982. She earned her M.A. in TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) at the University of Bêjaia in Algeria in 2007 and her BA in English Language and Literature at Badji Mokhtar-Annaba University in 2004. Miss Djamàa was a Fulbright grantee to the United States of America in 2007 where she spent two years studying and doing research at Hamilton College, NY. She was an academic visitor to the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University in May 2010 where she spent a month doing research. Miss Djamàa also visited the department of English and related Literature at the University of York for a short term internship in May 2012. She currently is enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the University of Annaba in Algeria with a specialization in TEFL.

She served as Head of the English Department in El-Tarf University, El-Tarf, Algeria from 2009 to 2011 and is currently the President of the Scientific Committee of the department in addition to being a faculty member. She taught English composition, lectured on British and American literature, and gave courses in phonetics, ESP, scientific English, and oral expression at the University of Annaba, Bêjaia, and El-Tarf for five years. She was an instructor of English at Djamile Sadki Ezzahaoui Middle School as well as Mohamed Boudiaf High School in Dar El-Beida, Algiers in 2005. Foci of her current and previous research interests include Teaching English for Specific Purposes, teaching methodologies and approaches, teacher education, syllabus design, learners' affective factors, film and literature, and technology in the EFL classroom.

Miss Djamàa is a member of the IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language).

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 953-957, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.953-957

Language, Culture, Idioms, and Their Relationship with the Foreign Language

Oktay Yağiz
Department of English Teaching, Faculty of Education, Atatürk University, Erzurum, 25240, Turkey

Siros Izadpanah
English Language Department, Islamic Azad University, Zanjan Branch, Iran

***Abstract*—This study explores the close relationship between language and culture. Nowadays, the issue of human communication is one of the most important subjects occupying the minds of linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers. .Since it is the most important means for communication among human beings, the relation between language, culture, and their mutual interactions have high significance. The inextricable connection highlights various manifestations of conventionalized language including the idiomatic expressions as one of the important and pervasive language uses reflecting culture in real life. Like other types of figurative language, idioms appear to be the natural decoders of customs, cultural beliefs, social conventions, and norms. Idioms, as a major component of native-like communication, enable a language learner to understand the thoughts, emotions and views of the speakers of target language. For this reason, learning idioms provides learners with a significant chance to acquire information about the underlying parameters of a language. Awareness of figurative language particularly idioms will improve teaching and assist learners to have better communication strategies. Otherwise, accurate and appropriate target language use and understanding will be at risk and the learners will tend to transfer their native language conceptual structure which will most probably be inappropriate. The strong relationship among the language, culture, and the figurative branch of the language especially idioms need particular attention in language learning since it appears to have inadequate research. Therefore, a systematic knowledge of language and culture integration inside and beyond the classroom setting can be built up.**

***Index Terms*—communication, culture, idioms, learning foreign language**

I. Background

Given that language is used to construct our social lives and using this understanding to improve our world, language and culture are inextricably intermingled. This togetherness has been widely highlighted in several linguistic, social and cultural studies (e.g. Alptekin, 2002; Brown, 1994; Bygate, 2005; Jiang, 2000; MacKenzie, 2012; Risager, 2007;). Peterson and Coltrane (2003) emphasize that to achieve desired communication, culturally appropriate language use appear to be a must. In other words, knowledge of linguistic features is not adequate for successful intercultural communication (Scarino, 2010). This knowledge, in fact, must be supported by an awareness of sociocultural context, tendencies, conventions, and norms in which the communication takes place (Baker, 2012). Likewise, Byram and Risager‟s (1999, cited in Al-Issa, 2005) argument that culture has a crucial role in encoding and decoding messages corroborates with the above mentioned idea that culture is at the heart of communication. Culture as a body of knowledge of common beliefs, behaviors and values appear to be the factor to establish and interpret meaning in both verbal and nonverbal language. Alptekin explains (2002) this conceptualizing process as the enculturation of the foreign language learner and states: “ Learners are not only expected to acquire accurate forms of the target language, but also to learn how to use these forms in given social situations in the target language setting to convey appropriate, coherent and strategically- effective meanings for the native speaker'. Thus learning a new language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers.” (2002, p.58) The close relation between language, culture, and the integration of culture into language learning are not new phenomena (Cortazzi& Jin, 1996; Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005; Guest, 2002; Moraine, 1976, Porto, 2010; Suzuki, 2010; Yuen, 2011). Rather than cultural orientation, Scarino (2010) highlights the intercultural orientation which aims at changes students' views throughout learning.

As an advantage of such a transition, Scarino states that “they come to understand culture not only as information about diverse people and their practices but also, and most importantly, as the contextual framework that people use to exchange meaning in communication with others and through which they understand their social world.” (2010, p.324) Min (2007) categorizes culture in English under two phenomena; high culture, and anthropological culture. The first underlines the intellectual and artistic achievements; the second refers to any of the customs, worldviews, languages, and conventions that make some people distinct from other social group. Culture, accordingly, encompasses three aspects, that is, material culture, social (institutional) culture and ideological culture.

Relation among cultures begins at the material level and gradually affects the social and ideological culture. As the material culture grows more, the social and ideological cultures change faster. In other words, micro level interaction leads to macro level influence.

However, this change is gradual and difficult, sometimes painstaking, even revolutionary. As a part of culture, ideologies find their clearest expressions in language. Language, as a special product of human society and an instrument of human thinking and communication, is a kind of institutional culture. Given the intermingled relationship between language and culture, the analysis of the ideological ground enriches the analysis of linguistic forms which show the language forms.

Behind linguistic utterances there lies an ideological background which influences the linguistic preferences and ways. This connection occurs at lexical-semantic and grammatical-semantic levels, and at the textual level (Hatim & Mason, 1990; cited in Min, 2007, p.217). Peterson and Coltrane (2003, cited in Al-Issa, 2005) state that language and culture are interwoven and the students' success in achieving higher level of oral proficiency in target language relies on the consideration of culture in designing and developing course materials.

Cognitive and corpus linguistics have provided pedagogically sound approaches.

Given the language of thought as a continuum ranging from simple to complex units, including idioms, they play a significant role in the linguistic system but not merely for ornamental purposes in language. (Boers et al., 2008)

Research findings show that formulaic chunks constitute at least one-third to one-half of language (Erman and Warren 2000; Foster 2001; cited in Conklin& Schmitt 2008; Howarth 1998; p.72). In the traditional view, idioms, „notoriously difficult" (Celce-Murcia& Larsen-Freeman, 1999) are considered special multiwords, and merely a matter of linguistic device with a special meaning and have certain syntactic properties. However, Kovecses (2002, p. 201) suggests that in contrast to traditional view, an idiom is not merely an extraordinary and somewhat complicated utterance of meaning which is special and hard to understand and requires deep linguistic knowledge, but many of them arises from our conceptual understanding comes from human's conceptual system which is natural and not subtle.

If figurative language such as idioms, metaphors, metonymies is pervasive in real life as a part of the culture, then it is not surprising that language learners will be certainly encountered and exposed with idiomatic expressions as a part of language learning and they should attempt to build up their knowledge of idioms if they want to survive in real communication settings. (Boers et al., 2004, p.376) However, idioms in particular are widely recognized to be a stumbling block (Buckingham, 2006) in the acquisition of a foreign language; though they are often recognized as incongruous, occasionally ungrammatical and difficult to figure out and resistant to translation for language learners and their contribution to communicative competence and intercultural awareness is both theoretically and empirically acknowledged (Boers et al, 2004; Kovecses& Szabo, 1996; Lin, 2012; Littlemore& Low 2006; Martinez & Schmitt, 2012). English is a language which is full of idiomatic expressions, hence learning these idioms constitutes the spirit of language (Elkilic, 2008), and idioms have a considerable role in an L2.

Learning idiomatic expressions will enhance the students' communicative ability and will result in understanding cultural norms. (Samani and Hashemian, 2012, p. 249) As the meaning of idiomatic expressions are not formed within conventional rules and often seen non-compositional in nature (Fernando and Flavell, 1981), lack of reliable clues to understand and interpret has led to the assumption that the only way to learn idiomatic expressions is rote-learning (Boers et al., 2007). Cognitive semantic studies (Gibbs, 1994; Kövecses, 1990; Lakoff, 1987), however, there are many idioms which are not arbitrary but motivated by conceptual metaphoric and metonymic understanding. As in of the common examples, the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT can be thought to motivate some figurative expressions that are frequently used in real life (e.g 'Time flies', 'I'm falling behind schedule again', and 'The holidays are approaching and those days are over') .To support this argument, Grant's finding (2004) attracts attention, thus Grant suggests that considerably small number of entries in idiom dictionaries is non-compositional and is therefore hard for learners. Another study (Boers, 2000) has shown that vocabulary retention can be facilitated by raising learners" metaphoric awareness".

Further, students have been found to recall idioms when they are connected with their literal meaning (Boers, 2001). Since the 1970s idioms have received significant attention and though in literature there have existed diverse idiom theories about idiomatic process (i.e. comprehension and production) (e.g. Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988; Swinney and Cutler, 1979; Tabossi et al., 2009; Tabossi & Zardon, 1993) it is strongly claimed native speakers of a language faster process idiomatic expressions compared to literal usage.

In addition to the studies with the native speakers, nonnative speakers have become the centre of studies in the literature with regard to idiom processing. For instance, Van Lancker-Sidtis (2003) investigated the impact of prosodic cues on helping the native and non native speakers in making a difference between two idiom interpretations. The results of study indicated that prosodic cues help native speakers to distinguish between figurative and literal use of idioms compared to the nonnative participants though they were proficient language users, and nonnative speakers had significantly more difficulties. Nevertheless,

Conklin and Schmitt (2008) did an experiment of self-paced moving- window reading to study how native and proficient non-native speakers comprehend idioms. The result of the study revealed that both groups read idioms faster than novel phrases and there is not any significant difference in both groups between figurative and literal meaning processing.

Since the similar pattern was used in both groups, the researchers concluded that non-native speakers understand idioms in the same way as native speakers. Siyanova-Chanturia et al. (2011) investigated whether processing of figurative and literal interpretation of native and nonnative speakers differ in a story context.

They concluded that:

The findings suggested that non-native speakers more slowly processed the figurative expressions compared to the literal utterances and showed a similar performance to process idioms over novel phrases.

II. Discussion

Vereshagn and Kastamarov (1990) have been recognized as language founders, in their book title "Language and culture," and argued that though people speak a common language, they may not properly understand each other due to intercultural differences. It is axiomatic that the language has a social nature and the main function of language is its instrumental role in communication between individuals. In addition, language is a tool for understanding the world, this means that language is not only a tool for informing but also it has the potential to provide information on the reflected person‟s environment, and maintain records. Considering the relationship between culture and language in language learning, it can be said that culture has its own language - our culture by the architecture, painting, music, dance, and literature speaks. By using this tool, people can have ideas about how the environment under the impact of culture is expressed, interpreted, and spoken. Teaching experience in the past years shows that the university students after graduation, had gained a wide knowledge of linguistics, but while speaking (real communication) they are unable to communicate well. This is due to the factors beyond the language in the culture. Culture not only reflects the real world around humans and their living conditions, but a nation's social consciousness means thinking, lifestyle, traditions, value systems, and world views. Ter-Minasova (2000) states that language as a coating material for culture, in vocabulary, grammar rules, idioms, proverbs and interpretation, folklore, literature, science, in written and oral discourse, cultural values are maintained. Thus, it can be said that in any foreign language course such as clash of cultures and practical experience is cross-cultural communication because every foreign word reflects, the outside world and foreign cultures. Equivalent words do not create a problem for foreign person. They help to explain language by a simple method or translation. For example, the word book in Russian language книга , in Italian language libro, in Farsi Ketab, can be translated. Each of these words can share the same ideas connected with the word „book‟ , would associate (books, novels, textbooks, bookstores, publishing book), and yet can make very different perceptions that data potentially exists in the human mind. Libro verde or green book, for Iranian is incomprehensible, in the minds of Italians refer on the collection of political documents that will be distributed at the Council House (Dehkhoda, 1994). In Turkey, for example When people add insult to injury, they make a bad situation even worse. „Tuz biber ekmek‟ (literally) to add salt and pepper means the same with the above expression. The phenomenon of salt attracts attention in that salt in Turkish life is widely used an d seen as the taste of life, and there are numerous figurative expressions in Turkish language using salt with both positive and negative meanings. To see the nexus between figurative language and culture, this example, to hear something straight from the horse's mouth (To hear something from the authoritative source) attracts attention. In Turkish, „Emir büyük yerden gelmek‟ (The order coming from important or authoritative persons) the concept of authority, in other words government, has been always considered holy and respectful, one should obey the governments for stability, security, and good life, unlike modern view, person was for government and authority in Turkish history so everything is seen as an order from the authority. There is a well-known statement in Persian and Russian which says: a book is man's best friend Книга-друг лучший and Italian Un buon libro, è un buonamico A good book, is a good friend. If the word "booklet" and its Italian equivalent of the libretto, we see that the Italian word meaning only a small book, but the meaning of short written works "like a musical opera, ballet, plays and scenarios of a dictionary. The libretto refers to the booklet or office where the scores will be recorded in the schools of higher education. There is no such equivalent in Persian language, because there is no such booklet in the universities. But in the Persian language "booklet" is a term that means part of a detailed report, and the probe and twist of irony is the elaboration of the malevolence. (Najafi, 1990) The above examples can be concluded that the words can be conceptually equivalent completely, but in terms of schematic knowledge, they may not be entirely equivalent. Words with no equivalent throughout foreign language learning can cause many problems. Because it implies that the concepts in a language and culture may not exist in another. Thus, word and words with no equivalent of the former reflect the underlying characteristics of each nation's culture. Various thoughts on understanding various nations and nationalities come from different ways of thinking and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, their understanding of abstract equivalents and methods can vary as well. Finding two words in two distinct languages that have the same meanings are very rare. Some of the words often take advantage from specific cultural information, the words which have cultural charge such as the English word "dog"; a dog represents both a concept and an animal, but the differences are important. Europeans like dogs very much, therefore, in many cases, the use "dog" is conceived as a recognized and praised word. Given the importance of the word "dog", it represents the loyalty, intimacy and beloved.

III. Conclusion

Language and culture are closely connected to each other. Language embodies and transfers culture. Varieties in language use within culture create different views.

Learning a second culture is often intricately intertwined with learning a second language.

Teaching second language should be accompanied with teaching second culture.

The results of research findings will have implications for language teachers in general and policy makers in particular. Language teachers should equip themselves with the knowledge of second culture, make students familiar with cultural differences and have high esteem for students' native culture; thus facilitate the process of language learning. Language policy makers should consider different cultures equally well and develop positive attitudes towards target cultures especially in planning and designing materials, hence avoiding any culture shock and cultural misunderstandings.

Given a pedagogical perspective, knowing idioms not only makes the speech language learners productive and enriched, but also help them to learn and understand the thinking that the people learn the language. Interpretation in terms of culture means the study of language symbols and cultural concepts in foreign language classes, not only possible but also necessary. Idioms and the role of "language" in culture can integrate form and content, therefore, not only previous knowledge of the language teachers and their personal experience help, but numerous terminology of culture and interpretations are also important.

REFERENCES

[1] Agar, M. (1991). The biculture in bilingual. *Language-in-Society, 20*, 167-181.

[2] Al-Issa, A. (2005). The Role of English language culture in the Omani language education system: An Ideological Perspective. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 18* (3) 258-270.

[3] Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *ELT Journal 56*(1), 57-64.

[4] Anastasiadi-Symeonidi, A. & Efthymiou, A. (2006). Οι Στερεότυπες Εκφράσεις καιη Διδακτική της Νέας Ελληνικής ως Δεύτερης Γλώσσας, Athens: Patakis.

[5] Antipov, T. A., Donskikh O. A., Morkovina I. U., &Sorokina U. A. (1368/1989). Text kak.

[6] Boers, F**.** (2001). Remembering figurative idioms by hypothesising about their origins. *Prospect, 16*, 35–43.

[7] Boers, F. Eyckmans, J., & Stengers H. (2007).Presenting figurative idioms with a touch of etymology: More than mere mnemonics? *Language Teaching Research 11*(1), 43–62.

[8] Boers, F. (2000). Metaphor awareness and vocabulary retention. *Applied Linguistics 21*, 553–71.

[9] Boers, F., Lindstromberg S., Littlemore J., Stengers H.& Eyckmans J. (2008). Variables in the mnemonic effectiveness of pictorial elucidation. In: Boers, F. & S. Lindstromberg (eds.), 189-116. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

[10] Boers, F.,Eyckmans J., & Demecheleer M. (2004). Cross-cultural variation as a variable in comprehending and remembering figurative idioms. *European Journal of English Studies,* 8(3), 375-388.

[11] Brown, H. (1994). Principles of language learning and teaching. 3rd edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

[12] Bygate, M. (2005). Applied linguistics: A pragmatic discipline, a generic discipline? *Applied Linguistics.* 26(4), 568-581.

[13] Cacciari, C., &Tabossi P. (1988). The comprehension of idioms. *Journal of Memory and Language, 27*, 668–683.

[14] Celce-Murcia, M. & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). The grammar book: An ESL/EFL teacher's course. 2nd edition. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

[15] Charteris-Black, J. (2002). Second language figurative proficiency: A comparative study of Malay and English. *Applied Linguistics, 23*, 104-133.

[16] Conklin, K. & Schmitt, N. (2008). Formulaic sequences: Are they processed more quickly than nonformulaic language by native and nonnative speakers?. *Applied Linguistics, 29*(1). 72–89.

[17] Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1996). Cultures of learning: Language classrooms in China, in H. Coleman (ed.) *Society and the Language Classroom* (pp. 169-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[18] Dehkhoda, A. (1373/1994). Encyclopedic Dictionary. Tehran: Tehran University Publications. A small Dictionary of Proverbs.

[19] Deignan, A., Gabryś, D., & Solska, A. (1997). Teaching English metaphors using cross-linguistic awareness-raising activities. *ELT Journal, 51*, 352-360.

[20] Elkilic, G. (2008). Turkish students' understanding of transparent and opaque idioms in English in reading as well as speaking. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 4*, 27-41.

[21] Ellis, N. C., Simpson-Vlach R., & Maynard C. (2008). 'Formulaic language in native and second-language speakers psycholinguistics, corpus linguistics, and TESOL, *TESOL Quarterly 41* 375–96.

[22] Fernando, C. & Flavell, R. (1981). On idiom: Critical views and perspectives. Exeter Linguistic Studies, 5. Exeter: University of Exeter.

[23] Gibbs, R. W. (1994). The poetics of mind: Figurative look on the bright side (consistent idiom) thought, language, and understanding. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[24] Glucksberg, S. (2001).Understanding Figurative Language. From Metaphors to Idioms, Oxford: OUP.

[25] Grant, L. (2004). A corpus-based investigation of idiomatic multiword units. PhD dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington.

[26] Guest, M. (2002). 'A critical 'checkbook' for culture teaching and learning'. *ELT Journal 56*(2). 154–61.

[27] Jiang, W. (2000). The relationship *between culture and language*. *ELT Journal 45* (*4*), *328–332*.

[28] Kövecses, Z. (2002).Metaphor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[29] Kövecses, Z. (1990). Emotion Concepts. New York: Springer Verlag.

[30] Kövecses, Z. & Szabo, P. (1996). Idioms: A view from cognitive linguistics. *Applied Linguistics 17*(3), 326-355.

[31] Lakoff, G. (1987). Women, Fire and Dangerous Things.What Categories Reveal about the Mind. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[32] Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors We Live By, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
[33] Liddicoat, A. J. (2005). 'Teaching languages for intercultural communication' in D. Cunningham and A. Hatoss (eds.). *An International Perspective on Language Policies, Practices and Proficiencies*. Belgrave, Australia: FIPLV.
[34] Lin, P.M.S. (2012). Sound evidence: The missing piece of the jigsaw in formulaic language research. *Applied Linguistics, 33*(3), 342-347.
[35] Littlemore, J., & Low, G. (2006). Metaphoric competence, second language learning, and communicative language ability. *Applied Linguistics, 27*(2)268–294.
[36] Liu, D. (2002) .Metaphor, Culture, and Worldview: The Case of American English and the Chinese Language, Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
[37] MacKenzie, I. (2012). English as a lingua franca in Europe: Bilingualism and multicompetence. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 9*(1), 83-100.
[38] Martinez, R., &Schmitt, N. (2012). A Phrasal Expressions List. *Applied Linguistics, 33*(3), 299–320.
[39] Min, F. (2007). Cultural issues in Chinese idioms translation. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology, 15*(4), 215-229.
[40] Mitsis, N. (2004). Η Διδασκαλία της Γλώσσας υπό το πρίσμα της Επικοινωνιακής Προσέγγισης. Εισαγωγή στη Θεωρία και τις Τεχνικές του Επικοινωνιακού Μοντέλου, Athens: Gutenberg.
[41] Morain, G. (1976). 'Visual literacy: Reading signs and designs in the foreign culture'. *Foreign Language Annals, 9*(3), 210–16.
[42] Najafi, Abolhassan. (1378/1999). Farhange Farsi e Amianeh. Tehran: Entesharate Niloufar.
[43] Peterson, E.and Coltrane, B. (2003.) Culture in second language teaching. Retreived on 01.07.2012 from http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/peyton02.html.
[44] Porto, M. (2010). Culturally responsive L2 education: An awareness-raising proposal. *ELT Journal, 64*(1), 45-53.
[45] *Risager, K.* (2007). Language and Culture Pedagogy. From a National to a Transnational Paradigm. Clevedon*:* Multilingual Matters Ltd.
[46] *Samani*, E. R., *& Hashemian* M. (2012). The effect of conceptual metaphors on learning idioms by l2 learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 2* (1) 249-256.
[47] Dogancay-Aktuna, S. (*2005*). Intercultural communication *in* English language teacher education. *ELT* Journal, *59(2*), 99-107.
[48] Scarino, A. (2010). Assessing intercultural capability in learning languages: A renewed understanding of language, culture, learning, and the nature of assessment. *Modern Language Journal, 94*(2), 324- 329.
[49] Sinclair, J. (1991). Corpus, concordance, collocation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[50] Siyanova, A., K. Conklin, & Schmitt, N. (2011). 'Adding more fuel to the fire: An eye-tracking study of idiom processing by native and non-native speakers. *Second Language Research, 27*(2) 251–72.
[51] Suzuki, A. (2010). Introducing diversity of English into ELT: Student teachers' responses'. *ELT Journal, 65*(2), 145-53.
[52] Swinney, D., & Cutler, A. (1979) .The access and processing of idiomatic expressions. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior , 18,* 523-534.
[53] Symeonidis, C. (2000). Εισαγωγή στην Ελληνική Φρασεολογία, Thessaloniki:Kodikas.
[54] Tabossi, P, Fanari R, & Wolf K. (2009). Why are idioms recognized fast? *Memory and Cognition, 37,* 529–40.
[55] Telia, V. N. (1385/2006). Bolshoi fraziologicheski Slovar ruskova yazika, Znachenie,Upotriblenie, Kulturologicheski komentari (Большой фразеологический словарьрусского языка, Значение. Употребление. Культурологический комментарий).
[56] Vanlancker–Sidtis, D. (2003). Auditory recognition of idioms by native and nonnative speakers of English: It takes one to know one, *Applied Psycholinguistics, 24,* 45-57.
[57] Conklin K & Schmitt N. (2008). Formulaic sequences: Are they processed more quickly than nonformulaic language by native and non-native speakers? *Applied Linguistics, 29,* 72–89.
[58] Chen, Y., & Lai, H. (2011). Proceedings from 25th Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation.
[59] Vereshagin, E. M, Kastamarov V. G. (1369/1990). Yazik i kultura (Язык и культура),Moscow. Russki Yazik.
[60] Winney, D. & Cutler, A. (1979) .The access and processing of idiomatic expressions. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour, 18,* 523–34.
[61] Wray, A. (2002). Formulaic Language and the Lexicon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[62] Telia, V. N. (1385/2006). Bolshoi fraziologicheski Slovar ruskova yazika, Znachenie, Upotriblenie, Kulturologicheski komentari (Большой фразеологический словарь русского языка, Значение. Употребление. Культурологический комментарий). Moscow: Ast-Press Publications.
[63] Ter-Minasova, S. T. (1379/2000). Yaziki i mejkulturnaya komunikatcia (Языки имежкультурная коммуникация). Moscow. Slova.
[64] Yuen, K. (2011). The representation of foreign cultures in English textbooks. *ELT Journal, 65(4),* 458-466.

Oktay Yağız is an assistant professor at Atatürk University, Turkey. He is the vice director of the School of Foreign Languages at Atatürk University as well. His research fields are EFL teaching and learning, academic writing, applied linguistics and English for Academic Purposes. He focuses on tertiary level education . He has been working on national and international research projects.

Siros Izadpanah is currently a Ph.D student in TEFL at Atatürk University .He is now a faculty member at Islamic Azad University ,Zanjan Branch,Iran . He has presented and published a number of articles in international conferences and journals ,and also published a few books in the field of TEFL.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 958-964, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.958-964

Rationales for Cooperative Tasks in Taiwan Translation Learning

Hui-chuan Wang
English Department, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

***Abstract*—In recent years, English teaching and learning have been getting considerable attention in Taiwan. Universities and colleges have been asked by the Ministry of Education to encourage language-majored students to take translation-related courses in order to raise the level of student's translation competence. To meet this need, since 2003, the Ministry of Education has included *English Translation I* and *English Translation II* as core courses and provided official syllabi and guidelines for language departments and teachers. However, the features in the official syllabi seem to be missing parts in Taiwan translation instruction. A number of studies have found that many translation teachers still utilize traditional translation teaching methods. In a traditional classroom, the instruction is more teacher-centered, so students tend to rely only on the teacher's suggestions and believe in teachers' "perfect' or 'correct' translation. With the increasing importance of translation learning, and the need for a cooperative and interactive teaching method suggested by the MOE, it is necessary to develop an alternative teaching approach for translation teachers. Therefore, the researcher intends to design a cooperative translation task which meets translation teachers' and students' needs. This study is a preliminary study working on the rationales for designing a cooperative translation task. This study addressed the following research questions: (1) What rationales should be included in this cooperative translation task? (2) How can rationales be realized in the design of the cooperative translation task? Based on the literature reviews, three main rationales will be used for the design of a cooperative translation task for Taiwanese college translation learners. The first prototype of the task, the Cooperative Translation Task (CoTT), will be provided in the current study.**

***Index Terms*—rationales, cooperative task, translation teaching, translation learning**

I. Introduction

In recent years, English teaching and learning have been getting considerable attention in Taiwan. Among all the areas of language learning, translation learning is one of the educational goals set by Taiwanese government. In October 2002, the Executive Yuan approved the Plan for Creating an English-friendly Environment and the Action Plan for Creating an English-friendly Environment. One of the plan's nine key strategies is to cultivate professional translators. Since then, universities and colleges have been asked to encourage language-majored students to take translation-related courses in order to raise the level of student's translation competence. To meet this need, since 2003, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has included *English Translation I* and *English Translation II* as core courses for students majoring in applied English/foreign languages to develop their translation competence.

A closer look at the official syllabi and guidelines in *English Translation I* and *English Translation II* reveals that the MOE encourages more cooperation and interaction among students through such activities as group discussion and peer correction. Moreover, translation problems are not identified by only one approach, but through multiple analyses, including error analysis, translation criticism, and comparative analysis. Obviously, the TVE department expects more interactive, cooperative, and student-centered learning process through analytic tasks.

However, those features seem to be missing parts in Taiwan translation instruction. A number of studies have found that many translation teachers still utilize traditional translation teaching methods (Chang, Yu, Li & Peng, 1993; Mu, 1992). In a traditional classroom, the instruction is more teacher-centered, so students tend to rely only on the teacher's suggestions and believe in teachers' "perfect' or 'correct' translation. In other words, TVE's suggested analytic tasks such as error analysis and translation criticism were taken by teachers rather than students.

Those students who are used to relying on teachers may not be qualified for real translation work nowadays. During the past decade, translation work has undergone a dramatic change, which is getting more customer-oriented; therefore, communicative translation has been more emphasized. Kiraly (1995, 2000) and Colina (2003) advocated the famous Communicative Translation Teaching (CTT), which has underlying philosophies resembling those of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The main instructional goal of communicative translation teaching is to cultivate students' communicative translation competence and to emphasize the social contexts of texts.

Information on translation instruction in Taiwan is quite limited, especially that on alternative translation teaching methods. However, some of the studies seem to follow the new trend of communicative translation teaching. For example, Liao (2009) proposed a theoretical basis of constructivism for teaching translation in Taiwan's colleges, with the use of communicative translation teaching techniques: meaningful tasks, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and on-line learning platforms. Although those alternative teaching approaches have found the positive effects on students'

translation learning and may complement the limitations of the traditional translation teaching, but each of them seems to only solve some parts of the existing problems and become an alternative syllabus instead of well-formed teaching method.

Therefore, with the increasing importance of translation learning, and the need for a systematic method to incorporate the various teaching techniques suggested by the Ministry of Education (MOE), it is necessary to develop an alternative teaching approach for translation teachers. Therefore, the researcher intends to design a cooperative translation task which meets the MOE's teaching goals and teachers and students' needs. This study is a preliminary study working on the rationales for designing a cooperative translation task, named Cooperative Translation Task (CoTT). This study addressed the following research questions: (1) What rationales should be included in this cooperative translation task? (2) How can rationales be realized in the design of the cooperative translation task?

II. Literature Reviews

In the area of translation teaching, Kiraly (1995) expressed his surprise that "as late as the mid-nineties the communicative revolution seemed to have passed translation teaching by" (p.253). With this notice, the stress on language function, communicative competence, creativity, and active student participation has slowly come to the world of translation didactics (Cronin, 2005). However, a number of scholars found that that many translation teachers still utilize traditional translation teaching, and the typical activities are teacher's lecture, translation exercises, teacher's correction, and appreciation of good translation works (Mu, 1992; Dai, 2003). The possible reason why teachers still use traditional teaching methods could be a lack of related research on translation pedagogy, as compared with the abundant research on English teaching methodology. Moreover, there is a lack of a systematic and well-designed translation teaching approach for teachers to shift the class into a more communicative one.

Despite a number of advantages of traditional translation teaching methods, such as delivering translation theories in lectures, some problems have been found in these methods as well. Kiraly (1995) claimed that traditional translation classes seem to lack both pedagogical guidelines and a motivating component. Gonz ález Davies (2004) also found that traditional translation classrooms are usually teacher- and text-centered and writing-based, without consideration of class dynamics and interaction.

With the hope of filling the pedagogical gap and improving traditional translation instruction, Kiraly (1995) proposed communicative translation teaching (CTT) in an attempt to change a passive and singular-perspective student into an active and multi-perspective translator. To do so, he proposed to change classes from teacher-centered to student-centered by using role-plays and simulations through small-group exercises to foster responsibility, independence, and the ability to see alternatives.

Gonz ález Davies (2004) further proposed task-based learning. She advocated function-, process- and product-based teaching. As she (2004) put it: "In task learning, a chain of activities are related to each other and are sequenced in such a way that they lead to a final product" (p. 23). Functional-based teaching attempts to make students aware of why, where and when the translation assignment is carried out. This is the information that should be known by students before doing translation (Nord, 1997). Process-based teaching asks for awareness of the translation strategies and solutions used by students themselves in their assignments. This approach increases their self-confidence and contributes to greater coherence, quality, and speed in their translation. Finally, product-based teaching looks at what the students achieve. In other words, it focuses on the final translation produced by the student.

Though a notion similar to communicative translation teaching (CTT) has been promoted by a number of scholars (Colina, 2003; Kiraly, 1995; Gonz ález Davies, 2004), few empirical studies have been published to date. Romney (1997) specifically examines the possibilities of using collaborative learning in translation classrooms with an attempt to provide an alternative to traditional classroom structure and increase student participation. Romney (1997) claimed that in traditional classrooms, the teacher is usually the judge of the quality of the translation, so only the bravest students are dared to offer alternative translations. Accordingly, students only learn through their own individual efforts and gain limited and erroneous results. Romney's (1997) results showed that collaborative learning in a translation course can facilitate the understanding of the source text and help students reach greater degrees of grammatical correctness, accuracy, and faithfulness through discussion and negotiation. Moreover, social support is an important element in sharing the difficulties. It has been found that students gain in self-confidence and become more tolerant of different opinions, and that they appreciate the non-threatening atmosphere of group work.

Another survey study, conducted by Ulrych (2005), examined the translation teaching methodology adopted by the various institutions and the rationale underlying the features of course content. It is found that in response to the question on classroom management and dynamics, more and more instructors recently have been using collaborative discussion/corrections in class in three kinds of interactions: teacher/student, students in group, students in pairs. The underlying rationale is to train students to cooperate with others such as fellow translators or clients in their future professions.

Information on translation instruction in Taiwan is also quite limited, especially that on alternative translation teaching methods. However, some of the studies seem to follow the new trend of communicative translation teaching. For example, Lai (2002) conducted translation projects with the professional world in different fields, including a book publisher, a television station that plays movies, and a public television station. The main purposes of these intern

projects were to offer students chances of contact with real practitioners and understand the needs and challenges of a career in translation in the hopes of helping students prepare for their future careers and further study. Lai's (2002) attempt has opened the possibilities of bridging the gap between the students and the professional world, as González Davies (2004) proposed.

Following the trend of humanistic teaching and constructivism in recent years, Liao has been promoting communicative translation teaching and attempted to provide a more creative and student-centered approach of instruction. Liao and Chiang (2005) explored the possibilities of using portfolios as an alternative method to teach translation. Students accepted this approach and learned how to be responsible translators, aware of their own learning process and progress. The survey results showed that 92% of the students believed that portfolios facilitated their learning, and all of the students agreed that it improved their English comprehension.

In 2009, Liao (2009) proposed a theoretical basis of constructivism for teaching translation in Taiwan's colleges, with the use of communicative translation teaching. Meaningful tasks, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and on-line learning platforms have been included as teaching techniques. That study found that generally students had a very positive view of the course design. Students were aware of the major difference in the teacher's role; the teachers became facilitators of the learning process.

Reviewing the above theories suggested by Taiwanese leading scholars in translation teaching and learning, the present research notices that they contribute significantly to the development of alternative translation pedagogy, despite the fact that at present, research focusing on the areas of translation teaching is still very scarce. It is still worth emphasizing that the newly promoted teaching methodologies analyzed above have shifted from transmitted knowledge to transformational knowledge, teacher-centered to student-centered, individual work to collaborative work, and molecular learning to social-constructive learning. These teaching methods can train students as more autonomous problem solvers and efficient communicators between the source and target text. These methods also meet the needs of modern translation practice.

College learners' translation studies should not only focus on the use of language but also the development of qualified professional translator, especially for the students at a technological university. Cooperative team work and management skills for their translation projects should be included. With my growing research interests in incorporating collaborative learning in translation instruction, the present study will follow that new trend and continue my research orientation to explore the possibility of realizing cooperative learning in translation classrooms. The purpose of this study is to explore the rationales through literature reviews and to design the first prototype of a cooperative translation task, named Cooperative Translation Task (CoTT).

III. Rationales of the Design

To design a new task, it is critical to start with the development of its design rationales. The following are the related literature reviews and how each rationale is developed. The cooperative translation task in the current study will be constructed based on the following rationales and the theories in translation learning and teaching.

A. The Teaching Guidelines in the Official Syllabi for English Translation I and English Translation II (2003), Issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE)

In Taiwan, the official syllabi are provided for the curriculum developers to open core courses and for teachers to teach those new courses. The syllabi for the courses *English Translation I* and *English Translation II* provided by the MOE are constructed for technological university teachers based on the translation-related professors' advice and it is expected that when these two courses are offered in a language department, translation teachers could follow the suggested syllabi and teaching principles. The official syllabi include not only learning goals, objectives, weekly learning content, but also teaching guidelines and principles, and suggest that a translation teacher flexibly uses a variety of learning activities such as peer correction. The MOE also expects a translation teacher to help students incorporate translation theories and practice in a systematic way and build students' problem-solving abilities.

However, most of time, the university departments in Taiwan do not actively provide this information to teachers. As a result, some teachers whose field is not translation may rely more on textbooks and follow traditional ways of teaching, which is more teacher-centered, text-centered, and writing-based. According to Dai's survey (2003), around 80% of translation teachers in Taiwan actually study other areas, such as TESOL, literature, or linguistics. This is due to the shortage of teachers in translation fields, so language teachers in other fields need to help with the instruction of translation courses. There is no doubt that those 'temporary' translation teachers tend to confront difficulties in knowing what to teach and how to teach. With translation textbooks in hand, most of these teachers may solve the problem of what to teach, but the problem of how to teach and what learning activities to conduct still exists, especially when little research has been done on translation pedagogy and the MOE's official syllabi are not provided by the department when they are assigned to teach the courses.

To solve the existing problems about translation instruction, the first source of the rationale goes to the teaching principles and guidelines in the MOE's syllabi. Those principles and guidelines have been developed by the professors in translation and TESOL fields through years' expert counseling and literature reviews. Adopting those principles in a translation task can solve teachers' problems in how to teach and even transform a traditional classroom into a more

interactive and cooperative one. Therefore, the current study will take teaching principles and guidelines in MOE's official syllabi as the main framework to explore other possible rationales.

A closer look at the MOE's official syllabi and guidelines in *English Translation I* and *English Translation II* reveals that the MOE suggests a variety of learning activities for teachers to utilize in the classroom, including (a) group discussion and presentation, (b) peer correction, (c) error analysis, (d) translation criticism, and (e) comparative analysis. These activities seem to share two main features. First, they encourage more interaction and cooperation among students through such activities as group discussion and peer correction. Second, problems are not identified by the instructor alone, but also through students' error analysis, translation criticism, and comparative analysis. In other words, to foster students' abilities in translation analysis and review is one main learning objective.

These two features thus contribute to decide the way of grouping and the nature of learning activities to this cooperative translation task. First, group work should be included in the task, including: (1) group translation exercises, (2) group discussion, (3) group presentation, and (4) peer correction. Students need to learn how to cooperate with within-group and between-group members in exercises, discussion, presentation and correction. Second, during group discussion and peer correction phases, it is important to involve analytic tasks, such as error analysis, translation criticism, and comparative analysis.

B. Five Major Features of Cooperative Learning

To realize the effective group work, it is essential to include the features of cooperative learning. There are five main features of Cooperative Learning, which make it more effective in learning: (a) positive interdependence; (b) face-to-face interaction; (c) interpersonal and small group skills; (d) individual accountability; and (e) small and heterogeneous groups. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (2002) asserted that positive interdependence is the first and the most important element of cooperative learning. They believed that when students believe that they sink or swim together, learning activities become meaningful (Johnson & Johnson, 1994) and the students become an alternative source of positive reinforcement for one another. According to Johnson and Johnson (1994), positive interdependence can be achieved through mutual goals (goal interdependence); sharing materials, resources, or information with group members (resource interdependence); division of labor (task interdependence); assigning complementary and interconnected roles (role interdependence); and giving a joint reward (reward interdependence). These interdependences can make students aware of what they need from each other, and collaboration can take place.

To create positive interdependence, the current study chose Johnson and Johnson (1994)'s principle of role interdependence. Each group needs to play two roles as Translator Group and Comment-giving Group. When they are translating texts, they play as Translator Group. When they are reviewing another translator group's work, they are Comment-giving Group. Given that situation, the two groups need to exchange their translations for peer reviews, so the interdependence can be constructed. Because students expect their works to be reviewed seriously by Comment-giving Group, they will try to take the same serious attitude when they are doing peer reviewing as Comment-giving Group. Therefore, during between-group peer response activity, the instructor needs to randomly select two groups to exchange translation products for translation reviews and each group writes down comments for each other. This activity is named **Written Peer Response**.

The second feature goes to face-to-face interaction. Face-to-face interaction engages students in higher-level thinking skills, such as analyzing, explaining, synthesizing, and elaborating (Hilke, 1990). Several studies have proven that interaction facilitates comprehension better than conditions without the interaction component (Gass & Varonis, 1994; Loschky, 1994; Polio & Gass, 1998). With face-to-face interaction, knowledge can be comprehended better through students' stimulating talk and the integration of various perspectives. In the study, face-to-face interactions will be used in both within-group and between-group activities. First, to prevent Translator Group from just assigning jobs to each member without any within-group discussion, face-to-face interaction with members has to be created in class to facilitate students' higher-level thinking skills such as analyzing. Second, there is a need for Translator Group to have face-to-face interactions with other classmates to collect more revision suggestion, so another activity is needed. Translator Group meets up the members of the other groups. This activity can be named as Translator Seminar. This new heterogeneous grouping will contribute more skills learning in error analysis, translation criticism, explaining, and problem-solving. All together, two face-to-face interactions will be held, named **Within-group Discussion & Translator Seminar**.

The third one is individual accountability, which should not be neglected because when members have a sense of personal responsibility, they will contribute their shares to the groups' success (Hilke, 1990). Individual accountability is the key to ensure that all group members are strengthened by cooperative learning (Slavin, 1997). However, making students understand their personal responsibility to help others for the group's success is a difficult task for teachers. Johnson and Johnson (1994) provided some suggestions to structure individual accountability. First, teachers should keep the size of the group small. The smaller the size of the group is, the greater individual accountability will be. Second, students can be randomly called on to present a group's work to the teacher or to the entire class. Third, teachers should observe the interactions within each group and take note of each member's contribution to the group work. Fourth, it is important to assign one student in each group the role of leader, and one of his/her responsibilities is to make sure that each member participates. Finally, teachers should give students a chance to teach what they have learned to others, which is called simultaneous explaining.

Based on Johnson and Johnson's (1994) suggestions, several components are included in peer review activities. First, when students are having oral peer reviewing or discussion in class, the instructor should observe their interactions and ask them to take notes of their discussion results. Second, students need to present their discussion results to both the instructor and the class. Thus, after Within-group Discussion & Translator Seminar, the instructor needs to give students some presentation time. As it is hard to present written notes to the whole class, oral presentation is preferred. As such, there will be an **Oral Peer Response** activity. A within group is randomly selected to orally present their discussion results. Each member of the group needs to express his/her own opinions based on their individual notes.

Finally, it is found that one potential barrier to effective group learning is a lack of sufficient heterogeneity (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). For example, with similar ability, some groups perform better than low-achiever groups, as they are all high achievers, which demotivates low-achievers. Hilke (1990) suggested that students be placed in groups that are mixed in academic ability, social skills, personality, and race or gender. It is believed that students should not form their groups based on friendship or cliques. Heterogeneous groups are most conducive for elaborate thinking, more frequent giving and receiving of explanations, and wider perspectives in discussing materials. Johnson and Johnson (1994) claimed that this kind of grouping increases the depth of understanding, the quality of reasoning, and the accuracy of long-term retention. Therefore, heterogeneous grouping can be used in a cooperative translation task to help students elaborate on their opinions and examine the materials from multiple perspectives.

In this cooperative translation task, both homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping are used for different phases and purposes. As university students in Taiwan are more used to making their own groups for translation exercises and within group activities, homogeneous grouping is still needed. However, this grouping may not stimulate more critical and high-level thinking, especially for translation reviewing activities. Therefore, heterogeneous grouping should be added after within-group activities. For example, after each translator group finishes within-group translation exercises. Between-group peer response can be conducted for Translator Group to collect more revision suggestions. The second heterogeneous activity is Translator Seminar, which has been mentioned above, for a translator group to listen to comments from various sources. These arrangements can complement a lack of variation in the peer comments as a homogeneous group tend to produce similar responses. According to Liu and Hansen (2005), when students form their own peer response group, they show a strong preference to find the people who are similar in ability, backgrounds, attitudes and so on. As a result, they tend to produce similar responses. Therefore, heterogeneous grouping activity should be conducted, but after the homogeneous grouping one.

C. Related Literature on Peer Response and Teacher Response

Peer response is also integral to the design of peer correction activity in a cooperative translation task. Therefore, there is a need to decide how response activities are conducted. First, we need to consider if teacher response should be included in the learning activity. Previous research has found that in comparing preferences for teacher response, peer response, or self-response, students prefer first teacher response, then peer response, and finally self-response (Nelson & Carson, 1998; Zhang, 1995). In Liao and Chiang's (2005) survey of the use of portfolios in translation learning, Taiwanese college students preferred teacher evaluation, then translation assignment, peer evaluation, and finally self-evaluation and correction. Liao's study showed that in translation learning, students hold similar attitudes toward teacher and peer response. Most of the students believe that feedback from the teacher will be more helpful to their learning. We may infer that if teacher response are excluded, students might distrust the learning outcomes of the learning task. Thus, it is essential to include teacher response.

However, teacher response may form student over-reliance on the teacher's advice, and this over-reliance may hinder the development of learners' real-time editing ability, which is needed by independent translators. To solve this problem, I employed Liu and Hansen's (2005) two solutions. First, they suggested that the teacher should take a supporting rather than an authoritative role in peer activities, serving as a peer. Hence, to change the role of the teacher, a teacher will join discussion with students. As a teacher can only take part in one group's peer reviewing activities, and s/he also needs to monitor the whole class' group peer review process, a guest teacher can be invited.

When the instructor is monitoring Within-group Discussion in Session 2, the guest teacher can join Translator Seminar as a peer. Because the participants in Translator Seminar include one translator group and one member from each group, the guest teacher has a chance to observe how this heterogeneous group works on translation reviews. This teacher sits with a translator group and answer the questions from the seminar participants, as others in the translator group do. Here, the teacher's job is not to give comments or even criticize the translator group's translation. Instead, s/he plays as a one member of the translator group and tries to respond the student participants' questions about the translation and at the same time, discusses with the translator group about how to solve the translation problems.

The second solution given by Liu and Hansen's (2005) is that peer response and teacher response may be given on different drafts. As most of the Taiwanese students are in favor of the teacher's response, if two kinds of response are given simultaneously, students will definitely ignore peer response and choose teacher response. Once students find that their response is not taken seriously, they are not willing to spend time and make efforts in reviewing peers' translation. As a result, students only follow teachers' suggestions and rarely reflect up their own translation process, styles, and problem-solving skills. Thus, teachers' response should not be given to students' first draft when Comment-giving Group is giving response. A teacher's responses can be given after all the peer reviewing activities. This activity can be

named as **Oral Teacher Response**. It is hoped that by utilizing that Liu and Hansen's (2005) two solutions, the possibilities of over-reliance on teacher response can be reduced to a minimum.

This cooperative task ends with the last activity, final revision, which is to ask students to make final revisions based on their collection of peer and teacher response both in written or oral. This makes **Final Revisions** activity. After students collect all the comments from classmates and the teachers, they make final revisions and turn in their final products with revised marks to the instructor.

IV. The Five Sessions in the Cooperative Translation Task

Now, those activities need to be arranged in a learning order. They can be separated into three stages in terms of the time of the students' presentation. Before the presentation (pre-presentation stage), each group needs to translate assigned texts and exchange drafts with another group for between-group translation review. During the presentation stage (presentation stage), there are both within and between-group discussions, oral peer response, and oral teacher response. After the presentation (post-presentation), each group needs to make their final revisions.

The definitions of activities here may be too general and confusing for translation teachers to follow, so this study follows González Davies' (2004) definition of tasks to name those activities. Her definitions distinguish the relationships among the three instructional actions: activities, tasks, and steps. González Davies (2004) defined a task as follows:

Task will be understood as a chain of activities with the same global aim and a final product. The full completion of a task usually takes up several sessions. In each of these, the activities lead along the same path towards the same end. (p. 23)

Based on her definition, a task consists of sessions. Accordingly, instead of using a general term for each activity, "Session" is used for each activity. Table 1 shows the five sessions in three stages. This cooperative translation task starts after each translator group finishes their first draft.

TABLE 1
FIVE SESSIONS IN THREE STAGES OF THE COOPERATIVE TRANSLATION TASK (COTT)

Stage	Sessions
Pre-presentation	Session 1: Written Peer Response
Presentation	Session 2: Within-group Discussion & Translator Seminar
	Session 3: Oral Peer Response
	Session 4: Oral Teacher Response
Post-presentation	Session 5: Final Revisions

Below are detailed descriptions of each session. The learning objectives, the procedures, and the expected learning are introduced.

Pre-presentation Stage

Session 1: Written Peer Response

Session 1 aims to promote peer cooperation and reviewing ability. Two randomly selected translator groups exchange translation drafts and produce written peer response for each other. Each group writes comments and suggested translations on a peer response sheet and sends it back to the translator group by email. Each group uses their peers' critiques to revise their draft before presenting it in class. The translator group could make decisions on whether to accept peers' suggestions and make revisions.

Presentation Stage

Session 2: Within-group Discussion & Translator Seminar

Session 2 attempts to create two kinds of communication: within-group discussion and translator-seminar participant discussion. After a translator group's presentation of their translation, each group assigns one member to Translator Seminar to ask either the translator group or the guest teacher questions. This member is required to prepare at least one question about the translator group's works, and the translator group has the responsibility to answer his/her questions. The rest members of each group have a within-group discussion to prepare individual oral comments. During seminars and discussions, all the students are encouraged to keep detailed notes of peer comments, questions, and suggestions in notebooks. It is hoped that the two face-to-face communications can create a close cooperative relationship among members, and students learn to improve translations through negotiation.

Session 3: Oral Peer Response

In Session 3, within-group students share their discussion results with the whole class. A group is randomly selected as the comment-giver group to give a public sharing. Each member of the comment-giver group needs to express his/her own opinions by reading aloud their notes. When each member speaks, other members stand beside him/her as supporters. The translator group can provide explanations for or arguments against these comments. Debate between the translator and comment-giver group is encouraged to enhance students' awareness of their own translation styles.

Session 4: Oral Teacher Response

In Session 4, the instructor and the guest teacher give their oral advice on translation. This session is especially arranged after students' oral comments in order to prevent students from simply repeating the teachers' suggestions.

The two teachers raise the acceptable and unacceptable translations. It is suggested that this session includes more than one translation teacher so that more suggestions from various perspectives can be elicited.

Post-presentation Stage

Session 5: Final Revisions

The goal of Session 5 is to motivate students to use the comments from their peers and teachers. Students are asked to revise their work again, referring to the responses from teachers and students. They need to turn in their final translation products and underline the revised translation for the instructor.

V. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to explore the rationales for a design of a cooperative translation task, named Cooperative Translation Task (CoTT), which is suitable for university students in Taiwan technological universities. Later, the researcher will have a circular implementation and modification of this cooperative translation task in different education settings to see its effects on students. The rationales found in this study contribute the core components and procedures in this translation learning task. Most importantly, the innovation and the developed rationales can improve translation instruction beyond the conventional form.

References

[1] Chang, P., Yu. Y., Li, Z., & Peng, M. (1993). English to Chinese Translation Courses. Taipei: Bookman.
[2] Colina, S. (2003). Translation teaching, from research to the classroom: A handbook for teachers. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
[3] Cronin, M. (2005). Deschooling translation: Beginning of century reflection on teaching translation and interpreting. In M. Tennent, Training for the new millennium (pp. 249-266). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
[4] Dai, B. (2003). The translation instruction in English and Applied English departments in Taiwan. Master thesis, Fu Jen University.
[5] Gass, S. M., & Varonis, E. (1994). Input, interaction, and second language production. *Second Language Acquisition*, 16, 283-302.
[6] González Davies, M. (2004). Multiple voices in the translation classroom: activities, tasks, and projects. Benjamins translation library. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub.
[7] Hilke, E. V. (1990). Cooperative learning. Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa.
[8] Johnson, D. W., & Johnson R. T. (1994). Learning together and alone: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
[9] Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Holubec E. J. (2002). Cooperative Learning in the Classroom. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
[10] Kiraly, D. C. (1995). Pathways to translation: Pedagogy and process. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press.
[11] Kiraly, D. C. (2000). A social constructivist approach to translator education. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome.
[12] Lai, S. (2002).Translation Practicum at University Level: A Report. *Studies of translation and interpretation*, 7, 377-397.
[13] Liao, B. S. (2009). The implications and implementation of communicative translation teaching. *Compilation and translation review*, 2, 65-91.
[14] Liao, B. S. & Chiang, M. Y. (2005). The use of portfolios to teach translation. *Studies of translation and interpretation*, 9, 291-312.
[15] Liu, J. & Hansen, J. (2005). Peer response in second language writing classrooms. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
[16] Loschky, L. (1994). Grammar and task based methodology. In G. Crookes & S.M. Gass(Eds.), *Tasks and language learning: Integrating theory and practice*. (pp. 123-167). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
[17] Mu, L., (1992). Translation Teaching in China. Taipei: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
[18] Nelson, G. L. & Carson, J. G. (1998). ESL students' perceptions of effectiveness in peer response groups. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7(2), 113-131.
[19] Nord, C. (1997). Translating as a purposeful activity. Manchester: St. Jerome.
[20] Polio, C., & Gass, S. (1998). The role of interaction in native speaker comprehension of nonnative speaker speech. *Modern Language Journal*, 82, 308-319.
[21] Romney, J. C. (1997). Collaborative learning in a translation course. *The Canadian Modern language Review*, 54(1), 48-67.
[22] Slavin, R. E. (1997). *Cooperative learning: Theory, research, and practice.* Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
[23] Ulrych, M. (2005). Training translators: Programs, curricula, practices. In Tennent, M. (2005). *Training for the new millennium: pedagogies for translation and interpreting*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.
[24] Zhang, S. (1995). Reexamining the affective advantages of peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 4, 209-222.

Hui-chuan Wang was born in Taiwan, Jan. 2nd, 1978. She got her doctoral degree (TESOL program) in 2010 at Department of English, National Chengchi University (NCCU), Taipei, Taiwan, R. O. C. Her major field is in English teaching and translation pedagogy. Her doctoral dissertation is "Design-based Research on Developing Cooperative Translation Tasks." Before she graduated from NCCU, she worked as a part-time instructor in 7 universities in central Taiwan. Now she is a full-time assistant professor at Department of English, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages and teaches translation and interpreting. She published one translation learning textbook in Taiwan for college teachers and students "*翻譯easy.com*." and has presented more than 10 research articles relating to translation instruction in Taiwan.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 965-974, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.965-974

Mirroring the Effect of Stuffed Classes on the Utility of ESP Classes: Challenges and Students vs. Teachers Attitudes

Giti Karimkhanlouei
Zanjan University of Medical Sciences, Iran

Behzad Rahbar
Islamic Azad University, Zanjan Branch, Zanjan, Iran

Behzad Bayat
Takestan Azad University, Iran

***Abstract*—Aligned with the growing demands for higher education in Iran and rush of people to enjoy advanced education benefits, the students and teachers are facing with the problem of overcrowded classes. Thus, this paper is an attempt to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of the students and teachers towards stuffed classes. The study sample consisted of 110 students and 15 teachers both males and females. The study concentrated only on ESP classes of medical students in Zanjan University of medical sciences. Teaching large classes' questionnaire (TLCQ) was used for data collection. Questionnaire was used as research instrument. The tool was adapted from the research study of Ijaiya (1999). Data were analyzed using SPSS software for descriptive statistics. From the perspective of the teachers, they did not have a good and satisfactory attitude towards such classes and claimed that management of such classes was difficult and demanding compared to small size classes. Continuous noise from here and there in the classroom situation was a nuisance and meddled in the teaching processes while dismangled the listening students and teachers themselves. The results indicated that the teachers in such classes have to take traditionally based teaching modes of instruction mostly monotonous lectures without engaging students. The pupil could not concentrate due to various parasites such as noise. It is recommended that government and policy makers provide the education venues with appropriate facilities restrict the number of students in classes and train ample number of professional teachers to attend classes in small size. The study suggested no significant difference between males and females and also there was not a difference in the young vs. old teachers.**

***Index Terms*—ESP, stuffed, overcrowded, medicine**

I. Introduction

Among different causes of overcrowded classes in the world, we can refer to rapid population growth and reduction/elimination of school fees. The reality, however, is that each of these factors have influenced class size, and thus affect the quality of education (Benbow et al., 2007).

Similar to many countries and with the approaching of new millennium every year we have increasing number of medical students registering to medical universities. This problem of over crowdedness is much more paramount in the classes of Special English, since the milestone of language learning lies in the ability to communicate which cannot be attained in our present classes. In other words, English language learning and teaching in academic medical courses in parallel with other levels require ongoing involvement and participation of the students and provision of constant feedback from the teacher to gauge their progress.

The unsatisfactory result of formal and final examinations is one potent indicator arising from overpopulated classes. Interaction in such classes and communication as a basis for communicative language learning is almost impossible and murky.

In view of this, the present study was carried out to measure the attitudes of both ESP(English for specific purposes) learners and teachers towards the overpopulated classes and to compare their viewpoints.

The proportion of students to teachers according to a report by UNESCO should not exceed 1: 30 or at most a maximum of 35(teacher: student ratio; 1:35) (UNESCO, 2000, FGN,

2006).This number clarifies the opaque situation that we have in our ESP classes where in some situations we have only one teacher to feed a population of over 70 students all in the same class at the same class time. This situation overtly makes the teaching job much more demanding than is expected and also unbearable. As FME reports in 2005, overpopulated classrooms are considered to beunconducive for both teachers and students when it comes to the issue of

continuous assessment marking and the ability to give individualized attention to students needing extra help. (FME, 2005: 5).

According to Nolasco and Arthur (1988), five likely problems of large classes are listed as follows: coping with the noise, persuading the class to use English, managing the introduction and setting up of activities, making limited resources go a long way and monitoring the work of individuals within the class (Nolasco and Arthur, 1988: 5).

Kolo and Ojo (2005) noted that teachers perceived that class work take a lot of time in teaching large classes. Other views of teacher are that exercises are not finished during the allocated time for teaching and this phenomenon makes class work to be cumbersome to be handled by one teacher; there is stress and boredom and fatigue in marking and class control. Due to these problems, many good teachers have either resigned or are frustrated. (Kolo and Ojo, 2005: -)

To deal with mentioned issues, this study concentrated on the perceptions of teachers and students on stuffed classes and the possible alternatives to tackle the problem and to face it will be put forward. Also the attitudes in terms of sex of the participants of the study and also attitudes on the basis of experience of the teachers will be analyzed. The study concentrated only on ESP classes of medical students in Zanjan university of medical sciences.

The study questions:

At the heart of this research lies the issue of increasing number of students in ESP classes and attitudes negotiating the changing context of teaching and learning ESP lessons. With this framework we shall, so to speak, be putting our theoretical following questions with which we will attempt to provide reasons for prevailing image of large ESP classes. The questions are as follows:

1. What is the general attitude of the students of medicine and pharmacy towards overcrowded classes?
2. What is the general attitude of the teachers of ESP towards overcrowded classes?
3. Is there any difference between male and female teachers of medicine in their attitudes towards overcrowded classes?
4. Is there any correlation between the students and teachers perspectives towards ESP overcrowded classes?
5. Is there any difference in male and female students' attitudes towards ESP overcrowded classes?
6. Is there any difference in teachers attitudes towards ESP overcrowded classes based on their years of experience?

II. Methodology

Design

The design of this study is descriptive survey research design study. Teachers' and students' perceptions were surveyed and the data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

Subjects

The subjects of this study comprised 110 students available from two faculties of medicine and pharmacy from Zanjan University of medical sciences. Their age range was 19-21.They were both males and females. Meanwhile, 15 teachers' perspectives on overcrowded classes were evaluated. They were both males and females and their age ranged from 28- 54. The range of their experience was 2 to 24 years. The subjects were selected on the basis of the subjects available. The teachers with more than ten years and more of experience were considered as experienced and those with less than ten years of experience were considered as young and less experienced teachers.

The Instrument

A questionnaire of TLCQ (Teaching Larges Classes Questionnaire) was distributed. It was the same questionnaire used by Ijaiya (1999). However, the validity and reliability of the items were evaluated by a pilot administration. The reliability was 72%.It included 13 items in which the respondents were asked to reflect their ideas on overcrowded ESP classes. The questionnaire was administered to both students and teachers.

Accordingly, in order to prevent the level of English language proficiency from affecting the results of the answers provided by the participants both questionnaires were prepared in Persian. As Oxford and Burry –Stock (1995) mention, the advantage of using such questionnaires is that they are less time consuming than some other data elicitation techniques such as interview. However, the disadvantage attributed to questionnaires is that they cannot explain the details about the learners' responses.

The questionnaire embraced 13 items. The items were placed on a five point Likert scale of – absolutely agree (AA), agree (a), no idea (N), disagree (DA) and totally disagree (TDA). The results were further constricted into three categories to aid in analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data was put under evaluation using percentages, mean, standard deviation and were analyzed by applying descriptive statistics and Chi Square.

III. Results

The research encompassed a related corollary of questions which will be considered one by one as follows:

A. The First and Second Research Questions

1. What is the general attitude of the students of medicine towards overcrowded classes?

2. What is the general attitude of the teachers of ESP towards overcrowded classes?

The results of the two first and second research questions dealing with the attitudes of teachers and learners were amalgamated and put forward in the following table (table 1). Essentially it sought to find out if there was any relationship between the ranking of the teachers and students with regard to the problems of over-crowded classrooms. Table 1 illustrates the percentage of the items and total agreement or disagreement.

TABLE 1:
COMPARISON OF THE RESULTS OF THE ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE TEACHERS AND STUDENTS GROUPS

ItemNo	***Item Stem***	***students' resp0nses and percentages***				***teachers' responses and percentages***			
		DA %	NA %	A %	Total %	DA %	NA %	A %	Total %
1	**Noise making is very rampant during lessens.**	12 12.6	11 11.6	72 75.8	95 100	0 0	0 0	15 100	15 100
2	**Securing students' total attention during lessons is almost impossible.**	15 15.8	11 11.6	69 72.5	95 100	0 0	1 6.7	14 93.3	15 100
3	**Many pupils at the back do not participate in the lesson.**	33 34.7	16 16.8	46 48.8	95 100	1 6.7	0 0	14 93.3	15 100
4	**Quiet students often get neglected.**	25 26.3	28 29.5	42 44.2	95 100	1 6.7	4 26.7	10 66.7	15 100
5	**Only brilliant students answer questions in class.**	54 56.8	21 22.1	20 21.1	95 100	2 13.3	3 20	10 66.7	15 100
6	**Teacher's questions cannot spread round the class.**	17 17.9	17 17.9	61 64.2	95 100	1 6.7	2 13.3	12 80	15 100
7	**Teacher's movement is restricted to the front of the class.**	33 34.7	24 25.3	38 40	95 100	1 6.7	1 6.7	13 86.7	15 100
8	**Teachers' cannot move round the class to mark students' assignments**	13 13.7	20 20.1	62 65.3	95 100	1 6.7	1 6.7	13 86.7	15 100
9	**It is impossible to catch students' cheating.**	48 50.5	14 14.7	33 34.7	95 100	4 26.7	0 0	11 73.3	15 100
10	**Late- comers sneak in unnoticed.**	23 24.2	31 32.6	41 43.2	95 100	3 20	4 26.7	8 53.3	15 100
11	**It is difficult for students to see students who are not paying attention.**	26 27.4	23 24.3	46 48.4	95 100	1 6.7	0 0	14 93.3	15 100
12	**Truants go unnoticed in the class.**	53 55.8	10 10.5	32 32.7	95 100	4 26.7	4 26.7	7 46.7	15 100
13	**Teaching aids cannot go round everybody.**	15 15.8	18 18.9	62 65.3	95 100	15 100	0 0	0 0	15 100

As Table (1) shows there was not a significant difference in the preliminary stage of the study between attitudes of the two groups towards ESP overcrowded classes ($P<0.05$). If we consider the 13 items closely, the whole table is a clear mirror of attitudes of the two groups of subjects toward the ESP course. With a brief look at the items and the scores, one can easily find out the attitudes of the two separate groups. As said it can be seen in the first elicitation, there was not a wide gap in the attitudes.

The table further crystallizes that the majority of the teachers had negative attitudes towards ESP overcrowded classes. In response to the item that noise making is very rampant during lessons %75.8 of the students and %100 of the teachers agreed with this item. Ijaiya,(1999) in his study on noise making classes found out that teachers teaching large classes experienced noise- making which was a barrier to effective teaching (Ijaiya, 1999: --).

In addition concerning the statement that securing students' total attention during lessons is almost impossible 72.5% (69) students agreed in parallel to 93.3% (14) of the teachers who had generally total agreement on this item. Only 48.8 % (46) of the students agreed with item that "Many pupils at the back do not participate in the lesson" while 93.35 of the teachers agreed with this item.66.75% (10) of the teachers believed that quiet students often get neglected whereas 44.2 % of the students were in agreement with this item. 56.8% (54) students disagreed with the item that "Only brilliant students answer questions in class in contrast to the teachers who (66.7%) agreed with this statement. In the same vein, 65.3 % of the students agreed that "Teachers cannot move round the class to mark students' assignments" while 86.7% of the teachers had this attitude. 73.3% of teachers perceived that it is impossible to catch students' cheating in such classes while only 33.4% of the students accepted this statement.

B. The Third Research Question

Is there any difference between male and female teachers in their attitudes towards overcrowded classes?

The third research question sought to find out whether there was any difference between attitudes of male and female students and teachers. The data did not show any significant difference between the female and male participants. The following tables are clear illustration of this finding. In this analysis the item which marked less than 50% implied positive attitude and items scored and marked by more than 50% of the respondents were considered as entailing negative attitude.

TABLE 2:
ATTITUDES TOWARD LARGE CLASSES IN TEACHERS' GROUP IN TERMS OF GENDER

Gender			Teachers attitudes		
			Positive attitude	Negative attitude	Total
gender1	Male	Count	1	8	9
		% within gender1	11.1%	88.9%	100.0%
	Female	Count	1	5	6
		% within gender1	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	13	15
		% within gender1	13.3%	86.7%	100.0%

TABLE 3:
CHI SQUARE TEST FOR ATTITUDES TOWARD LARGE CLASSES IN TEACHERS 'GROUP IN TERMS OF GENDER

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.096[a]	1	.756		
Continuity Correction[b]	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.095	1	.759		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.657
Linear-by-Linear Association	.090	1	.765		
N of Valid Cases[b]	15				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .80.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

TABLE 4:
FREQUENCY TABLE OF ATTITUDES TOWARD LARGE CLASSES IN TEACHERS' GROUP IN TERMS OF GENDER

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	9	60.0	60.0	60.0
	famale	6	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 5:
FREQUENCY TABLE OF ATTITUDES TOWARD LARGE CLASSES IN TEACHERS' GROUP IN TERMS OF POSITIVE / NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS

	Attitudes	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive	2	13.3	13.3	13.3
	negative	13	86.7	86.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

As the above tables signify, the findings revealed that there was no significant difference in male and female teachers' perception on teaching large classes. The above findings run contrary to Ijaiya(1999) whose findings revealed that male teachers find it easier in handling large and overcrowded classes than their female counterpart both in teaching and classroom management.

C. Research Question 4

Is there any correlation between the attitudes of students and teachers' perspectives towards ESP overcrowded classes?

The result of the analysis showed that there was an agreement between the views of students and teachers on the issue.

TABLE 6:
TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ATTITUDES

	Teachers vs. students attitudes		Attitude		
			Positive	Negative	Total
Group	student	Count	33	62	95
		% within group	34.7%	65.3%	100.0%
	teacher	Count	2	13	15
		% within group	13.3%	86.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	35	75	110
		% within group	31.8%	68.2%	100.0%

TABLE 7:
CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR TEACHERS VS. STUDENTS ATTITUDES

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.736[a]	1	.098		
Continuity Correction[b]	1.838	1	.175		
Likelihood Ratio	3.125	1	.077		
Fisher's Exact Test				.138	.083
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.711	1	.100		
N of Valid Cases[b]	110				

D. Research Question 5

Is there any difference in male and female students attitudes towards ESP overcrowded classes?

TABLE 8:
ATTITUDES TOWARD LARGE CLASSES IN STUDENTS GROUP IN TERMS OF GENDER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	49	44.5	44.5	44.5
	famele	61	55.5	55.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

6. Is there any difference in teachers' attitudes based on their experience years?

Data analysis did not show any significant difference on the basis of years of experience between old and younger teachers. Table 10 illustrates the details of this finding.

TABLE 9:
ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS ACCORDING TO THEIR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TOWARD ESP OVERCROWDED CLASSES

Crosstab

			Teachers		
			Positive attitude	Negative attitude	Total
Years of expericnec	<10	Count	2	6	8
		% within	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
	>10	Count	0	7	7
		% within	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	13	15
		% within	13.3%	86.7%	100.0%

TABLE 10:
CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS ACCORDING TO THEIR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TOWARD ESP OVERCROWDED CLASSES

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.019[a]	1	.155		
Continuity Correction[b]	.435	1	.509		
Likelihood Ratio	2.783	1	.095		
Fisher's Exact Test				.467	.267
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.885	1	.170		
N of Valid Cases[b]	15				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .93.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

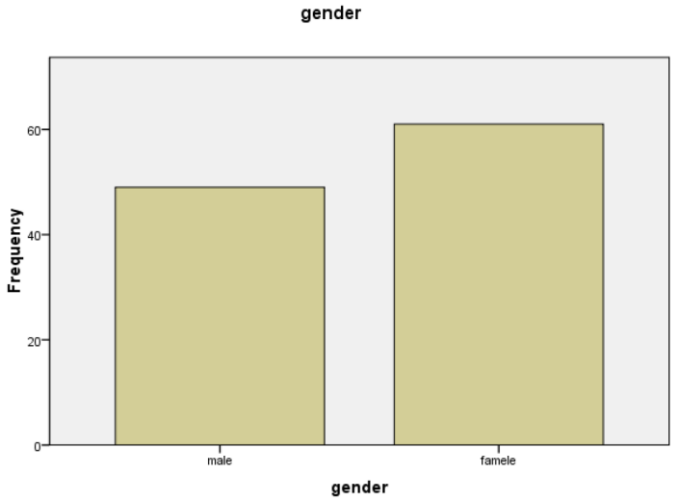
TABLE 11:
FREQUENCY TABLE FOR ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS ACCORDING TO THEIR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TOWARD ESP OVERCROWDED CLASSES

Analysis by Years of teaching

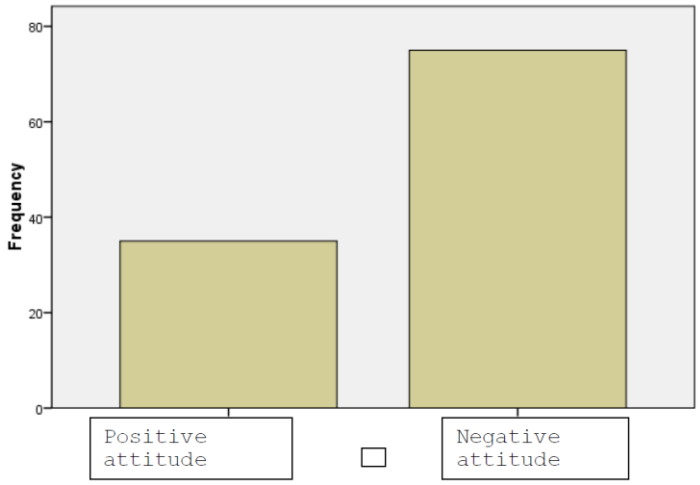
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<10	8	53.3	53.3	53.3
	>10	7	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

As mentioned before table 11 demonstrates there was no significant difference between the attitudes of two groups of teachers who were categorized under 10 years of experience and over 10years of experience. The calculated value was higher than the critical value at 0.05 probabilities. These findings corroborates with Ogunkola,(2004) and Hoxby(2000) that old teachers have over the years found coping strategies to the problem of teaching large classes to the extent that they no longer seems to see the size of classes as a problem.

The following graphs present a snapshot of the above comparisons. As it is clear from the bar graphs there was not a significant difference between the attitudes of the students and teachers on the basis of their gender.



Graph 1: A snapshot of the attitudes in two groups of teachers and students on the basis of their gender



Graph 2: Comparison of the attitudes in two groups of teachers and students

IV. Discussion of the Results

Research findings indicate that overcrowded classes may devalue and degrade ESP classes. Such classes hinder the achievement of the students and are among the factors which lead to diminution of students' grades. The interest and motivation of students are sacrificed for large class sizes, since they do not have opportunity to be demonstrated. Kathey et al (2005) put that: *"Class size may affect student attitudes more significantly than it affects achievement; a direct effect of large classsize is to lower the morale and increase the stress of teachers; and there is typically little to be gained from reductions in class size that do not bring class size below 30.*

Overcrowded classrooms put students at risk for a lower achievement rate than would likely be seen in smaller classrooms. The higher the student to teacher ratio, the less likely students are to be attentive. This also puts students with disabilities at a disadvantage because they may not get the individualized attention they need. Students who have to wait for help from a teacher would also suffer. This waiting period could lead to disruptive behavior or nonproductive activities, which in turn would lead to strains on the teacher's classroom management and the children's learning (Kathy et al., 2005: --)."

Over the past decades, the percentage of students aspiring to study in medical fields has continued to grow. This aspiration along with the optimistic strategies of policy makers and government in Iran to encourage people to be benefited from higher and free education has resulted in stuffing of classes, while there has been sporadic increase in the facilities and teachers. The problem is more outstanding in ESP classes due to the fact that teachers find it difficult to manage their classes communicatively and to reach optimal criteria. Besides, in the era of mirroring the world as merely a small village where all people are expected to communicate in English to transfer their knowledge and to receive the new research findings which is more critical for specialists, this objective has an opaque future concerning the large classes where our medical students have to attend. The results of this study affirm that students and teachers are encountered with many problems in their ESP large classes**.** In such populated classes the situation usually happens so that teachers are incapable of recognizing his students. Also multiple classes are usually merged in one class and being taught only by one teacher.

As accounts for the issues of overcrowded classes, Smith (2000) argues that:

"*Schools hold the responsibility of providing for students' various needs. Students' needs range from physical to emotional. In the classroom setting, students will need times for group interaction, but will need quiet times alone as well. This need will vary with the students in the classroom. Making space and allowances for that quiet time at any point during the day is helpful to many students."*

Within such a framework, the teachers are overwhelmed by a rapid expansion of number of students, without a corresponding expand in the number of students. The burden usually falls on the shoulders of teachers to deal with this inflation in terms of number of students. In parallel to this the quality and efficiency of such classes and quality education and training has become a matter of ivory tower so distant from the fabric of academic life. This problem has led to the escalation of criticism from the part of both teachers and students. In this vein, application of traditional structures of classroom management and teaching does not work and demands a new mould of shaping and reconstruction. Moreover this herald a new focus on delivery and performance or reshaping of classrooms so that they are hand gripped. Not pursuing these mentioned problems risk omitting the term by the students which per se leads to admission of failure. There is a high dissonance between input and output in such classes which is less encumbered by departments. The features of overcrowded classes as mentioned in the questionnaire of this research are not simply an abstract entity and epitomize the challenges of teachers and institutions facing the academy today. These features even are more sheltered in ESP classes where communication lies in its heart.

As Akinson and Fadukan state in a research from Kolo and Ojo (2006) noted that teacher perceive that class work take a lot of time in teaching large classes. Other viewsof teachers are that exercises are not finished during the forty minutes allocated for teaching making class work to be cumbersome to be handled by one teacher; there is stress and boredom and fatigue in marking and class control. Due to these problems, many good teachers have either resigned or are frustrated. The frustration leads to some teachers not attending classes regularly (Kolo and Ojo, 2006: 18).

The result of the study of Akhtar et al (2012) showed that there was much agreement between the views of students and teachers on the issue. The main thing that places limitation on the interaction between students and teachers as well as on the quality of teaching and learning is *seating arrangement* (Akhtar et al, 2012: 25).

Earthman (2002) draws from his work that overcrowding has negative influence upon teachers and students. The overcrowding has effects on students learning and students in overcrowded classes do not score as high on achievement test as students in non-overcrowded classrooms (Earthman, 2002: 19).

V. Conclusion, Implications and Suggestions for Further Study

The recent intense focus on academic accountability in terms of involving much population in higher education programs and overloading classes over their factual capacities has had significant repercussions on the quality of teaching and learning and has led to complaints of teachers and learners in Iran similar to many other countries. This phenomenon is more patent in ESP classes where the essence of teaching lies in interaction. The main objective of this study was to account for the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and learners toward stuffed ESP classes. In essence, the following points epitomize the nature of the challenge of teachers and learners in stuffed classes:

1. Noise making was the most important issue that the teachers had to handle in overcrowded classes.
2. Securing students' total attention in such classes was difficult.
3. Many pupils at the back do not pay attention.
4. It is difficult for students to see students who are not paying attention
5. There was an agreement between the attitudes of both teachers and learners of ESP towards populated ESP classes. They thought of such classes both demanding and challenging.
6. The demanding situation which varies from delivering knowledge to foster independence of learning and interaction as focal points in ESP classes is something awkward and unmanageable in stuffed classes.
7. Overall negative attitudes were the manifestation and outcome which happened in the perception of individuals in our classes.
8. Usually in such classes weaker and slower students are ignored and to come up with the problem of time constraint teachers only ask the help of strong and bright students. Interaction between students and teachers are at the marginal and lowest extent.

This research, very roughly, outlines the shape of the challenge. Alongside and somewhat in response to this challenge the development of new paradigm in realization of learning and teaching expertise and in development of quality teaching are the measurements to be taken in the country.

Implications

The following recommendations are put forward to deal with the problems arising from overpopulated ESP classes:

1. The number of teachers recruited for higher education be increased.
2. Personalized attention be given to individual students
3. To decrease the burden of teachers some methods of effective teaching be applied. Small group learning could be a suggestion.
4. In overcrowded classes some students may not find an appropriate situation to express themselves. Some methods of teaching can be used to involve less active students.
5. As a suggestion against problems of populated classes, small group work provides opportunities for self reflection, self development and the monitoring of one's own learning which moves the learner towards self direction and independence. (Grandtham 2003, Jacques 2003).
6. A ration of 1: 35 students is a fair alternative to deal with overcrowded classes. It is therefore recommended that our educational policy makers should formulate policies that will ensure that the number of students in a class should not exceed 30 students. This in turn will make the government to provide enough classrooms for the schools.

Suggestions for further study

Some rules of participation in the activities should be established to prevent interventions which tend to hinder teaching efficacy.

Furthermore, as a complementary investigation, teachers' using specific strategies are suggested to be taken. In this case, the research can be continued to investigate the teachers' influence on students.

Overall, as universities move toward the use of PBL and more students centered education and training, there is a need to discover how to make this alternative more attractive and viable for large class populations.

As this study indicated, the groundwork of the ESP classes is interaction. The ways this interaction can be facilitated in large classes scan be a good area of research.

Some training classes for teachers should be programmed to deal with the problems of overcrowded classes.

REFERENCES

[1] Ajayi,K and Ogunyemi B. (1990). The Relationship between Instructional Resources and Socio-Economic Status in selected Population of High Schools in Lagos State. *Dissertation/Abstract International*, Vol. 25, No. 2. Pages 22-23.

[2] Akinsolu, A.O &Fadokun, J.B. teachers' perceptions on teaching large classes in secondary schools: Implications for qualitative educational planning and administration. Nigeria, ONDO.

[3] Benbow, J. et al. (2007). Large class sizes in developing world: what do we know and what can we do? USAID U.S Agency for international Development.

[4] Brewer, D.J., A. Gamoran, R.G. Ehrenberg and J.D. Willms. (2001). The Class Size Controversy (CHERI Working Paper No. 14). Cornel University, ILR School. Retrieved from: http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornel.edu/ workingpapers; retrieval time:2012/4/22.

[5] Burnett, G. (1995). Overcrowding in Urban Schools. ERIC/CUE Digest Number Source: Corcoran, T. et al. (1988).*Working in Urban schools*. Washington D.C Institute.

[6] Dror, Y. (1995). School Location as a Function of Uniqueness, Autonomy Integration and Comprehensiveness: Educational Leadership. Retrieved June 07, 2010 from Educational Planning and Management Ministry of Education, Islamabad. AEPAM *Educational Research*, 12(1), 111-11

[7] Federal Ministry of Education, (2005). Education Status Report. FME, Publications, Abuja. ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education New York NY. 107.ED384682 1995-07-00.

[8] Goettler-Sopko, S. (1990).The effect of class size on reading achievement. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED325826.

[9] Hayes, D. (1997). ''Helping teachers to cope with large classes''. *ELT Journal*, Vol.51 No 2. Oxford University press, 1997.

[10] Hollingworth, P. M. (1992). Class size: An educational issue. *Education*, 112(3), 412-416. http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/5sw56439?display=all.

[11] Ijaiya, N.Y.S. (1999). Effect of overcrowded classrooms on teacher – students' interactions. In *Ilorin Journal of Education*. Vol.19. pp 1 – m11.

[12] Kleiner, C. (2001). The coed way. *US News and World Report*, 130(9), 44.

[13] Kolo, T.N and Ojo, F.R. (2005). Large classes and Assessment: Problems encountered by teachers in Nigeria secondary schools. A paper presented at the 31st Annual IAEA Conference held at Nicon Hilton, Hotel. Abuja, Nigeria. 4th – 9th September. Lewis.

[14] Kolo, T.N. (1991). Relative effects of class size, Social Educational Background and Attitude on Oral English Proficiency in Nupe Students. Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, University of Ibadan.

[15] Nolasco, R. and Arthur, L. (1988). Large classes: London. Macmillan Publishers.

[16] Obanyan, P.A (1975). ''Oral work in large French classes'', In *West Africa Journal of Education (WAJE)*, Vol. 19, N0 3. Pages 361-70.

[17] Pitts, D. L. (1977). A study of the relationship among financial efficiency and school location, school level and academic achievement in selected Texas Districts. Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, University of Houston. Research Study No. 183 iv.

[18] Akhtar, Sh. Lt., Arif, M. Zamurad, N. , and Hussain, I. (2012), Problems Faced by Students and Teachers in the Management of Overcrowded Classes in Pakistan, Language in India.

[19] Sitkei, E.G. (1968). The Effect of Class Size: A Review of Research. Washington, D.C.

[20] Smith, M. (2000). Articles on Personal Space, SDPL articles on classroom size pp.221-.

[21] UNESCO, (2000). The state of education in Nigeria. UNESCO, office Abuja.

Giti Karimkhanlouei is an Iranian TEFL teacher. She has PHD in TEFL. She teaches in topics related to ESP, theories of learning and teaching, development of reading and writing skills, letter writing at Medical University of Zanjan as a faculty member and the other universities as an invited teacher. Her expertise in health and education has led her to serve as head of English language department and as supervisor of theses of the students. She has dedicated her academic life for over 18 years of teaching courses of English and she has published a few books and articles. Her current research interests are Language teaching and learning with a special focus on students of medicine, e-learning and ESP course evaluation. She is a member of IATEFL and TESOL and has been editor of several books on emerging topics in TEFL

Behzad Rahbar is an Assistant Professor of General Linguistics. He was born on August 16th, 1978 in Iran. He received his PhD in general linguistics in 2010. His fields of study are sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics and second language learning. He has published some books and articles in ISI journals and attended some international conferences. He has proposed the Gender Spectrum Model in his PhD thesis and nourished this model in some other articles. He is currently the head of Linguistics Department of Zanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Zanjan, Iran.

Behzad Bayat was born in 1987 and is an MA student of TEFL. His areas of research interest is Second language teaching

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 975-985, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.975-985

Using Blogs to Facilitate Interactive and Effective Learning: Perceptions of Pre-service Arabic Teachers

Suad Al Waely
College of Education, Hashemite University, Jordan

Ibtehal M. Aburezeq
College of Education, Al Ain University of Science and Technology, UAE

***Abstract*—This study had three primary aims; (i) to explore pre-service Arabic language teachers' perceptions of using the blog as a learning tool, (ii) to identify the defects of collaborating via the blog, and (iii) to modify the use of blogs to facilitate more effective learning. Semi-structured interviews with 14 pre-service teachers in addition to analyzing postings on the course blog were the used methods for collecting data. The results showed that the participants perceived the course blog as a powerful application to enhance their learning through facilitating active interaction with the instructor, peers and course content. However, the results also indicated a number of challenges and defects associated with the blog use for instructional purposes. Discussion of these defects was explored, and suggestions for effective use of blogs were provided.**

***Index Terms*—blogs, Arabic language, technology, blended learning, pre-service teachers**

I. Introduction

The increasing use of Web 2.0 applications in teaching and learning seems to suggest that teaching the millennial generation may be fundamentally different from traditional approaches. These technologies challenge the conventional conception of pedagogical practices, social space, social practices, and schedules (Brewer & Klein, 2006; Ajayi, 2009). Web 2.0 as a term refers to the second generation of web technologies that is characterized by user communities and a wide range of services, including social networks, blogs, wikis groove, RSS, and podcasts. Such applications encourage collaboration and efficient exchange of information among users (Master Base, 2010).

Educational literature revealed that Web 2.0 applications have the ability to promote active involvement among students who would be driven to the knowledge construction process (Driscoll, 2002). Moreover, it could develop students' critical thinking skills through practical and insightful activities (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Driscoll, 2002; Karl and James, 2006). Blogs are one of the examples of web 2.0 applications. A blog is an interactive homepage that displays asynchronously developed serial entries, by utilizing simple user interfaces and allowing users to easily maintain content or add new entries, with the features of inserting text, graphics, video and audio (Deng & Yuen, 2011; Fageeh, 2011; Lai & Chen, 2010). The blog was defined by McIntosh (2005) as the following:

Historically, a weblog, or 'blog' for short, is recognized by its regularly updated, time and date stamped posts, running down the computer screen in chronologically reverse order (i.e. the most recent post comes first). Crucially, there is an 'Add Comment' feature so that readers of posts can leave their opinions, questions or thoughts. Finally, there is a writing style element: blogs are written by one individual who gives his or her thoughts in a generally relaxed, 'spoken' style (p. 2).

As cited in Fageeh (2011), Kim (2008) considered blogs as an effective replacement for all computer-mediated communication (CMC) applications to language learning. In this regard, Halic, Lee, Paulus, and Spence, (2010) claimed that:

The popularity of blogs among young people has made them tempting to educators seeking to integrate computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools at university level. These tools are seen as having the potential for enhancing student engagement and providing an environment for collaboration and creation of knowledge (p. 1).

In comparison with other web 2.0 applications, a blog has a number of common features including (1) creating a type of website in an easy, cheap and quick way; (2) organizing content chronologically backwards and by postings which are usually short and frequently posted; (3) allowing readers' voices to be heard through a "comments" feature; (4) instant publishing to the web without having to learn HTML or use a web authoring program; (5) viewing related links; and (6) clearly presenting author's voice and personality (Wu, 2006).

Blogs can be used in teaching and learning for writing reflections on lectures and presentations given in class; as a continuation of classroom discussion; case study discussion, raising questions and answers about processes, procedures, assignments, activities, and topics not addressed during class sessions; and as a resource center for sharing teaching and

learning aids. In language learning, blogs have been experimentally used as tools to develop writing and reading comprehension skills. Although implications indicate that blogging should not replace face-to-face interaction, it may provide a practice environment where students can think, reflect, and improve language slowly for a real-life audience (Fageeh, 2011; Pinkman, 2005).

Although the blended learning approaches that integrate web 2.0 applications into traditional classes have continued to grow rapidly, it is still at an infant stage of development where the challenge of internalizing such knowledge requires significant amount of time, effort, and planning. In addition, there are incoherent results in terms of effective blog use in educational settings. While several studies (Blackstone, Spiri& Naganumalogs, 2007; Ellison & Wu, 2008; Fageeh, 2011; Luce-Kapler, 2007; Lou, Wu, Shih& Tseng, 2010; Pinkman, 2005; Yang, 2009) have shared a common finding related to the effectiveness of the use of blogs in creating a new rich, engaging, and interactive educational platform supporting student learning and reflections; on the other hand, some studies have indicated that blogs integration technology was useless in terms of enhancing interactivity among students (Divitini, Haugalokken, & Morken, 2005). Thus, there is a need for further studies to support many of the opinions made about the benefits of blogs use in promoting more active and interactive learning in blended courses. More specifically, researchers and educators need to seriously comprehend how teachers and students perceive and respond to blog applications applied to enhance teaching and learning in traditional classes. Moreover, focused efforts are needed on how best to integrate blogs which can effectively enhance learning and improve achievement.

The Purpose and significance of the Study

Integrating blogs in teaching languages, especially in English classes, is one of the topics that gained a lot of attention in the educational literature. However, there is a lack of empirical research in the area of integrating blogs in Arabic language teaching and learning classes. Given the fact that Arabic teachers face a lot of challenges in teaching Arabic due to its difficulty, there is a vast need for innovative tools to deliver Arabic language, a tool that attracts students and effectively engages them in the learning process at the same time. In contributing to the body of the research literature, this qualitative study investigated pre-service Arabic teachers' perceptions of using blogs as an interactive tool for enhancing their learning to teach; it also evaluates the pros and cons of collaborating via blogs and how to modify the use of blogs to facilitate more interactive learning.

Molebash (2004) argued that pre-service teachers' perceptions have an impact on their teaching and their decisions of using technologies. Johnson (2007) cited in Ajayi (2009) stated that understanding pre-service teachers' perceptions of their own learning while using technology will help researchers and teachers' educators to gain insights into the relation pre-service teachers make between the theory of using technology for learning and what they actually do in real-life situations. Thus, a clear understanding of pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding blogs will advance researchers' understanding of how technological applications can best enhance teaching and learning through creating meaningful learning activities and tasks that meet students' needs and interests. In addition, the findings of the study will provide a contribution to the literature by understanding factors that effect students' use of blogs as a learning tool.

The Research Questions

- What are the pre-service Arabic teachers' views of the course blog as an interactive learning tool?
- What are the pre-service Arabic teachers' perceptions of the cons of collaborating and interacting via blogs?
- What are pre-service Arabic teachers' suggestions to improve the strategies in which the course blog are used to facilitate interactive learning?

II. Literature Review

With technology being more accessible to teachers and students, it is crucial to explore the applications of new technological tools to find practical pedagogical solutions to language learning problems and to enhance teaching and learning of language in general. The integration of text-based asynchronous applications, such as blogs, discussion board, emails, and wikis into language classes may contribute to facilitate this process by allowing students to actively participate in the learning process. They can explore and reflect upon their learning, as well as interact with peers, teachers and content (Castaneda, Ahern, & D áz, 2011).

Blogs are one of the rising technologies often used by educators to facilitate communication and collaboration among students (Divitini, Haugalokken, & Morken, 2005). It is a form of personalized online media or a personal online journal that introduces oneself to others, allows individuals to interact, and shares personal thoughts, information, pictures, movies, activities, and logs in a convenient and easy way (Lou, Wu, Shih & Tseng, 2010). The theory of blogging instruction is based on constructivism, where instruction is designed to be learner-centered that motivates students to learn, provide variety of active learning opportunities, enhance interaction between students and the instructor and among students themselves, and adopt interactive instruction and multiple assessments (Ku, 2007; Lou, Wu, Shih & Tseng, 2010).

Similarly, Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz (2004) noted that blogging contributed in creating a sense of community that would be difficult to take place in a traditional classroom setting. Dieu (2004) stated that blogging gives students an opportunity to "maximize focused exposure to language in new situations, peer collaboration, and contact with experts" (p. 26). Students in such context are required to communicate closely with a particular group of classmates. Moreover, the communication can be during class time or at their leisure time. This blend of planned and

spontaneous communicative exchanges inside and outside the classroom makes blogging a meaningful and engaging social exercise (Blackstone, Spiri& Naganumalogs, 2007).

On the contrary, some studies revealed that integrating blogs into teaching and learning contexts has no value in enhancing students' motivation to become more involved in the learning process (Divitini, Haugalokken, & Morken, 2005; Williams & Jacobs, 2004). According to Williams and Jacobs (2004), a significant number of participants indicated that blogging activities are not useful. In another study conducted by Xie and Sharma (2004), Students showed negative and positive ideas regarding blog use. They considered blogs as a helpful tool for learning and thinking. However, the availability of their contributions to everyone in the class gave them a feeling of anxiety and insecurity.

Along with these conflicting results in terms of the effectiveness of blogs in enhancing interactive learning, it is important to remember that the efforts of effective technology integration in schools are of little value if they do not take the pre-service teachers and in-service teachers into account (Ishtaiwa & Shana, 2011). Research literature has suggested that if teachers believed that technology does not fulfill their own and their students' needs, then most likely they will not attempt to implement it into their classes (Johnson, 2007; Molebash, 2004). According to Schellens, Van Keer, & Valcke (2005), the challenge, difficulty, and motivation of a learning task are defined by individuals' perceptions.

Concerning the perceptions towards blog use, Shoffner (2006) in his qualitative study concentrated on the potentiality of blogs for informal reflection. The analysis of learners' logs, focus group interviews and individual interviews with a group of pre-service teachers revealed positive results in terms of the impact of blogs on their reflective practice. The major positive features of blogs are their informality, accessibility through the Internet and ability to support online communal interactions.

Similarly, Wang, Hsu and McPherson (2006) investigated the effects of blogging on pre-service teachers' awareness of diversity in a literacy/reading context. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected from 24 pre-service teachers revealed that blogging: (1) allows to share knowledge and experiences as well as express feelings and thoughts, (2) enables to be aware of peers' opinions and confronting perspectives, (3) facilitates and deepens reflective practices, (4) bridges the disconnection between theory and practice , and (5) provides a learning environment where there is no restraint on time to think over the discussion topics compared to in-class discussion.

Kuzu, (2007) investigated the impact of course blog on supporting instruction and sustaining social interaction. Based on conducting semi-structured interviews with 10 pre- service teachers, it was found that participants valued the use of blogs to enhance their interaction with peers and the course instructor. In their description of pre-service teachers' perceptions and experiences of blogging in a web-based course, Demirel, Duman, Incesu, and Goktas, (2008) noted that students enjoyed blogging and felt complemented. They also indicated that blogging enriched their pre-service education through providing them with a motivating tool for enhancing communication and knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, students have negative perceptions about templates and memory field of the application. In another study, Yang (2009) explored the use of blogs to improve critical reflection. Based on date collected from Forty-three pre-service teachers who used blogs as a reflective platform, it was concluded that the technology is a valuable tool for reflection and communication with others.

In terms of studying the effect blogs bring to language instruction, Lou, Wu, Shih and Tseng (2010) conducted an experimental study to examine the impact of adopting blogging upon Chinese language composition instruction in a vocational high school in Taiwan. Forty students were randomly selected to serve as participants. The results revealed that utilizing blogging in Chinese language composition can positively enhance students' composition learning; and facilitate more effective instructor-student interaction, which enhances participants' learning motivation and compositional ability. Moreover, participants possessed a positive attitude toward the instructional model of using blogging in Chinese language composition instruction.

In a similar study, Fageeh (2011) sought to identify the effectiveness of blogging in developing writing skills and improving attitudes towards English learning. Participants were Writing Class students in a college in Saudi Arabia. An experimental research method and a descriptive research design were employed to answer the research questions. The findings indicated that the students perceived blogging as a beneficial tool for developing their writing proficiency and their attitudes towards writing. They noted that using a blog gave them an opportunity to freely express their ideas and thoughts in English, write for a wider audience, and maintain an interactive relationship with a real time readership.

The literature review shows that pre-service teachers considered blogs an advantageous learning tool that may lead to a number of positive effects on the teaching and learning process, where learners enjoy a high level of autonomy and opportunity for greater interaction with the peers and instructor. But like any other medium, blogs have some shortcomings such as the feeling of insecurity that participants expressed. Al-Fadda and Al-Yahya (2010) raised other issues that limit students' interaction and collaboration via blogs such as lack of time, class size, quality of students' posts, and lack of instructor presence. This, in turn, suggests that the key to success in adopting blogs rests not on the content being presented, but indeed on the method by which the content is being delivered. Thus, it is vital to realize how this success can be achieved. Pre-service teachers can provide important insights by describing their perceptions of the impact of blogs technology on learning that might lead educators to create efficient, flexible and interesting blogging activities.

III. Methodology

Research Context and Participants

This study was carried out at Al Ain University of Science and Technology (AAU) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a response to the encouragement from its administration to faculty members to adopt modern technology as an integral part of their instruction methods. The present case study was conducted at the Program of Professional diploma in Teaching.

An educational blog was created as a new and additional component to Methods of Teaching Arabic course (EDU 532) over 14 weeks. In addition to the daily face-to-face class meetings, students were requested to make both collaborative and individual weekly contributions to the course blog supported by Google Blogger. The course instructor prepared the students to use the different capabilities and functions of the course blog. The blog tool was mainly adapted for allowing pre-service teachers to post educational and meaningful content related to Arabic language teaching and learning, support their posts with resources (videos, audios, pictures, websites,…etc), discuses course content, generate questions, reply to questions, and comment on daily lectures.

In order to promote pre-service teachers to engage in productive interaction and in-depth discussions rather than random postings, they were asked to meet specific posting requirements. At the beginning of the semester, a set of instructions and assessment criteria were distributed. The criteria included the following:

- Contributions should be related to EDU (532) course syllabus.
- Contributions should include new ideas, opinions and critical thinking, rather than focusing on repeating, describing or summarizing others ideas and thoughts.
- Each pre-service teacher is expected to post at least two messages per week.
- Replying to the instructor and peers' questions should be within 24 hours.

The goals of the previous blended design were: enhancing pre-service teachers' learning to teach Arabic language by fostering interaction (student-student, student-instructor, and students-content), and contributing to a critical understanding of the course material. The course instructor's role included responding to students' questions, giving feedback, providing additional ideas and concepts. He produced 28 records under different titles where 21 of them were enriched with students' ideas and comments. In addition, the instructor was responsible for evaluating students' messages based on the provided criteria.

Due to the fact that almost all UAE universities provide separate sections for males and females, The investigation covers all female pre-service Arabic teachers (n = 68) registered into three sections of EDU 532 during the first semester of 2010/2011. In selecting the study sample, 14 female pre-service teachers originally were selected randomly using a list of students' names. They were personally contacted by the second researcher to request participation. Fortunately, all selected pre-service teachers accepted to participate in the study.

Data Collection and Procedures

Two types of data collection methods were used. They were semi-structured interviews and analysis of participants' posts on the course blog. The interview questions were developed from the literature review, research questions, in addition to the researchers' experience in the field. They concentrated on the following areas:

- Pre-services' views of blog as a tool to enhance interactive learning;
- Pre-services' views of the pros and cons of collaborating and interacting via blogs;
- Pre-services' views of the required assignments related to the course blog use, and;
- Pre-services' views of the suggestions for modifying the use of blogs in teaching and learning.

The interview questions were validated by a panel of experts in the fields of curriculum and Arabic instruction, educational technology, and research and evaluation. This led to further revisions and modifications. In addition, the second researcher interviewed three pre-service Arabic teachers not participating in the actual study, which helped to further rephrasing of the questions.

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), one of the important elements of successful qualitative research is establishing strong and effective relationships between the researchers and participants. This requires developing a sense of friendship between them that leads to trust and confidence. Consequently, it helps the researchers to get more information from participants and ensure confidentiality. Therefore, an orientation meeting was held with all participants to explain the purpose of the study, and the data collection details to ensure confidentiality, and to get pre-service' approval to use their comments for scientific research. Each interview lasted for 15 to 34 minutes. The substantive phases of data collection were audio-taped and transcribed into Arabic in which participants communicate. Recording interviews assured having the most complete record of what was said as advised by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995).

The secondary data collection method for this study was collecting participants' posts on the course blog such as posted questions, answers and comments. Both the interviews transcripts and participants' posts were transferred to a computer file.

Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman's (1994) data analysis guidelines were used. These guidelines include creating codes for the field notes, noting any reflections or remarks in the margins, creating codes for identifying similar patterns, themes, and

common sequences in the data set, and creating a set of generalizations that derive from the available data. Additionally, the researchers followed the data reduction method by eliminating all information that was not relevant to the research questions, summarizing ideas, categorizing similar patterns, and paraphrasing stories (as cited in Ishtaiwa & Shana, 2011).

To judge the value of the qualitative data, the internal and external validity were addressed in this study. According to Merriam (1998) cited in Ishtaiwa (2011), Internal validity in qualitative data is defined as pertaining to how closely the findings match reality. Internal validity was conducted by using, peer debriefing techniques and member checking to validate the descriptions of the data and the interpretations (Ishtaiwa, 2011). On the other hand, external validity is "concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations'' (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). It can be increased through rich and thick description. In this study, significant number of typical quotations was utilized to provide as much thick description as possible while addressing all of the diverse aspects of our findings (Ishtaiwa, 2011).

IV. Results of the Study

Participants' Views of the course blog

Pre-service Arabic teachers perceived the course blog as primarily positive in terms of potentiality to enhance their learning to teach Arabic language. Among 14 participants, 11 (79%) indicated that the course blog has a number of educational benefits. Most notably is promoting collaborative and interactive learning communities that led them to develop better and faster understanding of the course content; remember and retain more information; enhance their social interaction; and improve their learning and critical thinking skills.

More specifically, the findings revealed a total of 35 positive opinions and comments regarding the blog use. These opinions were summarized under six themes including (a) fostering effective interaction with the instructor, peers, and the instructional content, (b) experiencing an attractive and interesting learning environment, (c) accessing to variety of learning resources, (d) allowing more time to think, reflect and respond, (e) discussing interesting or complicated topics in details, and (f) breaking down the barrier of shyness. The themes, frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
Positive Themes Regarding Blog Use

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Fostering effective interaction with the instructor, peers, and the instructional content	12	34%
Experiencing an attractive and interesting learning environment	8	23%
Accessibility to a variety of learning resources	5	14%
Allowing more time for thinking, reflecting and responding	5	14%
discussing interesting or complicated topics in details	3	9%
Breaking down the barrier of shyness	2	6%

This previous findings were evident in the participants' typical responses, such as:

- "The course blog was really beneficial for me. It enhances my learning to teach Arabic language by allowing me to understand the course content in a better and deeper way. I had the opportunity to discuss what we studied in class and inquire about what I did not understand. The course instructor and my peers were always there to help me clarify things."
- "Using the course blog helped me improve my learning as well as increase my interest in the course. Blogging is very different from face to face instruction. It allowed us to discuss and share what we learn in class in a more enjoyable and interesting environment. I really enjoyed reading others thoughts and browsing posted links to expand my knowledge and understanding of issues related to teaching Arabic language."
- "This was the first time I use online technology to learn. One of things that I appreciate in such environment is the access to additional and supplementary materials and learning resources provided by the instructor or peers. Learning from different resources helped me to think more critically and see things differently."
- The asynchronous nature of blogging was beneficial for me. Its major advantage is giving me more time for reading, thinking and reflecting before posting my answers. The process of writing responses enhanced my contributions to the course discussions. Unlike speaking, with writing there is plenty of time to think and correct myself before posting the final response. In addition, there is no reason to be shy."
- "What I actually like about blog use is providing us with the opportunity to discuss all topics that we covered in class, what we could not cover, what we understood, and what we could not understand. There is a plenty time to engage in deep and rich discussions of complex, interested and related issues without hesitation, shyness or being afraid of wasting the class time."

The previous finding generated from interviews conducted with participants was supported by analysis of all participants' posts on the course blog. During the 14 weeks of the study, participants posted 439 posts which were categorized under six major themes. They were (a) responding to peer's questions, (b) responding to instructor's questions, (c) posting related and supplementary materials, (d) asking questions, (e) commenting on lectures or

presentations given in class, and (f) inquiring about explanations and clarifications. The themes, frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2:
THEMES REGARDING PARTICIPANTS' POSTS

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Responding to peer's questions	141	32%
Responding to instructor's questions	94	21%
Posting related and supplementary materials	78	18%
Asking questions	55	13%
Inquiry for explanation and clarifications	40	9%
Comments on lectures or presentations	31	7%

On the other hand, three participants (21%) provided negative comments regarding the use of the course blog as a tool to learn teaching Arabic language. They indicated their preference of face to face environment in comparison to blogs. As pointed out by a participant: " Why should we use such complicated tool which requires more time and effort to participate, I like face to face learning where you can get an immediate feedback." Another participant mentioned "I do realize that technology is an essential part of teaching and learning in my future career. However, I do not think that blogging is a good choice. If I have to use technology to contact the instructor and my peers, I prefer to use my personal email. It is easier and more private."

Pre-service Arabic teachers' views of the cons regarding the use of the course blog

Like any other technological application, utilizing blogs in education has its defects. In order to identify these defects from pre-service Arabic language teachers' point of view, Participants were asked about the cons and defects of collaborating and interacting via the course blog. Participants raised several concerns and issues including: extra workload, nature of students' responses, need for high level of technological skills, lack of immediate feedback, and lack of security and privacy.

Out of 14 participants, 12 respondents (86%) indicated that the use of the course blog had a major impact on their workload. They concluded that the amount of required work has dramatically increased as a result of adding more tasks to their workload. They were required to read a lot of materials, summarize, think, browse the Internet, download and upload related materials, and type responses and comments. Such activities need considerable amount of time and effort. This concern was evident in the participants' typical responses, such as:

- "Blogging has many advantages for me, for instance, it enabled me to read several perspectives and opinions. However, reading others' comments needs a lot of time and effort which I did not have. My schedule was always booked with other requirements."
- "One of the blogging defects is increasing my workload. Reading my classmates' numerous posts, summarizing them and formulating my own response is alot of work. In addition, I'm a slow typist needing much time and effort to type the required assignments."
- "I'm so happy with the idea of implementing blog technology in my learning to teach. It has positively impacted my productivity. However, the success in this new environment needs a lot of effort, as there are lots of things to be done."
- "Actually, using the course blog increased the burden of my study. As a student, I'm looking for something that helps me without increasing my workload. Unfortunately, using blogs in education means extra work, effort, and time to learn using this new application. "

Related to the first concern, 11 participants (79%) noted that the nature of students' responses presented an important defect of blog use. They reported their frustration of reading the same idea being repeated because some students tend to copy what other students have posted without giving different opinions or perspectives. The following typical participants' responses give a good description of this issue:

- "Some students post others' comments with minor changes. It means that you spend huge effort and time in reading the same thing many times. In this case, blogging is boring, time consuming and strenuous."
- "There should be different ways to exploit our effort rather than feeling boredom of reading repeated and irrelevant comments."
- "The bad thing about this issue is spending much of your energy on reading disconnected ideas. I noticed that some of my classmates posted their responses only to get the participation grade without paying any attention to the quality of their posts."
- "Most of the posted opinions are very short."

The analysis of students' postings supported this finding. It was noticed that the same idea is being written repeatedly. For example, in responding to one of the instructor's questions " what is the best teaching technique to teach students how to conclude the main ideas of the lesson?", nine participants posted the same answer which was "collaborative learning is recommended technique."

In regard of the third defect, the need for high level of technological skills, it was raised as a major defect of using the course blog. As perceived by nine pre- service Arabic teachers (64%), the lack of skills of mastering and utilizing new technology presents an important challenge to achieve the positive results of blogging activities. Nine participants

admitted that they do not possess the adequate skills and ability to apply the new technological applications effectively. One participant explained this issue by saying: "Integrating blog in teaching and learning process is a powerful way that can motivate students and provide them with variety of information resources. But achieving such promised results requires high level of technology literacy and skills which actually I do not have. For example, although our instructor showed me how to upload a PowerPoint presentation, I could not upload it successfully." Another participant said: "I believe in technology and its positive impact on teaching and learning. However, my experience in using computer technology is limited; I need a lot of effort, time and training before being able to communicate via the blog tool effectively." One more participant expressed her feeling toward this issue stating: "Why should we have to use this complicated application?!! The email is easier and more private to communicate and interact with each other."

As for the fourth point, although students were required to reply to the instructor and peers' questions within 24 hours, five participants (36%) considered this period of waiting for others to respond to their questions and requests as a defect of interacting via the course blog. They recommended adding synchronous tools such as instant messaging and video conferencing as they will enhance the effectiveness of technology integration in teaching and learning. Participants reported that synchronous tools in comparison to asynchronous ones will help them to engage in simultaneous dialogue and provide them with immediate feedback which is necessary to monitor the clarity and accuracy of their understanding. A participant commented "Personally, I like communicating via synchronous tools more than asynchronous ones. Synchronous format is just perfect in term of giving you an immediate response and feedback to ensure clear understanding of presented ideas." Another participant said: "Waiting for responses for my questions was annoying. The lack of immediate feedback is a major shortcoming of the course blog. Students usually wait to the last minute to respond, you even need to put in your mind; it is possible that you won't receive any response."

Finally, the lack of privacy when posting on the course blog was considered as another defect. Four participants (29%) indicated that they were anxious because they do not want their contribution to be available to everybody. This feature of blogs gave them a feeling of lack of confidentiality. As evident, a participant expressed her feeling: "In every single time l posted something on the blog, I felt nervous as a result of the fact that my opinions will be read from all my classmates." Another participant noted: "Unlike the course blog, sending an email to the instructor or to a classmate gives me a feeling of privacy. By email I could ask about anything without fear or timidity."

Pre-service Arabic teachers' suggestions to improve the use of the course blog

In this study, students were provided with a set of instructions and assessment criteria to enhance the quality of their postings**.** During the interviews, participants were asked about their views of these criteria to improve their use of the course blog. Participants provided mixed views about the effectiveness and efficiency of the criteria of blog use in term of enhancing their interaction and learning in this course. Eight participants (57%) considered these criteria as a powerful way to enhance their understanding and learning of the course materials. The following are some of the suggestions provided by the participants:

- "When the instructor talked with us about the course blog in the beginning of the semester, I got very scared of the complicated thing he was talking about. However, the criteria and guidelines used helped me a lot in implementing this amazing application. I can confidently say that two messages a week is more than enough to help a novice technology user like me to post good contributions."
- "Although it was the first time to use blogs for learning purposes. I'm happy with that use. Being required to post new ideas and opinions had the advantage of making me think in a critical way."
- "When I become an Arabic language teacher, I will use blogs in my teaching. In addition, I will use the great criteria that we were required to follow. It is fantastic in term of giving opportunity to all students to participate."
- "I remember that one of the requirements was replying to the instructor or peers' questions within 24 hours. I think this was a reasonable time limit."

On the other hand, 6 participants (43%) expressed their dissatisfaction with the contribution criteria that used in this study. They concluded that these criteria were not detailed enough to help them write qualitative posts. In this regard, participants concentrated on five major suggestions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the blog use as an interactive learning tool. These suggestions were (1) providing them with evaluation criteria, (2) focusing on discussing specific issues, (3) deleting irreverent and repeated comments, and (4) providing them with technical support, and (5) allowing them to use assumed or nicknames instead of their real names. The following are some responses regarding these suggestions:

- "In many times, I did not know what and how much exactly should I write. Many things were missing in term of the used criteria. Knowing how much I'm required to write and how my responses will be evaluated would help me to give better responses."
- "As a result of getting the same grade regardless the content of our posts, it was obvious that some students were posting only for getting the posting grade. This led to a huge amount of useless comments. I think having a clear evaluation criterion to reward the good responses would motivate students to pay more attention."
- "Asking us to post about specific issues is more beneficial than posting general ideas. Discussing specific ideas is powerful in enhancing our critical thinking and reflection."

- "Reading my peers' comments before posting my response was significant to me, it helped me see things differently. However, reading others' comments is cumbersome and boring. I was required to read tens of repeated and sometimes irreverent comments. I would suggest deleting all repeated and irreverent comments on a regular basis, which will save time, effort, and enhance the quality of the postings"
- "This was the first time I use the blog tool. We were asked to perform many tasks. On a personal level, I did not have prior experience and knowledge of most of these things. Besides that, I faced a lot of technical problems during the semester. To succeed in such activities, we need someone to show us how to implement this application and to provide us with some technical support."
- "I think one of the disadvantages of interacting via the course blog was forcing us to use our real names. Whenever I posted on the blog, I did not feel comfortable because my identity was revealed to all classmates. I think it would have been better if the instructor gave us nicknames as it would have made us feel more comfortable."

V. Discussion

The aim of the current study was to explore pre-service teachers' views of using the course blog as a tool for enhancing their learning to teach Arabic language. It also aimed to identify the pros and cons of collaborating via the course blog and how to modify its use to facilitate interactive and effective learning. Based on conducting interviews with 14 pre-service Arabic teachers and analyzing their postings on the course blog, some notable themes emerged that will be further explored.

Pre-service Arabic language teachers view the course blog as a functional and valuable tool for enhancing their learning to teach. The participants' self-evaluation of the impact of the course blog indicated that this tool has the advantage of improving learning and understanding of the course content through offering them a variety of instructional benefits. The positive participants' view towards the impact of the course blog on improving learning and understanding is due to the opportunity for interaction and reflection the tool offered. Unlike traditional teaching where the instructor or a few students may dominate the discussion, the blog allows all voices to be heard. Even those students who may be intimidated by speaking in front of their peers, or those who need more time to respond are easily able to express their thoughts more freely and descriptively (Black, 2005). As described by one participant: "The process of writing responses enhanced the quality of my contributions to the course discussions. Unlike speaking, writing provides plenty of time to think and correct my comments before posting it. In addition, there is no reason to be shy."

According to Berge and Collins (1995), text-based communications have the power to enhance interactions through removing and diminishing barriers of participation such as lacking communication skills, cultural differences, and shyness. Interaction is a powerful facilitator for learning, and there is a relationship between the amount of interaction students have with course content and their performance. More specifically, interaction serves as a purpose of increasing participation & motivation, developing communication, receiving feedback, enhancing elaboration & retention, supporting learner, discovery& exploration, clarifying misunderstanding, and achieving closure (Wagner, 1997). Blogs involve all of the above functions and characteristics.

This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies that focused on pre-service teachers' perceptions of blogs such as Shoffner (2006), Wang, Hsu & McPherson (2006), Kuzu (2007), Demirel, Duman, Incesu, & Goktas (2008), and Yang (2009). It was evident that participants in all these studies had positive views toward the use of blogs as a teaching and learning tool.

Although blogging environments have a more flexible and independent structure in comparison to traditional face-to-face learning environments, addressing problems occurred in such environments is relatively more difficult than dealing with the problems of traditional teaching (Kuzu, 2007). In this study, pre-service teachers identified a range of shortcomings that might limit the effective use of blogs for instructional purposes; including: (i) extra workload, (ii) nature of students' responses, (iii) need for high level of technological skills, (iv) lack of immediate feedback, and (v) lack of security and privacy. To address these defects and problems of blogging instruction, pre-service teachers offered several suggestions for more effective, thoughtful, and reflective blog use. These suggestions were (a) providing evaluation criteria, (b) focusing on discussing specific issues, (c) deleting irreverent and repeated comments, (d) providing technical support, and (e) using nicknames.

Utilization of blogs in education is a type of providing online activities that require many resources to be introduced and delivered. Conducting such activities effectively requires innovation, creativity, enthusiasm, desire, appropriate infrastructure, and adequate preparation for both teachers and students. In addition, the effective use of blogs as an integral part of instruction requires precise planning and well preparation. Thus, teachers have the key role in planning and implementation of blog activities. They need to make decisions regarding more well-organized, flexible and attractive uses of blogs in their instruction (Kuzu, 2007). In this aspect, Black (2005) offered some recommendations that can be followed to improve the quality of asynchronous discussion. They include the following:

- Specific instructions and evaluation rubrics for students' responses.
- Giving examples of what considered a "reflective piece."
- Well-made open-ended questions.
- Requirement of specific connections made to the readings.

- Private notes to students who behave inappropriately or change the topic.
- Summary of the discussion.
- Accountability (Black, 2005).

For pre-service preparation, providing experiences in instructional design, media selection, modeling exemplary technology practices, resource sharing, and extensive and sustained training and practice is a significant step to achieve good results in term of technology use (Earle, 2002). In this regard, it is crucial to realize that it is not enough knowing how to use technology; instead, pre-service teachers are required to be knowledgeable of technology and self-confident to integrate it effectively. Getting the advantages of technology integration depends on knowledgeable and enthusiastic individuals who are motivated and prepared to utilize technology to achieve instructional purposes (Shamoail, 2005).

Pre-service teachers' previous experiences with the blog use, their readiness for technology-supported instruction and their attitudes towards such a tool should be examined beforehand (Kuzu, 2007). It was obvious in some participants' responses that they do not prefer the blog due to lack of skills and knowledge of using it, and lack of security and privacy. Addressing such issues may lead to fruitful learning outcomes.

VI. Conclusion and Implications

The use of digital technologies in formal education has added flexibility to the teaching and learning process and offered opportunities for informal learning behavior. In terms of flexibility, the new technology can provide an interactive environment whereby students could collaborate and share knowledge freely and without traditional obstacles such as time and place. Blogs have been considered among these technologies that provide powerful technique for students learning through helping them to develop better and faster understanding of the course content; remember and retain more information; enhance their social interaction; and improve their learning and critical thinking skills. However, there is a number of challenges and defects associated with the blog use in instructional settings. In other words, the use of blog in education is a problematic issue due to technical or pedagogical factors. Meeting these challenges will define the effectiveness of the blog use as a means for supporting instruction.

Based on the findings of this study, a number of implications were offered in order to achieve a better result in term of using blogs to support teaching and learning in blended courses. First of all, educational institutions need to encourage and motivate faculty members to utilize blogs in their instruction. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the instructor plays a significant role in technology integration. So teachers should be motivated to use the new technology through different types of motivating incentives.

Second, pre-service teachers should be given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with and experiment new technology applications, share ideas and collaborate with each others on new technology projects and uses (Ishtaiwa & Shana, 2011). Although participants in this study pointed out that this was their first experience in using blog for instructional purposes, they were happy with it. Pre-service teachers should also be encouraged to participate in new technology evaluations that can support their own teaching and learning growth. Effective technology integration demands a strong commitment from both instructors and students.

Third, educational institutions should provide professional development programs for instructors and students that concentrate on effective use of new technological applications. Participants indicated that among the defects of blog use were type of students' responses, the need for high level of technological skills and lack of immediate feedback. These problems could be due to the lack of experience in structuring and implementing blogging activities. Training programs could help faculty and students alike create and implement more meaningful online activities.

Fourth, addressing the challenges of the blog use is highly recommended. Many pre-service teachers may resist technology for many reasons, including lack of technological skills, and lack of time to learn, plan and practice. Addressing such issues surely will motivate them to integrate this technology more effectively.

Finally, additional research is needed to examine and explore other issues related to blogs use such as the impact of blog on achievement in specific areas such as Arabic language, the effects of blog use on acquisition of language skills, students' perceptions of learning blogs use, comparing between the use of blog and other media, and the ways of evaluating students' postings on the course blog. Such studies may lead to more efficient use of blogs for instructional purposes.

References

[1] Al-Fadda, H., & Al-Yahya, M. (2011). Using web blogs as a tool to encourage pre-class reading, post-class reflections and collaboration in higher education. *US-China Education Review, 7*(7), 100-106. Retrieved December 19, 2010, from http://www.teacher.org.cn/doc/ucedu201007/ucedu20100710.pdf.

[2] Ajayi, L. (2009). An Exploration of Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Learning to Teach while Using Asynchronous Discussion Board. *Educational Technology & Society, 12* (2), 86–100.

[3] Berge, Z., & Collins, M. (1995). Computer-mediated communication and the online classroom: Overview and perspectives. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press.

[4] Black, A. (2005). The use of asynchronous discussion: Creating a text of talk. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 5* (1), 5-24.

[5] Blackstone, B., Spiri, J., & Naganuma, N. (2007). Blogs in English language teaching and learning: Pedagogical uses and student responses. *Reflections on English Language Teaching,* 6(2), 1–20.
[6] Bransford, J.D., Brown, A.L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). (2000). How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and School. Washington D.C.: National Academies Press.
[7] Brewer, S. & Klein, J. (2006). Types of positive interdependence and affiliation motive in an asynchronous, collaborative learning environment. *Educational Technology, 54* (4), 331–354.
[8] Castaneda, D., Ahern, T., & D áz, S. (2011). Teaching and learning the Spanish aspect using blogs and wikis: An exploratory study. *IALLT Journal of Language Learning Technologies, 41* (1), 64-89. Retrieved December 12, 2010, from http://www.iallt.org/sites/default/files/Castaneda11.pdf.
[9] Demirel, T., Duman, D., Incesu, S., & Goktas, Y. (2008). Using Blogs (Weblogs) in Higher Education: Toys or Tools. Kuzu. A, Odabasi. *Paper presented at the International Educational Technology Conference 2008, Eskisehir, Turkey,* 1114-1117. Retrieved January 11, 2011, from http://ietc2008.home.anadolu.edu.tr/ietc2008/219.doc.
[10] Deng, L. & Yuen, A. (2011). Towards a framework for educational affordance of blogs. *Computers & education, 56*(2), 441-451.
[11] Dieu, B. (2004). Blogs for language learning. *Essential Teacher, 1*(4), 26-30.
[12] Divitini, M., Haugalokken, O., & Morken, E. M. (2005). Blog to support learning in the field: Lessons learned from a fiasco. *Proceedings of the Fifth IEEE International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies (ICALT'05)*, 219 – 221.
[13] Driscoll, M. (2002). How people learn (and what technology might have to do with it). (ERIC Document No. ED470032). Retrieved January 2, 2011, from http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-3/learn.htm.
[14] Earle, R. (2002). The Integration of Instructional Technology into Public Education: Promises and Challenges. *ET Magazine, 42(1), 5-13.* Retrieved March 19, 2011, from http://BooksToRead.com/etp.
[15] Ellison, N. & Wu, Y. (2008). Blogging in the Classroom: A preliminary exploration of student attitudes and impact on comprehension. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia, 17*(1), 99-122.
[16] Fageeh, A. (2011). EFL learners' use of blogging for developing writing skills and enhancing attitudes towards English learning: an exploratory study. *Journal of Language and Literature, 2*(1), 31-48. Retrieved January 2, 2011, from http://www.lit.az/ijar/pdf/jll/5/JLL2011(1-5).pdf.
[17] Halic, O., Lee, D., Paulus, T. & Spence, M. (2010). To blog or not to blog: Students' perceptions of blog effectiveness for learning in a college-level course. *Internet and Higher Education, 13*(4), 206-13.
[18] Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1995). Research and the Teacher: A QualitativE Introduction to School- Based Research (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
[19] Ishtaiwa, F. (2011). Faculty Attitudes and Use of Moodle Course Management System as a Supplement to Face-to-Face Instruction: A Jordan Case Study. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences,* 12 (1): 11-44.
[20] Ishtaiwa, F. & Shana, Z. (2011). The use of interactive whiteboard (IWB) by pre-service teachers to enhance Arabic language teaching and learning. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 8(2), 1-18.
[21] Johnson, H. (2007). Dialogue and the construction of knowledge in E-learning: Exploring students' perceptions of their learning while using blackboard asynchronous discussion board. Retrieved December 15, 2010 from http://www.eurodl.org/materials/contrib/2007/Henry_Johnson.htm.
[22] Karl, L., and James, J. (2006). Students' perceptions of online learning: A comparative study. *Journal of Information Technology Education, 5*, 201-219. Retrieved November 20, 2010, from http://www.jite.org/documents/Vol5/v5p201-219Smart54.pdf.
[23] Kim, H. (2008). The phenomenon of blogs and theoretical model of blog use in educational contexts. *Computers & Education, 51*(1), 1342–1352. Retrieved November 29, 2010, from http://etec.hawaii.edu/otec/classes/645/sdarticle.pdf.
[24] Ku, C. J. (2007). Blog and project-based learning. Teachers' Voice: National Educational Association Monthly, *ROC*, 197, 24-27.
[25] Kuzu, A. (2007).Views of pre-service teachers on blog use for instruction and social interaction. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education-TOJDE, 8*(3), 34-51. Retrieved November 28, 2010, from http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde27/pdf/article_2.pdf.
[26] Lai, H. & Chen, C. (2010). Factors influencing secondary school teachers' adoption of teaching blogs. *Computers and education, 56*(4), 948-960.
[27] Luce-Kapler, R. (2007). Radical Change and Wikis: Teaching New Literacies. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 51*(3), 214-223.
[28] Lou, S., Wu, S., Shin, R., and Tseng, K. (2010). Adoption of blogging by a Chinese language composition class in a vocational high school in Taiwan. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 26*(6). 898-916.
[29] Master Base. Retrieved March 1, 2010, from http://www.en.masterbase.com/support/glossary.asp.
[30] McIntosh, E. (2005). From learning logs to learning blogs. Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research. Retrieved November 25, 2010, from http://edu.blogs.com/edublogs/files/slr_part_2_blogs.doc.
[31] Merriam, S. (1998). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
[32] Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded Sourcebook (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
[33] Molebash, P. (2004). Pre-service teacher perceptions of a technology-enrich methods course. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 3*(4), 412–432.
[34] Nardi, B., Schiano, D., Gumbrecht, M., & Swartz, L. (2004). Why we blog. *Communications of the ACM, 47*(12), 41-46.
[35] Pinkman, K. (2005). Using blogs in the foreign language classroom: Encouraging learner independence. *The JALT CALL Journal, 1*(1), 12-24. Retrieved December 27, 2010, from http://jaltcall.org/journal/articles/1_1_Pinkman.pdf.
[36] Shamoail , E. (2005). Teachers' perceptions and experiences in adopting "Blackboard" computer program in a Victorian secondary school: A case study. Doctoral Dissertation, Victoria University, 2005.

[37] Schellens, T., Van Keer, H. & Valcke, M. (2005). The impact of role assignment on knowledge construction in asynchronous discussion groups. *Small Group Research, 36* (6), 704–745.
[38] Shoffner, M. (2006). We don't have the liberty of being brainless: Exploring pre-service teachers' use of Weblogs for informal reflection. Dissertation Abstracts International, (UMI No. 3207340).
[39] Wang, S., Hsu, H-Y., & McPherson, S. (2006). Using Blogs to Facilitate Online Discussion. *Proceedings of World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education,* 998-1001, Retrieved January 15, 2011, from. http://iris.nyit.edu/~hhsu02/paper/blog.pdf.
[40] Wagner, E. D. (1997). Interactivity: From agents to outcomes. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning,* 71, 19–26.
[41] Williams, B.J., & Jacobs, J. (2004). Exploring the use of blogs as learning spaces in the higher education sector. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 20*(2), 232-247. Retrieved December 28, 2010, from http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet20/williams.html.
[42] Wu, C. (2006). Blogs in TEFL: A new promising vehicle. *US-China Education Review, 3*(5), 69-73.
[43] Xie, Y., & Sharma, P. (2004). Students lived experience of using weblogs in a class: An exploratory study. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference for the Association for Educational Communications and Technology*, 839-846.
[44] Yang, S. (2009). Using blogs to enhance critical reflection and community of practice. *Educational Technology & Society, 12*(2), 11–21. Retrieved December 27, 2010, from http://www.ifets.info/journals/12_2/2.pdf.

Suad Al Waely was born in Baghdad- Iraq, Al Waely holds a B. A. in Arabic language literature, from University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq, 1991. Her M.A. in Methods of teaching Arabic language from University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq, 1996. Al Waely received her Ph. D. in methods of teaching Arabic language from University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq, 1998.

She is now an assistant professor at Hashemite University in Jordan. Prior to joining Hashemite University, she worked as an assistant professor at Baghdad University in Iraq for twelve years. Her research interests concentrate on teaching Arabic methods, teacher training, language skills, and instructional technology.

Ibtehal M. Aburezeq was born in Suadi Arabia. Aburezeq holds a B. A. in Arabic language literature, from University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan, 1995. Her M.A. in curriculum and instruction from University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan, 1999. Aburezeq received her Ph. D. in curriculum & instruction from University of Washington, Washington State, USA, 2006.

She is now the Dean of Student Affairs and the Dean of College of Education at Al Ain University of Science and Technology, UAE. Prior to joining Al Ain University, she worked as an assistant professor at Hashemite University in Jordan for three years. Her research interests concentrate on curriculum and teaching methods of languages in general and Arabic language in particular. She also conducts research on instructional technology topics, and pre service students practicum programms.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 986-993, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.986-993

A Morphological Reading of Bizhan and Manizheh Based on Vladimir Propp Narrative Theory*

Alimorad Ahmadi
Department of English Language, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch, Iran

Maryam Rezabeigi
Department of Persian literature, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch, Iran

Faramarz Piri
Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch, Iran

Mandana Rahimi Bajelani
Language and Linguistics Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Kurdistan, Iran

***Abstract*—Contemporary narrative theory came to being with Russian Formalism and developed through the work of authors and critics such as Sheklovsky, Todorov, and Strauss. Relying on Saussure's linguistic theories, literary structuralism flourished in the 60s. Structural narratology started in 1928 with the publication of Vladimir Propp's Morphology of Fairy Tales. Propp, a Russian anthropologist, claimed that despite apparent differences, all stories follow similar actions and share similar characters. He believes there are fixed and changing elements in the stories. Names and traits may change, but the actions remain the same. Propp categorizes his findings in four formulas: fixed elements, 31 functions, and 7 spheres of action. This paper tries to reread Shahnameh's Bizhan and Manizheh from Propp's perspective to see if it complies with it or not. Finally, it concludes that it is compatible with the 31 functions, though Propp does not go beyond the surface structure and ignores key components such as motives, starting points, ethics, and religious considerations. Also some of the functions are not found in the story.**

***Index Terms*—Propp, morphology, elements of story, function, Bizhan, Manizheh**

I. Introduction

Narrative theory came to being with Russian formalism and developed through the work of authors such as Jacobson, Tinyanov, and Sheklovsky. Tinyanov who was also a novelist, being influenced by formalists' skill and expertise, embarked on the reading of literary structures in cooperation with Jacobson. Like Sheklovsky and other formalists and being inspired by Saussure's ideas and binary oppositions, Tinyanov and Jacobson used a systematic approach. Sheklovsky believed in the differentiation of prose and its independence from everyday language as much as Jacobson believed in the independence of poetry. In his book titled "art as technique", he introduced alienation concept and thereby challenged the realism of novel by attracting the reader's attention to the unfamiliarity of something which is quite usual.

Structuralists believe that although literature uses language as a tool, but it does not mean that literary structuralism is the same as language structure, for example when Todorov talks about the creation of general rules of literature, indeed, he means the underlying rules that are governing the literature. On the other hand, structuralists believe that literature has a special relationship with language and this, in turn, explains the nature of the language, this is where formalists and structuralists are closely related.

There are cases in which structuralism theory provides critics with a desirable ground for the implementation of descriptive theories. This theory, also, has enchanted many critics, for it has entered realism in the realm of literature impressionism. Of course, it cost a dear because structuralists, believing that speech is a subset of language, disregard real scripts as being specific. The most fruitful function of Saussure's model is a model that considers the structural concepts as metaphor. Attempts on literary-scientific structuralism have not been so influential. A structuralist disregards the text and author to account for the real subject, that is the system existing in the story. As it is said, author

* This article is derived from a research project titled "Morphological Reading of Shahnameh's Heroic Stories Based on Vladimir Propp Narrative Theory" sponsored by Research Department of Islamic Azad University- Kermanshah Branch."

is someone who thinks and tries hard to write the text and his experiences constitute the base of the story. In fact, writer is the origin and creator of the text, but according to structuralists, writing does not possess any base.

By determining a system in literary works, structuralists reject the history too, for the discovered or universal structures do not have any time and place or arbitrary components are a changing and developing process. Historical questions are linked to change and innovation, whereas, structuralism disregards them owing to determining the system present in the work; thus structuralists are not interested in the historical or developing trend, or conveying literary styles. They are only interested in the narrative structure of the story and aesthetic system governing it. Raman Selden, in his book "**An Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theory**" believes that structuralism is necessarily static and anti-history. They do not believe in the starting point and that of receiving point to its interpretation (Selden, 1989).

Undoubtedly, structuralism challenged various kinds of literary activities in its own period such as modern criticism, ethical criticism, and other humanistic criticisms. All the writers believing in these theories considered language as something which is able to comprehend reality. In their opinion, language reflects the writer's mind or his worldview. That is, writer is inseparable from his character and text represents the presence of the writer. However, Saussure's view introduced the eternity of the language. He believed that words have initially existed and text is derived from these words. Structuralists, instead of saying the writer is reflecting the reality, argue that the structure of language is the outcome of reality and meaning depends on the contrasts governing the language not on the writer's mentality or reader's experience, on the other hand, individual does not determine meaning, but the system governing the individual determines the meaning.

Within structuralism of codes' discovery, there are rules and systems that underlie all cultural and social activities of human being. Structuralists apply the principles of archeology and geology as their models and believe that what is observed at the surface is merely a small part of the iceberg. The real justification of the levels can be obtained only through digging and contemplation in levels. It can be argued that all sciences are structural in this regard. Reading beneath the lines, is exactly the structuralists' interpretation of the text.

Literary structuralism flourished in 60s and was going to use the methods and thoughts of Saussure, the founder of modern structural linguistics, in literature. Since it has been much said about Saussure's masterpiece, "**A Course in General Linguistics**" (1916), here, only some points are mentioned. Saussure considered language as language of signs, which cannot be studied diachronically but synchronically, that is in every point of time. He believed that every sign is composed of one signifier and one signified and their relationship is arbitrary and only cultural and historical traditions explain the relationships between them. In the governing system, every sign, due to its differentiation from other signs, becomes meaningful, for example the word "**gain**" is meaningless by itself and just because it is not "**pain**" or "**rain**" becomes meaningful. Finally, Saussure believed that if linguistics is only concerned with speech, it will not succeed. In fact, he had no interest in speech and was interested in the analysis of the concrete structure of the signs that made speech possible. Also, he was not interested in the real things people talked about.

Structural narratology is known with Propp, Strauss, Bakhtin, Grimas, Todorov, and Gennete. There are specific linguistic similarities between all of these individuals. Syntax, the rules governing the structure of the sentence, constitutes the basic model of the rules of the story. Todorov et al. talk about "The syntax of narrative" (Selden 1993). The most basic syntax of a sentence is subject and predicate. For example, in the sentence "Bizhan killed the hogs with sword and wand", "Bizhan" is the subject and "killed the hogs with sword and wand" is predicate. This sentence can constitute the basis of part of or the whole story. If Bizhan is replaced with Rostam or Esfandyar and wand and sword are replaced with bows and spears, the structure of the story will be the same. Vladimir Propp presented his theory in two books titled "**Historical Roots of Fairy Tales (1946)"** and "**Morphology of the Folktale (1927)"** based on the comparison between sentence structure and narrative.

Before talking about Propp, it is better to take a look at Claude Levi Strauss and his role in structuralism. He was one of the first scholars who used Saussure's linguistic principles in narrative discourse in 50s and 60s. Strauss, who was interested in the rich symbols in mythemes, spent years studying mythemes in different parts of the world and claimed that mytheme, like language, has a special structure; therefore every mytheme is an example of individual speech. He was trying to discover the linguistic system of the mytheme, that is a structure that made possible the function of separate examples of individual speech and their meaningfulness. In his book titled "**Structural Reading of Mythemes**", he presented a structural analysis based on which mythemes of various cultures throughout the world were similar.

After studying a lot of mythemes, Strauss distinguished themes that were present in all of them. These themes were beyond culture and language, and according to Charles Bresler, "talked directly to the mind and heart of all people" (Bresler 2007, p. 111). He called those basic structures "mytheme" (Taslimi, 2009). These units in mythemes are exactly equal to phonemes in language. Strauss believed that mythemes, just like phonemes, acquire their meaning from and through the internal structure of the mytheme and are based on opposition. For example, phonemes /b/ and /p/ are both obstructive, but their difference is in the vibration of vocal cords. /p/ is voiceless, while /b/ vibrates the vocal cords and is considered a voiced phoneme. In real speech, these vibrations of vocal cords differentiate /b/ from /p/, similarly a mytheme obtains its meaning from opposition. To love or to hate parents, to love someone who loves or doesn't love you, and to enjoy life with children or to leave them are all binary oppositions in the nature of a mytheme (Bresler, 2007). Bresler called the rules governing the connections between mythemes, structure or grammar of the mytheme.

The meaning of every mytheme depends on the interaction and order of the units within the story and the meaning of the mytheme is formed based on this structural model. In narratology, Bresler has analyzed King Lear by Shakespeare (ibid), and Selden, in "**A reader's guide to contemporary literary theory**" (Selden, 1993), has analyzed the mytheme of "Oedipus the king" from this perspective, and in "**Practicing Theory and Reading literature: An introduction**", he has carried out the reading of a short story by John Updike.

Vladimir Propp was born in Saint Petersburg in 1985 and after finishing his education started teaching German in Leningrad University. He, simultaneously, began researching the folktales. There are various articles and books by Propp; the most important ones include: the historical roots of fairy tales (1946), Russian heroic epic (1958), folk lyrics (1961), and morphology of the folktale (1928).

In the preface of "Morphology of the Folktale", Propp mentions the reason for writing the book as: "the word morphology means the study of the components of the plant and their relationships with each other and with the plant itself, on the other hand, the study of the structure of the plant. But, I think nobody has ever thought about the morphology of the folktale" (Propp 1989, p. 12).

In the first chapter of the book, he talks about the scientific history of fairy tales and believes that there is no comprehensive book about fairy tales and the present books are merely derived from the public observations and understanding and cannot be called scientific research. Greimas, in an article titled "structure and form: contemplations on a book by Vladimir Propp" which is presented in the second chapter of this book, argues that "there has been little progress in morphology reading of folktales because the research has mostly concentrated on the origin and history of folktales and morphology reading has been disregarded" (ibid, p. 50). Thus, proper morphology reading constitutes the basis of every scientific study and when there is no proper morphology reading, proper study will be impossible too.

In the second chapter of "**Morphology of the Folktale"**, Propp begins the research method in the following way:

1. A tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom.
2. An old man gives a horse to Súcenko. The horse carries Súcenko away to another kingdom.
3. A Sorcerer gives a boat to Iván. The boat takes Iván away to another kingdom.
4. A princess gives Iván a ring. The ring takes Iván away to another kingdom.

In all of these stories, there are fixed and variable elements. The names of dramatic personae and their attributes change, but not their actions or according to the translation by Fereydoon Badrei, their functions. In folktales, different personages perform similar actions that are used as the basis of the study. To do so, Propp selected tales 50 to 150 of the collection by Afanás'ev based on which he found 31 functions, seven spheres of action, and four principal formulas.

The general pattern of fairy tales is as follows: after explaining the initial situation, one of the characters is dispatched directly or indirectly because of obedience or disobedience. A villain appears in the story, acquires some information about victim, and deceives him in order to hurt him.

Propp classifies this sequence into seven spheres and represents each with the first Greek alphabet to be distinguished from functions which are indicated by Latin capital letters. These seven spheres of action include:

1. Villain: evil X, combat L, pursue P
2. Donor: delivering magical tools D, submitting the tools to hero T
3. Helper: transference of hero R, liquidating lack or defeating villain E, rescuing hero from pursuit S, carrying out difficult task A, transfiguration of hero Tr,
4. Princess: setting difficult task T, marking the hero M, unmasking the villain DV, identifying hero I, punishing the second villain P, marriage N,
5. Dispatcher: dispatching hero on a mission Y
6. Hero: decision making and moving ↑W, reaction against donor's request H, marriage N
7. False hero: 1W, H, his only task F

Then, Propp classifies these seven spheres into three groups: 1. in its own sphere of action 2. in several spheres of action 3.some persons in one sphere. After these findings, he arrives at the following four major formulas:

1. Function of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale.
2. The number of functions to the fairy tale is limited.
3. The sequence of functions is always identical.
4. All fairy tales are only one type regarding their structure.

In morphology of the folktale, Propp explains how personages appear in the story and describes the appearance of each character as follows: villain appears twice in the tale. It is not obvious where he has come from and his appearance is unexpected, but the second time is clear and after hero arrives he appears (R). The donor's reaction is accidental, and it often happens in the farm, forest, road, or street. The magical helper appears as donor (Z). Dispatcher, hero, false hero, and princess appear in the story from the starting point, but nothing is said directly about the false hero. Princess, like villain, appears twice. The second appearance is obvious. Although Propp does not consider these reaction styles without exception, but has tried to analyze all possible situations.

Dr. Ali Haghshenas, in an article titled "New Findings in the morphology of Iranian mythemes", analyzes the tales according to Propp's theory. After reading morphology of the fairy tales, he concludes that "religion is part of Iranian beliefs and is present in all aspects of this people. Tales have been influenced by this effect too; for example in Iranian folktales, parents' prayer, bet, or presence of true dervish cause the birth of the hero" (Haghshenas, 2008, p. 35). In

conclusion, he believes that some of the Propp's functions are not true for Iranian tales and sometimes new elements should be added to Propp's inventory. Overlapping roles, functional differences between tales in which the nature of their heroes differs, and absence of constant sequence of functions in Iranian tales are instances of differences observed in comparison with Propp (ibid).

Seyyed Mahmood Hejazi (2005) has read elements of folktales in Touti Nameh, but has not discussed morphology the way Propp has intended. In another article, Siamak Mohajer has examined the structure of narrative in Persian literature and tales of Fihe-ma-Fih. Although he has taken a short glance at Propp's morphology theory, but what he intended was to study these stories based on Todorov's theory and whether symbolism was direct meaning or indirect content.

Mahboobeh Khorasani has tried to generalize Propp's theories to one thousand and one night tales. She has randomly selected 47 tales and has claimed that her work is selective. "The results of this analysis are merely obtained from the case study of morphology of narrative in one thousand and one night and are not intended to be generalized to other scripts. Other studies can be carried out parallel to this study to judge the accuracy of the obtained findings (Khorasani, 2008).

Parvini and Nazerian believe that "the domain of narrative is so much extensive and is not merely limited to fiction, it also includes shortest narration of an event, short news headlines, longest historical works, biography, memories, itinerary, novel, poem, lyric, epic, short story, other forms of story, cinema, advertisement, and even stories we tell about ourselves and others in everyday life, and this is why narratology is related to sciences like typology" (Parvini and Nazerian 2008, p. 186).

Then, Parvini and Nazerian presented a summary of ten case stories of Kelileh vo Demneh and, in a table consisting of four columns named: name of the story, characters, functions, and personality type, performed their morphology reading based on Propp's theory and came to conclusions which were consistent with Propp's findings (ibid).

Like Haghshenas, they also found problems with Propp's articles suggesting that "prop does not go beyond the surface structure of stories and does not pay attention to deep structure, and considers other aspects of the story such as attributes of heroes, their motives, dimensions of tale's typology, and cultural, religious, and social aspects of story as subsidiary and claims they are not related to the morphology" (ibid, p. 200).

II. Discussion

Now, with regard to the elaborate introduction presented about the elements of the story, morphology of the tale, and its history, we turn to reading Bizhan and Manizheh according to Propp's 31 functions. The story begins with the attack of hogs to a territory called Arman on the border of Iran and Touran as well as complaint of a group of people before Kai khosrow. The king determines a big reward for a volunteer to kill the hogs. Bizhan, the only child of Giv, in spite of his father's warning about possible dangers, is volunteered and together with Gorgin Milad who is familiar with the path, depart.

There, Bizhan kills the hogs and beheads them to send to Kai khosrow. Gorgin, jealously and deceivingly carries Bizhan away to the camp of Manizheh, Afrasiab's daughter. Manizheh falls in love with Bizhan and by giving him anesthesia takes him to her palace. After some days, Afrasiab becomes aware of the event and captures Bizhan by his brother Garsivaz. First, Afrasiab wants to kill him, but with the intercession of Piran Veiseh changes his decision and imprisons him in a well, and sends Manizheh out of the palace.

Gorgin comes to Iran and tells a pack of lies to king, but Kai khosrow, through his cup finds out that Bizhan is alive. He summons Rostam from Sistan and along with penitent Gorgin dispatch them to save Bizhan. After a lot of happenings, Rostam gets informed of Bizhan's prison by Manizheh and saves him nightly. Then, they combat with Afrasiab's army and by taking many booties return proudly to Iran. Eventually, Kai khosrow praises Manizheh for her devotion and loyalty and appreciates Bizhan in order to thank her.

I.

One of the members of a family absents himself from home. (Definition: absentation. Designation: E)

In Kai khosrow's celebration for the sake of killing Akvan Div, a number of Arman people, a territory between Iran and Touran frontier, come to the king to complain about their gardens and farm's destruction by wild hogs and Bizhan volunteers to kill them.

II.

An interdiction is addressed to the hero. (Definition: interdiction. Designation: K).

Bizhan is only child of Giv and his father wants to prevent his going, so he warns him of possible dangers.

(The opposite of forbidding. Designation K^2).

Bizhan goes to the forest, kills the hogs, beheads them, and sends their teeth to Kai Khosrow to indicate his victory and bravery.

III.

The interdiction is violated. (Definition: violation. Designation: Q)

Although Bizhan is supposed to kill hogs, but following Gorgin's suggestion, he heads to a forest in which Manizheh, Afrasiab's daughter, puts up a camp every year.

Here, the villain, Gorgin, who feels jealousy for Bizhan's victory and is disappointed for his not participating in killing hogs, appears in the story. The main objective of villain is doing harm on the hero.

IV.

The villain makes an attempt at Reconnaissance. (Definition: reconnaissance. Designation: V).

After Bizhan is imprisoned in a well in a territory called Khotan and plundering Manizheh's palace by her father, and her wandering, Gorgin who is not aware of Bizhan, tries to get information about him. So, he goes to camp worriedly, but finds out nothing about the camp and Bizhan, except his horse with an overturn saddle. Thus, he inevitably returns to Iran with Bizhan's horse and hogs' teeth.

V.

The villain receives information about his victim. (Definition: delivery. Designation: W).

After Bizhan's going to Manizheh's private chamber and taking him to palace, the gardener of palace is scared of the presence of a man in the palace, so he informs Afrasiab. Afrasiab's corps under the command of Garsivaz, Afrasiab's brother, surround the palace and take Bizhan to Afrasiab. Afrasiab order his hanging, but Piran Veiseh arrive and remind him of Siyavash story and make Afrasiab change his decision. Finally, they decide to throw him into the well and put Akvan Div's stone on it. It is after these events that Gorgin becomes aware of the happenings.

VI.

The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings. (Definition: trickery. Designation: J).

To bring Bizhan to Manizheh's camp, Gorgin turns to trickery and by praising Bizhan and his braveries, his being fully aware of the region's situation, knowing Manizheh's camp, and intending to find some beautiful girls, encourages Bizhan to go there.

VII.

The victim submits to deception and thereby unwillingly helps his enemy. (Definition: complicity. Designation: G).

In morphology of the folktale in the subcategory of this part of the character's actions, proposes designations g^2 and g^3. "Reaction to magical agents and other methods is spontaneous, that is the hero goes to asleep, gets injured, etc.

Manizheh, after getting familiar with Bizhan, gives him anesthesia while going, and the hero unwillingly appears at Afrasiab's kingdom. This makes a difficult situation for the villain and Propp calls it "primary element of unluckiness" for which designation "h" is used to differentiate it from other forms of trickery.

VIII.

The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family. (Definition: villainy. Designation: X).

The seven actions can be called the preparatory part of the tale. Propp has considered various forms for villainy and classified them into 19 sections from x^1 to x^{19}, but not all stories always begin with such losses; some tales begin due to a lack or deprivation. These lacks can be internal. Then, Propp classifies the lacks which are indicated by designation x, into six groups, including: not having fianc é, necessity of acquiring a magical agent, etc.

While killing hogs, Gorgin abstains from helping Bizhan and after observing his victory is afraid of his infamy for not helping Bizhan.

IX.

Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched.

(Definition: mediation, the connective incident. Designation: y).

Propp has introduced seven subcategories for this section. The first role is the way the hero is dispatched from home, that is asking hero for help and his going: y^1. Requesting for help is usually from the king and is accompanied with a reward.

In Bizhan and Manizheh, Kai khosrow asks for help to kill wild hogs and donates ten horses with gold harnesses and a box of jewels to anyone who volunteers to do this important task. Here, threat is observed with reward and Giv warns his son of the dangers ahead.

X.

The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction. (Definition: beginning counteraction. Designation: w).

Having convinced his father, Bizhan decides to kill the wild hogs.

XI.

The hero leaves home (Definition: departure. Designation ↑).

According to Propp, there is a difference between the seeker hero indicated by designation "C" and the victimized hero. In seeker hero, the hero is only after something, but in victimized hero, there are many events ahead of hero. During these happenings, the donor or what Fereydoon Badrei calls "preparator" or "helper", appears in the story.

The first helper in the story is Piran Veiseh who arrives when Bizhan is supposed to be hung, and by reminding Siyavash story and the disasters that occurred to Touran, saves Bizhan.

The second helper is Kai khosrow, for according to the tradition in Hormozd day, the first day of the first month of the year, he looks at his cup and finds Bizhan alive and sends help to save him.

The third helper is Rostam who, with merchant's clothes along with one thousand skilled warriors, garrisoning them on the frontier, and hiding his ring inside grill chicken which is delivered to Bizhan by Manizheh, saves Bizhan

XII.

The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper. (Definition: the function of the donor. Designation: D).

Kai khosrow: looking at the cup and discovering the future secrets; because via this cup, Kai khosrow finds out that Bizhan is one of the heroes of the big combat between Afrasiab and him, so he is definitely alive.

Piran Veiseh: requesting for not killing Bizhan and imprisoning him in order for the Iranian to learn a lesson.

Rostam: the issue of ring and indirectly indicating his presence in Touran.

XIII.

The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor. (Definition: the hero's reaction. Designation: H).

By seeing the ring, Bizhan finds out that Rostam and his fellowships have come and makes Manizheh promise to confide her a secret. Finally, he tells her to go to caravan and tell him inform him if he is the owner of Rakhsh.

XIV.

The hero acquires the use of a magical agent. (Definition: provision or receipt of a magical agent. Designation: Z)

This function is not seen in Bizhan and Manizheh story.

XV.

The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search. (Definition: spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance. Designation: R).

With the guidance of Gorgin Milad, Bizhan arrives in the kingdom of Arman, the residence of hogs. Propp, in the subcategory of this function analyzes six possible ways which is consistent with the second definition or R^2 of Propp in the case of our hero, that is the hero is moving on a horse via earth.

Bizhan, after taking anesthesia by Manizheh, is transferred to Afrasiab.

XVI.

The hero and the villain join in direct combat. (Definition: struggle. Designation: L).

Hogs cannot be considered as villain. In this story, there is only one occasion of hero and villain struggle: when Afrasiab sends his brother, Garsivaz to Manizheh's palace at the suggestion of Qarakhan and makes sure that Bizhan is there, he sees Bizhan busy drinking and having fun with Manizheh without weapon. Bizhan takes out a knife in his shoes and wants to fight and defend himself, but is calmed down by Garsivaz words suggesting his intercession before Afrasiab.

XVIII.

The villain is defeated. (Definition: victory. Designation: V).

If Afrasiab is taken as villain, after Bizhan is rescued by Rostam, he attacks Afrasiab palace along with his battalion, kills some people, acquires some booties, and comes back to Iran very soon. Afrasiab loses his daughter and a number of his worriers.

XIX.

The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated. (Definition: dispose of evil. Designation: K).

This function is not observed in Bizhan and Manizheh, too.

XX.

The hero returns. (Definition: return. Designation: ↓).

After Rostam arrives at the well with the guidance of Manizheh and using a fire made at Bizhan's well, asks seven heroes to pick up Akvan Div's stone on the well, but their attempt is useless. Then, Rostam picks up the stone by himself, saves Bizhan, and returns Iran with Manizheh.

XXI.

The hero is pursued. (Definition: pursuit, chase. Designation: P).

After Rostam attacks Afrasiab's palace, he pursues them with a big army to Iran's border.

XXII.

The hero is rescued from pursuit. (Definition: rescue. Designation: S).

Rostam and commanders of army at Iran's border defeat Afrasiab and distribute booties among the corps.

XXIII.

The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country. (Definition: unrecognized arrival. Designation:C).

This function is not seen in Bizhan and Manizheh's story.

XXIV.

A false hero presents unfounded claims. (Definition: unfounded claims. Designation: F).

This function is not observed in Bizhan and Manizheh story.

XXV.

A difficult task is proposed to the hero. (Definition: difficult task. Designation: T).

Killing hogs which have attacked Arman, a territory between Iran and Touran.

XXVI.

The task is resolved. (Definition: solution. Designation: A).

After arriving at Arman forest, Bizhan kills hogs one by one by sword. Then, beheads them to extract their teeth and send them to the king.

XXVII.

The hero is recognized. (Definition: recognition. Designation: I).

When Garsivaz and his corps arrive in Manizheh's palace, after the report of the gardener of Manizheh's palace, they recognize the strange person who is Bizhan.

XXVIII.

The false hero or villain is exposed. (Definition: exposure. Designation: DV).

After returning, Gorgin claims that after killing hogs, Bizhan enters a forest following a beautiful zebra and disappears, but the king, according to astronomers, knows that he is alive and in Hormozd day looks at the cup and finds him.

XXIX.

The hero is given a new appearance. (Definition: transfiguration. Designation: Tr).

This function was not seen in Bizhan and Manizheh story.

XXX.

The villain is punished. (Definition: punishment. Designation: pu).

Gorgin is imprisoned, and when Rostam and other commanders go to rescue Bizhan, expresses his penitence and want to risk his life to compensate. Although Kai khosrow has sentenced Gorgin to life imprisonment for dishonesty and unfairness, forgives him by Rostam's intercession and sends him to rescue Bizhan.

XXXI.

The hero is married and ascends the throne. (Definition: wedding. Designation: N).

After Rostam's victory and return, Kai Khosrow fondles Bizhan and Manizheh who have suffered a lot, and gives them a palace with all luxuries.

III. Conclusion

1. Despite various happenings and large number of heroes in this story in each a story is placed, heroes have many things in common in terms of actions and behavior: Gorgin deceives Bizhan and intentionally throws him into the enemy's trap. Manizheh give Bizhan anesthesia and takes him to her palace. Garsivaz attracts Bizhan's trust and takes him to Afrasiab palace. To compensate for Bizhan's love, Manizheh is deprived of all her privileges and sent out of the palace. Gorgin is sentenced to life imprisonment for his villainy toward Bizhan. Kai khosrow, Rostam, Piran Veiseh, and Manizheh are helpers.

2. There was no need to add a new element, but some of Propp's functions were not seen in Bizhan and Manizheh story, including the villain causes harm or injury to a family member, the hero is designated, the hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country, the false hero presents unfounded claims, and the hero is recognized.

3. Lack of consistent sequence of functions in Bizhan and Manizheh story: Propp emphasizes that sequence of functions is always the same in folktales, but in Iranian folktales, including Bizhan and Manizheh, it is not necessarily so.

The following functions are considered as final functions of the folktale according to Propp's 31 functions:

XXXVI. The difficult task is resolved (Bizhan kills the hogs)

XV. The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search (Bizhan is carried away to Arman territory with the guidance of Bizhan).

X. The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction (Bizhan's convinces his father to go kill the hogs).

VI. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belonging (Gorgin takes Bizhan to Manizheh's camp by trickery).

The following function, however, is one of the first functions of Propp's model which is located in the middle part of the tale:

V. The villain receives information about his victim (the gardener of palace reports the presence of a stranger and Afrasiab dispatches an army under the command of Garsivaz).

4. Propp's model does not go beyond the surface structure of the story, for example there is nothing about the physical characteristics and traits of the heroes, including Bizhan or Rostam, and the motives of the heroes, including Bizhan's motive to kill hogs.

5. In sum, it can be concluded that:

Morphology reading of the folktale is not the final objective, but it's a tool for the better identification of the story which has to be used at the beginning of the story, and other external elements such as culture, environment, religion, and emergence of the tale should be criticized for the better understanding of the story. This style is a modern criticism that along with old criticism further our enjoyment and understanding of the story.

References

[1] Bresler, E. Charles. (2007). Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice. 4th Edition. New Jersey. Pearson/ prentice Hall.

[2] Dabir Seyaghi, Seyyed Mohammad. (2009). Narrative translation of Shahnameh to prose. 9th edition. Tehran. Ghatreh publication.

[3] Ferdowsi, Abolqasem. (2009). Shahnameh, Mosco edition. Vol 4. 1st edition. Tehran. Ghatreh publication.
[4] Haghshenas, Mohammad Ali & Khadish, Pegah. (2008). New Findings in the Morphology of Iranian Mythemes. *Journal of Literature and Humanities*, Tehran University. No 186.
[5] Hejazi, Seyyed Mahmood .(2005). Folktales and Tootinameh. *Monthly fiction*. No 88.
[6] Khorasani Mahboobeh. (2008). An Introduction to Morphology of One Thousand and One Night. 1st Edition. Tehran, theoretical studies.
[7] Parvini, Khalili & Nazemian, Houman. (2008). Vladimir Propp's Structural Model and its Functions in Narratology. *SID journal of Persian language and literature*, No11.
[8] Propp, Vladimir. (1989). Morphology of the Folktale. Translated by Media Kashigar, 1st edition. Tehran: Nashr Rouz.
[9] Propp, Vladimir. (1992). The Historical Roots of Fairy Tales. Translated by Fereydoon Badrei, 1st edition. Tehran: Tous publications.
[10] Selden, Raman. (1989). Practicing Theory and Reading Literature: An Introduction. New York. Harvester Wheatsheaf.
[11] Taslimi, Ali. (2009). Literary Criticism: Literary Theories and Their Function in Persian Literature. 1st Edition. Tehran: Ameh Book.
[12] Widdoson, Peter. (1993). A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory. 3rd Edition. New York. Harvester Wheatsheaf.


54200

Alimorad Ahmadi is an instructor at Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch. He was born on 27, Feb. 1973. He has been teaching English language and literature for 12 years. His recent works include translation of three books into Persian: American Politics and Society by David McKay,2012, American All by Peter Kivisto, Wendy,2012, and Essential Economics: A Guide for Business Students by Ken Fergusen,2009.
His recent published papers include:

- Barriers to Learning ESP among Iranian University Students. Procedia, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Cyprus International Conference on Educational Research,2012
- Public Education, Compulsory and Free? A Paradox. Procedia, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Cyprus International Conference on Educational Research,2012
- Critical Thinking in Higher Education: Unfulfilled Expectations. Brain. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience. Vol. 3, Issue 2. 2012

Maryam Rezabeigi, Instructor at Department of Persian literature, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah branch. She was born on 12 August 1978 in Kermanshah city. She has been teaching Persian literature since 2006-2012. Her favorites are Classic literature, Epic, comparative literature.
Her works include:

- The Study of the Evolution of Persian Poet Streams in 20s to 50s with the Emphasis on Nader Naderpoor's Poems.
- The Transient House Like Wind (World Lessons in Ferdowsi Shahnameh)
- Sufi And Sufism in Tazkaratol Aulia(Attar Neyshabori).
- Comparative analogy of different nation's myths (Iran, china, Japan, Greek, Roman, India, Mesopotamia).

Faramarz Piri received his M.A. in TEFL from University of Isfahan, Iran. He is currently teaching English at Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah branch. His areas of interest include Second Language Acquisition, language teaching methodology, and literature.
His recent published papers include:

- The Effect of Negotiation of Meaning on the Accuracy in EFL Writing. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 2, No. 5; May 2012
- The Effects of Pre-task, On-line, and both Pre-task and On-line Planning on Fluency, Complexity, and Accuracy – The Case of Iranian EFL Learners' Written Production. English Language Teaching, Vol. 5, No. 6; June 2012

Mandana Rahimi Bajelani is MA student in Language and Linguistics Department, University of Kurdestan. She was born on 23, Sept., 1973 in Kermanshah- Iran. She is currently teaching English in Kermanshah schools.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 994-1002, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.994-1002

Weblog Promotes ESL Learners' Writing Autonomy

Maryam Foroutan
Department of Humanities Studies and Language Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Nooreen Noordin
Department of Humanities Studies and Language Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Mohd Sahandri Gani bin Hamzah
Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, UPM Serdang Selangor, Malaysia

***Abstract*—Today, we observe widespread application of the internet, both synchronous and asynchronous communication, by educators in many worldwide classes. Weblog (blog or web log) can be one of the instructional and integral components for ESL instructors. By applying interview and observation, this study reports on ESL students' experience and perceptions in applying weblog throughout a semester in a writing class in Malaysia. Besides, this study examined the effect of using Weblog on students' writing autonomy. The findings revealed that students enjoyed the process of publishing their writings, and exchanging their experience in the weblog. Students also acknowledged weblog as a tool which provides more opportunities to publish their writing freely, extend their interaction with their peers outside the class setting, be able to publish and share interesting videos, have the chance to look for the appropriate materials in the World Wide Web (WWW) and check their sentences in the Google simultaneously. Students enjoyed some features in weblog which cannot be found in conventional modes of teaching and learning, such as experiencing unlimited time and place, more independency and freedom in publishing and exchanging comments. With the empirical data presented in this study, weblog can be applied as a suitable instructional tool to promote autonomy among language learners.**

***Index Terms*—ESL, computer-mediated communication (CMC), weblog, writing skills, autonomy, social interaction**

I. Introduction

Historically, blogging began around 1993 as a forum for the National Center for Supper Computing Applications (NCSA). The term "weblog" was uttered for the first time in 1997 by an Internet enthusiast called Jorn Barger. He decided to rename his 'website' (Robot Wisdom), a 'weblog' which refers to websites that are continuously being updated (Ward, 2004). Weblogs (also known as 'web logs' or 'blogs') offer common public spaces where allow people the freedom and chance to express themselves truthfully, readily and openly (Tremayne, 2007; Barlow, 2007). Blogging is the act of posting articles- personal diaries and comments- on an online site and updating them on a regular basis (Jones, 2006). In other words, weblog is a hypertext product where one posts or publishes his/her ideas and receives comments from other correspondents in a collaborative space (Wang & Fang, 2006). A weblog page includes the following sections: a title, a short description of the weblog, writer or author's profile, link, latter articles, new comments from readers, date and time of the post archival reports or information assorted by months, calendar and sections or subjects (Iida, 2009). Weblogs can be easily updated any time and as long as there is the Internet connection, it is available for everyone in any place for any kind of purposes including; entertainment, business, social, political issues and educational aims.

Over the past two decades, the number of weblogs in the Internet has increased dramatically. As of December 2007, an Internet search engine for tracking weblogs, Technorati, was tracking more than 112,000,000 weblogs. As more bloggers and readers are fascinated to post, read and exchange comments in the weblogs, this number has increased substantially in recent years.

Iida (2009) reported some of the reasons in using weblogs as: a) using weblogs easily: compared to websites which need specific softwares, such as Microsoft Front Page or Publisher on the users' computer, weblog needs the simplest skills, b) making personal pages with simple procedures, and, c) using weblogs with low cost: users can create their personal weblogs free of charge. Since weblogs are still new, their use for educational purposes has not been extensively discovered. The evidence on how weblogs are being applied in education and what effects they might have on students' learning, is still scarce. In most cases, teachers reported weblog's advantages for class management tasks

including; announcement, publishing the assignments, their instruction and handouts, or putting academic calendar, so that they are easily accessible for both students and their parents (Richardson, 2006).

Through weblog, learners have the opportunity to read other learners' posts and comment or add some materials to the existing articles. This interaction makes students motivated in learning, while provides a competition for learning with other learners. Since the Internet is the only place that users can access to different sources and skills simultaneously, it is observed that students can improve their language learning (e.g., Noytim, 2010). Weblog has been reported as an excellent communication tool for small teams or groups through which students share their thoughts and work together to express their ideas collaboratively (Iida, 2009) and also an appropriate space to store data and have group work tasks (Zailin, et al., 2012). Weblog users have choice on how, when and what to publish in their weblog. They can choose the materials based on their needs and goals as well as customize their weblog any time they wish; as the result, this authority creates personalization and ownership over their ideas, writing and favorites. Ferdig and Trammell (2004) believe that bloggers can sustain motivation through this personalization and ownership. Similarly, Iida (2009) believes "learning process of exploring useful weblogs or websites according to their own needs can encourage students to develop their skills to determine which resources are necessary to use to fulfill their purposes"(p.5). Iida adds the learning process will enhance students' awareness in critical thinking through reading weblogs which are created by different users in different fields. Besides, reading the materials of these weblogs can familiarize students for their future intentions. Knowing these updated materials is crucial for digital learners as the world of knowledge is constantly changing and they are expected to move along this unstable flow of revolution. Students are expected to swim and struggle in the sea of knowledge and get the most advantage by their own efforts. As the materials are ample in CMC, students have to choose their favorite materials based on their needs. Ward (2004) asserts that "a blog provides a genuine audience, is authentically communicative, process driven, peer reviewed, provides a dis-inhibiting context and offers a completely new form with un-chartered creative potential" (p. 3.). This "dis-inhibiting" context make weblog a comfortable writing environment for bloggers to freely communicate with other peers and other bloggers and in this promising environment enhance their reading comprehension, improve writing performance and get motivation in reading and writing on other authors' posts (see for example; Arslan and Kizil, 2010; Montero-Fleta and Pérez-Sabater, 2010; Sun, 2010; Sharma and Xie, 2008; Pinkman, 2005; Ferdig and Trammell, 2004). The nature of communicative phase and learner's choice in CMC has stimulated some researchers to consider the effectiveness of CMC and weblogs in developing autonomy (Zhang, 2009; Ward, 2004; Pinkman, 2005).

II. Literature Review

A. CMC and Autonomy

In education, one of the primary perspectives in learning which has been extensively discussed is 'learner autonomy'. Researchers suggest that students who take control of their own learning can succeed greater in learning, while persist their learning for a lifetime (Little, 2007). Schwienhorst (2008) contended that learner autonomy "focuses on learner-centered approach to learning, where learners are encouraged to critically reflect on their learning process and develop a personally meaningful relation to it" (p.11). Benson & Voller (1997) pointed out the term autonomy has been used in at least five ways:

- Situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
- A set of skills which can be learned and applied in institutional education;
- An inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;
- The exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning;
- The right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning (p.1).

There is consensus of opinions in the literature that learner autonomy emerges from the individual learner undertaking responsibility for his or her own learning (e.g., Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). The great merit of autonomy in the field of foreign and second language writing has been recently appreciated.

The challenge to facilitate EL writing and promote autonomy among learners made many educators and policy makers to look for new inventions to fulfill the problems of conventional methods. One of the widespread and prevailing methods is applying computer and the Internet in the classroom setting, as it is assumed that computers have the potential to help students to be more autonomous in learning (Schwienhorst, 2002). Boud (1988) asserts that computer could be assumed as a tool through which students have the chance to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been acknowledged as the most widely used learning environment by learners, as it provides opportunity to extend their interaction and learning beyond the limitation of place and time (McAnear, 2002). Today, we observe growing number of people connect to the Internet for a variety of purposes. Some of these Internet users are learners who seek for the information on their own choice of time, place and type of materials. These flexibility in choosing the time, place and materials is believed to lead learners to autonomy in learning. Moreover, the ideal learning atmosphere for digital learners is a rich learning environment that allows and supports learners to gain knowledge collaboratively and independently, disregarding their ideal learning styles (Maesin, Mansor, Shafie, & Nayan, 2009).

Since digital-age learners demand an active learning experience which is social, participatory, and is fostered by rich media, curriculum is expected to cater for different students' needs; in the meanwhile encourage them to control over their learning process. The Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) are the idyllic spots for learners, especially language learners, to search for their favorite materials in their convenient time and place. By considering specific features in web-based multimedia production and distribution tools containing text (blogs, wikis, Twitter), audio (podcasting, Skype), photo (Flickr) and video (vodcasting, YouTube) which are constantly being developed and updated, McLoughlin and Lee (2010) believe that tertiary education institutions have great opportunities in integrating social media and technologies into teaching, learning and assessment.

In the modern technology, today's students are familiar with the Internet and expect to take charge of their own learning (Solomon and Schrum, 2007), while engage in the fun and interesting activities and enjoy the process of learning. Therefore, when these digital learners come across conventional learning settings, which are not customizable, they become deactivated in their learning. Layton (2000) reported some unique digital children's characteristics as; more independent, more mentally open, more patient, and more audacious compared to most 20th-century children. These children have strong points of view and expect immediate satisfaction. However, McNeely (2005) emphasized that although students have a very good command of using online tools, they might have problem in using these communication tools successfully for educational purposes. Therefore, more research is required to investigate students' perception in applying these instructional tools and to find out if students are interested and if they get the most advantage from them.

Nguyen (2008) believes that the roles of teacher as supplier and students as receivers of information have radically switched in CMC settings. Online interaction in CMC along with the constructivist principles, which emphasize the role of communication and social contacts, are important factors in developing autonomy among language learners. According to Chapelle (2001), online language learners have laid-back access to supportive tools such as: online dictionaries, word processors, and the Internet information; consequently they develop interdependency of the teacher and are persuaded to manage their own learning to a certain extent. Similarly, Knapper (1988) pointed out to the potentially promising contribution of online environment in developing lifelong learning skills, which have pivotal role in fostering learner autonomy. The online environment as mentioned by Knapper can a) offer active involvement of students in learning process; b) be manageable in time, place and degree of learning; c) suit individual differences; d) motivate students in learning as the materials are updated daily; e) allow learner's interaction and exchanging knowledge; f) encourage learners to take risk in the learning process, and g) finally allow learners to have higher control over their own learning. In addition, Tschirhart and Rigler (2009) also believe that Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has essential role in promoting learning autonomy. They further emphasized the importance of appropriate learning materials and creating the suitable learning environment in CALL context where learners can communicate and interact with other learners of the target language.

In regards to autonomy, Salmon (2000) suggested a five hierarchical model for Computer Mediated Communication. In the first stage of this model, i.e, *Access* level, learners will be acquainted with the technology. In the second stage, *Socialisation* level, learners will get involved in social interaction, exchange and communication to compare their own experience and interpret each other's ideas. In the third stage, i.e. *Information Exchange* level, learners exchange their ideas and knowledge with other learners and in the meanwhile develop their knowledge. In *Knowledge Construction* level, learners initiate working independently. Lastly, in *Development* level, i.e. the fifth level, learners are able to use the mode as an innovative method in learning through networking. This model has the ability to support and promote learner autonomy (Yumuk, 2002; Salmon, 2000).

B. Weblog and Autonomy

Among different internet applications, weblog enables one to many communication between the readers and writers where can freely express and exchange their ideas. Baggetun and Wasson (2006) reported on the use of weblogs to develop self-regulated learning (SRL) among students. Their finding showed that blogging supported SRL as weblog is: a) a tool to reflect ideas on a topic, b) a method to initiate conversations with other friends, and c) a mean to develop personal knowledge through others' feedbacks and other learning resources. The findings also revealed that the Internet awakened students about their metacognitive knowledge where they noticed what and whom they are communicating with. Similarly, a study by Krishnaiyer, et al (2012) showed that blog facilitated students' reflection in writing.

In the same token, Wang and Fang (2006) reported on the effectiveness of using weblog to facilitate students' skills in articulating and reflecting on their own learning, and engaging with other students. The findings of this study showed that collaborative learning through weblogs encouraged students to develop their interdependency and autonomy in groups.

Although many researchers (e.g. Chiu, 2008; Schwienhorst, 2004; Arnold, 2002; Warschauer, 1996; Beauvois, 1995) indicated a potentially promising role for technology including computer and the Internet in enhancing learner autonomy; however, there is a paucity of research on how weblogs can help language learners to promote their autonomy in learning. This study aims to begin to fill the existing gap from three perspectives. First, this research will investigate students' perception and experience on applying weblog in their learning. Second, the research will investigate how learners accept autonomy in their learning. Third, the research will test a model for applying weblog for English writing autonomy.

C. A Social Inquiry Teaching Model for the Web

Social interaction is influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" in which it is assumed this concept covers "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86).

Robert A. Cole (2000) in his book '*Issues in Web-based Pedagogy'* has introduced a model for applying web in teaching. He believes that web is the best teaching model in applying Vygotsky's zone of proximal development as well as a flexible multimedia communication tool that is able to integrate content presentation, interactive and collaborative communication, and research for further learning; besides, web is a creative and effective tool for students' hands-on activities. Cole further postulated that children grow through four phases of the zone of proximal development where social to psychological patterns are gradually internalized. The mentioned phases are namely: reliance on others, collaboration with others, self-reliance, and internalization. Figure 1 shows Cole's four phases of learning.

Progressing from each stage to the higher stages illustrates changing the role of students from passive to collaborative to active. On each stage, the concept of scaffolding assists the student to progress the phases from completely reliance on others (in this research is the same as dependency) to collaborative with others, to self-reliance (as we call it autonomy), and finally to internalization of the goal (which is main goal in lifelong learning) of the educational activities.

Social Inquiry Teaching Model for the Web

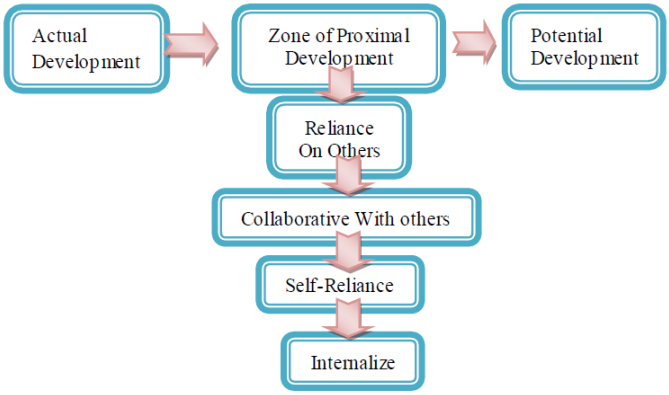


Fig. 1: Progression Through the Four Phases of the Zone of Proximal Development (adopted from Cole, 2000, p.168)

The four mentioned phases, as stated by Cole, are the basis for providing the order of instruction of a social inquiry learning model through which learners will subconsciously be acquainted with social and academic activities. Figure 2 adopted from Cole illustrates how this model can be applied for designing a website as a mediating tool that guides and scaffolds the social and inquiry-based activities of the learner through each phase of instruction.

In Cole's first phase, *reliance on others*, the learners are passive as they are only receivers of modeling and presentation of their teacher. In this phase, Instructional activities start when all students enter a center on the website to receive presentation prepared by the teacher. The content relates to an 'intellectual confrontation' which students are expected to challenge in finding the correct answers to academic questions. The related strategies, such as Webbing and modeling are applied in order to motivate students in their learning. Web features at this level should include multimedia components such as audio, text, video and animation to attract students' attention on the theme, content, and intellectual confrontation of the educational unit.

In the second phase, *collaborative with others*, learners, as inter-active learners, are able to use internal and external speech tools besides other mediating ones like the Web to enable them to communicate with mentors and construct their own potential development. In this phase, each student can enter his/her own personalized community of learning centers on the Web as Cole name these centers 'hubs'. These centers are places for learners to communicate with members of mentors in order to solve their problems and gain more information. The main features of this phase are; collaboration, interaction and communication with others. As mentioned by Cole, Web is the great tool where all these phases can be applied. Cole asserts that the activities in each hub, depending on the nature of the educational goal, should be designed in a way to include collaborative effort in which students and assistants can easily interact with each other.

In the third phase, *self-reliance*, students change to active learners who rely on their acquired knowledge in reflecting what they have learned and look for methods in order to gain more learning. In this phase of instruction, learners enter research centers on the Web that Cole names them 'Cubicles', initiate their own search and gather information for further learning.

In the final phase, *internalization*, Cole explains that students internalize their learning through repeated active application and are "capable of using their newly acquired potential development, without much conscious effort, to be creative in generating solutions to the original intellectual confrontation" (p.170). Cole pointed out that the Web has the

potential in providing such a proper environment where students are able to have their own Web site or to become mentors for other incapable peers in on-line communities to show what they have learned and internalized.

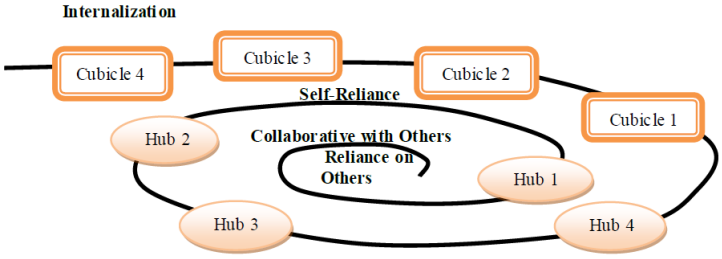


Fig. 2. Social Inquiry Model of Teaching for the Web (Cole, 2000, p.169)

III. Research Questions

Applying Cole's framework, this research aimed to investigate how the above framework assisted English writers to be autonomous in writing through blogging. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are students' experience and perceptions of using weblog?
2. What is weblog's effect on students' acceptance of responsibility in their own learning? How?

IV. Research Method

A. The Setting and Participants

The participants of this research were 30 undergraduate English major students, 17 of whom were female and 13, male, from the Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia. The samples consisted of three main races in Malaysia, 16 Malay, 8 Indian and 6 Chinese. Their national language was Malay, while Mandarin and Thamil were spoken by Chinese and Indian respectively. These subjects were in their sixth semester of their studies, had taken writing courses and had intermediate writing proficiency, while their ages ranged from 22-25 years.

B. Method

Thirty undergraduate English major students who had intermediate level of writing proficiency studied at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) were randomly chosen for this study. These students were asked to meet in a class (arranged by the researcher) twice a week for a 14-week period. Initially, students were given a survey in order to elicit their experience of using the Internet and blogging. Group interviews were conducted at the end of semester.

In the first session, the weblog (created by the researcher from *Blogger*) was introduced to the students in order to have them create their own usernames and passwords. Anonymous usernames were chosen to let students communicate and share their feeling with each other freely. Offering unlimited time and place (in or out of class), students needed to publish twenty entries at the weblog during 14-week period while selecting topics of writing was left to them. Moreover, they were requested to comment and revise each other's writings. Students were free to be logged in anytime and anywhere they wished, while teacher as a facilitator would help them upon their request.

Throughout the semester, observation helped the researcher to elicit some important information. At the end of semester, interview was conducted to gauge students' perceptions in using weblog and accepting responsibility for their own learning. Interview and observation were coded and main ideas were categorized and reported.

V. Findings

A. Students' Experience with the Internet and Weblogs

Thirty but two students reported using the Internet every day. These students stated that the Internet was an important part of their lives. Two students reported that due to having no home Internet access, they were not able to connect to the Internet every day but twice or three times in a week at university.

Applying weblog was more limited compared to other computer applications among students. The majority of the students reported that they had not published any entries to any weblogs, except Facebook, twitter and some other popular websites. Facebook was the most popular website where students published their entries for entertainment purposes only. At the beginning of the research, the majority of students were not aware of the effect of using weblog in their learning and considered it just as a tool to entertain them in their free time. They reported they have not used weblogs but to receive and submit the assignments and also to check the curriculum calendar.

After gaining some experience with weblog, all but three students enjoyed the process of publishing their entries in the weblogs, commenting on each others' entries and receiving their peers' comments. However, three students stated to be uncomfortable with using weblog. One of them stated:

"I think weblog is very complicated and requires specific skills, which I sometimes have problem in using these skills and feel very frustrated".

B. Students' Perceptions of Advantages of Using Weblog

All but three students reported that they had positive feelings about using weblog, mentioning that: "it was a very good experience," "I feel it is good for me to learn more", "I think I will learn better", "I can have more interaction with my friends". They reported that through weblog they were able to write more and communicate more often with their classmates. Moreover, they believed that weblog was a good medium to improve their language proficiency in reading and writing. Some students requested their partner to correct their mistakes grammatically. Students were more motivated to comment on each other's writings. Some other advantages of using weblog as reported by the students were: easier access to online bilingual dictionaries, easier correcting their sentences and spelling, and also receiving comments from their peers anytime and anywhere. Besides, students pointed out that in their previous experience of using offline tools, such as pen and paper or Microsoft word, it might have taken one week to receive their teacher's comments, while through this mode of learning, their peers could correct their mistakes within hours. This faster process made them more motivated in writing. Students acknowledged they were more interested to read and write on weblog. One student stated:

"I like to read my friend's writing and know his/her idea on a specific topic. I also cannot wait to read her/his comments on my writing. I feel using weblog is more interesting compared to writing on paper, because I can receive my comments so fast"

However, three students had negative comments about using weblog. They remarked; "I think using weblog makes me embarrassed", "I don't like my friends read my writings and laugh at me". For those two students who did not have home Internet access, communicating with their classmates outside the classroom was difficult. Interestingly, even those students who had no internet connection at home were worried about their responsibility to reply to their friend's entry. One student remarked:

"I don't have internet connection at home. It is very embarrassing for me to wait until I connect to the internet at university. I feel very uncomfortable, because I know I have to reply to my friend's writing as fast as I can".

It was observed that students were engaged to post comments on each other's entries and sustain their interaction even after class. They were aware of the effectiveness of their comments on their friend's writing proficiency. One student said:

When I receive feedback or comment from a classmate, I notice someone has read my entries and it gives me more confident and motivation to keep writing in the weblog. I like to write comments because I think my comments may help my friend to improve his/her language.

Observation also revealed that some students used Google in order to check their sentences. When one of them was asked the reason for using Google, he replied:

I use Google because I am not sure whether my sentence is correct or not. I afraid to publish something which is grammatically incorrect. I afraid my classmates laugh at me and criticize me. I think Google is the best way for me to check my sentences grammatically.

C. Students' Acceptance of Responsibility for Their Own Learning

Data from the interview and observation indicated that students saw weblog as a space to express their ideas freely without worrying about the limitation that often accompany traditional writing assignments. In overall, all students reported having more freedom in writing as well as more confidence to post comments on each others' entries. They liked the process of writing and posting comments due to its fast mode. It seems students were willing to receive feedback very fast instead of waiting to receive their teacher's comments one week later. Students reported that in the previous mode, i.e. offline, they were getting impatient waiting to receive their teacher's feedback, while now they were more pleased to have their writing checked online by their peers. They believed that some of their classmates were also able to correct their sentences and monitor them. Some claimed that online grammar checker and online bilingual dictionaries could assist them as a teacher could. However, some students pointed out to their peers' comments that could not be reliable. These few students insisted that their teacher correct their grammatical mistakes not any other appointees. Totally, the majority of students were satisfied in using weblog as a tool which could support them in their learning; besides they reported their willingness to keep on using weblog in their English writing class. One student claimed:

I think using online tools especially weblog is more fun compared to offline tools. We can review our writing any time we like. We can correct each other's writing easily, enjoy internet features and enjoy writing and receiving comments. I like to keep writing in the weblog and exchange ideas with my classmates.

Observation, supported students' acceptance to control over their own learning. At the beginning of the semester, since students were not familiar with the weblog application and applying the Internet as a learning assistant, more questions were asked from their teachers. However, gradually students began to establish a very good community with their peers, and their reliance from their teachers switched to their peers. It was observed that they helped each other in writing and offered some guidance in their peers' writing. To the middle of semester, students were more active in negotiating, expressing their ideas and making remarks on each other's entries. Besides, it was observed that students

murmured with each other and checked their grammar and vocabularies. To the end of semester, they were more reliant on the online dictionaries and using Google to check their words and grammar.

VI. Discussion And Conclusion

The findings of this research showed students' positive perception in applying weblog, and also students' acceptance of responsibility for their own learning. The results of this research supported Cole's framework and proved that incorporating CMC tools, including weblogs, are valuable to support language learners in promoting their autonomy. Since these online tools assist language learners to look for their own materials and correct their sentences by their own efforts; therefore, it is believed that language learner have the capacity to gradually narrow their dependency to their teacher or their peers, and consequently find themselves responsible for their own learning. As mentioned earlier, students in this study enjoyed the process of sending and receiving writings from their peers. Moreover, weblog encouraged them to continue exchanging their writings even at home where no teacher could control and force them to learn. This shows that they have relatively reached to the ultimate goal of education which makes students motivated enough in learning to control their own learning.

The role of technology as Kessler (2009) has pointed out is to provide more opportunities for language users in authentic context in which such activities stimulate students to endeavor for autonomy in the target language. The reasons for fostering autonomy among students through weblog are disclosed by Gonzalez and Louis (nd). They believe student-centered syllabus, which promote autonomy, requires defining objectives for student performance; having meaningful activities addressing students' needs, favorites and their learning styles; step-by-step lesson plan as well as an explicit evaluation method. Weblog is the best place to fulfill all these requirements. Gonzalez and Louis further indicated that through weblog, students have access to their courses at their available time and place while are able to apply metacognitive strategies to set their own objectives, manage their time, and evaluate their own performance. Likewise, McLoughlin & Lee (2010) believe that since these social software mediums are process-based, supported and managed based on learners' interest and involvement and encourage learners to be active, they possess the potential to foster self-regulation and autonomous learning among learners.

It seems appropriate to point out that while technological innovations, including internet, bring about changes in the classroom, facilitate extensive exchanges, and encourage learner autonomy, they are ultimately tools in the hands of instructors who must utilize them creatively to maximize students' language learning. This happens by preparing and training language teachers in applying technology including computer and the internet in the classrooms. Warschauer and Meskill (2000) believe that the success in integrating technology into curriculum and getting satisfactory results rests on appropriate planning and design in how to apply it appropriately in the classes.

Limitation of the study and suggestions for further study

This research suffered from the following limitations which may lead to further studies:

- The subjects of this study were English major students who had intermediate writing proficiency. It may have affected their acceptance of autonomy. Therefore, non-English major students may get different results from this study in regards to accepting responsibility for their own learning. A further study might explore how non-English major students respond to the use of weblog in promoting their autonomy.
- The present study suggested how blog could promote students' writing autonomy. More studies are required to examine how blog can affect students' writing performance, writing process and engagement.
- Moreover, in this study, students' writing autonomy was investigated. Further study might investigate the effect of blogging on the development of autonomy in other skills.

References

[1] Arnold, M. N. (2002). Computer-mediated communication: Writing to speak without foreign language anxiety? Published doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas, Austin.
[2] Baggetun, R. and Wasson, N. (2006). Self-regulated Learning and Open Writing. *European Journal of Education* 41.3/4, 453-474.
[3] Barlow, A. (2007). The rise of the blogosphere. Westport, Conn: Praeger Brown.
[4] Beauvois, M. H. (1995). E-talk: Attitudes and motivation in computer-assisted classroom discussion. *Computers and the Humanities* 28.2, 177-190.
[5] Benson. P &Voller. P. (1997). Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning. London: Longman, pp. 18-34.
[6] Boud, D. (1988). Developing learner autonomy in learning. Nicholas publication Company, New York.
[7] Chapelle, C. A. (2001). Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition. Cambridge. In L.V.,Nguyen, (eds.), *Computer Mediated Communication and Foreign Language Education: Pedagogical Features.* International Journal of Instructional Technology & Distance Learning 5.12.
[8] Chiu, C. Y. (2008). The discourse of an English teacher in a cyber writing course: Roles and autonomy. *Asian EFL Journal* 10.1, 79-110.
[9] Cole, R. A. (2000). Issues in web-based pedagogy: A critical Primer. Green Wood Press (The Greenwood educators' reference collection). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
[10] Ferdig, R.E., & Trammell, K. D. (2004). Content delivery in the "Blogosphere". *Technological Horizons in Education Journal 31.7*, 12-20.

[11] Gonzalez, D. and Louis, R., St. (no date). The use of Web 2.0 tools to promote learner autonomy. http://www.learnerautonomy.org/gonzalezstlouis.pdf (accessed 9/10/2011).
[12] Holec, H. (1981). Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning. Oxford: Pergamon. (First published 1979, Strasbourg: Council of Europe).
[13] Iida, A. (2009). Language Teaching Via Weblogs: Exploring New Possibilities of Teaching Japanese in JSL /JFL Contexts. *The 24th SEAJT Conference Proceedings*.
[14] Jones, J. S. (2006). *Blogging and ESL writing: A case study of how students responded to the use of weblogs as a pedagogical tool for the writing process approach in a community college ESL writing class.* Published dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education. The University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved 25 September 2011, from: http:/ /repositories .lib.utexas. edu/ bitstream /handle/ 2152/ 2736/jonesd17626.pdf?sequence=2.
[15] Kessler, G. (2009). Student- initiated attention to form in wiki-based collaborative writing. *Language Learning & Technology* 13.1, 79-95.
[16] Knapper, C. (1988). Technology and lifelong learning. In D. Boud (eds.), *Developing student autonomy in learning (2nd edn).* London: Kogan Page, 91-106.
[17] Layton, T. G. (2000). Digital Learning: Why tomorrow's schools must learn to let go of the past. http://metam exico.ni ng. com/ forum /topics /849670 : Topic: 9707. (accessed 13/9/ 2011).
[18] Little, D. (2007). Language Learner Autonomy: Some Fundamental Considerations Revisited. *Innovation in Language Learning and* Teaching 1.1, 14-29.
[19] Little, D. (1991). Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems. Dublin: Authentik.
[20] Maesin, A., Mansor, M., Shafie, A. L. & Nayan, S. (2009). A study of collaborative learning among Malaysian undergraduates. *Asian Social Science* 5.7, 70-76.
[21] McAnear, A. (2002). Strategies for expanding technology's role. *Learner and Leading with Technology 30.* 3, 4-13.
[22] McLoughlin, C. & Lee, M. J.W. (2010). Personlised and self-regulated learning in the Web 2.0 era: International exemplars of innovative pedagogy using social software. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology* 26. 1, *28-43.*
[23] McNeely, G. (2005). Using technology as a learning tool, not just the cool new thing. In D. Oblinger & J. Oblinger (2005). *Educating the Net Generation.* Washington, D.C.: EDUCAUSE.
[24] Montero-Fleta, B., and Pérez-Sabater, C. (2010). A research on blogging as a platform to enhance language skills. *Procedia Social and Bejavioral Science 2*,773-777.
[25] Nguyen, L.V. (2008). Computer mediated communication and foreign language education: pedagogical features. *International Journal of Instructional Technology & Distance Learning* 5. 12, 23-44
[26] Noytim, U. (2010). Weblogs enhancing EFL students' English language learning. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2,1127-1132.
[27] Pinkman, K. (2005). Using weblogs in the foriengn language classroom: ecouraging learner independence. *The JALT CALL Journal* 1.1,12-24.
[28] Richardson, W. (2006). Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classroms. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
[29] Salmon, G. (2000). E-moderating: the key to teaching and learning online. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
[30] Solomon, G. & Schrum, L (2007). Web2.0: New tools, new schools. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
[31] Schwienhorst, K. (2008). Learner autonomy and CALL environment. New York: Routledge.
[32] Schwienhorst, K. (2004). Learner autonomy and tandem learning: Putting principles into practice in synchronous and asynchronous telecommunications environments. *Computer Assisted Language Learning 16.* 5, 427-433.
[33] Schwienhorst, K. (2002). Why vitrual, why environments? Implementing virtual reality concepts in Computer-Assisted Language Learning. *Simulation & Gaming* 33. 2, 196-209.
[34] Sharma, P., & Xie, Y. (2008). Student experiences of using weblogs: an exploratory study. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks* 12. 3-4,137-156.
[35] Sithaletchemy.S., Krishnaiyer and Raja Hanani Raja Mushahar, and Nuretna Asurah Ahmad (2012). Using blogs as a tool to facilitate students' reflection. *GEMA: Online Journal of Language Studies 12.* 3. 939-960.
[36] Sun, C.Y. (2010). Extensive writing in foreign-language classrooms: a blogging approach. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 47.3, 327–339.
[37] Tremayne, M. (2007). Blogging, citizenship, and the future of media. London: Routledge.
[38] Tschirhart, C. and Rigler. E. (2009). LondonMet e-packs: a pragmatic approach to learner/teacher autonomy. *Language Learning Journal 37*.1, 71–83.
[39] Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society. The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
[40] Wang, J., & Fang. Y. (2006). Benefits of cooperative learning in weblog networks. *ERIC- ED 490815*. http://www. eric. ed. Gov / PDFS /ED 49 0815.pdf. (accessed 15/2/ 2010).
[41] Ward, J.M. (2004). Blog assisted language learning (BALL): Push button published for the pupils. *TEFL Web Journal 3*.1, 89-125.
[42] Warschauer, M. (1996). Comparing face-to-face and electronic communication in the second language classroom. *CALICO Journal, 13*. 2, 7–26.
[43] Warschauer, M., and Meskill, C. (2000). Technology and second language learning. In J. W. Rosenthal (Ed.), *Handbook of undergraduate second language education* (eds.). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. 303-318.
[44] Yumuk, A. (2002). Letting go of control to the learners: the role of the Internet in promoting a more autonomous view of learning in an academic translation course. *Educational Research 44.* 2, 141-156.
[45] Zailin Shah Yusoff, Nik Aloesnita Nik Alwi & Ainol Haryati Ibrahim. (2012). Investigating Students' Perceptions of Using Wikis in Academic Writing. 3L; Language,Linguistics and Literature, *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language* 18. 3, 91-102

[46] Zhang, D. (2009). The application of Blog in English Writing. *Journal of Cambridge Studies* 4. 1, 64-72

Maryam Foroutan is currently a PhD candidate of TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). She has been an English teacher, lecturer and curriculum developer. Her areas of research interest include; applying CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) and autonomy in teaching and learning English.

Nooreen Noordin holds a doctoral degree from Universiti Putra Malaysia in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language. She was appointed as a lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Currently, she is a TESL lecturer in the Department of Language Education and Humanities, Faculty of Educational Studies.

Mohd Sahandri Gani bin Hamzah is the Professor and Director of Educational Research Laboratory, at Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjung Malim, Malaysia. He received his Bachelor of Education in Agriculture Science from UPM (1981), Master of Education (Measurement, Evaluation and Supervision, 1995) and completed Philosophy Doctorate (Research and Evaluation of Educational Practices, 1998) from University Kebangsaan Malaysia. Besides, he is a competent and experienced professional with extensive “hands on” expertise combined with wide knowledge and skill in the area of research, planning, administration, supervision and teaching (schools, colleges and universities), versatile researcher and is active in educational consultancy.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1003-1010, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1003-1010

Slang Translation: A Comparative Study of J. D. Salinger's "*The Catcher in the Rye*"

Habibollah Mashhady
English Department, University of Zabol, Iran

Maryam Pourgalavi
Department of Foreign Languages, Khorasgan (Isfahan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran

***Abstract*—This study aims to investigate the slang translation in dialogues from English into Persian using the model proposed by Venuti. For this end, "*The Catcher in the Rye*" with its two Persian renderings by Najafi (2010) and Karimi (2010) are considered. The findings obtained from the analysis of the related data show that translation of slangs based on the model proposed by Venuti does not convey the meaning as the target readers expect; a fact that shows the shortcomings of Venuti's model.**

***Index Terms*—literary translation, slang, dialogue, domestication, foreignization, culture**

I. Introduction

Slang is one of the most arguable issues in language. Many scholars have been working on it for years (Hunsinger, 2011; Weintraub, 2004; Jackson, 2003; Eble, 1996; Allen, 1998; Flexner, 1960; Anderson and Trudgill, 1990; Strenstörm, 1999). It is not an entirely new concept (Cowden, 1925; Roberts, 2008); nevertheless, it is one of those phenomena that should be considered. Some scholars also believe that slang is a language with a known style and is used by a certain social group for instance, teenagers may use a special slang which cannot be fully understood by the people standing outside (Leech and Svartvik 1981; Allen, 1998). In literary translation, translation of slang causes serious problems because slang is language and culture bound and never occurs in simple or denotative meanings (Stolt, 2010; Eriksen 2010). Particularly, when translating literary works that belong to two wholly culturally different countries may be indispensably and instantly recognized. In order to deal with this kind of problems in translation, different strategies are used by translators, so it is useful to discuss and categorize these strategies in order to help translators to make the best and appropriate decisions while translating.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

For the aim of this study, a novel called "*The Catcher in the Rye"* by Salinger was considered and the problems of slang translation were investigated based on Venuti's model. In spite of the copious translation papers and theses in Iran, few are related to translation of slang, thus regarding the above-mentioned novel in which so many slang expressions are used, it was found to be a suitable topic for demonstrating the success or failure of slang translations in the book.

II. Literature Review

Lamberts (1998) believes that the aim of literary translation is to meet a need in the literary culture of the target language; so to deal with these needs and the translation strategies applies to discuss them is useful for explaining the literary relationships and conventions, and consequently, the literary translation. Moreover, he emphasizes the impact of translated literary works in creating the dynamics of discourse and culture. He mentions that the nature of literary translation makes scholars consider and investigate the conditions under which translation is produced. Therefore, it is not easy to study state of translated literary works especially in terms of the visibility or invisibility of literary translation. According to Lambert, when a translation is produced in an explicit way, it is regarded as a visible translation and when it is disguised as an original work, it is considered as an invisible translation and for this reason, many foreign literary works remain unknown. He demonstrates that translations which are invisible indicate the valuable position of translated works which play a key role in the development of the target literature (Venuti, 1995 and Gentzler, 2001).

Culture is another key issue which should be considered in translation of literary texts. Snell-Hornby (1990) introduces a new concept called 'the cultural turn' and says that this is a viewpoint that regards translation as a cultural and political issue not merely as a textual one. Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) explain that cultural turn emphasizes on the relationships between language and culture and show that how culture influences and constrains translation and contains other areas such as history and conventions. Other scholars believe that translating cultural words and expressions in literary works is difficult due to cultural implications in translation (Newmark, 1988; Nida, 1964; Bassnett, 1991).

Concerning the conception of culture and translation, Toury (1978) believes that translation involves both language and culture (Schaffner, 1995). Thus, the way of treating the cultural aspects of a SL and finding the most appropriate technique for a successful conveying of these aspects in the TL is one of the most problems of translators. Baker (1992) states that sometimes in translation, a SL word express a social or religious concept which is not known in target culture, and it usually occurs due to cultural differences in languages which this cause problems in translation from SL into TL. Venuti (1995) notes that because of differences between SL and TL, linguistic and cultural similarities should be found. In addition, he believes that translation should emphasize on cultural differences. On the other hand, Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997) argue that cultural approach in translation is used for anthropological studies.

A. Invisibility of the Translator

One of the significant areas in the recent translation theories has been devoted to the fact that whether the translator should remain invisible. Venuti in his book, *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995) discusses invisibility in the canon of English translation and says that the translator should be visible by resisting and changing the condition under which translation is produced or theorized, particularly in English-speaking countries. Here this scope is restricted to literary translation, where more criticism is produced. He discusses invisibility with two types of translation strategy, domestication and foreignization. With regard to cultural issues in translation, Venuti's notions of foreignization and domestication provide a useful conceptual approach in the area of intercultural transfer. These strategies concern both the choice of text to translate and the translation method. Venuti's theory is based on Friedrich Schleiermacher's essay (1813/1992) "*On the different methods of translating"* where he introduces two concepts of foreignization and domestication. Venuti (1995) says that domesticated translation mirrors the author, considers the foreign text as the original text and the translated work as a derivative text. He says that foreignized translation can show the cultural differences or otherness in such a way the gains and losses in translation are shown and the cultural gaps are highlighted.

B. Slang

In the relevant literature, most definitions of slang show a tendency towards a sociological view of the phenomenon (Eble, 1996; Allen, 1998; Mattiello, 2008; Coleman, 2004). Roberts (2008) says that the slang words and expressions were frequently used in ancient Greek and Roman literature. Flexner (1960) says that slang is a subtype of vernacular language that is considered as a level of usage and is not accepted as good and formal usage by the majority. Dumas and Lighter (1978) reject the classical definition of slang and explain a 'true slang' devalues a formal speech or writing and it is regarded as a taboo term in ordinary speech with people who belong to a higher social class. Leech and Svartvik (1981) define slang as a language which is not unknown and is used by people who belong to a certain social group, for instance teenagers. People outside a particular social group cannot fully understand slang. Slang shows the intimacy and solidarity of the ones who use it. Anderson and Trudgill (1990) remark that slang is a wider concept than vernacular language, as it is not strictly indigenous local speech. It is, instead, a hybrid language and often permeated with foreign lexical material. Coleman (2004) notes that slang is not long-lived and is used to specify in-groups and out-groups. In this regard, Mattiello (2005) mentions that sometimes, slang is used to show the solidarity or intimacy among the members of a group and then he distinguishes between general and specific form of slang. General slang is used to violate the standard usage and is not restricted to groups, however, specific slang is used by people with common age and experience like college students.

III. This Study

This is a descriptive library research conducted in the form of "case study". It discusses slang translation in dialogues both in English and Persian languages.

A. Materials

The corpus of this study is a body of slangs in dialogues extracted from Salinger's "*The Catcher in the Rye"* with two Persian renderings, one by Najafi (first edition in 1984 and the eighth edition in 2010) and the other by Karimi (first edition in 2002 and the eighth edition in 2010).

B. Procedures

The aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which slangs in dialogues are maintained in translation using the model proposed by Venuti. Based on the direction of data analysis, English text with its two renderings was thoroughly read in a way that the unit of analysis was a paragraph as a context. Then, 40 challengeable dialogue items were randomly selected and discussed. The next step was determination of the translators' strategies to translate the items into Persian; for this purpose, Venuti's (1995) theory of translation was selected as the theoretical framework of the study.

C. Criterion for Persian Slang: Farhange Farsi e Amianeh

Abolhassan Najafi is an Iranian writer and translator and a member of the Iranian Academy. He is the author of Farhang-e Farsi-ye Amiyâne, a dictionary published by Niloofar Publishers in 2008. According to Bateni (2008), citations and examples were derived from sources of the past 80 years. Bateni believes that although this book is not an appropriate alternative for general Persian dictionaries but sometimes it is badly needed.

IV. RESULTS

As noted earlier, this study aims to analyze English culture-bound words and expressions in the two Persian renderings of "*The Catcher in the Rye*" to see whether they are domesticated or foreignized. To this end, examples from "The Catcher in the Rye" are provided in both English and Persian (see Appendix A).

TABLE (1)
STRATEGIES OF SLANG TRANSLATION IN DIALOGUES IN "*THE CATCHER IN THE RYE"* (1951)

Translation Procedure	**Translation Strategies applied for Each Example**		**Percentage of Translation Strategies applied for Each Example**	
	1st Translator	**2nd Translator**	**1st Translator**	**2nd Translator**
Domesticated	32	36	80	90
Foreignized	2	2	5	5
Neutralized	3	1	7.5	2.5
Untranslated	3	0	7.5	0
Domesticated- Foreignized	0	1	0	2.5
Total	40	40	100	100

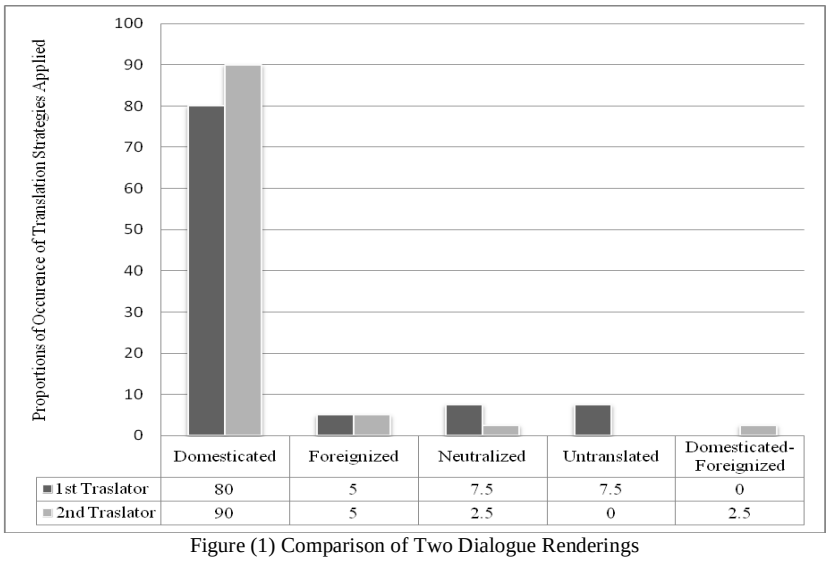


Figure (1) Comparison of Two Dialogue Renderings

As it is demonstarted in Table (1) and Figure (1), it can be understood that in the first translation, 32 items (80%) out of 40 were domesticated, two items (5%) were foreignized, three items (7.5%) were neutralized, three items (7.5%) were untranslated and no item was domesticated-foreignized. However, in the second translation, 36 items (90%) were domesticated, two items (5%) were foreignized, one item (2.5%) was neutralized, no items were untranslated and one item (2.5%) was domesticated-foreignized.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on Venuti's model, this study aims to decide how successful the two Persian translations had been in preserving the slangs of the novel and to discuss the major problems in translating slang in the English novel "*The Catcher in the Rye"* using Ventui's model. To this end, 40 slang items were randomly regarded, compared and analyzed based on the Venuti's model. The results showed that in the case of preserving slang items in the translation of dialogues, based on the model proposed by Venuti and with regard to the results of table (2), both translations are similar in their application of the procedures in preserving slang items (both of them 5%). The results also indicate that the most frequently employed translation strategy for transferring slang in "*The Catcher in the Rye"* in both translations is domestication, although it seems that Najafi's translation is more domesticated than the Karimi's translation. Since there is a trend of domestication in the target text, it attests to the fluency of the translation and the translator's invisibility. It should be considered that although many readers understand and accept translations which are domesticated, the cultural and linguistic features of the ST are sacrificed for the naturalness and fluency of the translation. However, using forignizing strategy can reproduce the original picture and truthfully transform the human atmosphere and spiritual essence of the ST, especially to the parts where the source culture is different from the target cultures. It is good for combining two cultures and is beneficial for keeping the characteristics of the SL texts. Nevertheless, it may cause an information overload and cultural shock, and thus may be difficult for the TT readers to accept and understand the translation.

Concerning translation of slang, it is arguably the most complex and problematic task for translators because of the linguistic and cultural differences between TL and SL and it is difficult to remain faithful to the original when

translating as Venuti proposes. Slang cannot be translated literally or using the foreignization strategy because it has to do with culture and should be translated to convey the intended meaning and produce the intended effect. Therefore, it is worthwhile to note that with different translation purposes, translators should choose different translation strategies. Because both domestication and foreignization entail inevitable loses in the process of translation. Thus, translation strategies should be adopted with regard to the condition under which a translation occurs.

VI. Conclusions

This paper provides an in depth analysis of the extent to which the slang items in the English novel "*The Catcher in the Rye"* preserved in translation using Ventui's model and discuss the major problems in translating slang in this novel. The results of this study show that slang items are considered to be a major challenge in the translation process, since it is not just a matter of rendering words, but rather a transforming of other's culture. Although the versions translated by means of foreginization preserve the cultural flavor and formal features of the ST, show the cultural diversity, signal the linguistic as well as cultural differences, and help the target readers which is their purpose of reading translated works to understand the foreign culture, it may be difficult for the TT readers to accept, understand and enjoy the translation. Since in the translation of slangs as culture-specific items, it is better to find target equivalents for the unfamiliar and unknown terms instead of remaining them untranslated or using neutral terms, and if the translators cannot find the appropriate target equivalents, they can use foreignization strategy and retain the cultural terms so that the target language readers know and understand about the source language culture. Finally, it should be emphasized that neither domestication nor foreignization are absolutely used in translation process and they should be concurrently used to produce an cultural and understandable translation for the target readers.

VII. Implications

This study focuses on translating vernacular language, exclusively slang, and shows how the translators deal with it according to the Venuti's model. It indicates that slang does with culture and should be translated to convey the intended meaning and produce the intended effect particularly in the literary texts. The translators should discover the concrete meanings of slang because there are some different understandings within different cultures found in slang. Understanding slang words is not as easy as it seems because some slang meanings cannot be discovered in dictionaries. For that reason, studies that focus on slang translation are urgently needed. The findings of this study will be useful for the literary translators in order to choose the appropriate translation strategies. It also provides some insights into cultural factors which determine the strategies applied in the process of translating literary texts; observing the cultures of both source and target language is indispensable and requires a deep knowledge of the linguistic and cultural features of both the SL and TL. This study provides a useful framework to both translation critics and students of translation studies, too.

Appendix A. ST Slang Items and Their TT Equivalents Based on the Translation of the Two Translators

No.	SL text	Karimi's Translation	TS	Najafi's Translation	TS
1	"Oh . . . well, about Life being a game and all. And how you should play it according to the rules. He was pretty nice about it. **I mean he didn't hit the ceiling or anything.**	"گفت که زندگی مسابقه س و ازین حرف ها... آدم باید درست بازی کنه. البته خیلی ملایم حرف زدن. **منظورم این است که عربده نکشیدن.**" (ص 15)	D	"آه... خب، درباره ی این که زندگی یه جور بازیه و اینا، و این که چه جوری باید با توجه به مقرراتش بازی کرد. خیلی خوب درباره ی اینا حرف زد. **می خوام بگم اصلا جوش نیاورد.**" (ص 12)	D
2	"If I' m not mistaken, I believe you also had some difficulty at the Whooton School and at Elkton Hills." He didn't say it just sarcastic, but sort of nasty, too. "I didn't have too much difficulty at Elkton Hills," I told him. "**I didn't exactly flunk out or anything**. I just quit, sort of."	"اگر اشتباه نکرده باشم گمون کنم در مدرسه ی ووتون و الکتون هیلز هم مشکلاتی داشته ای؟" این حرف را با لحن طعنه آمیزی نگفت اما تا حدودی زننده بود گفتم: " من در مدرسه ی الکتون هیلز مشکلات زیادی نداشتم. رفوزه ای چیزی نشدم. **فقط اونجا رو ول کردم.**" (ص 22)	D	"غلط نکنم تو مدرسه ی ووتُن و الکتُن هیلزم مشکل داشتی." اینو فقط با لحن نیشدار نگفت، بدجنسی هم قاطیش بود. بهش گفتم: "تو الکتن هیلز چندان مشکلی نداشتم. اخراجم نکردن، **می شه گفت خودم زدم بیرون.**" (ص 17)	D
3	Old Spenser asked me something then, but I didnt hear him. I was thinking about old Hass. "What, sir?" I said. **Do you have any particular qulams about leaving Pencey?"**	بعد اسپنسر چیزی از من پرسید که نشنیدم. داشتم راجه به اس فکر می کردم. گفتم: "چی گفتید قربان؟" **"در مورد ترک پنسی هیچ دلهره ی خاصی نداری؟"** (ص 23)	D	بعدش اسپنسر پیره یه چیزی ازم پرسید ولی من نشنیدم. داشتم به هاس فکر می کردم. گفتم: "چی، آقا؟" **"در مورد ترک کردن پنسی، دلیلی داری که باعث دلشوره ت بشه؟"** (ص 18)	D
4	"I left the goddam foils and stuff on the subway." I still didn't look up at him. "On the subway, **for Chrissake**! Ya lost them, ya mean?"	" من شمشیرها و سایر چیزها را توی مترو جا گذاشتم." باز هم سرم را بلند نکردم که به او نگاه بکنم. "توی مترو؟ منظورت اینه که گمشون کردی؟" (ص33)	Un	"وسایل و شمشیرای کوفتی رو تو تراموا جا گذاشتم. "هنوز بهش نگاه نمی کردم. "تو تراموا، **ارواح شیکمت!** یعنی گم شون کردی، ها؟" (ص24)	D

5	**"**I don't know, and **I don't give a damn.** How 'bout sitting down or something, Ackley kid? You're right in my goddam light." He didn't like it when you called him "Ackley kid."	"نمی دونم. **مهم نیست.** آکلی کوچولو، چطوره بشینی پا این که شر تو بکنی؟ تو درست جلو چراغو گرفتی و نمی ذاری نور به من بیفته." آکلی ابدا خوشش نمی آمد که او را "آکلی کوچولو" صدا بزنند. (ص 34)	N	"نمی دونم. **خیالی نیس.** چرا نمی شینی بچه؟ جلو نورو گرفتی." دوس نداشت بچه صداش کنن. (ص 25)	D
6	He shoved my book back with his hand so that he could see the name of it. "Any good?" he said. "**This sentence I'm reading is terrific**."	برای این که اسم کتاب را ببیند به زور پشت جلد آن را با دستش برگرداند. گفت: "خوب کتابیه؟" **"آره. مخصوصا این جمله که دارم می خونم خیلی عالیه."** (ص34)	F	جلد کتابه رو بست که بتونه اسمشو ببینه. گفت: "جالبه؟" **"این جمله ای که دارم می خونم محشره."** (ص25)	D
7	He never sat down in a chair. Just always on the arm. "**Where the hellja get that hat**?" he said.	هیچ وقت روی صندلی نمی نشست. جایش فقط روی دسته ی صندلی بود. گفت: **"این کلاه رو از کجا خریدی؟"** (ص 36)	Un	هیچ وقت روی صندلی نمی نشست. همیشه می نشست رو دسته ی صندلی. گفت: **"کلاهه رو از کدوم جهنم دره ای خریدی؟"** (ص 26)	D
8	"Where the hellja get that hat?" he said. "New York." "How much?" "A buck." **"You got robbed."**	گفت: "این کلاه رو از کجا خریدی؟" "نیویورک." "چند؟" "یک دلار." **"کلاه سرت گذاشتن.** (ص36)	D	"کلاهه رو از کدوم جهنم دره ای خریدی؟" "نیویورک." "چن؟" "یه چوق." **"بهت انداخته ن."** (ص26)	D
9	"**He's crazy about you.** He told me he thinks you're a goddam prince," I said.	گفتم: **"اما اون برای تو می میره.** به من گفتش که فکر می کنم تو یک شازده پسر هستی." (ص38)	D	گفتم: **"اون کشته مرده ته.** خودش بهم گفت به نظرش تو یه شازده ی کوفتی هستی." (ص 28)	D
10	"I got about a hundred pages to read for history for Monday," he said. "How 'bout writing a composition for me, for English? **I'll be up the creek if I don't get the goddam thing in by Monday**, the reason I ask. How 'bout it?"	"صد صفحه از تاریخ مونده که باید تا روز شنبه بخونمش. می تونی یه انشا برای من بنویسی یه انشای انگلیسی؟ **اگر تا روز دوشنبه انشاء ننویسم کارم ساخته است.** اینه که دارم ازت خواهش می کنم. می نویسی؟" (ص 45)	D	"واسه دوشنبه صد صفحه تاریخ دارم که باید بخونم. می شه واسه م یه انشا برا درس انگلیسی بنویسی؟ **اگه تا دوشنبه تحویلش ندم دهنم سرویسه.** واسه همینه دارم ازت خواهش می کنم. می نویسی؟" (ص 32)	D
11	"Yeah, I know. The thing is, though, I'll be up the creek if I don't get it in. **Be a buddy.** Be a buddyroo**.** Okay?"	"درسته. می دونم. اما موضوع این جاست که اگر انشارو ننویسم کارم ساخته است. **بالا غیرتاً رفاقت کن.** معرفت داشته باش. خوب؟" (ص 45)	D	گفت: "می دونم. ولی اگه انشا رو تحویل ندم دهن مَهَنم سرویسه. **دمت گرم.** یه حالی بده، خب؟" (ص 32)	D
12	"Just don't do it too good, is all," he said. "**That sonuvabitch Hartzel thinks you're a hot-shot in English**, and he knows you're my roommate. So I mean don't stick all the commas and stuff in the right place."	"زیاد هم نمی خواد روش زحمت بکشی. از این جهت به نقطه ویرگول زیاد کاری نداشته باش. اصلا رعایت نقطه گذاری رو نکن." (ص 46)	Un	"نمی خواد خیلی حسابی بنویسی. **اون هارتزل الاغ فکر می کنه تو خیلی انگلیسی بارته،** می دونه با من هم اتاقی هستی. واسه همین لازم نیست ویرگول و ایناشو رعایت کنی." (ص32)	D
13	"Je-sus-Christ." He put down his razor, and all of a sudden jerked his arms up and sort of broke my hold on him. He was a very strong guy. I 'm a very weak guy. "Now **cut out the crap**," he said.	"عجب گرفتاری شدیم ها." تیغش را گذاشت زمین و برقی دست هایش را بالا آورد و قلاب بند مرا باز کرد. استرادلیتر آدم گردن کلفت و پرزوری بود. من آدم ضعیف و بی بنیه ای هستم. گفت: **" حالا دیگه دست وردار."** (ص48)	D	"عجب بساطیه ها." تیغشو گذاشت زمین و یه دفه با یه حرکت فرز، دستشو آورد بالا و خودشو آزاد کرد. زورش خیلی زیاد بود. من خیلی ضعیفم. گفت: **"دیگه دس از مسخره بازی وردار."** (ص 34)	D
14	"**She had a lousy childhood**. I'm not kidding." That didn't interest Stradlater, though.	**"جین بچگیاش خیلی سختی کشیده.** جداً می گم." این موضوع علاقه اش را جلب نکرد. (ص 51)	D	**"بچگی گندی داشته.** جدّی می گم." ولی به این یکی علاقه نشون نداد. (ص 36)	D
15	"**No kidding**, now. Do that composition for me," he said. He had his coat on, and he was all ready to go.	**"حالا از شوخی گذشته** اون انشا رو برا من بنویس." لباسش را پوشیده بود و آماده ی رفتن بود. (ص 53)	D	"خب، **از شوخی گذشته** اون انشا رو برام بنویس." کُتشو پوشیده بود و دیگه داشت راه می افتاد. (ص 38)	D
16	"Ya crazy? How the hell could we go to New York if she only signed out for nine-thirty?" **"That's tough."**	"عقلت کمه؟ با این وقت کم چه جور می شد رفت نیویورک؟" **"بد آوردی."** (ص 66)	D	"مُخت معیوبه؟ اگه قرار بوده نه و نیم برگرده خوابگاه، چطو می تونسیّم بریم نیویورک؟" **"بد شد."**. (صص 45و 46)	D
17	"... You may be getting the hell out of here, **but I have to stick around long enough to graduate**." I ignored him. I really did.	"... تورو ممکنه از این جا بندازن بیرون، **اما من مجبورم این جا بمونم تا فارغ التحصیل بشم."** محلش نگذاشتم. استرادلیتر داخل آدم نبود. (ص66)	D	"... تو داری گورتو از این جا گم می کنی **ولی من باید یه مدتی رو این جا سر کنم تا درسم تموم شه."** تحویلش نگرفتم. جدی می گم. (ص46)	D
18	**"**What'd you do?" I said. "Give her the time in Ed Banky's goddam car?" My voice was shaking something awful. "What a thing to say. **Want me to wash your mouth out with soap?**"	من گفتم: "چیکار کردی؟ تو ماشین اد بانکی کار دختره رو ساختی؟" صدایم بدجوری می لرزید.. "این چه حرفیه داری می زنی؟ **مثل این که تنت می خاره."** (صص 67 و 68)	D	گفتم: "چیکار کردی؟ تو ماشین اد بنکی کارشو ساختی؟" بدجوری صدام می لرزید. **"**عجب حرفی. **می خوای ببرمت دهنتو با صابون آب بکشی؟"** (ص 47)	F
19	"**Get your dirty stinking moron knees off my chest."** "If I letcha up, will you keep your mouth shut?"	**"اون پاهای بوگندوت رو از روی سینه ی من وردار."** "اگه ولت کنم، صداتو می بری یا نه؟ (ص69)	D	**"زانوی لجنتو از روی سینه م وردار، کودن!"** "اگه ولت کنم، خفه می شی؟" (ص48)	D

20	"Now shut up, Holden, God damn it—I'm warning ya," he said—I really had him going. **"If you don't shut up,** I'm gonna slam ya one."	گفت: "دیگه خفه شو هولدن، بهت می گم خفه شو، اگه خفه نشی هر چه دیدی از چشم خودت دیدی." گذاشتم لجش حسابی دربیاید. **"اگه خفه نشی** یه چک محکم می خوابونم توی گوشت." (ص 69)	D	"خفه شو هولدن، دارم بهت اخطار می کنم." داشتم حسابی عصبانیش می کردم. **"خفه نشی** می زنم درب و داغونت می کنم**."** (ص 48)	D
21	"Now shut up, Holden, God damn it—I'm warning ya," he said—I really had him going. "If you don't shut up, **I'm gonna slam ya one**."	گفت: "دیگه خفه شو هولدن، بهت می گم خفه شو، اگه خفه نشی هر چه دیدی از چشم خودت دیدی." گذاشتم لجش حسابی دربیاید. "اگه خفه **نشی یه چک محکم می خوابونم توی گوشت."** (ص 69)	F	"خفه شو هولدن، دارم بهت اخطار می کنم." داشتم حسابی عصبانیش می کردم. "خفه نشی **می زنم درب و داغونت می کنم."** (ص 48)	D
22	**"You're aces, Ackley kid,"** I said. "You know that?" **"**Wise guy. Someday somebody's gonna bash your …."	: **"آکلی کوچولو، تو گل سر سبد این مدرسه ای.** حیف که خودت نمی دونی." "آدم نفهم. بالاخره یه روزی یک نفر پیدا میشه که چنان تو دهنی بهت بزنه که ... ." (ص 79)	D	**"تو خیلی محشری، بچه؛** می دونسی؟" "خل و چل! یکی باید محکم بکوبه تو اون **... ."** (ص 54)	D
23	I said it in this very sincere voice. "You're aces, Ackley kid,' I said. "You know that?" **"**Wise guy. **Someday somebody's gonna bash your …."**	این حرف را با لحنی صادقانه گفتم: "آکلی کوچولو، تو گل سرسبد این مدرسه ای. حیف که خودت نمی دونی." **"**آدم نفهم. **بالاخره یه روزی یک نفر پیدا میشه که چنان تو دهنی بهت بزنه که ... ."** (ص 79)	D	با لحن صادقانه ای تشکر کردم. "تو خیلی محشری، بچه؛ می دونسی؟" **"**خل و چل! **یکی باید محکم بکوبه تو اون ... ."** (ص 54)	F
24	"Listen," he said, "I don't care what you say about me or anything, **but if you start making cracks about my goddam religion**, for Chrissake—"	گفت: "گوش کن. من هیچ اهمیت نمی دم که راجع به شخص من یا چیزهای دیگه چیزی بگی، **اما اگه بخوای مذهب منو مسخره بکنی** به خدا قسم که..." (ص79)	D	گفت: "هی، ببین، من عین خیالم نیست چی چی بار خودم می کنی، **ولی اگه بخوای مذهبمو مسخره کنی**..." (ص54)	D
25	"Well—take me to the Edmont then," I said. "Would you care to stop on the way and join me for a cocktail? On me. **I'm loaded."** "Can't do it, Mac. Sorry."	"خوب عیبی نداره- پس منو ببر به ادمونت. میل دارین وسط راه یه جایی وایستین و یک کوکتل با من بزنین؟ پای من. **جیب هام پر پوله."** "نمی تونم، قربان. متاسفم." (ص95)	N	گفتم: "خب، پس منو ببر ادمونت. اگه دوس داری می زنیم کنار و یه لبی هم تر می کنیم. پای من. **وضع مایه تیله م خوبه."** "نمی تونم رفیق. باهاس ببخشی." (ص63)	D
26	"Well—take me to the Edmont then," I said. "Would you care to stop on the way and join me for a cocktail? On me. I'm loaded." **"Can't do it, Mac.** Sorry.**"**	"خوب عیبی نداره- پس منو ببر به ادمونت. میل دارین وسط راه یه جایی وایستین و یک کوکتل با من بزنین؟ پای من. جیب هام پر پوله." **"نمی تونم، قربان.** متاسفم." (ص95)	D	گفتم: "خب، پس منو ببر ادمونت. اگه دوس داری می زنیم کنار و یه لبی هم تر می کنیم. پای من. وضع مایه تیله م خوبه." **"نمی تونم رفیق.** باهاس ببخشی**." (ص63)**	D-F
27	"**Well, don't get sore about it**," I said. He was sore about it or something. "Who's sore? Nobody's sore."	من گفتم: **"خوب اوقاتت تلخ نشه."** خیلی اوقاتش تلخ شده بود. "کی اوقاتش تلخ؟ اوقات تلخی کجا بود؟" (ص 126)	D	گفتم: **"خب، حالا عصبانی نشو."** خیلی عصبانی بود. "کی عصبانیه؟ کسی عصبانی نیس." (ص83)	D
28	The first thing when I got in the elevator, the elevator guy said to me, **"Innarested in having a good time, fella?** Or is it too late for you?"	همین که پایم را گذاشتم توی آسانسور، اولین حرفی را که متصدی آسانسور به من زد این بود: **"میل داری یه مدتی خوش باشی رفیق؟"** یا این که برات خیلی دیره؟" (ص 139)	D	نجفی: تا رفتم تو آسان سُر، آسان سُرچی بهم گفت: **" می خوای امشب یه حالی بکنی رفیق؟** یا دیروقته؟" گفتم: "منظورت چیه؟" (ص 92)	D
29	"Ten for a throw." "He said five. I' m sorry—I really am—**but that's all I'm gonna shell out.**"	"یه راه ده دلار." "گفتش پنج دلار. متاسفم- جدا متاسفم. **اما بیش تر از این نمی سلفم."** (ص 149)	D	"یه راه ده تاس" **"**اون گفت پنج تا، متاسفم **ولی بیشتر نمی دم."** (صص98 و 99)	N
30	I went and got her dress for her. She put it on and all, and then she picked up her polo coat off the bed. "So long, **crumb, bum**," she said. "So long," I said. I didn't thank her or anything. I m glad I didn't.	من رفتم و پیراهنش را برایش آوردم. سانی آن را پوشید و بعد کت چوگان بازی اش را از روی تختخواب برداشت و گفت: "مرحمت زیاد، **لات اکبیری."** من گفتم: "مرحمت زیاد." (ص 150).	D	رفتم لباسشو آوردم دادم بهش پوشید و بارونیشم از رو تخت ورداشت و گفت: "خدافظ **تنه لش کثافت."** گفتم: "خدافظ." (ص 99)	D
31	"What's the matter? Wuddaya want? I said. Boy, my voice shaking like hell. "Nothing much," old Maurice said. "**Just five bucks**."	من گفتم: "موضوع چیه؟ چی می خواستین؟" صدایم سخت می لرزید. موریس گفت: "چیز زیادی نمی خواهم. **فقط یه پنج دلاری**. (ص 154)	N	گفتم: "چیه؟ چی می خواین؟" پسر صدام بدجوری می لرزید. موریس گفت: "چیز گنده ای نمی خوایم. **فقط یه پنج چوقی**." (ص 101)	D
32	Why should I give her another five bucks?" I said. My voice was cracking all over the place. "**You're trying to chisel me."**	من گفتم: "برای چی پنج دلار دیگه باید بهش بدم؟" صدای من در تمام عمارت می پیچید، **"شماها می خواین منو تیغ بزنین."** (ص 155)	D	گفتم: "چرا باید پنج تا دیگه بهش بدم؟" صدام عین چی می لرزید. **"می خواین گوشمو ببرین**." (ص 102)	D
33	"**We'll have oodles of time to do those things**—all those things. I mean after you go to college and all, and if we should get married and all. There'll be oodles of marvelous places to go to. You're just—"	**"برای این کارا هنوز یه عالمه وقت داریم-** برای همه ی کارها. یعنی بعد از این که تو دانشگاه رفتی و اگر ما با هم ازدواج کردیم یه عالمه جاهای عالی هست که می شه رفت دید. تو تازه..." (ص203)	D	**"برا اون کارا خیلی وقت داریم.** بعد از این که بری دانشگاه و اگه خواستیم ازدواج کنیم و اینا، خیلی جاهای قشنگ دیگه م هس که می تونیم بریم. تو فقط ..." (ص131)	D

34	**“Did you ever get fed up?”** I said. “I mean did you ever get scared that everything was going to go lousy unless you did something? I mean do you like school, and all that stuff?” “It’s a terrific bore.”	من گفتم: **"هیچ شده که بی حوصله و دلزده بشی؟** منظورم اینه که هیچ شده که این دلهره بهت دست بده که اگه یه کارو نکنی، کارا همش خراب می شه؟ منظورم اینه که از مدرسه و از این چیزها خوشت می آد؟" "مدرسه جداً جای دلخوریه." (ص 200)	D	گفتم: **"تا حالا شده جونت به لبت برسه؟** یعنی شده فکر کنی اگه کاری نکنی همه چی خراب می شه؟ منظورم اینه که مدرسه و اینا رو دوس داری؟" "نه. خیلی حوصله ی آدمو سر می بره. " (ص 129)	D
35	“It’s up to you, for God’s sake. **It’s none of my goddam business** what you do with your life.”	" این دیگر با خودت است. **به من هیچ مربوط نیست** که تو در زندگی می خوای چیکار بکنی. (ص226)	D	"به خودت مربوطه. زندگی خودته، **به منم مربوط نیس**." (ص145)	D
36	“...After a while, he’d be sitting back there and **then he’d start interrupting what old Spencer was saying to crack a lot of corny jokes...**”	"... بعد از مدتی که از نشستنش می گذشت **شروع می کرد توی حرف اسپنسر دویدن و مزه انداختن. آن هم نه یکی دوبار..."** (ص258)	D	"... بعد یه مدت که اون عقب نشسته بود **حرف اسپنسرو قطع می کرد که صد تا جوک چرت و پرت تعریف کنه..."** (ص163)	D
37	“I got my damn bags at the station,” I said. “Listen. You got any dough, Phoeb? **I’m practically broke**.” “Just my Christmas dough. For presents and all. I haven’t done any shopping at all yet.”	گفتم: "من چمدون های صاحاب مرده م رو گذاشتم توی ایستگاه. گوش کن، فیبی. تو پول مولی داری. **من یه غازم برام نمونده**." "فقط پول های عیدیم رو دارم. پول هایی که عیدی بهم داده ن هنوز هیچ خرجش نکردم." (ص273)	D	گفتم: "وسایل نکبتیم تو ایستگاس. ببین پول مولی چیزی داری؟ **من که کفگیرم خورده ته دیگ**." "پول کریسمسه. برا خریدن هدیه ی کریسمس. هنوز هیچ چی خیرد نکرده ام." (ص173)	D
38	“Can’t your friend talk?” I said. “He ain’t my friend. **He’s my brudda**.”	"رفیقت بلد نیست حرف بزنه؟" "اون رفیق من نیس. **داداشمه**." (ص310)	D	گفتم: "رفیقت نمی تونه حرف بزنه؟" "رفیقم نیس. **داداشمه**." (ص197)	D
39	“Listen, do you want to go for a walk?” I asked her. “Do you want to take a walk down to the zoo? If I let you not go back to school this afternoon and go for walk, **will you cut out this crazy stuff**?”	پرسیدم: "گوش کن دلت می خواد قدم بزنیم؟ دلت می خواد قدم زنان بریم باغ وحش؟ اگه اجازه بدم امروز بعدازظهر نری مدرسه و با هم بگردیم، **دست از این ادا و اصول ور می داری یا نه؟"** (ص317)	D	ازش پرسیدم: "گوش کن، دوس داری بریم یه قدمی بزنیم؟ دوس داری یه سر بریم باغ وحش؟ اگه بذارم امروز نری مدرسه و بریم یه قدمی **بزنیم از این مسخره بازی دس ور می داری؟"** (ص201)	D
40	**“I’m not mad at you anymore**,” she said. “I know. Hurry up—the thing’s gonna start again.”	گفت: **"من دیگه با شما قهر نیستم."** "می دونم. زود باش، بجنب. چرخ فلک می خواد دوباره راه بیفته." (ص321)	D	گفت: **"دیگه از دستَ عصبانی نیسُم."** "می دونم. زود باش، الان راه می افته." (ص205)	D

REFERENCES

[1] Allen, I. L. (1998). Slang: Sociology. In: Mey J. L. & Asher R. E. (Eds.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*. Amsterdam: Elsevier, pp. 878-883.
[2] Anderson L. G. & Trudgill P. (1990). Bad Language. Oxford: Blackwell.
[3] Baker, M. (1992). In other words: A coursebook on translation. London/ New York: Routledge.
[4] Barber, A. (2009). Dialogues, the Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy. Retrieved January 7, 2009, from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dialogues/.
[5] Bassnett, S. & Lefevere, A. (1990). Introduction. In S. Bassnett & A. Lefevere (eds.) *Translation, history and culture.* London: Pinter.
[6] Bassnett, S. (1991). Translation Studies. London: Routledge.
[7] Coleman, J. (2004). A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries: Volume II (1785-1858). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[8] Cowden, R. W., (1925). Slanging English Words. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English.
[9] Duma B. K. & Lighter J. (1978). Is slang a word for linguistics? In American Speech 53.
[10] Eble, C. (1996). Slang and sociability: In-group language among college students. Chapel Hill & London: The Universtiy of North Carolina Press.
[11] Eriksen, M. H. (2010). Translating the use of slang. Retrieved April 17, 2011, from http://pure.au.dk/portal-asb student/files/13200/Specialeafhandling.pdf.
[12] Flexner, S. B. (1960). Preface. In: Wentworth H. and Flexner S.B. (eds.) *Dictionary of American Slang*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, pp. vi-xv.
[13] Gentzler, E. (2001). Contemporary Translation Theories. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
[14] Hunsinger, E. (2011). Slang the Other English Language. Retrieved October 17, 2011, from http://www.buzzle.com/articles/slang-the-other-english-language.html.
[15] Jackson, H. (2003). Lexicography: An Introduction. London: Routledge.
[16] Lambert, J. (1998). Literary translation. In M. Baker (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.
[17] Leech, G. & Svartvik, J. (1981). A Communicative Grammar of English. London: Longman Group Limited.
[18] Mattielo, E. (2005). A bomb and un casino: intensifiers in English and Italian slanguage. In M. Bertuccelli Papi (Ed.), *Studies in the semantics of lexical combinatory patterns* (pp. 279-326). Pisa: Plus.
[19] Mattiello, E. (2008). An Instruction to English Slang. Milano: Polimetrica.
[20] Najafi, A. (2008). Farhange Farsi e Amiane, Niloofar Press: Tehran.
[21] Newmark, P. (1988). A Textbook on Translation. New York: Prentice Hall.
[22] Nida, E. (1964). Principles of Correspondence, In: Venuti, L. (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
[23] Roberts, D. H. (2008). Translation and the ‘Surreptitious Classic’: Obscenity and Translatability. New York: Oxford University Press.
[24] Salinger J. D. (2008). The catcher in the rye. California: Pawprints.
[25] Salinger J. D. (2008). The catcher in the rye. (A. Karimi, Trans.). California: Pawprints.
[26] Salinger J. D. (2008). The catcher in the rye. (M. Najafi, Trans.). California: Pawprints.

[27] Schaffner, C. & Kelly-Holmes H. (1995). Cultural function of translation. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
[28] Schleiermacher, F. (1813/1992). On the different methods of translating. In R. Schulte & J. Biguenet (eds.), *Theories of translation* (pp. 36-54). Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
[29] Shuttleworth, M. & Cowie M. (1997). *Dictionary of translation studies*. Manchester: St Jerome Press
[30] Stenström A-B. (1999). He was really gormless – She's bloody crap. Girls, boys and intensifiers. In: Hasselgård H. and Oksefjell S. (eds.), *Out of Corpora. Studies in Honour of Stig Johansson*. Ameterdam: Rodopi, pp. 69-78.
[31] Snell-Hornby, M. (1990). Linguistic transcoding or cultural transfer. A critique of translation theory in Germany. In S. Bassnett & A. Lefevere (eds.) *Translation, history and culture*, 79-86. London: Pinter.
[32] Stolt, R. (2010). The translation of slang. within the bounds of possibility. Norderstedt: GRIN Verlag.
[33] Toury, G. (1978). The nature and role of norms in translation. In Venuti, L. *The translation studies reader*. London: Routledge.
[34] Venuti, L. (1995). The translator's invisibility: A history of translation. London & New York: Routledge.
[35] Weintraub, J. (2004). From AOK to Oz The Historical Dictionary of American Slang. In *Humanities*, March/April, Vol 25, No.2. Retrieved December 14, 2011, from Available at: http://digitalcorpora.org/corp/nps/ files/govdocs1/081/081951.html.

Habibollah Mashhady is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics in the Department of English Language, University of Zabol. He teaches various subjects including: Language testing, teaching methodology, research methodology, linguistics and translation courses. He has written many articles published in ISI, ISC and Refereed Journals. His main areas of research are: Language Testing, Language Teaching, and Learning, Discourse Analysis, and Translation Aspects.

Maryam Pourgalavi finished her MA in English translation in Azad University of Khorasgan, Isfahan, in 2012. She received her B.A in English literature in University of Sistan and Baluchestan in Iran in 2004. Her ideas of interest include psychoanalytical criticism, cultural studies in translation and discourse analysis.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1011-1017, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1011-1017

Teaching in a Summer School Program as Practicum: Challenges and Implications

Chin-Wen Chien
National Hsinchu University of Education, Hsinchu City, Taiwan

***Abstract*—This study focuses on the implementation of a summer school program as prospective teachers' English Language Learner (ELL) endorsement practicum in the northwest United States. The participants are three prospective teachers and the data includes interviews, documents, and classroom observations. The four major findings are: students teachers' engagement with a limited ranges of teaching styles, little collaboration between cooperating and prospective teachers, the unclear goals of the summer school, and also curriculum planning and adaption. Four suggestions are provided regarding effectively implementing a summer school for practicum.**

***Index Terms*—cooperating teacher, endorsement, English language learner (ELL), summer school, practicum, prospective teachers**

I. Introduction

This study examines a summer school program in 2010 that was designed and provided for English Language Learner (ELL) with the aim of bridging the achievement gap between ELLs and their English-speaking peers. Prospective teachers taught in this summer school program to gain their ELL endorsement practicum. An ELL endorsement program gives teacher candidates a foundation in second language acquisition theory, linguistics, language teaching methods, and cultural issues related to teaching a diverse student population, whilst a practicum provides teacher candidates with hands-on experience utilizing the latest instructional methods.

The participants in this study were three prospective teachers who completed their elementary school teacher certification and did their student teaching in the academic year 2009 in the United States northwest. The data in this study includes interviews, documents, and classroom observations and aims to discuss the following questions. First, how was the practicum arranged in the summer school? Second, what teaching activities were the prospective teachers involved in and what did they learn from their participation? Third, what challenges and problems did the prospective teachers face in doing this practicum? In the conclusion of this study some suggestions are provided regarding effectively implementing a summer school for practicum.

II. Literature Review

The literature review discusses the teaching practicum in terms of its importance, problems, suggestions, and implementation. There are a variety of terms related to practicum, such as practice teaching, field experience, apprenticeship, practical experience, and internship (Crooks, 2003; Gebhard, 2009). Zeichner (1990) defines a practicum as including "all varieties of observation and teaching experiences in a pre-service teacher education program."

Freeman (1989) identifies four key components required in a practicum for language teaching: knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness. Knowledge should include subject matter (the "what" of teaching), characteristics of the learner (the "who"), and the learning environment (the "where"). Skills include the ability to select methods, use techniques, manage a classroom, and so forth. Attitudes meanwhile, is defined as "the stance one adopts toward oneself, the activity of teaching, and the learner one engages in the teaching/learning process" (p. 33). Awareness refers to "the capacity to recognize and monitor the attention one is giving or has given something" (p.33).

Through a practicum, pre-service teachers can gain practical classroom teaching experience, apply theory and teaching ideas from previous course work, and learn by observing experienced teachers. They also can enhance lesson-planning skills, gain skills in selecting, adapting, and developing original course materials, and expand their awareness of how to set their own goals related to improving their teaching. Moreover, they can question, articulate, and reflect on their own teaching and learning philosophies as well as see their own teaching through different lenses, learn how to make their own informed teaching decisions through systematic observation, and explore their own and others' teaching (Richards & Crookes, 1998; Crooks, 2003).

Mentor or collaborating teachers play an important role in prospective or student teachers' practicum. Pak's (2005) study focused on the factors affecting the relationship between a mentor teacher and a student teacher, concluding that there are four major influences: the experiences and personal dispositions of the subjects, the school culture, the student teacher's university teacher preparation program, and the student teaching classroom placement. Pak calls for better

selection and training in regard to mentors.

Tomas, Rai, and Haslam (2008) recognize that interactions between the collaborating teacher and supervisors as well as between pre-service teachers are missing in most practicum. They point out that while the supervisors select the cooperating teacher, they have no control over the quality of training that the pre-service teachers will receive in their schools. Supervisors can provide only limited feedback and support to pre-service teachers in terms of their teaching in the real classrooms. They also point out that pre-service teachers do not have many opportunities to observe other pre-service teachers' instruction.

Janopoulos' (1991) study examines the objectives of the practicum offered in the master's degree program for teachers of English to speakers of other languages (MATESOL) throughout the United States. Although Janopoulos' study focuses on MATESOL, the findings can be applied to practicum in ELL endorsement programs. He concludes that practicum objectives should be based as much on student needs as on program philosophy. The objectives should be seen as a dynamic, ongoing process in which goals may change from semester to semester and from student to student.

The above studies focus on the MATESOL practicum or practicum in general. This study aims to study the practicum of an ELL endorsement program, particularly the potential and problems of using summer school as practicum for an ELL endorsement program. This study aims to provide suggestions and implications on how summer school can be used for practicum for teacher education.

III. Method

The major data in this study include classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. The first type of data, documents, are the elicitation of themes or content in a body of written or visual media (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Here, copies were taken of the summer school program and handouts.

Semi-structured interviews were used in order to explore issues, probe for and follow up on the responses and to allow for interaction (Blaikie, 2000; Flick, 1998; Hitchcock & Huges, 1989). An interview protocol was used in this study. The interviews were conducted on the last week of the practicum and lasted between thirty minutes and an hour. The interviews aimed to find out the participants' education and language background, their teaching philosophies, and their challenges and concerns regarding the summer school program.

Observation is the most natural of all ways of collecting data, because it allows researchers to gain a better understanding of various behaviors (Bartels, 2005; Richards & Morse, 2007). Seven classroom observations were conducted for this study: three for Phoebe's class, one for John's class, and three for Yolanda's class. The researcher analyzed the data by organizing it into more abstract units of information or themes (Creswell, 2009; Hatch 2006; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

The participants in this study were three prospective teachers who completed their elementary school teacher certification and did their student teaching in the academic year 2009. The three of them did their practicum in summer in order to gain an ELL endorsement certification offered by a university in the Northwest. Details about the participants are show in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

	Yolanda	Phoebe	John
Education	M.A. in education	B.A. in Sociology	B.A. in Sociology, Special education
Prior work experience	Student teaching Part-time ELL teacher	Literacy tutor	Student teaching
Languages	English, Korean	English, Spanish	English, Spanish
Grade level	First grade	Third	Second grade

IV. Results

The analysis focuses on the practicum arrangement, teaching activities, teachers' learning, and challenges and problems.

A. Practicum Arrangement

The prospective teachers were required to complete a 36-hour practicum consisting of six hours of observation and thirty hours comprising co-teaching with a cooperating teacher or solo teaching. The teachers also had to submit two video-recorded lessons, lesson plans, and post-lesson reflections to the practicum supervisor. The teachers were paired with an ESL-endorsed cooperating teacher based on their grade level preference. Unfortunately, there were a limited number of classes at each grade level in the summer school with only one class each for K-1 and first through fourth grades.

B. Teaching Activities

While Yolanda and John were involved in station teaching in their practicum, Phoebe shared the instruction with her

cooperating teacher. In Yolanda's class, four stations were arranged with a different instructional focus: sight words, phonics, reading comprehension, and the alphabet. Yolanda was responsible for phonics instruction. She had specific procedures on teaching phonics in Example 1. She first showed the alphabet card and asked students to sound it out. She used flashcards to teach different words that began with that letter. She gave students white boards whereby she would say a word and students had to draw a picture and write the word. She then asked students to sound out the word again before asking them to spell it out. Finally, she asked students the first sound, the second sound, or the third sound of that word.

Example 1
Yolanda: (Shows the flashcard "k___ to Ss) How do you pronounce this?
S1: [k]
Yolanda: If I show you k_, what words begin with that sound?
S1: Kite.
S2: Key.
…
Yolanda: I will give you the board. Can you draw the "kite" and write the "kite"?
Ss: (Draw the kite and write kite)
Yolanda: (Point to k-i-t-e) [k]-[aɪ]-[t]. Let's sound it one more time. [k]-[aɪ]-[t].
…
Yolanda: How do you spell "kite"?
Ss: K-I-T-E.
Yolanda: Good job!
Yolanda: What is the first sound?
Ss: [k]
Yolanda: What is the second sound?
Ss: [aɪ]
Yolanda: What is the third sound?
Ss: [t].
Yolanda: When you put them together, you say…
Ss: [kaɪ t]
Yolanda: Good job! Now erase it.

There were only three stations in John's class; they covered phonics and alphabet instruction, songs and chants, and reading comprehension. John was responsible for teaching the students phonics and the letters of the alphabet. Similar to Yolanda, John taught the phonics in a certain procedure as in Example 2. In this example, he first reviewed the letters taught in the previous lesson. He taught a new letter "m" and asked students to pronounce the letter's sound. He said a word and asked students to repeat after him. He later said a word and students had to write the letter of the first or the last sound of the word. He also taught students the concept of rhyming words.

Example 2: John's Phonics Instruction
John: What does S make?
Ss: [s]
(Use the pointer to point to the letter Tt) What's this letter?
Ss: Tt
…
John: Today we will learn a new letter Mm. Repeat the word after me, [m].
Ss: [m]
…
John: I say the word and you say it back to me. Mouse
Ss: Mouse
…
John: (Give students white boards) Next word I would you like to hear "set." What is the first sound you hear?
Ss: (Write "s" on the white board) [s].
John: Do you all agree [s] is the first sound you hear from the word "set"?
Ss: Yes
Mr. James: What is the third sound you hear from "set"?
Ss: [t]
…
John: "Sam" and "ham" have the same rhyme. What does "rhyme" mean?
Ss: (No response)
S1: What is "rhyme"?
John: Rhyme means two words have the same sound in them like "Sam" and "ham." Do they have the same sound?
Ss: Yes.

John: Next word is “at.”
Ss: (Write “at” on the white board)
John: Next word is “sat.” Think about what you have to change.
Ss: (Write “sat” on the white board)
John: Next word is “mat.”
Ss: (Write “mat” on the white board).
John: Try “cat.”
Ss: (Write “cat” on the white board)

In station teaching, Phoebe did mini-lessons and provided students with individual practice. Phoebe liked station teaching, saying “The students were most engaged; enthusiastic also the best results occurred.” Although station teaching was fun and interactive, Yolanda hoped that she could see how the cooperating teacher did the whole class instruction.

Phoebe shared the teaching with her cooperating teacher in task-based, writing, and reading. For the task-based activities, on July 19, 2010, the students made a community poster by cutting pictures from magazines and writing captions on the bottom of the pictures. On July 20 and 21, the students were divided into two groups and Phoebe worked with one group. The students made their own paper puppets, read through the lines, and put on a puppet show based on a book they had read recently. In terms of writing activities, students were given ten minutes free writing on topics such as ‘my family members’. While students did free writing, Phoebe worked around the classroom and helped them if needed.

The whole class was divided into two teams and Phoebe did the reading circle in Example 3. Phoebe pointed to the author’s name on the cover first. She then led students to read aloud and paused to ask students the meaning of the word *nature*. One student replied “Everything around.” Phoebe asked the rest of the students to add more. One student answered “trees” and one student said “animals.” Phoebe summarized what students said at the end.

Example 3: Phoebe’s reading circle
Phoebe: The author is Douglas Gloria. Let’s look at it together.
Phoebe: Let’s read it together.
Phoebe and Ss: (Read aloud)
Phoebe: What is nature?
S: Everything around
Phoebe: What else can you add?
S: Trees
S: Animals
Phoebe: Things around us that are outside. The grass, trees, birds, animals, things that are outside and around us are in the nature.
S: I know that.
S: It’s moving. (Hands wave)

C. Prospective Teachers’ Learning

The biggest takeaway from doing practicum in the summer school for these prospective teachers was their learning about teaching strategies from their instructors and cooperating teachers.

With regard to teaching strategies, Phoebe realized the benefits of giving explicit instruction, use of building language frames, and modeling writing. John did not take any assessment class in the elementary school teacher education program (TEP), so he loved the assessment class. He felt that he had never learned how to do assessment before this assessment class.

Prospective teachers learned from the instructors. Yolanda particularly mentioned that one instructor encouraged them to try new things as “Dr. Caitlin was great. She really motivated us to try new things and made it seem like it was doable. She said it would be hard and we would make mistakes, but it would be possible.”

Prospective teachers also learned a lot from their cooperating teachers. Yolanda’s cooperating teacher made the point clear that teachers should make the effort to build connections with ELLs’ family and parents. Yolanda worked hard on what her cooperating teacher emphasized and she reminded the parents that they were on the same team in regard to the students’ learning. Phoebe learned a lot about teaching strategies from her cooperating teacher, such as table talk, visuals, talking, and partner work. John particularly learned more GLAD strategies implemented by his cooperating teacher.

D. Challenges and Problems

These prospective teachers faced three major challenges and problems while doing practicum in summer school. The first issue was the pairing of the prospective teachers with their master teachers. Phoebe highlighted that cooperating teachers should be master teachers and that the practices they use align with those of the endorsement program. John had a different teaching philosophy and style from his cooperating teacher and saw his cooperating teacher as being too concerned with order and little details. Neither John nor Yolanda experienced any collaboration with their cooperating teachers, or any clear discussion about teaching objectives.

The second major problem was the whole set-up of doing practicum in the summer school. John was not sure about the objectives of the summer school and he said,

"I would like to have had a little more clarity around the information and end goals of the summer program. I wish there was a clear connection between the university and summer school. It was not clear what I was supposed to be doing."

Furthermore, the prospective teachers had also hoped they could see the students' profiles. Yolanda said "I would love to have had more background information on the students. We did not know anything about some of these kids."

The third major issue was regarding the curriculum used in the summer school as the prospective teachers felt it was inappropriate to use content lower than the students' actual grade levels. Although the inappropriate curriculum seemed to be a weakness, the teachers did learn how to adapt it to meet their students' needs and proficiency levels.

V. Discussion and Implications

Based on the data analysis, four issues are investigated relating to the implementation of a summer school program as prospective teachers' ELL endorsement: the prospective teachers' involvement in and experience of different teaching styles, collaboration between collaborating and prospective teachers, the goals of the summer school, and curriculum planning and adaption.

A. Involvement in and Experience of Teaching Styles

In this study, Phoebe shared the instruction with her cooperating teacher. However, Yolanda and John were involved in only one type of teaching style, "station teaching" in their practicum. They never saw how their collaborating teacher carried out whole class instruction, and it should also be noted that having more than one teacher or adult in the classroom is not common in most elementary school settings. "Utilize cooperative learning experiences for ELLs" is one of the six critical topics that should be included in ELL teacher education (Wassel, 2009); therefore, these prospective teachers should have been exposed to how a teacher can incorporate different types of classroom activities in their classroom such as whole class instruction, group work, pair work, cooperative learning, individual work, etc.

Phoebe also hoped that collaborating teachers should be highly-experienced teachers, preferably ELL-endorsed. Freeman (2002) suggests that well-crafted mentoring programs should play a critical role in the design of teacher education programs. Freeman and Johnson (1998) also suggest that teacher education practices in TESOL should include experienced teachers as mentors to novices during field experiences or school-based programs. Teachers always benefit from each other's classes and they can use the opportunity of being observed to become more aware of their own teaching. By doing so, the pedagogies observed will imply a different understanding of the professional process of learning to teach. Therefore, assigning an experienced English-endorsed teacher as a mentor to the prospective teacher should be mandated in the practicum.

B. Collaboration between Cooperating and Prospective Teachers

The three participants in this study did not have many chances to collaborate with their cooperating teachers, despite their expectations. Such collaboration should be fostered such means as through working together on lesson planning or curriculum development. They can identify goals for a lesson and content area they want to work on together and may spend time collaboratively discussing and designing lessons which they then teach while others observe. The teachers can next meet to discuss their observations and ideas on how to improve the lesson (Wiburg & Brown, 2007). A complex relationship exists among teachers, new materials, teaching practices, and peers. Teachers can construct themselves as pedagogical and curricular leaders among their peers (Leander & Osborne, 2008).

Another way that prospective and cooperating teachers can collaborate is through collaborative dialogue as this process gives them multiple perspectives in problem solving and in issues of concern (Bailey, 1996; Howelett, 2004). Bartlett (1990) also claims that teaching is an interactive process, so teachers need to develop shared understandings in a community of knowledge users and developers.

C. The Goals of the Summer School

The university practicum supervisor provided practicum guidelines for all prospective teachers at the summer school; they included a practicum requirement checklist, observation guidelines, ELL endorsement practicum reporting form, observation worksheet, observation report guidelines, observation report evaluation form, lesson guidelines, lesson plan sample format, and an evaluation and post-lesson reflection rubric. The prospective teachers faced challenges and problems when they did their practicum in summer school as firstly, they did not have much knowledge about the students' backgrounds, academic achievement or test data. Secondly, because they did not know the major goals of the summer school they did not know how to best scaffold the ELLs' learning.

Orientation and professional development should be provided for teachers before the summer school begins. Topics covered should include the goals of the summer school, curriculum, standards, and ELL teaching strategies, so teachers will be familiar with how they should teach in order to meet the objectives. Second, students' data including academic performance, English proficiency levels, educational background in home country, etc should be provided, so teachers have a better understanding of students' background. A pre-assessment and post-assessment should be provided to

check if the summer school instruction does in fact positively influence student academic performance and to determine what further instruction can be provided.

D. Curriculum Planning and Adaption

The curriculum used in the summer school was at a lower level than the students' actual grade level. Although the three prospective teachers thought this inappropriate curriculum was a major issue in the practicum, they nevertheless used this as a chance to learn how to modify and adapt the curriculum to best fit their students' needs. Curriculum and lesson planning is crucial in language teaching. Lesson planning can provide opportunities for teachers' professional growth and learning, whether individually or collectively and the process also acts to demonstrate teachers' expertise. Teacher self-actualization, motivation, and sense of achievement are integral to successful curriculum and lesson planning decision-making (Marshall, Day, Hannay, & McCutcheon, 1990).

VI. Conclusion

This study focused on the implementation of a summer school program as prospective teachers' ELL endorsement practicum in the northwest United States. The four major findings are: students teachers' engagement with a limited ranges of teaching styles, little collaboration between cooperating and prospective teachers, the unclear goals of the summer school, and also curriculum planning and adaption. In order to make teaching in summer school a useful practicum for ELL teachers, universities and elementary schools should collaborate to find master teachers' as cooperating teachers, encourage collaboration between cooperating and prospective teachers, provide a practicum orientation to prospective teachers, and equip prospective teachers with expertise and skills in curriculum designs and adaptation.

References

[1] Blaikie, N. (2000). Designing social research. Cambridge: Polity Press.
[2] Bartlett, L. (1990). Teacher development through reflective teaching. In J. C. Richards & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second language teacher education*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 202-214.
[3] Bartels, N. (2005). Researching applied linguistics in language teacher education. In Bartels, N. (Ed.). *Applied linguistics and language teacher education*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media, Inc.
[4] Bailey, F. (1996). The role of collaborative dialogue in teacher education. In D. Freeman & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 260-280.
[5] Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
[6] Crookes, G. (2003). A practicum in TESOL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[7] Flick, U. (1998). An introduction to qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
[8] Freeman, D. (1989). Teacher training, development, and decision making. A model of teaching and related strategies for language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly* 23.1, 27-45.
[9] Freeman, D. (2002). The hidden side of the work: Teacher knowledge and learning to teach. A perspective from North American educational research on teacher education in English language teaching. *Language teaching* 35. 1, 1-13.
[10] Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly* 32.3, 397-417.
[11] Gebhard, J. (2005). The practicum. In A. Burns. & J. C. Richards. (2009) (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 250-258.
[12] Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1983). Ethnography. Principles in practice. New York: Humanities Press.
[13] Hatch, J. A. (2002). Doing qualitative research in education settings. Albany: State University of New York Press.
[14] Hitchcook, G., & Hughes, D. (1989). Research and the teacher: A qualitative introduction to school-based research. New York: Humanities Press.
[15] Howelett, K. M. (2005). The impact of an English as a second language professional development program on teacher practice. Ph. D. dissertation, University of Arkansas, Arkansas.
[16] Janopoulos, M. (1991). TESOL practicum: Bridging the gap between student needs and program objectives. Ph. D. dissertation, University of Northern Iowa, Iowa.
[17] Leander, K. M., & Osborne, M. D. (2008). Complex positioning: Teachers as agents of curricular and pedagogical reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 40. 1, 23-46.
[18] LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). Designing and conducting ethnographic research. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
[19] Marsh, C., Day, C., Hannay, L., & McCutcheon, G. (1990). Reconceptualizing school-based curriculum development. London: The Falmer Press.
[20] Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). Design qualitative research (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
[21] Pak, M. (2005). Learning to teach in urban school: Influences affecting mentor teacher-student relationship. Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
[22] Richards, J. C., & Crookes, G. (1988). The practicum in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 22.1, 9-27.
[23] Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2007). Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
[24] Tomas, Z., Rai, F., & Haslam, M. (2008). Designing and implementing the TESOL teaching practicum abroad: Focus on interaction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42. 4, 660-664.
[25] Wassel, E. (2009). Exploring professional development needs of teachers for teaching English second language learners: A mixed methods study in a homogenous white county. Ph. D. dissertation, Widener University, Pennsylvania.

[26] Wiburg, K. M., & Brown, S. (2007). Translating lesson study from Japan to the United States. In K. M. Wiburg & S. Brown. (Eds.), *Lesson study communities increasing achievement with diverse students*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 1-17.
[27] Zeichner, K. (1990). Changing directions in the practicum: Looking ahead to the 1990s. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 16. 2, 105-132.

Chin-Wen Chien received her Doctor of Education degree in Curriculum and Education, from the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, the United States, in 2011. Her dissertation focuses on the influence of language teacher's professional development on their classroom practice.

She is an assistant professor in Department of English Instruction of National Hsinchu University of Education in Taiwan. Her research interests include language education, language teacher education, and curriculum and instruction.

Dr. Chin-Wen Chin is a member of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and English Teaching Association, R.O.C.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1018-1027, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1018-1027

Evaluating Learners' Communication Strategies within a Synchronous Cyber Environment

Ying-Chuan Wang
Macau University of Science and Technology, Macau SAR, China

***Abstract*—In order to increase the competitiveness of Taiwan in the international environment, the Taiwanese government has become aware of the importance of English in reforming English education and establishing a new language testing system in leading to more successful language learning. However, many scholars in Taiwan are dubious as to whether this reformed English education has really improved the English communicative ability of learners. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to investigate learners' communicative competence in terms of communication strategies, by means of administrating a set of communicative task based activities within a computer mediated environment to provide evidence of the current learning outcomes. Drawing upon the framework proposed by Bachman (1990), communication strategies could be identified. After the data collection, the learners' speech data were analysed based on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), and the findings revealed that the learners employed the re-conceptualisation strategy more frequently than the substitution strategy. A new strategy, named "additional strategy", was discovered during this study. Therefore, this study suggests that the importance of adopting a communicative task-based activity into classroom increases opportunities for learners to interact with each other to improve their communicative competence.**

***Index Terms*—communicative competence, communication strategy, computer mediated environment, communicative task-based activity**

I. Introduction

The government and people of Taiwan strongly perceive the importance of employing English in communication in order to achieve the government's intention of becoming the hub of Asia Pacific Operations in an increasingly globalised world. In addition to this, the Taiwanese government has announced that English may become the second official language in the next 8 to 10 years (Liao, 2004, p.121). Therefore, a great deal of attention has been placed on language learners and educators, as well as on the reform of English education with a view of improving the teaching and learning of the English language in Taiwan.

Today, more and more language teachers in Taiwan are willing to attempt to implement a ''Communicative Language Teaching" (CLT) method, instead of traditional language teaching approaches such as Focus on Form Instruction (FFI) in their classrooms. With respect to CLT, this is an approach to the teaching of second or foreign language students that places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts. That is, CLT makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication in order to develop learners' communicative competence. Therefore, the learners will have an adequate ability to apply knowledge of both formal and sociolinguistic aspects of a language to communicate. FFI is not regarded as an effective teaching approach for developing communicative skills of language learners, and is no longer a recognised method for the CLT curriculum developed in 2001. According to the findings of the research carried out by Chang (2001) in junior high schools and Chang and Huang (2001) in senior high schools, teachers in secondary schools believe in CLT approaches for improving language teaching and learning practice. Hence, the CLT approach has, unsurprisingly, prevailed in most English learning and teaching contexts in Taiwan. However, after employing CLT in language education for many years, some researchers such as Liao (2006) still question if there is any significant improvement on learners' communicative competence in English language. As a result of this, this researcher was motivated to conduct this study.

A. The Purpose of the Study

The present study is an investigation of the learners' communicative competence in terms of communication strategies. It aims to examine the communication strategies of Taiwanese senior high school language learners who have passed the intermediate level of The General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), while lacking in language resources. Therefore, the object of this study is to understand the learners' communicative competence in terms of communication strategies, in order to provide some information to improve such competence in the language learning and teaching contexts. Furthermore, by means of evaluation of the learners' communicative competence, this will lend potential to remain language learners in terms of successfully learning the English language. As well as this, it will allow the language teachers to be aware of the current strengths and weaknesses of the learners in order to modify their teaching approach by promoting the notion of communicative competence.

B. Research Questions

1. How do Taiwanese EFL learners cope with deficiencies in their communicative competence in the English language?
2. What differences exist between the high scoring and low scoring learners when employing compensatory strategies?

II. Literature Review

A. The Notion of Communicative Competence

Hymes (1972) was the first person to propose the notion of communicative competence, thus providing a great stimulus to the current major focus in grammatical competence (Schachter, 1990). Hymes's (1972) theory is, originally, a development of Chomsky's (1965, p. 4) distinction. Chomsky's (1980, p. 59) distinction refers to *grammatical competence* and *pragmatic performance*. In contrast to Chomsky's distinction, Hymes's notion of communication competence concerns both knowledge and ability (Widdowson, 1989, p.130). Hymes (1972) believes that the model of competence must take communication into account and, therefore, divides "communicative competence" into two categories; the knowledge of language, and the capacities in language-use underlying performance in real time, that is, "knowledge" and "ability for use" (Hymes, 1967, 1972). It is said that communicative competence is a dynamic, interpersonal construct and relies on "the cooperation of all the participants involved" (Savignon, 1983, p. 9) so only by means of performance in the process of communication, the communicative competence of individuals can be examined.

Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) later carried out the work of defining and developing the theory of communicative competence proposed by Hymes (1972). Their framework of communicative competence consists of four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence. Subsequently, the frameworks of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) of communicative competence have been modified over the years (Brown, 2000).

Bachman (1990) was the first researcher to explicitly divide language knowledge into organizational and pragmatic competence. The most prominent modification should be recognised as Bachman's (1990) distinction, which concerns "communicative language ability". The expanding framework of Bachman (1990) is more comprehensive and explicit than previous models proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). Through refining the earlier models, Bachman (1990) suggests "the ability to use language communicatively involves both knowledge of competence in the language, and the capacity for implementing, or using this competence" (p. 81). Consequently, in Bachman's (1990) framework, he explicitly classified the composition of "knowledge" and the composition of a "skill", which remains ambiguous in the model of Canale (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, p. 42). Another improvement in the framework of Bachman (1990) is that his framework not only presented extensions of earlier models but also intended to "characterize the processes by which the various components interact with each other and with the context in which language use occurs" (p. 81). Consequently, the framework of communicative language ability proposed by Bachman (1990, p. 84) includes three components: language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms.

This researcher remains aware that Bachman and Palmer (1996) later revised Bachman's (1990) framework and renamed their model to include language use and language test performance. However, their model is not relevant to this study. As a result, the framework of Bachman and Palmer (1996) will not be discussed further.

In addition, many researchers such as McNamara (1996), Young (2000) and Chalhoub-Deville (2003), Chalhoub-Deville and Deville (2005) argue that Bachman's (1990) model presents a cognitive/psycholinguistic ability model, rather than interactional competence model. Even though Bachman (2002) in his publication shows his position has been advanced in 1990, he still distinguishes communicative language ability between the "ability targeted" and "the context in which they are observed" (Chalhoub-Deville, 2003, p. 372) in his model.

As Jacoby and Ochs (1995) suggest, the abilities, actions, and activities do not belong to the individual but are jointly constructed by all participants. Similarly, Swain (2001) believes that a dynamic representation of interaction is co-constructed by all participants in a given situations. Ultimately, Bachman's (1990) position is considered to be different from those who consider the "language use situation primarily as a social event in which ability, language users, and context are inextricable meshed" (Chalhoub-Deville, 2003, p. 372). That is, the social perspective of interaction. Therefore, interactional competence researchers propose their position as "ability-in language user-in context".

Even though interactional competence researchers provide their view of a dynamic interaction in which the abilities, actions, and activities do not belong to the individual but are co-constructed by all participants, this research focuses on the investigation of an individual's performance in various contexts rather than exploring the interactions between participants. As a result, the framework of Bachman (1990) provides a useful base for this research in order to identify strategic competence of Taiwanese learners of English.

B. Communication Strategy

There are three components included in strategic competence within Bachman's (1990) framework: assessment, planning, and execution. That is, assessing what is said, planning utterances, and executing the plan. In turn, the ability

to assess the situation, plan an utterance verbally, and also perform an utterance is to successfully execute plans and achieve goals. More explicitly, in order for the plan to match the goal, language users have to analyse the given situation and their resources in respect of the goal in order to construct and select an appropriate plan. Communication strategies, as Ellis (1994) agrees, are a part of the planning process and are useful for the speakers to tackle the problems that prevent them from executing their initial plan.

Færch and Kasper (1983) more explicitly indicate that communication strategies are used in the situations based on the problems that take place within the planning or execution phase. When problems occur within the planning phase, it shows that the language learners confront a problem in constructing or developing a plan which could provide adequate means in order to assist them in achieving their communication goals (Færch & Kasper, 1983, p. 23).

Ellis (1994, p. 398) argues that the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983) provides a basis for classifying the communication strategies into categories. Moreover, the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983) has been regarded as a psycholinguistic framework, allowing for the classification of the communication strategies into categories (Smith, 2003).

However, Bialystok (1990) and Poulisse (1990, 1993) criticise the Færch and Kasper (1983) taxonomy as it involves several problems that result in the difficulty of identifying the communication strategies. For example, Bialystok (1990) considers all plans developed by the speakers are conscious; this opposes Færch and Kasper's (1983) claim that consciousness about the problem does not exist in all situations. Poulisse (1990, 1993) also criticises the fact that some definitions of strategies are not clear, for instance, a difficulty in distinguishing "topic avoidance" and "meaning replacement". In some instances, the definitions of these categories do not indicate weather they should be based on either the view of the learner or the observer. Poulisse (1990) argues that creating new types of category for slightly different forms of utterances resulted in too many categories being included in their taxonomy. Therefore, it is suggested that there is a need to redefine the communication strategies and to make the taxonomy more general.

Poulisse (1993, p. 163), in particular, criticises and indicates that the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983) lacks insight into the cognitive processes underlying communication strategy use. Similarly, some researchers such as Kellerman et al. (1987) at Nijmegen University criticised the existing typologies of communication strategies as product-oriented. Such typologies focused on linguistic products because they showed a tendency to illustrate strategy types with isolated examples. As a result, these typologies were merely descriptive. Most importantly, the product-oriented classifications of communication strategies failed to distinguish the psychological process from the linguistic product. The criteria that were adopted to distinguish between the various subtypes of compensatory strategy were not explicitly related to the processes underlying communication strategy used in the earlier studies, generalizations made with respect to these processes were missed out. The Nijmegen University group therefore took such problems into account and proposed an alternative taxonomy to classify the compensatory strategies in a process-oriented manner.

C. The Nijmegen Project

The Nijmegen project was intended solely to study the compensatory strategies where the focus was to investigate the proficiency effect; the relationship between communication strategy (CS) use in L1 and L2 and the effectiveness of various CS types (Poulisse, 1990, 1993). Compensatory strategies were employed when the speakers encountered lexical problems. Lexical problems emerged when speakers had established a preverbal message containing chunks of conceptual, grammatical and linguistic information. Subsequently, the speakers discovered that they could not access the correct lexical items in order to match all of the intended expressions.

The Nijmegen Project classifies the compensatory strategy into two main strategies depending on whether the learners use the conceptual knowledge resource or the linguistic knowledge resource. However, Poulisse (1993) highlighted a weakness in the Nijmegen Project. For example, the strategies of 'transfer' and 'morphology creativity' could not be classified as completely different subtypes of the linguistic strategies from the process-oriented perspective. This results in such strategies sometimes being difficult to identify because some L2 words exist as L1 words. It is also possible to combine the holistic and analytic strategies in an utterance so it becomes difficult to be clear-cut in classifying the utterance in either the holistic or analytic strategies. Additionally, the problem of identifying the conceptual strategies and linguistic strategies of transfer has also been noticed. As Poulisse (1990, 1993) claims, there is no purer explanation of the conceptual strategies and linguistic strategies as the interaction of those that may occur and when there are similar underlying substitution processes.

As such weaknesses exist in the Nijmegen Project, Poulisse (1993) attempted to establish her taxonomy as much improved against other traditional taxonomies. Through refining her taxonomy, Poulisse believes that it has been more comprehensive in classifying and coding the use of compensatory strategies. The following section will be devoted to the discussion of the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993).

D. The Taxonomy of Poulisse

In Poulisse's taxonomy, she terms the three types of communication strategies as: substitution, substitution plus, and re-conceptualization strategies instead of linguistic and conceptual strategies. Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy was important for this researcher to consider as the basis to identify the speech production of the participants in her study. Due to Poulisse's taxonomy having been developed to classify the compensatory strategy from a process-oriented

perspective, it is useful to employ this typology into this current study to explore learners' underlying cognitive processes in their choice of strategy.

1. Substitution strategy

The purpose of using this strategy is to replace the intended lexical item with another in order to overcome the linguistic limitation. There are two ways to do this; one is to use related items such as "animal" for "rabbit" and the other way is the corresponding L1 item such as Dutch "voorwoord" for "preface" (Poulisse, 1993, p. 180). In the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), it was intended that these two strategies were classified as one as it was discovered that they shared a certain level of similarity when considering lexical access of L1 and L2. Poulisse (1993) claims that the speakers decide to either change or omit from one or more features of a particular chunk, which are both kinds of substitution strategies.

2. Substitution Plus Strategy

The second type of compensatory strategy in Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy is the substitution plus strategy. She explains the reason behind the name of such strategies being "Substitution Plus" is because they are always employed in combination with substitution strategies. This strategy considers "the out-of the ordinary application of L1 or L2 morphological and/or phonological encoding procedures" (Poulisse, 1993, p. 180), which may affect both L1 and L2 lexical items.

3. Re-conceptualisation Strategy

This strategy provides manipulation for the speakers to explain the item by encoding the conceptual features. For instance, the speaker may opt to encode the conceptual features by listing its possessions, or by substituting the word for a related concept that shares certain critical properties. By using this strategy, the speaker can also decide to add further background information in order for the listener to take advantage of understanding the context whilst interpreting the message.

Poulisse (1993, p. 182) concludes that basically, only the substitution strategy and re-conceptualisation strategy can be used on their own, as the substitution plus strategy is always used in combination with substitution strategies. These three major types of compensatory strategy comprise a taxonomy which differs from the traditional psycholinguistic approach taxonomies such as the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983).

The intention of this researcher is to investigate the lack of lexical items used by the learners. So the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) was chosen to examine the learners' strategies. As the language systems of Chinese and English are very different, this researcher does not expect the strategies of foreignizing and morphological creativity (i.e. the substitution plus strategy) to be included and will be seen in the speech production of this data. As a result, only two types of compensatory strategy suggested by the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), that is, substitution strategy and re-conceptualisation strategy will be of concern in this study.

More recently, Littlemore (2003) elaborates on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) by classifying the main three different types of compensatory strategy into more specific subtypes. In doing so, it has been helpful for this researcher to analyze her data more effectively. Littlemore (2003, p. 337) identified six strategies to be included in the substitution strategy. They are original analogical/metaphoric comparison, conventional analogical/metaphoric comparison, literal comparison, and super-ordinate. With reference to re-conceptualisation strategies suggested by Poulisse (1993), Littlemore (2003, p. 338) proposes five subtypes. She considers that the analysis of the target items by describing the components of this item, and its activity, place function and the emotion inspired by it.

In addition, Littlemore (2003) seemed not to include the strategy of adding further information in her elaboration, which was mentioned in taxonomy of Poulisse (1993). As this researcher considered its importance and decided to include this strategy into this study in order to identify learners' speech data. As a result, the learners' cognitive process on encoding the target items could be more comprehensively explored.

The Littlemore's (2003) typology could facilitate this study to achieve the above goal and to allow this researcher to investigate how the learners operate and use the communication strategies based on their cognitive process from their linguistic products. It also allows the analysis of the similarities and differences of the strategy usage between higher and lower scoring learners.

III. Research Method

This study was designed to administer a computer mediated oral activity to investigate the communicative competence in terms of communication strategies of the Taiwanese EFL learners in a senior high school through communicative tasks. In order to examine and investigate the research aims and questions of this study, the mixed research strategies were chosen, that is, both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies were adopted in the collection of data from the study, and considered throughout the response to the purpose of the study.

A. Sampling

In this study, the researcher aimed to target a particular group who had passed a language test, that is, the GEPT. The reason behind studying participants who had passed the intermediate level of the GEPT is that the intermediate level of the GEPT is equivalent to the level of B1 Threshold (LTTC, 2005). The interpretation of the level of B1 Threshold is that the test participants can clearly understand the main points of familiar matters and deal with most situations whilst

travelling. They can also produce simple text connections on familiar topics and describe their experiences, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans (Council of Europe, 1996).

Another consideration pertains to computer knowledge; the participants involved in this study need to interact individually with the computer when taking this activity. Therefore, some knowledge of computers was necessary. The Taiwanese Ministry of Education has implemented computer lessons in elementary school since 1995, so it was not necessary for to train the participants or to require them to have the ability to use computers when partaking in this study.

As quantitative and qualitative methods are employed in this study, the sample size needs to be manageable. Therefore, the researcher requires a moderate sample size in order to provide a representative amount of speech data. Finally, the decision was made to include 35 participants from a prestigious private secondary school situated in southern Taiwan.

B. Instrumentation

There are few computer mediated oral activities that include investigations of communicative competence available in the commercial market in Taiwan. In order to carry out this study, the researcher decided to design an oral activity that investigates learners' communication strategies within a computer based environment.

A total of 12 task items were presented in this activity and were divided into two types of task; type A and type B. Both types involved six task items and each participant was required to select four out of six task items to complete this section. The decision made by the learners was dependent on the learners' interests and confidence on the task items, so some task items were selected more frequently than the others.

The images chosen by Subject A were not shown on the screen of Subject B. The screen of Subject B only presented some instructions. Therefore, Subject B was not able to predict which item Subject A had chosen and was about to describe. Subject B was allowed to request more information about the image chosen by Subject A in order to gain full comprehension of the description of the image on screen given by Subject A to identify the item.

After Subject A described four out of the six images individually, Subject B was required to name these items in Mandarin in order to show if he or she had understood Subject A's description. When Subject B announced the correct name of the four objects in the activity in Mandarin, this activity was completed. It was the performance of Subject A that was of concern to the two native speaking assessors and two coders at this stage, as Subject B only played a supporting role. The computer recorded the oral performance of each subject within a pair of participants and all speech data collected were later scored by two native English-speaking assessors based on the learners' English proficiency and the level of comprehension. The participants' responses were also coded, which was carried out by the researcher and her colleague according to the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993).

C. Procedure

In June 2011 a pilot study was administrated to eight participants who volunteered to take part in this study. The aim of administering a pilot study was to ensure that the task items had been selected appropriately for the participants, and that the layout of the design of the computer mediated activity was clear and easy enough for participants to use.

A small scale item trial was carried out in the form of piloting a set of communicative task based activities within a computer mediated environment. The eight participants were grouped into pairs to undertake this activity. After finishing this activity, an informal interview took place. The eight participants involved in the pilot study were invited into the language lab and encouraged to express their feelings concerning the carrying out of this activity in order to gain the participants' opinions regarding the layout and task items involved.

Consequently, there were some improvements to be made after the pilot study and interviews. For example, replacing inappropriate images that had not been selected by any participants, adding conditions to the instructions for their indecisive behaviour in selection, which resulted in them abandoning their items of choice. After this improvement, in the main study the task items were decided on and included these images; in type A, jellyfish, cactus, binoculars, otter, dragonfly and roundabout, and in type B, ostrich, ointment, grasshopper, mirage, squid, and scarecrow.

In the pilot study stage, a training session took place to practice grading and coding the responses collected from the pilot study. The learners' speech data was transcribed by the researcher and her colleague and subsequently both sets of transcribed data were compared to search for differences. Later, the differences were discussed and an agreement was reached, so a training session could be held.

It was important to employ two native speaking assessors to ensure that all scores and responses coded were as reliably as possible. The speech data collected from the activity in the pilot study was scored by the two assessors based on the rating components of the GEPT speaking test, provided on the official website of GEPT (2006). The components included pronunciation and intonation, vocabulary and grammar, intelligibility, relevance and fluency. The learners' English proficiency in this study was scored based on a given five-point scale ranking system form ranging from very un-satisfied "(1)", to completely satisfied "(5)" to indicate the different levels in terms of these five components.

The main study was carried out at the aforementioned school and the computer based oral activity was administrated in December 2011. This activity lasted around fifteen minutes and the participants' responses were recorded as "wav" files in their computer's hard drive.

IV. Discussion of Findings

A. Types of Communication Strategies Employed by the Learners

According to the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), compensatory strategies are identified as being one of three types: substitution, substitution plus, and re-conceptualisation strategies. Due to the differences between Chinese and English language systems, the substitution plus strategy might not appear in the learners' response. It was decided that only the substitution and re-conceptualisation strategies would be adopted in this study to classify the speech sample.

Between these two compensatory strategies, the re-conceptualisation strategy was used more than twice as frequently as the substitution strategy. This implied that the learners' methods of identifying the objects tended to employ more re-conceptualisation, such as listing the intended lexical items one by one, selecting two lexical items from one lexicon, which could be combined into one new word, or adding further information (Poulisse, 1993, p. 118**).**

This finding could, therefore, be interpreted in terms of the participants favouring the use of the re-conceptualisation strategy based on their chosen methods, which were more inclined to encode the conceptual features through the analysis and manipulation of the intended concept.

This finding also supports the argument of Littlemore (2003). The learners tended to use the re-conceptualisation strategy because it involved being more direct and more related to the immediate perceptual world without involving "different level of abstraction" (Littlemore, 2003, p. 339), when compared to the substitution strategy, the re-conceptualisation strategy was less direct and more idiosyncratic. It is tempting to infer that the learner's belief in using re-conceptualisation strategy could contribute to a higher level of comprehension of their interlocutors, where direct interpretation of the immediate perceptual word is easier to process.

The strategy of describing or comparing the individual parts of the target item was employed the most frequently compared to the other strategies within the subtypes of the re-conceptualisation strategy. According to Poulisse (1993), the learners tried to be comprehensible, so the use of the re-conceptualisation strategy allowed the listeners to increase their comprehension of the utterances, but the use of this strategy requires more effort during their communication. Littlemore (2003) also claims that the reason behind componential comparison being regarded as the most successful re-conceptualisation strategy is that it helps to minimise cross-cultural differences between two interlocutors by offering direct information.

Comparatively, two strategies, that is metaphoric comparison and strategy of expressing emotion, were used much less frequently. The metaphoric comparison in the substitution strategy was used much less frequently (1.2%). The findings suggest that the learners seemed to not be accustomed to using a metaphorical means to describe the target items, so this strategy was adopted far less frequently than the others. Littlemore and Low (2006) argue that "being metaphoric is more an aspect of personal style and as such, some speakers might actively reject it" (p. 280). It is reasonable to speculate that the learners in this study did not make a habit of imprinting their own personal styles upon their utterances or became afraid that their metaphors would not easily be understood. Similarly, as Littlemore (2003) suggests the learners believed that the metaphoric comparison involved a personal concept concerning the target items, where sometimes a certain level of agreement is required, which is not easily transferred from person to person. Perhaps for this reason, the learners were afraid of using it as it may occasionally be treated by their listeners as an error or ambiguous expression. Therefore, the speakers had to make sure their listeners could understand their metaphoric comparison before using it.

Excluding the metaphoric comparison strategy, the strategy of expressing emotion to the target items, in particular, was employed at a very low percentage rate; only 4.8%. This finding supports the viewpoint of Littlemore (2003, p.339) who argues that the emotion category is a rather subjective category and concerns personal points of view. Based on the Oriental culture, people tend to be more conservative and implicit in relation to their feelings in contrast to Western culture. Part of this reason could be that the emotions inspired by the target items could be down to individual feeling, and this feeling reflected on the speakers and listeners need to reach agreement. Therefore, based on the percentage rate of strategy usage, it could be assumed that this strategy was considered as a less used and ineffective strategy requiring more mental effort than other subtypes.

An additional strategy was found in the learners' speech data and was later identified by the researcher in this study. This additional strategy was different from that identified in Tarone's (1977) study, who proposed "literal translation" in the strategy of Conscious Transfer, this occurs "when the learner translates word for word from the native language" (p. 198). For example, a Mandarin speaker translates the equivalent Mandarin expression to English as: "He invites him to drink" to describe two people toasting one another. This example was provided in the strategy of literal translation. However, the additional strategy was different from this because it was employed to translate the name of the target items from Chinese to English.

The importance of this study is pertinent in the light of the fact that it presents this additional strategy, which had not been proposed by either Poulisse (1993) or Littlemore (2003). It is probably the case that most research concerning communication strategies was carried out in western countries, such as Denmark or France, where the language systems are comparable to that of English. This offers the chance for the learners to transfer their L1 to English. For example, "a cuffer" (hairdresser, French: coiffeur) in Poulisse's (1990, p. 62) study.

Even though the findings show that only six participants employed the additional strategy into their responses and the percentage rate of the additional usage was only 2.2%, it was important to remain aware of every strategy adopted by

the learners in order to overcome their English vocabulary deficiency. This additional strategy was only employed by the learners who basically attempted to request that their listeners indicated the target item by means of directly translating it from their L1 (Chinese) to L2 (English). For example, Student A described "Jellyfish" by directly translating Chinese names of the target items to English and said "two words in Chinese…water…water… the first word and the second word is mother".

The reason for the learners' use of this additional strategy may be that both participants and their interlocutors speak the same language, that is, Chinese. This resulted in the participants attempting to translate the Chinese name of target objects into English words to their interlocutors and requesting them to assemble each word to guess the target items. However, when learners adopted this strategy too frequently, Chinese interlocutors may have been able to comprehend where English native assessors could not. In other words, even though the Chinese words have been directly translated into English, it is difficult for native speakers to make the intended meaning comprehensible. As a result, the learners who employed this additional strategy obtained a low level of comprehension to native speakers.

B. The Differences in Usage of the Compensatory Strategy between the Higher and Lower Scoring Learners

The findings illustrate that both the higher and lower scoring learners employed the use of the re-conceptualisation strategy twice as much more than substitution strategy. The findings also showed that both the higher and lower scoring learners used similar strategies in responding to the task items. The only difference was that the lower scoring learners used an additional strategy; namely the speakers requested the interlocutors to translate English words into Chinese and to assemble them to gain the Chinese name of the target objects.

It could be assumed that because the learners employed the additional strategy, they did not have sufficient English ability to express themselves well and so lost the confidence to express their intended meaning. Instead, they required their interlocutors to translate English words into Chinese to guess the name of the target object. For example, one of the lower score students attempted to describe the target item by using the strategy of place and activity first. However, later he found difficulties in his language resources. Subsequently, he developed a plan to request his interlocutor translate the English words into Chinese and then to assemble those words in order to gain the name of the target item.

Alternatively, the higher scoring learners had higher English proficiency, so they could understand how to convey the intended meaning effectively to facilitate their interlocutors through the choice of appropriate strategies. In other words, the higher scoring learners obtained much richer English resources enabling them to make their communication smooth and effective to convey their intended meaning through the choice of the appropriate strategy. Therefore, this could be the reason why the higher scoring learners did not use the additional strategy in their responses.

In relation to the substitution strategy, more lower scoring learners inclined to use the strategy of referring to the target item to a higher position within a hierarchy of the classification so that the learners only needed to utter the name of family to which the target items belongs, for example, 'it is an insect' or 'a kind of plant'. This did not require the learners to use a higher level of vocabulary to describe the target objects.

Interestingly, more higher scoring learners used the literal comparison strategy and the provision of extra information strategy than other strategies. The reason behind this could be that the higher scoring learners obtained rich vocabulary and complex grammatical knowledge and they did not need to depend on any particular strategy. Due to their greater communicative potential, they were aware of their constraints on their target language resources and had the ability to predict the possible problems that may have arisen in their planning process. So a proper strategy could be chosen by the speakers whilst communication was taking place.

The higher scoring learners used the strategy of providing extra information more frequently than the lower scoring learners. By providing further information concerning the target objects, the learners needed to produce more utterances. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the higher scoring learners obtained higher English ability that allowed them to explain themselves well by using this strategy.

This finding is in accordance with that of Chen (1990), which showed that the higher English proficiency learners tended to use the strategy of circumlocution, which required the learners to use more language while the lower English proficiency learners preferred to use the strategy of code-switching, which is related to their first language. Therefore, this explained the reason why the lower scoring learners in this study did not favour the use of the strategy of extra information because they had limited English ability.

In addition to discussing the differences of strategy usage between the higher and the lower scoring learners, the researcher also intended to explore how the higher and lower scoring learners used the same strategy at the same task item based on the participants' responses.

By examining speech production data in this study, it was discovered that the lower scoring learners also employed various compensatory strategies during communication. When the lower scoring learners employed the same communication strategies as the high scoring learners, the level of comprehension did not improve and unfortunately resulted in their intended meaning not being explicit.

When considering the issue of the same strategy being adopted by both higher and lower proficiency learners, those low in proficiency could not perform in an equivalent way to the high scoring learners. That is, it is believed that even though the higher and lower scoring learners adopted the same strategy, the higher scoring learners could use it more effectively than the low proficiency learners. The reason for this does not concern the understanding of the use of the communication strategies, but rather the well expressed, grammatically accurate words within their speech.

When massive grammatical errors and inappropriate language use occurs within conversation, the information cannot be delivered properly and thus causes the communication to break down. This suggests that limited vocabulary, grammatical mistakes or inappropriate language usage could be the reason why the low scoring learners used the same strategy as the higher scoring learners but their communication was not effective.

This researcher also agrees with the interpretation of Chen (1990) in relation to the issue of communication strategies used by lower proficiency learners. As Chen (1990) argues, the low proficiency learners have limitations in their target language which may have affected their surface realisation of the communication strategies, in terms of the grammatical accuracy and informative value. In this case, lower scoring learners would have made grammatical errors and provided insufficient information to their interlocutors. Therefore, Chen (1990) concludes that "the communication strategies employed by high proficiency learners might have been more effective than the same communication strategies employed by low proficiency learners" (p. 176).

V. Implications for Language Education Context

Since the Ministry of Education regards the development of language learners' communicative competence as the main goal of reformed English Education, the implementation of the communicative language teaching approach has been expected at all school levels; the English textbooks in Taiwan have also been revised to achieve this goal. However, this research has shown that the learners' cognitive styles concerning the choice of communication strategy and certain other strategies were greatly employed by the learners to overcome their lack of language resources. Furthermore, the strategy usage employed by the higher and lower scoring learners is very similar, but resulted in diversity effects. This shows that grammatical accuracy and informative value were factors while using their communication strategy to express their intended meaning to achieve communicative goals. Some implications for further study will be made in relation to the results of this research in the following sections.

A. Language Teacher

Language teachers should be aware that their teaching methods should be aimed at developing the learners' strategic competence. This would help to increase the opportunity for the learners to interact with each other by being able to use different strategies to overcome their deficiencies in their English language. That is, there is a necessity to develop their communicative competence through classroom interactions even though most language teachers complain about the restraints on instruction time for class activities. Without interacting with each other, the learners do not have opportunities to effectively apply these communication strategies into their interaction to solve their communication problems. Additionally, the learners will have more opportunities to notice their grammatical errors and expand their vocabulary bank while carrying out their interactions.

B. Language Learners

There is a need to bring learners' attention to these strategies and help them become more aware of all strategies available to them; in particular, such strategies include those that they may already make use of in the L1 when overcoming their English deficiency, resulting in communication breakdown. Many researchers such as Dörnyei (1995) and Chen (1990) suggest that providing training in how to appropriately use CS in L2, and providing opportunities for practice are essential as it can improve the effective use of the communication strategy.

During the instruction of learners' communication strategy usage, teachers should remind students of what they already do in their L1 and encourage them to do the same in L2, so that instruction can aid strategic transfer by raising awareness of the communication strategy. During practice activities, teachers should not only encourage, but also push learners to use communication strategies. Generally speaking, the purpose of the instructions should focus on helping learners develop and automate more effective strategies to achieve their communicative goals.

C. Education Department

The findings of this study could also provide some evidence with regards to a response to the policy of English education reform. Since 2001, the reform of English education attempted to improve the communicative competence of the learners; however, the result does not seem promising. The findings will assist the Ministry of Education in making future policies for developing language learners' communicative competence. Additionally, the findings of this study could produce some benefits to language educators in terms of awareness of the current weaknesses and strengths of English language education, and provide alternative propositions on their decisions regarding selection and design of teaching materials.

D. Recommendations for Future Studies

The present study has succeeded in responding to the research questions, which suggests the need for Taiwanese learners of English to develop their communicative language ability in terms of communication strategies. However, there are some perspectives that have not yet been fully explored due to the issue of time constraints on this study. Firstly, it would be advisable to investigate the different ages of the learners who are at different levels of English proficiency in the GEPT. Their results may highlight differences in performance between young and adult participants and learners with different English proficiency in terms of their use of communication strategies. The second

recommendation relates to the communicative task based activity within the computer mediated environment. This could allow future researchers to explore the communication strategy usage between learners from different locations or even nations. Scope for further research therefore exists in order to explore these issues.

REFERENCES

[1] Bachman, L. (1990). Fundamental considerations in language testing. New York: Oxford University Press.
[2] Bachman, L., & Palmer, A. (1996). Language testing in practice: designing and developing useful language tests. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[3] Bachman, L. (2002). Some reflections on task-based language performance assessment. *Language testing*, 19 (4), p.453-476.
[4] Bialystok, E. (1990). Communication strategies: A psychological analysis of second language use. Oxford: Blackwell.
[5] Brown, H. D. (2000). Principles of language learning and teaching (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
[6] Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical based of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47.
[7] Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to language pedagogy. In J. Richards, & R. Schmidt (eds.), *Language and communication*, (pp.2-27). London: Longman.
[8] Chalhoub-Deville, M. (2003). Second language interaction: current perspectives and future trends. *Language testing*, 20(4), 369-383.
[9] Chalhoub-Deville, M. B., & Deville, C. (2005). A look back at and forward to what language testers measure. In E. Hinkel (ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 815-832). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
[10] Chang, B. L. (2001). The belief of the junior high school teacher towards the communicative teaching approach. *Educational Journal*, 84, 37-48.
[11] Chang, S. & Huang Y. K. (2001). Communicative language teaching: senior high school teachers' beliefs and practices. Paper presented at the tenth international symposium on English teaching (pp. 219-217). Taipei: Crane.
[12] Chen, S. Q. (1990). A study of communication strategies in interlanguage production by Chinese EFL learners. *Language learning*, 40(2), 155-187.
[13] Chomsky, N. (1965). Aspects of the theory of syntax. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
[14] Chomsky, N. (1980). Rules and representations. Oxford: Blackwell.
[15] Council of Europe (1996). Common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment. http://www.coe.int (accessed October 15, 2005).
[16] Dörnyei, Z. (1995). On the teachability of communication strategies. *TESOL quarterly*, 29 (1), 55-85.
[17] Ellis, R. (1994). The study of second language acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[18] Ellis, R. (1999). Theoretic Perspectives on Interaction and Language Learning. In R. Ellis (*ed.*), Learning a second language through interaction (pp.3-32). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
[19] Færch, C. & Kasper, G. (eds.) (1983). Strategies in interlanguage communication. London: Longman.
[20] Fulcher, G. & Davidson, F. (2007). Language testing and assessment: an advanced resource book. London: Routledge.
[21] GEPT (2006). The Interpretation of Test Scores. http://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/96/geptintermediate96.htm (accessed February 15, 2006).
[22] Hymes, D. (1967). Models of the interaction of language and social setting. In J. Macnamara (ed.), Problem of bilingualism. *Journal of social issue*, 23, 8-28.
[23] Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. England: Penguin Books.
[24] Jacoby, S. & Ochs, E. (1995). Co-construction: an introduction. *Research on language and social interaction*, 28, 171-183.
[25] Kellerman, E., Bongaerts, T., & Poulisse, N. (1987). Strategy and system in L2 referential communication. In R. Ellis (ed.), *Second language acquisition in context* (pp.100-112). N.J.: Prentice Hall International.
[26] Liao, P. S. (2004). English as a global language and its effects on Taiwan's English education. *Studies in English language and linguistics*, 29 (1), 107-121.
[27] Liao, P. S. (2006). English profession is better than survival skills of college students (in Chinese). http://ejee.ncu.edu.tw/articles.asp?period=28&flag=28 (accessed October 5, 2006).
[28] Littlemore, J. (2003). The communicative effectiveness of different types of communication strategy. *System*, 31, 331-347.
[29] Littlemore, J. & Low, G. (2006). Metaphoric competence, second language learning, and communicative language ability. *Applied linguistics*, 27 (2), 268-294.
[30] McNamara, T. (1996). Measuring second language performance. London and New York: Longman.
[31] Poulisse, N. (1990). The use of compensatory strategies by Dutch learners of English. Dordrecht: Foris.
[32] Poulisse, N. (1993). A theoretical account of lexical communication strategies. In R. Schreuder and B. Weltens (eds.), *The bilingual lexicon* (pp.157-89). Amsterdam: John Bejamins.
[33] Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communication competence: theory and classroom practice.* Reading MA: Addison-Wesley.
[34] Schachter, J. (1990). Communicative competence revisited. In B. Harley, P. Allen, J. Cummins, & M. Swain (eds.), *The development of second language proficiency* (pp. 39-49). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[35] Smith, B (2003). The use of communication strategies in computer-mediated communication. *System*, 31, 29-53.
[36] Swain, M. (2001). Examining dialogue: another approach to content specification and to validating inferences drawn from test scores. *Language testing*, 18, 275-302.
[37] Tarone, E. (1977). Conscious communication strategies in interlanguage. In H. Brown, C. Yorio & R. Crymes (eds), *On TESOL '77: teaching and learning English as a second language : Trends in Research and Practice* (pp.194-203). Washington, DC: TESOL.
[38] Widdowson, H. G. (1989). Knowledge of language and ability for use. *Applied linguistics*, 10 (2), 128-37.

[39] Young, R. F. (2000, March). Interactional competence: challenges for validity. Paper presented at the Language Testing Research Colloquium. Vancouver, Canada.

Ying-Chuan Wang holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics and TESOL from the University of Leicester in U.K. She is currently an Assistant Professor in Macau University of Science and Technology. Her major research interests include the theories and practice of interlanguage communication, communicative competence, communication in hotel and tourism industry, and computer-assisted language learning.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1028-1035, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1028-1035

Readability of Reading Comprehension Texts in Iranian Senior High schools Regarding Students' Background Knowledge and Interest

Elham Tabatabaei
Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

Mohammad S. Bagheri
Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

***Abstract*—This research study considered the readability indexes of reading passages in English textbooks taught at Iranian senior high schools. For measuring the readability indexes of the passages, 30 English passages were fed into the computer and Flesch readability indexes of the passages were estimated. This study also examined students' prior knowledge-interest levels to see to what extent students were interested or had background knowledge of the passages in their English textbooks.120 participants including 60 males and 60 females took part in the study and completed a Likert-type scale questionnaire. Other issues that were analyzed in the study were the association between students' interest level and their background knowledge level, and the relationship between students' interest- background knowledge levels with the readability indexes of the passages. The results of the study indicated that the readability indexes of the passages in high school English textbooks did not accord with Flesch readability standard. The results also showed that students mostly had an average and a low level of interest and background knowledge regarding reading passages in their English text books. The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between students' interest level and their background knowledge level. This study also showed an insignificant relationship between students' interest level and the readability indexes of the passages in books two, three and four while based on Flesch readability formula there was a significant relationship between these two variables in book one. The results of the last part of the study revealed an insignificant relationship between students' background knowledge level and the readability indexes of the passages.**

***Index Terms*—text readability, readability formula, Flesch readability formula, students' interest level, students' background knowledge level**

I. Introduction

As one of the most significant factors in teaching English as a second or foreign language, reading comprehension is an important element and the question of the readability of the texts has special importance.

Fulcher (1997) believes that text readability or level is thought of as getting an appropriate balance between supports and challenges. Supports are the features that make a text easy to read, and challenges are the potential difficulties for particular readers. Davids (2002) also defines readability as how easy or hard the text is for a group of readers of certain or at a great level.

According to Klare (1963), readability formulas can be defined as mathematical equations used for the determination or prediction of the level of reading competence necessary for the comprehension of a particular piece of writing in order to provide an index of probable difficulty for the reader.

While over 200 readability formulas have been presented to evaluate the readability indexes of the passages, the researcher tried to use the most popular and the most famous one.

Flesch Reading Ease Readability Formula which is installed in Microsoft Office Word can be supposed as the most popular one. This formula rates texts on a 100-point scale. The higher the score, the easier it is to understand the texts.

TABLE 1:
FLESH'S READING EASE SCORE (DUBAY, 2004)

Reading Score	Style Description	Estimated Reading Grade	Estimated Percent of U.S. Adults
0 to 30	Very difficult	College graduate	4.5%
30 to 40	Difficult	13th to 16th grade	33%
50 to 60	Fairly difficult	10th to 12th grade	54%
60 to 70	Standard	8th and 9th grade	83%
70 to 80	Fairly easy	7th grade	88%
80 to 90	Easy	6th grade	91%
90 to 100	Very easy	5th grade	93%

Readability formulas have been criticized for many reasons. Some researchers in this case believe that these formulas are measurements based on a text isolated from the context of its use and they also believe that readability formulas cannot reflect reader characteristics like background knowledge, interest, values, and purpose. So the researcher in this study first of all intended to apply the above mentioned readability formula to reading comprehension texts in Iranian senior high schools and then examined the extent to which students were interested in or had background knowledge of the passages in their English text books. The relationship between students' interest level and background knowledge level with the outcomes of applying readability formula was considered as well.

Strangman and Hall (2005) contended that background knowledge is a term for more specific knowledge dimensions such as metacognition, subject matter, strategy, personal, self- knowledge, and conceptual knowledge.

Not only must the reader have some familiarity with contents of a selection, he or she must also have interest assumed by the author (Adams and Bruce, 1982). Hidi (2006) defines interest as a unique motivational variable, as well as psychological state that occurs during interaction between persons and their object of interest. She believes that interest is characterized by increased attention, concentration and affect.

II. Review of Literature

Early work on readability formulas began between 1915 and 1920 in the search for objective methods to judge individual reading abilities, especially with the advent of standardized reading texts (Gillam & Newbold, 2010). Thorndike's *the teacher's work book* (1921) was the first milestone, his tabulations of the frequency of 10000 printed words in sample texts set the stage for the readability formulas (Carrel, 1988).Thorndike's book was followed by another landmark work by George Kingsleg Zipf in 1949.Zipf came up with *Human Behavior and the Principles of Least Effort*, in which he declared a mathematical relationship between the hard and easy words, called Zapf's curve (Scott, 2005).

Nowadays readability formulas can be applied to anything from textbooks to different printed materials. Some of these applications are as follows: (educational system: McCellan, 1971; Reed, 1988; newspapers: Fusaro &Conover, 1983; Meyer, 2004; radio programs: Goldstein, 1940; Lowrey; 2006).

Since readability is an issue more complex than observable features of sentences, the researcher in this study tried to discuss two reader-based variables (readers' background knowledge and interest) to see to what extent learners were interested or had background knowledge of the passages in their English textbooks. The next review shows literature on readers' background knowledge and interest as two elements effective on reading fluency.

Research studies in educational psychology have confirmed a strong relationship between background knowledge and interest on one hand and comprehending different texts on the other hand. Some of these studies are as follows: (Johnson, 1982; Entin&Klare, 1985; Jalilifar& Assi, 2008; Leloup, 1993; Eidswick, 2010).

The results of many interest-prior knowledge studies that have been done in L2 learning show the significance of considering these two variables on the part of the learners. So, the researcher in this study considered text-type through readability formulas and students' background knowledge and interest as three variables that make a piece of writing understandable for different groups of learners.

III. Statement of the Problem

The researcher as an English teacher in Iranian high schools has always been concerned about the objectives defined for teaching and learning texts in English textbooks. It seems that the students are not interested, engaged and motivated enough to study reading comprehension texts. They always complain about the difficulty level of the texts, vocabulary items, the length of the texts, and the comprehension questions mentioned at the end of the texts. This problem can overshadow the quality of teaching and learning.

Apart from the problems on the part of the students, due to the difficulty level of the texts and students' lack of background knowledge and interest, teachers sometimes do not follow standard teaching procedures and techniques. They translate the texts word by word to give their students a better understanding of the texts. It seems that the purpose beyond teaching and learning these texts relates to word understanding and not text comprehending.

IV. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to apply readability formula to measure the difficulty level of reading comprehension texts written in high school English textbooks. The second objective was to examine the extent, to which students are interested in or have background knowledge of reading passages in their English text books. The third objective was to consider the relationship between students' interest level and their background knowledge level. The fourth objective was to consider the relationship between students' interest and background knowledge levels with the difficulty level of reading passages in English text books.

The following research questions were to be answered through this study:

1-Do the current rank orders of reading comprehension texts in high school English textbooks accord with readability formulas?

2-To what extent are students interested in reading passages written in their English text books?

3-To what extent do students have background knowledge of reading passages in their English textbooks?

4-Is there any relationship between students' background knowledge level and students' interest level regarding reading passages in their English textbooks?

5-Is there any relationship between students' interest and background knowledge levels with the readability indexes of reading passages in English textbooks?

V. Method

A. Participants

This research study was done with a total of 120 students studying English in Erfan and Andishe high schools located in district three in Shiraz. Sixty of these participants were male and sixty were female. They were selected from among a group with an intermediate and advanced level of English. They were selected based on availability.

B. Materials and Instruments

Thirty reading passages of four English textbooks taught at the high schools of Iran were used as the materials to be evaluated using Flesch readability formula. The lists of the books are as follows:

1-Birjandy, P., Soheili, A., Noroozi, M., & Mahmoodi, Gh. (2006). *English Book 1*.Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company of Iran.

2-Birjandi et al., (2005).*English Book 2*.Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company of Iran.

3-Birjandi et al., (2007).*English Book 3*.Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company of Iran.

4-Birjandy, P., Ananisarab, M.R., & Samimi, D. (2007). *Learning to Read English for Pre-University Students*. Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company of Iran.

The 30 chosen passages have different characteristics in terms of subject matter and readability index. The topics of reading passages are factual, anecdotal, and sometimes funny.

For the purpose of testing students' background knowledge and interest level, a questionnaire was devised, translated, and distributed using Likert scale including 5 choices (low, fairly low, mid-level, fairly high, and high). Attempts were made to ensure that the items were understandable for the participants.

In providing the questionnaire, the researcher was inspired by an article entitled "How to Generate Interest So Reading Comprehension Improves", by Susan M. Ebbers (2011). In this article Ebbers used a questionnaire to determine which topics interest learners and how much they already know about the topics. Cronbach's alpha (0.70) was calculated for the reliability of the questionnaire.

C. Procedures

The following procedures were conducted to meet the objectives of the study:

First, after Microsoft Office Word finished the processes of checking some of the features of difficulty level, i.e., the number of syllables or words, the length of sentences, and the syntactic complexity of sentences, the readability level of 30 passages was calculated and the researcher considered the results one by one. The computer evaluation of the text-readability level was based on Flesch Reading Ease Readability formula.

Second, on the basis of students' background knowledge and interest levels, the questionnaire was translated and checked by some experts and was administered to the participants. It was conducted during a regular class period, with the help of researcher's colleges who were well acquainted with the general objectives of the research. The students were instructed to read each of the items in the questionnaire and circle the numbers which best indicated their choice in the questionnaire ranging from 1(low) to 5(high).

The data required for this study came from both the participants' views and the computer evaluation of text-readability.

D. Data Analysis Procedures

In this study a model of readability standard presented by Flesch, was used to measure the readability indexes of the passages**.** To carry out the statistical analyses, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16) was used.

For the first research question of the study examining if the readability indexes of reading passages in high school English textbooks were in accordance with readability formulas, Flesch readability formula was applied to different passages and the results were analyzed through descriptive statistics. Then the raw scores obtained by the application of readability formula were reported.

For the second and third questions of the research, investigating the degree to which students were interested in or had enough background knowledge of the passages in their English text books, the questionnaire was distributed. The data obtained with the questionnaire was coded and a descriptive analysis was run to obtain the percentages and the frequencies of students' interest and background knowledge levels.

For answering the fourth and fifth research questions estimating the relationship between students' background knowledge and interest levels, and the relationship between students' background knowledge and interest levels with the readability of reading passages, regression and correlation analyses were used to measure the association between these variables.

VI. Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows the readability scores and the current rank order of English passages in four English textbooks. The logical rank order of the passages which is based on Flesch readability scores has been mentioned as well.

TABLE 2.
READABILITY SCORES AND LOGICAL RANK ORDER OF READING PASSAGES IN FOUR ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS, USING FLESCH READING EASE READABILITY FORMULA

Passages in Book1	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Flesch Score	88.7	95.2	90	100	81.3	96	96.9	99.5	80.5
Logical Rank Order	7	5	6	1	8	4	3	2	9
Passages in Book2	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**		
Flesch Score	92.5	98.5	99.6	89.5	100	97.9	79.3		
Logical Rank Order	5	3	2	6	1	4	7		
Passages in Book3	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**			
Flesch Score	66.2	67.2	66.9	66.4	88	62.4			
Logical Rank Order	5	2	3	4	1	6			
Passages in Book4	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	
Flesch Score	70.5	62.5	75.3	69.1	51.1	68	51	58.9	
Logical Rank Order	2	5	1	3	7	4	8	6	

Comparing the results of applying Flesch readability formula and as Table 2 shows the passages in books 1, 2, 3, and 4 in English textbooks taught at Iranian high schools do not follow a standard readability procedure. This means that with regard to readability accounts, they have not been arranged in a logical order. Moreover, considering the number of the passages in each book, it seems natural that book one should have fewer passages than book two and book three should have more passages than book two. But as Table 2 shows the order is not logical. In order to have a comprehensible language, the passages should be revised to logical and standard orders. In this way the readers can cope much better with the content of the passages in their English text books and the passages will have standard readability indexes.

TABLE 3.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF STUDENTS' INTEREST LEVEL REGARDING ENGLISH PASSAGES IN BOOKS 1, 2, 3, AND 4

Passages in Book1	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**total**
Mean	**2.17**	**3.96**	**2.38**	**4.1**	**2.13**	**3.63**	**4.13**	**4.03**	**3.03**	**29.23**
Std.Deviation	**0.592**	**0.793**	**0.622**	**0.607**	**0.629**	**0.964**	**0.681**	**0.85**	**0.928**	**3.213**
Passages In Book2	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**			**total**
Mean	**3.43**	**2.79**	**3.55**	**3.4**	**3.27**	**3.43**	**2.13**			**21.8**
Std.Deviation	**1.455**	**1.373**	**1.213**	**1.303**	**1.639**	**0.935**	**0.507**			**5.176**
Passages in Book3	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**				**total**
Mean	**2.43**	**2.6**	**2.67**	**2.9**	**2.67**	**2.3**				**15.57**
Std.Deviation	**1.251**	**1.38**	**1.37**	**1.494**	**1.295**	**1.236**				**5.276**
Passages in Book4	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**		**total**
Mean	**3.37**	**2.53**	**3.37**	**3.03**	**3.13**	**3.1**	**2.83**	**3.67**		**25.03**
Std.Deviation	**1.129**	**1.196**	**1.098**	**0.999**	**0.973**	**1.062**	**1.085**	**0.802**		**3.828**

In order to have a better and more general classification for students' interest level, a statistical application was done. Based on Table 3 one standard deviation was subtracted from the mean of the passages in each book and one standard deviation was added to the mean of the passages in each book. Table 4 shows the result of this application.

TABLE 4.
GENERAL CLASSIFICATION FOR STUDENTS' INTEREST LEVEL REGARDING READING PASSAGES IN FOUR ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS TAUGHT AT IRANIAN SENIOR HIGHSCHOOLS

Level of Interest,Book1	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	0	0	0
Average	12	40	40
High	18	60	100
total	30	100	-
Level of Interest,Book2	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	6	20	20
Average	22	73.3	93.3
High	2	6.7	100
total	30	100	-
Level of Interest,Book3	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	17	56.7	56.7
Average	13	43.3	100
High	0	0	100
total	30	100	-
Level of Interest,Book4	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	0	0	0
Average	27	90	90
High	3	10	100
total	30	100	-

Based on Tables 3 and 4 it can be concluded that the students have an average or a low level of interest regarding reading passages in books 2, 3, and 4.The only level of high interest belongs to the passages in book 1.This outcome reminds the authors of these books to evaluate English texts more systematically and scientifically.

TABLE 5.
GENERAL CLASSIFICATION FOR STUDENTS' BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE LEVEL REGARDING READING PASSAGES IN FOUR ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS TAUGHT AT IRANIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Passages in Book1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total
Mean	1.93	2.71	2	2.8	2.1	2.73	3.23	3.33	2.6	23.2
Std.Deviation	0.785	0.976	0.535	0.761	0.662	0.828	1.006	0.844	0.814	3.527
Passages In Book2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			total
Mean	2.63	3.1	2.21	2.73	2.6	2.93	2.13			18.1
Std.Deviation	1.273	1.205	1.371	1.363	1.404	1.015	0.681			5.839
Passages in Book3	1	2	3	4	5	6				total
Mean	2.1	1.76	1.7	2.1	2.33	2.1				12.03
Std.Deviation	1.269	1.023	0.877	1.242	1.184	1.062				3.764
Passages in Book4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		total
Mean	2.97	2.17	3.4	3.43	3.1	2.6	2.57	3.2		23.433
Std.Deviation	1.299	0.791	1.07	1.165	1.185	1.163	0.935	0.997		4.264

In order to have a better and more general classification for students' background knowledge level, a statistical application was done. Based on Table 5 one standard deviation was subtracted from the mean of the passages in each book and one standard deviation was added to the mean of the passages in each book. The result of this application is Table 6.

TABLE 6.
GENERAL CLASSIFICATION FOR STUDENTS' BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE LEVEL REGARDING ENGLISH PASSAGES IN BOOKS 1, 2, 3, AND 4

Level of Background Knowledge,Book1	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	0	0	0
Average	22	73.3	73.3
High	8	26.7	100
total	30	100	-
Level of Background Knowledge,Book2	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	8	26.7	26.7
Average	19	63.3	90
High	3	10	100
total	30	100	-
Level of Background Knowledge,Book3	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	16	53.3	53.3
Average	14	46.7	100
High	0	0	100
total	30	100	-
Level of Background Knowledge,Book4	frequency	percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	0	0	0
Average	21	70	70
High	9	30	100
total	30	100	-

Based on Tables 5 and 6 it can be concluded that the students have an average or a low level of background knowledge regarding reading passages in books 1, 2, 3, and 4. This again reminds the authors of these books to consider students' background knowledge level before inserting these passages in English textbooks.

TABLE 7
TOTAL CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSES BETWEEN STUDENTS' BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE LEVEL AND THEIR INTEREST LEVEL REGARDING READING PASSAGES IN FOUR ENGLISH BOOKS TAUGHT AT IRANIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
0.753	0.567	0.753	0.784	0.753	12.42	154.2	0.000
Dependent Variable = Students' level of interest							
Independent Variable =Students' level of background knowledge							

Based on Table 7 there is a positive and a significant relationship between students' interest level and their background knowledge level.

TABLE 8.
CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSES OF READABILITY INDEXES OF THE PASSAGES IN BOOKS 1, 2, 3, 4 AND STUDENTS' INTEREST LEVEL BASED ON FLESCH READABILITY FORMULA

Book1	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/78	0/61	0/78	0/08	0/78	3/32	11/04	0/013
Book2	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/67	0/45	0/67	0/043	0/67	2/02	4/07	0/1
Book3	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/3	0/09	0/3	0/007	0/3	0/63	0/39	0/57
Book4	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/25	0/06	0/25	0/01	0/25	0/65	0/42	0/52

TABLE 9.
CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSES OF READABILITY INDEXES OF THE PASSAGES IN BOOKS 1, 2, 3, 4 AND STUDENTS' BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE LEVEL BASED ON FLESCH READABILITY FORMULA

Book1	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/63	0/4	0/63	0/04	0/63	2/14	4/56	0/07
Book2	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/46	0/21	0/46	0/02	0/46	1/15	1/31	0/3
Book3	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/55	0/31	0/55	0/01	0/55	1/33	1/76	0/26
Book4	Pearson Correlation	R^2	R	B	Beta	T	F	Sig
Flesch	0/32	0/1	0/32	0/02	0/32	0/83	0/69	0/46

Considering the relationship between students' interest level and the readability indexes of the passages, the scores and the levels of significance show different results. Based on Table 8 and the scores obtained from Flesch readability formula there is a meaningful relationship between students' interest level and the readability indexes of the passages in

book one. P<0.013 means that whenever there is an increase in students' interest level, there is a decrease in difficulty level of reading passages. The relationship between these two variables is insignificant regarding reading passages in books two, three, and four.

Analyzing the results of the relationship between students' background knowledge level and the readability indexes of the passages in four English textbooks, the levels of significance in Table 9 demonstrate that there is no meaningful and significant relationship between these two variables. The outcomes of this part of the study are based on the application of Flesch readability formula.

VII. Conclusions

The evidence presented in this study led to the following conclusions:

1-From the first phase of the study, determining the readability indexes of reading passages, the conclusion may be reached that the arrangement of the passages was not standard and should be changed. A look at all readability scores showed that most of the passages in book one were more difficult than those in book two and some of the passages in book three were more difficult than those in book four. So, it can be concluded that most passages in books one, two, three, and four would not be appropriate for those reading at that specific age and educational level.

2-The students who took part in the second phase of the study, addressing students' interest and background knowledge levels, mostly showed an average and a low level of interest and background knowledge.

The passages, which earned the highest interest level, were:

book one passage eight, ***Eat Clothes Eat***, passage seven, ***High Ways in the Sky***, passage two, ***The Funny Farmhand***, and passage four, ***The School Bus***, book two passage five, ***The Little Old* Man Who Couldn't Read**, and passage one, ***Washoe and the Puzzles***, book three passage four, **The Olympic Games,** passage three, ***Memory***, and passage two, ***The Value of Education***, and book four passage eight ***Great Men and Women,*** passage one, ***Why Exercise is Important***, passage three, ***Global Warming, Global Concern,*** and passage four ***Earthquakes and How to Survive Them***.

The passages, which earned the highest background knowledge rating, were:

book one passage eight, ***Eat Clothes Eat***, and passage seven, ***High Ways in the* Sky,** book two passage five, ***The Little Old* Man Who Couldn't Read**, passage one, ***Washoe and the Puzzles***, passage two, ***The Other Side of the Moon***, and passage four ***Charles Dickens and the Little Children***, book three passage one, ***TV. Or no TV***., and passage four, **The Olympic Games,** and book four passage one, ***Why Exercise Is Important***, passage three, ***Global Warming, Global Concern*** , passage four, ***Earthquakes and How to Survive them***, and passage eight, ***Great Men and Women.***

3-Cosidering the relationship between students' background knowledge level and students' interest level, it was concluded that there was a significant correlation between these two variables. In other words, most passages which were interesting for the students were also those with the highest prior knowledge order.

4-Examinig the association between students' interest and background knowledge levels with the readability indexes of the reading passages, the conclusion reached at this point was that there was no correlation between students' background knowledge level and the difficulty level of reading passages.

Based on Flesch readability formula there was a positive relationship between students' interest level and the difficulty level of reading passages in book one. This showed that whenever there was an increase in the difficulty level of reading passages (the text becomes easier), there was an increase in students' interest level as well. This relationship was not meaningful regarding reading passages in books two, three, and four.

References

[1] Adams, M. L., & Bruce, B. (1982). Background knowledge and reading comprehension. In J. A. Language & T. M. Smith Burk (Eds.), *Reader meets author: Bridging the gap* (pp.2-25). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
[2] References and further reading may be available for this article. To view references and further reading you must purchase this article.
[3] Carrel, P. L. (1988). Some causes of text-boundless and schema interferences in ESL reading. In P. J. Carrel & D. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading*, (pp. 101-113). Cambridge: CUP.
[4] Davids, V. (2002). Determining text difficulty. Basehor-Linwood, *Virtual School*, 27, 1-3.
[5] DuBay, W. H. (2004). The principles of readability. Retrieved February 12, 2008, from: http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/readab/readab.pdf.
[6] Eidswick, J. (2010). Interest and prior Knowledge in second language reading comprehension. *JALT Journal*, 32 (2), 149-162.
[7] Entin, E. B., & Klare, G. R. (1985). Relationship of measures, interest, prior knowledge, and readability comprehension of expository passages. *Advances in Reading Language Research*, 3, 9-38.
[8] Fulcher, G. (1997). Text difficulty and accessibility: Reading formulae and expert judgment. English Language Institute, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK, *GU2 5XH*, 25(4), 497-513.
[9] Fusaro, J. A., & Conover, W. M. (1983). Readability of two tabloid and two nontabloid papers. *Journalism Quarterly*, 50, 360-363.
[10] Gillam, L., & Newbold, N. (2010). The linguistics of readability: The next step for word processing. Paper presented at a workshop on Computational Linguistics and Writing, Los Angles, California.
[11] Goldstein, H. (1940). Reading and listening comprehension at various controlled rates. Teacher's College, Columbia University.
[12] Hidi, S. (2006). Interest: A unique motivational variable. *Educational Research Review*, 1(2), 69-82.

[13] Jalilifar, A. R., & Assi, R. (2008). The role of cultural nativization in comprehension of short stories in EFL reading contexts. *The International Journal of Language Society and Cultural Issue*, 26, 62-79.
[14] Johnson, P. (1982). Effects on reading comprehension of building background knowledge, *TESOL Quarterly*, 16(4), 503-516.
[15] Klare, G. R. (1963). The measurement of readability. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.
[16] Lawrey, T. M. (2006). The relationship between script complexity and commercial memorability. *Journal of Advertising*, 35(3), 7-15.
[17] Leloup, J. W. (1993). The effect of interest level in selected text topics on second language reading comprehension. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus. MA: Addison-Wesley.
[18] McCellan, D. A. (1971). A comparison of reading ability of junior college students with the readability levels of the assigned texts. *Twentieth Yearbook of National Reading Conference*. Milwakee, Wisc : national reading conference, Inc.
[19] Meyer, P. (2004). The vanishing newspaper: Saving journalism in the information age. Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press.
[20] Reed, K. X. (1988). An analysis of reading levels of students and readability levels of textbooks at second junior college in the state of Alabama. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Auburn, Auburn.
[21] Scott, B. (2005). How do I decide which readability formula or formulas to use on my documents? *Canadian Change*, 63(7), 22-32.
[22] Strangman, N., & Hall, T. (2005). Background knowledge. Retrieved March 20, 2005, from: http:// www. cast. org/ publication/ nac/- background. Htm 1# top.
[23] Thorndike, E. L. (1921). The teacher's workbook. New York, NY: Teacher's College, Columbia University.
[24] Zipf, G. K. (1949). Human behavior and the principle of least effort: An introduction to human ecology. New York: Addison-Wesley.

Elham Tabatabaei was born in Shiraz, Iran. She has M.A.in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) received in 2012 from Islamic Azad Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.

As a teacher she has been teaching for more than ten years teaching English at senior high schools in Shiraz, Iran. Her research interests are teaching and translation.

Ms. Tabatabaei is currently an English teacher teaching at senior high schools in Shiraz, Iran.

Mohammad S. Bagheri was born in Shiraz, Iran in1964.He holds a PhD in TEFL obtained in 2006 from Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.

He has many years of experience teaching English, training teachers, supervising classes and publishing books & articles. Currently he is Humanities College Dean at I.A.U. Shiraz, Iran. His research interests are international exams, e-learning, ICT and learning strategies.

Dr. Bagheri is a member of TESOL Arabia and some other professional associations and is currently a member of Research Board at I.A.U.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1036-1043, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1036-1043

An Empirical Study on Multimedia-based Social Constructivist Model in English Vocabulary Acquisition

Xiaohong Du
Foreign Languages School of Zhengzhou University, Zhengzhou, 450001, China

***Abstract*—Basing on the aid of multimedia, this paper aims at investigating the development of students' controlled and free productive vocabulary through the application of the social constructivist model to a classroom vocabulary empirical study, so as to find out the relationship between FL learners' vocabulary acquisition and their application of social constructive model with the help of multimedia. On the basis of the results from this study, we attempt to put forward a new vocabulary acquisition model which combines the acquisition with production: combination of input and output, which will help FL learners narrow down the gap between their negative vocabulary and positive vocabulary under non-native environment.**

***Index Terms*—multimedia, social constructivist model, free-productive vocabulary, controlled-productive vocabulary**

I. Introduction

As we know, vocabulary acquisition is an indispensable part in the process of language acquisition, especially in English as a second or foreign language. During the last two decades, though there has been a growing interest in vocabulary acquisition among second language teachers and researchers, and the research stockpile has expanded in scope and complexity at a remarkable rate in and abroad. However, the studies by far, including both breadth and depth of vocabulary study, mainly concern how to help learners grasp the basic receptive (passive) knowledge, i.e. understanding the most frequent and core meaning of a word, while neglect FL learners' vocabulary competence improvement. That is the key reason why most FL learners who have relatively large vocabulary still could not produce words freely in their speaking and writing. The introduction and widely use of Internet and multimedia in English vocabulary acquisition will, to a certain degree, contribute to help students narrow the gap between their negative and positive vocabulary.

How to help learners apply their acquired vocabulary knowledge into their vocabulary competence is becoming more and more important in the field of vocabulary study. This paper aims at investigating the development of students' controlled and free productive vocabulary through the application of the social constructivist model to a classroom vocabulary empirical study with the help of computer and multimedia, so as to construct a new vocabulary acquisition model which combines the vocabulary acquisition with output or production. That is, ask students to output the newly-learned words in multimedia-based social interactive situations created by themselves with the help of teachers.

This paper includes quantitative and qualitative research. To the results of vocabulary tests and the questionnaire, SPSS was adopted to analyze the research findings. Inductive method was also used to analyze the data. The findings demonstrate the positive relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge acquisition (the controlled-productive and free-productive vocabulary) and their application of multimedia-based social constructivist model. The results of this study, in a way, will help FL learners shorten the gap between their receptive and productive vocabulary.

II. Multimedia-based Social Constructivist Model

Social constructivist model is put forward by Marion Williams and Robert L. Burden in 1997, which mainly based on different approaches of educational psychology such as, humanism, social interactionism and constructivism. In this model, there are four key sets of factors which influence the learning process--- teachers, learners, tasks and contexts, and none of these factors exists in isolation. They all interact as part of a dynamic, ongoing process. The social constructivist model puts the emphasis on the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners and tasks. Since learning never takes place in isolation, the social constructivist model focuses the importance on learning environment or context within which the learning takes place. From a social constructivist view, learning is the process of constructing knowledge in social environments, not merely obtaining it, but applying it within a social interactionist framework. With the advent and popularity of Internet and multimedia, more and more teachers have adopted the new technology to provide students with real or native-like language environments and vivid contexts. Introducing the internet and multimedia into English teaching is an inexorable trend in FL teaching and research. Multimedia-based teaching can help FL learners digest the abstract words through pictures and other animation or cartoons (Du Xiaohong,

2009, 2011). Besides, multimedia-based teaching can provide learners with sounds, pictures, electronic texts, cartoons and native-like contexts, which can not only stimulate learners' interest, but also can help them understand some abstract words easily. The effective use of internet and multimedia, on the one hand, can help teachers convey class information quickly and make the content of courses more substantial, on the other hand, can help learners use vivid and authentic language to communicate meaningfully. And students will be more active in learning under such class environment. Research suggests that learners produce longer sentences and negotiate meaning more often in pair and group work than in teacher-fronted instruction (Doughty & Pica, 1986). Under multimedia-based teaching environment, teachers can provide learners with opportunities to share ideas about the newly-learned words in real or real-like situations, which is very beneficial to activate their latent word stores and apply their newly-learned words into practice. In this paper, we'll apply Social constructivist model into our class vocabulary teaching with the help of internet and multimedia. It will, in a way, prompt the effect of adopting social constructivist model in classroom vocabulary teaching.

III. Research Design

A. Subjects

The subjects in this study were 74 freshmen in two classes selected from Zhengzhou University, majoring in International Trade. Group one (the controlled group) consists of 37 students from Class One, among them, 21 are female and 16 are male. Group Two (the experimental group) includes 37students from Class Two, among them, 19 are female and 18 male. The age ranged from 17 to 21. Approximately two-thirds of the subjects are from Henan province; the rest are mainly from different areas of China. All students were enrolled according to their scores in China Entrance Exam in 2011.

B. Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument used in this study is mainly quantitative study, including a questionnaire and two vocabulary tests. The qualitative method is also used in analyzing the data from the interview.

1. Vocabulary Test

The subjects in this study were arranged to attend two tests: a pre-test and a post-test.

The vocabulary pre-test used in this study was designed according to Laufer's (1998) distinction about English words (passive words, controlled active words and free active words) and the core vocabulary according to College English Syllabus. The twenty-five words in the pre-test are selected randomly from all the core vocabulary from the first two lessons in Book Two, New Horizon College English. Because free active words are difficult to control, the pre-test paper only includes: passive words and controlled-productive words.

The purpose of this pre-test was to determine whether the subjects in the two groups were qualified for this study.

The second vocabulary test, for examining the controlled-productive and free-productive vocabulary, was designed according to Laufer and Nation's (1999) test to controlled productive vocabulary. Forty positive words were chosen randomly from the core vocabulary taken from Unit 3 to Unit 5 according to the College English Teaching syllabus and the core vocabulary in Band-4 and Band-6 examination.

2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire in this study was carried out in the following week after finishing all the teaching experiment. The subjects were the thirty-seven students in the experimental class. The purpose is to find out the students' attitudes towards the new vocabulary learning model under the environment of internet and multimedia, so as to improve it and make it more feasible in the future teaching practice. The questionnaire in this study was designed according to Liu Runqing (1999). All the statements are presented in Appendix 3, and the key to understand the average mark is presented in the last part of Appendix 3. Each of the statement has five choices ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' (5/4/3/2/1) in the form of Likert 5 point scale. Students were required to mark a number in each item. In order to avoid misunderstanding, the questionnaire was handed out in Chinese version.

C. Procedures for Data Collection

In this study, there were two variables: vocabulary learning method and vocabulary test scores. Therefore, data collection in this study mainly prepared from these two aspects. The steps of collecting data in this study mainly undertaken like this:

Step 1: A pre-test

After the pre-experimental teaching (the core vocabulary in the first two lessons were taught to all the subjects by adopting the traditional vocabulary teaching method), asking them to complete the pre-test paper, so as to find out whether the two groups were qualified for this study.

Step 2: A nearly fifty-day teaching experiment.

Asking the students in Class 1 (the controlled group: group 1) and Class 2 (the experimental group: group 2) to deal with the positive words from lesson 3 to lesson 6 in different ways. Choosing twenty active words according to the teaching syllabus and Band-4 and Band-6 examination in each lesson and asking the two groups to prepare for the words before each class. In class, group 1 adopted the traditional vocabulary learning way (i.e., teacher as the source of

word knowledge, explaining, repeating and asking students to take notes about each required positive word). Group 2 adopted a new vocabulary learning method which was guided by the social constructivist model with the aid of internet and multimedia. That is, according to the values and beliefs of social constructivist model, instead of imparting word knowledge to students from beginning to the end in the class time, with the help of computer and multimedia, asking students to watch film clips about the topics of each lesson and encouraging them to note down the words they are unfamiliar with, then organizing them to create real-life situations to construct the word knowledge by themselves. Specifically speaking, first dividing students into some groups: in each group there is a group leader who is responsible for the organization of the group discussion and a secretary who is responsible for taking notes. During the group discussion, the students are allowed to use internet to consult reference materials, or present their associations and findings of the target word; they are even allowed to produce ill-structured sentence and some Chinese in discussion. The atmosphere is relaxed and lively, and the students are very free and active in activating the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations of the target words. Of course, the teacher and learners also interact with each other. The teacher walks around the classroom and tries to encourage learners to output the newly-learned words as they input them. In short, learners construct their vocabulary knowledge in real-world contexts, and the four elements: teacher, task, learner and the context are in this way a dynamic equilibrium.

IV. Results and Analysis

A. Results from the Pre-test

The following two tables show the results from the statistics of the controlled group (group 1) and experimental group (group 2) in the pre-test.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PRE-TEST

	group	Number	Mean	SD
score	1	37	17.68	3.793
	2	37	16.97	4.463

From table 1, we can find that the mean of group 1 (17.68) is a little higher than that of group 2 (16.97). And the standard deviation in table 1 indicates that the deviation of group 2 is a bit more deviant away from the central point in the distribution than that of group 1. However, we can not find whether there exists significant difference between the two groups just from Table 1.

TABLE 2
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST OF PRE-TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Sig.(2-tailed)	lower	upper
score	Equal variances assumed	1.515	.222	.748	.457	-1.183	2.064
	Equal variances not assumed			.748	.457	-1.183	2.604

Table two indicates that there is no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test, for the 2-tailed significance is 0.457 (P>.05), it is obvious that the value doesn't fall between 0 and 0.05. Therefore, there is no obvious significant difference on vocabulary level between the two groups before the teaching experiment, and the two groups are qualified for this experimental study.

B. Results from the Post-test

1. About Free-productive Vocabulary.

TABLE 3
A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FREE-PRODUCTIVE VOCABULARY IN THE POST-TEST

	group	Number	Mean	SD
score	1	37	71.08	10.734
	2	37	78.14	9.670

This table shows that after the teaching experiment, the students in the experimental group got higher average score (mean=78.14) than those of the controlled group (mean=71.08). The standard deviations of the two groups (group 1: 10.734; group 2: 9.670) prove that the students' average score in the controlled group spread a bit wider from the central point in the distribution than those of the experimental group.

TABLE 4
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST FOR FREE-PRODUCTIVE VOCABULARY

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Sig. 2-tailed	lower	upper
score	Equal variances assumed	.993	.322	-2.951	.004	-11.817	-2.287
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.946	.004	-11.825	-2.278

Through the Independent-Sample T-test, the above table shows that the 2-tailed significance is 0.004 ($p<0.05$), it is obvious that there is a significant difference in producing the free-productive words between the two groups. 95% confidence interval of the difference indicates that the significant difference in producing the free-productive vocabulary is at the 0.05 level.

2. About Controlled-productive Words

TABLE 5
A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONTROLLED-PRODUCTIVE VOCABULARY IN THE POST-TEST

	group	Number	Mean	SD
score	1	37	14.13	4.205
	2	37	14.68	3.575

The mean in the experimental group (group 2) is a little higher than that of the controlled group (group 1), and the standard deviation shows that the scores in group 1 spread more widely than those for group 2.

TABLE 6
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST OF CONTROLLED-PRODUCTIVE VOCABULARY IN THE POST-TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Sig. 2-tailed	lower	upper
score	Equal variances assumed	.808	.372	-.603	.548	-2.234	1.254
	Equal variances not assumed			-.604	.548	-2.239	1.251

Table 6 indicates that there is no significant difference on the scores of the controlled-productive words between the two groups after the teaching experiment, for the probability of 2-tailed t-test is 0.548 ($p >.05$).

On the basis of the analyses of these four tables, we can easily find that there is positive correlation between students' vocabulary test scores and their application of the social constructivist model under internet and multimedia environment, especially in their production of the free-productive words. While to the controlled-productive words, the differences between the two groups were not so obvious.

C. Results from the Questionnaire

TABLE 7
A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ABOUT STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NEW VOCABULARY LEARNING MODEL

Overall average	Attitude	Number	Frequency (%)
4.5-5.0	strongly agree	2	5.41
3.5-4.4	agree	19	51.35
2.5-3.4	Comparatively agree	12	32.43
1.5-2.4	disagree	4	10.81
1.0-1.4	strongly disagree	0	0

The above table indicates that there are more than eighty percent of the total students agree or comparatively agree with the new vocabulary learning model guided by social constructivist model under internet and multimedia environment. However, two students show strongly agreement to this vocabulary learning model, this also indicates that this model still needs great improvement.

V. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

On the basis of the above mentioned comparative analysis between the experimental group and the controlled group, we can find that the social constructivist model supported by internet and multimedia does have certain influence on students' vocabulary learning, especially on their free-productive vocabulary acquisition. Though there is no clear significant difference between the two groups about their controlled-productive vocabulary, the mean between them can, more or less, demonstrate the effect of social constructivist model in helping learners improve their vocabulary

competence.

In order to improve and make the new vocabulary learning model more feasible in the future vocabulary teaching and learning, a questionnaire about learners' attitudes towards the new vocabulary learning model under internet and multimedia environment was followed after the teaching experiment. The results were comparatively satisfactory and very beneficial to the improvement of our new vocabulary learning model. Social constructivist model emphasizes the dynamic nature of the interplay among teachers, learners, tasks and contexts in students' vocabulary learning. It is important to note that only with the help of modern technology, that is the computer and multimedia, can the four factors (learners, tasks, teachers and contexts) interact in an effective dynamic state and learners construct their vocabulary knowledge actively and effectively.

The correlation between the vocabulary test scores and the application of social constructivist model under internet and multimedia environment shows the function of this model in vocabulary acquisition, especially in the free-productive vocabulary acquisition. The results of this study, in a sense, help the learners shorten the gap between their receptive and productive vocabulary.

According to the results of this study, we attempt to put forward a new vocabulary acquisition model which combines the acquisition with production: combination of input and output. That is, under the environment of internet and multimedia, asking students to output the newly-learned words in social interactive situations which created by themselves as they input the new words. Of course, this is just an attempt. It requires teachers to have a good command of the background information about educational psychology, for the way that teachers behave in the classroom reflects their values and beliefs towards vocabulary acquisition. And vocabulary acquisition itself is very complicated to deal with.

In addition, though comparatively satisfactory results were obtained from this study, the subjects in this study are freshmen of non-English majors. This may affect the generalization of the result. It is sure that this study is not an end but a start point for further research in a wider field. The future studies about the application and effects of this model on vocabulary acquisition to sophomores, juniors, seniors, and English majors are called for and welcomed.

APPENDIX 1

Pre-test

1. Filling in the blanks with the help of the given letters.

1) A student with ave_____ intelligence is a student neither very bright nor very dull.
2) You should con_____ your attention on the study.
3) He dou_____ his English vocabulary in one year.
4) In s_____ of the bad weather, she is still working.
5) The dictionary is very hel_____ to me.
6) She holds a very good att_____ towards her work.
7) Though she is nearly 64, Julia doesn't want to re_____.
8) At the age of nearly sixty-five, Chichester began the greatest voy_____ of his life.
9) The boy con_____ his fear of the dark and walked alone in the woods at night.
10) The earthquake did serious dam_____ to the small town.
11) Would you please f_____ in your name, address and telephone number here?
12) Food that looks good doesn't nec_____ taste good.
13) Oliver's father tried to dis_____ him from marrying Jenny.
14) Have you dec_____ on a date for your departure?
15) I always con_____ you with your sister because you look so alike.

2. There are ten incomplete sentences in this part. For each sentence there are four choices marked A, B, C and D. Choose the one that best completes the sentence.

1) I've read the book and I've seen the film_____.
A. as usual B. as well C. either D. too
2) He _____his notes several times before the final exam.
A. went in for B. went into C. went out D. went over
3) Have you _____some money for possible emergency?
A. set down B. set out C. set out D. set aside
4) The earthquake _____ serious damages.
A. leads to B. results from C. lies in D. leads on
5) This is the _____pen he used when he was writing the book.
A. very B. exact C. well D. that
6) At sixty-five, Francis Chichester decided to sail _____ round the earth.
A. sole B. lonely C. singularly D. single-handed
7) During the accident, the ship _____ and people lost their lives in the sea.
A. turned over B. turned off C. turned down D. turned up
8) David argued with his father for hours, but he had to _____ in the end.

A. give out B. give in C. give up D. give away
9) He _____ to sail round the world all by the age 65.
A. set up B. set out C. set on D. set off
10) Whenever I look at the picture, I _____ it.
A. can't help admire B. can't help but admire C. can't help admiring D. would admire

APPENDIX 2

Post-test Paper
Part One: (**About Controlled-productive words)**
Filling in the blanks with the help of the given letters
1. Tom bought her a bun_____ of flowers as a birthday gift.
2. Please tell the secretary to arr_____ a meeting for the announcement of new personnel.
3. She is a very eff_____ secretary; she never forgets anything or makes a mistake.
4. The old man st_____ to pick up the wallet.
5. The pri_____ cause of his failure is his laziness.
6. With telephone, we can com_____ with people anywhere all over world.
7. Her anx_____ to succeed pushed her to work harder.
8. Wish you a m_____ Christmas and a happy new year.
9. He is too young to know right from w_____.
10. I am so ama_____ by the news that he won the game.
11. History is the most bor_____ lesson for us.
12. The government is making great effort to dec_____ the unemployment.
13. Because his family was very poor, he had to drop out of the school only after the ele_____ education.
14. Laying a good fou_____ of the building is the most important step.
15. Aspirin usually can rel_____ a headache.
16. He has many good qua_____ ----diligence, modesty and simplicity.
17. I sam_____ the biscuit and found it very good.
18. He has got some money for the pur_____ of his favorite books.
19. His parents can't aff_____ the tuition for his study in college.
20. Henry is very strict with his son. He only lets him watch TV occ_____.

Part Two: (About Free-productive Words)
This is a kind of vocabulary test which is called VKS (Vocabulary Knowledge Scale). Please choose the right number according to your knowledge to the words and finish the exercises according to the directions.
Self-report categories:
1) I don't remember having seen this word before.
2) I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
3) I have seen this word before, and I think it means_____. (synonym or translation)
4) I know this word. It means _____. (synonym or translation)
5) I can use this word in a sentence: _____. (Write a sentence.) (If you do this section, please also do Section4.)
1. endure ( ) _____
2. reluctantly ( ) _____
3. operate ( ) _____
4. rare ( ) _____
5. divorce ( ) _____
6. involve ( ) _____
7. worthwhile ( ) _____
8. prohibit ( ) _____
9. in part ( ) _____
10. indignant ( ) _____
11. grown-up ( ) _____
12. weep ( ) _____
13. promote ( ) _____
14. flow ( ) _____
15. productive ( ) _____
16. inspect ( ) _____
17. select ( ) _____
18. to one's taste ( ) _____
19. long for ( ) _____
20. delicious ( ) _____

APPENDIX 3

Questionnaire

(This is a questionnaire about students' attitudes and feelings towards the multimedia-based social constructivist model during their nearly fifty days vocabulary study. In order to avoid misunderstanding, the handouts were delivered in Chinese version.)

Please read the following statements carefully, and answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other students do. There is no right or wrong answers to these statements. Write your answers in the bracket after each statement.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Comparatively agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

1) I think the new vocabulary learning model fits me well.( )

2) I think the new vocabulary learning model that 'output as we input' is helpful to our oral expression improvement. ( )

3) I think learning vocabulary in an interactive classroom situation can relieve my anxiety. ( )

4) I prefer the new vocabulary learning method to the traditional teacher-centered one. ( )

5) I think it is light and relaxed to learn English words in interactive situations. ( )

6) I think the words constructed by myself are not easily Forgotten. ( )

7) I think the vocabulary that acquired through interaction can be easily transferred to our long-term memory. ( )

8) I think the words acquired in the interactive classroom environments can easily become our active vocabulary. ( )

9) I think the new vocabulary learning model can help us to associate what we've learned in the past, so as to improve our memory retention. ( )

10) I think the new vocabulary learning model can help us to associate the synonyms, antonyms and collocations of the new words. ( )

11) The new vocabulary learning model builds up my confidence in learning foreign vocabulary. ( )

12) The new vocabulary learning model enhances my enthusiasm in vocabulary learning. ( )

13) The new vocabulary learning model makes me more aware of the purpose of vocabulary learning. ( )

14) The new vocabulary learning model helps me adopt a better attitude towards my role in class. ( )

15) The new vocabulary learning model helps me overcome the fears of being questioned by teachers in class. ( )

16) The interactive classroom atmosphere can favorably shorten the gap between us and teachers. ( )

17) The interactive classroom atmosphere can help us understand better and study more effectively. ( )

Key to Understanding your average mark

Strongly agree----------5

Agree----------4

Comparatively agree----------3

Disagree----------2

Strongly disagree----------1

Please sum up your responses (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) to each statement and then get the overall average. Write down the average points on the top of this questionnaire.

REFERENCES

[1] Doughty, C. and T. Pica. (1986). 'Information gap' tasks: do they facilitate second language acquisition? *TESOL Quarterly* 20:305-325.

[2] Du Xiaohong. (2009). A Study on English Grammar Teaching Model to College Students Majoring in English Education, *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching* (5): 42-45.

[3] Du Xiaohong. (2011). On Dynamic Equilibrium between Implicit Grammatical Knowledge and Explicit Grammatical Competence. *Contemporary Foreign Language Studies* (7): 26-29.

[4] Laufer, B. (1998). The Development of Passive and Active Vocabulary in a Second Language: Same or different? *Applied Linguistics*, 19: 255-271.

[5] Laufer, B. & Nation, P. (1999). A vocabulary-size test of controlled productive ability'. *Language Testing*, 16, 1: 33-51.

[6] Liu Runqing. (1999). Research Methodology in Foreign Language Teaching. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

[7] Marion William & Robert L. Burden. (1997). Psychology for Language Teachers, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press: 5, 7-29, 30-44.

[8] Zheng Shutang. (2008). New Horizon College English (Book 1), Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Xiaohong Du was born in Xuchang, China, in 1973. She received her MA in Applied Linguistics from Hubei University in 2004,

Wuhan, China, and a BA in English Education from Henan Normal University in 1997, Xinxiang, China. Her main research interests are linguistics and foreign language teaching.

She has been teaching English for 15 years and now she is an associate professor in Zhengzhou University, Zhengzhou, China. From Sep 1, 2012 to Sep1, 2013, she is an academic visitor in the Centre of Intercultural Research in Communication and Learning (CIRCL) at De Montfort University, UK.

Associate professor Du is an IELTS Invigilator and a Cambridge ESOL Oral Examiner (BEC Preliminary / Vantage /Higher Level) in Zhengzhou, China. She is also an honorary associate professor of De Montfort University, UK from Sep 1, 2012 to Sep1, 2013.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1044-1052, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1044-1052

Motivational Strategies, Task Effectiveness and Incidental Acquisition of Second Language Vocabulary

Parviz Ajideh
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Massoud Rahimpour
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran;
School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Queensland, Australia

Davoud Amini
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Farahman Farrokhi
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

***Abstract*—Current approaches to L_2 motivation view language learning motivation as situated, dynamic and task-dependent (Pawlak, 2012). Despite the widespread recognition of motivation as a crucial variable in L_2 acquisition, few studies have focused on the effect of motivational involvement of learners in an instructional setting, such as task-based language teaching context, on learning achievements. This study aimed at probing the effect of motivational strategies (Dornyei, 2001b) applied to the pre-task phase of task implementation on short-term and long-term retention and ease of activation of L_2 vocabulary acquired incidentally as a result of engagement with a reading-while listening task. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) revealed that motivational strategies had an enhancing effect on both retention and ease of activation of L_2 vocabulary upon the immediate post-test. However, the enhancement was not observed for long-term acquisition since there was a considerable decay of retention and ease of activation upon the delayed post-test. The results confirm the effectiveness of task-specific motivation in improving linguistic achievements. Nevertheless, it is argued that motivational strategies cannot be a single substitution for cognitive strategies.**

***Index Terms*—task motivation, motivational strategies, incidental acquisition, second language vocabulary, task-based language teaching**

I. Introduction

Learning a second language to higher levels of proficiency requires developing a high level of lexical competence. This development can occur either intentionally, i.e. with explicit intention on the learner's part to learn the words' form and use, or incidentally through exposure to the oral or written text. It is admitted that a large size of vocabulary can develop not through instruction, rather implicitly as a by-product of involvement in meaningful use of language. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) offers a means to involve learners in primarily meaning-focused activities while taking the advantage of opportunities to focus learners' attention, in an implicit manner, on formal aspects of language including its lexicon (Laufer, 2005). Nevertheless, not all tasks are equally effective in promoting vocabulary acquisition. In fact, classifying tasks in terms of their effectiveness in mental actions involving vocabulary learning has been the major concern of many of studies (Laufer and Hulstijn, 2001; Skehan, 1998; Westholf, 2004).

A preliminary examination of related literature indicates that most of these studies have focused largely on cognitive processes involved in task-induced acquisition (Rahimpour, 1997; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1998). The affective and motivational processes have failed to receive the due attention regarding their significant position as determining factors in task performance and the subsequent learning attributable to it (Swain, 2012). Although the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001) defines task-effectiveness in terms of both motivational and cognitive variables involved in the processing of words through tasks, studies carried out within this theoretical framework have mainly focused on the effect of limited types of tasks on the processing of target words (see Kim, 2011for a review). Boggards and Laufer (2004) urge that further research be conducted to investigate the efficiency of various enhancement tasks in vocabulary acquisition. On the other hand, vocabulary retention and recall is a cognitive process which can be immensely affected by the motivational conditions involved in the initial encoding and later processing of unknown words through task performance. Despite the well-recognized role of motivational processes in SL development, little attention has been devoted to possible effects of situated motivation in TBLT context. The concept of 'task motivation'

(Dornyei, 2001a; Julkunen, 1989, 2001) is a conceptual effort to investigate the contributions of motivational processes to TBLT. One of the practical suggestions regarding the enhancement of task motivation is the concept of 'motivational strategies' cherished by Dornyei (2001b). The current study examined the effect of motivational strategies in conduciveness of tasks aimed at promoting incidental acquisition of L_2 vocabulary.

II. Literature Review

A. Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition in TBLT Context

One of the influential positions in offering a breakthrough to the challenge of L_2 vocabulary acquisition was the idea of incidental vocabulary acquisition. Although there have been controversies over what is exactly meant by the term 'incidental' (Gass, 1999), the concept seems to have been refined to the following definition: "Incidental learning is the process of learning something without the intention of doing so. It is also learning one thing while intending to learn another" (Brown, Waring & Donkaewbua, 2008: p 136).

The majority of studies on incidental vocabulary acquisition in a foreign language during 1980's and 1990's, as is evident in the special issue of Studies in Second Language Acquisition (Vol. 21, issue 2, 1999), have focused on the effect of involving subjects in extensive reading concerning pleasurable reading with guessing meaning from context (e.g. Paribakht & Wesche, 1999) ; however, some researchers have suggested that extensive reading is typically for the purpose of enhancing the knowledge and memory of partially-known words rather than focusing on building new vocabulary (Nation & Wang, 1999; Waring &Takaki, 2003). As Huckin and Coady (1999) contend, reading for meaning does not automatically lead to vocabulary acquisition. They attribute the chance of incidental vocabulary acquisition to such factors as the context surrounding each word, frequency of exposure, attention and noticing as well as task characteristics. In this line of research, some sort of instructional intervention for the purpose of enhancing input processing is suggested (Hulstijn, Hollander & Greidanus, 1996). Schmitt (2008) suggested combining an intentional learning program with extensive reading to cope with the immensity of L_2 vocabulary acquisition.

In recent years, due to the new developments within language teaching research including focus on form movement and task-based language teaching, vocabulary learning researchers have also begun to advocate focused instruction of vocabulary (de la Fuente, 2006; Laufer, 2005). One of the instructional techniques for the elaboration of input through reading was glossing (Rott, 2005; Watanabe, 1997; Xu, 2010). Different forms of glosses - marginal and multiple choices, L_1 and L_2 - were put into scrutiny. The current study uses within-text L_1 translations as the form of glosses to assist the processing of unfamiliar words within the reading-while-listening text since L_1 glosses have been proved to be as effective as L_2 glosses in contributing to vocabulary acquisition (Xu, 2010). Nevertheless research findings regarding the conduciveness of glosses in vocabulary acquisition is not conclusive. Pulido (2009) has asserted that the mere presence of glosses does not always guarantee the retention of lexical knowledge. To make up for this shortcoming, researchers have regarded the characteristics of TBLT situation.

To begin addressing this issue, a number of researchers have offered explanations of why certain tasks are more effective than others in promoting L_2 vocabulary acquisition. The nature of task engagement is one of the most viable candidates in determining task effectiveness (Westhoff, 2004). Thus, the study of mental actions involved in the processing of unknown words seems to be an important new dimension to the study of second language incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Since the time Craik and Lockhart (1972) introduced their insight-provoking idea of levels of processing, the issue of the effect of processing conditions in learners' initial encounter with an unfamiliar word on later retention of those words has been one of the routines within SL vocabulary acquisition research. Despite their succeeding attempts to explain the relationship between type of the word-processing and leaving memory traces of it, they were not very successful in clarifying the vague concept of depth of processing.

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001), inspired by the Noticing Hypothesis and Focus on Form Movement, took an influential step toward operationalizing the concept of depth of processing by introducing Involvement Load Hypothesis and the construct of 'task-induced involvement'. The hypothesis proposed a motivational feature of word processing (need) and two cognitive processing features of form-meaning relations (search and evaluation) as the three determining factors in deep processing induced by different task types. They were the first people to put their hypothesis into empirical assessment (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001). Since then various studies have been carried out to investigate the effectiveness of task types with different involvement indices in incidental development of vocabulary in recognition and production (see Kim, 2011 for a review).

These studies were mainly focused on the cognitive aspect of input processing. Studies concerning the motivational aspect of task performance are almost missing in the literature. The current study was designed to contribute to the theory of second language acquisition and its pedagogy by filling in the gap on possible effects of eliciting motivational involvement on task engagement and the way promotion in task engagement will influence incidental acquisition of vocabulary.

B. Task Motivation

The research field on foreign/second language (L_2) motivation was founded more than half a century ago by Canadian social psychologists, Gardner and Lambert. The earliest theories of L_2 motivation looked for a macro-

understanding of L_2 motivation in the overall social and educational context (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1972). However, with a shift of emphasis which began in the 1990's and was fueled by the 1994 debate that went on in the Modern Language Journal, the 'macro-perspective' was reduced to a 'micro-understanding' of L_2 motivation in the immediate learning situation. This new perspective led to the blossoming of research on L_2 motivation based on 'situated approach' including the influence of the teacher, classmates, task features and task implementation among others. A key conceptualization building the basis for the situated view of motivation was the distinction made by Tremblay, Goldberg and Gardner (1995) between 'trait motivation' and 'state motivation'. Trait motivation, which corresponds mostly to social-psychological view of motivation, involves stable and lasting tendencies of language learners. State motivation, on the other hand, refers to the transitory and temporary motivational responses of language learners to the learning situation. Concerning tasks as a major variable in the learning situation, the trait motivation is general and independent from the task whereas the state motivation is situation-specific and task-dependent (Julkunen, 1989; 2001).

One of the major developments within the situated approach to L_2 motivation was the attempt to relate motivation to situation-specific factors in task-based language teaching classes. Dornyei (2002) reiterated that "L_2 motivation can hardly be examined in a more situated manner than within a task based framework" (p. 138). The term task motivation is used when task characteristics are the focus of attention in motivation (Dornyei, 2002). Studies of task motivation in SLA research have also concentrated on features of L_2 learning situation in predicting task motivation. Dornyei (2009) conceived of task motivation as a complex issue which involves the interaction of the following four factors:

1. Learner-specific factors (e.g., cognitive, motivational and emotional factors; L_2 competence; personality traits)
2. Learning situational factors (e.g., teacher, class size, group compositions and school norms and regulations)
3. Task-related factors (e.g., task content, task structure, expected task outcome and task participants)
4. Other factors (e.g., time-related issues, distractions and disruptions)

Empirical studies targeting such a diversity of factors involved in L_2 task motivation are still being looked forward to. Most of the studies carried out so far with a focus on task motivation (Dornyei & Kormos, 2000; Julkunen, 1989, 2001; Kormos & Dornyei, 2004; Ma, 2009) have resorted to basic motivational constructs postulated in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Doci (2000). Therefore, most of the questionnaires for tapping task motivation are adaptations from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) developed by proponents of SDT (Agnesia, 2010; Dornyei, 2002; Dornyei & Tseng, 2009; Kormos & Dornyei, 2004; Ma, 2009). When shuffling through these studies, the following motivational components stand out:

- Perceived value of the task
- Perceived expectancy of success in performing the task
- Perceived effort spent on performing the task
- Perceived autonomy in choosing to do the task
- Perceived enjoyment and pleasure in completing the task

This study is focused on motivational interventions for the purpose of enhancing task effectiveness in incidental acquisition of L_2 vocabulary. The motivational intervention will specifically target learners' perceived value of the task, expectancy of success and their enjoyment as determinant components of task motivation as a result of engagement in a reading-while-listening task. The strategies employed to elicit these aspects of task motivation will be discussed in the next section.

C. Motivational Strategies

Due to the dynamic and intricate nature of motivational processes, some sort of motivational support through instructional processes is always necessary so that an optimal situation for learning is ensured. Given the central role of motivational attributes in the learning process, motivational strategies can increase the chances of learning achievement (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007).

Motivational strategies are defined by Dornyei (2001b) as such:

Motivational strategies are techniques that promote the individual's goal-related behavior. Because human behavior is rather complex, there are many diverse ways of promoting it – in fact, almost any influence a person is exposed to might potentially affect his/her behavior. Motivational strategies refer to those *motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect*. (p. 27)

The most academically-appropriate handling of SL motivational strategies was done by Dornyei (2001b). Most of the motivational strategies proposed by Dornyei (2001b) are meant to be related to the language learners' general motivation in long-term trajectory of second language acquisition. However, it has been substantiated through other studies that there is a close relationship between the situation-specific motivation in L_2 classroom and general, trait-like motivation (Dornyei, 2002; Dornyei & Kormos, 2000). There have been very few studies investigating specific motivational designs in the classroom. But given the nature of TBLT and with due reference to Dornyei's (2003) model of task processing, the motivational strategies suggested by Dornyei (2001b) can be accommodated into task-based framework. Dornyei (2003) proposed a theoretical model of motivational task processing which was later validated by Dornyei and Tseng (2009). According to this model, learners' constant appraisal of the upcoming stimuli determines their action control and choice of certain motivational strategies. The model comprises a dynamic task processing system including three inter-related mechanisms of 'task execution', 'appraisal' and 'action control'.

Based on the dynamic task processing model, the three motivational phases postulated by process models of motivation (Dornyei, 2001a; Dornyei & Otto, 1998), i.e., pre-actional, actional and post-actional stages can be matched to the three phases of task activities in L_2 classes (Ellis, 2003). The pre-actional stage, which concerns choice issues such as the formation of goals and intentions, corresponds to the pre-task stage from TBLT perspective. Dornyei's (2001b) first set of motivational strategies, i.e., those for generating initial motivation can be matched to the pre-actional/pre-task phase. For the actional stage corresponding to task implementation stage in TBLT, Dornyei (2001b) proposed the second set of strategies for maintaining and protecting motivation. It must be noted that the relationship between the pre-actional and actional stages of motivation is dynamic rather than linear. The dynamicity of motivational constructs has been stressed more vehemently in recent conceptualizations on L_2 motivation (Pawlak, 2012). This study intends to examine the effect of inducing motivational involvement on the possible increase of learners' engagement with an input-oriented listening-while reading task. The pre-task phase of classroom teaching process is taken as an opportunity to promote learners' task-related motivation. To this end, a set of motivational strategies suggested by Dornyei, (2001b) which target several motivational constructs conceivable as situated motivational variables including task attitude, autonomy, competence, effort and enjoyment were selected. The selected strategies have been picked out based on the criterion whether they are applicable to situation specific, state motivation. These strategies have been summarized in table I. The operational details related to motivational strategies appear in the methodology section below.

TABLE I.
MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES USED FOR ELICITING TASK MOTIVATION (ADAPTED FROM DORNYEI, 2001B)

1. Present and administer the task in a motivating way by
• Explaining the purpose and utility of the task
• Whetting students' appetite about the content of the task
• roviding appropriate strategies to carry out the task
2. Increase the learners' expectancy of success in performing the task by making sure that
• they receive sufficient preparation and assistance
• they know exactly what success in the task involves
• there are no serious obstacles to success
3. Make learning stimulating and enjoyable to the learners by increasing the attractiveness of the task through
• Making the task content-attractive by adapting it to learners' natural interests or by including novel, intriguing, exotic, humorous, competitive or fantasy elements.
• Personalizing learning tasks
4. Use goal-setting methods by
• Encouraging learners to select specific short-term goals for themselves
5. Build learners' confidence in their learning abilities by teaching them strategies relevant to task performance such as strategies to facilitate the intake of new material
6. Increase learner motivation by actively promoting learner autonomy

III. METHOD

A. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following two questions were the main focus of the study:

1. What is the effect of motivational strategies applied to the pre-task phase of a reading-while-listening task on short-term and long-term retention and ease of activation of second language vocabulary?

2. Do motivational strategies applied to the pre-task phase of a reading-while-listening task have an identical effect on short-term and long-term acquisition of vocabulary?

To initiate the study, the following two hypotheses were proposed:

1. Motivational strategies applied to the pre-task phase of a reading-while-listening task have an enhancing effect on retention and ease of activation of L_2 vocabulary.

2. The enhancing effect of motivational strategies in task-engagement is identical for short-term and long-term acquisition of L_2 vocabulary.

The independent variable of the study was motivational strategies applied to TBLT classroom through pre-task intervention. The dependent variable was incidental acquisition of SL vocabulary resulting from engagement with a listening-while-reading task. The incidental vocabulary acquisition was measured at the level of its four subcomponents:

1. Short-term retention of vocabulary as measured with a test of passive vocabulary immediately after the task engagement

2. Short-term ease of activation of vocabulary as measured with a test of active vocabulary immediately after the task engagement

3. Long-term retention of vocabulary as measured with a test of passive vocabulary two weeks after the task engagement

4. Long-term ease of activation of vocabulary as measured with a test of active vocabulary two weeks after the task engagement

B. Participants

Two intact classes of junior students of English as a foreign language at the Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch participated in the study. To ensure homogeneity of the two groups, a pretest was administered to both classes and those who scored below and above the range of 6-25 were left out of the data analysis. Then the two classes were randomly labeled as control group and motivational involvement group, including 24 and 27 students, respectively.

C. Materials

The main task was a reading-while-listening task. The text for the reading-while-listening task was extracted from a popular success book *Giant Steps*, written and read out by Anthony Robins (Robins, 1997). The 20 target words had been signified by L_1 glosses within the text. The reading text was followed by a whole-class discussion of the topic of the text *The Vocabulary of Success*. The students were asked to use as many arguments and illustrations from the text as possible.

To choose the target words, 40 words from the reading-while-listening text which were conjectured to be less familiar to the students were selected and then put to a survey from the students. The survey asked whether they signified each word as familiar or not. If *yes*, they were supposed to provide an equivalent or explanation inL_1. 20 words which were checked as unfamiliar were selected for the study.

The pretest included reading and listening comprehension items taken from archive versions of TOEFL iBT as the overall listening and reading skills were assumed to be relevant to task performance.

The post-tests were comprised of a vocabulary retention test and a vocabulary ease of activation test. The retention test was a test of passive vocabulary including 10 four-item multiple choice word translation questions from English to Persian. In order to neutralize the effect of guessing, a 5 th item stating 'I'm not sure' was added to the response options (r=0.71). The ease of activation test included 10 fill-in-the-gap sentence translation items from Persian to English. The English translations of the sentences were provided except for the target words (r=0.78).

D. Procedure

This study aimed at investigating the effect of motivational strategies on task effectiveness in incidental acquisition of L_2 vocabulary. Both control and experimental groups participated in a text-based task preceded by a pre-task phase and succeeded by a post-task phase. The main task was a reading-while-listening task involving reading a text while listening to the text read out by the author. The target words had been highlighted using within-text L_1 glosses. The post task entailed a whole-class discussion of the information presented by the reading-while-listening text. The discussion was stimulated by a set of triggering questions that summarized the main points in the text.

While the main task and the post task were identical for both of the groups, the procedure for the pre-task phase was different for the control group and motivational involvement group. The motivational involvement for the experimental group entailed the operationalization of motivational strategies proposed by Dornyei (2001b). The intended motivational strategies (Table I) were pursued through teacher talk, questioning/answering and video show, all of which was integrated into the pre-task phase of task implementation for the experimental group. First, the teacher presented a ten-minute lecture on the three phases of task, criteria for success in the task, how to improve their performance on the task as well as discussing the importance of vocabulary in daily success (the topic of the text was vocabulary of success). Then a short questioning and answering focusing on students' personal experience went on between the teacher and students. Finally, a video clip made by the researcher containing some fascinating pictures displaying Anthony Robins' career and family life accompanied by an attractive song was shown to the class. The control group was engaged in different kind of activities for the pre-task phase. They read a passage on effective communication and answered 8 comprehension questions that followed. The activity took about twenty minutes. The two tests for measuring short-term retention and ease of activation of target vocabulary were administered immediately after the task completion. The tests for measuring long-term retention and ease of activation were administered two weeks later.

E. Data Analysis and Results

This empirical study was intended to investigate the effect of motivational involvement in task performance on short-term and long-term retention and ease of activation of L_2 vocabulary. The descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and number of participants) of measures for the four dependent variables are introduced in table II.

TABLE II.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Pre-task Intervention	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Short-term Retention	Control Group	2.08	1.558	24
	Motivational Involvement Group	**3.52**	1.827	27
	Total	2.84	1.837	51
Short-term Ease of Activation	Control Group	1.75	1.073	24
	Motivational Involvement Group	**2.56**	1.450	27
	Total	2.18	1.337	51
Long-term Retention	Control Group	1.79	1.215	24
	Motivational Involvement Group	**2.22**	1.423	27
	Total	2.02	1.334	51
Long-term Ease of Activation	Control Group	1.62	1.096	24
	Motivational Involvement Group	**1.96**	1.192	27
	Total	1.80	1.149	51

To determine whether there was any significant difference between the control and motivational involvement groups, a multivariate analysis of variance with pre-test as covariate (MANCOVA) was conducted using the scores on the four dependent measures. The MANCOVA results demonstrated an overall significant difference between the two groups. This means that motivational involvement was effective in enhancing incidental acquisition of vocabulary. In addition to this overall effect, further analyses were administered to scrutinize the four subcomponents of incidental acquisition. These analyses indicated a statistically significant difference between the control and motivational involvement groups in terms of short-term retention and ease of activation of vocabulary. However, the differences for long-term retention and ease of activation scores between the two groups were not significant (TableIII).

TABLE III.
EFFECT OF MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES ON SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM RETENTION AND EASE OF ACTIVATION

Source	Dependent Variable	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power[b]
groups	Short-term Retention	1	17.043	15.690	.000*	.246	.973
	Short-term Ease of Activation	1	4.799	6.102	.017*	.113	.677
	Long-term Retention	1	.583	.945	.336	.019	.159
	Long-term Ease of Activation	1	.456	.579	.450	.012	.116

* Significant P<.05

The results of data analysis corroborate the first hypothesis that motivational strategies applied to the pre-task phase of task engagement had an enhancing effect on both retention and ease of activation. But this enhancement was not identical for short-term and long-term learning. In fact motivational involvement improved both retention and ease of activation scores in the immediate post-test whereas it did not have any significant effect on the performance upon delayed post-test. Therefore, the second hypothesis predicting identical effects of motivational involvement in short-term and long-term acquisition of vocabulary is not supported statistically.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Task-based language teaching was primarily proposed for helping learners improve their performance aspects of second language such as fluency. However, later developments within TBLT suggested a means for the acquisition of new linguistic elements, including vocabulary and grammar, through so called 'focused tasks' (Ellis, 2003). But using form-focused tasks to develop vocabulary has not been a common practice in SLA (Laufer, 2005). One possible reason for lack of focused tasks for vocabulary acquisition is related to the traditional distinction made between the incidental/intentional and explicit/implicit processes of vocabulary learning and teaching because incidental and implicit learning imply purely meaning-focused involvement (Hulstijn, 2003).

The current study was an attempt to lay incidental vocabulary acquisition in the context of focused tasks. Glosses were exploited as a means of input enhancement during the reading-while-listening task. L_1 glosses within the text were supposed to provide chances of noticing during a meaning-focused activity. According to the Noticing Hypothesis, which is a founding theory of TBLT, the linguistic input must be noticed during a meaningful processing before it is acquired. Noticing linguistic elements of input during task engagement depends, to a large extent, on task characteristics and task conditions which may encompass cognitive, emotional and motivational aspects of task performance. What has received greatest attention in the literature is the cognitive processes involved in task performance (e.g. Rahimpour, Salimi & Farrokhi, 2012; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1998). There is a lack of studies investigating emotional and motivational aspects of task conditions. According to Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001), tasks which elicit higher levels of involvement yield better retention of vocabulary. Such an involvement, of course, entails two cognitive elements as well as the motivational element of 'need'. Nevertheless, if placed in a general perspective of

task engagement, the motivational element of task performance can be expanded to other dimensions of motivation including enjoyment, expectancy of success, effort and perceived value of the task in hand. These aspects of task motivation were operationalized in this study through motivational strategies applied to the pre-task phase of the task. According to Willis and Willis (2007), the pre-task stage in TBLT can have a priming effect on later acquisition. The typical pre-task activities target cognitive processes in order to activate schematic knowledge or alleviate linguistic load in task engagement. This study, however, attempted to promote motivational involvement in task performance through pre-task intervention and examine the possible effects on retention and ease of activation of vocabulary encountered for the first time in a text-based focused task.

The results indicated that the motivational involvement had an enhancing effect on both retention and ease of activation of L_2 vocabulary in short-term assessment. This finding confirms the postulation that mental actions involved in task performance are not restricted to cognitive processes as they are commonly highlighted in TBLT (e.g. Robinson, 2001). Motivational engagement with a listening-while-reading task had an enhancing effect on later acquisition of vocabulary introduced through this task. This finding is in line with Craik and Lockhart's Depth of Processing Hypothesis which predicts that conceptual processing of new information will improve memory traces of it. Both cognitive and motivational involvement can be considered as instigators of conceptual and deep processing.

Unlike short-term acquisition, the long-term acquisition of vocabulary was not significantly affected by motivational involvement as there was a considerable decay of retention and ease of activation upon the delayed post-test. Therefore, the enhancing effect of motivational involvement was restricted to immediate post-test, and the effect disappeared very soon. In implementing the pre-task based on motivational strategies, cognitive involvement strategies (e.g., to activate schematic knowledge or linguistic priming) were intentionally avoided so that the distinct effect of motivational involvement is observed in the absence of any cognitive involvement strategies. The results demonstrated that motivational involvement alone, cannot lead to acquisition of vocabulary in the long-run.

This study has some pedagogical implications for the use of focused tasks to promote incidental vocabulary acquisition. Using motivational strategies through pre-task intervention leads to the enhancement of task engagement which, in turn, contributes to acquiring lexical aspects of the linguistic input. However an enduring acquisition is not guaranteed if there is not enough cognitive involvement in task engagement. Further research is required to examine the relative impact of motivational and cognitive involvement on incidental acquisition of vocabulary through focused tasks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

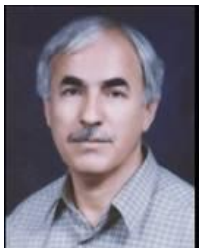
The study reported here is part of a more general Ph.D. project sponsored by the Department of English at the University of Tabriz.

REFERENCES

[1] Agnesia, R. H. (2010). Features affecting task motivation in English for academic purposes online learning. *Second Language Studies, 29*(1), 1-34.
[2] Bogaards, P., & Laufer, B. (2004). Introduction. In P. Bogaards & B. Laufer (Eds.), *Vocabulary in a second language: Selection, acquisition, and testing* (pp. vii–xiv). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
[3] Brown, R., Waring, R. & Donkaewbua, S. (2008). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading, reading-while listening, and listening to stories. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. 20(2), 136-163.
[4] Cheng, H. F. & Dornyei, Z. (2007). The use of motivational strategies in language instruction: The case of EFL teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 153-174.
[5] Craik, F. I. M. and Lockhart, R. S. (1972). Levels of processing: A framework for memory research. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 11, 671-684.
[6] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R.M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227-268.
[7] Dornyei, Z. & Tseng, W. T. (2009). Motivational processing in interactional tasks. In: A. Mackey and C. Polio (Eds). *Multiple perspectives on interaction: Second language research in honor of Susan* Gass (pp. 117-134). London: Rutledge.
[8] Dornyei, Z. (2001a). Teaching and researching motivation. Harlow, England: Longman.
[9] Dornyei, Z. (2001b). Motivational strategies in the classroom. Cambridge: CUP.
[10] Dornyei, Z. (2002). The motivational basis of language learning tasks. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Individual differences in second language acquisition* (pp. 137-158). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
[11] Dornyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Language Learning, 53*, 3-32.
[12] Dornyei, Z. (2009). The antecedents of task behaviour: A dynamic systems account of task motivation. *Proceedings of the Third Biennial Conference on Task-Based Language Teaching*. Lancaster University.
[13] Dornyei, Z., & Kormos, J. (2000). The role of individual and social variables in oral task performance. *Language Teaching Research, 4*, 275-300.
[14] Dörnyei, Z., & Ottó, I. (1998). Motivation in action: A process model of motivation. *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics, 4*, 43-69.
[15] Ellis, R. (2003). Task-based language learning and teaching. Oxford: OUP.
[16] de la Fuente, M. J. (2006). Classroom L2 vocabulary acquisition: Investigating the role of pedagogical tasks and form-focused instruction. *Language Teaching Research, 10*(3), 263–295.

[17] Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. (1972). Attitudes and motivation in second-language learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
[18] Gass, S. (1999). Discussion: Incidental vocabulary learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21, 319-333.
[19] Huckin, T. & Coady, J. (1999). Incidental vocabulary acquisition in a second language; A review. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21, 181-193.
[20] Hulstijn, J. H. (2003). Incidental and intentional learning. In: C. J. Doughty and M. H. Long (Eds). *The handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 349-381).Malden, MA: Blackwell.
[21] Hulstijn, J. H. and Laufer, B. (2001). Some empirical evidence for involvement load hypothesis in vocabulary acquisition. *Language Learning, 51*, 539-558.
[22] Hulstijn, J. H., Hollander, M., & Greidanus, T. (1996). Incidental vocabulary learning by advanced foreign language students: The influence of marginal glosses, dictionary use, and reoccurrence of unknown words. *The Modern Language Journal, 80*, 327–339.
[23] Julkunen, K. (1989). Situation- and task-specific motivation in foreign-language learning and teaching. Joensuu, Finland: University of Joensuu Publications in Education.
[24] Julkunen, K. (2001). Situation- and task-specific motivation in foreign language learning. In Z. Dornyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.). *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 28-41). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.
[25] Kim, Y. (2011). The Role of Task-Induced Involvement and Learner Proficiency in L2 Vocabulary Acquisition. *Language Learning*, *61*:Suppl. 1, 100–140.
[26] Kormos, J. and Dornyei, Z. (2004). The interaction of linguistic and motivational variables in second language task performance. Zeitschrift fur Interkulturellen Fremd Sprachenu Terricht retrieved online June 16, 2012 from http://www.ualberta.ca/ ~german/ejournal/kormos2.htm. 9.19.
[27] Laufer, B. & Hulstijn, J. (2001). Incidental vocabulary acquisition in a second language: the construct of task-induced involvement. *Applied Linguistics*, *22* (1), 1-26.
[28] Laufer, B. (2005). Focus on form in second language vocabulary learning. *EUROSLA Yearbook, 5*, 223–250.
[29] Ma, J. H. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in L2 students' task motivation: A self-determination theory perspective. Unpublished dissertation at the University of Hawai„i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI.
[30] Nation, P. & Wang, M. (1999). Graded readers and vocabulary. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 12, 355-380.
[31] Paribakht, S. & Wesche, M. (1999). Reading and incidental vocabulary acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21, 195-224.
[32] Pawlak, M. (2012). The dynamic nature of motivation in language learning: A classroom perspective. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2(2), 249-278.
[33] Pulido, D. (2009). How involved are American L2 learners of Spanish in lexical input processing tasks during reading? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 31, 31-58.
[34] Rahimpour, M. (1997). Task condition, task complexity and variation in L2 discourse. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Queensland, Australia.
[35] Rahimpour, M., Salimi, A. & Farrokhi, F. (2012). The effect of intensive and extensive focus on form on EFL learners' written accuracy. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(11), 2277-2283.
[36] Robins, A. (1997). *Giant Steps: Small changes to make a big difference.* London: Simon and Schuster Ltd.
[37] Robinson, P. (2001). Task complexity, cognitive resources, and syllabus design: a triadic framework for examining task influences on SLA. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and Second Language Instruction* (pp. 287-318). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[38] Rott, S. (2005). Processing glosses: A qualitative exploration of how form-meaning connections are established and strengthened. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 17(2), 95-124.
[39] Schmitt, N. (2008). Review article: instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching Research, 12* (3), 329-363.
[40] Skehan, P. (1998). A cognitive approach to language learning. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[41] Swain, M. (2011). The inseparability of cognition and emotion in second language learning. *Language Teaching*, 45(4), 1-13. doi:10.1017/S0261444811000486.
[42] Tremblay, P., Goldberg, M., & Gardner, R. (1995). Trait and state motivation and the acquisition of Hebrew vocabulary. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 27, 356-370.
[43] Waring, R., & Takaki, M. (2003). At what rate do learners learn and retain new vocabulary from reading a graded reader? *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15, 130-163.
[44] Watanabe, Y. (1997). Input, intake, and retention: Effects of increased processing on incidental learning of foreign language vocabulary. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *19*, 287–307.
[45] Westhoff, G. (2004). The art of playing a pinball machine. Characteristics of effective SLA tasks. *Babylonia*, 12(3), 58-62.
[46] Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2007). Doing task-based teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[47] Xu, X. (2010). The effect of glosses on incidental vocabulary acquisition in reading. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. 1(2), 117-120.

Parviz Ajideh is an associate professor at the department of English, Tabriz University. He holds his Ph.D. in English Language Teaching from the University of Allameh Tabataba'i, Iran. He has published several books and articles in EFL and supervised several M.A. and Ph.D. theses. His special areas of interest are ESP, SL reading and language testing. Dr. Ajideh was the Deputy Minister of Education, Deputy Dean of Faculty, Head of the English Department and Vice Chancellor at Tabriz University. For the time being, he is the Chancellor of Tabriz University.



Massoud Rahimpour is an Emeritus Professor at Tabriz University and has been the Honorary Research Consultant at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. He is holding a M.A in Teaching English from the University of Oklahoma City in the USA and Ph. D in applied linguistics from The University of Queensland in Australia. He lectures in the areas of SLA, syllabus design and TESOL methodology at the University of Tabriz. Dr. Rahimpour has presented and published several books and tens of papers in international conferences and journals. He has also supervised numerous M.A and Ph. D theses. His main areas of interest are task-based language teaching and learning, syllabus design, and research methodology. He is currently teaching at The University of Queensland in Australia.

Davoud Amini is a Ph.D. Candidate in English Language Teaching at Tabriz University. Involved with EFL as an instructor and researcher for more than 15 years, he has published the textbook *Taking Sides* for topic-based conversation classes and presented papers in SLA in international conferences. His academic area of interest includes affectivity in language learning, second language vocabulary acquisition and task-based language teaching.

Farahman Farrokhi was born in Iran in 1967. He received his Ph.D. degree in English language teaching from the University of Leeds, England. He is an associate professor at the Department of English at Tabriz University, and currently he is the Dean of the Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages at Tabriz University. His research interests include classroom discourse analysis, EFL teachers' perceptions of different feedback types, negative and positive evidence in EFL classroom context, language testing, task-based teaching, and syllabus design.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1053-1062, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1053-1062

An Empirical Research on Chinese-English Bilinguals' Compliment Responses—A Cross-cultural Perspective*

Xuehua An
Dalian University of Technology, Dalian, China

***Abstract*—Compliments and compliment responses (CRs) are decided by linguistic and sociocultural norms, and further reflect cultural values and social norms. The study of CRs has generated a great number of studies in pragmatics. Previous studies, including Chinese as participants, have investigated Chinese CRs and compared Chinese CRs with people of other languages. According to Holmes' (1988) taxonomy, CRs can be classified into three categories: Agreeing, Deflecting/Evading and Rejecting. Looking from a cross-cultural perspective, Chinese tend to use less Accepting strategies and more Rejecting strategies than Australians do (Tang and Zhang, 2009). Within the same language community, CR strategies might also change over time, as has been suggested in Chen and Yang's (2010). However, research on Chinese English-knowing bilinguals' CRs in the two languages is rare. The present study, focuses on a group of Chinese English-knowing bilinguals' CR speech act. It aims at finding out whether Chinese English bilinguals will respond to compliments differently, when they are exposed to different media—Chinese language and English language, which might shed new light on how language influences and shapes people's social and cultural norms. Written discourse completion task (DCT) is used to elicit the participants' responses to compliments on one's look, ability, character, possession. The survey was conducted on a cohort of 31 Chinese English teachers, during the period when they were in Singapore. Results show that there are differences in CR strategies employed in Chinese DCT and English DCT.**

***Index Terms*—compliment, compliment response, bilinguals, DCT, Cross-culture**

I. Introduction

Compliments and compliment responses are decided by linguistic and sociocultural norms, and further reflect cultural values and social norms. Compliments and CRs studies offer great insight into interlocutors' expressions of appraisals and reactions to external appraisals, which further reflect interlocutors' cultural and social values. Yuan also highlighted the importance of the study by commenting that "The compliment event is worth studying because, like all speech acts, it can show us the rules of language use in a speech community" (Yuan, 2001, p. 273). The interest in the study of compliments and CRs, beginning from Pomerantz (1978), has generated a number of relevant studies. Previous research included quite a number of cross-cultural studies, aiming to probe into different speeches in different speech community, including: Spanish and English (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001), German and American English (Golato, 2002), Australian English and Manderin Chinese (Tang & Zhang, 2009), et al. This study, however, intends to find out whether English knowing bilingual Chinese would respond differently to compliments, when they are exposed to Chinese and English, using written DCT to collect data.

II. Literature Review

A. Previous Studies

Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory offers insightful account of how politeness is conveyed and face is saved or threatened. A compliment may serve as both face saving and face threatening act (FTA), because evaluation, either positive or negative, may affect one interlocutor's face wants. There have been numerous studies on compliments and CRs in different languages, including German, Polish, Nigerian English, Turkish, Persian, Jordanian Arabic, Kuwaiti Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Chinese (Chen & Yang, 2010). These studies have revealed both similarities and differences among the rich diversity of languages (Chen & Yang, 2010). Chinese is almost "the second most studied language in CR research, next only to the different varieties of English" (Chen, 2010, p.3). Tang and Zhang (2009) investigated CRs among Australian English and Mandarin Chinese speakers, which suggested that compared with Australian participants, Chinese participants used fewer *Accepting* strategies, but more *Evading* and *Rejecting* strategies. They also found that fewer combination strategies were used by Chinese than Australians (Tang & Zhang, 2009). Beside cross-cultural studies, there is also evidence of different CR strategies within

* supported by "the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities".

the same language community, as suggested in Chen (1993) and Chen & Yang (2010). Chen and Yang (2010) adopted a quasi-longitudinal study of CRs in Chinese, which replicated Chen's own study in 1993, examining whether there are differences in responding to compliments over 17 years' time. These two studies, using the same instrument to collect data—written DCT, working with a similar subject population in the same city Xi'an, found that people are now using more *Accepting* strategies but less *Rejecting* strategies than they did previously in 1993. Chen and Yang (2010) claimed that the influx of Western cultural influences attributed to the changes in people's responses to compliments.

B. Definition

The compliment is defined as "a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer" (Holmes, 1988, p. 446; 1995, p. 117). CR is a response to a compliment. Compliments and CRs are regulated by social and cultural conventions of a certain speech community. Based on Holmes' definition, compliments can be explicit and implicit, but this study solely addresses CRs to explicit compliments.

C. Taxonomy

Taxonomies of CRs utterances in previous research have been ever-evolving. Pomerantz (1978) identified two categories: (1) Agree with the complimenter, (2) Avoid self-praise. Herbert's (1986) three categories, *Agreement*, *None-agreement* and *Other interpretations*, enjoy great popularity and wide acceptance. Under the first category *Agreement*, there are subtypes: appreciation token comment acceptance, praise upgrade, comment history, reassignment, and return. *Non-agreement* is the second category, including subtypes: scale down, question, disagreement, qualification, and no acknowledgment. The third category is *Other interpretations*, including only subtype: request interpretation. However, in the present study Holmes' (1988) taxonomy is adopted, following Chen's (1993) and Chen and Yang's (2010) practices. Holmes' categorization is different from Herbert's, in that she categorized the subtypes into three categories: *Accepting*, *Deflecting/Evading*, and *Rejecting*. This taxonomy is based on great insight gained from Pomerantz's (1978) model, where Holmes strikes a balance between two extremes of either "Agreeing" or "Rejecting", by proposing a compromising category—*Deflecting/Evading* compliments. Therefore, Holmes' (1988) taxonomy is gaining popularity and acceptance (Chen, 1993, Tang & Zhang 2009, Chen & Yang, 2010).

Research on CRs has been conducted extensively. How do people respond to compliments is an interesting question. Accepting the compliment might suggest immodesty, whereas declining the compliment might sound impolite. Is it really true that "You look lovely today" will "make a Chinese woman uncomfortable and even somewhat resentful"? (Tang & Zhang, 2009, p. 326)

Previous studies with Chinese as participants investigated CRs in Chinese language. This study, however, aims to see whether the different language media will produce different results with Chinese English knowing bilinguals as participants. Also this study will make comparisons between the present study and previous research with Chinese as participants, with the aim of identifying any features or trend in them. Specifically, this paper deals with the following research questions (RQs):

RQ 1 Will the English-knowing Chinese bilinguals respond differently when they are exposed to different language media?

RQ 2 What features and trend can be identified from the comparison between results of the present study and results from previous study on Chinese CR strategies?

III. Methodology

A. Participants

The participants in this study are 31 English teachers, aging 27 to 35, from different areas of China, including Beijing, Hebei, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Shanxi, Guangdong, Guizhou, Anhui, Henan etc. They have taught English in China for 2 to 10 years. These participants have been involved in a program offered by NIE, sponsored by MOE Singapore. The data were collected during this program. Participants were given around 15 minutes to fill the questionnaires in the classroom.

B. Data Collection Method and Instrument

Written DCT is used in the present study, though the disadvantages of it have been widely discussed and criticized by Trosborg (1994), Beebe and Cummings (1996), Yuan (2001), and Golato (2003). Yuan's (2001) study on Kunming Chinese CRs showed that oral DCT and written DCT did produce responses varying in lengths of responses, numbers of exclamation particles, repetitions and omissions. However, Yuan's study did not show different data collection methods will cause different CR strategies. As Chen and Yang (2010) argued that method of data collection might not be the only reason for variation in the study of CR. CRs tend to be consistent whatever the methods are used by the researchers (Chen and Yang (2010). However, the advantages of written DCT are quite obvious, allowing researcher control, and making efficient data elicitation possible. Therefore, what this study tries to find out among the group of participants "what they will respond" rather than "what they really say" in specific situations, aiming to see whether the participants' responses will vary in CR taxonomy identified when DCT of different languages are used to elicit CRs.

The questionnaires adopted in the present study follow Chen's study in 1993 and Chen and Yang in 2010, eliciting responses to compliments on one's *look*, *ability*, *character* and *possession*. A Chinese version of questionnaire (hereafter CQ for short) was distributed to the participants first. In order to minimize the effect caused by the original Chinese version, ten days later, an English version of questionnaire (hereafter EQ for short), with slight adaptations, was administered. First of all, the sequence is rearranged. CQ consists of four situations, where compliments on look, character, ability and possession, whereas EQ follows the sequence of look, ability, possession and character. Secondly, since Chinese is the participants' mother tongue, only one, and therefore most preferred response for each situation is elicited. However, in EQ more space is provided for participants to reply to certain compliments, though it is not compulsory to fill out all three possibilities. Therefore, the numbers of responses collected from the two questionnaires are quite different, as will be discussed in the following section. Thirdly, in the English version, the situations are changed slightly to make the situations appear more likely happen in Singapore, instead of China, so as to elicit more natural responses in the target language. Of all questionnaires collected from the 31 respondents, 25 CQs and 29 EQs were considered valid for the present study.

IV. Results

Altogether there are 100 Chinese responses and 179 responses collected from CQ and EQ respectively. The frequency of the use of each subtype under three broad categories identified by Holmes (1988) is calculated. Under *Accepting* strategies, there are subtypes of *Agreeing*, *Thanking*, *Expressing gladness*, *Encouraging*, *Accepting-explaining*, etc. Under *Deflecting/Evading* strategies, there are *Offering*, *Using humor*, *Seeking confirmation*, *Doubting*, *Deflecting*, *Deflecting/ Evading-explaining*, etc. Under *Rejecting* strategies, there are *disagreeing*, *denigrating*, *expressing embarrassment*, *Rejecting-explaining*, etc. The each category is coded under "combination". However, strategies employing several subtypes crossing the three broad categories are coded under "cross-category combination". This is different from Chen and Yang (2010), who did not identify any cross-category combination strategies. The frequencies of CR strategies are reported in Table 1, which offers a clearer picture of the percentage of three-category strategy uses in different situations in CQ and EQ. The researcher coded the data twice with an interval of two weeks' time between the first and second coding, resulting in an intra-coder reliability coefficient of 95% for CQ and 89% for EQ. Furthermore, a portion of data and the ambiguous responses found by the researcher were handed over to a second coder, yielding inter-coder reliability coefficient of 90% for CQ and 83% for EQ.

TABLE 1
CR STRATEGIES IN CQ AND EQ

		Chinese Questionnaire			
		look	character	ability	possession
Accepting	thanking	40%	0	0	20%
	agreeing	0	0	0	16%
	returning	8%	12%	16%	0
	expressing gladness	0	28%	0	0
	encouraging	0%	0	0	4%
	A-explaining	0	12%	0	0
	combination	28%	24%	8%	24%
	total	76%	76%	24%	64%
Deflecting /Evading	offering	0	0%	4%	4%
	using humor	0	12%	0	0
	seeking confirmation	0	0%	0	0
	doubting	0	0%	0	0
	deflecting	0	0%	0	0
	D/E-explaining	0	0%	0	4%
	combination	0	0%	0	0
	total	0	12%	4%	8%
Rejecting	disagreeing	4%	0%	12%	0
	denigrating	0	4%	16%	8%
	expressing embarrassment	0	0%	0	0
	R-explanation	0	0%	0	0
	combination	4%	4%	20%	4%
	total	8%	8%	48%	12%
Cross category combination		16%	4%	24%	16%
		English Questionnaire			
		look	character	ability	possession
Accepting	thanking	34%	0	36%	12%
	agreeing	0	0	2%	0
	returning	2%	19%	2%	10%
	expressing gladness	0	31%	2%	0
	encouraging	0	0	0	5%
	A-explaining	5%	10%	7%	12%
	combination	44%	38%	25%	31%
	total	85%	98%	75%	69%
Deflecting /Evading	offering	0	0	0	2%
	using humor	0	0	0	0
	seeking confirmation	0	0	2%	2%
	doubting	0	0	0	0
	deflecting	0	0	0	0
	D/E-explaining	0	0	0	14%
	combination	0	0	9%	5%
	total	0	0	11%	24%
Rejecting	disagreeing	0	0	0	0
	denigrating	0	0	0	0
	expressing embarrassment	0	0	0	0
	R-explanation	0	0	0	2%
	combination	0	0	0	0
	total	0	0	0	2%
Cross category combination		15%	2%	14%	5%

A. CRs in Four Situations

CRs with some examples for each broad category are presented, which are listed in CCR1-22 from CQ, and ECR1-14 from EQ. The subtype strategies under the three broad categories, *Accepting*, *Deflecting/Evading, and Rejecting*, are reported in brackets.

1. CR strategies in compliment on *look*

In CQ, *Accepting* strategies are featured by expressing thanks (40%), accepting combination (28%), and returning (8%). In EQ, accepting combination (44%) and expressing thanks (34%) also dominate. CCR 1-4 and ECR 1-2 are some examples. *Deflecting/Evading* strategies find no places in responding to compliment on one's look in both CQ and EQ. *Rejecting* strategies are only found in CQ. The respondents employ disagreeing strategies (4%) and rejecting combination (4%) in CQ (eg. CCR 5-6), which forms a contrast to no rejecting strategy use in EQ.

CCR1: 谢谢! [thanking]
Xiexie!
Thanks!

CCR2: 谢谢，你也是啊 [thanking+returning]
Xiexie, ni ye shi a

Thanks, you too!

CCR3: 谢谢！还要继续向你看齐，向你学习啊！[thanking+A-explaining]
Xiexie! Haiyao jixu xiangni kanqi, xiangni xuexi a!
Thanks! Still need to take you as an example and learn from you!

CCR4: 你也不错嘛！[returning]
Ni ye bucuo ma!
You also look nice!

CCR 5: 呵呵，老了！[denigrating]
Hehe, lao le!
Haha (laughing)! Old already!

CCR 6: 哪有！越来越老了吧！[disagreeing+denigrating]
Nayou! Yuelaiyue lao le ba!
Not really. I am getting older and older!

ECR 1: Thank you. I am so glad you like it. [thanking+expressing gladness]

ECR 2: It takes me a lot of time to be cleaned up. [A-explaining]

Generally, the participants adopt more *Accepting* strategies than *Deflecting/Evading* and *Rejecting* strategies. Furthermore, they use several *Rejecting* strategies in Chinese (8%), but not in English.

2. CR strategies in compliment on *character*

Respondents' CRs on compliments on character vary quite a lot. In CQ, 76% use *Accepting* strategies, 12% *Deflecting/Evading* strategies, 8% *Rejecting* strategies and 4% cross-category combination strategies. In contrast, 98% use *Accepting* strategies, and 2% cross-category combination strategies. Because the situation is set to thank the hearer for looking after the speaker's kid, quite a number of responses are returning the compliment by speaking highly of the kid (eg. CCR 7-8, ECR 3-4). So the responses are most featured by returning strategies and accepting combination strategies. Another difference is, using humor strategy under the *Deflecting/Evading* strategies is used in Chinese (eg. CCR 9-10), but not used in English.

CCR 7: 你家宝宝太可爱了，可好看了。[returning+A-explaining]
Nijia baobao tai ke'ai le, ke haokan le.
Your baby is very lovely, and easy to take care of.

CCR 8: 您太客气了！您的孩子很可爱，我很喜欢陪他玩。[expressing gladness+returning]
Nin tai keqi le! Ninde haizi hen keai, wo hen xihuan pei ta wan.
You're welcome! You kid is so cute that I enjoy playing with him.

CCR 9: 你才发现啊？呵呵 [using humor]
Ni cai faxian a? hehe
Did you just get to know it just now? haha (laughing)

CCR 10: 真累呀，以后不要再找我了。[using humor]
Zhen lei ya, yihou buyao zai zhaowo le.
Too tiring! In the future, don't ask me to do that later.

ECR 3: Glad I can help. By the way, your child is lovely. [expressing gladness+returning]

ECR 4: You are welcome. My daughter played very well together with your son. [expressing gladness+A-explaining]

3. CR strategies in compliment on *ability*

The responses to compliments on one's ability in CQ and EQ also show great contrasts. In CQ only 24% responses use *Accepting* strategies (CCR 11), 4% *Deflecting/Evading* strategies (CCR 12), and almost half (48%) use *Rejecting* strategies (CCR 13-14). However, in EQ, a majority of (75%) respondents accept the compliments (ECR 5-6), 11% chooses to evade, 14% combines different strategies (ECR 7), but no respondent rejects the compliment.

CCR 11: 你也会做得很好的。[returning]
Ni yehui zuode henhao de.
You will also do very well.

CCR 12: 没事，回头我教你。[offering]
Meishi, huitou wo jiao ni.
No big deal. I will tell you how to do it.

CCR 13: 过奖了，还有很多需要完善的地方。[denigrating+R-explaining]
Guojiang le, haiyou henduo xuyao wanshan de difang.
You over praised me. There still leaves much room for improvement.

CCR 14: 乱弄的，其实自己也糊里糊涂的。[denigrating+R-explaining]
Luannong de, qishi ziji ye hulihutu de.
I'm poorly prepared. Actually I am still rather confused about it.

ECR 5: Thanks. I am so glad to know it is enjoyable. [thanking+expressing gladness]

ECR 6: I really put a lot of efforts into it. [A-explaining]

ECR 7: Really? I hope it won't bore you. [seeking confirmation+denigrating]

4. CR strategies in compliment on *possession*

Responses to compliments on possession do not vary much. 64% and 69% of responses are accepting the compliments in CQ (CCR 15-16) and EQ (ECR 8) respectively. CQ manifests more *Rejecting* but less *Deflecting/Evading* strategies than those in EQ.

CCR 15: 谢谢你的夸奖！你将来的车肯定比这更好。[thanking+encouraging]
Xiexie nide kuajiang! Ni jianglai de che kending bi zhe genghao.
Thank you for your compliment! Your car will be better than this one.

CCR 16: 这车真是不错，不然我也不会选它呀！[agreeing+A-explanation]
Zhe che zhenshi bucuo, buran wo ye buhui xuan ta ya!
This car is really not bad. Otherwise I wouldn't have bought it.

ECR 8: Thank you! This phone is very inexpensive, indeed. [thanking+A-explaining]

ECR 9: Well, you know. I only use part of them. I still cannot figure out all of them. [D-explaining]

B. Combination Strategies

Combination strategies are also tabulated in Table 1. They can be combinations within categories of *Accepting*, *Deflecting/Evading*, and *Rejecting* strategies. However, different from Chen's (1993) and Chen and Yang (2010), combination strategies crossing categories are also found in responses.

1. Combination strategies within category

According to Table 1 and Table 2, both CQ and EQ exhibit combination strategies within Accepting strategies. Fig. 1 shows the contrasting features between data elicited from two DCT tasks. Generally, the participants employ more *Accepting* combination strategies in English than in Chinese.

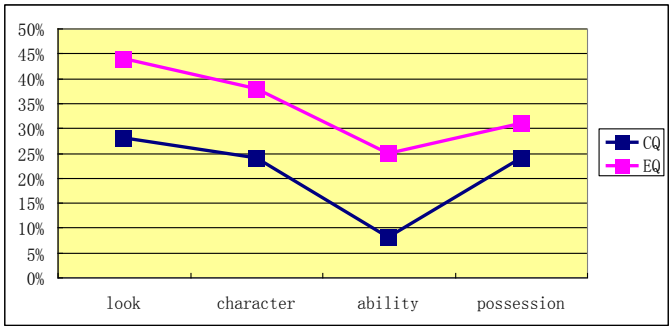


Fig. 1 Accepting combination strategies in CQ and EQ

According to Fig. 2, combination strategies within *Deflecting/Evading* strategies are adopted moderately in EQ, but not found in CQ. In contrast, Fig. 3 shows that there are no *Rejecting* combination strategies in EQ, but some are found in CQ.

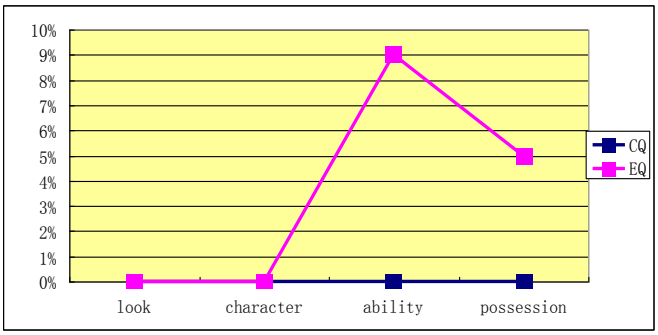


Fig. 2 Deflecting/Evading combination strategies in CQ and EQ

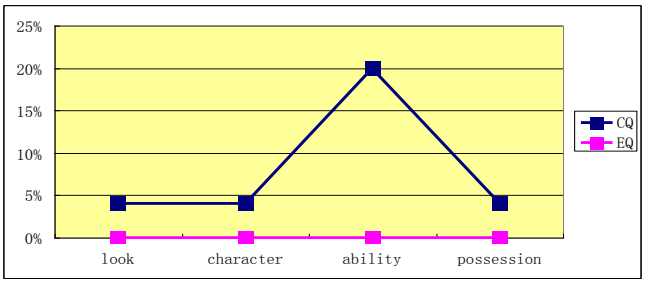


Fig. 3 Rejecting combination strategies in CQ and EQ

2. Cross-category combination strategies

Besides combination strategies within categories, cross-category strategies are commonly employed in different settings. From Fig. 4, it can be inferred that the participants use more cross-category strategies in CQ than in EQ. Several combinations are found: *Seeking Confirmation* + *Returning*, *Thanking* + *Seeking Confirmation*, *Thanking* + *Denigrating*, *Thanking*+ *R-explaining*, *Deflecting* + *Agreeing*, etc. Some examples (CCR 17-22 and ECR 10-14) are listed below, which due to space constraint are not exhaustive.

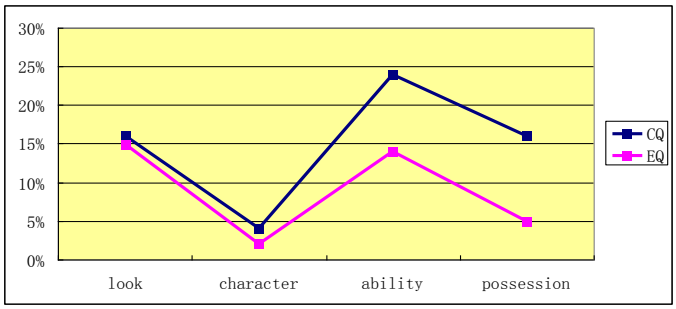


Fig. 4 Cross-category combination strategies in CQ and EQ

CCR 17: 啊，真的啊？谢谢。你也气色相当好呢。[seeking confirmation+thanking+returning]
A, zhende a? xiexie. Ni ye qise xiangdang hao ne.
Oh, really? Thank you. You also look great.

CCR 18: 真的呀？你也更漂亮了。[seeking confirmation+returning]
Zhende ya? Ni ye geng piaoliang le.
Really? You also look more beautiful.

CCR 19: 是吗？谢谢。你也行的。[seeking confirmation+thanking+returning]
Shi ma? Xiexie. Ni ye xing de.
Really? Thanks. You can also do an excellent job.

CCR 20: 哪里！你就是没做，你做的话比我做得好多了！[denigrating+returning]
Nali! Ni jiushi mei zuo, ni zuo de hua bi wo zuode hao duo le!
No! You did not do it. If you had, you would have done much better than me.

CCR 21: 谢谢！我这也是被逼出来的呀！在这种情况下，你也会像我一样，甚至比我做得更好的。[thanking+D-explaining+returning]
Xiexie! Wo zhe yeshi bei bi chulai de ya! Zai zhezhong qingkuang xia, ni yehui xiang wo yiyang, shenzhi bi wo zuo de genghao de.
Thank you! This is merely result under pressure. If you were in the same situation, you could also do as well as I do, if no better than me.

CCR 22: 谢谢，也不是什么好车。[thanking+denigrating]
Xiexie, ye bushi shenme hao che.
Thanks, but it's not that good car.

ECR 10: Thanks, actually I'd prefer to be more casual. [thanking+R-explaining]
ECR 11: Really? I didn't like it the first time I saw it. [seeking confirmation+R-explaining]
ECR 12: Really? I didn't like it the first time I saw it. [seeking confirmation+denigrating]
ECR 13: I was a little nervous. Did I speak clearly? [D-explaining+seeking confirmation]
ECR 14: Really? Oh, thank you. I like your dress. You're gorgeous today. [seeking confirmation+thanking+returning]

V. Discussion

A. *Comparison between CQ and EQ in Four Situations*

Man-Whitney *U* procedure is run to compare participants' means of CRs and decide whether CQ and EQ display significantly different CRs in four settings. The result shows that there are significant differences between CQ and EQ in responding to compliments on *character* (*SD*=.668, *t*=.008<.05) and *ability* (*SD*=1.196, *t*=.000<.05), but there are no significant differences in CRs in *look* and *possession*, which is show in Fig. 6.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Sig. (2-tailed)
Look	66	1.52	1.113	1	4	.407
	n1=25	1.64				
	n2=41	1.44				
Character	79	1.20	.668	1	4	.008
	n1=25	1.40				
	n2=54	1.11				
Ability	72	1.92	1.196	1	4	.000
	n1=25	2.72				
	n2=47	1.49				
Possession	67	1.57	.957	1	4	.370
	n1=25	1.80				
	n2=42	1.43				

Fig. 6 Different strategies used in four situations CQ & EQ
Note: n1= number of responses from Chinese version questionnaire
n2= number of responses from English version questionnaire
1=accepting strategy 2=deflecting strategy 3=rejecting strategy 4=cross category strategy

The result can be explained by Leech's Agreement Maxim and Modesty Maxim (Leech, 1983) and *Accepting* strategies are considered to observe Agreement Maxim, while *Rejecting* strategies observe Modesty Maxim. Explained this way, modesty is manifested by lowering oneself, and thus elevating the other party. Chen and Yang (2010) claimed a different interpretation of modesty based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Complimenter's linguistic behavior needs to protect and enhance his or her own face as much as the complimentee's. Modesty is exhibited in a manner which protects one's socially recognized self-image. Following this line, rejecting compliments can be considered as protecting complimentee's own face (Chen and Yang, 2010).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face wants are a person's expectations that his/her public self-image is respected by others. Looked in this light, a complimenter wants to satisfy one's face wants by complimenting on the complimentee. Furthermore, Agreeing strategies are seen as enhancing the complimenter's positive face—the want to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by others. Therefore, complimentee's agreeing with the complimenter is much motivated by the desire to save complimenter's positive face. In this study, good look and possession of nice things are viewed as desired aspects of one's face. However, when responding to compliments on one's *character* and *ability*, respondents employ quite different strategies. Deflecting/Evading strategies (12% and 4% in CQ, 0% and 11% in EQ) and Rejecting strategies (8% and 48% in CQ, 0% in EQ) are more employed in CQ than in EQ. This can be explained by deeply rooted modesty ideology in Chinese. When responding in Chinese, the participants use more symbolic Chinese way of showing modesty (e.g., 哪里 nail，哪里 nali；过奖了 guojiang le), which they find no appropriate counterparts in English speech community. Simply replying "No" may threaten the complimenter's positive face. Therefore, the typical Rejecting strategies find their good places in Chinese, but not observed in English. Nice character and competence are also aspects of positive face, but responses in Chinese manifest a tendency of employing significantly more Deflecting/Evading strategies and Rejecting strategies than in English, which suggests that modesty is highly valued aspect of positive face.

B. A Longitudinal Comparison

There has been extensive research on Chinese compliments and CRs. Here, a comparison is made between the present study and several previous studies with Chinese participants involved. It is worthwhile to note that the all the previous four studies are conducted in Chinese among Chinese participants. The present research investigates CRs in both Chinese and English. In order to facilitate comparison chronologically, the results are all presented in Fig. 5.

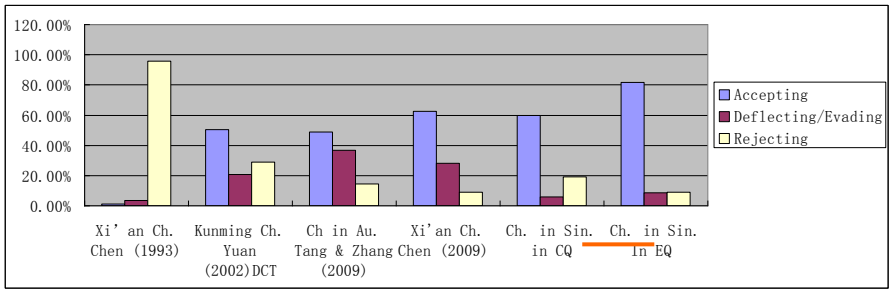


Fig. 5. Comparison of Chinese CR strategies in previous studies and present study
Note
Ch.=Chinese, Au=Australia, Sin=Singapore
*To make the comparison possible and the result clear, the cross-category strategies are not calculated herein.

The changes observed in several studies, spanning 17 years, are featured by a general trend of increase in the use of *Accepting* strategies, and a decrease in *Rejecting* strategies; *Deflecting/Evading* strategies display an increase from Chen (1993) to Tang and Zhang (2009) and a decrease in Chen and Yang (2010) and the present study. Compliments and CRs act as a "mirror of cultural values" (Manes, 1983, p. 96; cf. Lorenzo-Dus, 2001, p. 108), then the changes in CRs during the past 17 years among different Chinese groups in different parts in the world reflect a certain shift in cultural values.

Chen and Yang (2010) have attributed the change to the influx of western culture coupled with business, tourism, and technology. Though in Tang and Zhang's (2009) study, compared with Australians, Chinese tend to employ *Deflecting/Evading* strategies rather than Accepting strategies, their study, however, is also in line with the general tendency observed in the studies chronologically.

It is noteworthy that in the previous studies Chinese—the participants' mother tongue—is used in DCT, whereas, in the present study, Chinese and English are used in two DCTs among the same group of participants. The different languages also elicit different responses among them. This is not surprising, because while collecting the EQ, the researcher was told by several participants that when responding in English, they tended to think in English, which explains the divergence in result among the same group of people.

VI. Conclusion

This study aims at finding out whether the Chinese-English bilinguals will respond to compliments on look, character, ability, and possession differently in Chinese and English, using DCT as data collection method. Results show that different language media do result in different strategies employed in CRs in the four situations. Furthermore, a longitudinal comparison is made among the present study and previous studies involving Chinese respondents. The general tendency in the studies can be attributed to changes in people's values.

The study demonstrates that in Chinese CRs, there is a growing use of *Agreeing* strategies over a 17-year period, which is motivated to protect the complimenter's positive face. This tendency is observed from studies carried out since 1993 by Chen till present day. However, compared with people of other speech communities (e.g., Australians in Tang & Zhang, 2009), Chinese still value modesty as good virtue, by adopting *Rejecting* strategies and *Deflecting/Evading* strategies. The present study serves as a good comparison, on the same group of participants, between different language communities.

However, there are several limitations in the present study. First of all, the number of participants is small, resulting in a relatively less varied data. Thus generalization should be exercised with caution. Secondly, DCT data collection method is still controversial. This study is only an attempt to add a further dimension in the study of CRs among Chinese participants.

References

[1] Beebe, L.M., Cummings, M.C. (1996). Natural speech act data versus written questionnaire data: how data collection method affect speech act performance. In: Gass, S.M., Neu, J. (Eds.), *Speech acts across cultures Challenges to communication in a second language* (pp. 65-86). Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
[2] Brown, P. and Levinson, S.C. (1987). Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
[3] Chen, R. (1993). Responding to compliments: a contrastive study of politeness strategies between American English and Chinese speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics, 20*, 49-75.
[4] Chen, R. and Yang, D. (2010). Responding to compliments in Chinese: Has it changed? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, (7), 1951-1963.
[5] Clark, H.H. and Bangerter, A. (2004). Changing ideas about reference. In I.A.Noveck & D. Sperber (Eds.), *Experimental Pragmatics (Palgrave Studies in Pragmatics, Language and Cognition)* (pp.25-49). Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills.
[6] Golato, A. (2003). Studying compliment responses: a comparison of DCTs and recordings of naturally occurring talk. *Applied Linguistics, 24(1)*, 90-121.
[7] Herbert, P.K. (1986). Say "thank you"—or something. American Speech, 61, 76-88.
[8] Herbert, P.K. (1989). The ethnography of English compliment and compliment response: a contrastive sketch. In: W. Oleksy (Eds.), *Contrastive Pragmatics* (pp. 3-35). John Benjamins, Amsterdam.
[9] Hobbs, P., (2003). The medium is the message: Politeness strategies in men's and women's voice mail messages. *Journal of Pragmatics, 35 (2)*, 243-262.
[10] Holmes, J. (1988). Paying compliments: a sex preferential politeness strategy. *Journal of Pragmatics, 12 (4)*, 445-465.
[11] Holmes, J. (1995). Women, Men and Politeness. Longman, London.
[12] Jucker, A. H. (2009). Speech act research between armchair, field and laboratory. The case of compliments. *Journal of Pragmatics, 41*, 1611-1635.
[13] Leech, G.N. (1983). Principles of Pragmatics. Longman, London.
[14] Lorenzo-Dus, N. (2001). Compliment responses among British and Spanish university students. *Journal of Pragmatics, 33*, 101-127.
[15] Pomerantz, A. (1978). Compliment responses: notes on the co-operation of multiple constraints. In J. Schenkein (Eds.), *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction* (pp. 79-112). Academic Press, New York.
[16] Tang, C. and Zhang, G. (2009). A contrastive study of compliment responses among Australian English and Mandarin Chinese speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics, 41*, 325-345.
[17] Trosborg, A. (1994). Interlanguage Pragmatics. Requests, complaints and apologies. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
[18] Yuan, Y. (2001). An inquiry into empirical pragmatics data-gathering methods. *Journal of Pragmatics, 33*, 271-292.

Xuehua An was born in Jilin, China, 1979. She got both her Bachelor's degree and Master's Degree in Dalian University of Technology. Her major is Foreign Language and Linguistics. From 2009 to 2010, she furthered education in National Institute of Education, in Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, from where her academic journey embarked.

She is now a lecturer in School of Foreign Languages in Dalian University of Technology. Her research interests include teaching English as a second language, English for academic purpose, pragmatics.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1063-1071, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1063-1071

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Discursive (De-) Legitimation Construction of Egyptian Revolution in Persian Media

Bahador Sadeghi
Department of English, Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch, Takestan, Iran

Vahid Jalali
Department of English, Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch, Takestan, Iran

***Abstract*—This article seeks to explore discursive strategies applied in Fars News to represent the event of Egyptian revolution as a positive/legitimized action and Hosni Mubarak's regime as the negative/delegitimized other. Van Leeuwen's (2008) model of legitimation is used to show how Fars News applies the legitimation discursive construction, including four main categories of ''authorization'', ''evaluation'', ''rationalization'', and ''mythopoesis'' to legitimize Egyptian revolution. This article also tries to see how this news agency tries to delegitimize Mubarak's regime by using such discursive strategies. The researchers aim to reveal how Fars News network is using language in order to legitimize or delegitimize a single event. Also, the research will argue how using certain discursive strategies of language can affect people's mind in a way that might be in line with the policies and guidelines of a specific news agency. The study shows that Fars News put more focus on legitimizing Egyptian revolution than delegitimizing Hosni Mubarak's regime, and for the purpose of persuading its audiences to take the revolution as a good event and Mubarak as the evil since it has mostly utilized "authorization" as the most influential legitimating category. And among the subcategories of legitimation, Fars News has made use of "personal authority" more frequently.**

***Index Terms*—CDA, legitimation discursive strategies, Fars News, Egyptian revolution, Mubarak's regime**

I. Introduction

In recent era, the discourse of the media is going to represent the events in dichotomous ways to serve vested interest. In this sense, promoting certain representations using discursive strategies of legitimation has been made it feasible in the discourse of political issues (Chilton, 2004). Different countries through their representative news agencies make their best attempts to deliver pre-packed news so that their people would develop trust in what their favorite government bestow them as realities happening around the world. Bacue and Burgoon (2003) assert "One of the time-honored canons of persuasion is that establishing ethos or credibility facilitates social influence. The more favorably a communicator is regarded, the greater the opportunity to influence others". In doing so, there has to be negative/bad other to justify the actions conducted by the side who claims to be the lawful one. The state-run news agencies, as that of Fars News, are good examples the way the stances of a government affects the way a global news event is represented.

As Van Leeuwen (2008) explains, there are several categories through which an event, as that of Egyptian Revolution and Mubarak's regime, can be illustrated as positive / legitimized or negative / delegitimized. Van Leeuwen (2008) four broad categories in (de-)legitimation are authorization, evaluation, rationalization, and mythopoesis. Also, these four encompass several subcategories.

Using the discursive categories of (de-)legitimation proposed by Van Leeuwen (2008), this study delves in to some news articles published in Fars News Agency to see how (de-)legitimatory discursive strategies have been applied in (de)legitimizing Egyptian Revolution and Mubarak's regime.

A. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is one of the fields of studies in discourse which has been considered since 1970s. As pointed by Van Dijk (2007) "CDA was originally introduced in a seminal book by Roger Fowler, Gunther Kress, Bob Hodge and Tony Trew, Language and Control (1979), and later developed by Norman Fairclough (1989) in the UK, Ruth Wodak (1989) in Austria and Teun A. van Dijk (1993) in the Netherlands (for introduction, see, e.g., Wodak& Meyer, 2001). Van Dijk in Handbook of Discourse Analysis (Tannen, Schiffrin, & Hamilton, 2001, p. 352) defines CDA as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power, abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context".

These days, scholars as Wodak (2002) believe that CDA is applied to refer more particularly to the critical linguistic approach of scholars who find the larger discursive unit of text to be the basic unit of communication. For analyzing

these units of communication as units of discourse Fairclough(1989) in "Language and Power" determines three levels for CDA, the three stages of CDA are "*description* of text, *interpretation* of the relationship between text and interaction, and *explanation* of the relationship between interaction and social context". Also, Rahimi and Riasati (2011) know discourse as a form of language use and they define discourse analysis as an analytical framework for examining units of communication.

B. Critical Discourse Analysis in Media

According to Habermas's (1973) critical theory, CDA tries to help the analyst understand social problems that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships. The intended ideologies are injected to the minds of the targeted public through written materials we encounter in our daily and professional lives (like newspapers or materials published on the internet). In other words, Critical Discourse Analysis puts focus on how language as a cultural tool mediates relationships of power and privilege in social interactions, institutions, and bodies of knowledge (Bourdieu, 1977).

As Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to "show how the apparently neutral, purely informative discourses of newspaper reporting, government publications, social science reports, and so on, may in fact convey ideological attitudes, just as much as discourses which more explicitly editorialize or propagandize" (Anthonissen, 2001), news networks and the medias aim at having their audiences' skepticism about what happens in the world turned into what they desire to be seen, using manipulative discursive strategies like (de-) legitimation of events.

As we have high expectations and considerable evidence that discursive devices in today's world have an undeniable effect on the way realities are being represented, this study tries to explore the way in which a news agency uses the specific discursive strategy of (de-)legitimation to represent good and evil.

C. Legitimation

Legitimation is one of the discursive strategies used for manipulating an event in a way that serves the news writer interests. For delegitimizing one bad other as Jan Chovanec(2010) indicates, negative face of them is presented implicitly or explicitly to put them against the good other and persuade the audience not to follow the evil (p.62). Habermas (1988) points to Max Weber's idea that legitimate authority can lead us 'to the connection between belief in the legitimacy of orders [Ordnungen] and their potential for justification, on the one hand, and to their factual validity on the other' (p.95).Weber and Habermas believe that legitimacy is where the facts (facto validity) and norms (normative validity of values) come together and get merged (Steffek, 2003). Although scholars as Habermas, Weber and Wodak are famous writers on the idea of legitimacy, the concept of legitimacy in modern world has been developed by other authors as well as Van Leeuwen whose model of legitimation has been applied in developing this study to see how Egyptian revolution and Mubarak's regime are (de-)legitimized in news reported by Fars News agency.

D. CDA in Language Teaching

Considering the role played by discourse in pedagogical issues, as noted in Cots(2006),one can see the critical approach which can be used in classroom settings in line with a view of education which aims at extension of students' capacity to examine and make judgments about the world around them and, if necessary, to make suitable changes. For providing reasons for the relationships among, society, power, identity, ideology, politics, and culture, CDA has been applied as a fundamental regulation in education (Rahimi&Riasati, 2011). Nevertheless, this view of language and education respectively are all too often absent from foreign language programs.

In opposition to usual utilitarian views of education whose goal is to equip students as thoroughly as possible with just fluency in language, one could see an alternative list by Van Lier (1996), including a set of 'lifelong learning skills' as goals of education: (a) deal with the unexpected, (b) make informed choices, (c) develop sharp observational skills, (d) construct useful knowledge in one's interaction with the world, and(e) be guided by internal values, convictions, and reasons.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Instruments

The corpus of this analysis is composed of some 20 pieces of news chosen randomly from FARS NEWS network published during the Egyptian Revolution. This news agency was chosen because of the fact that it is a true representative of Iran government's views on world's issues and that we usually find Iran as the proponent of Islamic awareness and on the opposite side of dictatorship.

B. Procedure

Through the selection of some 20 pieces of news chosen randomly from Fars News, comparing different ways in which an event like that of Egyptian Revolution is represented to serve vested interests is possible. The concept of critical discourse analysis and the analytical framework of Van Leeuwen (2008) are employed to clarify the representation of Egyptian Revolution in the above mentioned news agency.

C. Data Analysis

Frequencies of using various categories of (de-)legitimation have been counted to show the degree to which systematic use is made out of these various strategies of (de-)legitimation and also to find which one of these strategies is used most frequently.

As in discourse several discursive strategies are being used to achieve (de-) legitimation, Van Leeuwen (2008) analytical framework describes the following discursive strategies used in (de-)legitimizing:

Authorization: It is subdivided to 'personal authority', 'impersonal authority', 'expert authority', 'role model authority', 'authority of tradition' and 'authority of conformity'.

Personal authority: In this type of authority "legitimate authority is vested in people because of their status or role in a particular institution, e.g., parents and teachers in the case of children. Such authorities then need not invoke any justification for what they require others to do other than a mere 'because I say so,' although in practice they may of course choose to provide reasons and arguments"(Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.106).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

به گزارش خبرگزاري فارس، در پاسخ به فراخوان اين جنبش مصري، "محمد البرادعي " مدير كل سابق آژانس بين‌المللي انرژي اتمي نيز از آن حمايت و تاكيد كرد كه وي با قدرت از اين تظاهرات حمايت مي‌كند.(Fars News, 89/11/05)

*Here, 'Mohammed ElBradehi' as an authority is expresses that he will support people in Egyptian revolution.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

ابوالعز الحريري تاكيد كرد: حسني مبارك مي گويد كه مي خواهد از قدرت كناره گيري كند اما از بروز هرج و مرج در كشور بيم دارد ما به او مي گوييم كه اساس هرج و مرج ناشي از ادامه رژيم كنوني است.(Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here, 'ElHariry' conveyed that Mubarak is the basic reason for the anarchy happening in Egypt.

Expert Authority: In this type of authority "legitimacy is provided by expertise rather than status'' (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 107).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

تحليلگران معتقدند كه به احتمال فراوان مردم مصر و حوادث اين كشور نيز دنباله‌رو حوادث اخير تونس باشد كه عليه استبداد حاكم بر اين كشور قيام كردند.(Fars News, 89/11/05)

*Here, 'analysts' as a group of experts show Egyptian revolution as the movement against the current autarchy, so they are delegitimizing Mubarak's regime by calling it autarchy.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

همچنين مشاور رسانه‌اي رئيس حزب الوفد نيز در گفت‌وگو با الجزيره تاكيد كرد كه امروز ثابت شد كه مبارك فاقد مشروعيت سياسي است.(Fars News, 89/11/12)

*Here, the media consultant of the chief of ElVafd party as an expert said that Mubarak's illegitimacy was proved.

Role Model Authority: In this type of authority, "people follow the example of role models or opinion leaders." (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.107).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

مصر[حوادث اين كشور نيز دنباله‌رو حوادث اخير تونس باشد كه عليه استبداد حاكم بر اين كشور قيام كردند.](Fars News, 89/11/05)

*Here, it is said that Egyptian revolution is the consequence of Tunis latest events against autarchy, so Tunis movement is known as a role model for Egyptians.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

*No example was found for this category.

Impersonal Authority:"There is also the impersonal authority of laws, rules, and regulations. The answer to the unspoken "why" question is then "because the laws (the rules, the policies, the guidelines, etc.) say so" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 107).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

*No example was found for this category.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

تظاهرات كنندگان در ميان التحرير اعلام كردند تا زماني كه "حسني مبارك" محاكمه نشود، اين ميدان را ترك نخواهند كرد.(Fars News, 89/11/22)

*Here, the protestors know Mubarak as an offender who must be judged by the court.

*The Authority of Tradition:*In this type of authority, "the implicit or explicit answer to the "why" question is not 'because it is compulsory,' but 'because this is what we always do'." (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 107).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

جوانان همانند ملت مصر صبور و منتظر گذر زمانند و اگر حسني مبارك لجوج است بايد بداند كه ملت مصر داراي پيشينه تاريخي هفت هزار سال بردباري و اصرار بر خواسته‌هايشان است.(Fars News, 89/11/20)

*Here, it is pointing to seven thousands-year history of Egyptians that they always insist on their demands patiently.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

نهضت آزادي‌بخشي كه در مصر شاهد و ناظر آن هستيم نفرت همگاني از 30 سال خيانت مبارك است. (Fars News, 89/11/22)

*This statement says that Mubarak has been a traitor for 30 years, so he has never been a loyalist to his country.

*The Authority of Conformity:*In this type of conformity, "the answer to the "why" question is not "because that's what we always do," but "because that's what everybody else does" or "because that's what most people do." (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.107).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

فعال سياسي مصر در ادامه گفت: ما از همه نيروهاي سياسي كه در زمينه ساقط كردن رژيم مبارك و نظم بخشيدن به وضعيت سياسي كشور تلاش كند استقبال مي‌كنيم زيرا همه ما مصري هستيم و بايد درباره اين خواسته‌ها با يكديگر همكاري كرده و متحد شويم. (Fars News, 89/11/20)

*This statement is emphasizing on unity among all Egyptians in stopping Mubarak's regime to get their requests.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

وي در تشريح خواسته‌هاي عمومي افزود: نخست ما مي‌خواهيم كه حكومت تغيير كند. (Fars News, 89/11/20)

*Here, the person for explaining the public demands says, "first of all, we want the government to be changed." So, that is the every body's request.

Moral Evaluation: As Van Leeuwen (2008) states, in moral evaluation we seeks for values rather than some established authority by which some actions are (de-)legitimized. It is subdivided to 'evaluation', 'abstraction' and 'analogy' (p.109).

Evaluation: Here we deal with values and evaluative adjectives. For example we have adjectives such as "normal," "natural," "golden," and so on to legitimize actions (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 110).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

ماالكنوندربرابرانقلابملیوواقعیملتمصرقراردارىم. (Fars News, 89/11/18)

*Here the adjectives ''national and real'' are used to describe Egyptian revolution positively.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

وي افزود: انقلاب مردم مصر همچنان ادامه دارد و اقشار مختلف جامعه مصر حقوق سلب شده خود را از حاكمان فاسد خواهند گرفت. (Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here, the adjective " corrupted " is used to describe the rulers of Egypt (Mubarak's regime) negatively.

Abstraction: "Abstraction" is another way in which moral evaluation can be applied. "Abstraction" can be used by "referring to practices (or to one or more of their component actions or reactions) in abstract ways that "moralize" them by distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 111).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution and delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

سران مصر ثروت و داراييهاي مردم مصر را به غارت برده‌اند و ملت مصر حقوق خود را بازپس خواهد گرفت. (Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here by asserting that heads of Mubarak's regime have stolen all Egyptians' properties, the quality of making Mubarak's regime as the bad other and legitimizing Egyptians' revolution in regaining their wasted rights can be distilled.

Analogies: Here the answer to the question "Why must I do this?" or "Why must I do this in this way?" is "because it is like another activity which is associated with positive values", or in the case of negative comparison, "because it is not like another activity which is associated with negative values"). (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.111)

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

انقلاب مصر با انقلاب اسلامي ايران تشابهات زيادي دارد و اين در حالي است كه بيگانگان سعي در تحريف اين انقلاب و اقتصادي كردن آن دارند.(Fars News, 89/11/22)

*Here an analogy (a comparison) is made between Egyptian revolution and Iran Islamic Revolution to legitimize it as an Islamic movement not an economic one.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

مردم مصر به خائني چون "مبارك" نيازي ندارند.(Fars News, 89/11/13)

*Here Mubarak is called the same as a traitor, so he is delegitimized in this way.

Rationalization: ''Rationalization that is legitimation by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action and to the knowledge that society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity." (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 106)

According to Van Leeuwen (2008), rationalization is subdivided into two main types, *Instrumental* rationalization with three sub-categories for instrumentality: goal-oriented instrumentality, means-oriented instrumentality and effect-oriented instrumentality through which practices are legitimized, *Theoretical* rationality which legitimizes practices by referring to natural order of things in a much more explicit way than the kinds of naturalization found in moral evaluation. Three subcategories associated with theoretical rationalization are: definition, explanation and prediction (p.113).

Goal-oriented instrumentality: In goal-oriented instrumentality " purposes are constructed as 'in people' as conscious or unconscious motives, aims, intentions, goals, etc." (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 114) and "the formula is I do x in order to do (or be, or have) y" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 114).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

هزاران مصري امروز 25 ژانويه در سالروز تاريخي اين كشور در مبارزه به استعمار انگليس به خيابان‌هاي قاهره پايتخت مصر ريختند.(Fars News, 89/11/05)

*Here asserts that rioters have rushed into streets *in order to* stand against England.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

تا سقوط رژيم مبارك، سازش و توافقي صورت نخواهد گرفت.(Fars News, 89/11/15)

*Here asserts that Egyptians will continue their protests *in order to* pull Mubarak's regime down.

Means-oriented instrumentality: Here the purpose is constructed as "in the action," and the action as a means to an end. The formula is then either "I achieve doing (or being, or having) y by x-ing"or"x-ing serves to achieve being (or doing, or having) y". (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.114).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

*No example was found for this category.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

ميليون‌ها مصري در سراسر مصر با برگزاري تظاهرات خواستار پايان حكومت حسني مبارك بر اين كشور شدند.(Fars News, 89/11/12)

*Here the action (protesting) which is the real purpose, serves as a means to achieve another goal that is getting to the end of Mubarak's regime.

Effect-oriented instrumentality:"Effect orientation, finally, stresses the outcome of actions. Here, purposefulness is looked at from the other end, as something that turned out to exist in hindsight, rather than as something that was, or could have been, planned beforehand. And the purpose is the outcome of an action. The crucial matter in this type of legitimation is that there is no identity between the agent of the action, whose purpose is to be constructed, and the agent of the action that constitutes the purpose itself." (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 114)

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

*No example was found for this category.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

حسني مبارك مي گويد كه مي خواهد از قدرت كناره گيري كند اما از بروز هرج و مرج در كشور بيم دارد ما به او مي گوييم كه اساس هرج و مرج ناشي از ادامه رژيم كنوني است.(Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here the current existing chaos in Egypt is the outcome of the action (continuance of Mubarak's regime) which is the fundamental reason for the existing disorder among people.

Theoretical rationalization: According to theoretical rationalization, legitimation is "grounded not in whether the action is morally justified or not, nor in whether it is purposeful or effective, but in whether it is founded on some kind of truth, on "the way things are" "(Van Leeuwen, 2008,p.116).

Typically, there are three forms associated with theoretical rationalization: definition, explanation and prediction.

Definition: in which one activity is defined in terms of another, moralized activity. For a definition to be a definition, both activities must be objectivated and generalized, and the link between them must either be attributive ("is," "constitutes," etc.) or significative ("means," "signals," "symbolizes," etc.) (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 116).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

سيدحسن نصراللهقيام مردم مصر را قيامي برخاسته از بطن مردم اين كشور دانست(Fars News, 89/11/18)

*Here the Egyptian revolution is defined and legitimized as something from amongst of people.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

رژيم مبارك، مانعي بسيار بزرگ در راه پيشرفت ملت مصر و تحقق خواسته‌هاي آن است.(Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here Mubarak's regime is being defined as an obstacle against Egyptians wills and demands and is delegitimized subsequently.

Explanation: In explanation, it is not the practice which is defined or characterized, but one or more of the actors involved in the practice. Here the answer to the "why" question is: "because doing things this way is appropriate to the nature of these actors." Explanations describe general attributes or habitual activities of the categories of actors in question (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.116).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

با اين حال حضور جوانان مصري در اين انقلاب از اهيمت ديگري برخوردار است و به همين دليل است كه ما مي‌گوييم در برابر يك انقلاب واقعي قرار داريم كه نتيجه خواست و اراده و عزم ملت مصر است.(Fars News, 89/11/18)

*Here a feature/attribute of Egyptian revolution is explained a real revolution and is legitimized because it is the result of the demands and wills of Egyptian nation in which the participation of the youth has got significant.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

نخست ما مي‌خواهيم كه حكومت تغيير كند سپس انتخابات برگزار شود چرا كه پارلمان كنوني ديگر مشروعيت ندارد و به دنبال تقلب گسترده فعاليت خود را شروع كرد.(Fars News, 89/11/20)

*Here people are willing to change the government because in their opinion, the current parliament has started its work with cheating people and is not legitimized any more.

Prediction: Although predictions have a ring of authority about them, they are meant to be based not on authority, but on expertise, and they can therefore be denied by contrary experience, at least in principle" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.116).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

وفيق مصطفى افزود: انقلاب مردم مصر همچنان ادامه دارد و اقشار مختلف جامعه مصر حقوق سلب شده خود را از حاكمان فاسد خواهند گرفت. (Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here the expert is predicting that Egyptian people will get their wasted rights from the corrupted rulers. In this way, it is legitimizing Egyptian revolution in demanding their rights.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

وي گفت: سران مصر ثروت و داراييهاي مردم مصر را به غارت بردهاند و ملت مصر حقوق خود را بازپس خواهد گرفت و هيچ يك از مسئولان رژيم مبارك نخواهند توانست از اين وضعيت فرار كنند.(Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here the expert predicts that there will be no way out for heads of Mubarak's regime and people will get their lost rights. It means that heads of Mubarak's regime and therefore Mubarak are delegitimized as the thefts of people rights.

Mythopoesis: Van Leeuwen (2008) asserts that another way to legitimize a practice is through storytelling (p.117). Regarding to Van Leeuwen's (2008) categories of legitimation, mythopoesis is subcategorized as moral tale, cautionary tale, single determination and over determination. Mythopoesis applies narratives in which "outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non-legitimate actions" (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p.92).

Moral tale: "In moral tales, protagonists are rewarded for engaging in legitimate social practices or restoring the legitimate order" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.117).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

مردم مصر به دليل سرنگوني مبارك در شادي و خوشحالي هستند. (Fars News, 89/11/22)

*Here joy and happiness as the result of Mubarak's destruction is the reward of Egyptians' revolution.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

*No example was found.

Cautionary tales: "Cautionary tales, on the other hand, convey what will happen if you do not conform to the norms of social practices. Their protagonists engage in deviant activities that lead to unhappy endings" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.118). Here the unhappy ending is the salient matter that happens due to the protagonist's misconduct (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.118).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

*No example was found.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

در حالي كه مردم مصر به دليل سرنگوني مبارك در شادي و خوشحالي هستند، تظاهرات كنندگان در ميان التحرير اعلام كردند تا زماني كه "حسني مبارك" محاكمه نشود، اين ميدان را ترك نخواهند كرد. (Fars News, 89/11/22)

*Here Mubarak is downed at last, and because of his actions during his governance, people are willing him to be judged.

Single determination: Regarding mythopoesis, when we have a narration which represent events (whether to legitimize or delegitimize them) in a fairly straightforward way then we are dealing with single determination (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.118).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

*No example was found.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

ميليونها مصري در سراسر مصر با برگزاري تظاهرات خواستار پايان حكومت حسني مبارك بر اين كشور شدند. (Fars News, 89/11/12)

*This statement has no personal narrative and only is stating that millions of Egyptians from all around the Egypt are demanding the end of Mubarak's regime by protesting.

Overdetermination: Overdetermination is divided in to "inversion" and "symbolization".

Inversion: In "inversion" we have "actors and/or actions inverted in terms of specific semantic features" (Van Leeuwen, 2008,p.118).

Examples:

No example was found.

Symbolization: Here, stories/narrations "use symbolic actions, specific actions that can nevertheless represent more than one domain of institutionalized social practice" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, 119).

Examples:

To legitimize Egyptian revolution:

مردم مصر نيازمند رهبري كسي چون "جمال عبدالناصر " هستند كه هيچگاه به سازش با رژيم صهيونيستي تن نداد و نماد يك رهبر مقاومت عربي بود.مردم لبنان و مصريهاي مقيم اين كشور با استفاده از عكسهاي جمال عبدالناصر كه براي همه عربها نماد ملي‌گرايي و مبارزه با صهيونيست‌ها بوده،

خواستار حمايت ملتهاي عربي از انديشه‌هاي ملي‌گرايانه وي هستند تا سكوت دولتهاي عربي در قبال تجاوزهاي پياپي رژيم صهيونيستي و نيز سركوب تظاهرات مردمي در مصر توسط رژيم مبارك را درهم بشكنند.(Fars News, 89/11/13)

*Here "Jamal Abdolnaser" is mentioned as a symbol of a nationalist leader, and Egyptians want a leader like Jamal Abdolnaser rather than a traitor like Mubarak.

To delegitimize Mubarak's regime:

خبرگزاري فارس: الهلباوي در گفت و گو با شبكه بي بي سي فارسي در پاسخ به اين سئوال مجري كه وزير امورخارجه مصر اظهارات رهبر انقلاب را رد كرده گفت: وزير خارجه كنوني مشروعيت ندارد ضمن اينكه وي بايد از رهبر ايران بدليل موضع‌گيري كه در قبال انقلاب مصر داشته سپاسگزار باشد. (Fars News, 89/11/17)

*Here the use of the word "foreign affair minister of Egypt" who is delegitimized by "Elhalbavy" symbolizes all those individuals who are present in Mubarak's government and Mubarak himself.

III. Results and Discussion

This article seeks to achieve two goals. The first goal investigated in this study is how Fars News agency attempts to legitimate the Egyptian revolution. The second one is how Fars News agency attempts to delegitimate Mubarak's regime.

The texts of 20 pieces of news about Egyptian revolution were read and analyzed by applying 20 subcategories of legitimation frame work of Van Leeuwin (2008). Number of each these 20 subcategories of legitimation were counted in order to show the frequency of each category used by Fars News to (de-) legitimize such a single event. The result of this analysis is shown in table 1.

TABLE 1:
FREQUENCY OF EACH VAN LEEUWEN'S LEGITIMATION CATEGORY USED BY FARS NEWS IN 20 PIECES OF NEWS ABOUT EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

Rows	(De-) legitimation categories	Legitimation of Egyptian revolution		Delegitimation of HosniMubarak's regime	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Personal	23	22%	12	13%
2	Expert	12	11%	6	7%
3	Role model	5	5%	0	0%
4	Impersonal	0	0%	3	3%
5	Tradition	3	3%	4	4%
6	Conformity	7	7%	9	10%
Total		50	48%	34	37%
7	Evaluation	9	9%	9	10%
8	Abstraction	15	14%	10	11%
9	Analogies	6	6%	1	1%
Total		30	29%	20	22%
10	Goal oriented	3	3%	4	4%
11	Means oriented	0	0%	5	5%
12	Effect oriented	0	0%	2	2%
13	Definition	3	3%	3	3%
14	Explanation	5	5%	2	2%
15	Prediction	5	5%	4	4%
Total		16	15%	20	22%
16	Moral tale	6	6%	0	0%
17	Cautionary tale	0	0%	7	8%
18	Single determination	0	0%	8	9%
19	Inversion	0	0%	0	0%
20	Symbolization	3	3%	2	2%
Total		9	9%	17	19%
Overall		105	100%	91	100%

Table 1 shows the frequency by which each category of legitimation is employed in collected news texts. By analyzing the news texts in the framework of discursive strategies of legitimation developed by Van Leeuwen (2008), according to the results shown in table 1, Fars News agency has legitimized Egyptian revolution with the overall frequency of 105 and delegitimized Hosni Mubarak and his regime with the frequency of 91. It means that Fars News has put more attempts in legitimizing Egyptian revolution than delegitimizing Mubarak's regime. It seems that this news agency is going to delegitimize Mubarak regime by presenting Egyptian uprising as a legitimized action.

The most frequent category of legitimation used by Fars News agency in representing Egyptian revolution and Mubarak's regime is authorization (48%). And among the subcategories of legitimation, personal authority (22%) and abstraction (14%) are the most frequent ones. So, in Fars News point of view, personal authority and abstraction are the most influential discursive strategies of legitimation which have more effect on news audiences.

On the other hand, strategies as inversion (0%), effect oriented (2%), and impersonal authority (3%) have the least usage in collected news texts. It means that such discursive strategies have less or no effect on the audiences to serve Fars News vested interests. So there is no reason for this news agency to focus on strategies which have little effect on the news readers.

According to table 1, some of the subcategories are only employed in either legitimizing or delegitimizing. For example, single determination, means oriented, and effect oriented strategies are applied in delegitimizing Mubarak's regime with the frequency of 8, 5, and 2 respectively, but they are not used for legitimizing Egyptian revolution at all. On the other hand, role model and moral tail are used only for legitimatory purpose, and they are not effective in delegitimatory representations of an event.

IV. Conclusion

The analyzed pieces of news in this article show how in Fars News the notion of 'Revolution' is attributed to Egyptian people as the good others who are looking for the democracy and their certain rights, and how this news agency shows Hosni Mubarak as the evil other of this event. For this reason, the first purpose was to find discursive strategies applied to delegitimize Mubarak's regime, policies and all his government. Andthe second one was to find discursive strategies applied to legitimize Egyptian revolution. Since the situation of Egypt in the world of Islam is an unprecedented one, and Iran is known the pioneer and proponent of Islamic awareness in the region, it was very important for a news agency like Fars News to legitimize this revolution as the result of a public movement by people whose majority are Moslems, and put more emphasis on the legitimate movement of Egyptian nation in the form of an uprising against Mubarak's regime.

Fars News to represent Mubarak and those who followed him, constitutes 'evil' to them and shows them as 'bad-others' who have killed and injured innocent people, wasted people rights and played the role of Israel and America puppet. Moreover, for making its arguments against Mubarak and his government coherent, Fars News mostly has used personal authority (13%) and abstraction (11%) in delegitimizing Mubarak and his regime. To utilize the language in order to legitimize people who rushed in to the streets to ask their rights, democracy and Islamic government, again among other discursive strategies, personal authority (22%) and abstraction (14%) have played the significant roles. Hence, Fars News agency looks at these two strategies as the most effective ones in representing its interest to its audiences.

As the social construction of evil/Mubarak's regime is essential for the social construction of good, those who consider themselves as members of the good-group/protestors define themselves in terms of positive representations and as those who certainly have the right to judge good and bad while those who must be excluded and distinguished from the righteous circle are defined in terms of negative/bad characters (Achugar, 2004). In the same track Fars News has repeatedly mentioned Mubarak and his regime as the symbol of dictatorship and the puppet of Israel and America, and referred to Egyptian revolution as a movement looking for human rights and democracy. Fars News Sometimes and even often repeats 'Mubarak and his regime' along with other countries' names like Israel and America so that the reader believes that Fars News is delegitimizing not only Mubarak but also Israel and America. Fars News has also tried to show some similar points between Iran Islamic Revolution and Egyptian Revolution in order to represent it as an Islamic movement and against the U.S. and Israel interests.

Having another look on table 1, you may wonder why some categories are more frequent than others. The reason is the influence that each of them can have on the news readers. All these results and conclusions are showing the power of language. This study reveals how a news network can use language and its discursive strategies systematically in order to achieve its social and political vested interests.

References

[1] Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). Discourse and Practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[2] Chilton, P. A. (2004). Analysing political discourse:Theory and practice. London: Routledge.
[3] Bacue, A. E., &Burgoon, J. K. (2003). Nonverbal communication skills. In J. O. Green, & B. R. Burleson (Eds.), *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills* (pp.170-219) . Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
[4] Van Dijk, T. A. (2007). Editor's Introduction: The Study of Discourse: An Introduction. Discourse Studies. (5th ed.). (pp. xix-xlii). London: Sage.
[5] Fairclough, Norman. (1989). Language and Power. London: Longman.
[6] Van Dijk, T.A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4.2, 249-283.
[7] Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments. In Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage.
[8] Tannen, D., Schiffrin, D., & Hamilton, H. (2001). Handbook of Discourse Analysis. Oxford: Blackwell.
[9] Wodak, R. (2002). Aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis. ZeitschriftfürAngewandteLinguistik.
[10] Rahimi, F., &Riasati, M. J. (2011). Critical discourse dnalysis: Scrutinizing ideologically-driven discourses. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*1.16, 107-112.
[11] Habermas, J. (1988). Legitimation Crisis. Oxford: Polity Press.
[12] Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
[13] Anthonissen, C. (2001). On the effectiveness of media censorship: linguistic, paralinguistic and other communicative devices of media regulation'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Vienna.
[14] Chovanec, J. (2010). Legitimation through differentiation: Discursive construction of Jacques Le Warm Chirac as an apponent to military action. In O. Okulska, & P. Cap (Eds.), Perspectives in Politics and Discourse (pp. 61_82). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

[15] Habermas, J. (1988). Legitimation Crisis. Oxford: Polity Press.
[16] Steffek, J. (2003). The legitimation of international governance: A discourse approach. *European Journal of International Relations* 9.2, 249–275.
[17] Cots, j. (2006). Teaching 'with an attitude': Critical discourse analysis in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal* 60.4, 336-345.
[18] Van Lier, L. (1996). Interaction in the Language Curriculum: Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity. London: Longman.
[19] Achugar, M. (2004). The Events and Actors of 11 September 2001 As Seen from Uruguay: Analysis of Daily Newspaper Editorials. *Discourse & Society* 15.2–3, 291–320.

Bahador Sadeghi, an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics holds a doctorate degree in TEFL from the University of Isfahan, Iran. He also holds three MAs in TEFL, English Translation and International Relations from Tehran Islamic Azad University, Isfahan University and Allameh Tabatabai University respectively. He has been lecturing different subjects in TEFL, Translation studies, General English and ESP at several universities in Iran for the last twenty two years. He has both published and presented a number of articles in some international journals and conferences. He is the (co)-author and translator of ten books from English to Persian. He is also a certified translator to the judiciary power in Iran and he has been, as a simultaneous interpreter, actively involved in many national and international seminars, sport events and tourism projects.

Vahid Jalali, an EFL teacher holds his MA in TEFL from Islamic Azad University (2012). He received his BA in English translation in Islamic Azad University (2010). He also works as a translator for sports federations and foreign sale department of some companies.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1072-1078, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1072-1078

Interpretation of Transferred Epithet by Means of Conceptual Integration Theory

Xinmei Wang
School of Foreign Languages, Shandong University of Finance and Economics, Shandong, 250014, China

***Abstract*—Transferred epithet is one of the figures of speech frequently used in our expression. A better understanding of this seemingly illogical modification is undoubtedly of great benefit for common readers. In this paper, the conceptual integration theory advanced by Fauconnier and Turner (1994, 1997) is applied to the interpretation of transferred epithet. The purpose is to test the effectiveness of the blending framework, and this study is also expected to come up new insights to widen the wealth of data that is necessary to verify the generality of conceptual integration.**

***Index Terms*—transferred epithet, conceptual integration, blending framework**

I. Introduction

Figures of speech, as a kind of language form, possesses specific rhetoric effect and is creatively used in specific context, and it is also considered to be "a departure from the 'linguistic norms' of everyday language in some way, whether semantically or syntactically" (Wales, 1989: 170-177). While it has always been of interest of the rhetorician and is also considered peripheral phenomenon and outside of the core data which the linguists should be concerned (Coulson, 1997). Actually it is a pervasive phenomenon in every language as a kind.

Transferred epithet is one of the figures of speech frequently used in our expression. In rhetoric, the transferring in descriptive modifiers is a "betrayal" of the regular grammar. In literary works, it is used to create a kind of beauty with haziness, terseness and a dramatic sense. A better understanding of this illogical modification is undoubtedly of great benefit for common readers. Most of this rhetorical device focused on its aesthetic function. Unfortunately they failed to scientifically illustrate the concrete cognitive process of its meaning construction.

This paper gives an introduction to a new cognitive theory about building the semantic structure and semantic meaning, that is, conceptual integration theory advanced by Fauconnier and Turner (1996), and its conceptions of mental space, blending, on-line process and emergent structure, etc. With this theory, on one hand, the problems remained unsolved, that is, the meaning construction of transferred epithet can be fully explained, on the other hand, the generality of this theory is developed and its adequacy and descriptive power are tested.

II. Transferred Epithet

Figures of speech are very effective and expressive in achieving balance between the obvious and the obscure, so that the readers could notice the ideas immediately and therefore accept them. Figures of speech can make our thoughts vivid and concrete. They help us to exchange ideas with others in a clear and effective way, because they stir emotional responses, they can carry truth and keep alive into the heart by passion. The transferred epithet is one of the rhetorical devices frequently used in our expressions. In most cases, the semantic transference in natural language relies on the use of transferred epithet, and transferred epithet is a universal semantic phenomenon (Leech, 1981).

A. Definition of Transferred Epithet

As an effective and specific rhetorical device, a series of definitions of transferred epithet are given by scholars.

A Dictionary of Literary Terms (Cuddon, J. A, 1979:315) thought that "transferred epithet is a figure of speech in which the epithet is transferred from the appropriate noun to modify another to which it does not really belong".

In *Manual of English Grammar and Composition*, Nesfield (1964: 284) defined it like this: When two impressions are associated together in the mind, an epithet that property belongs to one only is transferred to the other. One of the commonest, though not only, application of this figure is when some personal quality is transferred to something inanimate.

Lanham (1991:86) in *a manual of Rhetoric Terms* said "transferred epithet is a change in the relation of words by which a word, instead of agreeing with the case it logically qualifies, is made grammatically with another case".

Although we have various definitions about transferred epithet, they share more similarities than differences, that is, they share the same character, a transferred epithet, as its name implies, a figure of speech where a modifier (an adjective, the present and past participles, prepositional phrase, nouns or descriptive phrase) is transferred from the modified it should rightly modify to another which it should not modify or belong under the condition that the two

impressions are closely associated. The following are some typical examples are: *the scathing column, the baking court, a laughing and cheering ring*, etc..

B. The Process of Forming the Transferred Epithet

The process for the forming of semantic interaction of transferred epithet consists of, first, the conflicting words between the modifier and the modified joining in the linear way; second, the exchanging and rearranging of the semantic meaning in the pre-positioned language situation, the interaction of which is the typical distinguishing characteristics for transferred epithet. Usually the form of transferred epithet is the modifier (adj., participles, descriptive phrases, "of" phrases, etc.) plus the modified (usually n.), and the literal meaning of the modifier and the modified obviously conflict to each other. For instance: silent moon. In the above example, the moon has the property of human beings, but they joined together.

C. The Characteristics of Transferred Epithet

The characteristics of transferred epithet can be considered in terms of its usage and effect of expression. On one hand, in transferred epithet, the modifier and the modified exist in context, out of context or in the counterfactual cognitive context. The semantic interaction of them is the typical distinguishing characteristic for transferred epithet. For example, *Englishman likes to have a* ***leisurely drink*** *in a local pub. Leisurely* and *drink* both has its own semantic set. According to their logical relation and association between them, we form the image relation and then the semantic relation. The media for *leisurely* and *drink* is *person*. Their original logic is hidden and the illogical arrangement is foregrounded. Therefore, we have *leisurely drink*. On the other hand, from the point of view of its effect, transferred epithet makes language concise and comprehensive, vivid and vigorous, and also gives novel and original meaning. It helps reader to grasp the author's original idea and real intention.

Transferred epithet is more dynamic and vivid in communication and is full of inspiration. It is considered to be the typical picturesque and informative expression. It is worth noticing that, sometimes the modifier or the modified is hidden in the fictitious language space. That is, they do not appear in the sentence side by side. In this case, we are hoped to reestablish the hidden modifier or the context of modified to understand the transferred epithet smoothly. So the cognitive ability and the level of language have great influence in the understanding of rhetorical language.

III. Mental Space and Conceptual Integration Theory

A. Mental Space

The theory of mental spaces was developed in reaction to mainstream views of meaning. In recent years, many aspects of language that were not initially linked to mental space construction have been studies by scholars of different disciplines, and integrated into a more general powerful theory, conceptual integration theory. The mental space theory suggests that construction of meaning is neither static and nor permanent. Different projections, category assignments, and space configurations are stimulated locally in given situations.

On Fauconnier's (1994) model, "a mental space contains a partial representation of the entities and relations of a particular scenario as perceived, imagined, or remembered by a speaker. This representation typically includes elements to represent each of the discourse entities, and simple frames to represent the relationships that exist between them). Speakers set up spaces in order to partition the information evoked by a series of mental spaces and connections between them" (Fauconnier, 1994). That is, "mental spaces are small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purpose of local understanding and action. They are very partial assemblies containing elements, and structured by frames and cognitive models. They are interconnected and can be modified as thought and discourse unfold, and it can be used generally to model dynamic mappings in thought and language" (Fauconnier, 1994, 1997; Fauconnier & Turner, 1996).

B. Conceptual Integration

Conceptual integration is a general cognitive operation used to construct meaning developed by Fauconnier (1997), and Fauconnier & Turner (1998). It interacts with other general cognitive operation. It yields products that frequently become entrenched in conceptual structure and grammar (Fauconnier, 1997). It often performs new blending on its entrenched products. It is easy to detect in spectacular cases but it is for the most part a routine, workday process that escapes detection except on the technical analysis (Fauconnier, 1997). The essence of the operation is to construct a partial match between input mental spaces and to project selectively from those inputs into a novel 'blended' mental space, which then dynamically develops emergent structure (Fauconnier, 2003). It operates on two input mental spaces to yield a third space, the blend which inherits partial structure from the input spaces and has emergent structure of its own (Fauconnier, 2003). The following are some of the conditions which are satisfied when two input spaces input I1 and input I2 are blended:

(1) Cross-space Mapping: there is a partial mapping of counterparts between the input space 1 (input I1) and input space 2 (input I2).

(2) Generic Space: there is a generic space, which maps onto each of the inputs. This generic space reflects some common, usually more abstract structure and obligation shared by the inputs, and defines the core cross-space mapping

between them. A generic space does not have to be available prior to the construction of a network. It is often constructed and projected along with other spaces and connections.

(3) Blend: the input I1 and input I2 are partially projected onto a fourth space, the blend.

(4) Emergent structure: the blend has emergent structure not provided by the inputs. This happens in three interrelated ways. We can see its full picture in fig. 1.

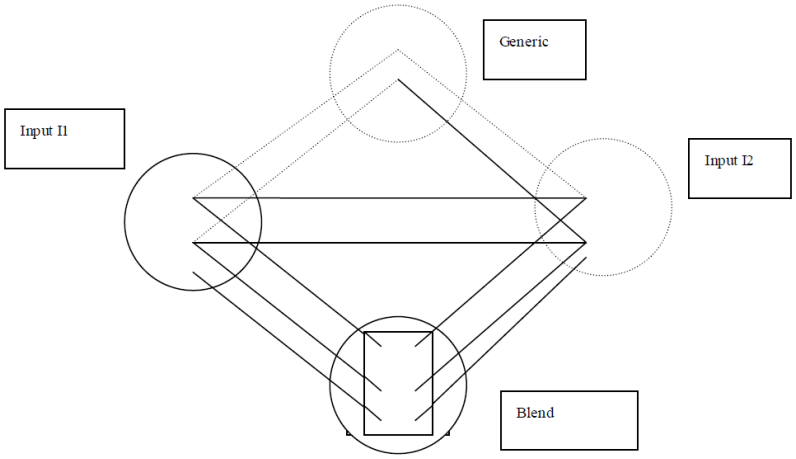


Figure 1 (Fauconnier, 1997:151)

Conceptual integration involves the temporary construction of simple cognitive models and the establishment of cognitive mappings between different spaces (Fauconnier, 1997). The mapping, or mental space connection, can be understood as that an object or element in one space connects to an object or element in another space, and can be based on identity, similarity, metonymy or analogy.

C. Blending Process

Blending involves three processes, composition, completion and elaboration, each of which provides for the possibility of emergent structure (Fauconnier, 1997). Composition involves attributing a relation from one space to an element or elements from the input spaces. Emergent structure in composition arises from contextual accommodation of a concept from one domain to apply to elements in a different domain (Fauconnier, 1997). Completion is pattern completion which occurs when structure projected from the inputs matches information in long-term memory (Fauconnier, 1997).

We choose to compose structure from input spaces into the blend. That is, we apply counterpart connections between the input spaces. Thus, a working space for further composition became possible. Completion renders additional structure when certain elements have been taken into consideration. Elaboration develops the blend through imaginative mental simulation according to principles and logic in the blend (Fauconnier, 1997). Some of these principles will be brought to the blend by completion. Continued dynamic completion can recruit new principles and logic during elaboration. But new principles and logic may also arise through elaboration itself (Fauconnier, 1997).

IV. Application of Conceptual Integration Theory to Interpretaion of Transferred Epithet

Conceptual integration occurs at many levels of abstraction and in all sorts of contexts. In order to demonstrate the general utility of conceptual integration networks and in the light of the previous introduction, conceptual integration theory is applied to the integration of transferred epithet. The study is carried out from aspects of cross-mapping and integration networks.

A. Transferred Epithet as Data of this Study

There are several reasons which make me choose transferred epithet as data of this study. Firstly, traditional interpretation of it lays much emphasis on its aesthetic function rather than its cognitive operations involved in its meaning construction. Secondly, conventional study tends to interpret it in a rather static way, while language now is considered to be the human cognitive capacity, and actually we construct meaning dynamically. So this dissertation choose transferred epithet as data to give a new interpretation in dynamic way. Thirdly, the characteristics of transferred epithet make the application of conceptual integration theory feasible, because the cognitive interpretation of transferred epithet involves leaps between different mental spaces.

According to its definitions and characteristics, the following examples will be taken to give an illustration.

(1) The big man crashed down on *a protesting chair*.

(2) Her panic gave place to anger and *a burning humiliation.*

(3) The Grape of Wrath

(4) The boat blew a long *mournful whistle* into the mist.

B. Cross-space Mapping in Transferred Epithet

Various researches in cognitive science prove that mapping across cognitivespaces plays a central role in language and thought. All blending depends upon cross-space mapping. Mappings between domains and blending are at the center of meaning construction and of the unique human cognitive capacity of producing, transferring and processing meaning.

1. Analogical Mapping

Phrase *protesting chair* in example (1) shows the characteristics of analogical mapping. *Protesting* is usually used to modify human who desires to express his disagreement, feeling of unfairness, annoyance, especially when he/she cannot withstand the heavy burden or dissatisfaction. The sentence also provides us a context in which the man with heavy weight falls on the chair violently and noisily. It seems impossible for chair to protest, but one property of '*protest*' which exists in mind of both speaker and reader is its impassioned and vehement sound, and the chair will certainly cackle and creak under the heavy load. So they share a strong resemblance in the sound they make. Therefore, the phrase constructs a blend. 'The protesting man' comprises one input mental space (input I1). 'The chair under the heavy load' comprises the other input mental space (input I2). The generic space 'sound producing' defines the cross-space mappings between the two input spaces. They are the burden, the sound, the content, the way, expression of the protest, and the heavy load, the cackling or creaking of the chair. Which element in the input I1 is projected to the blend relies on the element projected to the blend in input I2. The other projections from input I1 space unrelated to the sound are omitted by the projected structure of heavy load, creaking and cackling of chair from the input I2, that is, the structure in input I1 that is projected to the blend is the burden, the impassioned and vehement sound of protesting. It is by analogical mapping that the two structures are projected to the blend. The analogical mapping is initiated by the structure of 'people protests' and 'chair creaks'. In blending, the emergent structure through composition is that the chair cannot withstand the heavy load. The emergent structure is completed by the context provided by the sentence is that the chair is protesting. Therefore, this combination *protesting chair* displays the vivid and humorous effect of figurative language. Figure 1 represents the conceptual integration network for the concept of *protesting chair*. See Fig.2.

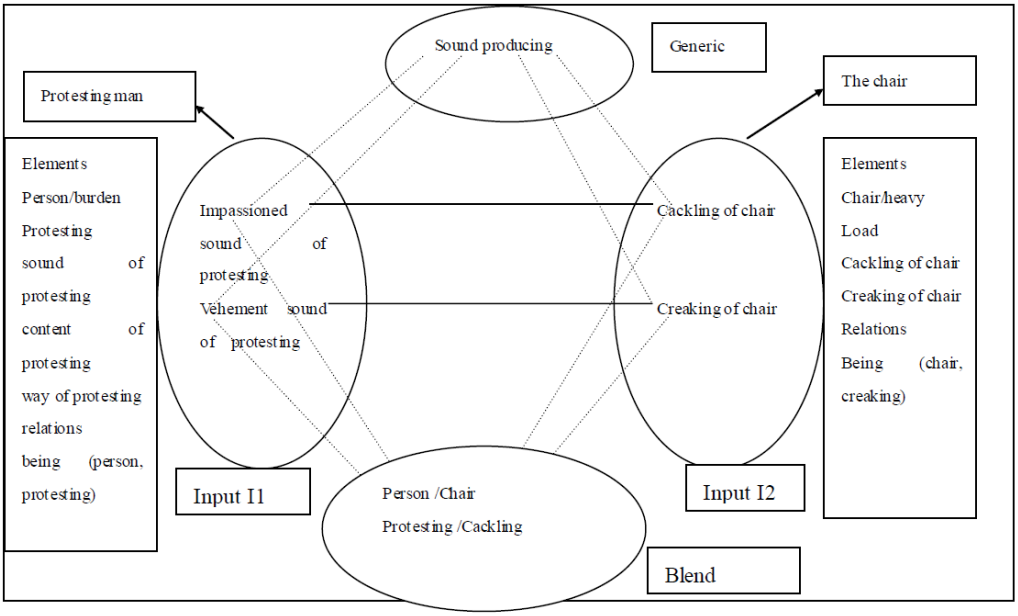


Figure 2

2. Metaphorical Mapping

In transferred epithet (2), the modifier *burning* conveys a concrete concept. Compared with burning, *humiliation* is a more abstract concept. From this phrase, we can elicit two input spaces. *Burning* which evokes one input space (input I1), presents the fire, while *humiliation* comprise the other input space (input I2). The cross-space mapping between the inputs is metaphorical, with fire as source input and humiliation as the target. This analysis reveals the required mapping between folk models of heat and folk model of humiliation. In this mapping, the fire maps onto an angry individual, smoke or steam (a sign of heat) maps onto signs of humiliation, explosion (uncontrolled fire) maps onto extreme, uncontrolled humiliation. The important basis for this mapping is the physiological effects of humiliation: increased body heat, blood pressure, anger, redness in face, and so on. In the blended space, we find the individual and their emotions projected either from the source input of physical heat, explosion or from the body physiology linked to the emotion. Naturally, the generic space represents abstract commonalities between inputs: rising temperature. In blending, the emergent structure through composition is that fire is burning and he is also burning with rage. The emergent structure completed by the encyclopedic knowledge is he structure that humiliation tends to be out of control.

3. Metonymical Mapping

Transferred epithet (3) is one kind of transferred epithet. It is also the name of novel written by John Steinbeck. With the Great Depression as its background, the book described that enormous farmers' land was forcibly occupied by the monopoly capitalists. What is waiting for the farmers was only the bankruptcy. In order to flee from famine, they had to move to the west. Unfortunately, they felt into another predicament.

Fig. 3 represents the conceptual integration network for the concept of *grape of wrath*. Here is how the integration network works. From this phrase, we can construct two input spaces. Wrath is the emotion of human beings. One of the input (input I1) mental spaces is the domain of emotion. Grape is a kind of fruit, so the domain of fruit comprises the second input mental space (input I2). Input I1 presents the structure of human emotions such as wrath, anger, happiness, excitement. While input t I2 presents the structure of planting grapes, taking care of grapes and picking grapes. There is a cross-space mapping between the two input spaces. The projection is partial and selective. In input I1, the emotion of wrath is projected to the blend. In input I2, the processes of growing grapes are projected to the blend. The generic space guiding this mapping contains an abstract event structure: agent and patient. In the blending, the emergent structure through composition is that people plant and pick fruits with some kind of emotion. While the emergent structure is completed by metonymical projection from *wrath* to *grape*. The emergent structure through completion is that the farmers plant and pick the grape wrathfully, that is, it is the farmers who got angry instead of the grape, which is also the theme of the novel.

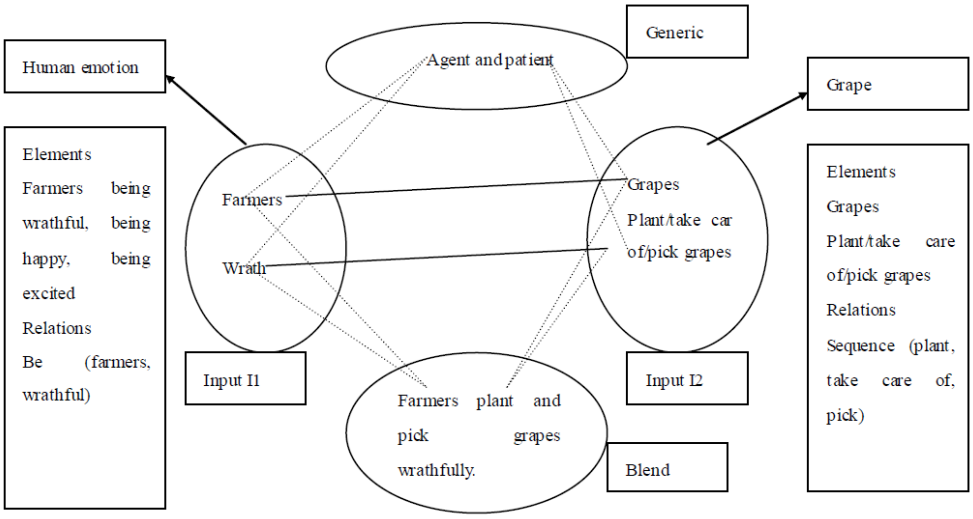


Figure 4

4. Mapping with the Phrase as One Input

In sentence (4), the phrase *mournful whistle* is a typical transferred epithet. *Mournful* which is used to modify person is now transferred to modify *whistle*. It is extracted from short story ***Eveline*** written by James Joyce. In this story the heroine Eveline was dispatched willfully at work, and had to face her fierce father at home. She had no alternative but living an empty and lifeless life. Later she got chance to escape from the strained and depressing circumstances and to pursue her own happiness with her boyfriend, but before they got on board ship, she lost all her courage and hesitation occupied her mind. The boat blew a long whistle into the mist. Her boyfriend as well as her happiness went far away. At that moment, she was fully filled with grief and sorrow. What she could do is just crying mournfully. The sentence conveyed two aspects of information: The boat blew a long whistle into the mist; the whistle sounds mournful when it blew. Instead of describing the heroine's mood directly, the author transferred *mournful* to the seemingly irrelevant word *whistle*. In this way, the reader experienced not only the mournful state of mind of the heroine but also the bitter atmosphere set off by the mist. The transferred epithet helps the sentence achieve the artistic effect of prominence through contrast. The following is how the integration network works.

In this network, there is an input space (input I1), structure with the state of mind of human being, the other input space (input I2) structure of boat, and a blended space with a cognitive model that combines information from the two input spaces. Input I1 contains the elements of heroine and her state of mind like grief, bitterness, sorrow and mourn. Input I2 contains the elements of boat and its anchoring and whistling. The generic space consists of a cause and effect abstract event structure that guides the mapping: the whistle of the boat may stir the emotion. There is a cross-space mapping between the elements in the input spaces, such as happiness and whistle, mourn and whistle. But the projection is partial and selective. According to the context the sentence provides, in input I1, the state of sorrow or mourn is projected, and the structure of others is not. In input I2, the elements of anchoring and whistling are projected. In blending, two structures from input spaces are projected to the blended space. Moreover, there is emergent structure through completion: the whistle makes people feel mournful. Consequently, the *mournful whistle* in blend is connected conceptually to the inputs. Bu this way, the bitterness and sadness the heroine experienced is greatly highlighted. We

can conclude that the phrase can be counted as source input space, while target input space is introduced not form the phrase, but from the context provided by the background which can be taken as one hidden input. Based on the above analysis, this novel and specific as well as superficially illogical structure emerges. See fig. 5.

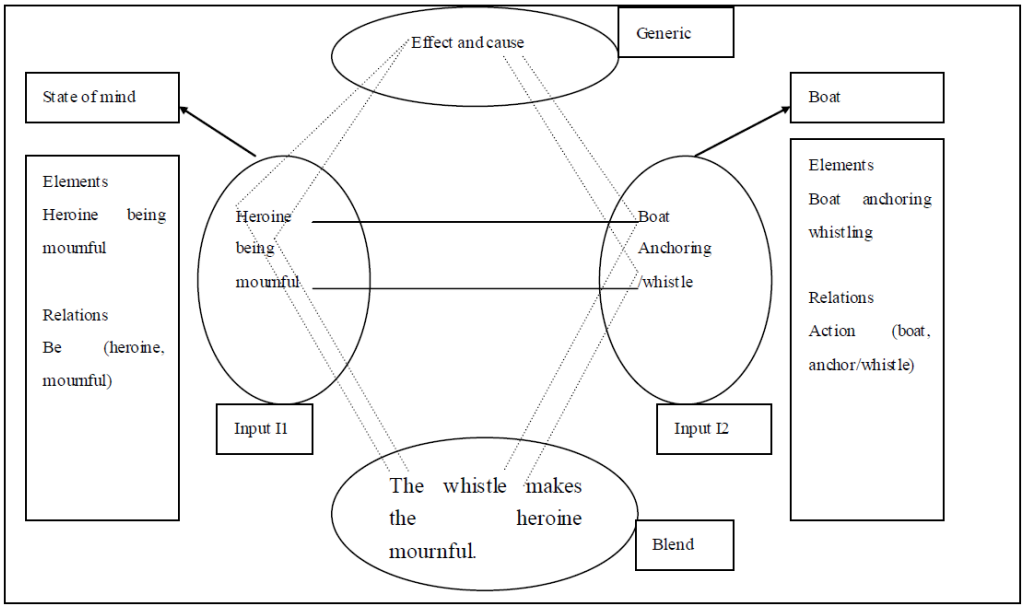


Figure 5

V. Conclusion

After careful study of meaning construction in transferred epithets by means of conceptual integration theory, we may have an overall picture of its strong force in interpreting the figure of speech - transferred epithet. I can draw the following conclusion.

Firstly, in transferred epithet, two words which do not allocate are joined together to give novel and vivid expression. It is extraordinary characteristic that we find the possibility among the impossibility. The conceptual integration theory helps us to find what is happened backstage. That is also the reason that such combination does not prevent us from understanding the speaker's intension. Secondly, the intention of writers and the contextual information around or beyond the phrase plays an important role in meaning construction of transferred epithet. Thirdly, the mapping between spaces inheres the following characteristics: 1) The cross-space mapping involves the establishment of mental spaces, and the transferred epithet is usually composed of the modifier and modified. Mostly the modified structures one input. Because conceptual integration depends on our ability to recruit relevant specific knowledge in order to establish novel mapping, as for the other space, we have to construct it according to the properties of the modifier, that is, to find the space that is closely related to the on-line meaning construction. 2) The tools of conceptual integration theory, including the cline between identity, similarity and analogy links, have proven useful in explaining the variety of complex concept combinations of transferred epithet. The generic space is often apparently structured by analogy, similarity, causative and resultant event structure suggested by linguistic and background information.

To summarize, conceptual projection is a dynamic process that cannot be adequately interpreted by a static description. And conceptual integration plays a very important role in many areas of cognition.

References

[1] Coulson, S. (1996). Mennedez Brother Virus: Blended Spaces and Internet Humor. In Adele Goldberg (Ed.). Conceptual structure, Discourse and Language. Stanford: CSLI Publications.
[2] Coulson, S. (1997). Semantic Leaps: The Role of Frame-shifting and Conceptual Blending in Meaning Construction. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[3] Cuddon, J. A. (1979). A Dictionary of Literary Terms. Great Britain: W and J Mackay Limited.
[4] Fauconnier, G. (1994). Mental spaces. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[5] Fauconnier, G & Turner, M. (1994). Conceptual Projection and Middle Spaces. Technical Report no. 9401. Department of Cognitive Science, University of California, San Diego.
[6] Fauconnier, G. (1997). Mappings in Thought and Language. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
[7] Fauconnier, G & Turner, M. (1996). Blending As a Central Process of Grammar. In Adele Goldberg (Ed.) *Conceptual Structure, Discourse and Language*. Standford: Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI) Publications. Pp 113-129.
[8] Fauconnier, G. (1998). Mental Spaces, Language Modalities and Conceptual Integration. In Michael Tomasello (Ed.). *The New Psychology of Language*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. Pp 251-279.

[9] Fauconnier, G & M. Turner. (1998). Conceptual Integration Networks. *Cognitive Science* 22:2. 133-187.
[10] Fauconnier, G & M. Turner. (2003). Conceptual Integration. Shanghai: Foreign Languages.
[11] Jackendoff, R. (1983). Semantics and Cognition. Mass: MIT Press.
[12] Johnson, M. (1987). The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
[13] Lakoff, G. (1998). Cognitive Semantics. In V. Eco (ed.). *Meaning and Mental Representations.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Pp119-154.
[14] Lakoff, G. (1987). Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Minds. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press.
[15] Langacker, R. W. (1990). Conceptual, Image and Symbol. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
[16] Lanham, R. A. (1991). A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms. USA: University of California Press.
[17] Leech, Geoffrey. (1981). Semantics. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
[18] Levinson, S. C. (1983). Pragmatics. Cambridge University Press.
[19] Nesfield, J. C. & Wood, F. T. (1964). Manual of English Grammar and Composition. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
[20] Turner, Mark & Gilles Fauconnier. (1995). Conceptual Integration and Formal Expression. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 10, 183-203.
[21] Wales, K. (1989). A Dictionary of Stylistics. England: Longman Group UK Ltd.

Xinmei Wang, a College English teacher for English majors in Shandong University of Finance and Economics in Jinan, has been teaching English majors for more than eight years. The courses she has taught include Advanced English, Advanced English Writing, Reading, Listening, etc. During this decade, she published several papers. Her research field is theoretical linguistics.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1079-1084, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1079-1084

A Review and Analysis of the Article 'An Evaluation of the Testing Effect with Third Grade Students'

Meisam Rahimi
Department of English Language and Literature, University of Isfahan, Iran

Samira Ghanbaran
Department of English Language and Literature, University of Isfahan, Iran

Seyed Mahmood Kazemi
Department of English Language and Literature, University of Isfahan, Iran

***Abstract*—This paper reviews and analysis the article in four stages. In the first stage, major approaches to educational research are briefly reviewed and the selected article is classified in these terms and the classification is justified. In the second stage, a concise synopsis of the aims, research design and major findings of the article are presented. In the third stage, the main strengths of the selected research as a contribution to policy, practice, knowledge or understanding are explained. And in the final stage, some ways in which the reported research in the selected article could have been improved are suggested, and any difficulties which might have been encountered in following these recommendations will be analysed.**

***Index Terms*—recall, development, education, memory, testing effect, reading, comprehension**

I. Introduction

This article[1] was written by Chandra L. Brojde[2] and Barbara W. Wise[3] and published as part of the proceedings of the Cognitive Science Conference[4] in 2008 in Washington, DC.

Testing effect, according to Verkoeijen, Bouwmeester, and Camp (2012), is the robust finding that "taking one or more intervening tests after an initial encoding (study) episode produces better retention of the to-be remembered material than does restudying the same material for an equivalent amount of time."

According to Einstein, Mullet, and Harrison (2012), in recent years, psychologists have reached remarkable results indicating that learning being accompanied by testing is significantly beneficial to memory so that the benefits gained through testing outweigh those obtained through a comparable amount of time spent for additional study. It is interesting to know that the evidence shows that college students are not aware of the benefits of introducing testing into their learning. A study by Karpicke, Butler, and Roediger (2009) shows that only a small proportion of students (11%) considered self-testing as a study strategy and merely 1% of them reported that as one of their best learning strategies. On the other hand, 84% of students considered repeated reading a study strategy and almost half of them (55%) considered it to be their best strategy. The testing can be performed by students themselves as self-testing or by language educators as part of the teaching/learning process.

The article under review and analysis in this paper aims at evaluating the testing effect with young children (third grade students) where testing is performed by language educators as a means of further learning. This paper tends to look at this article in five stages. In the first stage, major approaches to educational research are briefly reviewed and the selected article is classified in these terms and the classification is justified. In the second stage, a concise synopsis of the aims, research design and major findings of the article are presented. In the third stage, the main strengths of the selected research as a contribution to policy, practice, knowledge or understanding are explained. In the fourth stage, an evaluation of how significant aspects of theory, research design, methods or researcher values influenced the analysis and conclusions of the article is presented. And in the final stage, some ways in which the reported research in the selected article could have been improved are suggested, and any difficulties which might have been encountered in following these recommendations will be analysed.

---

[1] The URL of the paper is as follows: csjarchive.cogsci.rpi.edu/proceedings/2008/pdfs/p1362.pdf

[2] Chandra L. Brojde (chandrab@colorado.edu) Department of Psychology, CB 345 University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309

[3] Barbara W. Wise (Barbara.wise@colorado.edu) CLEAR Computational Language and Education Research, CB 594 University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309

[4] The following is the URL of the archive of the Cognitive Science Conference Proceedings: http://csjarchive.cogsci.rpi.edu/Proceedings/index.html

II. Major Approaches to Educational Research

Identifying and then visualizing a research design is helpful in clarifying the suitability of the procedures carried out and will enable us to evaluate the appropriateness of any later data analysis employed (Porte 2002).

Research designs can be classified in endless ways. However, they are usually put into three major categories: experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger 2005). Several key questions can be asked in order to determine the classification of a particular research design: First, whether random assignment is involved or not. If the answer is positive, the design is considered randomized, or true, experimental. If answer is negative, then a second question must be asked: whether either multiple groups or multiple measurements are used or not. Positive answer leads to a quasi-experimental design and negative answer leads to a non-experimental design (Trochim 2001).

A. True Experimental Designs

In an experimental design, study participants are randomly selected and assigned to experimental and control groups. In such designs, all sources of internal validity are completely controlled. Random numbers tables are often used for assigning research participants to the groups. Random assignment decreases the likelihood that the obtained results are due to extraneous factors or nuisance variables rather than the independent variables.

Generally, three major designs are used for conducting a true experiment: (1) a randomized two-group posttest only or pretest-posttest design, (2) a Solomon four-group design, or (3) a factorial design (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger 2005).

The notation used in the following description is as follows:

X = experimental manipulation (independent variable)
Y = experimental manipulation (independent variable) other than X
O = observation
R = random assignment
NR = non-random assignment

B. Randomized Two-group Design

This design is composed of two groups or two levels of an independent variable. The primary purpose of this design is to determine whether a particular independent variable causes an effect (causality). Two basic types of this design are used: the posttest only and the pretest-posttest design.

1. Randomized Two-Group Posttest Only Design

The design is as follows:

R ➔ X1 ➔ O
R ➔ X2 ➔ O

Source: Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger (2005)

This simple design incorporates all required elements of a true experimental design: (1) random assignment (2) experimental and control groups, and (3) observations following the treatment.

2. Randomized Two-Group Pretest-Posttest Design

This design is typically utilized for randomized experiments:

R ➔ O ➔ X1 ➔ O
R ➔ O ➔ X2 ➔ O

Source: Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger (2005)

The pretest included is beneficial in several respects: First, the researcher can ensure that the groups are truly equivalent. Second, it provides information which enables researchers to compare the participants who completed the posttest to those who did not.

3. Solomon Four-Group Design

We can consider this design as a combination of the randomized posttest only and pretest posttest two-group designs, as depicted below:

R ➔ O ➔ X1 ➔ O
R ➔ O ➔ X2 ➔ O
R ➔➔➔➔ X1 ➔ O
R ➔➔➔➔ X2 ➔ O

Source: Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger (2005)

The main advantage of this design is that it controls for the possible effects of pretest on posttest results. This design can also be considered as a very basic example of a factorial design.

C. Factorial Design

This design empirically examines the effects of more than one independent variable, both individually and in combination, on the dependent variable.

R ➔ X_1 ➔ Y_1 ➔ O
R ➔ X_1 ➔ Y_2 ➔ O

R ➔ X_2 ➔ Y_1 ➔ O
R ➔ X_2 ➔ Y_2 ➔ O
Source: Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger (2005)

This design is beneficial in several respects: First, more than one independent variable can be examined simultaneously. Second, several hypotheses can be tested in a single research study. Finally, the interaction between independent variables can also be examined.

D. Quasi-experimental Designs

Due to the feasibility of random assignment in real-world environments, researchers must often use quasi-experimental designs. Studies based on these designs occur in real-life settings as opposed to a laboratory. Quasi-experimental designs make use of both control and experimental groups; however, subjects are not normally randomly selected nor randomly assigned to these groups. These designs, therefore, do not manage satisfactorily to control for extraneous variables as intervening factors in research outcomes. The major attraction of such designs is the fact that they do not disrupt the research environment (i.e. the school system and/or re-assignment of subjects to other classes) and make use of the available groups.

A variety of quasi-experimental designs are presented which can be divided into two main categories: interrupted time-series designs and nonequivalent comparison-group designs (Cook & Campbell 1979).

E. Nonequivalent Comparison-group Designs

These designs do not employ random assignment. In these designs, groups as similar as possible are selected. Unfortunately, the resulting groups might be nonequivalent. However, careful analysis and cautious interpretations may still lead to some valid conclusions (Graziano & Raulin 2004). Two major types of this design are: 1. Nonequivalent Groups Posttest-Only (Two or More Groups) 2. Nonequivalent Groups Pretest-Posttest (Two or More Groups)

1. Nonequivalent Groups Posttest-Only (Two or More Groups)

In this design the experimental group receives the treatment while the control group does not:
NR ➔ X1 ➔ O
NR ➔ X2 ➔ O
Source: Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger (2005)

The results of a study employing this design may be considered largely uninterpretable due to the fact that there is a low probability that the obtained results could be attributed to the intervention.

2. Nonequivalent Groups Pretest-Posttest (Two or More Groups)

In this design, the dependent variable is measured before and after the intervention:
NR ➔ O ➔ X1 ➔ O
NR ➔ O ➔ X2 ➔ O
Source: Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger (2005)

This design has two advantages over the previous one: First, the researcher will be more confident that the obtained results are due to the independent variable. Second, the between-group differences can be measured before exposure to the treatment.

F. Interrupted Time-series Designs

This design employs periodic measurements on a group prior to the intervention to establish a stable baseline. This will help the researcher to interpret the impact of the independent variable more accurately. After the intervention, the researcher will make several more periodic measurements.

G. Non-experimental Designs

These designs do not involve any control over the variables and the environments under investigation and consequently they will not be able to rule out extraneous variables as the cause of the observed outcome. Here, three of the most widely used designs in this category are reviewed briefly.

H. Case Studies

In this design, a single person or a few people are examined in-depth. A study based on this design provides an accurate and complete description of the case under investigation.

I. Naturalistic Observation

This design involves observing organisms in their natural settings. The main advantage of this approach is that participants are observed in a natural setting where they do not realize that they are studied.

J. Survey Studies

In this type of study, information about behaviors, attitudes, and opinions of a large number people is obtained through asking questions. Some surveys merely describe what people express as their opinions and activities. Others try to find relationships between the respondents' reported behaviors and opinions and their characteristics. When surveys are used to determine relationships, they are called *correlational studies.*

In the study reviewed, the participants are neither randomly selected nor randomly assigned. Therefore, the design in this study is not true experimental design. On the other hand, there is control over the following variables: 1. testing 2. age and 3. level of proficiency. As a result, the design of the study is not non-experimental. Consequently, the design is quasi-experimental. As other characteristics of the design which make it quasi-experimental are: 1. This study occurs in real-life settings (classroom) as opposed to a laboratory. 2. This study makes use of both control and experimental situations (instead of groups).

III. Aims, Research Design and Major Findings

A. Aims

According to Chandra and Barbara (2008), the testing effect has been investigated comprehensively with regard to undergraduate students through various materials. However, the effect has not been dealt with comprehensively in lower levels of education, specially using educationally related material in real classroom settings.

The reviewed article is a first attempt to deal with this issue from two perspectives: first, whether young children also demonstrate an general testing effect regarding educationally related material, specially whether initial multiple choice tests will lead to better retention of the material or not. Second, whether the overall testing effect will be sensitive to the content (type) of the initial questions.

B. Research Design

The participants of the study were ten female and eight male children with an average age of nine years and one month. Met in their classrooms, children were asked to complete a reading comprehension and a word reading test to make sure that students' reading level was in line with their level of education.

Three stories were selected from the Houston Museum of Science Horizon Plus Science Stories Series. These stories had been written at the third grade level. Three conditions were presumed: 1. A story with fact questions 2. A story with main idea and inference questions 3. A story without any questions used as a control. Considering the three conditions, three versions of each story were prepared and assigned to different conditions in a counterbalanced way. Each story included graphics depicting plot points and was five pages long.

Each student was required to read the three texts, one week apart for three weeks. In the first two conditions and for each story, children required to answer three multiple-choice questions as they read the text and two multiple-choice questions right after reading the text. As for the first condition, all the questions dealt with details of the text. Regarding the questions in the second condition, the first three were inference questions and the last two were about the main ideas. In the third condition, children did not answer any questions after reading the story. Children did not have any access to the stories as they were answering the multiple-choice questions.

As the participants read the stories and answered the multiple choice questions (except for the reading with no question), they gave an oral summary of that story. Children who were not willing to answer questions or those who gave a short answer up to two sentence summaries were required to give more elaborate answers. Having finished their summaries, they immediately answered 10 open-ended questions which asked for short answers of only one or two words. The questions were prepared based on guidelines which were developed for a related study. The questions consisted of five fact questions and five inference or main idea questions. Each question was composed of a stem and four choices, three distractors and one correct answer. The most prominent themes in the texts as well as the content of the multiple-choice questions from the two experimental procedures were used as the basis for question development.

An interactive computer program designed to improve children's reading was utilized to present the stories and multiple-choice questions. The program recorded the children's voice as they read the texts orally. Children could also click on the words and listen to their pronunciation.

During each of the three sessions, children's voice was recorded as they read the story through a headset accompanied with a microphone. In the first session, children first went through the reading comprehension and word reading tests. Moreover, the administrator presented an sample story to make the students familiar with the structure of the texts and the computer environment. Children could listen to the pronunciation of the unfamiliar words by clicking on them.

The transcription of the oral summaries of the students was provided. A 10-point checklist based on similar material to the questions posed at the end of stories was used to analyze the transcriptions. Based on the number of items of the checklist included in the summary, a score was assigned to each summary, ranging from zero to ten. Similarly, children were assigned a score from zero to ten based on the number of questions answered correctly at the end of each story.

C. Major Findings

Regarding summaries, a one-way repeated-measure ANOVA with planned contrasts was conducted. The result showed that there was a significant difference between the condition with questions and conditions without questions, $F(1,15) = 4.54$, $p = 0.05$. Nevertheless, no significant difference was found between inference/main idea question condition and the fact condition, $F(1, 15) = 0.11$, $p = 0.75$

Similarly, a second one-way repeated-measures ANOVA with planned contrasts was conducted for open-ended questions. The result of the analysis indicated that there existed a significant difference between the condition with

multiple-choice questions and conditions without multiple-choice questions, F (1,15) = 5.802, p = 0.03. Moreover, no significant difference was found between inference/main idea question condition and the fact condition, F (1,15) = 0.195, p = 0.67.

Generally, the results clearly show that 1) no testing effect can be found with regard to lower level education students (third-grade in this case), 2) the testing effect is strong in both inference/ main idea questions condition and fact questions condition and 3) the testing effect is strong in both summary or short-answer questions conditions at the final test.

IV. The Main Strengths

As mentioned in the article, the interactive program used for presenting the material had two particular features among others. First, the users had the opportunity to answer the questions more than once as far as they did not get the correct answer. Second, the participant received feedback on their performance in answering the questions. In case that a student answered a questions correctly, the program would provide the feedback and the answer would be fixated in his mind. On the other hand, if they provided the wrong answer, the program would indicate it making them think more deeply. Consequently, these features provided conditions which perhaps led to a more established and elaborative mental representations of the material which in turn decreases the extent of forgetting and consequently would lead to a greater testing effect.

A headset is something which usually comes with a computer. Therefore, using a headset for recording the oral summaries of the children wouldn't distract their attention as much as in the case when they might have used the traditional paper and pencil method. For the reason, using computers for presenting material and conducting tests improved the validity of the test.

The main focus of schools is certainly learning. On the other hand, tests are usually used in these systems mainly for evaluation and to a lesser extent for enhancing learning. So, it can be mentioned as a strength in the design of the study that it deals with real classroom settings with educationally relevant material.

V. Possible Improvements

Two reasons are presented in the article for the fact that the testing effect for inference/main idea questions was not greater than fact questions. There might be another explanation for this phenomenon as follows. As expressed in the article, the stories presented as the material of the experiment encompassed some graphics showing plot points in the story. On the other hand, the final multiple-choice questions asked about the most prominent themes in the story. Consequently, the observed testing effect might have been partly due to the children's visual memory. This problem could be easily eliminated by removing the pictures included.

According to the definition presented in the introduction testing effect is the finding that "taking one or more intervening tests after an initial encoding (study) episode produces better retention of the to-be remembered material than does restudying the same material for an equivalent amount of time." A second issue is that in the reviewed study is that no comparison group is available where the participants restudy the text instead of taking the test. In the reviewed study, the comparison is between a group with an initial test and a group without an initial test, whereas the comparison must be between a group with an initial test and a group with the same amount of time as spent on testing with restudying. This matter could be solved through having the second group which did not receive the test restudy the material in the same amount of time spent on testing in the first group.

According to Chandra and Barbara (2008), research on testing material as a means of improving reading comprehension suggest that the design, format, and content of test questions might influence the comprehension of the material. In this regard, two suggestions can be made to improve the study. First, since multiple-choice questions restrict the premise of the material covered in testing, especially in this case that there were only five questions for each condition, using oral summaries as the initial and final testing would lead to a more valid investigation of the testing effect. Second, using tests during reading and immediately after reading the texts might lead to different results with respect to testing effect. So, two separate studies can be conducted to investigate the two conditions separately. In the first suggestion, the scoring procedure might be problematic. In order to make the task easier, a checklist consisting of various points in the text can be provided according to which the oral summaries will be scored. Obviously, the more elaborate the checklist is, the more valid the final results will be.

The next issue is related to the reliability and validity of the 10 initial and final multiple-choice questions. These questions had not been piloted. So, their reliability and validity could not be established.

The next two issues are related to recording the voice of children as they read the story and the interactive program. As for recording the children, there has been no need to record the children's voice as they read the story. This perhaps acted as a distractor which, in this case, reduced the comprehension of the texts. As there was no need for recording, the researcher could simply eliminate this section of the research procedure. As for the second issue, the interactive program allowed the child to listen to the pronunciation of the unknown words by clicking on them. This again could be a distractor which could reduce the comprehension of the texts.

The next issue is related to the three versions of the stories. As expressed in the article, considering the three conditions, three versions of each story were prepared and assigned to different conditions in a counterbalanced way. Now, the question is why three versions of each story. The researcher could simply assign the three stories to the three conditions in a counterbalanced fashion.

Some more illuminating results might have been obtained if the gender variable was controlled. The participants, as mentioned, were 8 males and 10 females. The testing effect might be different for different genders.

REFERENCES

[1] Cook, T. D. & Campbell, D. T. (1979). Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings. Chicago: Rand McNally.
[2] Einstein, G. O., Mullet, H. G. & Harrison T. L. (2012). The Testing Effect: Illustrating a Fundamental Concept and Changing Study Strategies. *Teaching of Psychology* 39/3, 190-193.
[3] Graziano, A. M. & Raulin, M. L. (2004). Research methods: A process of inquiry (5th edn.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
[4] Karpicke, J. D., Butler, A. C. & Roediger, H. L., III. (2009). Metacognitive strategies in student learning: Do students practise retrieval when they study on their own? *Memory* 17, 471–479.
[5] Marczyk, G., DeMatteo, D. & Festinger, D. (2005). Essentials of Research Design and Methodology. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
[6] Porte, G. K. (2002). Appraising Research in Second Language Learning: A practical approach to critical analysis of quantitative research. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
[7] Trochim, W. M. K. (2001). The research methods knowledge base (2nd edn.). Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing.
[8] Vanderstoep, S. W. & Johnston, D. D. (2009). Research methods for everyday life: Blending qualitative and quantitative approaches. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
[9] Verkoeijen, P. P. J. L., Bouwmeester, S. & Camp, G. (2012). A Short-Term Testing Effect in Cross-Language Recognition. *Psychological Science* 23/6, 567– 571.

Meisam Rahimi was born in Isfahan, Iran on March 14, 1983. He received his BA degree in English language and Literature from the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran in 2008. He is currently an MA student in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at the University of Isfahan. His areas of interest include computational linguistics, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and language acquisition.

Samira Ghanbaran was born in Iran, Esfahan on September 21st ,1986.I earned my diploma in Physics and Mathematics at Esfahan University of Technology Highschool, Esfahan, Iran on June 19th , 2004.

I continued my studies in BA in English Literature, English department of the University of Esfahan, Esfahan, Iran. Degree was earned on September 21st, 2008.

I'm a MA student in English Teaching, English department of the University of Esfahan, Esfahan, Iran.

She has worked for four years as a LANGUAGE TEACHER. Still she is a Teacher in Pooyesh Language School, Esfahan, Iran. She is interested in Discourse Analysis, Testing Theories, Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics and all related courses in second language learning.

Seyed Mahmood Kazemi was born in Isfahan, Iran in 1975. He got his BA in TEFL, from the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran, in 1999 and is now an MA student in tefl, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

He has been an English Teacher in Isfahan, Iran from 1999. His research interests are language testing, psycholinguistics, and discourse analysis.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1085-1090, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1085-1090

A Study on Network and Multimedia Application to Chinese Language Acquisition

Haizhen Mo
Henan Institute of Science and Technology, Xinxiang, Henan Province, 453003, China

Huiqing Dong
Department of Foreign Languages, Northwest A&F University, Yangling, Shaanxi Province, 712100, China

***Abstract*—"Technology is playing an ever increasing role in foreign language education and more so for less commonly taught foreign languages like Chinese" (Zhao and Lai, 2009). Teaching and learning Chinese language with up-to-date technology aid is of vital significance nowadays. The study on the effect of network and multimedia application to Chinese language teaching and learning shows that students feel at home with this new teaching model since it is helpful to arouse students' interest in learning and to improve their learning efficiency, while quite a few problems are still persistent in the teaching aimed at developing students' learning autonomy, such as lack of consciousness of learning based on network and low abilities to learn autonomously from multimedia sources. To deal with these problems, some suggestions are put forward in the paper with typical considerations given to students' emotional factors and instructor's role in the pedagogical output and input process.**

***Index Terms*—Chinese language acquisition, computer-aid teaching and learning, Great Wall Chinese Courseware, network and multimedia approach**

I. Introduction

Most of our contemporary Nobel Prize accomplishments in natural sciences result from an integration of different disciplines, thus interdisciplinary study is gaining momentum in modern scientific research and development (Zhang, 2009). So does language acquisition pedagogical techniques (Li, 2012). Since 1990s, many achievements in foreign language teaching and learning with the aid of network and multimedia have been obtained (Warschauer and Kern, 2000). The rapid development of modern information technology has long been propelling the modernization process of the whole society, and irrevocably calls for modernization of present-day education (Hu, 2004; Chen, 2004). He (2008) writes that "Types of teaching materials should go along with the progress of information technology, and electronic courseware will gradually replace the conventional paper teaching materials, thus exuberating greatly the functions of conventional textbooks". Conventional teacher-centered language acquisition model, merely imparting language skills and knowledge (Cai, 2003; Cai and Wu, 2003; Zhu, 2004; Zhang and Wu, 2005), is not only hard to meet the practical demand of the new generation students, but also difficult to improve students' initiative abilities of using Chinese language. International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education, published by The Office of Chinese Language Council International (2008), clearly states that "The general objective of the international Chinese education is to help the learners to improve their Chinese proficiency, highlight their learning objectives, foster their abilities to combine self-directed learning and collaborative learning, form an effective strategy, and ultimately acquire language competence". In line with these new demands, several network and multimedia teaching courseware have come forward, including "Changcheng Hanyu"–Great Wall Chinese Multimedia Product for Teaching and Learning Mandarin, which has been standing out predominantly among others worldwide. Great Wall Chinese is a new Chinese teaching and learning system based on extensive network and cutting-edge multimedia technology. It integrates e-learning with e-tutoring (online or face-to-face tutoring), and provides a convenient, vivid and cost-effective teaching method (Hanban Great Wall Chinese Centre, 2009). The courseware is a time-space free media for learners at any time, in any place and at any level in China or overseas.

With the aim of making full use of network and multimedia technologies in language acquisition, an internet survey was conducted to investigate students' applicability, as well as the effectiveness and problems of the new teaching model.

A. Subject of the Survey

In the past two years, Great Wall Chinese has prevailed in over 70 Confucius institutes across the world for Chinese language teaching and learning. In March 2010, the author conducted a survey among a total of 150 students studying Chinese with the courseware at Confucius Institutes in Krakow, Poland, Konfuzius-Institute Nurnburg, Germany, Confucius Institute at the University of Sydney, Australia, and Confucius Institute at the University of Utah, USA, etc, with the aim of finding out about the effect of this computer technology on Chinese language acquisition, thus,

assessing on the educational outcome from students' angle. The survey is an anonymous one, and with a feedback of 112 efficacious questionnaires finally.

B. Content of the Survey

The content of the survey mainly involves the degree of students' applicability to the courseware and evaluations of its effectiveness, and also evaluations of the effectiveness of using network and multimedia in assisting self study, the problems existed, and any suggestions or recommendations.

II. Result of the Survey

Network and multimedia model not only brings learners with shared information beyond time and space, but also leaves influence on learners' study methods and produces results with completely new concepts and manners. The survey result is measured with Likert Scale, and the data of the 112 efficacious questionnaires are assayed under the SPSS 3.0 Test Analysis for Surveys. Of the five ordered response levels from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" in Likert Scale, the middle "neutral" level is taken as a general divide benchmark, i.e. the median value, for the sake of apparent assessment. The bilateral four values are treated as either a summative positive levels evaluation or negative levels evaluation. The result of the survey shows that network and multimedia aid model is positively correlated with students' adaptation and progress, but it also suggests several problems students met in their study. The main results are summed up as follows.

A. Network Teaching and Learning

As a new educational technique, network Chinese teaching does not change the substance of educational process, but it changes the whole pattern of teaching (Xue, 2003). Students can arrange study schedules of their own and choose contents they are interested in. So network teaching and learning holds a strong to-and-fro pertinence to some extent.

(1) Chinese skills improved through network teaching and learning

In table 1, it can be seen clearly that 41 and 37.6 percent of students surveyed marked "listening and speaking ability" progress, 12.4 percent of students answered "reading ability", and 9 percent of students answered "writing ability".

Table 1
Chinese skills improved through network teaching and learning

item	Efficacious surveyed student number 112	percentage
Listening	50	41.0
Speaking	46	37.6
Reading	15	12.4
Writing	11	9.0

Table 1 shows that network teaching not only arouses students' interest in Chinese learning, but also contributes to the improvement of their listening and speaking abilities remarkably, in keeping with "foster their (students) abilities to combine self-directed learning and collaborative learning," put forward by International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education.

(2) Functions of network teaching and learning in Chinese acquisition

The answers of students surveyed are in order as follows: stimulating study interest, developing self-learning ability, giving full play to Human-Computer interaction, arousing study enthusiasm. From this, it can be seen that students generally consider that network teaching can stimulate Chinese learning interest, and is helpful in building up self-learning ability. Study enthusiasm refers to learners' positive sense inclination of desiring and exploring relevant knowledge. Enthusiasm is a prerequisite to every successful work. Therefore, in order to make students learn Chinese well, the first thing to do is to arouse their enthusiasm of Chinese learning. This survey shows that network teaching is an effective means of arousing students' enthusiasm.

(3) Whether students communicate with one another online

In the answers, 25.5 percent of students surveyed answered "often", 36.9 percent of students answered "sometimes", 32 percent of students answered "basically not", and 5.2 percent of students answered "never". These indicate that a bit over one quarter of students often communicate or cooperate in studying, and nearly 40 percent of students basically not or never communicate and cooperate. It shows that students have low awareness of developing inter-communications, promoting interstudy or doing cooperative learning by making use of internet; so teachers should strengthen their guidance in this field and initiate cooperative learning online among students, and also encourage students to work cooperatively.

(4) Network Chinese autonomous learning initiative, compared with traditional teaching

From table 2, it is shown that 27.9 percent of students surveyed answered "with full self-control and no need of teachers' supervision"; 60.1 percent of students answered "with good self-control, but is easily influenced by such factors as online chatting, music listening, game playing, etc."; 7.0 percent of students answered "with poor self-control and need assistant teachers in accompany"; 5.0 percent of students answered "lost in controlling study schedule and

cannot accept this way of learning". Seen from the survey, close to 88 percent of students think their autonomous learning ability is good or great, but teachers' supervision or guidance are still needed; for the rest students having poor autonomous learning ability, they need teachers' instructions even more. When asked by the question of "Whether teacher's role of guidance, assistance, and supervision is important for your online learning?", 78.2 percent of students surveyed answered "important" or "very important", 13.5 percent of students answered "just so so", 8.3 percent of students answered "not important" or "it is not necessary". "More and more students would take up their curriculum in accordance with their interest orientation and social demand, instead of starting a subject with the jurisdiction of teacher's dictates as well as within an intrinsic logic of a specific subject. (Xiang, 2004)" Therefore, at the same time of prioritizing students as subject place, teachers' leading position during network teaching and learning can not be ignored completely. In this new teaching pattern, teachers represent prominently as guides, assistants, and organizers.

TALE 2
STUDENTS' SELF-EVALUATION OF THEIR NETWORK AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

Evaluation	Efficacious surveyed student number 112	percentage
With full self-control and no need of teachers' supervision	34	27.9
With good self-control, but is easily influenced by such factors as online chatting, music listening, game playing, etc.	74	60.1
With poor self-control and need assistant teachers in accompany	8	7.0
Lost in controlling study schedule, and cannot accept this way of learning	6	5.0

(5) Study hours of network learning out of class

Network Chinese learning gives students greater free time and more space. From table 3, it can be seen that when asked by "How many hours do you need in network autonomous Chinese learning every week?", 14.7 percent of students answered "two and a half hours", 37.7 percent answered "five hours", and 47.6 percent answered "above 5 hours". It is shown that over eighty percent of students have the need of at least five hours to fill up their in-class or formal study. Though with abounding online network resources available on hand, the supplementary period time of study beyond class for students is an integral part in their network autonomous Chinese learning.

TABLE 3
WEEKLY HOURS STUDENTS NEED IN NETWORK AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

Hours	Efficacious surveyed student number 112	Percentage
2.5 hours	18	14.7
5 hours	46	37.7
Above 5 hours	58	47.6

(6) Obstacles to network teaching and learning

Forty-eight percent of students surveyed answered "lack of sense and habit of learning Chinese by using internet"; 34.3 percent answered "inconvenient to get access to online network"; 7.1 percent answered "computer operating ability is limited"; 10.6 percent answered "poor in Chinese for following instructions". The survey shows that nearly half of the students admit that they lack for awareness and habit in network Chinese learning, and they wish to be rightly instructed and guided. 34.3 percent of students regard online resources access as an important requirement in Chinese learning and this shows that students rely much on computers and network, and computers play an important role in their learning. Only 7.1 percent of students think their computer operating abilities are the obstacle to network learning, and this tells that only a minority of students needs to improve their computer operating skills, i.e. they need to facilitate with the awareness of exploring and discovering in study by using online resources.

B. Multimedia Teaching and Learning

Multimedia aid Chinese teaching and learning can submerge learners into an environment of mutual interactions of sounds, lights and images, and stimulate their sense organs with an integrative approach to words, images, pictures and sounds. At the same time of receiving traditional aural information, learners can strengthen the effect of aural input through a vast amount of visual input, thus to better memorize acquired knowledge and skills (Xiong, 2002).

(1) Students' applicability to multimedia teaching

One third of students surveyed answered they adapted to multimedia teaching quickly, over a half got accustomed to gradually, and the rest felt a little difficult. This shows that more than the majority of students can adjust their study attitudes and change their studying habits initiatively and positively according to changes of teaching patterns and means, so as to conform to the new teaching methods, in spite of a few students who are still unfamiliar with multimedia teaching and are more used to traditional teaching patterns. It shows that approving and accepting the changes of teaching patterns is quite a long process for students, and that students differ greatly in studying methods and habits. For example, asked by the question "Multimedia, video, and blackboard, which teaching media is most

effective?", 64.8 percent of students welcomed multimedia, 25.5 percent preferred video, and the rest 9.7 chose blackboard. It indicates that all teaching media have some pros-and-cons. Some students enjoy traditional teaching patterns, but most students prefer to the multimedia one, since it is a stronger incentive to sense organs, and makes teaching more imaginary, stereoscopic, and vivid, thus raising study efficiency. Therefore, multimedia teaching seems more accessible and sensible.

(2) Extent of students' attention focused in multimedia teaching milieu

Table 4 shows that, when asked by the question "Where do you focus your attention on when in multimedia teaching milieu?", 76 percent of students surveyed answered they focused on the teaching contents presented by multimedia, 16 percent answered teacher's implication of discourse, and 8 percent answered text books.

TABLE 4
CONTENTS STUDENTS FOCUS ON WHEN IN MULTIMEDIA MILIEU

Contents	Efficacious surveyed student number 112	Percentage
Multimedia	93	76.0
Textbooks	19	16.0
Others	10	8.0

It can be seen from the above table, most of the students focus on the teaching contents presented by multimedia. It suggests that multimedia teaching improves students' attention and conforms to their cognitive law. Compared with textbooks, the use of multimedia in presenting teaching contents can better attract students' attention. Some relative investigation says the concentration ratio is the highest when many sense organs participate in studying activities (Peng and Chang, 2004). The investigation is consistent with the result of this survey.

(3) Interest of students in Chinese learning aroused with multimedia teaching

88.6 percent of students surveyed answered "(strongly) agree", while 11.4 percent answered "(strongly) disagree". This tells that the overwhelming majority agrees to the effect of multimedia teaching in arousing interest in Chinese studying.

(4) Students' initiative participation in multimedia learning

Seen from the table 5 below, some 20 percent of students surveyed held a negative point of view, and around 80 percent responded with an affirmative answer to get on the learning of Chinese with the aid of multimedia courseware on their own. It illustrates that in multimedia Chinese teaching, teachers should not rely on multimedia devices too much to the neglect of teaching interactivity with students. Teachers should pay attention to arouse students' participation awareness to accord with the teaching characteristics of language classes.

TABLE 5
STUDENTS' INITIATIVE PARTICIPATION IN MULTIMEDIA LEARNING

comment	Efficacious surveyed student number 112	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	5.0
Disagree	10	8.0
Neutral	13	11.0
agree	42	34.0
Strongly agree	51	42.0

(5) Problems met in multimedia milieu

To the query "unfamiliar with the functions of all the contents in the disks", 20 percent students surveyed answered "yes", to "too many contents there to differentiate what is primary from what is secondary", 48 percent students answered "yes", and with the question as "have no students or teachers to communicate with", 32 percent students answered "yes". The survey reflects that, in the process of multimedia Chinese teaching and learning, students need instructions and communications with study partners or teachers during their process as well as about their problems met in study so as to better improve their studies.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the idea of "students-centered" in multimedia and network teaching becomes more and more prioritized, teachers' leading role cannot be neglected either. Online resources are rich but indiscriminal, so if students are put in the vast ocean of internet assimilating knowledge by their own, it will be very difficult for language students. "The educator's expertise is valuable in helping learners select the most appropriate learning resources and sequence them in appropriate order. At the same time, educators need to help learners build their independent learning skills" (Zhao and Lai, 2009). Hence, teachers should give students proper instructions, e.g. teachers should supply students with relative websites in accordance with the need of study materials for them to surf the internet on purpose, but not to look for materials blindly getting half of the result with twice of the effort; teachers should not only arrange teaching schedule and materials to wait passively for students to accomplish, but to arrange proper study materials for students to refer to, so as to help students transit from the state of passive study to totally autonomous study. Teachers should make full use of web resources, and resources inside and outside courseware to arouse students' study enthusiasm, to guide students

to learn knowledge and skills effectively, to adjust teaching schedule on demand of students' need, and to give students individualized help. At the same time, more team work among students is also included.

IV. Conclusion and Prospect

Although the survey scope of this study poses a certain extend of regionality, and due to the complexity of the subject content, the items designed in the survey is unable to cover the exhaustive aspects, the survey is still of much objectivity, thus demonstrating fundamentally that the Great Wall network and multimedia Chinese Courseware teaching model is generally approved and approbated by learners.

The network and multimedia language teaching methodology with its cutting-edge of creating virtual language atmosphere and with abundant provision of resourceful audio-visual materials not only provides teachers with new teaching means, but also promotes the development of students' autonomous and individualized study, diversifying the interactions among teachers, students and computers. This new teaching pattern gives a full play to the concept of modern quality education, i.e. students-centered, teachers-guided, and paying attention to fostering students' language communication ability. Along with the development of modern educational techniques, improvement of educational facilities and reformation of teaching concept, a new path of Chinese teaching pattern with excellent combination of computers and human will come of age.

Meanwhile, with the rapid economic development and phenomenal cultural impact of China on the world, Chinese language acquisition and application is coming into increasingly great demand. At present, there are 223,499 international students studying in China, among whom 13,516 are Chinese government sponsored in total. Among the figure 13,516, 3,365 of them is the sole increment of 2008. However, this quota only accounts to 6.05 percent of the whole cake among all studying in China from abroad. The Chinese government's projected target of scholarships would exceed over 260,000 in 2013 (Zhou and Zhang, 2009). At the same time, the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism of Ireland (2008) testified that "the Chinese community is the second largest ethnic group after the Polish community in Ireland which represents a relatively new destination for Chinese emigrants and who have brought with them a hard-working ethos and a strong sense of family and community". The Department of the Taoiseach (2008) stipulated that one of the key actions in the Irish Government Actions to Build the Smart Economy Framework is: "We will continue to strengthen bilateral education relations between Irish and Chinese authorities at third level, including further development of economic and cultural links and the learning of the Chinese language". Set in this favourable backdrop of Sino-Irish government's full support and underpinned with the two Chinese language and culture research centres established in 2007 in University College Cork and University College Dublin, it is prospective that research into Chinese language pedagogical methodology with the state-of-art cyber-delivered products be soon perfected and further developed to satiate the unprecedented socioeconomic demands.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by Program for Science & Technology Innovation Talents in Universities of Henan Province (HASTIT).

References

[1] Cai, Jigang. (2003). Why Reform the Traditional College English Teaching Pattern. *China University Teaching*, 11, 25-26.
[2] Cai, Jigang & Wu, Shixing. (2003). Importing Network & Multimedia Technique to Reform Traditional Teaching Pattern. *Foreign Language World*, 6, 2-7.
[3] Chen, Jianlin. (2004). College English Curriculum Requirements: A Theoretical Understanding and Application. *Educational Technology for Foreign Language Teaching*, 6, 46-50.
[4] Department of the Taoiseach. (2008). Building Ireland's Smart Economy, A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. Dublin: The Stationery Office.
[5] Hanban Great Wall Chinese Centre. (2009). A Brief Introduction of Great Wall Chinese. http://www.docin.com/p-20882822.html. (Accessed 29/9/2012).
[6] Hu, Long. (2004). Innovation is the Eternal Theme in Foreign Language Education Technique. *Computer-assisted Foreign Language Education*, 6, 78-80.
[7] Li, Weihong. (2012). Critical Analysis of Cooperative Learning in Chinese ELT Context. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5:1046-1050.
[8] National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). (2008). Virtual City Twinning Project, An Education Toolkit for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Dublin: NCCRI.
[9] Office of Chinese Language Council International. (2008). International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
[10] Peng, Beiping & Chang, Qing. (2004). The Practice and Exploration of the Multimedia Teaching of College English. *Journal of Taiyuan University*, 1, 51-54.
[11] Warschauer M. & Kern R. (2000). Network-based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice. Cambridge University Press).
[12] He, Qisen, Huang, Yuanshen & Qin Xiubai. (2008). A Retrospect and Prospect of 30 Years of Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies. *Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies*, 6, 427-433.

[13] Xiang, Xianming. (2004). Reform of University Teaching Ethos during Higher Education Popularization. *Journal of Higher Education*, 1, 75-79.
[14] Xiong, Jie. (2002). The Coordinated Application of Multimedia CAI and Traditional Teaching Mode in College English Teaching. *Journal of Xidian University of Electronic Technology*. 1, 91-95.
[15] Xue, Zhenhong. (2003). On Internet-Assisted College English Teaching. J*ournal of Shaoyang College*, 4, 145-147.
[16] Zhang, Renlei and Wu, Min. (2005). An Analysis of Teaching Reform in Multimedia and Network College English. *Heilongjiang Researches on Higher Education*, 4, 119-121.
[17] Zhang, Zhiguo. (2009). Main Parts Research on Language Policy: Example of the Senior Language Research Centre in the University of Maryland. *World Education Information*, 7, 34-37.
[18] Zhao, Yong & Lai, Chun. (2009). Technology and Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) Education. Confucius Institute. 2, 33-35.
[19] Zhou, Yi & Zhang, He. (2009). Applying the Scientific Development View on the State-Funded Education Abroad and Promoting the Cultivation of Advanced Professionals to Serve the National Strategy—Interviewing with Liu Jinghui, Secretary General of China Scholarship Council. *World Education Information*. 9, 14-15.
[20] Zhu, Fudao. (2004). Teachers' Leading Role under the Condition of Web-assisted College English Teaching. *Foreign Language World*, 1, 48-53.

Haizhen Mo, associate professor at Henan Institute of Science and Technology, Xinxiang City, Henan Province, P. R. China. Dr. Mo got PhD of agrotechnology in 2007 at Jiangnan University, Wuxi, China and did post doctoral research at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. Dr. Mo is the young core teachers fostered and subsidized by Henan Province, excellent academic technology leaders at the provincial level.

Huiqing Dong, Professor of Language and Culture at Northwest A&F University of P. R. China, and Director of Education and Culture Section of Chinese Embassy in Ireland

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1091-1097, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1091-1097

Minimalism in SLA

Parviz Maftoon
College of Foreign Languages and Literature, Science and Research Branch, IAU, Tehran, Iran

Nima Shakouri
Roudbar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Rasht, Iran

***Abstract*—What Chomsky and his followers persist is that thought is not influenced by language and is only expressed by it. Zahedi (2008) claims Chomsky's determinist approach to language comprises three distinct problems: Humboldt's Problem—what constitutes knowledge of language—Plato's Problem—how such knowledge is acquired—and Descartes' Problem—how such knowledge is put to use, all of which are the main concern of first language acquisition but not second language learning. The present paper is an attempt to elucidate the concept of minimalism and presents an answer to whether the penetration of minimalism into the realm of SLA is plausible. In fact, assuming language as a specific faculty that imposes the output in first language acquisition is not on a par to claim that second language learners acquire the language in much the same way as their first language.**

***Index Terms*—minimalism, maximalism, legibility condition, UG**

I. Introduction

An interesting point about human beings is that they are keen on learning about recent discoveries; however, they know nothing about the earlier discoveries. In fact, they show little interest in what have been discovered. Nevertheless, it is a truism that understanding of the past provides an explanatory tool (Boeckx, 2006). Accordingly, what behaviorists have achieved in the past paved the way and provided an empirical tool for Chomsky (1957) to claim that relying on external input cannot account for the creative aspect of language use. In other words, what makes Chomsky assert that a native speaker is able to create and understand infinite number of sentences never heard before was a tool provided by behaviorists. In fact, Chomsky's rejection of any behaviorist account helped him shape what came to be known as the cognitive revolution—a child is born with a language acquisition device (LAD) playing a central role in the acquisition and use of behavior. From this time, the central question in the realm of linguistics was a problem argued by Chomsky: how to account for children's acquisition of their native language. Along the same line, the knowledge of language (competence) is tacit rather than explicit; thus it is no good asking a native speaker a question such as "how do you form negative sentences?" (Radford, 1997, p. 2). As Radford adds:

Perhaps the richest vein of readily available evidence which we have about the nature of grammatical competence lies in native speakers' intuitions about the grammaticality and interpretations of words, phrases and sentences in their native language. For example, preschool children often produce past-tense forms like goed, comed, seed, buyed, etc. and any adult native speaker of (modern Standard) English will intuitively know that such forms are ungrammatical in English, and will know that their grammatical counterparts are went, came, saw and bought. (p. 3)

To make the task of linguistics more precise, Chomsky (1957) claims that there are three stages in which adequacy can be attained in grammar. In other words, grammar is a theory of language that must achieve three levels of adequacy:

1. Observational adequacy. The lowest level of adequacy is achieved if a grammar presents the observed primary linguistic data correctly. In other words, a grammar can accept or reject a sentence. That is, the grammar is able to distinguish those strings of words which are sentences of the language from those which are not sentences of the language.

2. Descriptive adequacy: A grammar is descriptively adequate if it correctly accounts for the native speakers' intuition; whether a sentence is grammatical or not takes place in the realm of descriptive adequacy. The main concern here is to know what an ideal speaker knows. For example, in the sentence *Sara eats an apple*, a native speaker knows that *an apple* is understood as the object in the above sentence.

3. Explanatory adequacy. This stage of adequacy determines how a child acquires a first language. The central question of linguists, as Bourke (2005) outlines, is as follows: How does the child go from primary linguistic data, i.e., well-formed, short sentences in the target language, to a grammar for that language, i.e., a procedure for generating a potentially infinite number of sentences?

Through a critical lens, one can ask what Chomsky and his followers have to offer for second language acquisition (SLA). What is implausible is that the concept of the faculty of language is used in relation with first language acquisition, but not SLA. If we want to generalize Chomsky's proposal for the first language acquisition to SLA, it seems to be a futile attempt. Besides, recently, several scholars (e.g., Cook, 1997; Schwartz, 1997) are not compatible with comparing L2 learners to native speakers of the L2 based on the properties of UG. In other words, the use of ideas

and techniques employed in L1 does not always transfer to L2 acquisition for various reasons and employing them in L2 may hinder the process of language acquisition.

II. Literature Review

A. The Minimalist Program (MP) and SLA

Working in SLA within the framework of minimalism is a "challenge" (Balcon, 2001, p. 306) since researchers need to keep up with changes in syntactic theory, as well as changes in SLA. Accordingly, Bley-Vroman's (1983) comparative fallacy warns that "work on the linguistic description of languages can be serially hindered or sidetracked by a concern with the target language" (p. 2). He goes on to hold that "the learner's system is worthy of study of its own right, not just as a degenerate form of the target system" (p. 4). In this regard, Bley-Vroman claims that SLA primarily differs in part from first language (L1) acquisition on the basis of differences in their outcomes. That is, the property of the grammar of L2 learners is different from that of native speakers (White, 1998).

Drawing on the concepts of minimalism to account for the process of SLA is not an easy task. Nevertheless, the cautionary note by Chomsky (1995, cited in Balcon, 2001) makes us alert that one should bear in mind that MP is a program, not a theory, even less than the principle and parameters approach, although minimalism emanates from the achievement of the principles and parameters program (Boecks, 2006).

MP appeals to the idea that the language faculty of humans shows signs of an optimal design, which seems to suggest that the inner workings conform to a very simple computational law. In other words, MP considers a linguistic expression as the optimal realization of the interface conditions, where optimality is determined by the economy of UG. Along the same line, MP aims at developing the ideas of economy of derivation and economy of representation (David, 2003). The former, according to David, is a principle stating that movements only occur in order to match interpretable features with uninterpretable features. An example of an interpretable feature is the plural inflection on regular English nouns, e.g. boy**s**. The word *boys* can only be used to refer to several *boys*, not a single *boy*, and so this inflection contributes to meaning, making it interpretable. Besides, English verbs are inflected according to the number of subjects (e.g., *Boys run* vs *A boy runs*); however, this information is only interpretable once a relationship is formed between the subject and the verb. Economy of representation, on the other hand, insists the principle that grammatical structures should exist for a purpose; i.e., the structure of a sentence, as David asserts, should be no larger or more complex than required to satisfy constraints on grammaticality. What is plausible is that this faculty is innate; thus, how can this innate faculty be imagined in SLA? Moreover, if the knowledge of language is predetermined, how can we expect that MP contributes to learning in L2; still, what Chomsky has discussed for decades seems not to be applicable to SLA.

B. Minimalism and Poverty of Stimulus

What is clear is that linguistic evidence available to a child is too impoverished to account for how the child comes from small sample of cases s/he gets as input to a grammar that lets him/her generate an infinite number set of well-formed sentences of the language. Along the same line, the basic tenet of argument, to Longa and Lorenzo (2008) is that "the amplitude and rich articulation of the knowledge about language of any normal child strongly contrasts with the scarcity and degeneracy of the data she comes across" (p. 542). Actually, the deficiencies of the data are of different kinds, which Thomas (2002, cited in Longa & Lorenzo, 2008) classifies into three main groups:

- Degeneracy. Stimuli are poor because they contain defects such as false starts, interrupted fragments, lapses, etc.
- Finiteness. Stimuli are poor because they represent a very limited, idiosyncratic, and accidental array of data from an infinite set of possibilities.
- Partiality. Stimuli are poor because certain phenomena that the child has no problems dealing with are completely absent from the array of data at her disposal. (p. 543)

The concept of poverty of stimulus can be clarified through an example. Imagine a child makes the sentence *Sara is happy when she is here* into the question form *Is Sara happy when she is here*? Now a legitimate question to ask is how the child knows to move *is* from the main clause and not from the embedded clause? There are two possible answers to this question. Either the child is exposed to many such clauses, or the child is built so as to consider viable only such sentence formation rules. If we choose the first answer, we are implicitly driven to this notion that rules are learned on the basis of available data. However, if we accept this proposal for L1, we can simply deny it in SLA; children only learn the rules that they are exposed to. In this regard, we can claim the creation of such sentences will be finite. Then, we should expect if the child is not exposed to particular data, s/he will not be able to produce correct sentences. This is an example of what linguists refer to as the poverty of stimulus argument: the linguistic input (stimulus) given to the child is not rich enough to account for what s/he tacitly knows. This argument must not raise such issues that poverty of stimulus is a pro-innateness argument. MP is not an attempt to question the concept of innateness (Longa & Lorenzo, 2008). Accordingly, Longa and Lorenzo contend:

Any effort to explain language acquisition as a process guided from stimuli and the external circumstances of the child must be abandoned if it proves to be correct. If, on the contrary, stimuli are proved to be rich and capable of serving as the model from which to derive any sort of grammatical rule or principle, then an empiricist interpretation of language learning is in principle possible. (p. 544)

To give up the discussion any further, it can be concluded that the poverty of stimulus, according to Longa and Lorenzo, has only an indirect or secondary role in the defenses of innateness. The authors further state that the main purpose of the poverty of stimulus argument is to discredit empiricism. They, nevertheless, maintain the idea of poverty of stimulus argument within the depot of MP is not a pivotal one. It is not among the concern of MP that stimuli given to children are or are not poor. The primary goal of the program, according to the evolutionary psychology, is to discover those systems that account for the implementation of linguistic systems.

However, one of the central questions in the realm of MP is that what kind of knowledge is innate. In embracing the concept of innateness, Longa and Lorenzo claim, there should be a shift from input-output model to a dispositional model (Longa & Lorenzo, 2008). On elaborating the distinction between input-output model and dispositional model, Longa and Lorenzo assert that the former model, relying on the poverty of stimulus argument, asserts that "the mismatch between, on the one hand, the scarcity and the imperfection of the [input] around children, and, on the other, the sophistication of the system of knowledge finally attained" (p. 547) lends support to a claim that the amount of information encapsulated in the system of knowledge is not derivable from experience. Longa and Lorenzo go on to hold that "the second model, [the] dispositional model, is based on the idea that an innate feature of a species is simply a property determined to appear at a certain point of the developmental process" (p. 547). In effect, dispositional model "treats innate features phenotypical [; that is,] what is innate is the property and not the basis of development" (Longa & Lorenzo, 2008, p. 547). In the same line, Longa and Lorenzo imply that "a certain property of grammars can be considered innate in spite of not being the answer to a specific grammatical instruction from an innate base" (p. 547). The phenotypical nature of innateness has two implications: (1) it is a feature inherited from the external systems and has its foundations on the compositionality of thought for some and for others as the planitification and execution of motor gestures; and (2) it is a feature somehow unavoidable for any combinational system as held by Chomsky (Longa & Lorenzo, 2008).

C. Maximalism versus Minimalism

From the point of view of the architecture of mind, language faculty plays the role of a bridge by which representations of the external systems become accessible to one another. In support of this, linguists might endorse either maximalist or minimalist perspectives. Whereas Chomsky (1957) is a minimalist, or "lumper," Halliday (1973) is a maximalist, or "splitter" (Bourke, 2005, p. 92). For minimalists, according to Longa and Lorenzo (2008), thought is directly externalizable, and the mind does not need to incorporate a specific grammatical system. This implies that the mechanisms of the faculty of language are not different from the external systems. Maximalists, in contrast, taking the dominant position among the acquisition theories hold that language is a specific faculty that imposes the output. Imagining that second language learners acquire the language in much the same way as they do in learning their first languages does not seem to be plausible. In contrast, Bourke (2005) confers that the basic claim of Hallidayan systemic functional grammar is that every use of English determines the form of the language that is used for that particular purpose. To maximalists, language is a specific faculty that imposes the representational format (grammar) on thoughts in order to be translatable into psychomotor instructions (Zwart, 1998). As Bourke (2005) maintains "grammar is thus a tool for making meaning" (p. 92). An example from the maximalist perspective will clarify the issue. In expressing uncertainty, according to Bourke, one may select various exponents in order to fulfill the same purpose:

Sara may come.

I am not sure whether Sara comes.

Sara is likely to come.

In Halliday's (1973) functional systemic grammar, all meaning comes out of three metafunctions: (1) ideational, (2) interpersonal, and textual. As put by Bourke (2005,) ideational metafunction refers to the use of language in order to represent the world and how we experience it, e.g., to talk about the weather or to say what is going on. Interpersonal metafunction refers to language as an exchange between people, as in greetings, polite requests, etc.; and textual metafunction refers to the ways language holds together as a text, i.e., how it forms a coherent message rather than just a collection of sentences. Accordingly, Halliday (1994, cited in Bourke, p. 93) goes on to hold that the context in which the language occurs is also divided into three parts, the field, the tenor, and the mode:

- The *field* is basically what is being talked about and relates to the ideational metafunction;
- The *tenor* has to do with the role relations between the people in the exchange and relates to the interpersonal metafunction; and
- The *mode* has to do with the nature of the exchange—whether it is spoken or written, and the genre. It is related to the textual metafunction.

Halliday's system, in contrast with Chomsky's, is dynamic and interactive (Maftoon & Shakouri, 2012). Linearity is absent in Halliday's perspective. Although Hallidayan systemic functional grammar may seem complex and messy (Bourke, 2005), the dynamic nature of language, as to Maftoon and Shakouri (2012), is more compatible with Halliday's (1973) perspective of language. In fact, Bourke (2005) maintains language is processed through a network of systems. At each point in the processing, as Bourke continues "certain options are made and one enters into ever more delicate system networks until eventually the original metafunctional meaning is transmuted into wording" (p. 93).

Thornton and Wexler (1999) declare that a basic tenet of UG is that much linguistic knowledge is part of the genetic makeup of the child. This knowledge is encoded in the form of universal principles. These principles are only useful to a certain type of mental computations. In fact, the principles of UG prohibit the arrangement of words, certain operations, etc. The MP tries to explain the principles that universally constrain the form of languages. The constraints have assumed to have a central position in theory of UG that endow the child with innate knowledge of syntactic properties. To MP, as Longa and Lorenzo (2008) put forth, it is the faculty of language that is required to adjust to the formal properties of the systems it serves as a cognitive bridge. They also go on to hold that "while [,] according to the maximalist view [,] it is the mind which must be adapted to its linguistic tool, according to the minimalist position[,] it is language which accommodates and develops properties akin to those of other components of mind" (p. 552).

To maximalists, human language is modular from two different perspectives: On the one hand, the faculty of language, as Longa and Lorenzo (2008) declares, "is seen as one of the components (modules) in which the mind is articulated, each one being a specialized system from an anatomical and a functional point of view (external modularity)" (p. 552); on the other hand, the faculty of language is considered internal different subsystems. From the external modularity point of view, language is located at the same level of the analysis of mind as such other components as vision, motor control, while to internal modularists, language is attributed a highly specific set of subsystems, such as case theory and phrase structure theory (Longa & Lorenzo, 2008). This implies the fact that language is a complex dynamic system; understanding a sentence involves interactions of various components and modules.

D. Minimalism and Legibility Conditions

MP postulates that the faculty of language is designed to satisfy legibility conditions, but it may not (Zahedi, 2008, p. 40). There are no output conditions within the faculty of language. The only output conditions are those of bare output conditions external to the faculty of language and imposed by performance systems known as legibility conditions. However, performance systems are also equipped with intellibility conditions which do not impose on the faculty of language. But what motivates the faculty of language to allow generation of illegible expressions, as Zahedi argues, is unknown. Accordingly, the most fundamental hypothesis of MP is that language is an optimal solution to legibility condition which is, according to Zahedi, imposed by the performance systems, external to language but internal to mind. Along the same line, Longa and Lorenzo (2008) declare:

The ultimate foundations of the FL [faculty of language] are certainly not linguistic, the interaction of the external systems during development being responsible for the emergence of a linguistic capacity and with genes perhaps only in charge of the development of those nonlinguistic systems. The growing of the FL is thus to be considered a side effect of the development of the external systems, which establish the conditions that, given a minimum amount of external stimuli, impel the implementation of a linguistic capacity as an aspect of the cognitive equipment of any individual. The FL is therefore an unavoidable result of certain initial nonlinguistic conditions and not the final outcome of an initial state of linguistic knowledge. (p. 548)

Bare output condition implies that in MP there are no output conditions except those imposed externally (i.e., the performance system). They are called output conditions because they operate on interface levels; they are designated as bare since they are no longer part of the computational systems as postulated in Government-Binding, such as filters and ranked constraints (Zahedi, 2008, p. 41). In brief, minimalism takes its point of departure as to what the faculty of language may contain. In this regard, it suffices to say that the Principles and Parameters approach provides language learners with a fixed set of principles common in all languages, and one or more parameters of variations. As Boeckx (2006) mentions, the principles come as a menu. In much the same way, Baker (2001) has likened principles to the list of atoms in the periodic table that may be combined in various ways (the parameters) to form molecules.

E. Minimalism and Computational System

MP, as a departure from Chomsky's (1957) earliest models, has an inclination towards the dynamic nature of language (Maftoon & Shakouri, 2012). In this regard, Zwart (1998) states that "the Minimalist Program [MP] deals with the perennial question of how to link sound and meaning" (p. 215). Accordingly, in his earlier work, Chomsky (1957) proposes that the faculty of language, independent of the other faculties, entails a computational system that joins the two components of the mind dealing with sound and meaning. As to Zwart (1998), the computational system of human language interacts with the external systems via two distinct interface levels, the Phonetic form and the Logical form. Cook and Newson (1996, cited in Bourke, 2005, p. 90) assert that "the sounds are the external face of language [, whereas] the meanings are the internal face of language". In a sense, Bourke (2005) puts forth that "the 'sounds' make up the Phonetic Form (PF) component, and 'the meanings' make up the Logical Form (LF) component" (p. 90).

In the same vein, it is necessary is ask how linguistic interpretation is represented. To pave the way in order to find a legitimate answer to this question, Zahedi (2008) claims that this can be captured by the notion of intelligibility. However, one must not confuse interpretability with intelligibility, as Chomsky (2000, p.141) warns that there is no bound on the number of legible expressions; the fact that the faculty of language is to satisfy legibility may permit generation of expressions that are unusable. Along the same line, Zahedi (2008) holds that the computational system of language may generate illegible derivations which can be rendered intelligible by the performance system and also may be genetically legible derivation not intelligible to the performance system. For example, *Sara to play tennis is happy* is

illegible at the faculty of language, but it is intelligible. However, *the green Iranian fur coat is sleeping*, though legible, is not intelligible.

However, McGilvray (2005) claims as "meaning-sound associations are arbitrary," (p. 206) and "there is no biological relationship between them," (p. 206) and as they are only a matter of social conventions, they are "of no interest to natural scientist" (p. 206). To Zahedi (2008), this property is called "lexical creativity" (p. 41) of language, which has been ignored by Chomsky and his followers. As a result, language is a human capacity which allows one to develop various social organizations. Culture, for instance, in the form of various social organizations depends on language.

F. The Role of UG in SLA

UG is not a theory of language acquisition, as White (1998) claims, although it provides constraints on linguistic representation. UG is part of LAD which contains learning principles, the abstract rules operated on a language. Put differently, UG is part of the faculty of language that places limitations on grammars, constraining their forms (i.e., syntactic, semantic, and phonological), as well as the way they operate (i.e., the principles that the grammar is subject to). Accordingly, UG includes invariant principles and parameters. What we are interested is whether certain abstract and complex properties which are undetermined by the L2 input manifest themselves in interlanguage grammars. Thus, in addition to a theory of constrains on interlanguage representation, we need a theory of how that representation is acquired, a theory of development. What is implicit is a central question: If the properties are innate and do not have to be learned, how does UG contribute to an explanation of language acquisition? Accordingly, White (1998) remarks:

It is the claim that, at least in the case of first languages, there is a logical problem of language acquisition, a mismatch between what goes in (namely, the primary linguistic data) and what comes out (a grammar). In other words, the input underdetermines the output. Assuming a logical problem of L1 acquisition, people have asked whether the same holds true of L2. (p. 2)

Is UG available to L2 learners? In other words, does interlanguage grammar show evidence of being constrained by principles of UG? As White says, if interlanguage grammars are UG constrained, then we expect parametric properties to show up, either in the form of L1 settings or L2 settings or settings found in other languages, with an associated cluster of properties.

Drawing on the principles and parameters approach, researchers (e.g., Bley-Vroman, 1983; Cook, 1997) made an attempt to find out to what extent UG constrains SLA? Four logical possibilities have been articulated regarding the role of UG in SLA: (1) no access hypothesis, (2) partial access hypothesis (3) full access hypothesis, and (4) dual access. The first hypothesis holds that UG is totally inaccessible to the adult L2 learner; learning takes place in terms of non-linguistic learning strategies. Partial access hypothesis, nevertheless, maintains that UG is partially available to the learner; only those parametric values characterizing the L1 grammar are available, and the rest must be learned in terms of non-linguistic learning strategies. On the other hand, according to full-access hypothesis, UG is fully available; differences in patterns of acquisition between L1 and L2 learners and the lack of completeness can be accounted for in other ways. Dual access hypothesis also contends that L2 learners have access to UG but the access to UG is partly blocked by the use of general learning strategies. Bley-Vroman (1983), however, argues that L2 learning is fundamentally different in part from L1 acquisition on the basis of differences in their outcomes. According to Bley-Vroman, SLA theories must explain both the representational problem and the developmental problem. In other words, as to Bley-Vroman, SLA theories have to deal with not only what L2 learners come to know, but also how they attain this knowledge. Although there is not a unanimous agreement among scholars on the legitimacy of at least one of these possibilities, accepting that UG contributes to the acquisition of L2 leads us to this claim that L2 learners are susceptible to attain unconscious knowledge that goes beyond the L2 input! Put differently, it is claimed that there might be other sources besides input that contribute to learning. If it is plausible for researchers, it is time to focus on the nature of mental representation that L2 learners achieve.

III. Conclusion

Minimalist program centers upon two types of questions. The first deals with how the knowledge of language is represented in the human mind. The second question is how that knowledge develops in the individual. As Lasnik (2002) enunciates, Chomsky's (1995) answer to the first question is that competence—the knowledge of language—is "a computational system whereby derivations produce structural representations" (p. 432). Chomsky's answer to the second question concerning the explanatory adequacy is that "much of the computational system is innate" (432). Further, "only the properties of particular lexical items have to be learned" (p. 432). These derivations and representations constituting linguistic competence, according to MP, conform to an economy criterion demanding that they be minimal. In the same line, MP attempts to pursue two goals. Firstly, grammar should make use of the minimal theoretical apparatus necessary to meet the criterion of descriptive adequacy, and secondly, to minimize the acquisition burden found by children in order to meet the explanatory adequacy. But such issues all take place in L1, and one should dare to say that Chomsky's language faculty does not exist in L2 learners' minds. In other words, the notion of innateness explicitly declares that L2 learners are not equipped with an innate acquisition device to acquire L2. What the present authors do not deny is that there are certainly some similarities between the acquisition of L1 and L2. In

both, some features of MP can be traced. Learning is UG constrained and entails the acquisition of functional categories which are initially minimally specified and acquired in more depth based on the input. As Hawkins (2001, cited in Balcon, 2001, p. 312) proposes, in L2 English inflection is at first minimally specified, with aspect, tense, and agreement features added gradually. Despite these similarities, the process of acquisition seems different.

In the same vein, Herschensohn (2000, cited in Balcon, 2001, p. 312) views syntax as invariable and language development as the acquisition of morphology and the lexicon, yet there is little indication of HOW this acquisition occurs. In L1, the concept of innateness of the faculty of language is pivotal. But what about the L2? Certainly what Chomsky and his followers do insist is to investigate the process of L1 acquisition rather than that of L2 acquisition. One can, therefore, conclude that Chomsky is silent about L2. Furthermore, if we are forced to provide a connecting link between SLA and MP, we can provide tentative answers for some questions that lack both empirical and theoretical bases. However, no one ignores that the second language user takes advantage of the minimal available resources to use language that does not give us strong theoretical reasons that lend support to the penetration of minimalism into SLA.

REFERENCES

[1] Baker, M. (2001). The atoms of language. New York: Basic Books.

[2] Balcon, P. A. (2001). Minimalism and beyond: Second language acquisiton for the twenty-first century. *Second Language Research*, *17*(3), 306-322.doi: 10.1177/026765830101700304.

[3] Bley-Vroman, R. (1983). The comparative fallacy in interlanguage studies: The case of systematicity. *Language Learning 33*, 1-17. doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1983.tb00983.x.

[4] Boeckx, C. (2006). Linguistic minimalism: Origins, concepts, methods and aims. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[5] Bourke, J. M. (2005). The grammar we teach. *Reflections on English Language Teaching 4*, 85–97.

[6] Chomsky, N. (1957*).* Syntactic structures. Paris: Mouton.

[7] Chomsky, N. (1995) The minimalist program. Cambridge: MIT Press.

[8] Chomsky, N. (2000). The minimalist inquiries. In R. Martin, D. Michaels, & J. Uriagereka (Eds.), *Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik* (pp. 89-155). Cambridge: MIT Press.

[9] Cook, V. (1997). Monolingual bias in second language acquisition research. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses 34*, 35-49.

[10] David, A. (2003). Core syntax. A minimalist approach. Oxford: Oxford University Press

[11] Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). Language in a social perspective: Explorations in the functions of language. London: Edward Arnold.

[12] Lasnik, H. (2002). The minimalist program in syntax. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 6 (10), 432-437. doi:10.1016/S1364-6613(02)01977-0.

[13] Longa, V. M., & Lorenzo, G. (2008). What about a really minimalist theory of language acquisition? *Linguistics*, *46* (3), 541-570.

[14] Maftoon, P., & Shakouri, N. (2012). Grammar is not autonomous. *British Journal of science, 7* (2), 17-25.

[15] McGilvray, J. (2005). Meaning and creativity. In J. McGilvray (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Chomsky* (pp. 204-222). Cambridge: Cambridge Universsity Press.

[16] Radford, A. (1997). Syntax: A minimalist introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

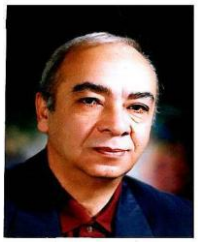
[17] Schwartz, B. (1997). On the basis of the basic variety. *Second Language Research 13*, 386-402. doi:10.1191/026765897670070857.

[18] Thornton, R., & Wexler, K. (1999). Principle B, ellipsis, and interpretation in child grammar. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[19] White, L. (1998). Universal Grammar in second language acquisition: The nature of interlanguage representation. In A. Juffs, T. Talplas, G. Mizera, & B. Burtt (Eds.), *Proceedings of GASLA IV* (pp. 3-14). Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh.

[20] Zahedi, K. (2008). Determinist inquiries: Debates on the foundation of language. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, *1* (1), 26-50.

[21] Zwart, J. W. (1998). The minimalist program. *J. Linguistics*, *34*, 213-226.doi:10.1017/S0022226797006889.



Parviz Maftoon is Associate Professor at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran. He received his Ph.D. degree from New York University in TESOL in 1978. His research interests concern SLA, SL/FL teaching methodology, and language syllabus design. He has published nationally and internationally and written and edited a number of books. He is currently on the editorial board of some language journals in Iran.

Nima Shakouri is currently a Ph.D. candidate of TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran. He has taught English courses for over a decade at different universities. Moreover, he has published nationally and internationally.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1098-1105, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1098-1105

A Contrastive Study of Chinese and British English Request Strategies Based on Open Role-play

Xiuping Han
BinZhou Medical University, YanTai, China

***Abstract*—This study investigates the similarities and differences in request strategies used by native speakers of British English and Mandarin Chinese. The method of a non-prescriptive open role-play is used as the instrument of data collection. After the analysis of the data is conducted, the findings of the study is presented and discussed, including the realization of three main requests strategies. Besides, this paper also focuses on how request strategies interact with the two social variables of power and distance.**

***Index Terms*—contrastive study, open role-play, speech act, request strategy**

I. Introduction

In everyday interactions, people constantly create utterances to achieve certain communicative intentions. These interactional goals are represented by particular speech acts such as requests, apologies, compliments, refusals, disagreements, and the like. Among these, the speech act of request has fascinated linguists working on cross-cultural and cross-linguistic studies.

A speech act of request is a prominent event in daily interactions, one in which the speaker usually manipulates appropriate linguistic forms to make requests according to certain situations. People produce requests for various reasons in everyday interactions, either to obtain information or certain action, to seek support, or to acquire assistance from others; however, the way requests are presented varies from one speech community to another. In a request the speaker to a greater or lesser extent imposes on the addressee hence there is a need to put politeness strategies into action in order to mitigate the imposition, in other words, to soften what the addressee might regard as an impingement on his/her freedom of action (Blum-Kulka, 1984). Thus speakers tend to employ a variety of strategies to try to make sure their requests will be granted. Such strategies will inevitably reflect the expression of politeness.

Given that requests are impositives, a speaker in making a request takes into consideration situational, social, and cultural factors, choosing appropriate linguistic forms to accomplish a speech act of request so as to maintain or establish a harmonious relationship with the hearer in such a situation. A study of request strategies allows us to take a closer look at politeness, cultural values, and other social aspects of a particular community.

Although a lot of work has been carried out on politeness phenomena, mainly through the analysis of the realization patterns of speech acts in a number of languages, there has been little work on East Asian languages, and there is less work on the contrastive analysis of particular kinds of speech acts as realized in Mandarin Chinese and British English. This study, as an attempt to address cross-linguistic and cross-cultural strategies employed in the speech act of request between a western language and an East Asian language, will hopefully provide some insights into politeness and speech acts.

A. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the politeness of request speech acts by investigating the patterns used by native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and British English under the influence of some social factors, such as social, cultural, and situational factors which produce sensitivity in both interlocutors. And the term ---'native speaker' refers to the participants in this research who can speak Mandarin Chinese or British English as their mother tongue.

Social variables, such as power, status and familiarity are indispensable for the realization of request speech acts, and these factors also determine the effects of the patterns of requests used by people from different cultures. (Brown and Levinson, 1987). By identifying the specific influences of social factors on request speech act, this study also try to analyze the speech acts in terms of power status and familiarity.

Specifically, this study focus on the choice of patterns of request strategies, including the choice of head acts, internal modifications, and external modifications, and on how request strategies interact with the two social variables of power and distance.

B. Methodologies for Data Collection

Written questionnaire is one of the most commonly used data collection method in the study of cross-cultural communication or inter-language pragmatics to obtain targeted speech acts. It has been employed by many researchers

to examine the performance of the request speech act. But it has been pointed out by many including Blum-Kulka, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, Hong, and Lee-Wong that the use of questionnaires also has some limitations. Imagining which speech act they would use in a given situation is rather difficult for participants, so that written responses may not actually correspond with oral performance they use in real life. Furthermore, they may not reveal the actual pragmatic features of spoken interactions.

Role-play has been used as an effective way of collecting oral data in this study of inter-cultural and cross-linguistic pragmatics. Responses in role-plays were recorded by audio taping, and then are transcribed. They allow researchers to obtain more interactive data as weel as providing sufficient time of responding.

Role-play includes two forms --- closed role-play and open role-play. In a closed role-play, participants respond verbally to a given situation without a reply from others. Open role-play allows participants to interact with each other and thus offers more conversational features, such as the process of negotiation, hesitation, the sequences of an action, etc. Open role-play also allows an examination of the sequences of negotiation which helps in the realization of complete forms of request interactions.

C. Design of the Role-play Situations

In order to examine the influence of social variables on the speech act of requesting, nine request situations for role-plays were designed, in which situations varied with the three social variables of distance, power and imposition. The power variable has three levels: +Power (the addressee has a higher power than the speaker), =Power (having parallel status), and −Power (the addressee has a lower power than the speaker). There are various types of power, such as age, gender, physical strength, or institutionalized roles (Brown and Gilman, 1960). The variable of social distance also has three levels: +D (the interlocutors are strangers), =D (the interlocutors are acquaintances), and −D (the interlocutors know each other very well). Finally, the ranking of imposition has two levels: +R (a high extent of imposition) and −R (a low extent of imposition). This study focuses on +R because requests made in all nine situations have a high degree of imposition. Because of this, elaborate request strategies were likely to be elicited. People tend to employ more strategies in situations that have a high degree of imposition. They will also think more and even make careful planning before they utter their request in order to make their requests approved. All the nine role-play situations are listed in Appendix. Table 1 shows the classification of role-plays according to contextual and social variables in the nine role-play situations.

TABLE .1
CLASSIFICATION OF ROLE-PLAYS ACCORDING TO CONTEXTUAL AND SOCIAL VARIABLES

Situations	Social power	Social distance	Ranking of imposition
R1 (borrow money)	+ P	+D	+R
R2 (borrow car)	+ P	−D	+R
R3 (borrow computer)	−P	+D	+R
R4 (ask to stay in one's house)	=P	−D	+R
R5 (ask a neighbor for help)	=P	+D	+R
R6 (cancel holiday)	− P	−D	+R
R7 (change jobs)	+P	=D	+R
R8 (ask an employee for help	− P	=D	+R
R9 (ask a colleague to treat a meal)	=P	=D	+R
R: Request open role-play situations; P: Social Power; D: Social Distance. R: Ranking of imposition			

To sum up, the use of open role-play as the instrument of data collection has the benefit of providing us with a controlled context yet one which allows us to examine speech act behavior in its discourse context; in which the social variables believed to be involved in the performance of the speech acts can be manipulated and allowing for 'real' interaction and a limited amount of 'spontaneity'.

D. The Subjects

The participants including 16 native speakers of British English (8 males and 8 females) and 20 native speakers of Chinese (11 males and 9 females) were matched in pairs in random in each situation, and their conversations were recorded respectively for further analysis. Most of the participants were between 18 and 35 years of age.

E. Coding for the Study

A request is comprised of head acts, internal modifications (lexical/syntactic modifications), and external modifications (supportive moves) according to Blum- Kulka. This study also makes use of CCSARP methodology that is widely used in the field of request studies to analyze the data.

Head acts are usually classified into three main levels in relation to the degree of directness; each level is further classified into sub-categories. 1) Direct head acts comprise mood derivable, performatives, obligation statements, and want statements; 2) Conventionally indirect head acts are made up of suggestory formulae and the query preparatory; (3) Non-conventionally indirect head acts consist of strong hints and mild hints.

TABLE 2
HEAD ACTS IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE REQUESTS

Directness levels	Strategies	Descriptions and examples
Level 1: Direct strategies (Impositives)	Mood derivable	The grammatical mood (imperative) used in this form is conventionally regarded as a request. Chinese:帮我倒杯水。（Give me a glass of water.） English: Pass me the salt, please.
	Performative	The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by using a relevant illocutionary verb, making the utterance an order, a plea or begging. Chinese:我求你借我点钱。(I beg you to lend me some money.) English: I'd like to ask you to give me one more chance.
	Obligation statement	The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by stating moral obligation directly. Chinese:你得/该帮我一把。（You should give me a hand.） English: You must come back early.
	Want statement	The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by asserting a particular want, desire or wish. Chinese: 我想请你帮个忙。（I want to ask you a favor.) English: I need a dictionary.
Level 2: Conventionally indirect strategies	Suggestory formula	The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent expressed as a suggestion. Chinese:今晚去跳舞怎么样？（How about going dancing tonight?） English: Why don't you have some more?
	Query preparatory	The utterance contains a preparatory question referring to the feasibility of the request, including asking the hearer's ability, willingness, permission, possibility or convenience to perform the act. Chinese:你能帮我个忙吗？(Can you do me a favor?) English: Would you mind closing the door?
Level 3: Non -conventionally indirect strategies (Hints)	Strong hint	While the illocutionary intent is not expressed overtly, the speaker provides strong clues for the hearer to construe the request. Chinese:这个房间很热。（This room is very hot.） English: I'm rather hungry.
	Mild hint	The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by providing less strong clues, but it is still interpretable as a request with the help of context. Greater inference is required on the part of the hearer. Chinese: 你忙吗？（Are you busy?） English: May I speak to you?

II. THE FINDINGS

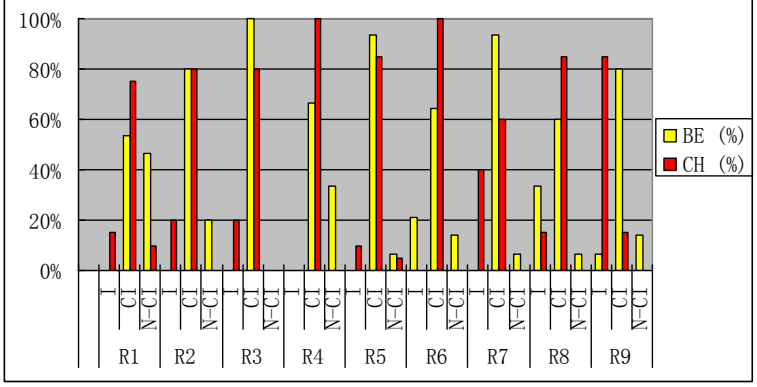
The analysis of the data resulting from the open role-play is based upon an independent evaluation of each response according to a number of dimensions. The strategy types are based on three levels of directness and impact: direct level (impositives), conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect level. We will start this section by presenting a percentage distribution of the main request strategy types in British English (BE) and Chinese (CH) across all nine situations. The analysis of the data will be presented in terms of request strategies and not by situations since the coding scheme for this study is based upon three levels of directness and, as it will be recalled, the three different levels of directness have been interpreted as strategies. The distribution of the request strategies reveals a high degree of cross-cultural agreement. There is a marked preference for conventional indirectness across most situations in both languages.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF MAIN REQUEST STRATEGY TYPES IN NINE SITUATIONS

Target request	Strategy type	BE(16)(Number of informants)	BE (%)	CH(20)(Number of informants)	CH(%)
R1(+P,+D)	I	0	0.00%	3	15.00%
	CI	9	56.25%	15	75.00%
	N-CI	7	43.75%	2	10.00%
R2(+P,-D)	I	0	0.00%	4	20.00%
	CI	13	81.25%	16	80.00%
	N-CI	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
R3(-P,+D)	I	0	0.00%	4	20.00%
	CI	16	100.00%	16	80.00%
	N-CI	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
R4(=P,-D)	I	0	0.00%	2	10.00%
	CI	11	68.75%	18	90.00%
	N-CI	5	31.25%	0	0.00%
R5(=P,+D)	I	0	0.00%	2	10.00%
	CI	15	93.75%	17	85.00%
	N-CI	1	6.25%	1	5.00%
R6(-P,-D)	I	3	18.75%	9	45.00%
	CI	11	68.75%	11	55.00%
	N-CI	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
R7(+P,=D)	I	0	0.00%	8	40.00%
	CI	15	93.75%	12	60.00%
	N-CI	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
R8(-P,=D)	I	2	12.50%	3	15.00%
	CI	13	81.25%	17	85.00%
	N-CI	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
R9(=P,=D)	I	1	6.25%	17	85.00%
	CI	13	81.25%	3	15.00%
	N-CI	2	12.50%	0	0.00%

R:Request open role-play situations; I: Impositives; CI:Conventional indirectness; N-CI:Non-conventional indirectness; BE:British English; CH:Chinese.

Figure 4.1 Percentage distribution of main request strategy types



A. Direct Strategies (Impositives)

Figure 4.1 compares the use of impositives across the nine role-play situations in both languages. While this strategy follows a similar trend across most of the situations in both cultures, with Chinese showing higher levels of the strategy in some situations, and the proportion of impositives used within each situation varies.

This strategy was employed by Chinese in most of the situations, while the British found the use of the strategy appropriate mainly in situations 6 (ask a colleague to cancel his holiday) and 8 (ask an employee to help with a project),18.75% and 31.25% respectively. In situation 9 (ask a colleague to treat you to a meal), only one person used this strategy. The common denominator in all the three situations is the fact that the interlocutors are familiar with each other or at least they are acquaintances, and the addressee's power was lower than the addresser. For example, in R6 (cancel holiday) the speaker has recently been granted higher status than the hearer having been put in charge of the execution of a high profile work project, a project for which s/he needs the co-operation of all members of staff, including the addressee who had booked a holiday. So, although the speaker and the hearer have equal status in that they have the same position at work, the speaker has gained institutionalized power, even if only temporarily. This institutionalized power would make it easier or shall we say less personal for the speaker to ask for such a high cost request, since in the mind of the participants the requester is the company and not the individual.

The Chinese found this strategy more appropriate in R6 (ask someone to cancel his holiday), R7 (change jobs) and R9 (ask a colleague to treat you to a meal). Particularly in R9 the Chinese show a rather higher incidence than the British, 85% of the Chinese speakers used the obligation statement. In R7, the strategy was employed by 40% of the Chinese informants, and in R6, the number was more than 40%.

In R9, the use of impositives seemed to be the most appropriate strategy in Chinese. Most Chinese participants used the obligation statement. For example:

"那你升职了得请我们大家吃顿饭啊。"

"Well, you have got a promotion, so you should treat us to a meal."

In R7, The preferred strategy of Chinese speakers was the mood derivable–imperative (40%). This is the most direct request strategy in terms of head acts.

"嗯…那就麻烦您安排一下。"

"Yeah, please help, well, to arrange this among colleagues."

In R6, the strategies used by Chinese speakers are mood derivable and want statement. Such as :

"我看，你还是把假期往后延迟一下吧!"

"我希望你能把假期先放一放。"

The strategy was used across more situations in Chinese than in British English with varying proportions. It should be noted that the British employed the strategy in two types of situations: those in which the participants were familiar with each other — intimates-friends, friends and/or acquaintances — regardless of any status difference or degree of imposition as illustrated in R9 (ask a colleague to treat a meal) and in those situations where the speaker had higher status than the hearer as inR6 (cancel holiday) and R8 (ask an employee to help with a project).

It should be pointed out that the lowest incidence of the strategy is found in R4 (ask to stay in one's house), in which the participants have equal power, but they are familiar with each other, followed by R5 (ask a neighbor to help you move some things) in which the participants have equal power, and they are not familiar with each other, and a very low level in R1 (borrow money) where it is the hearer who has higher status than the speaker and the interlocutors are not friends. In these situations, the ranking of impositions are to the highest degree, and it would be hard for the speakers to ask the hearers to offer certain kinds of help, so it would be very impolite to use the direct strategy in English.

Thus, so far, it appears that the use of impositives in both cultures is motivated by interplay between social distance and social status without any considerations for the degree of imposition. It should also be noted that seven out of the nine situations where this strategy seem to be more appropriate are characterized by the fact that the participants know each other to varying degrees. The more familiar the participants are the more direct the strategy.

A further explanation for the use of impositives in these situations by speakers of both languages can be found in Ervin-Tripp's empirical research into the requesting behavior of Americans. The results of the research show that requests between family and friends tend to be more direct than those between strangers. Using Ervin-Tripp's finding we could hypothesize that the deference in the proportion of impositives used in those situations where the strategy was employed by both groups of informants, appears to show that the British see relationships with friends as more distant than their Chinese counterparts. There seems to be, still amongst close friends, an inclination to be seen as respecting the freedom of action of the hearer by not imposing upon him/her, in other words, an inclination for 'negative' politeness. On the other hand, the Chinese appear to see the distance between friends differently and show a higher degree of 'positive' politeness. Although there is also respect for the freedom of action of the hearer, as seen by the inter-play of the strategies employed, there is an assumed reciprocity between the participants. There is an implicit cultural 'guarantee' of no fear of loss of 'face' in requesting directly from a friend and/or close acquaintance. The commonly shared background information the speaker has about the hearer makes the use of impositives very appropriate and thus is the expected behavior, and vice versa. It could be said that by using impositives speakers show how committed they are to the belief that their addressees will comply with their requests, not because they will find them imposing but probably because of assumed cultural expectations of solidarity and reciprocity amongst friends (Ervin-Tripp, 1976, P.45).

B. Conventional Indirectness

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, conventional indirectness constitutes the most frequently used main strategy type in both cultures. Cross-cultural agreement on the appropriateness of the strategy is particularly salient in this strategy, this can be seen in the request R2 (borrow car), and in R8 (ask an employee to help with a project), the difference is less than 5%.

Cross-cultural variation is obvious in R9 (ask a colleague to treat you to a meal), with a more than 60% difference in the use of the strategy between CH and BE. This is the biggest difference in all nine situations. In R9, almost 80% of the British tend to use the suggestory formula, such as, "How about treat us a meal?" While the Chinese preferred the use of impositives, which shows a more close relationship, as has been mentioned in the first part of this chapter. Less than 20% of the Chinese used this strategy.

A rather lower incidence of the strategy in both languages is found in R1(borrow money), 56.25% in BE and 75% in CH, and in R6 (ask someone to cancel his holiday), 68.75% in BE and 55% in CH, and its highest incidence is found in

R3 (borrow one's laptop), with BE reaching their peak(100%),and in R4(ask to stay in one's house) and R6(ask someone to cancel his holiday),with CH reaching their peak(more than 80%).

Conventional indirectness is dominant in more than half of the situations. According to Brown and Levinson, a speaker assesses the seriousness of a FTA according to the social distance, the social power between him/her and the addressee and the degree of imposition of the act. They claim that the less socially familiar the interlocutors are the more social power/status the hearer has over the speaker and the more imposition an act involves, the more indirect and thus polite the speaker will be. In R3 and R5, the interlocutors do not know each other very well, so there is a high incidence of this strategy. While in R4 (ask to stay in one's house) and R6 (ask someone to cancel his holiday), there is almost no status difference, and the interlocutors are familiar with each other. But the reason why there is still a high incidence of the strategy is that the weightiness of the request is rather high. Both the Chinese and the British find it's more appropriate to use the conventional-indirect strategy in order to be polite. And both the Chinese and the British tend to use the query preparatory in R4 and R6. The Chinese also used a lot of suggestory formula.

"Is it convenient for me to use your country house for a week?"

"你看，方不方便把你在乡下的房子借我暂时住一下？"

"嗯,这次度假能不能暂缓一下?"

"你那个假期呢，咱们能不能往后拖一拖？"

"Can you postpone your holiday this time？"

The Chinese also used a lot of suggestory formula. For example,

"这次度假你就先别去了吧？"

But even if this had been the case, the degree of imposition does not seem, contrary to Brown and Levinson's theory, to be a significant variable affecting the informants' strategic choice. The variable that seems to be affecting this situation is social distance since as explained before--- there is a negative correlation between the variable and directness. Due to the fact that the participants are complete strangers and taking into account this negative correlation we would expect higher levels of indirectness. However, both groups of informants chose conventional indirectness instead of non-conventional indirectness. This linguistic behavior could be explained by the very same reason that makes us expect higher levels of indirectness: social distance. Let us not forget that the participants are strangers and that a non-conventional indirect request may not secure uptake under the circumstances, whereas a conventionally indirect one will not only make the compliance of the request appear as a free act but also secure the addressee's interpretation of the additional speaker's meaning. An impositive would not have been appropriate bearing in mind the status difference of the participants and the fact that the speaker is asking the addressee for a favor, and a non-conventionally indirect request could have been employed had the participants not been as familiar with each other.

C. Non-conventional Indirectness

As can be seen in Table 5 and Figure 4, non-conventional indirectness constitutes the least frequently used main strategy type in CH, where it was only employed in two situations out of nine and with a very low incidence. The results of BE, however, are different. The strategy had a higher incidence than that of impositives though a lower incidence than CI.

NCI was employed across eight situations with different degrees of incidence in BE. In British English the highest incidence of the strategy is found in R1, the request to borrow money followed by R4, the request to borrow a friend's house. There seems to be cross-cultural and situational agreement in the use of the strategy in R1, and in R5. However, the proportion of hints employed varies: in R1, BE employed 43.75% of NCI whereas Chinese speaker's usage of the strategy did not even reach half of that figure, 10.00%. In R5 BE showed 6.25% against 5.00% of CH. Although both groups of informants coincided in the choice of NCI in R1 and R5 there is some difference in the use of the strategy between BE and CH.

The strategy was employed by Chinese only in R1 (the request to borrow money) and R5 (ask a neighbor to help you move some things with his/her car) with a very low incidence, ranging from 10.00% to 5.00%. R1 and R5 are characterized by the common fact that the participants do not know each other well. A possible interpretation for the use of the strategy in R1 is the already discussed negative correlation between social distance and directness— the closer the speakers are the more direct the linguistic mapping of the request will be — as well as Brown and Levinson's fear of losing 'face' by having an 'on record' request denied.

In R1, the Chinese speaker has no choice but to borrow money from the recently appointed manager, because the speaker needs to pay the bills desperately, and the speaker already has a lot of debts. It is a rather awkward situation and makes the speaker feel embarrassed, so 10% of the participants choose to use the strategy of non-conventional indirectness, and most used the strategy of strong hint by stating the recent situation of being in need of money.

"我最近经济状况很紧张，实在是没办法了..."

Let us look at the reason why the speaker used the strategy of non-conventional indirectness in R5, the speaker ask a neighbor to help move some things out of the flat. In this situation, the speaker troubled the hearer a lot, which will take him a lot of time. So this is a situation of high ranking of imposition. One out of fifteen Chinese participants used the strategy of strong hint.

"可是我没有车，这个时候也找不到其他人帮我……"

In BE the strategy had a much higher incidence and it was used across eight situations except situation 3. The highest incidence of the strategy is found in R1, the request to borrow money followed by R4, the request to borrow a friend's house. According to Brown and Levinson's understanding of 'off-record' requests, we would assume that the strategy of strong hint or mild hint was used in order to minimize the degree of imposition. Since in these situations, the degree of imposition is very high, the interlocutors are not familiar with each other, they must have strong motivation to choose the strategy. So it is logical to assume that by employing 'off-record' requests the speaker provides the addressee with the opportunity to volunteer. Therefore someone using a hint could either be leaving the options open to the addressee because they do not want to impose on him/her, or because they do not want to deprive the addressee of the pleasure of offering and indicating consideration for the speaker's needs. In fact, Brown and Gilman have suggested that 'off-record' strategies mix with both 'positive' and 'negative' politeness strategies and they can be interpreted in different ways.

In R1 (borrow money) the participants are recent acquaintances. The hearer has higher status than the speaker who is an employee of the company. Hence it would be more appropriate to avoid uttering the request directly and only state the truth, since there is great possibility of being refused, and the speaker wants to avoid for fear of loss of 'face'. For example:

"I'm recently short of money. I've just rent a house and have a lot of bills to pay… I really don't know what to do…"

In R4 (ask to stay in one's house) the participants are friends and have the same status, the object of the request is high: the speaker wants the hearer to lend him/her their house. This situation yielded a variety of speech acts: requests by the speaker and by the hearer, invitations and offers by the hearer. In terms of the use of non-conventional indirectness, 31.25% in BE and 0% in CH, it could be claimed it was used with one purpose of not imposing upon the addressee seeing the weight of the request and with another purpose of letting the addressee show his/her consideration for the speaker, in this case, a friend, by offering him/her the house. For example:

"Several relatives come to visit me. They will stay for about one week, but I don't have enough room in my own house. I've heard you have a vacant house here…."

In R6 (cancel holiday) the participants know each other well. The speaker has higher status than the hearer since s/he has been put in charge of a very important project at work and the weightiness of the request is very high since the hearer is asked to cancel his/her already booked holiday because of this project.

"This project is really important as well as urgent, and we just don't have enough hands…"

In R2 (borrow car) there is a slightly higher incidence of the strategy, probably due to the combination of a negative correlation between social distance and a positive one with social status. The participants have a friendly relationship, the speaker has less social status than the hearer and the weight of the request is very high. Thus the use of the strategy could either be interpreted as a non-imposition or as a solidarity seeking technique. For example:

"My car's just broken down. I've got half an hour to get to the airport to pick up my parents and I have no other means of transport. Can you help me at all?"

"Do you remember that big favor I did to you last year around Christmas, just before that… I just got this… to get to the airport and my car's broken down, you know any chance that you can just give me a hand?"

III. Concluding Remarks

By contrasting the strategies of head acts both in English and Chinese, we can find that the similarity between native Chinese speakers and native English speakers is that both value conventionally indirect strategies and their difference lies in that native Chinese speakers prefer to use direct strategies i.e. imperatives, in some cases, while native English speakers seldom choose to use imperatives when requesting someone to do something. Furthermore, in adopting conventionally indirect strategies, native Chinese speakers are inclined to use tag questions, such as ", …, 好吗？/行吗？/可以吗？/你同意吗？(…Is it ok? Do you agree?)". While their English counterparts tend to use general questions in the forms of "Can/Could you…?", "Will/Would you…?" and "Would you mind…?"

In Chinese, direct strategies and conventionally indirect strategies complement each other. While in British English, conventionally indirect strategies are overwhelmingly preferred, with direct strategies only occupying a small portion. The reason of the difference of head acts in English and Chinese requests can also be traced back to their different cultural backgrounds in China and the English-speaking countries.

With respect to such an adoption of both the direct strategies and conventionally indirect strategies in Chinese, there are many reasons that we can find in the Chinese culture. In Chinese traditional culture, individual's position and power in the society is very much emphasized since China had been a hierarchical society for thousands of years. And because Chinese culture emphasizes collectivism in nature, the negative face, i.e. the need for freedom of action is not so stressed by Chinese people as by native English speakers. So to impose on someone's freedom of action does not usually threaten the addressee's face in Chinese. On the contrary, it is often acceptable in China. What really concerns the addressee's face in the Chinese society is his/her dignity or self-respect, and negative face does not exist in Chinese culture (Gu 1990:251).

All in all, Chinese requests stress both direct strategies—imperatives and conventionally indirect strategies—tag questions. These characteristics are the reflection of the traditional Chinese culture. Let us now turn to the cases in English. According to Blum-Kulka, native English speakers most often adopt the conventionally indirect strategies.

They use direct strategies less frequently than Chinese people do. Bald imperatives will be considered as very rude among native English speakers. The preference of such request strategies by the native English speakers is also profoundly connected with the culture.

In almost all the English-speaking countries, individualism is highly valued and cherished. The value of equality is also emphasized in everything from government affairs to daily social deals. Since everyone in such a society treat others as equals, the power relationship, which is stressed in Chinese society, will not play a big role. As a result, direct strategies or imperatives, which seem more or less like orders, will certainly not be preferred when they make requests. Instead, what is considered more important is whether the addressee's freedom of action is interfered by the requests, thus native English speakers usually take the addressee's negative face into consideration. What is more, when requests are made, the politeness principles listed by Leech will always be observed then. That's to say, requesters will try to minimize the cost to others and not to impose.

The general questions such as "Can/Could you…?","Will/Would you…?" not only shows that the requester tries to get the permission of the addressee out of the consideration of his/her freedom of action but also indicates the equal relationship between them. Hence, such strategies will certainly be widely adopted by native English speakers.

REFERENCES

[1] Austin, J. L. (1962). How to Do Things with Words. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[2] Brown, P. and S. Levinson. (1987). Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[3] Blum-Kulka, S. (1985). Modifiers as indicating devices: the case of requests. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 12 (2–3), 213–229.
[4] Blum-Kulka, S. and E. Olshtain. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns. *Applied Linguistics*, 5,196–213.
[5] Edmonson, W. (1981). Spoken Discourse. London: Longman.
[6] Fukushima, S. (1996). Requests strategies in British English and Japanese. *Language Sciences*, 18, 671–688.
[7] Fukushima, S. (2003). Requests and Culture: Politeness in British English and Japanese. Bern: Peter Lang.
[8] Faerch, C. and G. Kasper. (1984). Internal and external modification in interlanguage request realisation. In Blum-Kulka, S., J.
[9] Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics.* 14 (2), 237–257.
[10] Goffman, E. (1967). Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books.
[11] House and G. Kasper. (eds.). Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies. Norwood NJ: Albex.
[12] Hong, W. (1998). Request Patterns in Chinese and German: A Cross-cultural Study. Munich: Lincom Europa.
[13] Lee-Wong, S.M. (2000). Politeness and Face in Chinese Culture: Cross Cultural Communication. Melbourne: Monash University Press.
[14] Leech, G. (1983). Principles of Pragmatics. London: Longman.
[15] Sifianou, M. (1992). The use of diminutives in expressing politeness: Modern Greek versus English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 17 (22), 155–173.
[16] Trosborg, A. (1995). Interlanguage Pragmatics: Requests, Complaints and Apologies. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Xiuping Han, born in Binzhou, Shandong province, China, in 1980,12, with a master's degree in Literature (2010) from Ludong University , Yantai, Shandong Province. The major field of study is pragmatics.

She now works in BinZhou Medical College as an English teacher, with many papers concerning English language study and language teaching published.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1106-1116, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1106-1116

The Effects of Task Type Planning on Students' Essay Writing: A Study of Iranian EFL Learners

Reza Panahi
Shiraz Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

***Abstract*—This study investigated the effects of planning on second-language written production with regard to proficiency level, and task type. The participants were 157 Iranian learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners attending a four-year university program in Iran. They were asked to complete two different types of writing tasks i.e., expository writing task and argumentative writing task in different planned conditions i.e. Individual Planned Condition and Collaborative Planned Condition over a two-week period. In the Individual Planned Condition, the learners were given 10 minutes for individual planning in the pre-structured task sheet and then were asked to write an essay for 30 minutes. In the Collaborative Planned Condition, learners were allowed to interact with a peer during planning and were required to independently complete an essay. Participants' written products were evaluated on five analytic measures covering the areas of Content, Organization, and Language in Use, Grammar, and Mechanics. The results of MANOVA test indicated that the planned condition had an impact on learners' written performance in both tasks. Individually considered, learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition were able to achieve significantly higher scores in all the analytic features in Task 1 (Expository writing task). In contrast, there were no significant mean differences between two conditions in Task 2 (Argumentative writing task). The results also indicated that proficiency had influenced learners' written performance in both tasks. The proficiency effect was consistently found throughout the analytic scores Task 1 and Task 2. However, the interaction between condition and proficiency was not found in the two tasks. The results of repeated measures for the effect of task type revealed that significant mean differences were only found in the Mechanics section. It is concluded that Iranian EFL learners' written performance was affected by planned condition and proficiency, but only to a small degree by the nature of task type with regard to the five analytic features.**

***Index Terms*—task type planning, essay writing, Iranian learners, EFL, expository writing task, an argumentative writing task**

I. Introduction

Since the oral skills have received the most attention in Iran, there is also a need for written communicative skills. For several decades, the traditional form-focused and product oriented instruction has been the dominate method of teaching Iranian students to write in their L2. So as the result, the errors in the surface level have been omitted and the focus has shifted to the final products within an emphasis on accuracy.

According to Bagheri (2007) due to this focus on the final product, Iranian learners have had little opportunity to edit and revise their texts or to interact with peers or on instructor during the completion of writing tasks. Thus, Iranian learners have failed to achieve a high level of L_2 writing proficiency party because of these form- focused, product – oriented instructional practices.

With the rise of communicative language teaching in Iran since the late 1983, a pedagogical shift from a traditional, product – oriented approach to a process-oriented approach has been motivated to enhance L2 writing abilities in communicative way. Some researchers such as Riazi and Riasati (2011) have proposed that prewriting exercises, multiple drafting cycles, interaction through instructor feedback, or peer review sessions would be beneficial to Iranian learners from the process-oriented perspective.

The present study attempts to find a balance between a learners' writing process and their writing products in the context of task based instruction by focusing on planning and its impact on the language development of Iranian English learners. To do this the key terms are introduced and dealt with in the following sections.

► **Task Type Planning**: An activity which is designed to help achieve a particular learning goal. (Richards.J.C.2002)

► **Essay Writing:** in composition a longer piece of writing, particularly one that is written by students as part of course of study or by a writer writing for publication which expresses the writer's viewpoint on a topic. (Richards.J.C.2002)

► **Iranian Learners:** Those learners who live and study in Iran where the spoken language is Farsi.

► **EFL:** those learners who learn English in a formal classroom settings, with limited or no opportunities for use outside the classroom, in a country in which English doesn't play an important role in internal communication(Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

► **Expository writing task:** According to Roca de Larios et al. (1999), in an expository writing task, participants can use their own experience in a more familiar domain to do the task.

► **Argumentative writing task:** An argumentative writing task is expected to be more cognitively demanding because it requires the participants to deal with unfamiliar information and to decide how to support or defend their own position on a given topic.

Theoretical Framework

As Ortega (1999, p. 113) stated, despite advances in L2 writing research, many fundamental questions still remain unresolved. How planning benefits writing performance is one such vague area that needs to be answered. Numerous planning studies have defined the construct of planning as "the availability of a certain amount of time immediately before performing the experimental tasks" Central to the planning research in the present study is the notion of "planned condition," which refers to any condition that allows for planning. It includes manipulation of time or task conditions as variables.

Since planning plays a role in formulating ideas and generating content and how planning expertise can facilitate L_2 task performance, and how different task types affect the planning process, the research findings from both task-based research and L2 writing research can be facilitated to implement a more efficient teaching method with better understanding of learners' individual differences.

Objectives of the Study

This study investigates how certain aspects of learners' written performance are affected in different planned conditions and to use the results of the analyses to improve learners' L2 writing process in the classroom context. This study was designed to examine the relationships among planned condition, proficiency level, and task type on the five dimensions of linguistic features including Content, Organization, Language in Use, Grammar, and Mechanics.

This study would provide a new knowledge base for the key variables shaping L_2 writing task performance: planned conditions, writing task types, and proficiency levels.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives, this study seeks to answer the following questions;

1. What are the effects of task type on the overall quality of learners' written products?
2. What are the effects of planned conditions on the overall quality of learners' written products?
3. What's the relationship between proficiency and the overall quality of learners' written products?

II. Methodology

Participants

127 students, who were studied at Islamic Azad University of Shiraz and Shiraz state universities in the winter 2012, were participated in this study. Participants were given two different types of task such as expository texts and argumentative text within the limited time. The participants also had individual interviews after the task completion. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Two M.A. students majoring in EFL evaluated the participants' essays according to the given scoring criteria. The results indicated that there was no global effect of planning on the quality of a written text.

Each participant was notified about the results of the writing tasks with a detailed comment from the two raters. Of the 127 participants, 54 were male and 73 were female. The participants varied from freshman to senior students and their majors were also diverse including English translation, teaching, and literature. Their age ranged from 18 to 25. At the time of data collection, they had been learning English for an average of 7-11 years including elementary school, junior high, high school, pre-university and university. Three – fourths of the participants stated that they had extracurricular English instruction in a private institution for some years. It indicated that Iranian learners have been mostly exposed to English in a formal instructional setting either in a school or in a private institution as part of extracurricular activity.

INSTRUMENTS

Instruments used in this study include; pretest materials, writing tasks, task conditions, scoring rubrics used to rate learners' written products, and scoring procedures.

♦ **Pretest material**

To determine participants' L_2 proficiency level, the multiple-choice test of Oxford Quick Placement Test was used. This test was selected because it is inexpensive, easy to administer, and easy to score objectively.

The scores of the Oxford Quick Placement Test grammar section were entered by SPSS and then calculated by ANOVA analysis. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for Oxford Quick Placement Test "Structure and Written Expression" section scores. The results indicate that learners in the Individual Planned Condition had higher mean scores (25.24) than learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition (24.20). In addition, learners' mean scores in the Individual Planned Condition (7.29) had more variation than those in the Collaborative Planned Condition (6.41).

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR OXFORD QUICK PLACEMENT TEST SECTION SCORES

	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Individual Planned Condition	58	25.24	7.29	0.0	36.0
Collaborative Planned Condition	69	24.20	6.41	10.0	37.0
Grand Total	127	24.68	6.81	0.0	37.0

The results of an ANOVA test presented in Table 2 indicate that there were no statistically significant mean differences between the two conditions in the Oxford Quick Placement Test section scores. Therefore, the ANOVA results for the Oxford Quick Placement Test mean scores suggest that the two groups did not show difference in terms of their general L2 proficiency.

TABLE 2
ONE – WAY MANOVA RESULTS FOR OXFORD QUICK PLACEMENT TEST SECTION SCORES

Factor	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P Value
Condition	33.984	1	33.984	.729	.395
Error	5,825.780	125	46.606		

* p<.05

♦ Writing Task

Two writing tasks (Expository and Argumentative) were selected for this study. Within each planned condition, the participants were asked to complete two tasks over a period of two weeks. Both tasks were adapted from the Test of Written English (TWE) sample writing prompts accessible to the public (Educational Testing Service, 2004 – 2005). The TWE is intended to demonstrate test takers' ability to compose an essay in standard written English and it has been carried out as a subsection of Oxford Quick Placement Test battery (ETS, 2004-2005). Since TWE writing task concerns crucial aspects of language used in academic settings, it is acceptable to use it in an EFL educational context like Iran and the test results can be possibly used for academically based decisions, accordingly.

♦ Task conditions

Skehan& Foster (1999, p.121) reported that a task condition is referred to as 'manipulation of what happens while the task itself is running: In this study, task condition is operationalized by the two types of planned conditions. Two planned conditions include Individual planned condition and collaborative planned condition.

Table 3 show a description of the two conditions in this study.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTION OF PLANNED CONDITIONS AND COLLABORATIVE PLANNED CONDITION

Planned condition	Description
Individual Planned Condition: - It includes a task sheet with pre-structured outline of writing given, individual planning process, and writing an essay.	Participants are given a structured form for planning and then asked to write an essay as they had planned it.
Collaborative Planned Condition: - It includes a task sheet with pre-structured outline of writing given, interaction with a peer, and writing an essay	Participants are allowed to interact with a peer during planning, while taking notes individually on the task sheet given to them. Afterward, they independently write an essay as they had planned it with their partner.

♦ Rating Rubrics

Kroll (1998) mentioned that analytic scoring allows raters to identify different aspects of writing and provides detailed diagnostic information about the learners' writing performance. A modified version of Cohen's (1994) and Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartifiel, and Hughey's (1981) scale is used for this study with a focus on five aspects of writing: Content, Organization, Language in use, Grammar, and Mechanics. The Content dimension includes the presence of main ideas, logical development of ideas, and supporting ideas with proper examples. The Organization dimension specifies the proper sequencing of ideas and use of cohesive devices. The Language in Use dimension focuses on the range of vocabulary and the use of proper register. The Grammar dimension refers to grammatical construction in terms of accuracy while the Mechanics dimension focuses on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and indentation. Analytic scoring is indicated as a band score ranging from 1 to 5. Table 4 details the itemized characteristics of textual features that were evaluated by the raters in analytic scoring.

TABLE 4
LINGUISTIC AND DISCOURSE FEATURES OF ANALYTIC SCORING INSTRUCTIONS

Linguistic and discourse features	
Content	Logical development of ideas Main ideas, supporting ideas, and examples
Organization	Sequence of introduction, body, and conclusion Use of cohesive devices
Language In use	Language in use: choice of vocabulary Register
Grammar	Sentence – level structure
Mechanics	Punctuation Spelling, capitalization, indentation

Scoring procedure

Two experienced M.A students, majoring in English Language Teaching, rated all the learners' written products. A rater training session was held by the researcher before the raters began to score the written texts in order to minimize an individual rater's variability and to enhance inter-rater reliability.

The raters were given a standardized set of instructions that defines the dimensions of the scoring instructions for the study. According to the instructions, raters were required to scan all sets of the essays before assigning a score to any composition. Afterward, they had enough time to assess the essays accurately and fairly in a setting where they felt comfortable. Raters were asked to use full 5- point scales in the analytic scoring process.

The maximum mark given for each section was 5, and the total number of the section is five as follows: Content, Organization, and Language in Use, Grammar, and Mechanics. Thus, the maximum composite score of all the sections was 25 in total. The final score for each written product is the average of the two raters' scores. Where there was unacceptable disagreement of more than one point per subsection, a third rater was invited to resolve a score discrepancy. Final determination of rating was the rating agreed upon by the two raters, or an average of rating, when those ratings represented acceptable disagreement within one point score difference.

Inter-rater Reliability

The coefficient alpha was used to calculate the Inter-rater reliability between two raters based on 5 Likert scale. Table 5 shows the results.

TABLE 5
RELIABILITY ESTIMATES FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK 1 AND TASK2

Task 1	**Reliability Estimates**
Content	.83
Organization	.83
Language in Use	.76
Grammar	.68
Mechanics	.67
Task 2	
Content	.89
Organization	.77
Language in Use	.64
Grammar	.50
Mechanics	.56

Overall, reliability estimates in Table 4.1 indicate that the rating of the two raters for the analytic features were more consistent in Task 1 than those in Task 2. Compared to task 1, the reliability estimates among the five analytic scores in Task 2 showed some variation. That is, the ranges of reliability estimates for Task 1 and Task 2 were .67-.83 and .50-.89 respectively. For each task, the rating for Content and Organization showed greater consistency between the two raters than for Language in Use, Grammar, and Mechanics. These results suggest that Task 2 as an argumentative writing task was challenging for the raters to discriminate in score judgment rather than Task 1 as an expository writing task in this present study.

Data collection procedures

All the data were collected over a 3- week period in five L2 English classes. Before the experiment, participants were informed that all details of the procedures would be confidential and their essay was not graded as part of their academic achievement. Then, each participant completed a questionnaire to provide background information regarding previous English language learning experience .Besides, a pretest was administered.

The participants had pressure to perform a task within a specified time limit. the 30- minute time limit was given to participants to complete the task.

To ensure that the participants actually engaged in planning, they were asked to make written notes on a given task sheet in both task conditions, after task sheet in both task conditions. After task completion, all the writings artifacts that the participants generated during task completion were retrieved. These writings included the planning task sheet and written products.

In the present study, the task was described in both English and Farsi, and actual instruction was provided in Farsi on the grounds that the study is not intended to test participants' comprehension of the second language. The participants were told that they could not use a dictionary or ask for help during task completion. This decision was made because the study was intended to examine how learners handle their tasks solely depending on a given task condition without any external feedback.

Data Analysis Procedure

To measure the effects of condition (Individual planned condition and collaborative planned condition), and proficiency level (advanced, Intermediate, and Novice) on learners' written products for both tasks, using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were carried out with the composite scores for two tasks. Thus, a MANOVA test was used to examine mean score differences on two dependent measures. In addition, post hoc tests were used to investigate which pairs of comparisons among the proficiency levels lead to significant results. SPSS version 16.0 was utilized to perform all the statistical analysis.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher used two separate sets of MANOVA for both Task 1 and Task 2 in a separate section to investigate the effects of condition (Individual Planned Condition and Collaborative Planned Condition), and proficiency level (Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice) on learners' written products with the set of the five analytic scores. There were 2 kinds of variables: independent variables such as conditions and proficiency levels and the dependent variables like the set of the five analytic scores in Task 1 and Task 2. Thus, a MANOVA design was used to examine mean score differences on the five dependent variables. Later, post hoc tests using the Scheffe method were used to asses which pairs of comparisons among the three proficiency levels led to significant results.

Analysis of Analytic Scores between Group Comparisons: Condition and Proficiency (Task 1)

The descriptive statistics for the five analytic scores in Task 1 are reported in Table 6. Regardless of the learners' Proficiency, all the analytic scores in the Collaborative Planned Condition were consistently higher than those in the Individual Planned Condition. It is noticeable that Advanced level learners showed relatively higher mean scores in Content (3.98) and Organization (3.78) section in the Collaborative Planned Condition compared to the mean scores of Content (2.70) and Organization (2.57) in the Individual Planned Condition. The mean scores for the Mechanics section in the collaborative Planned Condition are the lowest among these of the other analytic measure across the three proficiency levels (Advanced =2.91, Intermediate =2.46, and Novice =2.15), while mean scores for the Grammar section are the lowest in the Individual Planned Condition (Advanced =2.57, Intermediate =2.18, and Novice =1.66). Additionally, mean scores for the Content and Organization section in the Collaborative Planned Condition had higher variation ranging from .72 to 102 compared to those for the Content and Organization section in the Individual Planned Condition ranging from .80 to 95.

TABLE 6
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK 1

	Proficiency / Measures (Total possible)		Content (5)	Organization (5)	Language in Use (5)	Grammar (5)	mechanics
Individual Planned Condition	Advanced	Mean	2.70	2.57	2.55	2.57	2.61
	(n=22)	SD	0.80	0.95	0.53	0.66	0.55
	Intermediate	Mean	2.28	2.03	2.23	2.18	2.35
	(n=20)	SD	0.80	0.83	0.64	0.75	0.56
	Novice	Mean	1.94	2.12	1.69	1.66	1.84
	(n=16)	SD	0.91	0.81	0.57	0.65	0.68
	Grand Total	Mean	2.31	2.24	2.16	2.14	2.27
	(n=58)	SD	0.84	0.86	0.58	0.69	0.60
Collaborative Planned Condition	Advanced	Mean	3.89	3.78	3.44	3.02	2.91
	(n=23)	SD	0.80	0.72	0.68	0.66	0.58
	Intermediate	Mean	3.12	3.14	2.67	2.48	2.46
	(n=26)	SD	1.00	1.02	0.87	0.67	0.55
	Novice	Mean	2.35	2.55	2.33	2.28	2.15
	(n=20)	SD	0.86	0.79	0.52	0.41	0.33
	Grand Total	Mean	3.12	3.16	2.81	2.59	2.51
	(n=69)	SD	0.89	0.84	0.69	0.58	0.49

A MANOVA was performed to examine the effects of condition and proficiency on the five dependent variables in Task 1. The MANOVA results are presented in Table 7 the results for the condition effect are Wilk's A=.734, $F_{5, 117}$= 8.474, P<.000. The researcher found that the set of five analytic scores can be affected by condition factors. In other words, the set of the five analytic scores in Task 1 vary between individual Planned Condition and Collaborative Planned Condition. The significant condition effect shows that learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition performed differently from the learners in the Individual Planned Condition in all the analytic features (Content, Organization, and Language in Use, Grammar, and Mechanics).

The proficiency effect was found to be significant, Wilk's A=.662, $F_{10, 234}$= 5.356, P<.000 on the set of the five analytic measures. Like the result of the condition effect, the proficiency factor also had an impact on learners' written performance in all the analytic features. Specifically, these results indicate that Advanced level learners performed differently from Intermediate level learners or Novice level learners regarding the five analytic scores. However, it was found that the multivariate interaction of condition and proficiency was not statistically significant.

TABLE7
RESULTS OF MULTIVARIATE TESTS FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK 1

Factor	Wilks' A Value	F	Hypothesis *df*	Error *df*	P Value
Condition	.734*	8.474	5	117	.000
Proficiency	.662*	5.356	10	234	.000
X	.869	1.706	10	234	.080
Proficiency					

* p<.05

The results of the follow – up univariate ANOVAs presented in Table 8 indicate that significant condition effects were found in all the analytic categories of Content ($F_{1, 126}$ = 27.244, P<.000), Organization ($F_{1,126}$=34.558, P<.000), Language in Use ($F_{1,126}$=30.779, P< .000), Grammar ($F_{1,126}$= 15.740, P<.000) and Mechanics ($F_{1,126}$=5.929 P<.016),

respectively. The results suggest that learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition scored higher than learners in the Individual Planned Condition in all the five analytic features in Task1. In other words, learners benefited from collaborative planning to carry out the given expository writing task in this present study.

Regarding the effects of proficiency, the results show that there were significant proficiency effects in all the analytic categories of content ($F_{2,125}$=17.718,P<.000), Organization ($F_{2,125}$= 10.218,P<.000), Language in Use ($F_{2,125}$= 22.365, P<.000), Grammar ($F_{2,125}$= 16.762, p<.000), and Mechanics ($F_{2,125}$= 19.508, p<.000), respectively. These results indicate that learners performed differently across the three proficiency levels. Advanced level learners obtained the highest scores in all the analytic features in comparison to those of the Intermediate and Novice level learners. Intermediate level learners obtained higher mean scores than those of Novice level learners. No between – group interaction effect between condition and proficiency was found to be significant in Task 1.

TABLE 8
RESULTS OF ANOVA TESTS FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK1

Factor	Analytic Measures	Sum of squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*P* Value
Condition	Content	20.531	1	20.531	27.244*	.000
	Organization	26.069	1	26.069	34.558*	.000
	Language in Use	13.454	1	13.454	30.779*	.000
	Grammar	6.551	1	6.551	15.740*	.000
	Mechanics	1.774	1	1.774	5.929*	.016
Proficiency	Content	26.704	2	13.352	17.718*	.000
	Organization	15.416	2	7.708	10.218*	.000
	Language in Use	19.552	2	9.776	22.365*	.000
	Grammar	13.953	2	6.977	16.762*	.000
	Mechanics	11.676	2	5.838	19.508*	.000
Condition X Proficiency	Content	2.976	2	1.488	1.975	.143
	Organization	3.524	2	1.762	2.336	.101
	Language in Use	1.104	2	.552	1.262	.287
	Grammar	.488	2	.244	.586	.558
	Mechanics	.264	2	.132	.441	.644

* p<.05

The results of the Scheffe post hoc analyses are presented in Table 9 These results show that there was a considerable mean difference among the pair wise comparisons within the three proficiency levels. Distinctively, all the comparison groups showed significant differences except two pair wise comparisons which include the comparison between Intermediate and Novice level groups in Organization and Grammar section.

TABLE 9
POST HOC SCHEFFE RESULTS FOR PROFICIENCY IN TASK 1

Analytic	Pair wise Comparison for proficiency	Mean Difference	SE	P Value
Content	Advanced – Intermediate	.56*	.18	.010
	Advanced – Novice	1.14*	.19	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.58*	.19	.012
Organization	Advanced – Intermediate	.54*	18	.015
	Advanced – Novice	.83*	.19	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.29	.19	.325
Language in Use	Advanced – Intermediate	.52*	.14	.001
	Advanced – Novice	.96*	.15	.001
	Intermediate – Novice	.44*	.15	.014
Grammar	Advanced – Intermediate	.45*	.14	.005
	Advanced – Novice	.80*	.14	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.35	.14	.057
Mechanics	Advanced – Intermediate	.35*	.11	.010
	Advanced – Novice	.75*	.12	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.40*	.12	.006

* P< .05

Analysis of Analytic Scores between Group Comparisons: Condition and Proficiency (Task 2)

Table 10presents a summary of the descriptive statistics for the analytic measures in Task2. Overall, five analytic mean scores of Advanced and Intermediate level learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition were consistently higher than those of Advanced and Intermediate level learners in the Individual Planned Condition. In contrast, the mean scores of Novice level learners in the Individual Planned Condition were higher than those of Novice level learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition in all the analytic features.

In particular, in the Content (3.59) section of Collaborative Planned Condition, Advanced level learners obtained higher mean scores than the Individual Planned Condition. In the Organization (2.75) section of Individual Planned Condition, Novice level learners obtained relatively higher mean scores than the Collaborative Planned Condition.

Overall, the mean score differences between two conditions were not noticeable compared to the result of the descriptive statistics in Task 1.

TABLE 10
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK 2

	Proficiency / Measures (Total possible)		Content (5)	Organization (5)	Language in Use (5)	Grammar (5)	Mechanics (5)
Individual Planned Condition	Advanced	Mean	3.23	3.23	2.98	2.68	2.91
	(n=22)	SD	0.98	0.96	0.82	0.59	0.71
	Intermediate	Mean	2.45	2.60	2.22	2.13	2.40
	(n=20)	SD	0.86	0.93	0.57	0.28	0.53
	Novice	Mean	2.53	2.75	2.09	2.06	2.22
	(n=16)	SD	0.83	0.75	0.38	0.25	0.45
	Grand Total	Mean	2.74	2.86	2.43	2.29	2.51
	(n=58)	SD	0.89	0.88	1.77	0.37	0.56
Collaborative Planned Condition	Advanced	Mean	3.59	3.33	2.85	2.76	2.98
	(n=23)	SD	1.03	0.94	0.51	0.50	0.59
	Intermediate	Mean	2.73	2.83	2.25	2.25	2.85
	(n=26)	SD	0.90	0.76	0.53	0.55	0.61
	Novice	Mean	2.40	2.43	1.93	2.00	2.30
	(n=20)	SD	0.90	0.92	0.52	0.46	0.47
	Grand Total	Mean	2.91	2.86	2.43	2.43	2.71
	(n=69)	SD	0.94	0.87	0.50	0.50	0.56

A MANOVA was performed to investigate the effects of condition and proficiency on the five dependent variables in Task 2. the MANOVA results are presented in Table11.The results for the condition effect, Wilk's A= .867, $F_{5,117}$= 3.583, P< .005, indicate that condition factor in Task 2 had impact on learners' written performance with regard to the five analytic scores. It is shown that the set of the five analytic scores in Task 2 varies between the two conditions (Individual Planned Condition and Collaborative Planned Condition). This condition effect suggests that learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition performed differently from the learners in the Individual Planned Condition in all the analytic features (Content, Organization, Language in Use, Grammar, and Mechanics).

The proficiency effect was significant, Wilk's A= .616, $F_{10, 234}$= 6.413, P<.000 on the set of the five dependent measures. The results suggest that the proficiency factor also influenced learners' written performance across all the analytic features in Task2. These results suggest that the five analytic scores in Task 2 were significantly different for learners with different proficiency levels. However, multivariate interaction of condition and proficiency was not found to be significant in Task2.

TABLE 11
RESULTS OF MULTIVARIATE TESTS FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK2

Factor	Wilks' A Value	F	Hypothesis *df*	Error *df*	P Value
Condition	..867*	3.583	5	117	.005
Proficiency X	.616*	6.413	10	234	.000
Proficiency	.939	.753	10	234	.674

* P < .05

The results of the follow – up univatiate ANOVAs presented in Table 12 indicate that significant condition effects were not found in all the five analytic features in Task 2 unlike the results of Task1.

Meanwhile, the individual results for the proficiency effect were found to be significant. That is, significant differences were detected for the three proficiency levels in all the analytic measures in Task 2, Content ($F_{2, 125}$= 13.4, P<.000), Organization ($F_{2, 125}$= 7.31, P<.001), Language in Use ($F_{2, 125}$= 27.46, P<.000), Grammar ($F_{2, 125}$= 24.87, P<.000), Mechanics ($F_{2, 125}$= 13.93, P<.000), respectively.

The results suggest that learners performed differently across the three proficiency levels. In other words, Advanced level learners scored higher in all the five analytic features than did intermediate level learners while Intermediate level scored higher in all the five analytic features than Novice level learners did. These results are basically the same as the results of Task 1 regarding the proficiency effect. There was, however, no significant interaction between condition and proficiency.

TABLE 12
RESULTS OF ANOVA TESTS FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK 2

Factor	Analytic Measures	Sum of squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*P* Value
Condition	Content	.89	1	.89	1.05	.308
	Organization	.00	1	.00	0	.999
	Language in Use	.26	1	.26	.77	.383
	Grammar	.07	1	.07	.31	.577
	Mechanics	1.23	1	1.23	3.68	.058
Proficiency	Content	22.26	2	11.13	13.04*	.000
	Organization	11.37	2	5.69	7.31*	.001
	Language in Use	18.41	2	9.21	27.46*	.000
	Grammar	10.98	2	5.49	24.87*	.000
	Mechanics	9.31	2	4.65	13.93	.000
	Content	1.33	2	.67	.78	.46
Condition	Organization	1.61	2	.81	1.04	.36
X	Language in Use	.22	2	.11	.33	.72
Proficiency	Grammar	.19	2	.09	.42	.66
	Mechanics	1.00	2	.50	1.50	.23

* P< .05

The Scheffe post hoc analyses for the proficiency effect in Task 2 are presented in Table 13. The post hoc analyses found that there were significant mean differences among the pair wise comparisons with the three proficiency levels, especially between Advanced and Intermediate level learners, and between Advanced and Novice level learners. Regarding five analytic scores, research just showed differences between Advanced and Intermediate level learners, and also Advanced and Novice level learners in the four areas of Content, Organization, Language in Use, and Grammar section but not in Mechanics section.

TABLE 13
POST HOC SCHEFFE RESULTS FOR PROFICIENCY IN TASK 2

Analytic	Pair wise Comparison for proficiency	Mean Difference	SE	P Value
Content	Advanced – Intermediate	.80*	.19	.000
	Advanced – Novice	.95*	.21	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.15	.21	.766
Organization	Advanced – Intermediate	.55*	.18	.014
	Advanced – Novice	.71*	.20	.002
	Intermediate – Novice	.16	.20	.721
Language in Use	Advanced – Intermediate	.67*	.12	.000
	Advanced – Novice	.91*	.13	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.24	.13	.183
Grammar	Advanced – Intermediate	.53*	.10	.000
	Advanced – Novice	.69*	.11	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.17	.10	.279
Mechanics	Advanced – Intermediate	29	.12	.058
	Advanced – Novice	.68*	.13	.000
	Intermediate – Novice	.39*	.13	.012

* P< .05

Within Group Comparison: Task type

In this research, five sets of repeated measures study were conducted with the analytic scores in Task 1 and Task 2 to evaluate any differences in learners' written performance. For each analysis, the two task types were repeated measures.

The descriptive statistics for the analytic scores in the two tasks are reported in Table14. The descriptive analysis revealed different results in Task1 and Task2.Overall, the results of the descriptive analysis show that learners had the highest mean score in the Content (2.78) section and the lowest mean score in the Grammar (2.41) section in Task 1. Meanwhile, they achieved the highest score in the Organization (2.88) section and the lowest score in the Grammar (2.33) section in Task 2.

TABLE 14
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ANALYTIC MEASURES IN TASK 1 AND TASK 2

	Analytic Measures (Total Possible)	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Task 1	Content (5)	127	2.78	1.06	1.00	5.00
	Organization (5)	127	2.76	1.04	1.00	5.00
	Language in Use (5)	127	2.54	.83	1.00	5.00
	Grammar (5)	127	2.41	.75	1.00	4.50
	Mechanics (5)	127	2.43	.63	1.00	4.00
Task 2	Content (5)	127	2.85	1.00	1.00	5.00
	Organization (5)	127	2.88	0.92	1.00	5.00
	Language in Use(5)	127	2.41	.69	1.00	5.00
	Grammar (5)	127	2.33	.55	1.00	3.50
	Mechanics (5)	127	2.65	.64	1.00	4.50

Based on the results of the analysis presented above, it can be concluded that the task type didn't influence the learners' written performance except in Mechanics section. In other words, Task 2(Argumentative writing task) only led learners to focus more on the Mechanics section over other analytic features compared to Task 1(Expository writing task).

The repeated measures analysis results in Table 15 indicate that only the mean scores in Mechanics section ($F_{1, 126}$= 12.480, P< .001) were found to be significant among other analytic features. Similar to the results of the composite scores, these results suggest that task type did not influence the Iranian EFL learners' written performance except in one section, Mechanics.

TABLE 15
REPEATED MEASURES RESULTS FOR ANALYTIC SCORES IN TASK 1 AND TASK 2

Factor	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P Value
Content	.284	1	.284	.515	.474
Organization	.886	1	.886	1.921	.168
Language in Use	1.072	1	.355	1.612	.207
Grammar	.355	1	.355	1.612	.207
Mechanics	3.087	1	3.087	12.480*	.001

* p<.05

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the procedure of the research, condition had an impact on learners' written performance in both tasks regarding the composite scores and the set of the analytic scores. Individually considered, learners in the Collaborative Planned Condition were able to achieve significantly higher composite scores and analytic scores including Content, Organization, Language in Use, Grammar, and Mechanics section in Task 1 (Expository writing task).

In contrast, there were no significant mean differences between two conditions in Task 2 .Therefore, it is feasible to interpret that learners' written performance was not affected by any of the planned conditions in Task 2 (Argumentative writing task).

The results relating to proficiency show that proficiency had substantial influence on learners' written performance in both tasks. The proficiency effect was consistent throughout the analytic scores in Task 1 and Task 2. However, the interaction between condition and proficiency factors did not influence the written performance as reflected by the five analytic scores in both tasks.

For task type effects on the analytic scores of learners' written performance, significant mean differences were only detected in the Mechanics section.

Pedagogical implication of the study

The findings of this study help broaden the understanding of second language learners' cognitive writing process involving planning. In addition, the results have pedagogical implications as well as theoretical implications in second language writing and relevance to second language writing assessment.

The results of the conditional effects indicate that the planned conditions had an impact on learners' written performance in both tasks. Thus, these results tend to support the claim that the planning process eased the processing load during task completion and enabled learners to produce a high quality text regardless of condition types.

Specifically, the Collaborative Planned Condition has a positive effect in the expository writing task**.** Collaboration with a peer was more effective in the expository writing task rather than in the argumentative writing task due to learners' better opportunity to brainstorm their ideas and to build up more reasonable explanations to fulfill the expository writing task through the interaction with a partner. The effects of planning would be greater in a task which has an inherently complex structure or requires learners to produce more difficult linguistic aspects.

In summary, the results of the study confirmed that planning in the L2 writing process enabled learners to lower their cognitive load during task completion and to yield a high quality text with regard to the composite scores and the set of the analytic scores.

Remarkably, collaboration with a partner in the planning process was more effective in generating specific examples and details to help learners develop their own ideas in Task1 (Expository writing task), In the meantime, learners did not benefit from any of the planned conditions to take their own position on a topic and to generate supporting ideas and details in Task 2. As a result, the conclusion drawn here is that the Collaborative Planned Condition was more effective for Iranian EFL learners to complete the Expository writing task than was the Individual Planned Condition.

Based on the learners' knowledge and ability concerning different analytic aspects of written language, and the cognitive demands of the task at hand, the effects of proficiency vary. Advanced level learners did not seem to demonstrate any distinctive pattern with regard to the two tasks**.** Conversely, the mean scores of Intermediate level learners demonstrated noticeable patterns between the two tasks.

In task2, the mean scores of the Intermediate level learners are similar to the mean scores of the Novice level learners. Learners in both proficiency levels obtained the highest score in Organization section and the lowest score in the Grammar section. In short, the mean scores in Intermediate level learners displayed a different pattern depending on the task types: in Task 1, their score patterns are similar to the score patterns of Advanced level learners while, in Task 2,

the score patterns are closer to those of Novice level learners. It seems obvious that Novice level learners benefited from the planned condition itself regardless of the condition types among the three proficiency levels.

In sum, Iranian EFL learners in this study appeared to use the planned conditions to achieve Content or Organization over Grammar from the concept of limited information processing capacity. Indeed, each proficiency level demonstrated their own priority over others in each task. For Novice level learners, the planned conditions played a more active role to fill their limited linguistic resources**.** The more able learners who can provide less capable learners with the appropriate level of assistance through social interaction help novice level learners move from their current level toward their potential level of development.

In this study, however, Novice level learners greatly improved their writing ability in terms of content, and organization section by utilizing the planned conditions and the task sheet. Consequently, the patterns commonly found in higher proficiency level learners are also shown in the lower proficiency level learners. It is reasoned that the function of the planned condition seems to help even lower proficiency level learners pay more attention to such higher writing processes as content and organization. Thus, it is also possible to conclude that the planned conditions were substantially effective in enhancing less proficient writers' ability to write in this particular study. Each set of analytic scores in Task 1 and Task 2 displayed a distinctive pattern reflecting L2 learners' proficiency level. Among the three proficiency levels, Intermediate level learners showed a somewhat different pattern from others in a sense that their analytic scoring patterns varied depending on the task types, unlike those of Advanced or Novice level learners.

Concerning the characteristics of the proficiency level learners, Iranian L2 learners paid more attention to higher writing processes including content or organization rather than lower writing processes such as morpho-syntactic features such as grammar or mechanics.

The results suggest that the planning process during task completion appears to promote an active engagement of learners to a given task, awareness of positive input, and facilitation of the writing process. Collaborative writing enabled students to discover ideas together and exposed them to different views**.**

With regard to the task types used in this study, genre-based instruction can be also considered productive in Iranian EFL educational context: instructors provide learners with inaccessible cultural knowledge in their instructional practice while learners are not fully exposed to L2 input and interaction with native speakers. In the EFL Iranian educational context, genre-based instruction can be also an effective approach to enhance learners' writing ability. Eventually, Cumming &Riazi (2000, p. 68) resulted that L2 writing is viewed as "complex configurations of background and process variables that interrelated students previous educational experiences and present practices learning to write". Thus, it is crucial for writing instructors to keep in mind that the knowledge and skills that make a learner a better writer can be somehow learned or taught through the introduction of a variety of awareness-raising activities and the use of strategies during writing task completion in the classroom context. Moreover, tasks need to be selected based on learners' accessibility and familiarity connected to a real-world situation. There is no one-size-fits-all writing process for L2 learners. Hence, learners need to practice writing in a variety of situations in which learners are involved in producing texts with an opportunity to reflect on the writing process including planning (Johns, 1997).

REFERENCES

[1] Bagheri, M.S. (2007). Crack. IELTS in a Flash. (Writing task 2). Tehran, Azaran.
[2] Cohen, A. D. (1994). Assessing language ability in the classroom. (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.
[3] Cumming, A. &Riazi, A. (2000).Building models of adult second – language writing instruction. Learning and Instruction, 10, 55-71.
[4] Dellerman, P., Coirier, P., &Marchand, E. (1996). Planning and expertise in argumentative composition. In G. Rijlaarsdam, H. v. d. Bergh, & M. Couzijn (Eds.), *Theories, models and methodology in writing research* (pp. 182-195). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
[5] Jacobs, H. L., Zinkgraf, S. A., Wormuth, D. R., Hartfiel, V. F., &Hughey, J. B. (1981). Testing ESL composition: A practical approach. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
[6] Johns, A. M. (1997). Text, role, and context: Developing academic literacies. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[7] Jones, S., & Tetroe, J. (1987).Composing in a second language. In A. Matsuhashi (Ed.), *Writing in real time* (pp. 34–57). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
[8] Knoll, B. (1998). Assessing writing abilities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 18,*219–240.
[9] Riazi & Riasati. (2011). language learning style preferences: A students case study of shiraz EFL Institutes. *Asian EFL Journal, 9*, 97-125.
[10] Richard.J.C. (2002). Dictionary of Language and Applied Linguistics. Pearson Education Limited. United Kingdom: England.
[11] Roca de Larios, J. R., Murphy, L., &Manchon, R. (1999). The use of restructuring strategies in EFL writing: A study of Spanish learners of English as a foreign language. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8,* 13–44.
[12] Ortega, L. (1999). Planning and focus on form in L2 oral performance. *Studies in Foreign Language Acquisition, 21,* 109–148.
[13] Skehan, P., & Foster, P. (1999). The influence of task structure and processing conditions on narrative retellings. *Language Learning*, 49, 93-120.

Reza Panahi got M.A. in TEFEL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) in Shiraz Azad University, Fars, Iran in 0ctober 2012. He was born in Shiraz.

He teaches English more than 10 years in the ILI (Iran Language Institute). And he has done his military service.

Mr. Panahi has not been the member of any professional societies.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1117-1125, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1117-1125

Metaphor and Its Textual Functions

Xiaojing Yin
Shandong University of Finance and Economics, Shandong, 250014, China

***Abstract*—Metaphor is, in essence, mapping from the target domain to the source domain; from the familiar and concrete to the unfamiliar and abstract. When this happens, the entailments of metaphors as well as the contextual information will be integrated into texts and hence form coherent texts. Thus, it is accessible for us to explore discourse cohesion and coherence from the point view of conceptual metaphor. The present study is directed toward a comprehensive interpretation of how metaphors perform functions in the creation of discourse coherence and points out that metaphor is also a key mechanism for textuality. We finally come to the conclusion that conceptual metaphors facilitate discourse organization.**

***Index Terms*—conceptual metaphor, cohesion, coherence, discourse organization**

I. Introduction

The cognitive view on discourse analysis pays a lot of attention to the functional system and cognitive strategies for this linguistic unit. Language is thought to be the product of people's conceptualization of the objective world, and discourse, as a linguistic unit at a higher semantic level containing various individual semantic and syntactic forms, reflects the author's systematic cognition of certain objective phenomena, objects, events, etc. Therefore, understanding a discourse is closely related to the receiver's cognitive processing of the linguistic materials. When we receive a discourse, we are actually following the author's line of thought and carrying out a reasoning process to achieve successful communication with the author. Thus, we need to bridge the gap between the objective content in the discourse and the cognitive world in our minds. Such a process requires us to frequently refer to our knowledge and experience in mind, which constitutes our cognitive world, to give a complete interpretation of the discourse. With the close relationship between these two sets of concepts, we gain cohesion at the surface level as well as coherence achieved at the semantic level.

Ricoeur began to study metaphor at discourse level in his book The Rule of Metaphor published in 1975. He studies metaphor on basis of semantics that takes the word or the name as its basic unit. In his book, the progression from one discipline to the other corresponds to changes of the linguistic entity chosen for considerating settings: the word, the sentence and the discourse. But he never carries out a systematic research on authentic discourse. That is to say, he does not explore how metaphor works in discourse.

Later on, Gibbs explores the textual function of metaphor in his book The Poetics of Mind (1994). He claims that application of metaphors in a discourse contributes to the cohesiveness of text because metaphor works in a discourse by providing vivid context. (Goalty,1997, p.163) claims that "metaphor can be used, consciously or subliminally, to structure the development of a text, as the organizing principle which gives the text a lexical cohesion", which suggests that the study of metaphor has entered a new stage of research and application. At this stage, some scholars begin to notice the importance of analyzing metaphors at discourse level.

Cameron begins to consider metaphor from a textual and interactional perspective and published his insights on the textual function of metaphor in Metaphor in Educational Discourse (2002). She shows how different texts and interactional episodes may come not only with different types of metaphors, but also p63with different distribution patterns. She puts emphasis on conceptual metaphor used in classroom discourses and fails to explore how conceptual metaphors guarantees the cohesion of the discourse. Ponterotto (2003) argues that conceptual metaphor performs the cohesive function in discourses and conversations. His research focuses on conceptual metaphors behind the idioms and his study is to explore how the conversation strategies are related to conceptual representations and what determines the integration of knowledge during a rapid, complex exchange in a conversation. But his research focuses only on idioms, which limits his insights. Through the survey we find that attention is transferred into actual use of metaphors, topic extending and sentences organization. However, it is found that most research focuses on the ideational and interpersonal roles of metaphor. The chosen material is mainly confined in communicative contexts and literature texts. It is an urgent need to testify the theory in more rich materials. Based on former researches, this paper makes tentative research on discourse analysis in order to complete the original theory in depth and in detail.

II. Conceptual Metaphor and Cohesion

"Metaphor can be used, consciously or subliminally, to structure the development of a text, as the organizing principle which gives the text a lexical cohesion" (Goatly, 1997, p. 163). Metaphor is a cross-domain mapping from a source to a target. It is argued that extension of metaphor at discourse level is usually realized by analogical transfer, which maps metaphorical entailments from the source domain onto the target domain. Each mapping is a set of

ontological correspondences across the two conceptual domains and metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology of the source domain, in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). Cohesive tokens are usually identified as grammatical connectors, logical connectors and lexical connectors. The most prominent cohesive evidence the conceptual metaphor embodies is lexis which, in most cases, contributes to a certain semantic category. They appear in clusters and chains.

A. Identification of Metaphor

We discuss first how to identify a metaphor from abundant conveyed messages. It should be mentioned that metaphor in the cognitive linguistic view means primarily conceptual metaphor, as opposed to linguistic metaphor (Kovecses, 2002). The present thesis adopts Steen's five-step procedure for metaphor identification as follows:

1. Identification of metaphor focus
2. Identification of metaphor idea
3. Identification of metaphor comparison
4. Identification of incomplete propositions
5. Identification of metaphor mapping

Step one: Identification of metaphorical focus

"Metaphorical focus" refers to the metaphorically used word as the focus that "stands out against the background of a literal frame" (Steen, 2002,p.394). "The focus is the linguistic expression used non-literally in the discourse" (Steen, 1999:61). Take the following sentence as an example:

(1) This is the journey we continue today. (Barack Obama's Inaugural Address Jan. 20th, 2009)

The above italicized word journey is the metaphorical focus. It means that the national life is like a journey. Therefore, the metaphorical focuses refer to something else analogous to a real journey.

Step two: Identification of metaphorical idea

"Metaphor identification is a matter of concepts, propositions, and reference…and propositional analysis was specially designed to cater for them...aims to bridge the gap between discourse and conceptualization" (Steen, 1999, p.64-65). Take the following sentence as an example:

(2) And we'll get our economy going again. And our best days are ahead of us.

The above italicized words like going and ahead of us show the metaphorical idea of economy as journey. There are no focuses as those in step one. The metaphors are implicit without explicit focuses. It shows that the progress of economy is like a forward movement of a journey. And the expression ahead of us shows that economic prosperity is the target or the destination of a journey.

Step three: Identification of metaphorical comparison

This step means to "set up the comparative structure that is implicit in the non-literal mapping between domains for every conceptual metaphor" (Steen, 1999, p.66).

(3) We've got to grow the economy from the bottom up. (The First Presidential debate)

The above italicized words grow and economy show that there are similarities between these two words in terms of one aspect of the characteristics of economy. Economic development can be referred to as the process of growing. Therefore, step three means to establish similarities between words.

Step four: Identification of the incomplete propositions

This step is to fill the incomplete propositions. It handles the reconstruction of the complete comparison statement by "inferring the implied concepts for the empty slots" (Steen, 1999, p. 68).

(4) But I know how to get America working again, restore our economy and take care of working Americans. (The 20th Presidential debate)

The incomplete proposition is "building", thus a metaphor is identified that ECONOMY IS BUILDING.

Step five: Identification of the metaphorical mapping

The last step is to "identify the complete non-literal mapping. This is done by filling out the conceptual structure of the two sides of the non-literal analogy, the source and the target domain" (Steen, 1999, p. 71-72).

(5) But I know how to get America working again, restore our economy and take care of building Americans. (The 20th Presidential debate)

In the above sentence, "building" corresponds to economy. The characteristics of building correspond to those of economy.

The above are the five steps of identifying metaphor. The first step of the present thesis is to work manually through literature word by word in search of metaphors according to Steen's five-step procedures.

B. Conceptual Metaphor and Its Cohesive Functions

Conceptual metaphors appear in sequence to form a variety of cohesive devices. Cohesion is created by metaphorical expression system which is governed by underlying systematic metaphorical concepts involving two domains and mappings between them. The following sections will explore how conceptual metaphor contributes to cohesion by presenting various cohesive devices produced by metaphorical expressions. According to the original classification given by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the relevant metaphorical cohesive devices are classified into three main types: reference, reiteration and collocation.

Reference Constructed by Conceptual Metaphor

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), only endophoric reference within the text makes cohesion. Endophoric reference consists of three types of reference: personal, demonstrative, and comparative. In English discourse, it is found that some words cannot be semantically interpreted in their own right. Instead, some information should be retrieved somewhere else. By referring to a metaphorical item in the text, it helps make a cohesive text. The following parts mainly focus on these three kinds of reference constructed by conceptual metaphor.

Personal Reference Constructed by Conceptual Metaphor

Personal reference involves the use of personals. The category of personals includes three kinds. The first one is personal pronouns, such as "he" "she" "it" and "they". The second is possessive pronouns, such as "his" "her" "its" and "their". The third is possessive determiners. These three kinds of personals represent reference of person.

(6) Marriage resembles a pair of shears, so joined that they cannot be separated; often moving in opposite directions, yet always punishing anyone who comes between them. (Sydney Smith)

It is clear that the whole sentence is linked by the conceptual metaphor MARRIAGE IS A PAIR OF SHEARS. Actually, the pronoun "they" refers to the source domain "shears" in the preceding clause. Cohesion lies in the continuity of reference. "Shears" is defined as a large cutting instrument shaped like scissors, used for shearing sheep, cutting hedges, etc., while "marriage" is a legal union between a man and a woman as husband and wife. At first glance, it is difficult to bridge "marriage" and "a pair of shears" together. However, the following clause explains the characteristics of "marriage". In this way, the mapping from "a pair of shears" to "marriage" is realized by their similarities.

Demonstrative Reference Constructed by Conceptual Metaphor

Demonstrative reference is reference by means of location, a scale of proximity. The speaker or writer identifies by employment of "this" "these" "here" or "now" if it is close, and "that" "those" "there" or "then" if it is in a location that is not close. (7) The Peterson's dog is the bane of the neighborhood. That bulldozer never stops digging.

The demonstrative pronoun "that" in the second sentence is used to make a thing specific, especially when it is seen as distant in space or time from the speaker or writer. And cohesion is constructed on the basis of the conceptual metaphor PETERSON'S DOG IS BULLDOZER. Peterson's dog serves as a target and bulldozer a source. In this case, "that", together with "bulldozer" obviously refers to "Peterson's dog" in the preceding sentence.

Comparative Reference Constructed by Conceptual Metaphor

Comparative reference is indirect reference by means of comparison. Two kinds of comparison are distinguished: general and particular "General comparison" means comparison simply in terms of likeness and unlikeness, without respect to any particular property, such as "same", "similar", "different" etc. On the other hand, "particular comparison" means comparison in a particular aspect of quantity or quality, including "More", "fewer", "better", "other", "otherwise", "else".

(8) Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. (Francis Bacon, Of Studies)

In this passage, comparative reference is realized by the use of "others" and "few". It is easy to find out the implicit conceptual metaphor BOOKS ARE FOOD, whose metaphorical meaning is revealed by verbs like "tasted, swallowed, chewed and digested". In this metaphor, the characteristics of "food" are first mapped onto the "books" and then the characteristics of "eating food" are mapped onto "reading books". Both "others" and "few" refer to "books" through this mapping and it forms a coherent passage.

Reiteration Constructed by Conceptual Metaphor

As one kind of lexical cohesion, reiteration is broadly used to create cohesion in discourse. Reiteration is realized through repetition. Three types of repetition are discussed in the following section, including identical words, synonyms or near synonyms, super-ordinate or general word.

Identical Word

The use of identical word is the most direct form of repetition which forms lexical cohesion. Look at the following example:

(9) Above me towered the colossal edifice of society and to my mind the only way out was up. Into this early resolved to climb. Up above, men wore black clothes and boiled shirts, and women dressed in beautiful gowns... (Jack London, What Life Means to Me)

In this example, "society" is compared to "colossal edifice" with "society" as a target and "edifice" as a source. The term "edifice" is repeated and achieves cohesion in this text. In the extension process, there exists a crossing mapping from the concrete to the abstract. "Up", "climb" and "up above" used in the following sentences all illustrate the nature of "edifice". "Society" is rigidly stratified by social status, at the top of which is the upper-class, while the lower-class is at the bottom. In this sense, the common ground between "society" and "edifice" is that both of them are arranged in order of height. Then the two originally separated domains are connected by this mapping.

Synonyms or Near Synonyms

It is more frequent to find the use of a set of similar or approximate words or phrases to modify the same target domain:

(10) Smiles are passports through the desert... visas to all alien countries.

In the above example, metaphors involve one target domain and two source domains. Thus, two conceptual metaphors are produced SMILES ARE PASSPORTS and SMILES ARE VISAS. Based on our general knowledge, passport refers to an official document issued by a government, identifying an individual, granting him permission to travel abroad, and requesting the protection of other governments for him. Visa is an official authorization appended to a passport, permitting entry into and travel within a particular country or region. Therefore, "passport" and "visa" are similar in that both of them guarantee that the holder can travel in foreign countries. The common characteristics of the two concepts are mapped onto "smiles" by analogy. In this way, "passport" and "visa" are used to make it salient that "smiles" can work well everywhere, thus giving the reader a vivid description of what "smiles" sounds like. This kind of metaphor is of great importance in organizing a text.

Super-ordinate Word or General Word

In addition to "identical words" or "similar words", super-ordinate words can act as a tree and categorize the different domains into one category at different levels, thus making the whole discourse cohesive:

(11)I once have said that, my attachment, can be said of many intimate relations, with mainland my mother, Taiwan my wife, while Hongkong a sweetheart and Europe my love (Guangzhong Yu).

In this example, four metaphors coexist: MAINLAND IS MOTHER; TAIWAN IS WIFE; HONGKONG IS SWEET HEART, and EUROPE IS EXTRAMARITAL LOVE. "female" can be taken as a super-ordinate word, while "mother," "wife", "sweetheart" and "extramarital love" are subordinate words. In cognitive linguistics, this mental process of classification is called categorization. Usually, there are three levels of categories, that is, basic level category, subordinate category and super-ordinate category. The super-ordinate level performs a collecting function grouping together categories that are closely linked in our knowledge representation system, while the subordinate fulfils a specific function. Here, "mother," "wife", "sweetheart" and "extramarital love" are at the subordinate level, while "female" is at the super-ordinate level. In this way, the cohesive chain can be achieved by using a set of words guided by a super-ordinate word or a general word. It should be made clear that the super-ordinate word "female" here also can be considered as a "general word".

Collocation Constructed by Conceptual Metaphor

Collocation as a subclass of lexical cohesion involves a pair of lexical items that are associated with each other in the language. To be brief, collocation is a tendency to co-occur:

(12) Boomerangs were like relationships. You got the process. The boomerang decided what you put in and never had complete control would return and some days, if the conditions were bad, it would never come back. Selecting a suitable boomerang for the conditions helped but not always. (Mark Hansen, Boomerangs)

"Boomerang" is a flat wooden missile which can be thrown so that it returns to the thrower if it fails to hit anything. The common ground between "boomerang" and "relationship" is explained by the following sentences---the more you give, the more you will get. In this example, "out" and "in" are used to form a kind of opposite collocation. In fact, "relationship" indicates a spatial metaphor. There is an internal systematicity to each spatial metaphor. Spatial metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience. They are not randomly assigned. "Out'' and "in'' give orientations, which are coherent with spatial cases. Therefore, "out" and "in" define a cohesive system rather than a number of isolated and random cases.

Conceptual Metaphor and Coherence

III. Conceptual Metaphor and Discourse Coherence

As mentioned before, conceptual metaphor is a thinking pattern having its own entailments and cognitive characters. All these entailments in a conceptual metaphor form an entailment ground, on which coherent ideas and sub-concepts are generated and organized. We hold that there are four kinds of entailments at discourse level: intra-metaphorical entailment, inter-metaphorical entailment, parallel entailment and hierarchical metaphorical entailment.

A. Intra-metaphorical Entailment and Coherence

We can find a coherent discourse that involves only one conceptual metaphor. In this case, the target concept reflects the metaphorical entailments of the source concept and we get to touch the target domain in terms of the source domain woven coherently and systematically. For example:

(13) Time is treated as if it were something almost tangible. We budget it, save it, waste it, steal it, kill it, cut it, account for it; we also charge for it. (A. Lamer, Go-Go Americans)

In this example, there is a conceptual metaphor TIME IS TANGIBLE OBJECT, in which TIME is the target domain and TANGIBLE OBJECT is the source domain. We comprehend time, an abstract concept, in terms of a tangible object which can be disposed of at our will. These metaphorical entailments can be invoked to help us understand TIME in terms of the metaphorical TIME CAN BE DISPOSED OF AT WILL. By means of the conceptual metaphor TIME IS TANGIBLE OBJECT, the discourse progresses as a coherent one.

One conceptual metaphor can achieve not only the coherence of itself, but also the coherence of text in which it exists. Look at the following example:

(14) Entomologists tell us of a strain of ants known to science as the sanguinea---a species so martial and imperialist in disposition that they are commonly referred to as army ants, or soldiers. In the insect world, their inroads may well be

dreaded, as once the declined advent of the Roman was a signal of alarm to lesser peoples. For not only do they make war, they are also, it appears, slave owners who prey on unfortunate neighborhood colonies such as those of the wood ants. When a slaving expedition is mounted; the attacking of sanguinea divides into columns, each led by a scout, approaching the hostile fortress from different directions. Once in sight of their objective they call a halt. Then, while the other detachments maintain a blockade, one unit is sent forward as an assault force. As a rule these invaders easily beat down whatever resistance is offered to them. The wood ant defenders attempt to evacuate their positions; bearing with them the cocoons of their blood, but their line of retreat is cut off by the besiegers, who capture the fugitives while the storm troops continue to scour the fortification (Goatly, 1998, p.163).

This text is concerned with a kind of ant named sanguinea, and one conceptual metaphor runs through the whole text, that is, SANGUINEA IS ARMY. Here ARMY is used to give a vivid description of SANGUINEA, and we get to know the characteristics of ants in terms of soldiers. On mapping between the two domains, many words about army or soldiers are used. Some are nouns, for example, "disposition", "inroads", "scout" and "fortress"; some are verbs, such as "evacuate", "capture" and some others are objectives: "martial", "imperialist", "dreaded", "disciplined", "hostile", etc. They are all military words used to describe war and soldiers. In other words, these words are the entailments of ARMY. Conceptual metaphor is a mapping process from the source domain to the target domain, so these entailments of ARMY is mapped onto the target concept SANGUINEA. For example, "martial and imperialist" correspond to the "dreaded feature of sanguinea", "a slaving expedition" corresponds to "an attack on wood ants", "neighborhood colonies" correspond to "other ants' nests surrounding" "invaders" correspond to "sanguinea who attack the wood ants". We list them in the following figure, mappings in SANGUINEA IS ARMY.

Source Domain: ARMY		Target Domain: SANGUIMEA
martial and imperialist	→	dreaded feature of sanguines
a slaving expedition	→	an attack on wood ants
neighborhood colonies	→	other ants 'nests surrounding sanguinea
invaders	→	sanguinea who attack the wood ants

With the help of the conceptual metaphor SANGUINEA IS ARMY, we can understand the coherent relation between these sentences and treat the text as a coherent whole. From the above analysis, we know how one conceptual metaphor achieves coherence in a text. Words used to describe the source domain in a text constitute the entailments of the source domain, and then these entailments are mapped onto the target domain which is then added with these new entailments. Therefore, sentences containing these words are coherent correspondingly to ensure a whole coherent text.

Thus, one conceptual metaphor constructs a discourse at the macrostructure level. The notion of macrostructure has been introduced by van Dijk (1977) to provide an abstract semantic description of the global content of discourse. It refers to the main idea or topic of a discourse. Conceptual metaphor has its framing function for the sequence of a discourse and the whole discourse develops accordingly. Let us consider another example:

(15) The chess-board is the world: the pieces are the phenomena of the universe; the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know his play is always fair, just and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. (Thomas Henry Huxley)

In this example, the initial metaphor is WORLD IS CHESS-BOARD which acts as a frame in the whole paragraph. Under this framework, "the phenomena of the universe" are compared to "the pieces", "the laws of nature" to "the rules of the game" and "the nature" is compared to "the player". The conceptual domain of CHESS-BOARD is systematically mapped onto that of WORLD, and the metaphorical entailments of the source domain help us constructing the target domain WORLD. There exists a lexical cohesive chain which connects the whole discourse tightly and helps to make the discourse coherent.

B. Inter-metaphorical Entailment and Coherence

In some discourses, there is a type of metaphorical expression with overlapping entailments building a common ground to achieve coherence. That is, there is no central conceptual metaphor, but several parallel conceptual metaphors functioning equally. These different conceptual metaphors usually have a shared metaphorical entailment that can make a discourse develop in a coherent way. Two situations for texts of this kind usually exist. One is a central conceptual metaphor out of which a series of sub-conceptual metaphors are generated; and the other is the presence of several parallel conceptual metaphors working together. Let us take several examples to illustrate this point:

(16) Chao Xinmei was already in her highness and mighty, when she heard from Miss Su that Hung-chien indeed returned home in the same ship together with her, her face turned pale as if Hung-chien had turned into thin air, expressionless. If Miss Su had not spoken to him, Hung-chien would think that his presence was as dark as absence, just like a phantom of early dawn upon the cock's crowing or the Taoist truth that it can be felt but not be seen, can be expounded but can not be touched.(Weicheng, 2003, p.52)

The example shows that a series of metaphorical expressions are produced systematically which ensures internal discourse coherence. Hung-chien is neglected or ignored by others. Chao acted as if Hung-chien had turned into thin air and Hung-chien himself felt he was just like a phantom of early dawn upon the cock's crowing or the Taoist truth, which can be "felt but not seen, expounded but not touched". Source domains like "the thin air", "phantom" and "the Taoist truth" share some entailments. For "the thin air", we have the entailments such as "colorlessness",

"invisibleness". "phantom" is an imaginary term suggesting gods which are invisible to people. As to "the Taoist truth", it is abstract and we can not easily comprehend it. For these three source domains, the common entailment is "invisibleness" and that is to say, "invisibleness" is the overlapping entailment between the different domains. They together provide a vivid description of how Hung-chien is neglected and looked down upon by Chao. It is the overlapping entailment that makes the metaphorical description a coherent one. All the following metaphorical expressions serve this topic and the entailments inferred from the different domains are also related to the topic. In other words, the topic helps readers to determine the choice of entailments from each domain, since there are a large number of entailments that can be inferred. Look at another example:

(17) If those department stores that are decorated with colorful Christmas lights are full of French flavor, then the small markets scattered throughout Paris are refreshments for appetizers on a feast. Though the feast may be intoxicating, yet the refreshments give us deeper impression. (Reader's digest V11, p.52)

This text gives a vivid description of department stores and small markets in Paris. There are two conceptual metaphors in the text, namely, DEPARTMENT STORES ARE FEASTS and MARKETS ARE REFRESHMENTS. The two conceptual metaphors share neither the same target domain nor the same source domain. That is to say, two different source domains FEASTS and REFRESHMENTS employed to describe two different target concepts DEPARTMENT STORES and MARKETS. The two conceptual metaphors function equally in this text and constitute a parallel structure. All metaphorical expressions derive from the two conceptual metaphors, and the coherence of the two conceptual metaphors help achieve textual coherence. Feasts are attractive and few people can refuse them, and in department stores we can not help buying attractive goods. The two domains in each conceptual metaphor generate systematic correspondences. We will find that DEPARTMENT STORES and MARKETS, FEASTS and REFRESHMENTS are comparable. And the comparison serves as the base for coherence of the two conceptual metaphors as well as the whole text.

Another way is through one presupposed conceptual metaphor and two explicit ones to construct the coherence of text. Let us look at an example taken from (Shu Dingfang2000, p. 82):

(18) Man of virtue is water and man of wickedness is oil. After many years of cooking and getting in touch with different people, I find they share something in common. Water, is clear, cool and easy to evaporate; while held for a sip, it is tasteless. Wherever there is water, there is freshness. When water meets oil, it will become turbid, but will not splash. Thus water can be used to describe a gentleman. However, the oil without any transparency, is strongly adhesive, full of creamy. A drip of oil may render dust adhered to it. The oil cannot be invaded by a drop of water for it never surrenders to a drop of water. Thus oil can be said of a villain.

We have no difficulty in recognizing two explicit conceptual metaphors: MAN OF VIRTUE IS WATER, and MAN OF WICKEDNESS IS OIL with MAN OF VIRTUE and MAN OF WICKEDNESS as target domains and WATER and OIL as source domains respectively. All sentences derive from these two conceptual metaphors and the whole text is organized on the basis of them. We comprehend MAN OF VIRTUE in terms of its property of limpidness in contrast with dirty things which corresponds to goodness of a man. In MAN OF WICKEDNESS IS OIL metaphor, the target concept MAN OF WICKEDNESS is interpreted in terms of the source concept OIL. For oil is turbid and dirty. The same characteristics can be said of men of wickedness, who are dishonest and wily. Firstly, through a comparison between the two target domains MAN OF VIRTUE and MAN OF WICKEDNESS, we will find that the former is positive while the latter negative. They form a hierarchical system, with human beings at the superior level and man of virtue and man of wickedness at inferior level. Oil and liquid form a hierarchical structure, with liquid at higher level while water and oil at lower level. We can find that an implicit and presupposed conceptual metaphor underlies the text: HUMAN BEING IS LIQUID, which governs these two explicit conceptual metaphors MAN OF VIRTUE IS WATER and MAN OF WICKEDNESS IS OIL. They form a systematic structure with HUMAN BEING IS LIQUID at higher level, which ensures coherence in this text, as well as the three conceptual metaphors. In a word, the three conceptual metaphors, one is presupposed and the other two explicit, are coherent with each other. Therefore, the whole text is organized coherently. Another example is given below:

(19) These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair. (Bertrand Russell, What I Have Lived For)

There are three metaphors in this discourse: these passions are great winds; anguish is a deep ocean; and despair is a container with verge. The first one is the central metaphor, for it provides orientation for the whole passage and brings out the latter two, while the latter two sub-metaphors form a metaphorical structure themselves and meanwhile facilitate the formation of the central metaphor. If a discourse contains more than one metaphor, but they do not develop a central proposition, then this discourse is not concentrated on a unified topic, and is therefore not coherent.

C. Parallel Metaphorical Entailment and Coherence

Metaphor can organize a discourse by parallel progressive mapping. It may involve the progressive development of several correlated conceptual metaphors. Through interaction across different domains, the discourse develops in a coherent way. Let us look at the conceptual following examples:

(20) Life is like a pot of tea. The head round tastes with great fragrance that is like a person's early year's of life. The body one, is the enterprising young man, full of energy but still with ups and downs. It tastes full-bodied flavor.

Tea, after several rounds, becomes tasteless and with a tint of both sweet and bitter, which assembles a man entering his old age and returns to his nature of being simple.

In the above example, the metaphor, LIFE IS TEA, acts as a frame for the whole passage. Through this conceptual metaphor, the source domain TEA is mapped onto the target domain LIFE. This mapping controls the following three mappings. Then the discourse develops in a parallel progressive way concerning several analogical aspects of the source domain and the target domain. We can say that the mappings make the different conceptual domains interact with each other and thus keep the discourse coherent.

Text coherence can also be achieved through several parallel conceptual metaphors. In a text of this kind, conceptual metaphors make equal contribution to coherence and they form a parallel structure:

(21) The Middle-aged is a bus, though may be not a brand one, with its windows shattered off and seats torn down, is still very popular for its high capacity. The bus keeps on the move till it arrives at its destination. On the contrary, the brand ones, such as Lincoln, Cadillac serve just one single person. Only, buses are also in trouble when it brakes down on the anchor, which is a common occurrence. The middle-aged is an overdue ticket, whether can be accepted to board or not depends on the captain. He has to wait and see if there is a sixpenny seat to accommodate him. The middle-aged has nothing to offer for he has no good appearance, profession or energy. They are the most likely to be laid off. The middle-aged is a soccer match with half an hour left before it concludes. Before the match they are supposed to kick two goals. Yet it disappoints all that it scores zero and The World Cup is completely hopeless. It also seems that no great progress will be made in the next half round.

There are three conceptual metaphors in this text, namely, MIDDLE-AGED MAN IS BUS, MIDDLE-AGED MAN IS OVERDUE SHIP TICKET and MIDDLE-AGED MAN IS HALF-ENDED SOCCER MATCH. The text is constructed on the basis of these conceptual metaphors. Let us first analyze MIDDLE-AGED MAN IS BUS. Many people take bus as their vehicles when go out. Buses not kept in good condition are prone to break down. These features of bus correspond to those of a middle-aged man: having rich experiences but very likely to get ill. The second conceptual metaphor is MIDDLE-AGED MAN IS OVERDUE SHIP TICKET. With economic reforms in the 1990s, a lot of middle-aged people fail to meet new demands brought about by new challenges and became laid-off workers. This corresponds to the feature of the concept "overdue ship ticket": being invalid. The third conceptual metaphor is MIDDLE-AGED MAN IS HALF-ENDED SOCCER MATCH. When a soccer match is about to conclude, there will be scarce chances for players to score a goal. For middle-aged people who have not yet get any achievement, life will be even harder. So we see that these two domains correspond with each other. All expressions in this text derive from the three conceptual metaphors respectively, so their coherence is dependent on the coherence of the three conceptual metaphors. And we can see that the three conceptual metaphors share the same target domain MIDDLE-AGED MAN, thus forming a parallel structure. They are coherent on basis of their overlapping entailment: the three source domains are used to highlight three different aspects of the same concept MIDDLE-AGED MAN. Therefore, the metaphorical expressions in the text are coherent; and consequently the whole text is coherently constructed.

D. Hierarchical Metaphorical Entailment and Coherence

Different conceptual metaphors may systematically relate with each other and form a hierarchical structure. In this case, there is usually a basic conceptual metaphor according to which a series of sub-conceptual metaphors are generated. The basic metaphor acts as a frame for the whole discourse and restricts the sub-conceptual metaphors. For instance:

(22) All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his life plays many parts.
His acts being seven ages.
At first, the infant. . .
(William Shakespeare, As You Like It, 2.7)

From this famous passage from Shakespeare's As You Like It, we know that there is a basic metaphor LIFE IS PLAY with LIFE being a target and PLAY a source. It is well-known that a play consists of many elements, such as, players, costume, stage, audience, directors, roles, exits or entrances of players. In the narrow sense, life held by an individual is conceptualized as a play. The constituent elements in the domain of life, such as, the involved person, his birth, his death, etc. are mapped systematically to the source domain play, such as the actor, beginning and ending of the play, etc. To be more precise, the play corresponds to life, the actor or actress to the person leading a life ahead, and his performance to his life quality. Furthermore, the beginning of a play is conceived of as the birth of a person, the climax of the play normally as a satisfying state of his life while the last scene or the falling of the curtain indicating end of the play as the moment of his death. In a given situation, the moment when an actor enters or exit from the stage can also be conceived of the birth and death of a certain person. On the stage, the actor may play different roles in a play, which corresponds to that a person may undertake different responsibilities during his lifespan, that is, he may simultaneously be a lovely father as regards to the child, an obedient son to the parents and a responsible husband to the wife. If the person leads a happy life with satisfying social relations and achievements, his life can be assumed as a comedy with a

happy ending; if the person goes through many failures and frustrations and has a miserable end, his life can be commented as a tragedy.

With this metaphor, several sub-conceptual metaphors are generated: WORLD IS STAGE, MEN AND WOMEN ARE PLAYERS, BIRTH OF PEOPLE IS ENTRANCE OF PLAYERS, DEATH OF PEOPLE IS EXIT OF PLAYERS. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A PLAY goes through the whole discourse. It activates the sub-conceptual metaphors which form a hierarchical entailment system. These sub-conceptual metaphors serve as the constituting parts of the basic metaphor and help to construct a unified and coherent discourse. Let us take another example:

(23) Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. (Francis Bacon, Of Studies)

In (24), we can easily identify a basic metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD though the source domain FOOD does not appear in this discourse. Bacon first illustrates some characteristics of eating food through verbs like "taste, swallow, chew and digest". Then these characteristics are mapped onto reading books. Thus we can comprehend the concept BOOKS, or IDEAS in terms of the concept FOOD through the following mappings:

Source Domain	Target Domain
FOOD	BOOKS; IDEAS
To taste	to read in parts
To swallow	to read without curiosity
To chew and digest	to read wholly

These mappings can also be laid out as conceptual metaphors that provide the submappings of the IDEAS ARE FOOD metaphor:

THINKING IS COOKING
ACCEPTING IS SWALLOWING
CONSIDERING IS CHEWING
UNDERSTANDING IS DIGESTING

We cook food and we can stew over ideas. We swallow food and we can swallow a claim or insult. We chew food and we can chew over some suggestion. We digest food and we can or can not digest an idea. We get nourishment from eating food and we are nourished by ideas. These similarities can be laid out as perceived structural similarities between the concepts of food and ideas. While reading it, the reader can easily apply different actions of eating food to comprehend various ways of reading books. These mappings correlate with each other by these conceptual domains. So the conceptual metaphor BOOKS ARE FOOD links the whole passage tightly and maintains coherence in this discourse.

IV. Discussion

Conceptual metaphor theories provide us with a foothold from which people can observe the internal structure of a discourse. Because conceptual metaphor plays an important role in the expression of human experiences, we assume that it can be a cohesive force in discourse. The purpose of this thesis is to apply insights from the contemporary theory of conceptual metaphor to the analysis of cohesive and coherent functions of conceptual metaphor in discourse studies. To summarize, the cohesive chains of conceptual metaphor can be created by reference, reiteration as well as collocation. The cohesive chains realized by reference are formed by personal reference, demonstrative reference and comparative reference. Reiteration is created by repeating the identical word, synonyms or near synonyms or utilizing a super-ordinate or a general word. In this sense, conceptual metaphor serves as a cohesive device at the surface level of discourse.

References

[1] Black, M. (1993). More about Metaphor: Metaphor and Thought. Ed. Ortony, A. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[2] Cameron L. & Low, Q. (2001). Researching and Applying Metaphor. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language education Press.
[3] Cameron, J. (2002). Metaphor in Educational Discourse. London & New York: Continuum Press.
[4] Diane, P. (2000). The Cohesive Role of Cognitive Metaphor in Discourse and Conversation. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.
[5] Gibbs, R. W. and G. J. Stern. (1999). Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
[6] Goatly, A. (2000). Critical Reading and Writing. London and New York: Routledge.
[7] Halliday, M. A. K. (2000). An Introduction to Functional Grammar. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
[8] Hoey, M. (1991). Patterns of Lexis in Text. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[9] Kovecses, Zoltan. (2002). Metaphor: A Practical Introduction. New York: Oxford University Press.
[10] Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson. (1980). Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
[11] Lakoff, G. (1987). Women, Fire and Dangerous Things. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
[12] Lakoff, G. (1993). The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: Metaphor and Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
[13] Langacker, R. W. (2004). Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Beijing: Beijing University Press.
[14] Ponterotto, D. (2003). The cohesive role of cognitive metaphor in discourse and conversation. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyer.
[15] Ricoeur, P. (1986). The Rule of Metaphor. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

[16] Santa Ana, O. Brown. (2002). Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latins in Contemporary American Public Discourse. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
[17] Steen,G. (1994) .Understanding Metaphor in Literature: An Empirical Approach. New York: Longman.
[18] Stern, J. (2000). Metaphor in Context. Cambridge, Mass: MTT Press.
[19] Taylor, J. R. (2002). Cognitive Grammar. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[20] van Dijk, T. A. (1997). Discourse as Structure and Process. London: SAGE Publications.
[21] Ungerer, F. & Schimid, H. J. (2001). An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
[22] Zhengkun Gu. (2007). Tao and Teh. Beijing: China publications Co. Ltd.

Xiaojing Yin, a College English teacher for English major students in Shandong University of Finance and Economics in Jinan, has been teaching college English for ten years. During this decade, she published several papers and translated two piece works of American literature. Her research field is linguistics.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1126-1132, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1126-1132

Relationship among Iranian EFL Learners' Self-efficacy in Writing, Attitude towards Writing, Writing Apprehension and Writing Performance

Hoda Sarkhoush
English Department, Islamic Azad University of Shiraz, Iran

***Abstract*—The main trust of the present study was to investigate whether writing performance in students of English as a foreign language (EFL) was related to self-efficacy in writing, writing apprehension, and attitude towards writing. Fifty IELTS students (30 females and 20 males) studying IELTS Writing participated in this study. In order to collect data, three instruments were used which were a writing apprehension test (WAT), a self-efficacy in writing scale (SWS), and a questionnaire on attitude towards writing (WAQ). In order to make the questionnaires more comprehensible, they were adapted to Iranian context. This study conducted in two phases. First, the questionnaires were administered in the fist hour. In the second phase participants were given 45 minutes to write an argumentative essay on a given topic. The compositions were scored according to IELTS Writing Band Descriptive for public version by two raters. The obtained marks were taken to indicate the students' overall writing performance. The findings of the study suggested that, self-efficacy in writing and writing apprehension was negatively correlated. Moreover there was a positive correlation between self-efficacy and attitude towards writing. Besides, the results showed that self-efficacy and writing performance were positively correlated. The correlation between writing apprehension and attitude towards writing was negative. Finally there was a negative correlation between writing apprehension and writing performance. The results of a three-way ANOVA revealed that those learners with positive attitudes performed significantly better than those with negative attitudes on writing task. In terms of self-efficacy and apprehension levels no significant differences were found.**

***Index Terms*—attitude towards writing, self-efficacy in writing, writing apprehension**

I. Introduction

According to Celce-Murcia (1991), expressing one's feeling in a written form especially in a second or foreign language and doing it with acceptable coherence and cohesion is a great success.

Writing considerer as a complex task so the amount of anxiety level will be heightened in students who perform writing task. Sometimes this anxiety demotivates students and caused the negative attitude towards writing and their confidence (Gere, 1987; Sharples, 1993).

Over decades investigators have tried to find out practical solutions and approaches to enhance students writing. But regardless of the approaches and methods they used, students desire to show negative attitude towards writing. Not only ordinary students but also proficient students, those who are talented in other language skills such as speaking, reading, and listening, share the same problem in writing task. They always think it is beyond their capabilities to express themselves in written English.

Resent research findings compare the proficient writers and less skilled ones, it become obvious that those who performed better in writing tasks are more knowledgeable than their less skilled peers (Graham, 2006b; Graham & Harris, 2005). For example Graham, et al. (1993) found that sophisticated writers were more likely to emphases on planning and revision strategies whereas unskilled writers concentrated on surface-level features of writing such as neatness and spelling writers. Olinghouse and Graham (2009) also found the differences between skilled and unskilled writers. In their studies, students were interviewed based on their writing performance experience and their ability to write. The results of the study showed older students not only were more knowledgeable about the characteristics of good writing, but also more knowledgeable about the writing process. It confirmed that knowledgeable writers considered two elements as the most important ones in their writing which were the role of effort and motivation for completing writing tasks.

Besides the differences found between skilled and unskilled writers Graham, et al. (1993) found another differences which were based on how skilled and unskilled writers understand the value and the purposes of writing.

Lin and colleagues (2007) found that more experienced writers concentrated on conveying meaning to the reader, whereas inexperience writers focused on the physical characteristics of writing task.

Series of studies showed that writing knowledge can be a predicator of writing performance (Benton, Corkill, Sharp, Downey, & Khramtsova, 1995; Kellogg, 1987). In a study by Benton and colleagues (Benton & Kiewra, 1986), students were asked to do some writing tasks such as unscramble letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs. They concluded

that students with greater writing knowledge performed significantly better on writing task than participants with limited writing ability. The results of the studied also showed that sophisticated writers were more accurate and fluent.

Fidalgo and colleagues (Fidalgo, Torrance, & Garcia, 2009) found similar results in their studies.

To the researchers' view three blockage psychological factors which are writing apprehension, self-efficacy in writing, and attitude towards writing considered as the most important ones in performing writing task. These factors are introduced and dealt with in the following sections.

Writing Apprehension

Writing apprehension is defined as "a psychological construct which is directly related to persons' tendencies or inclination to do or avoid a task that required writing accompanied by evaluation" (Dally 1978).

Self-efficacy in Writing

A person's self-efficacy defined as, "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required producing given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). How people act, think, and feel, directly reflected to their beliefs. So those who got high self-efficacy demonstrate high confidence and easily get involved in any activities. Whereas individuals with low self-efficacy and lack of confidence avoid any task and activities that surpass their capabilities (Bandura, 1977).

Attitude towards Writing

The feelings of writer about his or her writing refer to writing attitude which is mostly ranges from happy to unhappy (Graham, Berninger & Fan, 2007). Writing attitude is not only the individuals' feeling ("I think my writing is good") but also the students' evaluation of their writing ("I think my instructor reacts positively to my writing").

Theoretical Framework

Anxiety as a dominant feature is reflected in highly apprehensive writers so they find writing unrewarding, even punishing. Consequently they avoid any possible situations that require writing (Daly & Miller, 1975).Anxiety is reflected in the behaviors of apprehensive writers as they write, in the attitudes they express about their writing, and in their written products. Low apprehensive on the other hand, tend not to avoid situations that demand writing, so they display confidence in their abilities to write, and frequently enjoy writing.

On the other hand, significant bodies of studies clearly demonstrate that students' self-efficacy beliefs can be positively associated with academic achievements (Zimmerman, 1989; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992; Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2002; Webb-Williams, 2006).

In addition, students who showed positive attitude towards writing are more eager to involve in writing task than their peers who hold negative attitude on the same task (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995).

Objectives of the Study

This study intends to investigate whether writing performance in students of English as a foreign language (EFL) is related to self-efficacy in writing, writing apprehension, and attitude towards writing task. More specifically, the study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. Do individuals with low writing apprehension perform significantly better on a test of writing skills than those with high writing apprehension?
2. Do individuals with high self-efficacy perform significantly better on a test of writing skills than those with low self-efficacy?
3. Do students with positive attitudes towards writing perform better in writing tasks than those with negative attitudes?
4. Is there a relationship among self-efficacy in writing, attitude towards writing, writing apprehension and writing performance?

Research on Apprehension and Writing Performance

Hassan (2001) investigated the relationship between self-esteem in writing and writing apprehension. 182 university students were participated in this study. In order to assess students apprehension and self-efficacy two questionnaires were given to students which were foreign language self-esteem questionnaire and writing apprehension questionnaire. Students also ask to write a composition. The results of the study confirmed that:

1. There was a significant relationship between self-esteem and writing apprehension. High apprehensive writers suffer from lower self-esteem than their peers with low apprehension.
2. Low apprehensive writers wrote better than high apprehensive writers.

Pajares and Johnson (1994) said that writing apprehension is negatively correlated with self-efficacy. These findings supported the fact that writing capability can directly predict writing performance (Pajares & Valiante's, 1996)

Research on Self-Efficacy and Writing Performance

McCarthy, Meir and Rinderer (1985), and Pajares and Johnson (1996) have found that there was a relationship low level of self-efficacy and poor writing. They found that those students, who evaluated themselves to be talented writers, would write well, whilst the students who considered themselves to be poor writers, would perform according to their beliefs.

Bandura (1997), Beach (1989), Meier, McCarthy, and Schmeck, (1984), Shell, Murphy and Bruning (1989), McCarthy, Meier and Rinderer (1985), and McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer, (1985) have all also stated that academic

self-beliefs are strongly predictive of academic performance. They considered self-efficacy as the key elements in writing performance.

Graham and colleagues (2007) investigated the relationship between writing attitude and writing performance. The results of the study revealed that those students who had positive writing attitude got better achievement in writing task than those with less favorable attitude towards task. In a similar study Graham, et al. (2007) also found that writing attitudes can be a significant predicator of writing achievement.

II. Methodology

Participants

Fifty IELTS students (30 females and 20 males) studying IELTS Writing participated in this study. All the students were native speakers of Persian. The participants were given 3 questionnaires, a self-efficacy in writing scale (SWS), a writing apprehension test (WAT), and a questionnaire on attitude towards writing (WAQ). On the basis of the results, they were classified into high and low levels. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants according to the variables levels.

TABLE 1:
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO THE VARIABLES

		Value Label	N
attitude level	**1**	**negative**	**23**
	2	**positive**	**24**
Self-efficacy level	**1**	**low**	**22**
	2	**high**	**23**
Apprehension level	**1**	**low**	**22**
	2	**high**	**25**

Instruments

The instruments in the study were modified versions of: A self-efficacy in writing scale (SWS), A writing apprehension test (WAT), and an attitude-towards-writing questionnaire (WAQ). In order to grade the students' writing, IELTS Writing Band Descriptor for public version was used.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

♦ Writing Apprehension Questionnaire

For this study, we used Daly and Miller's (1975a) WAT to evaluate students' apprehension on writing. This is a 26-item questionnaire that features 13 items with positive polarity and 13 with negative polarity. Those items which were reversed were recorded to the same variables in data analysis. Scoring was done on a 5-point Likert scale that asked the participants to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements about writing apprehension.

In order to calculate the reliability of the WAT Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was used. The result showed that the reliability of the instrument was 0.89 (Table 2).

TABLE 2:
RELIABILITY OF WAT

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.891	26

♦ Self-Efficacy in Writing Scale (SWS)

In order to assess students' self-efficacy in writing we used Yavuz-Erkan (2004) self-efficacy scale in writing. Yavuz-Erkan developed a 21-item writing self-efficacy scale to grade the strength of students' belief in their writing ability. The scoring was done on 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree. Each statement on the scale was preceded by the phrase "I can …"

Five factors which were content, design, unity, accuracy and punctuation were considered in this questionnaire.

The reliability was calculated. The scale was found to have Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.90 (Table 3).

TABLE 3:
RELIABILITY OF SWS

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.900	28

♦ **Attitudes toward Writing Questionnaire (WAQ)**

Rose's (1984) attitude-towards-writing questionnaire (WAQ) was the third measurements that used in this study. This questionnaire tries to examine the link between attitude towards writing and the students' actual writing performances. It consists of 24 items. The items of the scale were in Likert scale: Almost Always, Often, Sometimes, Occasionally, or Almost Never. This questionnaire was also adapted to Iranian context the same as other instruments.

The reliability of WAQ was calculated through Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient and the result showed that the reliability of the instrument was 0.83 (Table 4).

TABLE 4:
RELIABILITY OF WAQ

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.830	24

Since the questionnaires were basically developed with reference to first-language learners, particularly English native speakers, and therefore may not tap the essential aspects of EFL context, the researcher adapted the WAT for use with Iranian EFL students as follows:

First, WAT, SWS, and WAQ were translated into Persian by three EFL instructors. Second, the translations were compared and necessary changes were made so that all items in the scales were comprehensible to Iranian EFL students. Then the scales were read by two Iranian lecturers. They were revised based on their comments and then they were administered to 5 EFL students. After that the final version of the scales were established with feedback from the students' and lecturers' comments. Once in their final Iranian form, the scales were back-translated. The Iranian versions were translated into English to ensure a true translation. Then the team discussed any discrepancies until all members reached a consensus. The final versions turned out to be very similar to the original ones. Thus, the Persian versions were administered to the participants.

Data Collection Procedures

This study was conducted in two phases. WAT, WAQ, and WSQ were administered in the first session. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of three psychological constructs – apprehension, attitude, and self-efficacy on their writing ability. They were also informed that they would remain anonymous. In the second phase, students were given 45 minutes to write an argumentative essay entitled "Some people believe that there should be fixed punishments for each type of crime. Others, however, argue that circumstances of an individual crime, and the motivation for committing it, should always be taken into account when deciding on the punishment". To ensure that the students would view the performance task as serious, their professor informed them that the scores would be considered as part of their ongoing term grade.

The compositions were graded according to IELTS Writing Band Descriptors for public version by two raters. Both raters were English IELTS Instructors and they were unaware of the students' identification. In this part the inter-rater reliability was estimated to see how consistent the raters were in their judgments. To this end, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used and then the obtained correlation coefficient was put in the inter-rater reliability formula (Henning 1987, p. 82).The Correlation Coefficient was 0.89 with p–value of 0.000 using Spearman Brown Prophecy formula (Henning 1987, p. 82), the inter-rater reliability was found to be 0.94. The obtained marks were taken to indicate students' overall writing performance. The average of raters' scores was taken as the main scores for computation. Based on the results, the participants were divided into two groups of high and low ability in writing.

Data Analysis Procedures

Our data consisted of the results of the questionnaires--writing apprehension test, self-efficacy in writing, and attitudes towards writing -- on the one hand, and the score of the essay writing task on the other hand. The data gathered from the questionnaires and essay writing were entered into the computer item by item according to their own values, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16 to get descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and three-way ANOVA.

To determine the relationship among self-efficacy in writing, attitudes towards writing, writing apprehension and writing performance irrespective of sex and proficiency level was measured using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The individuals were divided into two groups and for this end; the median was calculated for each variable. The median for attitude was 71, for self-efficacy 68.5, and for apprehension 90.5. In order to divide the students into two groups, each variable was recoded. Students who scored lower than the median got value 1, which indicated low self-efficacy, low apprehension, and negative attitude towards writing. Those who scored above the median got value 2, and were considered as having higher self-efficacy in writing, higher apprehension in writing, and positive attitude towards writing. Since there were three independent variables, a three-way ANOVA was run to find the significant differences among the groups. The analyses were carried out at a significance level of $p<.05$

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

One of the aims of the present study was to determine the possible relationship among self-efficacy in writing, attitude towards writing, writing apprehension and writing performance. A correlation analysis was run and the results are summed up in Table5.

TABLE5:
CORRELATIONS AMONG SELF- EFFICACY IN WRITING, ATTITUDE TOWARDS WRITING, WRITING APPREHENSION AND WRITING PERFORMANCE

		Self-efficacy	Apprehension	Writing
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.606**	-.469**	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000
	N	50	50	50
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation		-.729**	.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N		50	50
Apprehension	Pearson Correlation			-.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N			50

According to the results which appear in (Table 5)the Pearson correlation coefficient for attitude towards writing and self-efficacy in writing indicated a positive relationship between these two variables ($r_{=}$.606,p<.05) which means that high self efficacy is associated with high attitude towards writing. The Pearson correlation coefficient for attitude towards writing and apprehension in writing was -.469, (p<.05) indicating a negative relationship between apprehension in writing and attitude towards writing. The correlation between attitude and writing performance was also positive ($r_{=}$.623, p<.05). It indicated that those with positive attitudes in writing would significantly perform better than those with negative attitudes.

According to the results, there was a negative relationship between self-efficacy and apprehension at the .000 level of significant .This means that higher self-efficacy is associated with the lower apprehension and a positive correlation between self-efficacy and writing performance ($r_{=}$.513, p<.05). It means that those with high self-efficacy significantly perform better on the test than those with low self-efficacy. The correlation coefficient for writing apprehension and writing performance was negative ($r_{=}$ -.545, p<.05). It indicated that the students with high apprehension would perform weakly on their writing task.

Furthermore, a three-way ANOVA was run to assess the differences among the groups in terms of the levels of attitude towards writing, self efficacy in writing, and writing apprehension as independent variables and writing performance as the dependent variable. As the table of ANOVA shows (Table7), only attitude level is significant and there is a significant interaction between attitude level and apprehension level.

TABLE 7:
ANOVA RESULTS ON THE EFFECTS OF ATTITUDE LEVEL, APPREHENSION LEVEL, AND SELF – EFFICACY LEVEL ON WRITING.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	sig.
Corrected Model	15.838[a]	17	2.263	4.329	.002
Intercept	895.725	1	895.725	1713.874	.000
Alevel	2.782	1	2.782	5.323	.028
Slevel	.138	1	.138	.263	.612
Aplevel	1.481	1	1.481	2.833	.102
Alevel * Slevel	.653	1	.653	1.249	.272
Alevel * Aplevel	1.188	1	1.188	2.273	.141
Slevel * Aplevel	3.607	1	3.607	6.901	.013
Alevel * Slevel * Aplevel	.234	1	.234	.447	.508
Error	16.724	32	.523		
Total	1270.219	40			
Corrected Total	32.563	39			

Alevel=attitude level Aplevel=apprehension level Slevel=self-efficacy level

As can be seen from Table 8, the mean of the group with positive attitude is higher than that of the group with negative attitude. It can be concluded that those with positive attitude towards writing perform better than those with negative attitude.

TABLE 8:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON WRITING BASED ON ATTITUDE LEVELS[A]

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Negative	19	3	6	5.08	.796
Positive	21	4	7	6.00	.796

According to ANOVA results, no significant differences were found in terms of the effect of self-efficacy and apprehension levels on writing performance.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the procedure of the research, the participants for each variable--self-efficacy in writing, apprehension in writing, and attitude towards writing, were divided into two groups. Each group performed differently on questionnaires and writing task. The results of a three-way ANOVA revealed that those learners with positive attitudes performed significantly better than those with negative attitude. In terms of self- efficacy and apprehension levels no significant differences were found.

Correlation between variables demonstrated some results. According to the findings, self-efficacy in writing and writing apprehension are negatively correlated (r=-.729). On the other hand, there was a positive correlation between self-efficacy and attitude towards writing (r=.606, p<.05). Moreover, the results showed that self- efficacy and writing performance were also positively correlated (r=.513, p<.05).

The correlation between writing apprehension and attitude towards writing was negative(r=- .469, p<.05). Finally there was a negative correlation between writing apprehension and writing performance (r= -.545, p<.05).

Pedagogical Implications of the Study

Cognitive and emotional activities can deeply effects writing performance; so it is a need to nurture the affective aspects of EFL learning. Although our finding were not in line with other studies in terms of self-efficacy in writing and writing apprehension but to the researchers' view they could consider as blockage factors that may hinder the actual performance of the writers.

It is a need for EFL students to be aware of their capabilities, their attitudes, and their feeling. They should try to minimize the effects of the blockage factors. Moreover EFL instructors can guide to build students self-efficacy. They could enhance students' positive evaluation of their ability.

In a nut shell, writing always considers as a personal act, so that students' writing efficacy beliefs are easily vulnerable to any harsh criticisms. (Zumbrunn, et al., 2010). Although harsh criticisms can easily put students' efficacy beliefs in danger, ample praises can easily boost students' effort and persistence in writing tasks and cause them feel more efficacious.

REFERENCES

[1] Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological* Review, *84*(2), 191-215.
[2] Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: *The exercise of control*. New York: WH Freeman and Company.
[3] Beach, R. (1989). Showing students how to assess: Demonstrating techniques for response in the writing conference. In C.M. Anson (Ed.), *Writing and Response* (pp. 1277148).Urbana, IL: NCTE.
[4] Benton, S. L., & Kiewra, K. A. (1986).Measuring the organizational aspects of writing ability. *Journal of Educational Measurement, 23(4),* 377-386.
[5] Benton, S. L., Corkill, A. J., Sharp, J. M., Downey, R. G., & Khramtsova, I. (1995). Knowledge, interest, and narrative writing. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 87*(1), 66-79.
[6] Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). Language teaching methodology. London: Prentice Hall
[7] Daly, J. (1978). Writing apprehension and writing competency. *Journal of Education Research*, *72*(1), 10-14.
[8] Daly J. and Miller, M. D. (1975). Apprehension of writing as a predictor of message intensity. *The Journal of Psychology*, 89, 173-177.
[9] Fidalgo, R., Torrance, M., & Garcia, J. (2009).The long-term effects of writing strategy instruction for young writers. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 32*(4), 516-536.
[10] Lin, S. C., Monroe, B. W., & Troia, G. A. (2007). Development of writing knowledge in grades2-8: A comparison of typically developing writers and their struggling peers. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 23*(3), 207-230.
[11] Gere, A. R. (1987). Writing groups: History, theory and implications. Carbondale: Southern Illionis University Press.
[12] Graham, S., Schwartz, S., & MacArthur, C. (1993). Knowledge of writing and the composing process, attitude toward writing, and self-efficacy for students with and without learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 26(4),* 237-249.
[13] Graham, S., Harris, K. R. (2005).Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self regulated strategy development. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 30(2),* 207-241.
[14] Graham, S. (2006). P. Alexander & P. Winne (Eds.), Handbook of Educational Psychology (pp. 457-478). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
[15] Graham, S., Berninger, V., & Fan, W. (2007).The structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 32*(3), 516-536.
[16] Hassan, B. (2001). The relationship of writing apprehension and self-efficacy to the writing quality and quantity of EFL university student. *Mansoura Faculty of Education journal,* 39:1-6.

[17] McCarthy, P., Meier, S., & Rinderer, R. (1985). 'Self-Efficacy and writing: A different view of self-evaluation. *College Composition and Communication*, 36(4), 465-471.
[18] McCutchen, D. (1987). Children's discourse skill: Form and modality requirements of schooled writing. *Discourse Processes, 10*(3), 267-286.
[19] McKenna, M. C., Kear, D. J., & Ellsworth, R. A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly, 30*(4), 934-956.
[20] Meier, S., McCarthy, P. R., & Schmeck, R. R. (1984).Validity of self-efficacy as a predictor of writing performance. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 8*(2), 107-120.
[21] Olinghouse, N. G., & Graham, S. (2009). The relationship between the discourse knowledge and the writing performance of elementary-grade students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*(1), 37-50.
[22] Pajares, F., & Johnson, M. J. (1994). Confidence and competence in writing: The role of writing self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, and apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English, 28*(3), 313-331.
[23] Pajares, F. (2002). Overview of social cognitive theory and of self-efficacy. Retrieved December 11, 2011, from http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/eff.html.
[24] Pajares, F., & Johnson, M. (1996).Self-efficacy beliefs and the writing performance of entering high school students. Psychology in the Schools, 33(2), 163-175.
[25] Rose, M. (1984).Writer's block: The cognitive dimension. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illionis University Press
[26] Saddler, B., & Graham, S. (2007). The relationship between writing knowledge and writing performance among more and less skilled writers. Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 23(3), 231-247.
[27] Sharples, M. (Ed.) (1993).Computer supported collaborative writing. Spring: Verlag.
[28] Shell, D. F., Murphy, C. C., & Bruning, R. H. (1989).Self-efficacy and outcome expectancy mechanisms in reading and writing achievement. Journal of Educational Psychology, 81(1), 91-100.
[29] Webb-Williams, Jane. (2006). Self-efficacy in the primary classroom: An investigation into the relationship with performance. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association New Researchers/Student Conference, University of Warwick, Britain.
[30] Yavuz-Erkan, D. (2004). Efficacy of cross-cultural e-mail exchange for enhancing EFL writing: Unpublished Dissertation Abstract. Ukurova University, The Institute of Social Sciences English Language Teaching. Adana/Turkey.
[31] Zumbrunn, S., Bruning, R., Kauffman, D., & Hayes, M. (2010).Explaining determinants of confidence and success in the elementary writing classroom. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.
[32] Zimmerman, B. J. (1989). A social cognitive view of self-regulated academic learning. Journal of Educational Psychology, 81(3), 329-339.
[33] Zimmerman, B. J., Bandura, A. & Martinez-Pons, M. (1992).Self motivation for academic attainment: The role of self-efficacy beliefs and personal goal setting. American Educational Research Journal, 29 (20), 663-676.

Hoda Sarkhoush got her M.A. in TEFEL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) in Shiraz Azad University, Fars, Iran in 0ctober 2012. She was born in Shiraz.

She is an English teacher. She teaches English for more than 9 years.

Miss Hoda Sarkhoush has not been the member of any professional societies.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1133-1137, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1133-1137

Thoughts on College English Testing

Li Sun
School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Science and Technology, Changchun, China

***Abstract*—Testing and teaching are so closely related that it is virtually impossible to work in either area without being constantly concerned with the other. Testing must accompany English teaching and reflect how much English knowledge students have grasped in a certain phase of English study. Tests should be constructed primarily to reinforce learning, to motivate students, and to assess students' performance in language acquisition. Thus, it is necessary for instructors to design tests according to the features of the college English intensive reading course in order for validity and reliability to occur.**

***Index Terms*—teaching and testing, testing procedures, compatibility and validity**

I. Introduction

Progress tests, also known as classroom tests, are tests that measure the extent to which students have mastered the material taught in the classroom. Each progress test is unique and can only be evaluated fully by the instructor in light of his or her knowledge of the students, the language program in which the students participate, and the instructor's own particular aims and goals. The instructor often measures students' ability by quizzes and small scale tests and the results obtained from them enable the instructor to become more familiar with the work of each student and with the progress of the class in general. A good progress test should encourage students to perform well in the target language and to gain additional confidence. In addition, the aim of classroom testing is to stimulate learning and to reinforce what has been taught.

Progress tests differ from achievement tests in that progress tests are less formal. Achievement tests measure achievement on a large scale and often contain more test items, test types, test time, and standard scoring. These tests are based on what the students are presumed to have learned, not necessarily what they actually learned or what they were actually taught.

II. Classroom Testing

A. What Kinds of Classroom Practices and Exercises Should Be Considered for Testing Beginning Students?

As we ponder the idea of classroom testing, the question arises: what kinds of classroom practices and exercises should be considered for testing beginning students? The college English intensive reading course is one highly practical course geared towards college students of various majors. Testing is not only reserved for written exams, but also for all sorts of classroom practices and exercised. In a broad sense, all exercises and practices, especially oral practices, can be regarded as a kind of testing, such as reading texts aloud or answering questions, which, to a certain degree, may reflect students' pronunciation, intonation, and the mastery of vocabulary and grammar. This type of testing, however, can be a disadvantage in that evaluating "finish products" may not reflect students' integrative English levels. For instance, a beginning student read a poem eloquently and passionately finder the guidance of instruction and receives high praise in a speech contest. At first, it may appear that the students' performance is based on his or her proficiency in English when in actually, repetition and memorization brought about the appearance of proficiency instead of actually knowledge of the language.

Of course, it is neither reasonable nor practical for instructors to give assessment marks for all students' reading or conversations. After all, students should not be hindered from learning because of fear of being assessed. If students are assessed too much in the classroom, enthusiasm is greatly reduced, the relationship between students and instructor is decreased, the learning atmosphere in the classroom becomes tense, and students do not dare to think, speak and question freely.

It should be mentioned that multiple choice testing is often a component in many types of beginning tests; however, the marks obtained from multiple choice do not completely reflect students' true knowledge of English skills in that it fails to measure the degree that students answer question correctly or incorrectly. In addition, multiple choice testing fails to measure the ability to use language such as the ability of speaking, writing and translating. Thus, multiple choice should not be major component in classroom testing.

B. What Form of Classroom Tests would Be Most Suitable to Evaluate English Skills of Moderately Advanced Students?

A second question arises: what form of classroom tests would be most suitable to evaluate English skills of moderately advanced students? For years teaching practice has used integrated testing forms involving listening

comprehension, dictation, and reading comprehension, which measure students' comprehensive knowledge of intonation, pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary and other areas. An experienced instructor can write reliable and valid test questions that accurately and consistently measure students' abilities in these areas. Take a Chinese student who graduated from the Chinese institute. The student always received good testing marks in listening comprehension, dictation and reading comprehension. When he studied at a New York university, instructors praised him for his excellent knowledge of English. This is one of many examples demonstrating the consistency of these testing areas. Hence, listening comprehension, dictation, and reading comprehension would be most suitable to evaluate moderately advanced students' work.

C. What about Reliable and Valid Classroom Tests for More Advanced Students?

A third question arises: what about reliable and valid classroom tests for more advanced students? According to the requirements of Chinese students, outlined in the college English Teaching Outline, students learn English du ring four years of college study. Since during the third year university require students to learn large amounts of vocabulary, using words correctly in context, translation and interpretation skills are key points for English teaching. Thus, retelling stories is used as a valid classroom practice and test to measure these areas. After reading material and working out the exercises of the texts such as vocabulary, translation, and answering question, students should be able to retell information in a text. Retelling information can show how much a student has learned from a text and judging from the students' degree of achievement, the instructor can see if his or her teaching methods are effective. So, retelling stories using oral of written modes of expression is a way of testing for more advanced students.

III. Analyzing the Used Test Paper

A. The Importance of Analyzing the Used Test Paper for Teachers

From analyzing the used test papers, teachers could have a clear understanding whether the test papers have validity, reliability and discrimination.

Whether a test is good or not, first we must know whether it has validity or not. Validity means whether a test measures what it intends to measure, it includes face validity, content validity, concurrent validity, construct validity and predictive validity. No matter what a large-scale test it is, it does have these kinds of validity. As for the face validity, we can judge it soon after the test papers have been finished designing. But other kinds of validity could only be judged through analyzing the used test papers. Many teachers have such opinion that only the large-scale exam needs analysis, as for our final especially the mid-term exam there is no need to do that. But this is a kind of misleading opinion. Our purpose of carrying out the exam, no matter what a large-scale test it is, is to judge whether we can test what we want to test, if you did not make any analysis on the used test papers how could you know that. Maybe when you design the test papers , you have ignored something, and you need to make analysis. For example, in an exam, if you design a new type of items that you want to exam the students' comprehensive ability, but there are so many new words in it which have bad effect on the students' comprehension on it, so such kind of items lack of construct validity. If one of the exam questions intends to test the students' mastery of grammar, but it turns out to test the students' mastery of vocabulary, then it lacks of content validity. Also, if you put aside the used test papers and made no analysis on them, how can you know the concurrent validity of the test. So analyzing the used test papers is very important for the teachers to decide the various kinds of validity of a test.

Reliability is another important factor for a test. It refers to the extent to which test scores are consistent. So through analyzing the used test papers we can know whether there is any injustice scoring and whether all the teachers have the same scoring standard. Also we could know whether the test contains enough information and the items are representative. Because for the mid-term and final exam, the designers are always the markers, so they could know how to make the test most reliable next time through analyzing it. Besides that, if we want to make a comparison among the different years of graduates through their exam scores, first we must make sure that the tests have validity and reliability at the same level through analyzing the used test papers. Also because the mid-term and final exam belong to the achievement test, so we need a certain kinds of discrimination, whether a test has such kind of discrimination we need to compare the results of the students got in the exams. If it does not have, we need to analyze the test paper itself to find out the reason.

From the used test papers the teachers could know how to design a more successful test paper. As for this point, it is especially useful for the young teachers. Maybe at the very beginning of their work, they could get no chance to design the test papers. But eventually they will get the chance, so they need to accumulate experience. From analyzing the used test papers, they could know how to find out the most appropriate forms of the component parts of a test. For example, if they want to test the students' vocabulary, whether they should use the form of filling in blanks or choosing the synonyms or just writing down the words according to their Chinese meanings, as for the multiple choice they could know how to design the stems and the opinions, they could know how to weight each section, they could know how to make clear directions for each part, because for some new test designers, sometimes, they will create ambiguous directions. They could know which part is better and how to make similar items in their later designing.

The analyzing of the used test papers is not only useful for the young inexperienced teachers but also useful for the experience teachers. We call some teachers experience teachers but it does not indicate that they could always design

the perfect test papers. They could also design the invalid items which maybe they could not realize when they were designing. If they design such kind of items again, other people will probably doubt about their ability. So they have to analyze the used test papers to find out which parts are not very good and summarize the reasons, then they will be more careful next time. And also from analyzing the used test papers, the teachers could know which parts seems to be too difficult or too easy for the students, then they could design more practical test papers. And experienced teachers also know that they could find out the errors the students are easily to make from analyzing the used test papers. They could design such items as error corrections. In addition to what I talked above, through analyzing the same used test papers ,different teachers could state their own opinions and exchange their ideas, they can point out which part needs to improve, which part should be deleted and which item is good enough to be used again.

The analyzing of the used test papers could have a positive effect on English language teaching. One of the effects of testing is to serve as an assistant of language teaching, it can diagnose teaching and guide teaching. From certain test the teachers can know many things. For example, if the test indeed tested what we want to test, we could know which part had the students mastered well and which part they had difficulties, so in our further teaching we could have a kind of guidance about we should delicate explanation and make more exercise on it.

We often say that a good test can have a positive feedback effect on teaching. Although it was a very good test, the teacher did not pay enough attention, just give the marks and made not analysis on it, how can it has such kind of effect. On the contrary, if the teachers made a careful analysis of the used test papers, they could have a clear consciousness on the focal points in their further teaching, they do not have to spend more time on explaining the knowledge the students had mastered well. And also their teaching could become happy and more successful. So , the teachers should keep their used test papers especially the young teachers, they should make analysis on them so that they could make a comparison among the students of different grade, work out different targets and give their own recommendations. Once there are more accumulation of such kinds of test papers, it will become the precious materials for studying testing. It will not only save time for the teachers in their further designing the exam question, but will also help them to make clear the focal points in teaching and to improve the teaching quality.

In a word, making analysis of the used test papers is not only helpful for the teachers to design more practical test paper but also has a beneficial feedback effect on teaching. Besides that, analyzing the used test papers is also important for the students.

B. The Importance of Analyzing the Used Test Papers for the Students

Nowadays, almost no university and college distribute their used test papers back to the students needless to say the teachers explain them to the students. One of the reasons is that the teachers want to store the used test papers for further research, but they could collect them back after analyzing them together with the students.

Most of the students want to know why they have got such marks, some students think they did the exam questions quit well but they have got low marks, some students do not think they did well but they have got high marks so they want to find out the reasons.

There are also some careful and diligent students who want to have their used test papers to see which part they lost marks and why. Is it because the items are too difficult or because they did careless working. And if they lost marks really because they could not work out the items, they will find similar items and so more such kind of questions so as to improve their own ability, or they can as the teachers in time so h twill not make the same mistakes again. And sometimes the students could not work out some items in an exam, they are eager to know the answers but they could not get the original materials so maybe they will not know the answers for a long time, maybe it will affect the students' accumulation of other knowledge just because language is a continuous system. Some of my students had suck kind of experience , after they had taken the cet-4 exam, they said "we had seen the similar exam question in our former final exams but we did not work out it at out that time and this time we have not work either. If our teacher had explained it to us we would have done it well". So at that time I realized the importance of analyzing the used test papers. Teachers should not only distribute the used test papers back, but also should help the students to analyze them. They do not have to analyze each question in detail but should help the students make it clear why they make suck kind of errors and explain the part that most of the students made mistakes. As long as the students analyze the students analyze the used test papers with the help of their teachers, they would know how to work out the similar questions next time and how to use the special method to work out a question quickly and correctly. All in all, it is necessary for the students to make analysis on the used test papers.

Also, besides what I have talked above, because the test is designed for the students, they have used the test papers so they have their own opinion about the test papers. The teachers could ask the students to give their opinions on the test papers and listen to their suggestions. It is very useful for both the students and the teachers to do so.

IV. Reliability of Classroom Tests

A. Factors Affecting the Reliability of a Test

There are two important factors affecting the reliability of a test. They are the extent of the sample of material selected for testing and the administration of the tests. As validity is concerned chiefly with the content of the sample, so reliability is concerned with the size. The larger the sample, the greater the probability that the test as a whole is

reliable. And the administration of the test is the same test administered to different groups under different conditions or at different times? Obviously, this is an important factor in deciding reliability, especially in tests of oral production and listening comprehension. In order to differ from validity, we can give you the following example: if a recording for a listening comprehension test is initially poor in quality, then it is poor in quality for all candidates. This will result in invalidity. But if the quality of the recording is good and if certain groups hear it played under good acoustic conditions while the other groups hear it under bad acoustic conditions, this will result in unreliability and invalidity. There are also some other factors affecting the reliability of a test, such as test instructions, personal factors and scoring the test, but the important factors are that we just talked about.

B. Methods of Measuring the Reliability of a Test

One method of measuring the reliability of a test is to re-administer the same test after a lapse of time. It is assumed that all have been treated in the same way in the interval---that they have either all been taught or that none of them have. If such assumptions can be made, comparison of the two results would then show how reliable the test has proved. Clearly, this method is often impracticable and, in any case, a frequent use of it is not to be recommended, because certain students will benefit more than others by a familiarity with the type and format of the test. Moreover, in addition to changes in performance resulting from the memory factors, personal factors such as motivation and differential maturation will also account for differences in the performances of certain students. Another means of estimating the reliability of a test is by administering parallel forms of the test to the same group. This assumes that two similar versions of a particular test can be constructed, such tests must be identical in items contained in the nature of their sampling, difficulty, length, rubrics. Only after a full statistical analysis of the test and all the items contained in them can the test safely be regarded as parallel. Of the correlation between the two tests is high, then the tests can be termed reliable. The split-half method is yet another means of measuring test reliability. This method estimates a different kind of reliability from that estimated by test producers. The split-half method is based on the principle that if an accurate measuring instrument were broken into two equal parts, the measurements obtained with one part would correspond exactly to those obtained with the other.

C. The Importance of Reliability

Imagine that forty students take a 100-item test at one o'clock one Friday afternoon. The test is not impossibly difficult or ridiculously easy for these students, so they do not all get zero or a perfect score of 100. Now what if in fact they had not taken the test on the Friday but had taken in at one o'clock the previous afternoon or the following afternoon? Each student would not have got the same score on the Friday as they actually did on the Tuesday or on the Saturday. Because human beings simply do not behave in exactly the same way on every occasion, even when the circumstances seem identical. We talked about some factors affecting the reliability and some methods of measuring the reliability. Here we will talk about the importance of reliability. First, we will introduce the reliability coefficient. Reliability coefficients are like validity coefficients. They allow us to compare the reliability of different tests. There is a test with a reliability coefficient of one is one which would give precisely the same results for a particular set of candidates regardless of when it happened to be administered. A test which had a reliability coefficient of zero would give sets of results quite unconnected with each other, in the sense that the score that someone actually got on a Friday would be no help at all in attempting to predict the score he or she would get if they took the test the day after. It is between the two extremes of one and zero that genuine test reliability coefficients are to be found. While the reliability coefficient allows us to compare the reliability of tests, it does not tell us directly how close an individual's actual score is to what he or she might have scored on another occasion. With a little further calculation, however, it is possible to estimate how close a person's actual score is to what is called their true score. If a test is not reliable then we knew that the actual scores of many individual are likely to be quite different from their true score. This means that we can place little reliance on those scores. Even where reliability is quite high, the standard error of measurement serves to remind us that in the case of some individual there is quite possibly a large discrepancy between actual score and true score. This should make us very cautious about making important decisions on the basis of the test scores of candidates whose actual score place them close to the cut-off point. We should at least consider the possibility of gathering further relevant information on the language ability of such candidates.

V. Conclusion

Testing plays a key role in promoting effective college English teaching. Its purpose lies in examining students' understands and mastery of word, expression, sentence structures and contents of certain texts during a designed period of time; determining if teaching methods are effective, and finding out if students are receiving instruction effectively. Certainly in order to make progress tests serve teaching better, instructors must reinforce the validity and reliability of testing in college English intensive reading course and make testing an effective means of measuring teaching students learning and promoting the teaching and learning progress. Testing is a very useful assistant of teaching and also an indispensable method of inspecting the teaching result so we must give it enough attention. And if we want to get useful information from testing, we must make analysis on the used test papers. On the one hand it can help the teachers to design more practical and successful test papers in their future work and help them to absorb each other's good points

and on the other hand it can help the students to have a clear understanding of their own weak points and learn a better way in language study and help them to be more successful in their study.

REFERENCES

[1] Aikhenvald Alexandra. (2001). Pproblems in Comparative Linguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[2] Aitchison Jean. (2001). Language Change: Progress or Decay. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[3] Campbell Lyle. (2004). Historical Linguistics. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
[4] Clarke Smith. (1990). Sources of semiotic. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
[5] Croft William. (2004). Cognitive Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[6] Tim Mcnamara. (2003). Language Testing. Shanghai: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Li Sun was born in Jilin, China in 1978. She received her Master degree in foreign linguistics and applied linguistics from Changchun University of Science and Technology, China in 2005.

She is currently a lecturer in School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Science and Technology, Changchun, China. Her research interests include linguistics and teaching methodology.

ISSN 1798-4769
Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 1138-1145, September 2013

doi:10.4304/jltr.4.5.1138-1145

Writing Attitudes of Iranian EFL Students: A Qualitative Study

Razieh Gholaminejad
Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Ahmad Moinzadeh
Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Manijeh Youhanaee
Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Hamidreza Ghobadirad
Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

***Abstract*—This paper reports on one aspect of a qualitative study conducted in an EFL setting, of the perception of writing attitudes of 65 EFL students in the University of Isfahan. An open-ended questionnaire was administered to 65 undergraduates to examine firstly what the Iranian EFL students' attitudes towards writing in general are; secondly, whether Iranian EFL students are active writers, If yes, in which language; thirdly, whether Iranian EFL students feel any difference between expressing ideas while writing in English and Persian.**

***Index Terms*—writing, attitude, active writer**

I. Introduction

A. What Is Writing?

Writing is the expression of feelings, thoughts, desires and plans in black and white (Akkaya & Kirmiz, 2010). Writing is a way to explore thoughts and ideas to make them evident and accessible. It is a difficult skill for both native and nonnative speakers in a similar way, because any writers should make a harmony among several issues such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics (Hamed Jahin & Wafa Idrees, 2012).

When thought is written down, ideas can be scrutinized, reassessed, rearranged, and changed, hence, it is fair to say that writing encourages deep thinking (Hamed Jahin & Wafa Idrees, 2012).

Ranging from "mechanical control to creativity, with good grammar, knowledge of subject matter, awareness of stylistic conventions and various mysterious factors in between" (Wall, 1981, p.53), writing is regarded as a difficult, intricate and demanding skill to master (Graham, Harris & Mason, 2005). In order to master the skill, years of practice and hard work are required.

Many studies (e.g. Collins & Parkhurst, 1996) reveal that many students do not express their ideas clearly in their writings. Writing is especially difficult for nonnative speakers because they are expected to create written products that demonstrate mastery of the second language as well as the expression of ideas (Abu-Rass, 2001).

Reasons for creative writing, according to Tompkins (1982), are as follows : 1) to keep amused; 2) to promote artistic expression; 3) to discover the functions and values of writing; 4) to arouse imagination; 5) to clarify thinking; 6) to search for identity; and 7) to learn to read and write.

Multiple simultaneous factors are at work to influence writing achievement including a poor life-style, poor health and inadequate reading habits due to parents' low socio-economic status (Akkaya & Kirmiz, 2010). One of the most outstanding of them is attitudes to writing. In the following, the term 'attitude' is defined by different researchers.

B. What Is Attitude?

Attitudes play an important role in forming our world view. They influence our perception of the world around us and determine how we respond to different entities of the world (Jabeen & Kazim Shah, 2011). The common attitudes of a group of people held for a long time are realized in the form of culture.

As early as 1932, the term attitude was defined by Likert as "an inference which is made on the basis of a complex of beliefs about the attitude object" (cited in Gardner, 1980, p.267). Ajzan (1988, p.4) proposed a different definition of attitudes as "a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event".

Meanwhile, it was defined by Gardner (1980, p.267) as individuals' entire instinctions and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified topic".

Likewise, attitude is considered as individuals' psychological states acquired during a certain amount of time due to their experiences McLeod (1991) as well as "a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behavior" (Baker, 1992, p.10).

C. Attitudes from the Mentalist and Behaviorist Paradigm

Attitudes are usually defined along the mentalist and behaviorist paradigm. Drawing on Wenden (1991), many researchers including Jabeen and Kazim Shah (2011), Rahimi and Hassani (2012), Karahan (2007), Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009), and Musgrove (1999) believe that attitudes have cognitive, affective and behavioral components. The Encyclopedia of Psychology (2004) discusses the attitudinal model, similarly, on the basis of these three factors. The cognitive component involves beliefs or perceptions about the objects or situations related to the attitude. The affective component refers to the feelings and emotions that one has towards an object, 'likes' or 'dislikes', 'with' or 'against'. The behavioral component means that certain attitudes tend to prompt learners to adopt particular learning behaviors. Attitude not only predicts behavioral patterns (Speilberger, 2004), it also triggers various manifestations of behavior (Jabeen & Kazim Shah, 2011).

Thus, emotions and attitudes are different affective states, although an attitude may bring about an emotional response, as in a student's negative attitude toward writing leads to hatred and apprehension (Musgrove, 1999). As a matter of fact, emotional responses are among the subsets of attitudes and a dominant aspect of attitude .

D. Language Attitude

Learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards the languages (Starks & Paltridge, 1996). 'Language attitudes', according to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1992), are defined as the attitude which speakers of different languages have towards each others' languages or to their own language.

The relationship between attitude and performance has been viewed as mutual, with each factor affecting the development of the other (Mathewson, 1994). All in all, SLA literature supports a relationship between attitudes towards a language and language achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

Drawing on Gardner and Lambert (1972), Karahan (2007) states that positive language attitudes give learners positive orientation towards learning English, and enhance proficiency as well, and vice versa. This is supported by Brown (2000) who adds the positive attitudes towards the self, the native language as effective factors as well. Furthermore, Karahan (2007) adds what people feel about the speakers of the language being the learned as an effective factor.

According to Dörnyei & Csizér (2002), positive attitude facilitates foreign language learning while negative attitude acts as a psychological barrier against it. Thus, attitudes, ranging from negative, natural, and positive, determine students' success or failure in their learning. This highlights the important role which positive attitude towards the language being learned plays in learning a second language. Putting it another way, maintaining positive or negative feelings towards a language may bring about difficulty or ease of learning.

E. Writing Attitude

The relationship between attitude and writing achievement has received rather little attention in TEFL literature (Graham, Berninger & Fan, 2007). Writing attitude is highly effective on improving or hindering writing achievement (Bartscher, Lawler, Ramirez and Schinault, 2001).

Writing attitude is defined by Graham et al (2007) as "an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy." (518) In other words, the more positive attitude students have towards writing, the more energy they spend on the task.

Examining their roots of negative attitudes students have towards writing lessons, Sever (1998) notes that in primary years of education, the way teachers conduct classes and teach writing lessons is important in forming negative or positive impressions regarding writing among students. That is, boring writing classes negatively influence attitudes (Akkaya & Kirmiz, 2010).

F. Writing Apprehension

Writing apprehension can be defined as "a general avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the individual to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing" (Daly and Miller, 1975).

According to Aikman (1985), negative attitudes toward writing result in predictable behaviors such as delay in completing writing assignments.

G. Related Literature

Considering the fundamental role played by attitudes in human beings' lives, it is not unexpected to see that attitudinal studies have a long historical background (Oppenheim, 1998). There is a great body of literature regarding attitudinal research on attitudes towards different languages (Marley, 2004, Balcazar, 2003, Levine, 2003; Villa, 2002,

Malallah, 2000; White, 2002; Bernat and Gvozdenko 2005; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005; Graham, 2004, to name a few). There is a plethora of research conducted to investigate learners' attitudes towards the English language. Besides, different aspects of language attitudes have been studied such as the relationship between attitudes and language achievement, beliefs about target language use, attitudes towards English-language speakers, the relationship between attitudes towards ideology, and language achievement.

Studies such as Vijchulata and Lee (1985), Sarjit (1993), Benson (1991), Buschenhofen (1998), Arani (2004), Karahan (2007), Qashoa (2006), Al-Quyadi (2002) reconfirmed the importance of identifying learners' motivation and attitudes towards the English language. These studies help the researchers to understand the how to identify learners' motivation by focusing on learners' attitudes (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009).

II. The Study

The subjects of this study were 65 undergraduates at the University of Isfahan, one of the most accredited public universities in Iran. Two different classes consisting of 28 and 37 students were chosen randomly in the spring of 2012.

The participant's ages ranged from 18 to 30 years and they were non-native speakers of English. Among the participants, 24 ones did not know any third language (other than English and Persian). And, the 41 subjects who already knew a third or fourth language were skilled at the language merely in an elementary or intermediate level.

Some of the participants had native-like fluency with English, having studied English since the age of 6 to 9. Others did not have native-like fluency, but they all claimed to be progressing towards the advanced level studiously and diligently. Overall, the age they began to learn English ranged from 6 to 13 years old.

A. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The instrument used to collect the data was a detailed 4-paged open-ended questionnaire. Questionnaires are one of the most commonly used methods for both quantitative and qualitative research. An open-ended question is usually designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the subject's own knowledge, opinions or feelings, and is asked where statistical validity is not the main goal.

By and large, questionnaires are considered as a quantitative method for collecting data; however, open-ended descriptive questionnaires can be used in qualitative studies as well. Unlike in a multiple choice question, open-ended questions are unstructured question in which no possible answer is suggested.

B. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher distributed 65 open-ended questionnaires to two different undergraduate English classes. The participants were required to answer the open-ended questionnaires (adopted from Jabur, 2008) consisting of 36 items to investigate how their identity is formed and shaped by writing in English as a foreign language.

The questionnaire consisted of only open-ended questions to make sure that the participants write as various and deeply detailed explanations as possible. The questionnaire has been already validated by Jabur (2008), though the researcher also adjusted the questionnaire to the new research setting by means of conducting a pilot study on 9 participants beforehand. Based on the analysis and results generated from the answers provided by the pilot study, a more specific set of open-ended questionnaire and interview questions were designed. Besides, before handing out the questionnaires among the participants, the researcher translated the questionnaires from English to Persian to assure the participants' paramount comprehension of what they were exactly asked to write about as well as to assure the subjects' utmost convenience in production and facing the least problem while trying to make themselves understood.

C. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the most complicated and most critical aspect of a qualitative research, which aims to find out the categories, relationships and theories based on the participants' view of the topic. Data analysis is the process of examining the collected data by observing, categorizing, and understanding to identify themes and reach conclusions.

D. Validity

Keeping in her mind that she will have to explain how she came to the final claims and conclusions from the data, the researcher made an attempt to avoid coding according to what she wanted to find, or putting words into the participants' mouths.

The researcher did her utmost not to impose her bias, narrow-mindedness, presumptions and previous knowledge of the issue and concentrate instead on finding new themes in her data.

E. Research Questions

1. What are Iranian EFL students' attitudes towards writing in general?
2. Are Iranian EFL students active writers? If yes, in which language?
3. Do Iranian EFL students feel any difference between expressing ideas while writing in English and Persian?

III. Results and Discussion

A. Attitudes toward Writing in General

There were various answers provided when the participants were asked to write a short paragraph regarding how they felt toward writing in general. Their comments revealed a surprising division among them from liking writing because of its advantages to disliking it for different reasons especially because of its difficulty or being boring.

1. Writing as a difficult task

11 participants reported how they considered themselves as bad writers, elaborating that they did not like writing as it was a difficult task. To name a few, Mehran complained that unless he had had studied on the matter beforehand, he was unable to convey his ideas, or put his ideas together and commit them to the paper; thus, he always thought that his readers would be perplexed. Likewise, Sara insisted that although an amusing and interesting task, writing is so intricate for her that after she is done with a paragraph, she feels she is relieved!

Looking through a pessimistic perspective, Masood pointed out that writing has always been a difficult task and will be forever. He added, "When I was in high school and junior high school I used to write compositions which were admired by everyone, but now I don't like writing anymore."

As another participant who mentioned the disadvantages of writing in comparison with other language skills are, Meysam, complaining about the restrictions he faces while writing, said, "I like writing but not as much as I love speaking because following certain rules in writing such as paragraphing, punctuation, etc. should be taken into consideration which all in all make a hurdle in writing." He added that the essential role of writing in human's life cannot be denied; the only problem is that writing properly and satisfactorily is difficult.

Being a time-consuming task was another reason Mohammad provided for not taking on writing as a daily activity, which he attributed to the sensitivity he had in choosing suitable words and structures.

2. Writing as an enjoyable task

While 11 participants addressed writing as a difficult and time-consuming, and as a result not enjoyable activity, 13 participants reported to love and enjoy writing for different reasons.

For example, Maryam who said she really loved writing only when she was free and in the mood, stated, "If I am interested in the subject, the result will turn out to be good. My readers, in my opinion, can comprehend what I mean in my writings."

In a much similar way, Homa, discussing why she liked writing, pointed out, "I enjoy it because whenever I write, I suppose that the entire world is my addressee, rather than a certain person." Thus, imagination, as the distinctive feature of writing is presented as an important factor to use writing. This was agreed by Mona saying that the reason why she really liked writing was that it increases the innovation of our mind in addition to the imagination power.

Having loved writing since his childhood when he used to writing stories in Persian, Mohammad stated that "It is really nice to have a habit to write down one's feelings regularly in different stages of life mainly because when I read them later on, I really enjoy it, feeling nostalgically."

Regarding it as a task one can start at the very beginning of language learning, Sima commented, "I love writing because from the very beginning of language learning one can take it up. I used to think that one should be quite master in a language to start writing in it but now I know that it is not so."

Stressing the role of encouragement in increasing one's interest in writing, Parvin reported that "I remember the first time that I wrote in English for which my father gave me a gift. This was a big encouragement for me to love writing. I really like writing and I do with a lot. The texts I have written have been posted online so far and generally have had interesting feedbacks." For Parvin, receiving feedbacks from different people, which all in all helps the writer promote the quality of his or her work, is mentioned as another reason to be interested in writing. Parvin said that she really looks forward to receiving her readers' comments on her writings as soon as she posts a new writing on her weblog.

Nonetheless, being interested in writing was not only stated by those who were active writers. This was demonstrated by Mahin who although has not enthusiastically been involved in writing in a serious manner, she likes to be able to use her pen to impress her readers and direct them towards a better world.

3. Writing as a tool for releasing excitement

11 out of 65 participants explained that writing, one of the basic needs of human beings, is a tool for releasing ourselves, sending out all daily tensions, concerns and negative feelings.

Mina, for example, pointed out, "When there's no one to listen to what I want to say, I start writing. My pen and paper are my friends in loneliness." This was supported by Saeed who added that our feelings cannot be captivated in our hearts; they should be released through writing. Likewise, Azin stated, "Writing, for me, is like washing the dishes; I am released through writing." Therefore, writing is considered as one of the essential fundamentals for human being's daily life in terms of excitement release. Fatemeh commented that her heart urges her to write only whenever she is experiencing the apex of happiness or sadness. Sometimes when she starts to write especially when she wants to talk about her feelings she gets so much brainstormed that ideas jump out of her mind automatically.

Maryam and Aida even saw writing as a must for mental relaxation, believing that writing about what is going on in our mind is really important for our mental health, because there are sometimes some words we can't let others know face to face. Therefore it is better to write them down, so that we feel enough tranquility. Aida added: "For me, writing is a way to release my thoughts and to free my soul. It is the best way to tranquilize yourself when you don't like or you're unable to say what is in your heart."

Hadi, who considers writing essential in his regular activities pointed out, "Sometimes I feel I am so much in need of writing that I'd go for it unintentionally. I have always been encouraged for my good compositions throughout my school time. I don't know why, but it seems as if whenever my hand finds a pen or something around, it starts writing what is going on in my head, without letting me know it."

4. Writing as a tool for freedom of speech

Freedom of speech was another reason why writing was favored by some subjects including Omid who reported that principally he enjoys writing because it is only during writing that he is able to think independently and free from others. Writing in any languages especially in Persian gives me freedom, because there are many things tongue cannot talk about but pen can write about. Thus, regardless of the language in which writing is encoded, it is considered as a more liberal way to convey the thoughts and feelings without being criticized directly.

According to Matin, another participant who believed in liberal aspect of writing, writing is a way to discuss in detail and directly what we cannot talk about openly for others. Thus, he sees writing as the most liberalist activity available to him.

Laleh adds that in writing, we are allowed to express our feelings in any way we desire. Sometimes, we like to write ambiguously and sometimes directly. Therefore, we are not restricted, nor do we fear people's criticism. She went on to say that today, writing our feelings is much easier than talking about them face to face; and the emergence of SMS proves this. SMS has been a very useful tool to express our words whenever we feel unable to say them directly.

However, Arezoo, who seems to have suffered from lack of self confidence feared, that her writings would the laughed at, if read, explained:

"When I write I can express myself more beautifully than when I speak. I really like to commit the very moments of my life to the paper but I always avoid it because I am afraid someone might read it and make fun of it."

Thus, two opposite opinions regarding writing is observed; one of which considered writing as a tool for expressing ourselves freely while the other complained that writing limits us as it is exposed to be read by everyone. What this may suggest is that writing is a skill which has contradictory dimensions.

5. Writing as a method to improve the speaking skills

Writing, in a sense, can be considered as a type of careful and cautious speaking which is documented. Accordingly, it plays an important role in improving one's power of speaking. The mistakes one makes while speaking can be avoided when one commits his or her ideas to the paper.

6 students commented that they are interested in writing and that they really aim to increase this skill in both Persian and English as it helped improve their speaking skills simultaneously. Shadi, for example, pointed out, "My writing is of good quality, although I want to promote it. I always decide to start writing regularly from this very tonight, but the writing activity seems so boring to me that actually I never start." Similarly, Ali notes that for a university student writing is a superior way to express one's feelings and thoughts, because it indirectly promotes one's ability to give a lecture.

6. Other advantages of writing

Believing that in order to promote one's writing skill, we should keep on writing, many of the participants stated that the writing skill is actually a technique which all of us, more or less, have the ability to promote. Besides, a person can find some topics he or she is interested in.

Explaining different advantages of writing, Amirali regarded writing as a way to preserve scientific findings or literary works: "if not committed to paper, scientific findings or literary works will be forgotten and vanished."

Ramin and Hadi, both of whom have recently started to write their diaries in their journals in Persian and sometimes in English, emphasized that diary writing has not only affected their writing quality, but also it has made them think about and improve their daily acts and behaviors.

The following, which is a comment given by Behnaz highlights an interesting use of writing:

"Writing is the best way to express one's feelings both personally and socially. When I want to talk to my daughter, as she is too young to understand, I'd rather write them down so that she'll read them in the future."

Here, writing is used as a device to connect the present to future; to make a link and remove the age gap; and to communicate with people not present now, or not able to understand our words at the moment.

Also, there was another attention-grabbing use of writing by one of the students:

"Writing plays an important role in my life. Even it was through writing that I got familiar with my espouse, which is the biggest gift that writing has given to me. I daresay that writing has changed the whole direction of my life."

Lastly, 3 participants said they had no idea about writing or left the space missing.

B. Being or Not Being Active Writers

The responses provided by the participants when asked whether they were active writers, and if yes in which language, fell into two categories:

The first group consisting of 20 participants claimed that they are not active writers. The second group including 45 students claimed to be active writers, actively writing their diary in their journals or weblogs. These 45 participants could be classified into three groups:

First, 7 participants said that they usually write in English. Second, 26 ones said that they are active writers in Persian. Third, there were 12 participants who stated that they write both in Persian and English depending on the setting, their mood, and the topic.

C. Any Difference between Expressing Ideas in English and Persian

The second question aimed to explore whether the students' writing in English differed from their Persian ones. If yes, then what exactly the differences were.

1. no differences between expressing ideas in English and Persian

20 participants, out 65, denied any difference in their writing in English and Persian, noting that there was little difference (if any), because when a person is writing, although in different languages, his thoughts, feelings and beliefs are constant and there is only a shift in the language.

2. differences between expressing ideas in English and Persian

40 participants responded "yes" to the question whether their Persian writing was different from their English ones, adding that, most obviously, since two absolutely different language systems are involved, there must be some differences in terms of grammatical rules as well as the addressees' view points, cultural values.

Besides, being non-native speakers, participants claimed to have two different proficiency levels; one language is their mother tongue and the other is a foreign language. English and Persian are two completely different linguistic systems; hence writing in them has to be different as well. For example, Soheil explained:

"Being a native speaker in Persian, it goes without saying that I write in Persian without needing to look up any words in dictionaries, but in English I have to do so continually which makes me tired of writing. This is one of the main differences between my writing in English and Persian which I usually encounter."

Some participants explained that they are more proficient in Persian obviously, so they feel they write better in English, or they are too weak in English writing, therefore they prefer Persian when they are writing as they are more at ease in Persian.

Mina and Aida, for example, pointed out that the only difference in their writing in English and Persian is because of their full proficiency in Persian, which leads to having more words available and facing less grammatical difficulties in their mother tongue: "There are a lot of differences; obviously my Persian writing is more fluent. As Persian is my mother tongue, I am more fluent when writing in Persian."

Complaining about the mismatch between the proficiency levels, Matin and Fatemeh commented that in writing in English the whole effort focuses on avoiding grammatical or lexical mistakes, but in Persian the topic is the main focus. Matin said:

"In writing in Persian we have a wider range of vocabulary at our service and we have almost no problem in terms of grammar. Besides, not being familiar with English context, we usually encounter problems in English. Sometimes we get so involved in grammatical and lexical accuracy in our writings that we forget about the main idea we were to convey."

2.1. Shorter sentences and shorter writings in English

A few students indicated that their English writings have shorter sentences, while their sentences in Persian are longer. As a result, their writings are shorter in English. Besides, it was mentioned that using compound and complex sentences in English is somehow problematic for some of the participants.

2.2. Writing more directly in English

Peyman and Masood stated that in writing in English we can be more frank and explicit, in contrary to the Persian one which goes indirectly. They feel that they write more directly, openly and outspokenly in English, while Persian writing requires more ambiguity and indirect conveying as meaning. Therefore one may feel less limited while writing in English.

2.3. Writing more emotionally in English

Mahin, as one of the participants who claimed that there are differences between expressing her ideas in English and Persian, believes that in writing in English, feelings are more involved, leading to a more emotional outcome. Likewise, Sanaz commented that she writes more emotionally and simply in English.

2.4. Feeling someone else or imagining oneself abroad while writing in English

Three students, surprisingly, when asked to compare their writings in Persian and English, gave their responses which were the most outstanding for this question. They explained that when they write in Persian, they feel that they can express themselves comfortably and that they are *themselves*: "I am not myself when I write in English; my writing in English has some kind of artificial feelings in it."

In the same manner, Sima, commented that her writing in English involved imagining herself abroad, in the country which the language is spoken.

2.5. Linguistically richer and more elaborative outcomes in Persian

Ramin, one of the participants who considered his English writing totally different from his Persian ones, advocated the quality of his English writings, explaining: "my English writing outcomes has been richer than my Persian ones, which might be owing to the fact that I've never done my Persian writings seriously." This was agreed by Iman who said that he is much more at ease when he writes in English, because discussing the topics in detail is more possible and

easier in English. In sharp contrast with this comment was Ali's, who asserted that he could elaborate on the issue in Persian more than English because he had wider background knowledge about the Persian topics.

As another supporter, Omid believed that the liveliness in his Persian writings was absent in the English ones.

2.6. More respectful words in Persian

As one of the supporters of writing in Persian, Mahin discussed how her Persian writings were different from her English ones, noting that she can use more respectful words in Persian. For example when she wants to write a letter, there are a wider range of words to use as a greeting to show respect.

In the end, there were three students who had left the questions missing and one who refused to compare them as he believed that the two languages are not related to one another, so they are not comparable.

IV. Conclusion

The obvious conclusions to be drawn from the above-mentioned responses are three-folded:

Firstly, the data show that the participants were mostly active writers. More importantly, among those who write actively, most of them write in Persian; some of them write both in Persian and English depending on the setting, their mood, and the topic; and, a few of them only write in English.

Second, while the first group of participants reported that writing is a difficult, boring and time-consuming task, the second believed that writing is an enjoyable task, as it involves imagination and innovation of mind on one hand, and receiving feedbacks and comments on the other hand. The third group were those who explained that writing is one of the basic needs of human beings, or more specifically it is a tool for releasing excitement, through which one sends out all daily tensions, concerns and negative feelings, and gains enough tranquility. The fourth consisted of those who considered writing as a tool for freedom of speech, explaining that there are many things we cannot talk about but we can write about, without fear of being criticized directly. The emergence of SMS proves this assertion. The fifth group of participants considered writing as a way to improve the speaking skill, because they consider writing, as a type of careful and cautious speaking, and accordingly the mistakes one makes while speaking can be avoided when committed to paper. Finally, some participants mentioned other advantages, for example writing is a way to prevent scientific findings or literary works from being forgotten; writing, particularly journal writing, improves the quality of daily acts; and writing is used as a device to connect the present to future; to make a link between different generations and remove the age gap. What the list claims is that writing is a multi-dimensional language skill which language learners can take on for various purposes. The different and sometimes contrary aspects of writing including being difficult, boring and time-consuming; enjoyable; a tool for releasing excitement; a tool for freedom of speech; a way to improve the speaking skill; a way to prevent scientific findings or literary works from being forgotten; a way to improves the quality of daily acts; and a device to connect the present to future all in all suggests the intricacy of this language skill.

Finally, most of the Iranian English-major students feel that expressing ideas while writing in English is different from writing in Persian. The differences, mainly caused by proficiency mismatch between the two languages, include shorter sentences in English; more directness in English; more emotions involved in English; feeling someone else or imagining themselves abroad in English; linguistically richer and more elaborative outcomes in Persian; and more respectful words in Persian.

References

[1] Abu Ras, R. (2001). Integrating reading and writing for effective language teaching, *English Teaching Forum*, 39(1), 30-39.
[2] Aikman, C. (1985). Writing anxiety: Barrier to success. Paper presented at the National Adult Education Conference, Milwaukee, WI.
[3] Ajzan, I. (1988). Attitudes, personality and behaviour. Chicago: Dorsey Press.
[4] Akkaya N. and Kirmiz F. S. (2010). Relationship between attitudes to reading and time allotted to writing in primary education, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 4742–4746.
[5] Al-Quyadi, A. (2000). Psycho-sociological variables in the learning of English in Yemen. Ph. D thesis, Bhagalpur University.
[6] Al-Tamimi & Shuib. (2009). Motivation And Attitudes Towards Learning English: A Study Of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates At Hadhramout University Of Sciences And Technology, *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies 29 Volume* 9(2), 29-55.
[7] Arani, J. (2004). Issues of learning EMP at university: An analysis of students' perspectives. *Karan's Linguistics Issues*. http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/emp.
[8] Baker, C. (1992). *Attitudes and language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
[9] Balcazar, I.H. (2003). Language Shift and Language Attitudes of Kaqchikel Maya Adolescents. Paper presented at the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism, Arizona State University.
[10] Bartscher, M. A., Lawler, K.E., Ramirez, A.J. & Schinault, K.S. (2001). Improving student's writing ability through journals and creative writing exercises. Master of Arts action research project reports, Saint Xavier University, Chicago.
[11] Benson, M. J. (1991). Attitudes and motivation towards English: a survey of Japanese freshmen. *RELC Journal*, 22(1), 34-48.
[12] Bernat, E. and Gvozdenko, I. (2005). Beliefs about language learning: Current knowledge, pedagogical implications, and new research directions, *TESL EJ*, Vol.9, No.1, pp. 1-21.
[13] Buschenhofen, P. (1998). English language attitudes of Final-Year High School and First-Year university students in Papua New Guinea. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8, 93-116.

[14] Collins, N. D., & Cross, T. L. (1993). Teaching the writing process to gifted and talented students. *Gifted Child Today*, 16(3), 22-23.
[15] Csizér, K. and dörnyei, Z. The internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning effort, *The Modern Language Journal, 89*, i, (2005), pp. 19-36.
[16] Dally, J. & Miller, M. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument of writing apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9(4), 272-289.
[17] Dörnyei, Z. and Csizér, K. (2002). Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: Results of a longitudinal national survey. *Applied Linguistics, 23, 421-462*.
[18] Gardner, R. (1980). On the validity of affective variables in second language acquisition: conceptual and statistical considerations. *Language Learning, 30 (2),* 255-270.
[19] Gardner, R. C. and Lambert, W. (1972). Attitudes and motivation in second language learning. Rowley, Ma: Newbury House.
[20] Graham S., Berninger V. & Fan W., (2007), The structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students, *Contemporary Educational Psychology 32,* 516–536.
[21] Graham, S., Harris, K.R. & Mason, L. (2005). Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 30 (2), 207-241.
[22] Graham, S.J. (2004). 'Giving up on modern foreign languages? Students' perceptions of learning French', *The Modern Language Journal*, 88, pp.171-191.
[23] Hamed Jahin J. & Wafa Idrees M. (2012). EFL Major Student Teachers' Writing Proficiency and Attitudes Towards Learning English, *Journal of Taibah University, KSA*, 9-72.
[24] Jabeen F. & Kazim Shah S. (2011). The Role of Culture in ELT: Learners' Attitude towards the Teaching of Target Language Culture, *European Journal of Social Sciences* – Volume 23, Number 4, 604-613.
[25] Levine, G.S. (2003). Student and instructor beliefs and attitudes about target language use, first language use and anxiety: Report of a questionnaire study, *The Modern Language Journal, 87, 3*, pp. 343-364.
[26] Malallah, S. (2000). English in an Arabic environment: Current attitudes to English among Kuwait university students, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol.3, No.1, pp.19-43.
[27] Marley, D. (2004). Language attitudes in Morocco following recent changes in language policy, *Language Policy*, 3, pp. 25-46.
[28] Masgoret, A. M. and Gardner, R.C. (2003). Attitudes, motivation, and second language learning. A meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates. *Language Learning*, 53, 123-163.
[29] Mathewson, G. (1994). Model of attitude influence upon reading and learning to read. In R. Ruddell, M. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed., pp. 1131–1161). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
[30] McLeod, S. H. (1991). The affective domain and the writing process: working definitions. *Journal of advanced composition, 11*. 95-105.
[31] Qashoa, S. (2006). Motivation among learners of English in the secondary schools in the eastern coast of the UAE. M.A thesis, British University in Dubai.
[32] Sarjit Kaur. (1993). Analysis of the English language needs of consultants at NCVC. M.A thesis, University of South Australia.
[33] Sever, S. (2004). Türkçe öretimi ve tam örenme [Turkish instruction and whole learning]. Ankara: An Yay nc l k.
[34] Starks, D. and paltridge, B. (1996). A note on using sociolinguistic methods to study non-native attitudes towards English, *World Englishes*, 15 (2), pp. 217-224.
[35] Tompkins, G. E. (1982). Seven Reasons Why Children Should Write Stories. *Language Arts, 59*(7), 718-21. [EJ 269 736].
[36] Vijchulata, B., & Lee, G. (1985). A survey of students' motivation for learning English. *RELC Journal*, 16 (1), 68-81.
[37] Villa, D.J. (2002). The sanitizing of U.S. Spanish in academia, *Foreign Language Annals*, 35, 2, pp. 222-30.
[38] Wall, D. (1981). A pre-sessional academic writing course for postgraduate students in economics. *Practical Papers in English Language Education, vol. 4*, 34-105, United Kingdom: University of Lancaster.
[39] Wenden A. (1991). Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy, Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice Hall.
[40] White, C.M. (2002). Language authenticity and identity: Indigenous Fijian students and language use in schools, *Language, Culture and Curriculum.* 15, 1, pp. 16-29.

Razieh Gholaminejad, an MA student of TEFL at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan.

Ahmad Moinzadeh is currently assistant professor of linguistics at the department of English, faculty of foreign languages, university of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. He has instructed BA, MA and PhD courses at this department for many years. His main areas of research are syntax, comparative / contrastive linguistics, morphology and language acquisition he holds a PhD degree in linguistics, an MA degree in Linguistics and a BA degree on English language and literature.

Manijeh Youhanaee, associate lecturer, holds a PhD in language and linguistics from the University of Essex. She is currently the head of the English Department at University of Isfahan. She has presented MA and PhD courses in linguistics, Generative Grammar and second language acquisition. Her areas of interest include syntactic theory, acquisition of L2 & L3 syntax, L2 acquisition of word order versus morphological markers and properties of L2 lexical attrition.

Hamidreza Ghobadirad, an MA student of TEFL at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, has been teaching English for 12 years to both the children and adults. Apart from teaching in Sadr, Sokhansara and Gooyesh, he was the manager of Kish institute for five years.

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/.

(Contents Continued from Back Cover)