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The Impact of Word Study Intervention on Adult English Learners' Spelling and Reading

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Abstract—The purpose of this study was to document the impact of an instructional approach, Word Study, on adults' spelling and reading. Forty-nine adults enrolled in ESL classes at a community-based site in the United States from January through May and were tested on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, the Elementary Spelling Inventory and the Developmental Spelling Analysis. This study employed a mixed-methodology including statistical and qualitative analyses. The results showed significant growth for the adult students on their spelling and reading scores and positive response to the intervention. Reasons for why this approach is valuable to educators are addressed in the discussion.

Index Terms—word study, reading, spelling, adults, English learners

To be proficient in English a person must adequately pronounce words when speaking, possess listening and reading comprehension, decode text while reading, and encode text when writing. Word Study is one instructional approach that will strengthen students' pronunciation, decoding, and encoding. Word Study, built on the conceptual framework of stage development theory (Henderson & Beers, 1980), is defined as a method for teaching orthography by training learners "to examine, discriminate and make critical judgments about speech sounds, word structures, spelling patterns, and meanings" (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, Johnston, 2004, p. 2). Research has shown that English learners progress through the same sequence of developmental stages as native English speakers (Tompkins, Abramson, & Pritchard, 1999) and that Word Study provides English learners with the vocabulary, spelling and word recognition skills they need to master English (Bear, Helman, Templeton, Invernizzi, & Johnston, 2007). Several studies have documented the successful use of Word Study intervention with native English speaking adult learners (Hanlon & Cantrell, 1999; Massengill, 2006; Massengill Shaw, 2008), but missing from the literature is research using Word Study with adult English learners. This research aims to fill the void by documenting Word Study's effectiveness with adults enrolled in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes at a community-based site in the southeastern part of the United States.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have researched the effects of a first language (L1) on learning to spell a second language (L2). Sparks, Patton, Ganchow, Humbach and Javorsky (2008) conducted regression analyses on 54 high school students they had followed since first grade. The students were native English speakers and had taken two years of a second language by 10th grade. The researchers found students' L2 spelling was best predicted by students' L1 spelling and phonemic awareness abilities. DeSousa, Greenop and Fry (2011) looked at cross-language relationships for third grade children speaking Afrikaans and English. Thirty bilingual (Afrikaans-English) and 30 monolingual (English) students were asked to spell real and nonsense words in Afrikaans and English. DeSousa, Greenop and Fry found differences in accuracy among the two groups, although the bilingual children had correlated scores on spelling English and Afrikaans. This informs us that there is a cross-language relationship when spelling words in both languages; students' oral language background and their knowledge about language influenced the development of their spelling strategies in two different orthographical languages. The authors also investigated the effects of phonological awareness for Zulu-speaking children as they learned to spell in English. DeSousa, Greenop and Fry (2010) assessed 30 monolingual (English) and 30 bilingual (Zulu and English) second graders. Their findings supported the universal language hypothesis that phonological awareness in L1 supports spelling in L2. Orthographic knowledge relies on phonological awareness (Durgunoglu & Oney, 2002).

Huyen-Hoan and Taft (2010) studied bilingual adults who spoke a native language other than English, but had been immersed in English since childhood. They compared bilingual adults' performance to monolingual native English speakers on three tasks: phoneme deletion, spelling to dictation, and auditory comprehension. Huyen-Hoan and Taft found that even if bilinguals are exposed to English at an early age and are immersed in an English environment, they still process English differently from monolingual native English speakers.

Davidson and Strucker (2002) evaluated word-recognition errors of native and nonnative adult speakers of English who scored between fourth to sixth grade equivalency and were enrolled in Adult Basic Education courses. Results indicated native English speakers made more real-word substitutions than nonnative speakers, but ESL speakers made more phonetically plausible substitutions. The authors reasoned that decoding difficulties have often plagued the native speakers since childhood, whereas the nonnative speakers may transfer some of their first-language decoding knowledge to learning English.

Al-Jarf (2009) evaluated general and specific spelling strategies of Arabic (mainly a phonetic language) speaking freshmen enrolled in a listening English-as-a-second-language course. The most common strategy used by all Arabic spellers was to substitute an entirely different word than the one they were asked to spell. Poor spellers produced more errors than good spellers; error patterns included deletion of silent letters, reduction of double letters, substitution of a target digraph by another digraph, deletion of vowels, and substitution of a vowel by another vowel or by a digraph. Al-Jarf provided three reasons students misspelled words: poor knowledge of spelling-sound correspondences, lack of mastery of spelling rules, and poor phonological coding and reliance on orthographic coding. The author concluded English learners' spelling should be treated as a complex developmental process and spelling should be taught directly with reading, writing, listening, and vocabulary.

Instructors of English learners need to be aware of the phonological and orthographical differences of languages, and be able to explicitly teach the comparisons in students' native language with English spelling (Cheung, Chung, Wong, McBride-Chang, Penney, & Ho, 2010; Sun-Alperin & Wang, 2008). Davidson and Strucker (2002) stated that ESL teachers should not neglect phonemic, morphemic and orthographic instruction because this would be a detriment to students' future English development.

This study contributes to the field by documenting the impact Word Study instruction has on 49 adult English-as-a-second-language learners' spelling and reading. Questions that guided this study include the following:

1. Did adults who received the Word Study approach make significant gains in their spelling and reading?
2. What did the adult students say about Word Study?

A small sample (N=4) of adult language learners who did not receive Word Study served as control students and were matched to 4 of the 49 experimental students. Therefore a tertiary question was, "When Word Study students were matched with students who received no Word Study instruction, were there differences in the amount of improvement?"

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methodological design. As Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) stated mixed methods research attempts to draw on the strengths and minimize weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches because both are important and useful. In the field of adult literacy where sample sizes tend to be small and quantitative findings may be limited, mixed methods allows a researcher to use varied data sources to "produce more complete knowledge necessary to inform theory and practice" (p. 21).

Background information

Approximately 550 adults attended the ESL program at Community Adult Education Center in the southeastern part of the United States during the academic year, which was divided into three sessions: mid-August to December, January to mid-June, and July to mid-August. This research study took place during the second session.

Open enrollment allowed students to begin taking classes at any time during the year. Potential students were asked to complete an information sheet with basic facts (address, birthday, country of citizenship) as well as length of time in the United States, previous schooling experiences and occupation. The ESL tester briefly interviewed the incoming students, then administered the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS, 2001) to determine in which class each student would be placed. The students' Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System scores ranged from levels 1-6. For instructional purposes, students were grouped into CASAS levels 1/2 (Classroom A), levels 3/4 (Classroom B), and levels 5/6 (Classroom C). Three teachers and their respective leveled classes met in the morning and three teachers with their leveled classes met in the evening January through March. Although students were assigned to classes, they sometimes chose to attend a different class, one that was typically below their level. Only the students who completed this study will be described.

Participants

A total of 49 experimental students who received Word Study took the pre-post tests and are included in the results. There were 31 females and 18 males with an average age of 43 years. Thirty-six Spanish speakers came from a number of countries including Columbia (N=12) and Mexico (N=6). Less representative of the Spanish speaking countries include Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Chile, El Salvador, and Peru. Three students each spoke Chinese, French and Arabic. Two individuals spoke Vietnamese, and one person each spoke Portuguese, Thai, and Korean. All of the students self-reported reading and writing in their native language. Forty-two students had completed twelfth grade in their home country and 21 had attended a college or university in their homeland. Six of the 21 received degrees from technical/vocational college, nine held bachelor's degrees, five possessed master's degrees and one man held a doctorate degree. The amount of time the students had spent in America ranged from two months to 38 years with the average about 7.63 years.

Four students (one male, three female) served as control and did not receive Word Study instruction. Their average age was 40 years. Two spoke Spanish – one from Mexico and one from Columbia. Two were from China and spoke Mandarin. All reported being literate in their native language. Three had been in America for a short time (months) and one lady had lived in America for three years. Two did not complete high school and one possessed a vocational degree.

Intervention

Class met almost four hours during the morning (8:00-11:45AM) and almost three hours in the evening (6:00-8:45PM) Monday through Thursday. Students learned a number of skills including listening, speaking, reading and

writing. Topics included communication (e.g., greeting, giving advice, etc.) finances, rules and regulations, rights and responsibilities, job applications, shopping, doctor visits and many more. Texts such as *ExpressWays* (Molinsky & Bliss, 1997) and *English in Action* (Foley & Neblett, 2003) were used in the lessons.

Approximately 15-30 minutes during the 3-or-4 hour block of daily class time the teachers instructed experimental students on Word Study. Word Study is a sequential approach to teaching English words. A typical lesson included sorting words, discussing the meaning of words, using words in sentences and conversation, pronunciation of words, and writing the words.

Sorting words according to patterns lies at the heart of Word Study. Students look at a printed word as they say the word being studied. The word is then associated with other words of similar patterns (e.g. *home, zone, code*) although sometimes phonetic representation diverges, for example the long vowel silent-e pattern words such as *home* and *love*. In a sort students are presented with approximately 20 words, each on a separate slip of paper that contain two to four contrasting spelling features (Bear, et al, 2004). Words for the sorts were taken from *Word Sorts for Within Word Pattern Spellers* (Invernizzi, Johnston, Bear, & Templeton, 2004) and *Word Sorts for Syllables and Affix Spellers* (Johnston, Invernizzi, Bear, & Templeton, 2004). An example of a sort for the syllables and affixes level is 15-20 words that end with doubling a letter (stop – stopping), dropping a letter (hope – hoping), or nothing (track – tracking). After separating the words into their intuitive categories, the learners must make a hypothesis about why some words need a double letter, why some words drop the e, and why some words can have the suffix –ing added without any changes. Once the knowledge is mastered, the students can apply the concept to new and unknown words in future contexts. For example, when given the words *whiz* or *dream*, the students should be able to add the –ing and spell the word correctly. Theoretically, anytime the students encounter the words which have a vowel suffix, the students will be able to analyze the word and choose the correct spelling based on the acquired knowledge. Word sorting is “an active process in which students categorize words and pictures to reveal essential differences and similarities among words” (Bear et al., 2004, p. 59).

When students compare and contrast word features, they notice similarities and differences within and across categories that help them, with teacher guidance, to form generalizations about how the words work. As previously noted, it is these generalizations that lend efficiency to word learning because they enable learners to apply what they have discovered to the reading and writing of many other words (Ganske, 2006, p. 4). The inductive reasoning skills required to sort and then articulate the pattern respects the cognitive abilities of adult learners.

Data sources

The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is a standardized assessment used throughout the United States in adult education programs. It possesses strong content and criterion validity and psychometric properties (Flowerday & Parke, 2005). The reading component measures specific skills such as the ability to understand technical manuals, tax forms, and prescription labels. Students receive a score and are placed in one of the six reading levels described in the National Reporting System (2010). Scores below 180 (foundation) and low beginning 181-190 were levels 1 & 2 (Classroom A). High beginning 191-200 and low intermediate 201-210 were levels 3 & 4 (Classroom B). High intermediate 211-220 and advanced placement 221-235 were levels 5 & 6 (Classroom C). The CASAS was administered to the students by the ESL tester every six weeks. For this research study, the tests scores prior to intervention and closest to the conclusion of the study was obtained for analysis.

All participants were administered the Elementary Spelling Inventory (Bear, Helman, Templeton, Invernizzi, & Johnston, 2007) pre-post test. The Elementary Spelling Inventory (hereafter ESI) 25 word test contained words representing all stages of development, beginning with *bed* and progressing to *opposition*. This test was chosen because it could assess the range of all participants’ ability levels: from foundation to academic. One may question the use of ‘spelling’ tests as a valid measure. Research has shown a reciprocal relationship between spelling and reading (Chall, 1983; Ehri, 1997; Henderson, 1990; Perfetti, 2003). “Spelling is a conservative measure of what students know about words, for if students know how to spell a word, they nearly always know how to read the word” (Bear, et al., 2007, p. 7). Sterbinsky (2007) determined the Elementary Spelling Inventory to be a reliable instrument and a valid predictor of student achievement, including those learning English as a Second Language. The spelling inventory also showed significant relation to elementary/middle school students’ standardized test scores. Sterbinsky concluded the Elementary Spelling Inventory is a “valuable addition to any educator’s toolbox” (p. 16). The 25-word test was given as a typical spelling test – I read the word, used the word in the sentence and read the word again.

Due to great variance in adults’ ability level, the students were also given the Developmental Spelling Analysis (hereafter called DSA) from *Word Journeys* (Ganske, 2000) as a pre-post test. Students either received the “within word” test or the “syllables and affixes” test. Either 25-word appropriately leveled stage test highlights the features students know, and indicates where their knowledge of spelling patterns and the corresponding sounds are confused or unknown. The DSA was administered as any typical spelling test. I gave students a word, used the word in a sentence, and then the word was dictated again.

A post-questionnaire with two questions was given to participants: What do you think of Word Study? Why do you think/feel this way? Then students were given space to write any additional comments about Word Study they wished to share.

Data collection and analysis

Quantitative data included pre-post test scores of 25 points for the ESI, (Bear, et al., 2007), DSA 25-point assessment (Ganske, 2000) and CASAS reading (2001) with 235 possible points. In addition, I measured students' knowledge about features of words; a feature is the smallest part of a word that is measurable, such as initial consonant or vowel pattern. Pre-post feature scores were included for the ESI (Bear, et al., 2007) with 53 possible points, and the DSA (Ganske, 2000) for 50 possible points.

All quantitative information was entered in a statistical program. Each student's row of data included pre-post test total scores and pre-post test feature scores as previously mentioned. Additional data in each student's row included attendance, gender, ethnicity, length of time in the United States, self-reported ability to read and write in native language, highest level of schooling and degree obtained. This study was a repeated-measure design with an intervention. A number of statistical analyses were conducted and are described in the results.

Qualitative sources included the open-ended post-questionnaire for students. Traditional case study techniques by Merriam (2009) were employed to analyze the two qualitative questions from the questionnaire. The data were read several times and notes were taken, patterns were identified and pertinent themes established.

III. RESULTS

The results will be presented by the guiding research questions. First, attendance will be reported. There were 72 days of school January 4 through May 20. Due to open enrollment I assessed students the beginning of January, mid-March and end of May on the ESI (Bear et al., 2007) and DSA (Ganske, 2000). Eleven students attended January through March with an average of 26 of the 37 days. Another eleven students were tested March to May and attended an average 27 of the 35 days. Twenty-seven students attended the entire semester averaging 56 of the 72 days.

Did adults who received the Word Study approach make significant gains in their spelling and reading?

To answer the first question, paired-sample t-tests were conducted since this research study had a repeated-measures design with an intervention. Each participant had scores on two variables. The first variable represented the pre-test score on each measure and the second variable represented the post-test score on each measure. I was interested to discover if the difference between the two scores was significantly different from zero.

Table 1 displays the raw score mean gains, standard deviations, and p values for the ESI (Bear, et al., 2007). Paired sample t-tests showed there was significant growth on total scores and feature scores for the group as a whole from January-May. Learners' spelling growth measured by their total score on the Elementary Spelling Inventory was $M=5.22$, $t(26)=5.06$, $p<.00$. The adult students' spelling growth on features of words measured by the ESI (Bear et al., 2007) was $M=8.56$, $t(26)=4.74$, $p<.00$. The results show standard deviations were high, indicating there was great variability on students' scores in this small sample. Differences among terms were detected.

Table 2 displays the raw score mean gains, standard deviations, and p values for the DSA (Ganske, 2000), both among the group as a whole and disaggregated by term (January-March, March-May, January-May). The students' growth on an ability-leveled spelling measure (Ganske, 2000) for overall total score was $M=3.61$, $t(22)=4.05$, $p<.00$ and for word features was $M=7.35$, $t(22)=4.37$, $p<.00$. Once again, differences among terms were noticed.

The reading measure used in this study was The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS, 2001). A paired sample showed student growth was significant across students $M=8.06$, $t(46)=8.79$, $p<.00$.

What did the adults say about Word Study?

To answer this question, all student questionnaires reported a positive response to the method. When asked to generate an answer for "What do you think of Word Study?" they responded with the words good/very good, interesting, important/necessary, excellent/great, and helpful. Student A wrote, "I think this is very necessary, interesting. Because this is a tool helpful, that helps us to know new words and to difference the pronunciation between the words." Student B wrote, "Word study is for me very important because I learning lots the rules and the correct spelling, pronunciation, sound and significance the new words." Student C said, "It really helpful because my vocabulary is improving every day. I like this method. It's working for me a lot." Student D said, "It helped and guided me to the first step of learning structure of vowel, sounding and spelling along with grammar." In conclusion Student E wrote, "I would like the teacher continuous with the same method because I think we can learn easily."

When Word Study students were matched with students who received no Word Study instruction, were there differences in the amount of improvement?

Due to the fact that I was only able to collect control data (i.e. no Word Study instruction) on four students, they were paired as close as possible to experimental students based on ESI pre-test scores and other related factors. Table 3 shows the match between experimental-control participants.

I knew this was a convenience sample so I conducted independent samples t-tests to evaluate whether the means for each group were significantly different from each other. There was no significance for ESI $t(6)=2.93$, $p=.78$; DSA $t(6)=.94$, $p=.38$; or for the CASAS $t(6)=.82$, $p=.43$. After I discovered there were no group differences for each of the measures I ran descriptive statistics. Table 4 documents the mean gains from pre-post test for all measures among the two groups. As can be seen, the experimental students consistently made greater improvement on the spelling and reading assessments.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study inquired about the impact an instructional method could have on adult ESL students' spelling and reading. The results showed a significant increase in learning for students. When analyzing the results it appears that students made greater gains from January to March than from March to May. There may be a few reasons why this occurred. First, spring break and the International food fair took place during the March to May term. Both of these may have influenced instructional time or concentration. A second possibility is the students' learning really 'took off' with a new understanding from January to March, and then their learning consolidated the last portion of the semester so evidence of gains was less noticeable. A third possibility could be the challenge of open enrollment that became more evident during the latter part of the term. Incoming students in March had missed the foundational lessons from January-March and while teachers tried to 'catch them up' they also had to continue teaching the former students who were ready to learn new concepts.

Differences among tests were also noted. The ESI (Bear et al., 2007) contained 25 words that started easy (e.g. bed) and progressively became harder (e.g. opposition) with approximately 7-10 words for each targeted stage: within word and syllables and affixes. Some words included bed, ship, train, place, marched, shower, bottle, favor, cellar, pleasure, fortunate, confident, civilize and opposition. When administering the test, I noted that some words were similar in Spanish and students scored quite well on those words. In contrast, the DSA (Ganske, 2000) contained 25 words for each stage "within word" or "syllables and affixes." While the words on the DSA were not taught by the teacher or studied in lessons, the patterns or generalizations found in the words were similar between instruction and assessment. In order to measure effective growth, there should be a match between instruction and assessment.

The results also indicated when four experimental students were matched to four control students, the experimental students made greater gains. While the conclusions are tentative and only suggestive, there are possible reasons why students who were taught Word Study with fidelity were able to make significantly noticeable progress.

First, Word Study is a developmental approach built on decades of research for children and adults. Longitudinal and cross-grade-level research document the progression for all literacy learners; learners only vary in the rate they acquire the knowledge (Bear, et al., 2004; Tompkins, et al., 1999). Learning to spell in English should be viewed as a developmental process (Al-Jarf, 2009; Bear, et al., 2007); learning to read in English is also developmental (Davidson & Strucker, 2002). Teachers can move students along the developmental continuum by providing appropriately leveled instruction.

Second, Word Study instruction focuses on the connection between phonological and orthographical knowledge in relation to reading and spelling. Researchers have shown that word recognition and spelling are predicted by phonological awareness (Al-Jarf, 2009; Durgunoglu & Oney, 2002). Non-native speakers of English "could be helped by the overlearning of phonics principles and syllable patterns and oral reading practice to improve fluency" (Davidson & Strucker, 2002, p. 313). Further, Davidson and Strucker stated nonnative speakers of English should receive instruction in morphosyntaxics and vocabulary. Al-Jarf (2009) advocated for direct instruction in the study of vowel sounds and combining affixes with morphemes. Word Study delivers on these instructional recommendations because it builds students' concepts in a structured and systematic manner that promotes mastery and application.

Third, Word Study appeals to multiple learning styles including visual, auditory and kinesthetic, which have been recommended in the literature (Perez Canado, 2005). Lincoln and Rademacher (2006) investigated learning styles of adult ESL students. Some students preferred aural modes (20%), while other students favored kinesthetic (15%), visual (4%) or a combination (15%). So it is important to recognize different modalities benefit all students and to incorporate these into classroom instruction. Sylwester (1995) wrote,

When objects are registered by several senses, they can be stored in several interrelated memory networks. A memory stored in this way becomes more accessible and powerful than a memory stored in just one sensory area, because each sensory memory checks and extends the others (p. 96).

All students benefit from hands-on opportunities to generalize beyond the immediate words to groups of words that have similar spelling characteristics (Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000).

Fourth, students' critical thinking in a scaffolded environment was promoted through cross-linguistic transfer and explicit connections across languages; this is important to close the gap for English learners (Bear et al., 2007; Howard & Snow, 2006). Further, students were not 'told' the rule nor asked to memorize it. Teaching is not telling (James, 1958). Instead, the adult students read the words and inductively reasoned how categories could form and how patterns differed. Then they applied the pattern to more words and compared the pattern to words in their native language (Bear, et al., 2007; Howard & Snow, 2006). In this manner, students actively constructed their knowledge. Word Study is based on social constructivism: learning often occurs as a result of social interactions with others, language is essential for interaction, and scaffolding by a more competent peer or adult provides assistance for the learning episodes (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). The teacher provided support through clues, breaking the word into parts, providing examples, and encouraging students (Slavin, 1997).

Fifth, students' newly acquired knowledge was connected to their schema. Schema theory (Piaget, 2001) explains how our cognition is structured in such a way that information we receive is sorted and classified and connected with previously stored knowledge. Schema is acquired, extended and refined throughout life. In this research, learning occurred because students' schema was supported by comparisons among languages, connections between written and oral forms, and opportunities to see conceptual phonological and orthographical relations (Bear, et al., 2007).

Previous to this intervention, teachers reported they had devoted minimal instructional time to learning about phonics or the English orthographical system. When they did instruct students in phonics and spelling prior to this research study, the rules of English were given as statements to the students and a few words were presented for application of that rule in a more deductive approach. A short time later another rule and new concept would be covered. Sometimes the teacher would have students complete a workbook page with fill-in-the-blank sentences containing a certain feature in the words. The teachers stated their prior instruction had less review and depth as well as limited scope and sequence, and often they did not explicitly teach phonemic, morphemic and orthographic knowledge as recommended (Cheung, et al., 2010; Davidson & Strucker, 2002; Sun-Alperin & Wang, 2008).

Despite the positive results, there are always factors that limit research. One limitation of this study was the small sample size in one community-based ESL classroom. Therefore the results cannot be generalized. Another limitation was that no phonemic awareness or first-language assessment was included. A third limitation was the challenge of open enrollment and the CASAS was administered every six weeks instead of at the commencement and conclusion of the study.

Future research with increased sample sizes should conduct regression analyses to determine the impact of the instructional method. It may be possible that students at higher developmental levels may not make as much progress as those at lower levels. This has yet to be documented. Future research should implement a confidence measure to determine the impact Word Study has on students' self-efficacy. Additional research ideas include adding a writing component such as an essay to determine if students transfer and retain their knowledge. A great addition to the research would be to include a vocabulary measure to determine the amount of vocabulary progress students make as a result of learning Word Study. Further, a pronunciation test could be used since accurate pronunciation plays a role in second language spelling (Sawyer & Joyce, 2006). Future research may also assess whether students who speak languages with deep orthographies make more or less progress in a certain amount of time than students who speak languages with shallow orthographies. The field is ripe for a variety of investigations.

In sum, this study shows that Word Study is not the typical spelling approach used in adult ESL classes that inadequately teaches orthography through memorization and rote learning of words (Perez Canado, 2005). Instead the multisensory approach provides students with explicit instruction that fosters critical thinking and cross-language transfer based on students' developmental needs. It may be concluded that Word Study is a potential method for use in ESL adult classrooms based on increased test scores and positive qualitative responses. The careful study of examining the phonology and orthography of words aims to close the spelling gap for English learners (Howard & Snow, 2006) and is necessary for students' successful mastery of the English language (Al-Jarf, 2009; Bear et al., 2007; Davidson & Strucker, 2002). The benefits of such an approach should not be underestimated.

APPENDIX. TABLES

TABLE 1
PAIRED-SAMPLES T-TEST FOR THE ESI

Test		Mean Gain	Standard deviation	P value
ESI total score ^a	Jan-March	2.81	3.32	.000
	March-May	2.25	4.02	.003
	Jan-May	5.22	5.37	.000
ESI feature score ^a	Jan-March	4.86	5.36	.000
	March-May	3.25	5.63	.003
	Jan-May	8.56	9.38	.000

^aESI – Elementary Spelling Inventory (Bear, et al., 2007)

TABLE 2
PAIRED-SAMPLES T-TEST FOR THE DSA

Test		Mean Gain	Standard deviation	P value
DSA total score ^a	Jan-March	3.33	3.19	.000
	March-May	1.90	4.37	.027
	Jan-May	3.61	4.27	.001
DSA feature score ^a	Jan-March	7.03	7.03	.000
	March-May	3.72	3.72	.027
	Jan-May	7.35	7.35	.000

^aDSA –Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske, 2000)

TABLE 3
MATCH OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL STUDENTS

Participants	ESI Total Pre-Test	CASAS Pre-Test	Attendance	Highest Education in Native Country	Native Language
<i>Control</i>					
Student A	3	193	32	8	Spanish
Student B	1	197	31	12	Chinese
Student C	0	195	35	9	Chinese
Student D	1	197	27	12	Spanish
<i>Experimental</i>					
Student 1	0	195	28	12	Spanish
Student 2	0	193	20	12	Spanish
Student 3	2	197	22	9	Spanish
Student 4	2	210	23	10	Spanish

TABLE 4
MEANS FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL STUDENTS

Test		Mean Gain from Pre-Post Scores
ESI total score	Control	1.25
	Experimental	10.50
ESI feature score	Control	5.50
	Experimental	19.75
DSA total score	Control	.75
	Experimental	7.25
DSA feature score	Control	2.00
	Experimental	11.00
CASAS	Control	6.25
	Experimental	8.50

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Gender Representation in Current EFL Textbooks in Iranian Secondary Schools

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Abstract—This study investigates gender representation in current EFL textbooks (*Right Path to English I and II*) that are designed locally and taught as an obligatory subject in Iranian secondary schools. Two methods of analysis were performed. First, these textbooks were subjected to a systematic quantitative analysis with reference to: (1) gender visibility in both text and illustrations and (2) female/male-oriented topic presentation in dialogues and reading passages. Second, a qualitative analysis was undertaken by concentrating on four components of gender-role modelling: (1) male-centred language including: (a) firstness and (b) masculine generic construction; (2) gender-linked occupation possibilities; (3) distribution of household responsibilities, and (4) distribution of spare time and leisure activities. The findings revealed the degree of imbalance in gender representation in these textbooks. The paper concludes by addressing the implications of gender imbalance depicted in the textbooks for learners' perceptions.

Index Terms—ELT curriculum, gender representation, sexism, stereotyped gender roles, occupational roles, visibility in text

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of communication which can be used to express cultural attitudes and values. It also plays an important role in establishing and maintaining social relations and “can be seen as a clear index of the way individuals negotiate with social forces” (Mills & Mullany, 2011, p.1). Cameron (1985) highlights that the organisation of human societies depends on linguistic communication, and gender-based linguistic variation is an example of the role language plays in social functions.

The relationship between language and gender and how it is represented has been greatly disputed in sociolinguistic studies since the mid to late 1960s. Following the emergence of three books on language and gender in the 1970s: *Male/Female Language* by Marie Ritchie Key, *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance* edited by Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, and *Language and Women's Place* by Robin Lakoff, sociolinguists have turned their attention to the influence that imbalanced representation of gender has on the position of women in contemporary society. This phenomenon is referred to as sexism or gender bias in the literature review.

Sexism is commonly considered to be discrimination against people based on their sex rather than their individual merits. In other words, sexism is a belief that one sex or gender is superior or more valuable than the other. In the words of Thomas (2004, p.76), “sexist language represents women and men unequally, as if members of one sex were somehow less completely human, less complex, and had fewer rights than members of the other sex”. The role that language plays in maintaining and strengthening sexist values is very important and the reason for this is probably because “linguistic sexism is deeply rooted and far more subtle than other forms of sexism” (Porreca, 1984, p.705).

A powerful means of conveying gender-biased language is via instructional materials, in particular school textbooks as they play a crucial role in determining students' perceptions of female and male roles in society. According to Ndura (2004), the content of instructional materials significantly affects students' attitudes and dispositions towards themselves, others, and society. Early adolescence is the period of identity development when children are uncertain about who they are and what they want to become in the future. This is also the time when they receive their earliest education about norms, culture, and the world around them. Thus, English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum needs to be examined in terms of representation of speakers, including their L1 background, social class, and gender. The present study investigates gender representation in two current English Language Teaching textbooks (*Right Path to English I and II*) in Iranian secondary schools.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The portrayal of gender roles in EFL/ESL textbooks has been a concern for scholars since the 1970s. Hence, there have been numerous attempts to analyse the representation of gender roles in these textbooks at all levels of education. Researchers who have conducted these studies have focused their inquiries on visual and textual presentations of female and male characters. Visual presentation refers to illustrations, which include pictures in the form of drawings and photographs, and textual presentation relates to conversations and any written content.

Some of the studies dealt with in this literature review have concentrated either on the analysis of illustrations or the analysis of textual presentations, while others have analysed both of these aspects in textbooks. In the making of a non-

sexist dictionary, Graham (1975) with the help of some lexicographers analysed five million words from children's textbooks in the United States and found that although there are more women than men in the world, these textbooks contained over seven times as many references to men as women and more than twice as many references to boys as compared with girls. There were also three times as many wives mentioned as husbands indicating that the main characters or speakers in the text were male.

Two years later, Coles (1977) examined five of the most widely used sets of adult basic education materials. From 150 stories, it was found that men were mentioned three times more than women. In addition, 39 of the total of 61 females were housewives, whilst 106 of the total of 192 males had 73 different occupations. His study found that males mostly occupied skilled or managerial positions and were viewed to be breadwinners but females, on the other hand, were nothing more than housewives or workers.

In the same year, Nilsen (1977) in a comparison of words found in a standard English dictionary to their use in everyday vocabulary concluded that things were named after men five times more than after women, and most words that referred to women had passive roles or were restricted to nouns for helpless young animals (e.g., chic, kitten, and bunny), whereas words that referred to men indicated more active roles and described dominant male animals (e.g., wolf, buck, and stud).

Britton and Lumpkin (1977) in a study to determine the effectiveness of new guidelines aiming at correcting sexist levels in reading, literature, and social studies textbooks compared pre 1970 textbooks with the ones published after 1970. They reported that the number of major characters that were female had increased by only 2% in early editions and up to 16% in much later editions.

One year later, Arnold-Gerrity (1978) in completing a content analysis of nine primary reading textbooks examined the involvement of females in character roles. In the first four books, for grades one and two, she found there were twice the number of male characters as female, while in the three readers, for grades three and four, male-oriented stories were five times more frequent; and in the remaining two textbooks, for grades five and six, males appeared three times more frequently than females. Further to this, she discovered that the occupational roles for males in the textbooks were wide and varied, while for females, they were narrow and restricted to being housewives or mothers caring for the family unit.

The three most relevant studies of gender bias in ESL/EFL textbooks appeared from 1978: *Sexism and TESOL Materials* by Hartman and Judd (1978); *For Men Must Work, Women Must Weep: Sexism in English Language Textbooks Used in German Schools* by Hellinger (1980); and *Sexism in Current ESL Textbooks* by Porreca (1984).

In 1978, Hartman and Judd conducted a survey of several textbooks and observed that not only did women suffer from low visibility, but the references to females in the text were considerably outnumbered by references to males. This was established by counting the sex-linked proper names, titles, and non-generic pronouns. For example, in one of the books that they examined, the ratio of male to female references was 63% to 37%. They also demonstrated that women's roles were stereotypical and related to children and household chores that were exemplified by cooking, changing diapers, or doing the laundry. Men, on the other hand, were depicted fixing the car, changing light bulbs, or mowing the lawn. Therefore, they concluded that "since sexist usage is built into our language habits, it is little wonder that textbooks, including ESL texts, model this usage to their students" (p. 390).

Hellinger (1980) conducted a study of 131 passages from three ELT textbooks used in German schools and found that men were involved in 93% of the passages, while 30% of the textbooks did not include any women at all. It was also revealed that unlike men who were always portrayed in occupational roles of some social status, women had uninteresting, undemanding, and less than successful positions.

In the third seminal study, Porreca (1984) conducted a content analysis of the then 15 most widely used ESL textbooks and focused on measurable categories of omission and occupational visibility in text and illustrations, firstness, masculine generic constructions, and the frequency of the use of nouns and adjectives representing men and women. In every category of her study, she found evidence that "sexism continues to flourish in ESL materials", and despite the fact that "females comprise slightly over half the population of the United States, they are depicted or mentioned only half as often as males in both text and illustrations" (pp.718-719).

Another study in the 1980s was the content analysis of 41 Indian high school, higher secondary, and pre-university curricula textbooks from five different areas of India. The findings of this study revealed that instead of highlighting women and men as equals, textbooks in India gave school children the message that men have the dominant position in all aspects of Indian society (Kalia, 1980).

Progressing into the 1990s, there are three studies worth mentioning, beginning with Sleeter and Grant (1991) who examined 47 textbooks used in grades one to eight between 1980 and 1988 in the United States. They discovered that although women were depicted in non-traditional roles in social studies, reading and language, arts, science, and mathematics textbooks, it was totally unacceptable for men to be depicted in traditionally female roles (e.g., nurse or secretary).

In 1992, Peterson and Kroner conducted a content analysis of 27 textbooks for introductory psychology and 12 for human development courses to identify if there were any examples of gender bias in these textbooks. Their findings demonstrated that females were frequently portrayed in negative and gender biased ways. Five years later, Poulou (1997)

in examining the differences in the discourse roles of men and women in the dialogues of textbooks for teaching Greek as a foreign language revealed that sexist differences had adverse effects on pedagogical values.

Since 2000, most of the major studies on this subject have been undertaken in Asian and Middle Eastern countries including Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Hong Kong, and Jordan. For instance in Iran, Ansary and Babaii (2003) explored the status of sexism in the 1999 edition of the same textbooks (*Right Path to English I and II*) that are used as the corpus of the current study and found that based on the frequency of occurrence, women suffered most from low visibility. The ratio of females to males in text was 1:1.4 and in illustrations was 1:1.6. Moreover, in an examination of female/male-oriented topic presentation in dialogues and reading passages, they demonstrated that of the total of 40 topics presented, 27(67.5%) of topics were male-dominated. They also reported that the occupational capacities in which women were portrayed appeared to be mostly restricted to occupations such as student and nurse, whereas men enjoyed a diversity of jobs such as policeman, soldier, dentist, farmer, doctor, and teacher.

In the case of the distribution of spare time and leisure activities, it was mentioned that “females were fundamentally shunted into indoor passive activities such as *sitting in the classroom, watching TV at home, reading, etc.*” (Ansari & Babaii, 2003, p.9). Regarding male-centred language, they discovered the usage of paired nouns such as *uncle and aunt, brother and sister, boys and girls* where the masculine noun always comes first. Moreover, generic pronouns reflected males as the default or unmarked gender, even pronouns such as *you, I, and we* which can be equally used to describe female or male subjects were associated with pictures illustrating men. Overall, they concluded that *Right Path to English I and II* are sexist textbooks that present students with an unfair and inexcusable view of women in their early exposure to the English language.

Özdoğan, Aksoy, Erdoğan, and Gök (2004) in a content analysis of two course books used in the third grade of Turkish elementary schools found that females were depicted with traditional feminine traits such as being ‘hardworking, loving, caring, and child-raising’. On the contrary, male figures were presented as having the traits of ‘self-confidence, decisiveness, and adventurousness’. They also demonstrated that in many family communications, while the father was the source of information for the child, the mother was presented in a more supportive role and consequently, the role for caring for younger siblings was assigned to older sisters instead of older brothers in many instances, which is parallel with the patriarchal values of Turkish society.

In the same year, a comprehensive study was conducted in Pakistan by Mirza (2004), in which she analysed 194 textbooks in six different subjects to determine the different portrayal of gender. The conclusions drawn from her study are too numerous to mention as she gave a percentage breakdown of each of the 194 textbooks analysed, including the results from surveyed interest groups. However, the overriding outcome from nine detailed conclusions was that references to females were outnumbered in all circumstances by references to males.

Two years later, in another study in Hong Kong, Lee and Collins (2006) selected 20 English language textbooks used by the Education Department of Hong Kong and compared them to the previous books that were published in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The results suggested that although many authors of textbooks these days use various strategies to avoid biased treatment of the two genders, there is still much room for improvement as women are still commonly associated with home duties, have passive roles, and mentioned less frequently than men in both written and visual modes.

More recently, Hamdan (2010) looked at a series of English language textbooks distributed in Jordan and found that out of 78 jobs, men occupied 62 (79%) which portrayed them as the dominant characters in the labour market despite the fact that nowadays, Jordanian women hold diverse positions such as government ministers, members of parliament, police officers, and taxi drivers.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Materials

Two EFL textbooks currently used in Iranian secondary schools were selected to serve as the corpus of the present study. The description of the textbooks is presented in (Table 1):

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTION OF THE TEXTBOOKS

Title	Publisher/Authors	Grade	Date of Publication	Number of Pages
Right Path to English I	Iranian Ministry of Education (Birjandi & Babaii)	7	2012	97
Right Path to English II	Iranian Ministry of Education (Birjandi & Babaii)	8	2012	85

B. Data Collection Analysis

Two methods of analysis were undertaken. First, these textbooks were subjected to a systematic quantitative analysis with reference to: (1) gender visibility in both text and illustrations and (2) female/male-oriented topic presentation in dialogues and reading passages. Second, in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of the gender-role

stereotyping in these textbooks, a qualitative analysis was carried out by concentrating on four components of gender-role modelling: (1) male-centred language including: (a) firstness and (b) masculine generic construction; (2) gender-linked occupation possibilities; (3) distribution of household responsibilities, and (4) distribution of spare time and leisure activities.

C. Procedures

The procedures in this study were in two stages. The first stage focused on counting the number of occurrences of females and males in both text and illustrations and the results were summed up and tabulated, together with the total number of times that female/male-oriented topics were presented in dialogues and reading passages.

In the second stage, an inquiry was made into the use of male-centred language. To assess the extent of this, instances of firstness in which males or females were presented first in reading passages, dialogues, examples, and exercises were considered. In addition, the usage of masculine generic constructions whether they were either truly intended to be generic (inclusive of both genders) or merely male-referenced, along with the use of all masculine nouns, adjectives, and pronouns as all-inclusive terms for both genders were highlighted. Next, the occupation possibilities for females and males were identified and tabulated. Then, the household responsibilities of females such as *cooking, cleaning, shopping, and mending* were paired with their male counterparts and the results of the distribution were tabulated. Finally, spare time and leisure activities that allow individuals to relax their minds and engage in physical outlets such as *sport, walking in the park, or going out with friends* were investigated and tabulated.

IV. THE ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the collected data is divided into two sections. Section A shows the results of the quantitative analysis and is presented in two parts: part (1) gender visibility in both text and illustrations and part (2) female/male-oriented topic presentation in dialogues and reading passages. Section B determines the qualitative analysis of the corpus and is presented in four parts: part (1) male-centred language; part (2) gender-linked occupation possibilities; part (3) distribution of household responsibilities, and part (4) distribution of spare time and leisure activities.

Section A. The Quantitative Analysis

Part 1. Gender Visibility in Individual Text and Illustrations

TABLE 2
GENDER VISIBILITY IN INDIVIDUAL TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Male				Female		
	T	I	Total	T	I	Total
Textbook	323	287	610	185	177	362
I	62.5%	62%	62.5%	36.5%	38%	36.5%
Textbook	417	111	528	284	78	362
II	60%	59%	59.5%	40%	41%	40.5%

Note 1. T= Text, I= Illustrations

Note 2. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Due to the rounding, they may not add up to 100%

As presented in (Table 2), female and male characters appeared 972 times in text and illustrations throughout Textbook I. A comparison between the percentages of female figures (36.5%) and male figures (62.5%) shows a difference of (26%) suggesting that there is a sharp numerical imbalance in the visibility of female and male characters in individual text and illustrations, which implies that men are dominant in terms of appearance.

In Textbook II, of the total of 890 characters, 362 were female and 528 were male. In other words, female characters comprised (40.5%) and male characters (59.5%) in individual text and illustrations. This indicates a (19%) difference between the gender representations, and although this result does not imply as large a difference as (26%) in Textbook I, it still reveals a surprising asymmetry between the two genders.

Part 2: Female/Male-Oriented Topic Presentation in Dialogues and Reading Passages

TABLE 3
FEMALE/MALE-ORIENTED TOPIC PRESENTATION IN DIALOGUES AND READING PASSAGES

	Male only	Female only	Male/Female	Sex-neutral	Total
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Textbook	Dialogue	12 (47%)	11 (43%)	1 (4%)	2 (6%)	26
I	Reading	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0	0	4
Textbook	Dialogue	7 (46%)	8 (50%)	1 (4%)	0	16
II	Reading	7 (89%)	1 (11%)	0	0	8

As illustrated in (Table 3), the results of female/male-oriented topic presentation in dialogues in Textbook I revealed that of the total of 26 topics, 12(47%) were male and 11(43%) were female-oriented. However, in 1 dialogue (4%), an interaction between female/male characters was observed and two dialogues (6%) were sex-neutral. In the reading passages in Textbook I, of the total of 4 topics, 2(50%) were male topics and the remaining 2(50%) were female topics which shows a symmetry in female/male-oriented topic presentations.

On the other hand, in Textbook II, of the total of 16 dialogues, 7(46%) of the topics were male-referenced and 8(50%) were female-referenced, surprisingly enough for the first time it was observed that females outnumbered males. Furthermore, in 1 dialogue (4%), an interaction between female/male characters was observed. In the reading passages in Textbook II, after observing the surprising results in dialogues, the converse of this applied as out of the total of 8 passages, 7(89%) were male-referenced and only 1 (11%) was female-referenced which demonstrates a sharp difference of (78%).

Section B. The Qualitative Analysis

Part 1. Male-Centred Language

Textbook I

In this textbook, three instances of firstness were observed and examples are given below:

(1) On page 26, in introducing the family members, the reading passage began with “*This is Amir’s family. This is Mina*”. This sentence shows male firstness when the family could have just as easily been introduced as Mina’s family, a female character.

(2) On page 51 where a sister and brother were studying together, the boy states: “*My sister and I study our books every day*”. However, it could have also been appropriate for the girl to have spoken the sentence.

(3) On page 89, in exercise D, the sentence “*My father and mother eat lunch at 12*” demonstrates the male dominance as the father was mentioned before the mother.

In this textbook, generic pronouns were basically intended to include both genders; however, they mostly highlighted males as the default gender that is everyone is a male unless specified otherwise. In the case of the pronouns *I, you, and we* that can be used equally for female or male subjects, they were usually associated with pictures illustrating men. Moreover, there was very little use of adjectives in this textbook due to the simplicity of the elementary English being taught; however, females were portrayed as being *sick* far more often and their illnesses more severe than those of males.

In all illustrations throughout Textbook I, except in the case of a family group, there were no examples of mixed gender conversation or activities, that is to say males were always with males and females with females. For example on page 56, *a boy was illustrated to be thinking about a friend who was a boy*, or on page 6 *when a female was driving a car, all the passengers were female*. In addition, where generic parts of the human body such as *hands and arms* (p.4) and *features of a face* (p.27) were depicted, they always were restricted to male body parts. Furthermore, there were six instances where all objects such as *jackets, shoes, hats, and combs* in the illustrations belonged to men and only in one illustration (p.49), the objects such as *a dress, a scarf, and a Tee shirt* could be considered solely owned by women.

Textbook II

In this textbook, three instances of firstness were observed and examples are provided below:

(1) On page 37, in Review (2), Section (C) “*My brother is tall: but my sister is short*” reveals the firstness of the male character.

(2) On page 46, in a reading passage it was mentioned that “*Nahid went to Shiraz and she stayed at her grandfather’s house*”; however, it could have been stated that she stayed at her grandmother’s house.

(3) On page 64, the reading passage began with “*Mr Kamali and his family are from Tehran*”. Once again, the sentence could have been written from the context of Ms Kamali and her family.

Generic pronouns used in this textbook were basically intended to include both genders; however, they mostly highlighted males as the default gender. In the case of the pronouns *I, you, and we* that can be used equally for female or male subjects, they were usually associated with pictures illustrating men. In considering the use of adjectives, although they were confined to *Lesson One* in which simple adjectives such as *tall, short, old, and young* were mentioned, the authors chose to use them in such a way as to denigrate females. For example on page 10, it was mentioned that “*Mr Hamidi is a teacher. He is young, Mrs Amini is a woman. She is old*”. Further to this, in an illustration Mrs Amini was portrayed as a very *old and wrinkled* female.

Once again, there was segregation of the genders except within a family group. However, there was a more even distribution of generic objects belonging to females and males in illustrations than there was in Textbook I.

Part 2. Gender-Linked Occupation Possibilities

TABLE 4

GENDER-LINKED OCCUPATION POSSIBILITIES IN TEXTBOOK I

Gender-linked occupation possibilities in Textbook I	
Female	Male
Nurse	Surgeon
Teacher	Teacher
Librarian	Policeman
Doctor	Doctor
Housekeeper	Farmer
	Bus driver
	Soldier
	Shopkeeper
	Dentist

As shown in (Table 4), males were presented in a wider range and overall a higher level of employment than females in Textbook I. A close examination indicates that women occupied positions such as *housekeeper, nurse, teacher, and librarian*, with an exception of the portrayal of a woman as a *doctor* on page 84. In contrast, men enjoyed greater diversity of occupations ranging from lower ranking roles such as *bus driver, farmer, and shopkeeper* to higher ranking roles such as *surgeon, dentist, teacher, and doctor*.

TABLE 5

GENDER-LINKED OCCUPATION POSSIBILITIES IN TEXTBOOK II

Gender-linked occupation possibilities in Textbook II	
Female	Male
Driving instructor	Professional runner
English teacher	Teacher
Nurse	Doctor
Farm worker	Farmer
Housekeeper	Bus driver
	Shopkeeper

Based on the results shown is (Table 5), males and females had almost an equal number of job possibilities with almost the same ranking as each other, which could be interpreted that Textbook II has an encouraging message that job possibilities should be equal for both genders.

Part 3. Distribution of Household Responsibilities

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES IN TEXTBOOK I

Household responsibility in Textbook I	Female	Male
Nursing the baby	*	-
Serving the meal	*	-
Setting the table for the meal	*	-
Cleaning the house	*	-
Making tea	*	-
Shopping	-	*
Driving	*	*
Cooking dinner	*	-
Helping mother to set the table	*	-

Note: (*) Indicates household responsibility

An evaluation of the distribution of household responsibilities shown in (Table 6) reveals the sad reality that out of the total of ten household responsibilities, eight were performed by females in the family, *mothers and daughters*, whereas males were only responsible for shopping and sharing the driving of the family car with females.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES IN TEXTBOOK II

Household responsibility in Textbook II	Female	Male
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Taking the children to the park	-	*
Washing the dishes	*	-
Setting the table for the meal	*	-
Cleaning the house	*	-
Cleaning the radio	-	*
Shopping	*	*
Driving	*	*
Cooking dinner	*	-
Helping mother in the kitchen	*	-
Washing the car	-	*
Baking a cake	*	-

Note: (*) Indicates household responsibility

The findings illustrated in (Table 7) highlight that out of eleven household responsibilities, five were performed by females which were based around duties in the home that could not be avoided, whereas males were only responsible for three activities, one being a leisure activity of *going to the park*. It should be noted that both females and males were engaged in sharing two activities of *shopping* and *driving* which were both outside the home.

Part 4: Distribution of Spare Time and Leisure Activities

TABLE 8
DISTRIBUTION OF SPARE TIME AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN TEXTBOOK I

Spare time & leisure activities in Textbook I	Female	Male
Playing ping pong	*	*
Setting up a computer	*	-
Listening to the radio	-	*
Playing football	-	*
Reading a newspaper	*	*
Graffiti artist	-	*
Sitting in the park	*	-
Playing in the park	-	*
Eating at a restaurant	*	-
Reading a book	*	*
Watching television	*	*
Talking on the telephone	-	*
Writing a letter	*	-
At the art gallery	*	-
Praying	*	*

Note: (*) Indicates the activity

The list of spare time and leisure activities in (Table 8) presents fifteen different activities performed by both female and male characters in Textbook I. A close look at this table reveals the equal distribution of spare time and leisure activities between both genders. In addition, female activities are not restricted to passive indoor activities such as *watching television or reading a newspaper* as they also enjoyed active outdoor roles such as *playing ping pong, visiting the art gallery, and eating at a restaurant*.

TABLE 9
DISTRIBUTION OF SPARE TIME AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN TEXTBOOK II

Spare time & leisure activities in Textbook II	Female	Male
Playing ping pong	-	*
Taking the children to the zoo	-	*
Praying	*	*
Playing football	-	*
Reading a newspaper	*	*
Doing a crossword	-	*
Sitting in the park	*	*
Going to the movies	-	*
Swimming	-	*
Reading a book	*	*
Watching television	*	-
Going to a football stadium	-	*
Writing a letter	-	*
Riding a bike	-	*

Note: (*) Indicates the activity

As presented in (Table 9), females only took part in four indoor activities such as *reading a book, watching television, praying, and reading a newspaper*, and only on one occasion, a woman could be seen *spending her time in the park* (p.3). On the contrary, males performed thirteen different indoor and outdoor activities such as *going to the movies or a*

football stadium, swimming, riding a bike, taking the children to the zoo, and doing a crossword. It is obvious that females were fundamentally shunted into indoor passive activities.

V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of findings showed that there is an imbalance in gender representation in current Iranian EFL textbooks (*Right Path to English I and II*). These findings are similar to that of many studies into gender bias in EFL/ESL materials since the 1970s, for example, (Hartman & Judd, 1978; Kalia, 1980; Porreca, 1984; Peterson & Kroner, 1992; Özdoğru, Aksoy, Erdoğan, & Gök, 2004; Lee & Collins, 2006).

A comparison of findings with the small scale study conducted by Ansari & Babaii (2003) on the same textbooks (1999 edition) demonstrated that in Textbook I, male-referenced text increased from 56% in the 1999 edition to 62.5% in the 2012 edition, which is a negative increase of 6.5% illustrating that after thirteen years, women still suffered from low visibility. Furthermore, male-referenced illustrations remained at the same percentage of 62% reinforcing the lack of change in the status of women in this textbook. In Textbook II, male-referenced text remained at the same percentage of 60%, whereas female-referenced illustrations improved by 2% from 39% to 41%, which is a marginal increase but at the very least, it is in the right direction.

In Textbook I, male-referenced dialogues reduced from 64% in the 1999 edition to 47% in the 2012 edition which is a reduction of 17% illustrating a very positive shift towards female participation in topic presentation. There was also an increase of 6% in gender-neutral dialogues which indicates another positive change. Furthermore, male-referenced reading passages remained at the same percentage of 50% representing the equality of the genders in this textbook. In Textbook II, male-referenced dialogues dropped from 62% to 46% which is a reduction of 16% demonstrating another positive shift towards female participation in topic presentation. In fact, female-referenced dialogues increased to a percentage of 50%, which is higher than the male percentage. There was also an increase of 4% in female/male topic presentations; however, male-referenced reading passages increased from 82% to 89%, showing a disappointing result from what was expected after getting positive results in female-referenced dialogues.

In considering occupational possibilities, the previous findings revealed that females appeared to be mostly restricted to occupations such as *student* or *nurse*, and in some instances, they were seen to be working in jobs such as *teacher* or *doctor*. On the contrary, new findings demonstrated that female occupational possibilities were more diverse and included three more choices such as *driving instructor, librarian, and farm worker*. It should be noted that in Textbook II, both genders had almost an equal number of job possibilities with almost the same ranking as each other, which could be interpreted that this textbook has an encouraging message that job possibilities should be equal for both genders.

In the case of the distribution of spare time and leisure activities, in the previous research it was mentioned that “females were fundamentally shunted into indoor passive activities such as *sitting in the classroom, watching TV at home, reading, etc*” (Ansari & Babaii, 2003, p.9). Nevertheless, in the new findings, female activities were not restricted to passive indoor activities as they also enjoyed active outdoor roles such as *playing ping pong, visiting the art gallery, and eating at a restaurant*, which indicates a change in attitude towards females.

Regarding male-centred language, the previous research discovered the usage of paired nouns such as *uncle and aunt, brother and sister, boys and girls* where the masculine noun always comes first. However, in the recent study, only one instance of paired nouns, *father and mother*, was observed. Moreover, in the previous research, generic pronouns reflected males as the default or unmarked gender, even pronouns such as *you, I, and we* which can be equally used to describe female or male subjects were associated with pictures illustrating men. Unfortunately, the new findings revealed no improvement in the use of the generic pronouns as the results were exactly the same.

An examination of the distribution of household responsibilities revealed that the previous research found females in more traditional stereotypical roles such as *doing the dishes, cooking, serving food, setting the dinner table, and taking care of the children*. The sad reality is that the findings of the new research highlight the same biased results.

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis of findings revealed that there is an imbalance in gender representation in ELT curriculum in Iran. As English language teaching and learning in Iran is based on “a rigidly anti-imperialist ideology alongside indigenization and localisation” (Borjian, 2013, p.13), the state-run education programs are indigenised to meet the country’s cultural and religious ideologies. Although this study showed improvement to some areas of the textbooks when compared with the results of the previous research which examined the same textbooks (1999 edition), there is still more room for improvement to provide an equal opportunity for learning for all students.

A pedagogical implication is that ELT curriculum in Iran needs to be examined as the content of instructional materials significantly affects students’ attitudes, dispositions, and their understanding of norms, culture, and the world around them. Therefore, Educational Authorities should provide guidelines for the use of fair treatment of gender in all aspects of textbook design such as equal visibility for female and male characters and equal female/male-oriented topic presentations in dialogues and reading passages with a wider range of occupational possibilities and personal traits. In

addition, further research needs to be undertaken on a wide range of current ESL/EFL textbooks to explore issues of representations of speakers, in particular gender representation.

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Pronunciation and Comprehension of Oral English in the English as a Foreign Language Class: Key Aspects, Students' Perceptions and Proposals*

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Abstract—Traditionally, little attention has been paid to learners' perceptions of pronunciation and comprehension instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. This study is aimed at putting forward a series of detected key aspects, students' perceptions and proposals for enhancing, improving and implementing pronunciation and comprehension skills in the Spanish higher-education EFL class—specifically a pronunciation class. By means of the administration to students of three questionnaires designed *ad hoc* for this small-scale, pilot study, a diagnostic analysis has been carried out that has yielded to valuable data and to the suggestion of specific proposals derived from first-hand experience. Accordingly, among other aspects, the results obtained show that students' motivation and implication is high when being taught pronunciation, they believe in the usefulness of pronunciation instruction, but at the same time they may experiment frustration relatively easily, especially due to inhibition and peer-comparison factors that may negatively affect performance and self-confidence. In the same way, students are aware of the importance of both segmental and suprasegmental aspects in order to favor comprehensibility, they consider variation in means, methods and activities to be fundamental in the classroom in order to keep their own interest and motivation and they find computer-assisted and audio-visual aids highly useful and valued when it comes to learn pronunciation.

Index Terms—pronunciation, comprehension, questionnaire, diagnostic analysis, segmental features, suprasegmental features, EFL class

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Objectives

It is beyond doubt that pronouncing a language properly is a key aspect when understanding and making ourselves understood. In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning process pronunciation should play a determining role since it is directly related with the development of students' communicative competence and thus to language proficiency and comprehensibility.

Spoken communication is grounded on the communicability not only determined by correct grammar and profuse vocabulary but also on the correct interplay between the segmental and suprasegmental features making up pronunciation. As Burns (2003) concedes, despite minor inaccuracies in vocabulary and grammar, learners are more likely to communicate effectively when they have good pronunciation and intonation. Nowadays, as Pourhosein (2012, p.120) states, despite the “emphasis on the importance of meaningful communication and intelligible pronunciation, it is not enough to leave pronunciation teaching and training to pronunciation classes only”; it is determining that the relatively few hours devoted to this purpose in the curriculum are planned and devised to make the most of them, giving students the tools to continue improving on their own and the voice to express in which ways they learn the best. In spite of this, “researchers in applied linguistics have paid little attention to learners' perceptions of pronunciation instruction in L2 contexts” (Kang, 2010) so that this article has tried to deepen on students' perceptions and feelings about English pronunciation issues in general and about the English pronunciation subject EA0910 “Pronunciation and comprehension of oral English” in particular in order to make a diagnostic analysis of the situation which will ideally lead to an improvement in their pronunciation skills.

This small-scale but representative pilot study stems thus from my own concern as an English pronunciation teacher about the need to do some research on the traditionally assumed and clearly noticeable difficulties most Spanish students¹ find in pronouncing English properly with the final aim to devise and implement feasible improvement

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¹ In this case we are focusing on higher education students in a foreign language context. They are students of the English Studies degree (in their first year).

measures. With this objective in mind, with a series of questionnaires designed *ad hoc* –and according to my own observation and experience– I have tried to determine students' perceptions, needs, demands and feelings regarding English pronunciation and comprehension and their views about the materials, instruction methods, tools and contents used and/or included in a regular English pronunciation class in an EFL high-education context. Students' specific suggestions have finally been analysed in order to be able to pose improvement proposals devised from first-hand experience. With this analysis of key aspects, perceptions and proposals, this study is aimed at becoming the first one from a series intended at better understanding why pronunciation is such a hurdle for Spanish EFL learners and how this could be solved or at least improved.

B. Pronunciation: The Great Hurdle for Spanish EFL Students

It is not a secret in the Spanish EFL teaching context that pronunciation is a great hurdle for most Spanish students who do not feel comfortable or at the same proficiency level of other European counterparts with the way they pronounce English. In fact, as Coe (1987 in Swan and Smith) states "European Spanish speakers, in particular, probably find English pronunciation harder than speakers of any other European language". Moreover, as Pourhosein (2012) concedes, limited pronunciation skills can affect learners' self-confidence by decreasing it, also restricting social interactions, and thus negatively affecting estimations of a speaker's credibility and abilities, which obviously negatively influences the EFL instruction process. In fact, as Jones (2002) states, pronunciation teaching methods should address the issues of motivation and exposure by creating awareness and stressing the importance of sound pronunciation. In this very same sense, Pourhosein (2012) lists a series of factors affecting the learning of English pronunciation among which we find: attitude, motivation, instruction and exposure to target language.

That pronunciation is a rather problematic aspect for most Spanish students is (regretably) a fact, but the reasons and solutions may be varied in nature and in effectiveness. Traditionally, most Spanish-speaking countries have tended (and still tend) to neglect the teaching of pronunciation in EFL settings, focusing instead on grammar, reading and writing skills. Already in 1994, Gilbert described pronunciation as an orphan in English programs around the world and in 2010 she still believed that "pronunciation continues to be the EFL/ESL orphan" (Gilbert, 2010, p. 1). This lack of enhancement of listening and speaking skills has originated generations of students with a manifested insecurity and a lack of proficiency in their oral capacities in English, something, which, on the other hand, is a general complaint and claim in the Spanish EFL context.

However, along with the weaknesses of a particular curricular design, native language may –positively or negatively– influence second or foreign language pronunciation since the speech habits of the mother tongue tend to superimpose on the speech habits of the target language (Akram and Qureshi, 2012). In this sense, Cunningham Florez (1998, p. 3), for instance, concedes that errors in aspiration, intonation, and rhythm in the target language are likely to be caused by interference or negative transfer from the first language and Odlin (1989, p. 112) goes on stating that, "there is no little doubt that native language phonetics and phonology are powerful influences on second language pronunciation". In this sense, Spanish and English phonological systems show important differences, especially as regards phoneme production, linking phenomena, intonation and stress, which may make pronunciation specially hard for Spanish speakers. For instance, Spanish does not distinguish between short and long vowels –the length of the vowel is not significant in order to distinguish words– so that Spanish speakers tend to confuse these pairs both in comprehension and in speaking. Moreover, as Case (2012) states, Spanish speakers tend to find great difficulty in recognising not rhotic versions of vowel sounds and, due to the differences in syllable patterns –Spanish is a syllable-timed language and English a stress-timed language–, Spanish speakers tend to add extra syllables or swallow sounds to match the expected/desired number of syllables, especially when it comes to final consonant clusters. Moreover, among many other aspects negatively affecting pronunciation in English, Spanish speakers tend to fail in pronouncing end consonants accurately or strong enough and tend to add unnecessary sound prefixes to words which begin with a consonant cluster on s-. To deepen on these specially problematic aspects, Shoebottom (2011) concedes that Spanish has a strong correspondence between the sound of a word and its spelling. However, English is irregular in this respect, this causing predictable problems when Spanish learners write a word they just first meet in spoken language or say a word first met in written language.

According to the difficulties mentioned above, it is essential that we as English teachers give our students the opportunity to reflect on the way they learn to pronounce and on the way they want to do so, so that with first-hand impressions we can improve the instruction of pronunciation and comprehension meaningfully, providing them with the necessary tools to do so independently and in a conscious and profitable way.

C. The Importance of Comprehensibility in Oral English

Pronunciation is a key aspect in the development of oral skills. Proper pronunciation is inherent to any competent speaker but this competence can (and must) be trained in any non-native speaker. The review of previous literature on the topic shows that with careful preparation and integration, pronunciation can play a significant role in supporting the learners' overall communicative skill (Pourhosein, 2012, p. 119). Nonetheless, the idea that learners should speak and sound like native speakers is not the trend nowadays, apart from being a rather unrealistic idea. In fact, it is rare that L2 adult learners achieve native-like speech patterns (Moyer, 2004; Scovel, 2000). Moreover, it is difficult to achieve native-like pronunciation in typical ESL classrooms after childhood (Kang, 2010). As Ur (1996) concedes, the aim of pronunciation is not to achieve a perfect imitation of native accent, but to get the learner to pronounce accurately

enough to be easily and comfortably comprehensible to other speakers. In fact, as scholars such as Derwing and Munro (2005) or Goodwin (2001) argue that it is teachers' role to help ESL learners to set realistic goals for pronunciation instruction and these goals do not normally target native-like accents.

According to Burns (2003), it is far more important for speakers to be able to achieve intelligibility (the sound patterns produced by the speaker are recognisable as English) comprehensibility (the meaning of what is said can be understood by the listener) and interpretability (the purpose of what is said can be understood by the listener). Moreover, many studies from an English as a second language perspective –such as Howlader's (2010)– found that mutual intelligibility, comprehensibility and neutral accent can promote better oral communication. In fact, from the perspective of World Englishes, mutual intelligibility is a key issue for both listeners and speakers (Kang, 2010)

In order to achieve comprehensibility, both segmental –main focus in the teaching of pronunciation in former EFL approaches– and suprasegmental features must be paid attention to as the main components of good pronunciation (Fig. 1) and thus they are key aspects to be dealt with in a balanced and complementary way in the pronunciation class.

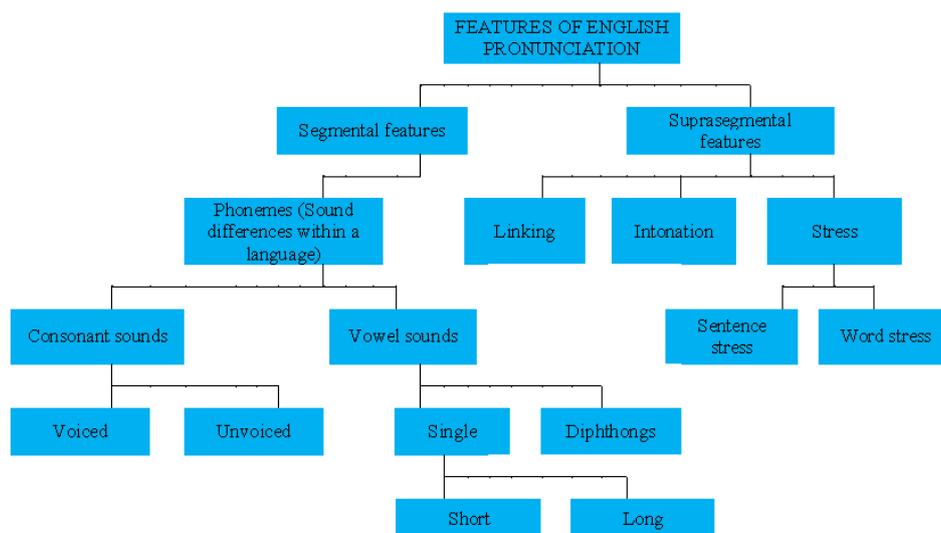


Figure 1. Features of English pronunciation according to Pourhosein (2012, p. 120).

Therefore, comprehensibility is the key nowadays due to of the increasing demand of communication in English between the non-native speakers rather than between the native and non-native ones in the world (Howlader, 2010) and accordingly it must be enhanced and trained.

II. METHOD

A. Context for the Research

This paper puts forward the results obtained from a small-scale pilot study about key aspects, students' perceptions and proposals to improve pronunciation and comprehension of oral English. The study population is made up of 48 Spanish students from first year of the Bachelor's Degree in English Studies and enrolled in the compulsory subject EA 0910 *Spoken English: Comprehension and Pronunciation* (an EFL class focused on pronunciation production and reception issues). The students belong to three different groups of practice, each of them with a different teacher but coordinated in terms of contents, methodology and assessment system. The author of this paper taught practice group number 1 (PR 1) and asked her colleagues from PR 2 and PR 3 to collaborate in the study. Therefore, from the 48 students taking part in the study, 19 belonged to PR 1, 12 to PR 2 and 17 to PR 3.

The classes took place in the language laboratory so that students had at their disposal a wide range of technical means that tried to make the practice of pronunciation more motivating and dynamic.

According to the objectives made public in the course syllabus of the subject, it focuses on the pronunciation of English in terms of producing and understanding speech sounds and its main objective is to improve the student's productive and receptive skills in the English language. More specifically, the subject deals with: segmental and suprasegmental phonology, correspondence between phonetics and spelling, discrimination of sounds in isolated words and in connected speech, and pronunciation practice in specific difficult areas for Spanish speakers. The coursebook *English Pronunciation in Use – Intermediate* by Mark Hancock (2012 edition) is the one used in the subject but when students take part in this second semester subject they are already familiar with the basics of pronunciation since they have already taken the subject EA0911 *English Phonetics and Phonology* during the first semester. This initial EA0911 course is supposed to have given the students a solid foundation in the basics of the phonological system of the English language.

B. Methodology: Questionnaires Administration and Analysis

The methodology employed in this study is a simple and straightforward one: the administration via the electronic platform of the subjects' virtual classroom of 3 anonymous questionnaires (see their printed version in Appendix A) to be voluntarily responded by the students. Students were thus not forced to take part in the study but highly encouraged to do so: finally, 87% of the students enrolled in the subject took part in it.

The questionnaires were created on the basis of the aspects and phonology-related terminology which was already familiar to the students, that is, according to the main contents of the coursebook, according to personal interaction with students during tutorial hours and also according to previous similar questionnaires such as Kang's (2012), and Akram and Qureshi's (2012).

The 3 questionnaires were designed to be answered in less than 45 minutes (in total) and they dealt with different aspects which I considered to be the foundations of the research and which I grouped as follows:

Questionnaire 1 – Student's perceptions and feelings

Questionnaire 2 – Materials, methods, tools and contents employed

Questionnaire 3 – Work needed, perceived relevance and improvement suggestions

Questionnaire 1 included 25 items and questionnaire 2 included 30 items to be ranked from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (absolutely agree), that is, participants were asked to make scalar judgments on a five-point scale. Questionnaire 3 included a first item to rank different pronunciation-related aspects according to the work needed in them (as personally perceived by each student) from 1 (more work needed) to 8 (less work needed) and a second item in which they had to assign importance to these aspects from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a lot). Questions 3-10 in questionnaire 3 were open questions to reflect and suggest specific action so that qualitative results could be obtained. However, not all the students answered all the open questions.

The questionnaires were uploaded in the virtual classroom and those students who wanted to participate anonymously had access to them from March 15 until April 15, 2013. The questionnaires could be answered in a single session or in more than one since the answers could be saved by the system. Students were explained the mechanics of the study and its objective so that it became clear to them the importance and benefits of taking part in it. Afterwards, punctuations and means (quantitative analysis from questionnaires 1, 2 and part of 3) were calculated and qualitative results and suggestions (second part of questionnaire 3) were analysed in order to obtain the results presented in section number III.

Obviously, this study may present certain limitations among which we find, for example, the limited sample under analysis –48 students took part in the study. It is not a big sample but we consider it to be big enough to obtain representative results. Additionally, it is difficult to control the interest on the part of students when responding. Due to their format, questionnaires 1 and 2 and part of questionnaire 3 may have been responded at random but the fact of having given them more than a month to answer, the fact of having made them reflect about the importance of the study and the fact that the study was voluntary seem to indicate that non-interested students simply did not participate.

III. RESULTS

A. Questionnaires Results

The following paragraphs summarise the results obtained in the 3 questionnaires administered to the 48 students.

Questionnaire 1

91.6% of the students taking part in the study felt concerned about their own pronunciation (item 1) and 100% of them considered "English comprehension and pronunciation" an important subject in their degree and felt that the subject would help them to improve their pronunciation (items 2 and 3). As regards item 4, 33.3% of the students agree with the fact that pronunciation is a key aspect for communication and 66.6% absolutely agree with the statement. In the same way, 25% show their agreement with the fact that English pronunciation is important for their professional future and 75% absolutely agree with it (item 5). 91.6% of the students agree or strongly agree with the fact that most of what they are taught in the subject is relevant for them (item 6) and all of them (50% agree and 50% strongly agree) like learning English pronunciation (item 7). 91.7% of the students enjoy English pronunciation lessons/classes, so agrees (66.6) or absolutely agrees (25.1) with item 8, and also a 91.7% of the students enjoy participating in games and tasks in the English pronunciation class (item 9), so they agree (41, 6%) or strongly agree with the item (50%).

In terms of the insecurity felt by students when they have to speak in English in front of their classmates (item 10) 41.6% of the students felt indecisive whereas another 41.6% agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that they feel insecure under such a circumstance. 66.6% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that they could do much better when speaking in English in front of their classmates but they feel ashamed and insecure so they deliberately avoid sounding too native-like (item 11). 100% of the learners stated (40% agreed and 80% strongly agreed) that they wanted to be able to pronounce English just as native speakers (item 12). In fact, a 75% of the surveyed learners, conceded that it is very frustrating for them not to be able to sound as an English native (item 13). 33.3% of the students conceded that they were not satisfied with their pronunciation in English –that is, they disagreed with the fact that they were satisfied with it, according to item 14–, 25% felt indecisive about the statement and 41.6 did feel satisfied (33.3% agreed and 8.3% strongly agreed).

91.6% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that if they have a good pronunciation then they will feel more confident in English (item 15) and as regards item 16, nobody strongly agreed with the fact that pronunciation

skills are innate, in fact 41.6% of the students felt indecisive about it and another 41.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. 66.6% of the students agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (16.6%) with the fact that pronunciation skills are acquired through practice (item 17).

Item 18 shows a great variety of perspectives: 25% of the students strongly disagree with the fact that their mother tongue is a handicap for them to pronounce more correctly, 33.3% disagree, 16.6% are indecisive, and 25% agree or strongly agree with the statement. As regards item 19, 66.6% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that knowing the main theoretical aspects of phonetics and phonology does not guarantee a good pronunciation (item 19) and 25% of them showed their indecision in this respect. 100% of the surveyed students felt satisfied with the effort they devote to improve their pronunciation (item 20).

In item 21, 33.3% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that it is frustrating to see how some classmates have a much better pronunciation than them, and 41.6% felt indecisive about the statement; the remaining 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Nobody absolutely agreed with the fact that learning English was too difficult for them (item 22) and just 8.3% agreed with it whereas 58.3% disagreed with the item. As regards item 23, nobody strongly agreed with the fact that speaking is the hardest skill to develop but 50% agreed with it; 33.3% felt indecisive and 16.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Nobody absolutely agreed with item 24 (“I think I will never feel satisfied with my pronunciation”) but 33.3% of the students agreed with it, 16.6% of them were indecisive and 50% of them disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Finally, no student felt nervous in the English pronunciation class (item 25), just 33.3% of them felt indecisive about this aspect.

Questionnaire 2

As regards the results obtained in questionnaire number 2, 91.6% of the students agreed or absolutely agreed with the fact that pronunciation symbols are useful for learning pronunciation correctly (item 1). 25% of the respondents absolutely agreed with item 2 (“I think English textbooks can help me to learn English pronunciation”) and 50% absolutely agreed with it; 16.6% disagreed with the statement and 8.3% were indecisive. Everybody supported the fact that English videos and audios can help them to learn English pronunciation (item 3), in fact, 75% absolutely agreed and 25% agreed. 91.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that singing songs in English can improve their pronunciation (item 4) and the same percentage (91.6%) agreed or absolutely agreed with item 5: “I think that repetition and imitation are important aspects to learn English pronunciation”.

As regards item 6, 50% of the students believe (agree with the fact) that recording themselves is useful to improve their pronunciation and 33.3% of them absolutely agree with it. As regards the usefulness of printed dictionaries for learning pronunciation (item 7), 66.6% of the students agree with their usefulness and 16.6% of them strongly agree with it while another 16.6% feel indecisive. 50% of the respondents feel dubious (indecisive) as regards item 9 (“students should be given more chances to speak in class”) whereas 41.6 agree with it. 66.6% of the students agreed with the fact that attending classroom activities is useful (item 10) whereas the other 33.3% strongly agreed with it. 58.3% of the respondents absolutely agreed with the fact that the language laboratory is useful for pronunciation classes (item 11), 25% of them agreed and 16.6% felt indecisive.

As regards particular pronunciation-related aspects, items 12 to 30 try to measure students’ attitude towards them. For these items, results have been included in the form of figures (Figs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) to make them more visual and illustrative.

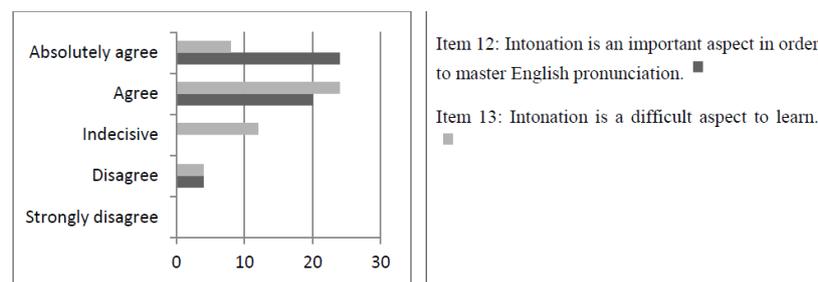


Figure 2. Intonation-related aspects.

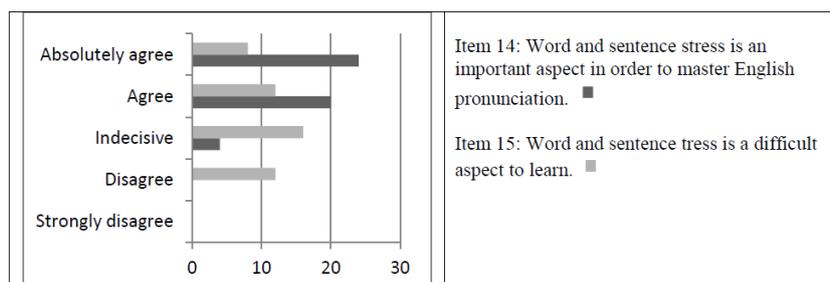


Figure 3. Word and sentence stress-related aspects.

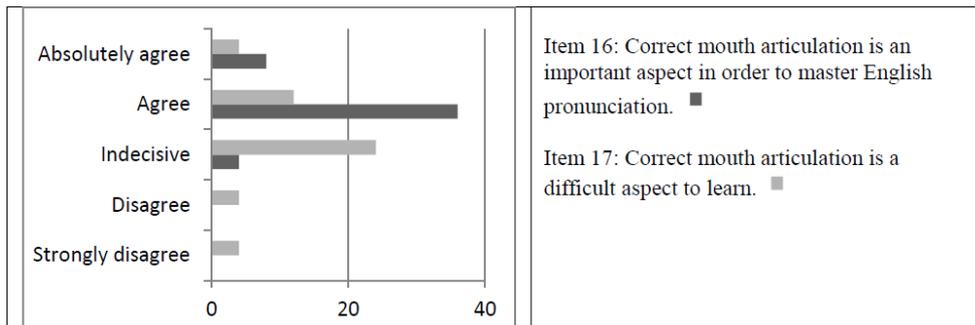


Figure 4. Mouth articulation-related aspects.

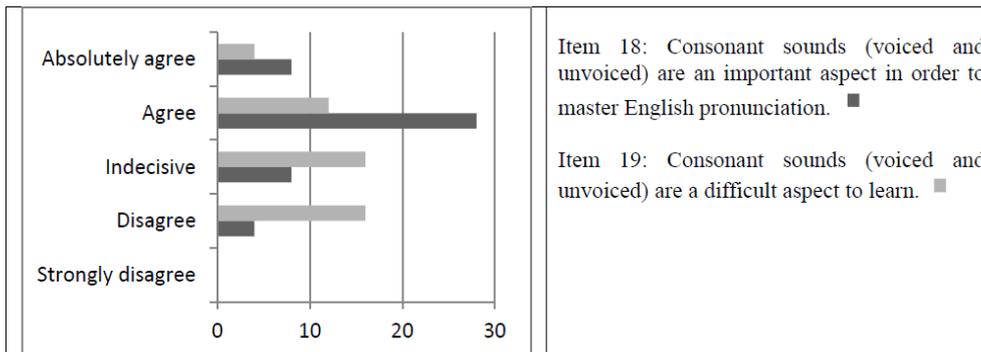


Figure 5. Consonant sounds-related aspects.

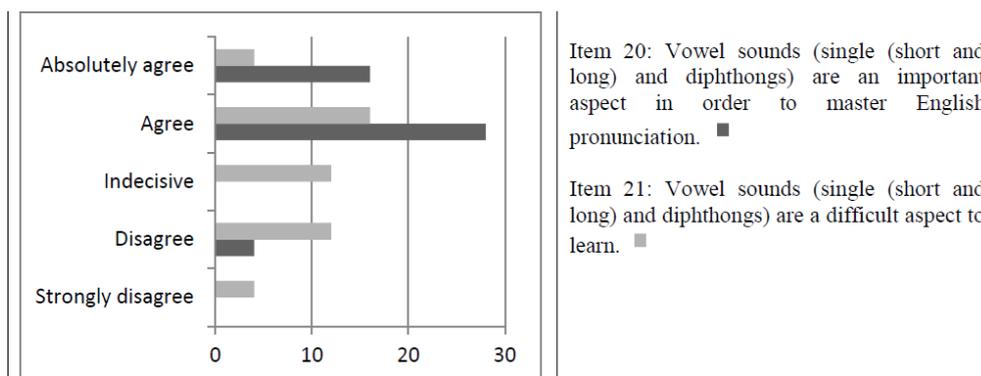


Figure 6. Vowel sounds-related aspects.

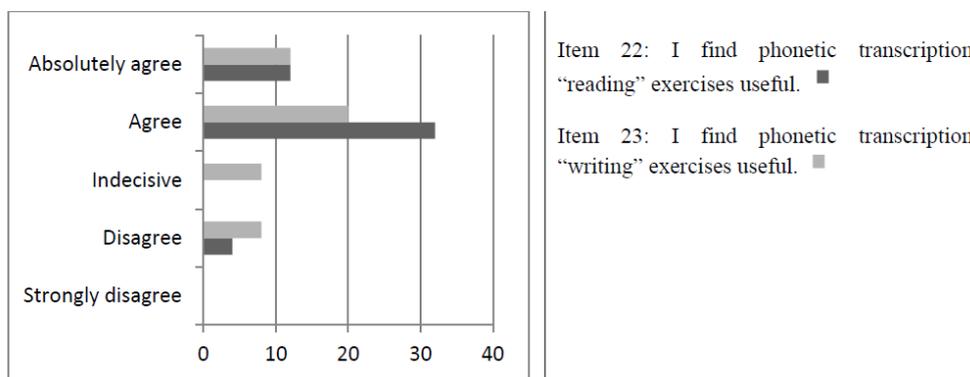


Figure 7. Phonetic transcription-related aspect.

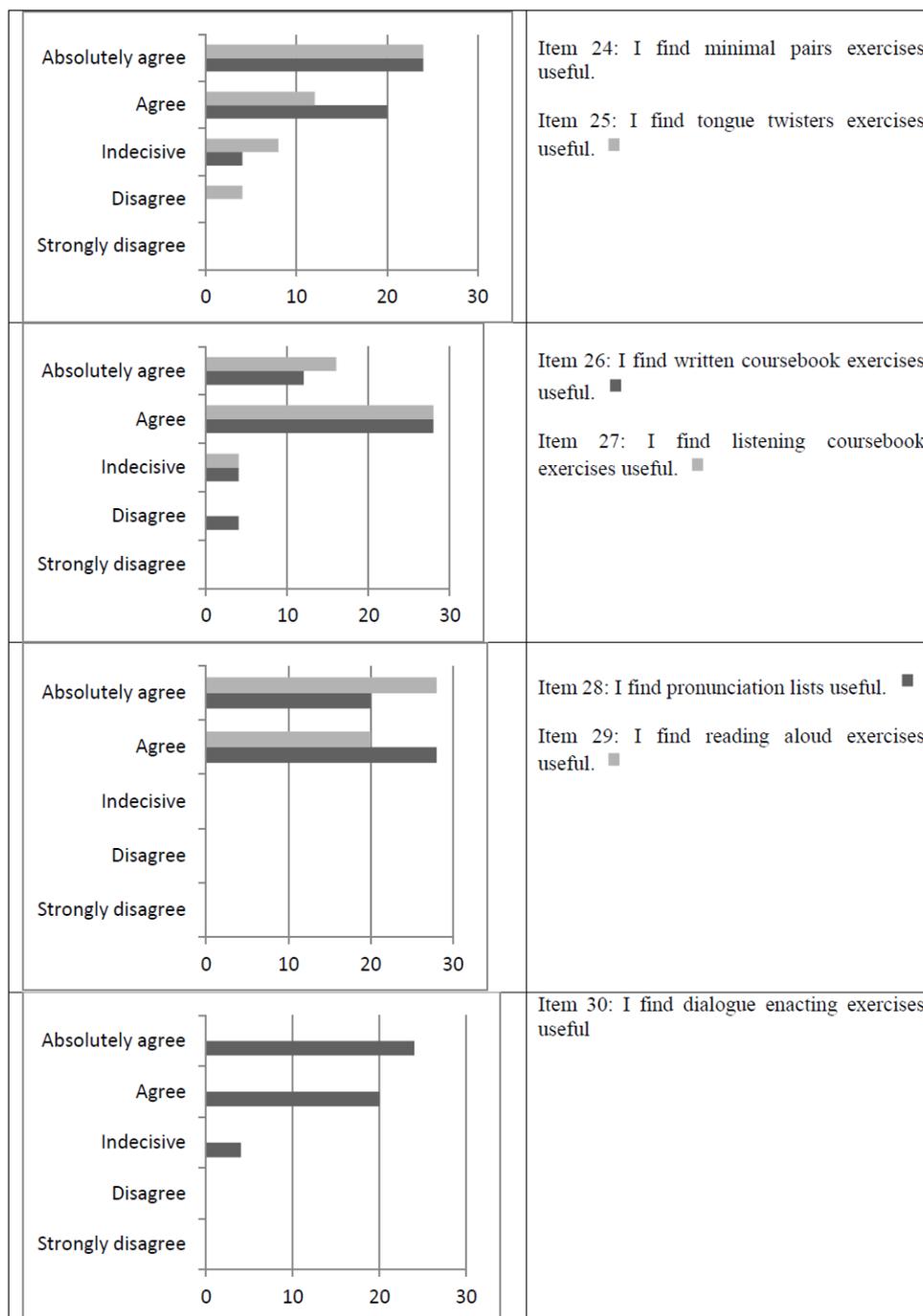


Figure 8. Miscellaneous pronunciation-related aspects.

Questionnaire 3

The results obtained in Questionnaire 3 have been summarised in the following paragraphs. Regarding the first item, in order to obtain the final rank of specific aspects student need to work on (according to their own views and perceptions) the numerical values assigned by students to each item in the ranking have been added up to a total which has been subsequently divided by the total number of students, that is, the arithmetic mean has been calculated for each item (shown between brackets) on the basis of the numerical values assigned to them. Accordingly –since 1 implies more work needed and 8 less work needed– the rank and numerical values obtained have been (from 1 –more work needed– to 8 –less work needed–):

- 1 (2.1) Intonation
- 2 (2.5) Stress
- 3/4 (4.4) Vowel sounds
- 3/4 (4.4) Mouth articulation
- 5 (5.3) Phonetic transcription production
- 6/7 (5.6) Consonant sounds

6/7 (5.6) Phonetic transcription reading

8 (6.1) Connected speech

In question 2, the arithmetic mean has been calculated in order to quantitatively rank the importance assigned by students to the different pronunciation-related aspects, punctuation ranging from 1 point (minimum –less important) to 5 points (maximum –more important). Accordingly, the assigned importance is (from 1–more important– to 8 –less important–).

1 (4.66) Intonation

2 (4.5) Connected speech

3 (4.33) Vowel sounds

4 (4.31) Stress

5 (4.16) Consonant sounds

6 (3.66) Mouth articulation

7 (3.16) Phonetic transcription reading

8 (3) Phonetic transcription production

The qualitative part of the study comprises questions 3 to 10 in Questionnaire 3. Its analysis has been more painstaking than the quantitative one but necessary in order to try to obtain relevant data regarding students' pronunciation skills, classroom activities, teachers' methodology and materials and in order to enhance students' participation according to their own perceptions and suggestions.

Regarding question number 3, that is, *How would you improve classroom activities?*, students' responses are closely related to what they responded in the next question (4. *How would you improve students' participation?*). Students point out that they would like to have more purely-speaking activities in class, that is, they emphasise the need to learn by practicing. It is also quite a repeated statement the fact that participation in class is unbalanced so people (presumably those who participate more) point out the need to try to make everybody participate in a more well-adjusted way. They also agree with the fact that fun activities, games, contests, and purely interactive activities attract their attention and motivate them more so that including more of these activities would probably enhance students' participation. Many students point out (and questionnaires reveal) that they are not much self-confident in terms of their own pronunciation so that positive reinforcement seems necessary. Many students do also point out the fact that seeing how their partners' pronunciation is better than theirs discourages them from participating so the aforementioned positive reinforcement and an adequate atmosphere play a crucial role for them.

With respect to question 5 (*How would you improve teacher's methodology?*), students seem to agree in the fact that it is important that teachers combine coursebook activities with other kinds of activities that may be more appealing to them. Students seem to understand the importance of the kind of practice provided by the book but they want their teacher to get actively involved in their learning by taking part in the activities themselves and by devising new ones specifically intended for the needs detected in his/her class. Closely related to their responses to question 5 are their responses to question 6 (*How would you improve materials?*), students would add more exercises for practicing at home and ask for more recording and recorded-type activities. Some students do also believe that some of the audios provided are pretty exaggerated and thus sound a bit artificial and non-natural to them and they state they would prefer to work with more natural-sounding real pronunciation samples. In general they ask for variation and quantity so that they can focus on specific areas which may be problematic for them and find as much material as they want/need to work on them.

Regarding question number 7 (*How would you particularly improve your classmates' pronunciation skills?*) students seem to agree with the fact that it is very important to record oneself and then critically listen to one's own recordings. Thus, many of them do also propose some kind of peer-review correction for some of the recordings. They do also ask for a wide range of exercises at their disposal so that they can choose which aspect to study in depth. Students do also believe that the use of songs and films in English is a good, fun, and natural way to improve their listening and pronunciation skills and they do also find imitation an easy and useful activity. Reading aloud in front of the class is mentioned too and repetition is also a key issue for most of them.

Among the specific types of activities suggested for improving pronunciation (question 8), they mention again reading aloud, recording fragments, more group interaction activities, watching movies, listening to songs and audio books, getting familiar with online dictionaries and looking up any word whose pronunciation is dubious in order to check how it is pronounced, etc.

Regarding question number 9 (*Why is pronunciation such a hard issue (in general) for Spanish students?*) most students are aware of the fact that there are many phonological differences between English and Spanish systems and they believe this may be the origin of the problem. Some others do also point out that oral aspects in general and pronunciation in particular are not normally much dealt with in the Spanish education system. The fact of having a dubbing culture (in which original versions are hardly seen) does not help either according to many students.

Finally, as regards question 10 (*Is there anything you would like to do in class (in order to improve your pronunciation) that has never been done before?*), some students point out that they would like to read aloud texts belonging to different genres or simply longer texts. They do also suggest the inclusion of debate-type activities and brief theatre performances which focus on the practice of the different aspects involved in pronunciation.

B. Activity-type Proposals

According to the results obtained in the questionnaires, to my own experience in the classroom and to the feedback and suggestions obtained from students when interacting with them, a series of activity-type proposals have been developed, a selection of which I present below. Their usefulness and didactic character have been confirmed in the classroom through their implementation and they are presented here in a general way (just with a brief explanation) since they admit variation and adaptation to specific needs. They are mostly short, dynamic activities covering a wide range of pronunciation-related topics which were carried out in the pronunciation classroom together with regular coursebook activities (once questionnaire results were analysed) and which proved their usefulness and good acceptance on the part of students. Therefore, the selected activities devised and proposed are:

1. Minimal pairs: a student is provided with a numbered list of minimal pairs. A word from each pair has been highlighted and the student has to read only the highlighted word from the pair. The rest of the students note down the word read.

2. Mouthing: first the teacher (as an example) and then a student silently articulate a word by reproducing mouth position when saying the word aloud. Students have to guess the word which has been silently mouthed.

3. Sit down list: a comprehensive pronunciation list is shown to the whole class. Students stand up and each student reads aloud a word from the list. If a student fails, then he/she sits down. The last student standing up wins.

4. And the Oscar for the best imitation goes to...: the teacher selects some short movie scenes with an adequate level of difficulty and provides the students with their transcript. Students watch the scene and make notes if necessary. Then, three of the students from the class (and the teacher) will play the role of the jury and the other students will repeat the scene imitating the actor(s) or actress(es) performance. The jury will award the Oscar for the best imitation to the student who best imitates what has been seen.

5. Dialogue enacting: in groups or pairs students enact self-devised or pre-written dialogues in which different pronunciation aspects are dealt with.

6. Lyrics: firstly, the students are provided with the lyrics of a song in which some words have been removed. Students have to fill in the gaps according to what they hear and become familiar with the song. Then, they sing aloud in class imitating the singer(s).

7. Record yourself: students record themselves reading texts from different genres. Then they listen to themselves and try to record themselves again correcting the mistakes detected or improving the weak aspects. A peer-review stage can also be incorporated.

8. Read the transcriptions: students are provided with transcriptions such as $[\text{ɪ} \text{ɹ} \text{ɒ} \text{d} \text{ə} \text{m} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{z} \text{ } \text{d} \text{ə} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{k} \text{æ} \text{p} \text{ə} \text{t} \text{ə} \text{l} \text{ } \text{ə} \text{v} \text{ } \text{d} \text{ə} \text{ } \text{j} \text{ʊ} \text{r} \text{n} \text{ə} \text{l} \text{ } \text{t} \text{i} \text{d} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{k} \text{ } \text{t} \text{ɪ} \text{ŋ} \text{d} \text{ə} \text{m} \text{ } \text{ə} \text{nd} \text{ } \text{ə} \text{v} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{ŋ} \text{g} \text{l} \text{ə} \text{nd} \text{ } \text{ə} \text{nd} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{z} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{w} \text{ə} \text{n} \text{ } \text{ə} \text{v} \text{ } \text{d} \text{ə} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{k} \text{i} \text{:} \text{ } \text{"} \text{ɪ} \text{w} \text{ə} \text{r} \text{l} \text{d} \text{ } \text{ɪ} \text{s} \text{i} \text{t} \text{i} \text{:} \text{ } \text{z} \text{"}$. Individually or in small groups they have to try to read the transcriptions and then “decipher” them in written format.

9. Stress-full bingo: the teacher designs and distributes at random a series of pre-elaborated bingo cards with stress patterns on it (for instance, oOoo is the stress pattern for words such as *particular*). Then he/she reads aloud a series of words or sentences and the student with the bingo card that fits the stress patterns of the words/sentences read wins.

10. Riddle reading and recording: students read (at a different speed) a series of riddles and record themselves. They can also make up their own riddles if preferred.

11. Once upon a time...: a student stands up and the rest of the class pretends they are children listening to a great story-teller. The student starts telling a story paying much attention to intonation, stress and to the fact of catching “childrens’” interest.

12. Mirroring: students become aware of mouth articulation by slowly pronouncing a series of words from a list (proposed by the teacher or by other mates) and looking in a little mirror (they have to bring to class) the way their tongue, lips and teeth move and articulate to produce the sounds.

13. Correct punctuation can save lives: make students reflect about the importance of punctuation both when reading and writing by showing to students a series of funny examples such as the ones in Fig. 9. Students may start reading the examples aloud and then start a debate and/or look for more examples.



Figure 9. Examples of how “pronunciation can save lives” (idea obtained from: <http://cybertext.wordpress.com/2012/11/22/a-light-hearted-look-at-how-punctuation-can-change-meaning/>)

14. Identifying sentence focus: a student reads aloud a series of sentences emphasising a different word each time, that is to say, changing the focus of the sentence in each case. The other the students have to identify where the focus is in each case. For example:

- I can't believe she told you this!*
- I **can't** believe she told you this!*
- I can't believe **she** told you this!*
- I can't believe she told **you** this!*
- I can't believe she told you **this**!*

15. Poetry reading: students have to choose a poem they particularly like and recite it in class. At the end, students will choose their favorite poetry and the best performance. This can also be done with short theatre fragments or with other texts from different genres.

Obviously, all these activities admit and benefit from introducing new aspects or adaptations. Teachers have to feel free to introduce any variable or modification they consider necessary according to their students' needs since innovation is a key aspect in order to keep students' interest.

IV. CONCLUSION

The role of English as the lingua franca nowadays makes it especially relevant the fact of being able to successfully communicate in English. This communication depends on the fact that mutual intelligibility or comprehensibility exists, and pronunciation is crucial in this respect.

From the different aspects analysed throughout this paper and from the results obtained in its corresponding research, it seems relevant to note that –despite the added difficulty arisen from the fact that a second or foreign language is normally learnt in an artificial environment– pronunciation can be taught and learnt with a wide variety of methods and activities that make students naturally and confidently improve and progress.

According to the results obtained students are motivated and seem to acknowledge the importance of pronouncing properly since, otherwise, comprehensibility would be affected and thus communication broken. Affective factors as well as a positive, reinforcing classroom atmosphere do also play a key role in pronunciation instruction. Realistically setting goals and reflecting about the feasibility of sounding “absolutely native” is an important aspect to develop and consider in pronunciation classes in order to avoid unnecessary frustration. In the same way, it is important to show positive reinforcement to those students with weaker capabilities since it is frustrating for most of them to see how some classmates have much better pronunciation than them.

As research shows, students emphasise the importance of using audiovisual means to foster imitation patterns and are aware of the importance of becoming familiar with both segmental and suprasegmental aspects. Students like variation in class activities as well as being provided with real and natural language models to imitate (together with the more traditional didactic approach offered by the coursebook). They do also need fun activities which help them to more naturally deal with pronunciation issues, helping them to forget a bit about the stress of consciously or unconsciously being subject to evaluation on the part of their peers and the teacher. In this way, students appreciate the effort devoted by teachers in order to devise activities specifically addressed to the particular needs detected in class. This involvement on the part of the teacher makes them feel more confident and valued and this positively affects their attitude to the subject and to the skill under development.

What seems clear is that students have a lot to say in their learning process; they reflect on what is good for them more than we may think at first sight and asking them is the best way to incorporate their suggestions and perceptions to our teaching and thus to their learning. Questionnaires such as the ones employed in this study can shed light on the way students want or need to be taught and even on aspects traditionally problematic or a bit abandoned.

From the results obtained it seem obvious that in a pronunciation class it is fundamental that students feel comfortable, encouraged to improve and motivated, never pushing them beyond their own will, otherwise, group or class work will negatively affect the student's learning process and eagerness instead of fostering intelligibility for use beyond the classroom.

APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 - STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND FEELINGS

AGE _____ GENDER _____
 1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= indecisive 4=agree 5= absolutely agree

1.	I am concerned about my pronunciation.	
2.	I consider “English comprehension and pronunciation” an important subject in my degree.	
3.	I think “English comprehension and pronunciation” will help me to improve my pronunciation.	
4.	I consider pronunciation a key aspect for communication.	
5.	I think English pronunciation is important for my professional future.	
6.	I can see the relevance of most of what we are taught in this subject.	
7.	I like learning English pronunciation.	
8.	I enjoy my English pronunciation lessons/classes.	

9.	I enjoy participating in games and tasks in the English pronunciation class.	
10.	I feel insecure when I have to speak in English in front of my classmates.	
11.	I could do much better when I speak in English in front of my classmates but I feel ashamed and insecure so I deliberately avoid sounding too native-like.	
12.	I want to be able to pronounce English just like native speakers.	
13.	It is very frustrating not be able to sound as an English native.	
14.	I am satisfied with my pronunciation in English.	
15.	If I have a good pronunciation, then I will feel more confident in English.	
16.	Pronunciation skills are innate.	
17.	Pronunciation skills are acquired through practice.	
18.	I think my mother tongue is a handicap for pronouncing more correctly.	
19.	Knowing the main theoretical aspects of phonetics and phonology does not ensure a good pronunciation.	
20.	I am satisfied with the effort I devote to improve my pronunciation.	
21.	It is frustrating to see how some classmates have much better pronunciation than me.	
22.	I feel that learning English pronunciation correctly is too difficult for me.	
23.	Speaking is the hardest skill to develop.	
24.	I think I will never feel satisfied with my pronunciation.	
25.	I feel nervous in my English pronunciation class.	

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 - MATERIALS, METHODS, TOOLS AND CONTENTS EMPLOYED

AGE _____

GENDER _____

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= indecisive 4=agree 5= absolutely agree

1.	I think pronunciation symbols are useful for learning pronunciation correctly.	
2.	I think English textbooks can help me to learn English pronunciation.	
3.	I think English videos and audios can help me to learn English pronunciation.	
4.	I think that singing songs in English can improve my pronunciation.	
5.	I think that repetition and imitation are important aspects to learn English pronunciation.	
6.	I think that recording myself is useful to improve my pronunciation.	
7.	The use of printed dictionaries is important for learning pronunciation.	
8.	The use of online dictionaries is important for learning pronunciation.	
9.	Students should be given more chances to speak in class.	
10.	Attending classroom activities is helpful.	
11.	The language lab is useful for pronunciation classes.	
12.	Intonation is an important aspect in order to master English pronunciation.	
13.	Intonation is a difficult aspect to learn.	
14.	Word and sentence stress is an important aspect in order to master English pronunciation.	
15.	Word and sentence stress is a difficult aspect to learn.	
16.	Correct mouth articulation is an important aspect in order to master English pronunciation.	
17.	Correct mouth articulation is a difficult aspect to learn.	
18.	Consonant sounds (voiced and unvoiced) are an important aspect in order to master English pronunciation.	
19.	Consonant sounds (voiced and unvoiced) are a difficult aspect to learn.	
20.	Vowel sounds (single (short and long) and diphthongs) are an important aspect in order to master English pronunciation.	
21.	Vowel sounds (single (short and long) and diphthongs) are a difficult aspect to learn.	
22.	I find phonetic transcription "reading" exercises useful.	
23.	I find phonetic transcription "writing" exercises useful.	
24.	I find minimal pairs exercises useful.	
25.	I find tongue twisters exercises useful.	
26.	I find written coursebook exercises useful.	
27.	I find listening coursebook exercises useful.	
28.	I find pronunciation lists useful.	
29.	I find reading aloud exercises useful.	
30.	I find dialogue enacting exercises useful.	

QUESTIONNAIRE 3 – WORK NEEDED, PERCEIVED RELEVANCE AND IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS

AGE _____

GENDER _____

IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS

1. What are the specific aspects you specially need to work on? (order them from 1 (more work needed) to 8 (less work needed))

- _____ Consonant sounds
- _____ Vowel sounds
- _____ Connected speech
- _____ Phonetic transcription production
- _____ Phonetic transcription reading
- _____ Mouth articulation

- _____ Stress
 _____ Intonation
2. How important do you consider the following pronunciation-related aspects to be? (from 1= not at all to 5= a lot)
- _____ Consonant sounds
 _____ Vowel sounds
 _____ Connected speech
 _____ Phonetic transcription production
 _____ Phonetic transcription reading
 _____ Mouth articulation
 _____ Stress
 _____ Intonation
3. How would you improve classroom activities?
 4. How would you improve students' participation?
 5. How would you improve teacher's methodology?
 6. How would you improve materials?
 7. How would you particularly improve your classmates' pronunciation skills?
 8. What specific types of activities would you suggest for improving your pronunciation?
 9. Why is pronunciation such a hard issue (in general) for Spanish students?
 10. Is there anything you would like to do in class (in order to improve your pronunciation) that has never been done before?

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A Literature Review on the Heuristics of Learning Writing, and a Discussion of Academic Rigor and (robo) Grading

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Abstract—This monograph offers a Review of the Heuristics of Teaching and Learning Writing, as well as a Discussion of Academic Rigor, software Grading and Course Policies, grounded in attitudinal research and universal learning design theory. The author's 1980's student learning preferences research is made contemporary by applying the findings of his longitudinal study of writing growth personality type predictors to current literature and drawing conclusions about how best to teach *all* content to maximize learning. In writing instruction, the Omnibus Personality Inventory study proved that *attitude* and growth in narrative writing ability *correlate*. *Moderate social extroverts* were more likely to grow in narrative writing ability than those who scored highest on extroversion; those scoring higher on the *altruism* scale were more likely to make higher writing gains. The finding that improved writers indicated a *negative* relationship with *high* impulse expression means that those improved students were more emotionally controlled and serene. That the *gainers* rated low on the *anxiety* scale supports the finding that successful writing learners had fewer fears about learning, confirming educators' hunches. That student writing improvers also indicated high scores on the altruism scale is reassuring; it also supports the finding that good curriculums build on students' positive values as pedagogy in multiple ways, not *all* of them class content related. Research of the past three decades has advanced the thesis that, unless we pay pedagogical attention to the student as a whole person with individual learning propensities, we will miss not only the "course content" mark but also likewise miss the mark of teaching the values of citizenry. Both of these worthy aims require knowing as much as we can about how best our students learn.

Index Terms—teaching, writing, learning, attitude, process, grading, academic rigor, heuristics, holism, personality

I. INTRODUCTION

This researcher is most fond of the mission of the community college and its wonderful, sometimes underprepared or overwhelmed students. Many of them are among the most engaging, genuine, unpretentious learners on the face of the earth, ranging in age, as they do with advanced placement programs, dual enrollments, re-employment retraining and senior citizens programs, from 15 to 105 years of age and with potential deep experiential fundings and resources. As just-retired NYC public schools middle-school teacher and wonderful performance poet Taylor Mali asserts, teaching is the greatest job in the world, and teaching community college students is no exception (2012, *What Teachers Make*, Introduction, Putnam). As part of my revisited student learning styles research from three decades ago in CA, I set out recently to re-confirm that student *personality orientations are predictive of learning opportunities* in the current scholarship of learning. A recent researcher finds: "The community college is a distinctly American contribution to higher education. Nowhere else in the world can one find such commitment to access to higher education. This noble endeavor also brings with it significant challenges—one of which is maintaining academic rigor" (Robert J. Exley: 2002. Vice President of Academic Affairs at Iowa Western Community College. "ACADEMIC RIGOR" NIOSD Innovations Abstracts Volume XXIV, Number 16 2).

The present author initially conducted this heuristics research and wrote an account as my MA thesis in Dec. 1980, for the then brand-new, first in the nation, Master's Program in the Teaching of Writing (MATW) at Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA. In a way, it was a follow-up to his Reed College 1978 BA thesis in Philosophy, where he not only examined the literature of Dostoevsky's major novels, but abstracted his take on how humans learn and don't learn: the important role that heuristics and learning styles play in any educational pedagogy. Lately, I have gone back through this then original research of late as a continued call to action, to inspire, even now, in the early 21st century, an educational pedagogy that considers the learning styles and personalities of students as crucial elements that we must understand much more of if we are to teach as effectively as we educators across the disciplines can. Here, then, is a quick summary of the old story of the pre-FERPA personality testing of two school districts, one, Arcata High School District, as a control, the other, Hoopa High School District, the basis of the study, which took an entire population of Native Americans high school students and looked at which personality orientations and learning styles were predictive of growth over an academic year in narrative writing ability fostered by project-trained writing instructors compared with those who were not. While such research might not be replicable in the United States today, due to understandable

federal privacy protections and restrictions, your author urges readers to consider the implications of student personality, heuristics and learning styles on 21st century learning pedagogy and future research as our profession seeks to come truly of age. Likewise, we encourage a review of even more cutting-edge research and teaching writing theory that has ensued in the past 30 years as your scribe has grown comfortable and middle-aged putting into daily practice what he learned so long ago at Humboldt University under the tutelage of alumni Ray Caver's former teachers Richard Day and Thomas Gage, along with David Boxer, Karen Carleton, Les Squire and Jim Johnson.

To expect and maintain academic rigor, educators should learn all that they can learn within the limits of federal law, district guidelines and libertarian privacy concerns, about the students' personality and motivations, the backgrounds and wills of the people who grace their classrooms. To do so is to be on the right path toward understanding, on social science and bio-chemical models and every model in between, how our students learn and don't learn, how our charges gain or regress or stay static and why, how best to teach them what we now know that they know and don't know, how best they might make that knowledge their own by matching their lexus of deep learning, be it visual, auditory, tactile, kinetics, conceptual, practical, by modeling, memorization, song mnemonics, recitation aloud, or writing low stakes summaries to communicate to others or to question... To match our students' personality strengths and opportunities with our pedagogy techniques remains the best way to foster learning, 30 years ago, today, probably forever, despite the recent MOOC platform idea that knowledge comes in a pre-packaged digital jug to be poured into the global mugs of students about whom the course-designers can know virtually nothing due to universal design constraints and the fact that the student body can run to the size of a small city.

Your author considers the so-far-ahead-of-its-time student-centeredness work of James Moffett to be contemporary on these issues, despite its origins in the 1960's-1990's. He wishes, too, that James were still here to remind we educators of what really matters in our profession (James Moffett: 1983. JMC The James Moffett Consortium website). Likewise, on the slippery slope topic of robo-grading for both *placement essays* with such software as Write-Placer (C.) and potentially the *grading of class essays*, see the clear as rainwater recent "The Washington Post web articles in" the column "The Answer Sheet" by Valerie Strauss on why "computers can't do it" (2013. "Grading." Title. *The Washington Post*, web. 26 May) and why "grading schools on test-based performance" in Virginia is "counterproductive" and reveals only that "The course grading system proposed by legislators in Richmond does a very good job of only one thing: identifying which divisions in the commonwealth are the poorest" (2013 "Superintendent." *The Washington Post web*: June 7). Moffett and others brought us into the new century by arguing that, for active classroom learning to occur, educators must know who it is they are teaching and how best those people learn. Moffett, Strauss and others also convincingly stress the art of human teaching, the human educator and human learner interacting face-to-face or at minimum dialoguing interactively online, with attention paid to the sanctity of the material and the expectations that what is to be learned is worth learning, imparted with an individualized plan that holistically integrates all we know of how our students learn. Valerie Strauss concurs that all learning worthy of the name is personal; she, like most current researchers in a field that is mostly new and not yet codified, finds that the computer software graders are highly flawed at best, still years away from challenging "John Henry," the steel driving man of ballad song and human-vs.-mechanized-machine-of-the-future-fame.

When we use computer software to "grade" essays, essentially simple binary counting programs, measuring exactly but crudely such things as syllables per word, words per sentence, sentences per paragraph, average sentence length, paragraphs per essay, we allow students or devious researchers to "game" the programs by using polysyllabic sensical or non-sensical and long, cumulative sentences that may or may not make sense yet yield high, composition one worthy scores. In permitting this, we send the undeniable message that we **do not care enough** about our students to actually **read** what they write. The teachers who feel that robo-grading software will free them up from massive course essay grading in order to teach more course "content" fool themselves and beg the obvious answer to the question of whether paper grading is "teaching." To give the human touch up to robo-grading of either placement essays or classroom written rhetoric is to give up on **real** teaching, no matter what slick rationales and political pressures and expediencies masquerade that sad fact. The ultimate educational bean-counter mentality irony is that most of the per essay/"unit" prices of robo-grading programs slightly exceed the human pay point price, which is three cents per professionally read and deliberately considered "blue" booklet at my institution. Thinking positively from now on, we should pay attention to what we already know works in the educational nexus, using the best means we know to foster deep learning in any field.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this productive vein, this researcher's long-ago Omnibus Personality Inventory study proved that attitude and growth in narrative writing ability correlate. **Moderate social extroverts** were more likely to grow in narrative writing ability than those who scored highest on extroversion; those scoring higher on the **altruism** scale were not surprisingly more likely to make higher writing gains. The finding that improved writers indicated a **negative** relationship with **high** impulse expression means that those most improved students were predisposed to be more emotionally controlled and serene, ready to learn. That the **gainers rated low on the OPI anxiety scale** supports the important finding that successful writing learners had fewer fears about learning and school, fewer fears in general, confirming educators' common sense notions about learning as well as other research. That those student writing improvers also indicated

high scores on the altruism scale is not only reassuring culturally, but it also supports the finding that good curriculums build on students' positive values and citizenry as educationally-sound pedagogy in multiple, important, ways, not *all* of them class content related. Interestingly, those students who scored high in *thinking introversion* (internalization of thought) were more likely to *regress in narrative writing* over a year of instruction, perhaps due to shyness and social anxiety, although these individuals might fare better with expository writing pre and post samples. As mentioned, those whose writing regressed showed a positive relationship with the thinking introversion category on the OPI, but they also had a *negative interest in Complexity*, and they had a low correlation with social introversion. These results suggest that rethinking of the role of student personality and motivation in learning is necessary if teachers are to help students improve their writing. Your researcher ventures to say that the research of the past three decades has further advanced the thesis that, unless we pay pedagogical attention to the student as a whole person with individual learning propensities and backgrounds, we will miss not only the "course content" mark but also likewise miss the important and ultimately larger mark of teaching the values of citizenry. Both of these worthy aims require knowing as much as we can about how best our students learn.

Others, wiser than your scribe here, before and since, have shown as I likewise found that student attitude and personality are key components in learning: that to ignore the huge role that classroom *anxiety*, for instance, plays in individual learning and the subject content acquisition gains that occur when educators can assuage student anxieties about writing, math, science, art, or physical education, whatever the feared topic might be. To ignore or not help alleviate that state of learning angst, often through building a sense of a safe classroom community of peer learners and with the teacher as separate but equal learner, is to put aside a human educational tool that we know works. That would not be wise pedagogy. Wise pedagogy is what we seek here, what we all want, all of us, is it not? We likewise all want what is best for our students as whole persons in and beyond the classroom, as citizens. These heuristic factors ought to be considered in the "universal learning design," to use a 21st century term, in the setting of course policies, such as absence and lateness policies, even the multiple means we provide our class materials in to accommodate not only those with documented disabilities but to benefit those students who have varied learning preferences. This researcher ventured to go out on a limb here and say that heuristic factors and the overcoming of individual educational obstacles ought to enter the professoriate's calculus of grading, that growth, genuine effort and personal epiphanies ought to matter not only for students between final grades as a "rounder" but as grading rubric criteria themselves.

Here is what Vice President Robert Exley says about the student as a whole person and our educational mission: "In November 1999, The Center for Academic Integrity distributed copies of 'The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity' (www.academicintegrity.org). This powerful treatise identifies the core values necessary for academic integrity and at its outset identifies the premise for why academic integrity matters: 'Academic integrity is essential to the success of our mission as educators. It also provides a foundation for responsible conduct in our students' lives after graduation (p. 2). We must consider the moral definition of academic integrity as we deal with the issues of academic rigor" (Exley: 2010. "ACADEMIC RIGOR IN THE OPENDOOR COLLEGE" 2-3). It seems clear that we educators are helping to build more than text takers or in-class writing-as-a-means-of-testing knowledge-regurgitating automatons, far more in fact. We play a vital role in building citizens, neighbors, community members, in short, in ensuring our own one-equals-all futures as planetary, fully-human brothers and sisters. The results of this researcher's long-ago study of student personality and attitude orientation and their influence on growth in narrative writing ability, and more-federally privacy law restricted research done since do more than suggest this attitude toward the whole learner in all education fields: those results and most of the few studies since demand this attitude, not a business model of student outcomes product and multiple choice, test-based education. The U.S. federal government abandoned the business model in its Program Planning Budget System (PPBS) *for all departments but the Department of Education* not long after President Johnson's "System 60's" model influenced by Robert MacNamara's Defense Department economic model for war, which emphasized Vietnam jungles' body counts in a cost/benefit analysis (Rivlin: 1971). Educators have long known that cumulative grades are the best indicator of student success, grades given holistically by teachers, not tied to objective testing, which works best only in the sciences and ignores real but intangible-on-multiple-choice-tests growth in the Humanities and in other fields (Moffett: 1992). 19th and early 20th Century American school heads were called "education philosophers" and principals called "*the principal teacher,*" who was not solely and administrator but *taught* as well (Farrell: 2013). The below results of this student heuristics and writing learning researcher suggest that we have lost our way by the continued and unfortunate in the Humanities emphasis on the business model of education which does not by design assess the *means and techniques and learning preferences of real learning*.

Writing Diagnostic Results

In the sample-wide survey with 57 sets of complete data, Hoopa High students showed a mean improvement of .72 on the holistic scale. For the sample, the standard deviation was 1.76, indicating that those students who improved and those who regressed did so *substantially*. In all, 30 students improved over the year, 17 showed no growth, and 10 regressed. Since each paper received 2 combined scores from the 6 point holistic criteria, a total possible gain from 2 points to 12 was possible for each student. Hence, the .72 improvement figure indicates a 7% growth rate for the sample. This is significant, especially considering the extremely low growth rate in the Humboldt State University study cited earlier (growth of 2% university wide). Parenthetically, a three-year research project at Wisconsin State University in-

licated that as many students scored lower on an identical "pre" and "post" A.C.T. English Usage Test after taking Freshman composition as scored higher (Eulert: 1979). Clearly, any growth suggests successful instruction in writing and student learning: here *three times* as many students improved as regressed. (See Table 1 for a breakdown of the writing diagnostic results).

Of the 30 students whose scores improved, there was a mean gain of 2.0 on the scale with a standard deviation of 1.21. It seems that those who improved over the year made great strides: these students showed a phenomenal **20% growth** in narrative writing ability.

Of the 17 students who showed no growth, there was, of course, no improvement, though this does not mean that these particular subjects were poor writers. Some of these students scored quite high on the "pre" test but earned the same score on the "post" sample. This statistic means simply what it says: there was no growth in writing ability over a year of instruction.

Of the 10 students whose scores dropped, there was a mean regression of -1.90 on the holistic scale with a standard deviation of .83. This supports the finding that those who regressed, like those who improved, changed *substantially*. These students, though few in number, regressed in writing ability at a 19% rate.

III. GROWTH IN WRITING AND O.P.I. SCALE CORRELATION: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Running the first deck of cards containing the data for the whole sample revealed low correlations among all of the scales on the O.P.I. and improvement in writing¹. This researcher had planned to run separate decks for each of the three subgroups in the sample: those who improved on the gain score, those who stayed the same, and those who regressed. In this way, I could find differences in the personality orientations of each of three groups and determine how those differences may have effected growth in writing.

This technique did yield stronger correlations, both positive and negative.

The "Intellectual Disposition Category" and its six scales correlated weakly with gain scores on the whole sample. The subgroup of 30 improvers showed weak and even negative correlations with "intellectual disposition." The subgroup of 17 students with no gain scores showed, of course, no correlations. Surprisingly, it was the group of 10 writing regressors who displayed higher correlations with the scales composing the "Intellectual Disposition Category." (Please see Table 2 for whole sample and subgroup scale correlation results).

The Thinking Introversion (TI) scale showed a weak .18 correlation with writing gain scores from the whole sample. This is not significant. Likewise, the isolated group of 30 improvers had only a .18 correlation with TI. Contrary to my expectations, *the writing regressors had a .37 correlation with Thinking Introversion*. This is contrary to Heist and Youngs' finding in their above mentioned study of graduate students where TI correlated at over .30 (r of .24 to be significant at the .05 level) with a faculty rating of written performance. This also seems to conflict with Trent and Medskers' finding that students who persist in college are more receptive to growth in intellectual disposition. (Trent and Medsker: 1967, *Beyond High School*, CRDHE, University of California Berkeley, p. 151).

Why did the regressors tend to have a higher personal interest in a broad range of ideas? Perhaps the answer to this question has to do with the type of writing sample used in the study: *perhaps students with higher TI scale scores are able to write better in the expository mode than in narrative*. Perhaps Thinking Introversion tends not to manifest itself in narrative writing in a like manner to Heist and Young's finding that high intellectual dispositions do not reflect in college grades.

The Theoretical Orientation (TO) scale correlated even less with improvement in writing for all of the study groups. In the whole sample, there was a .08 correlation: in the subgroup of 30 improvers there was a .04 relationship, and among the 10 regressors the correlation was a negative one, -.07. Though this negative correlation reflects my intuition that students with *theoretical interests write better*, the insignificant positive correlation among the improvers offers little proof of that hunch.

One disturbing finding of the Wisconsin study cited previously was that most of the students scored extremely low on the "aesthetic" scale of the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey (1931)"Study of Values" profile, their instrument used to assess personality. Since Heist and Young had demonstrated that their Estheticism (ES) scale correlated at .61 or better (r of .20 to be significant at the .01 level) with the "aesthetic" scale on the "Study of Values," I wanted to determine whether Hoopa's students would also do poorly on this measure of diverse interests in all artistic matters, including literature and drama. This hypothesis was borne out: the mean score on the ES scale of the O.P.I. was a mere 8.79 out of 24 items. It seems that many young people are not all that concerned with matters of esthetics. I mention this only because the Wisconsin project found little relation between success in the composition course and importance placed on esthetic values. The study planner has refrained from examining the mean scores for the sample on each of the separate scales, except as they relate to writing ability. However, a very interesting personality profile of the young student would emerge from this sample should someone choose to do so. Perhaps someday, in a time when Cyber computers are replaced with those much faster and smaller, another researcher or an older version on me will want to take up this calling...

¹ Kathy Keech, Director of Writing Assessments for CRDHE at U.C. Berkeley, has determined that correlations from .1-.25 are "low" in education research, while correlations from .25-.59 are moderately "strong," and those above .6 are very "high."

Corresponding to the Wisconsin findings, my sample showed *no relationship* between the writing gain score and the O.P.I.'s Estheticism scale. For the whole sample there was a slight negative correlation of $-.01$: for the writing improvers there was a $-.04$ relationship, and for the regressors a $.15$ correlation. Esthetic interests seem to have nothing to do with improvement in narrative writing.

Correlations with the Complexity (CO) scale are again low, although there was a *surprise*. The whole sample had a $.04$ relationship with the writing gain score and the subgroup of 30 improvers showed a negative correlation of $-.17$, neither of which are statically significant. The writing regressors, however, had a stronger negative correlation of $-.28$, which suggests that those students who display a weaker interest in novel and sometimes complex ideas also tended to be weak in their ability to write. Strangely, Trent and Medsker found that many college dropouts scored high in the CO scale. They *say*: "It may be too, that many of the withdrawals, higher than the persisters to start with in complexity of outlook, intellectual curiosity, and tolerance for ambiguity as measured by the Complexity scale, sought more from their college experience than did many persisters" (Trent and Medsker: 1967, p. 151). Is there some fault in college curriculums that keeps these students from persisting? *More specifically, is there something in high schools' composition programs that lets students with little interest in complexity become "writing dropouts," less able to write a good narrative piece at the end of the year?* The answer is a mystery.

Although the author had anticipated a strong relationship between the Autonomy (AU) scale and the writing gain score, the numbers just weren't there. In fact, there was another surprise. The whole sample showed a correlation of $.16$ and the improvers had a $-.10$ relationship, **but the writing regressors showed a $.33$ correlation between AU and decline in writing ability**. It looks as though those students who display more independent critical thinking, not necessarily subject to traditional norms, are likely to *decrease* in narrative writing ability. This researcher was genuinely puzzled by this finding. This researcher considers a sense of autonomy a highly desirable trait, one that would probably help one's writing ability. Clearly, we need to know more about this causal relationship. Looking into its heuristic objectively has already yielded a new arena of research for the future.

Religious Orientation (RO), the last scale in the "Intellectual Disposition Category," showed positive correlations with all of the groups in my study. In the whole sample, there was an insignificant $.08$ relationship, and, among the writing improvers, an even smaller $.01$ one. *Among the writing regressors there was a $.34$ correlation*: This again tells us something unusual but definitive in the data. The RO scale measures a tolerance for religious flexibility: high scorers in RO are often skeptical of conventional religious beliefs, especially those that are orthodox or fundamentalistic. Hence, our writing regressors were *more tolerant and liberal in their religious thinking* than those who *improved*. The evidence seems to support the hypothesis that students of a more traditional religious orientation improve more readily in narrative writing. Again, we need more research in this area. It might be instructive to track, should the sensitive information be volunteered, just which students at Hoopa attend the small Christian church on the reservation. In interview with the minister there, post hoc, revealed that the church has irregular hours and is poorly attended, many Hoopa adults and youth being subsumed with social struggles, alcoholism, high unemployment, subsistence salmon and steelhead fishing via gill-netting on the Klamath and illegal activity such as marijuana cultivation on a larger scale on reservation-area farms.

So far, considering just the scales in the "Intellectual Disposition Category," the findings read like a "Who's Who in declining writing ability." Several factors seem to be predictive to some degree in accounting for regression in narrative writing ability: none seem to be predictive of improvement. What factors do have to do with successful writing improvement? God knows we all have our intuitions, and anecdotal theories abound, but our newborn educational science affords precious little empirical data causative of writing growth. The best empirical indications could find came from the Wisconsin study.

They found five significant factors that are predictive of success in the composition course, and hopefully, by extension, in writing. First, the number of semesters of high school English, more than the particular curricula, had an effect on success in the college composition class. Second, the student's opinion of his high school instruction matters: students who were poorly prepared and who had negative attitudes toward their teachers tended to fail; well-prepared students tended to rate their high school teachers more realistically and succeeded more often. Third, the student's score on the "economic" scale of the **Study of Values** was predictive: the higher the concern for pragmatic matters of money, the lower a student's performance in composition tended to be. (We will soon see a similar pattern with the related O.P.I. scales). Fourth, the student's score on the "social" scale of the Study of Values was predictive. (We could reasonably expect the O.P.I. to verify this). Last, the student's change in *attitude* toward English from pre-test to post-test was *important*: a good attitude upon entering college had no relationship to later success; **change** was the necessary factor. Students with a beginning negative attitude were as likely to do well as those with beginning good attitudes if neither changed, and students with poor attitudes who decided that they liked English more after the course*actually improved greatly. (Eulert) These, then, are items of note. We shall soon see if any of the scales in the "Social Emotional Disposition Category" co-oberate these findings. Before doing even this, we should verify what items *do not* seem to affect student learning in the English class.

Eulert's report on the Wisconsin project indicates several factors that do not effect student performance greatly, some of these are confirmed by the correlations we have reviewed. As mentioned, beginning student attitude toward the course makes no Difference, and likewise parental attitude toward college success has little effect on actual student

success. Neither the student's own rating of his effort to excel, nor his attitude toward college in general matters much. Also, the numbers of papers written and the size of the high school he/she came from have no import. Significantly, the importance a student placed on esthetic values had little bearing on success in the college composition course. This finding is confirmed by the lack of a significant correlation with student scores at Hoopa High between our writing gain scores and the Estheticism scale of the O.P.I. Likewise, the importance a student places on theoretical values had no relationship to success in the composition course at Wisconsin State University. Again, this fact seems to concur with the lack of a significant correlation between the Theoretical Orientation scale on the O.P.I. and the narrative writing gain scores. Further, the Wisconsin study showed that the students' orientation toward political and religious values had little effect on success. While my study has yet to assess the importance of political values, the above finding confirms the conclusion that religious values do not correlate directly with growth in English as evidenced by the O.P.I. Finally, the student's quartile rating on the A.C.T. Usage Test and the amount of emphasis placed on grammar by the college English instructor have little or no effect on success in the course. Another nail has been driven into the coffin of teaching and assessing grammar by itself.

Impulse Expression has little to do with written Self-expression in narrative writing, at least as measured by the O.P.I. Perhaps even narrative writing is too deliberate an act to assuage uninhibited spontaneous impulses. Also, there was no relationship between high impulse expression and regression in narrative writing, although Heist and Young have demonstrated an inverse relationship between IE and college grades.

The Personal Integration (PI) scale correlated negatively at $-.10$ with writing gain scores for the whole sample and at a positive $.10$ with the writing improvers. This somewhat insignificant correlation tends to back up an intuitive feeling that students with high personal integration would tend to write better. The evidence is inconclusive, however. The writing regressors also displayed a $.09$ relationship between Personal integration and the writing gain score. I might add that there was a large standard deviation of 10 points out of 55 on the PI scale among Hoopa students, which indicates *variety* in the students' personal integration.

The mean Anxiety Level scale score at Hoopa was fairly high at 11.9 out of a possible 20 items. More specifically, there was a negative $-.02$ correlation between anxiety, level and the writing component for the whole sample. Surprisingly, there was a $.23$ correlation between the anxiety level scale scores and the writing gain scores of the writing improvers. It is important to note here that the Anxiety Level scale is an inverse one: that is, *the more a student admits to feelings of anxiety when answering the O.P.I.' questions, the less anxious the student AL in actuality*. Hence, a high Anxiety Level (AL) score indicates a lack of anxiety in the student. Therefore, our writing improvers tended to be less anxious and exhibit less symptoms of anxiety than those in the rest of the sample. The writing regressors showed a negative $-.12$ relationship with AL. Can it be that the lack of anxiety is a factor in growth in writing ability? In other words, is anxiety an important factor inhibiting student learning? My findings tentatively indicate that it is. The writing class that reduces anxiety among students appears to be the most successful one. I should note that many comprehensive student surveys, including Daly and Millers' work, have shown composition courses to be the most feared classes in college. They found apprehension to "negatively affect" communication. (Anthony Petroskey: 1976, summary report on John A. Daly and Michael D. Millers' findings in "Research Roundup," *English Journal*, Dec., p. 74).

The "Miscellaneous Category" containing the last four scales of the O.P.I. shows us probably the clearest picture of the relationship between personality factors and growth in writing. When examining the Altruism (AY) scale of the Miscellaneous Category, it is important to note that Heist and Young found a significant negative correlation of $-.48$ (r of $.20$ required, to be significant at $.01$ level) between the economic scale on the Study of Values and AM. This indicates a moderately strong inverse relationship between the economic scale which had been found to be predictive of success in the college course and the O.P.I.'s Altruism scale. Also, the social scale in the *Study of Values* was shown by Heist and Young to correlate at $.46$ with Altruism. Keeping this in mind, there was a $.20$ correlation between Altruism and the whole sample, which indicates a definite but low relationship between high Altruism scale scores and growth in writing. Also, there was a $.21$ relationship between the improvers and Altruism, a slightly stronger figure that weakly supports the intuition that students with a concern for the welfare of their fellow men also tend to be more receptive to growth in writing ability. In line with this interpretation, there was a weaker $.14$ relationship between the writing regressors and the Altruism scale. Given the fact that the economic scale from the Study of Values is inversely related to altruism, and given the fact that a high economic scale score was shown to correlate negatively with success in the composition course in the Wisconsin study, it should be stressed that one could expect altruism to correlate positively with success on the writing diagnostic score. This did occur, supporting the notion, although the positive relationship between Altruism and the writing gain scores was not as high as one might expect. Likewise, the Wisconsin study determined that the social scale in the *Study of Values indicated that the students with a concern for people and issues outside themselves also tended to do well in the composition course*. Given the above mentioned relationship between this social scale and Altruism, we could expect the same sort of relationship to occur with growth in writing. Again, this did happen although the correlation *is* not highly conclusive.

The Practical Outlook (PO) scale, a measure of utilitarian or practical orientations, correlated strongly in Heist and Young's findings with the above-mentioned economic scale from the *Study of Values*. The correlation between them was a $.62$ (r of $.20$ required, to be significant at the $.01$ level). Also, there was a negative correlation between Practical Outlook on the O.P.I. and the esthetic scale from the *Study of Values*. For my whole sample, there was $.10$ correlation

between PO and growth in writing, and among the writing improvers there was a .08 correlation. Among the writing regressors there was a negative -.14 correlation between PO and the writing component. The *Study of Values* economic scale prepared us to expect that high economic scores or large concerns with practical matters of money tend to correlate **inversely** with success in the composition course. Thus, we might expect our similar Practical Outlook scale also to correlate inversely with success in the writing gain score. This was not confirmed as our writing improvers had a small positive correlation with Practical Outlook. This researcher would conjecture, however, that writing in another mode, *exposition* for instance, would be inversely related with high practical orientation scores. I would also expect a positive correlation between such factors as theoretic orientation and thinking introversion, and growth on an expository writing scale. However, this remains to be researched in our 21st century.

As might be expected, there were insignificant correlations between the Masculinity-Femininity scale scores and the Response Bias scale scores, and growth in writing. The masculinity-Fem-ininity scale showed a negative relationship with growth in writing for the whole sample. I was never interested in pursuing the relationship between this scale score and writing. Also, the Response Bias showed a negative -.02 relationship with growth in writing for the sample. Obviously, these scales from the O.P.I. are designed to be helpful when looking at other factors. The response bias in particular gives us a measure of the test taker's attitude and would not be expected to correlate strongly with growth in writing. I should note, however, that there was a .23 correlation between the Response Bias scale and the writing improvers. This indicates that those students who grew over the year on the writing diagnostic scale also had higher response biases when taking the O.P.I. In other words, one shouldn't take oneself too seriously. It appears the students who grew over the course of the year in writing ability also tended to dislike participating in standardized testing situations more than those who stayed the same or regressed,

This project has generated a wealth of data that has not yet-been examined. I have not examined the individual scale scores for the entire high school and what they tell us by themselves about the Hoopa School District student profile. Moreover, there is also the question of other variables that could be correlated with the O.P.I. scale scores. Perhaps improvement is not necessarily the best variable to concentrate on when correlating writing ability with each of the O.P.I. scale scores. Perhaps it would be even more beneficial to look at where the students scored on the holistic-scale during both portions of the writing sample and to search for the corresponding correlations with the scale scores. Perhaps a mean score indicating the student's place on the holistic writing scale during both the "pre" and "post" test would be a more beneficial variable to test against personality factors. This then would tell us how high scoring writers, medium scoring writers, and low scoring writers correlate with the various personality orientations. Perhaps this would be a useful project and natural next examination using the wealth of untapped and likely soon to be barred by pending federal student privacy regulations data that I already have on hand and have extracted voluntarily with the cooperation of a whole school district. This researcher likewise was lucky to have the district permission of Arcata High School, predominately white, to preform norming testing the year before the Hoopa research project on the reservation much testing of other types, mostly social services or I.Q. testing related, must have seemed almost punitive in the past. Does one hear any takers to mine further diamonds of early inquiry and findings from the seeming dross but really invaluable wealth of the extensive data collected by this researcher not then yet bound by restrictive federal protections?

IV. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Before summarizing what this researcher learned about attitude and learning and began to put into practice 30 years ago at Humboldt State University, let him reinforce the importance of what we educators do when we use all the information at hand, including frequent face-to-face individual conferencing with our students and outright talking with them, one-to-one and in class publically, about how we can best get through to them the course material, to give them every opportunity at semester-long mastery of the material and its integration into their *lives*. Robert Lemanson, in the preface to his fine book on pedagogy and our mission as teachers, says succinctly that we should work with "what we have and what we know, playing the hand we are dealt," not attempting to "undo past education" but, instead, starting "where we and they are." Lemanson argues convincingly of what to do with underprepared students that: "Most of us learn, sometimes slowly, sometimes painfully that the people we interact with-spouses, lovers, offspring, colleagues' supervisors-are unique individuals with their own of characteristics, predilections, and personality traits. So it is that a student might be brilliant and irresponsible or illiterate and charming. The student is a whole person. We do our best work when we provide whatever help is most needed. This implies some degree of personal knowledge of the individuals we teach, and an appreciation of young people in general. While the average age of students entering college is generally increasing, most first-year students are still quite young adults-almost adults. They are our lumpy raw material. To be effective as teachers we must deal with first-year students in all aspects of their person, their strengths, their faults and their shortcomings. We might have to do more for students now than we would have in the past, but this is the hand that we have been dealt" (Leamnsion: 2010. Preface *Thinking About Teaching and Learning*).

This emphasis on the student as a whole person, part of a community of learners, is refreshing, and it harkens back to an earlier era when respect for the individual and his or her role in their own learning *process*, assisted by educators who care about *both* the material and their classroom citizens and who take the time and make the effort to learn how their students learn best. Researcher Leamnsion is no doubt also a fine teacher. Consider this *d'q̃ à vu* all over again position:

I don't believe that there is much about teaching that can be called new. Certainly the appearance of computers, electronic classrooms, distance learning and the like are all new technologies and many teachers will have to learn some new tricks to take advantage of the technology. But I consider technologies and techniques in general to be more peripheral than central to the business of teaching. It is the "core of education," to use Elmore's (1966) phrase, that remains unchanged. This core is what it always has been, a *personal interaction between teacher and student, no matter the technology*. When students and their learning problems become central, technologies, methods, and techniques, both new and old, will be used with reason. New teaching innovations are largely sound practices dusted off and updated. For example, cooperative learning has been practiced with great benefit for many years, but it is now getting wide exposure and more formal organization. Active learning has always been, for most teachers, the only kind there was, but now it is becoming more formalized and consciously practiced (Leamson: 2010. Preface *Thinking About Teaching and Learning*).

Now we are ready to go back to the future, to the past that sometimes informs us the best. We are ready, as educators, to consider the student as a whole person infused with experiences, learning preferences, individual motivations and demons, to consider *all* of this in everything pedagogical from our mapping of our teaching strategy, to our multiple means of class content delivery, to re-examining our rigorous course policies and grading standards to maximize learning in as many of our student charges as is humanly possible, all the while emphasizing the classroom positivity and reward that we *know* works better than punishment in long-term learning in both face-to-face and virtual classroom communities.

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James Andrew Freeman, born in Montreal, Canada, the son of a military father then in Medical School at McGill University and a teacher mother, James Andrew Freeman was born March 27th, 1956. He earned a Master of Arts in English with a teaching writing concentration (MATW) from Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA, USA, in Dec., 1980 with High Honors, completed the literature program concentration in June, 1981; earned a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy with a literature minor at Reed College in Portland, OR in June, 1978, Phi Beta Kappa; and an Associate of Arts degree in English journalism at Shasta College, Redding, CA in June 1976 with High Honors.

He has taught creative writing, composition and literature at Bucks County Community College as Professor of Language and Literature in Newtown, PA since 1982; taught etymology, debate forensics, Greek mythology, brain physiology, model rocketry, creative writing and SAT verbal preparation at the George School/Thomas Edison University Summer Academic Residential Camps in Newtown, PA from 1987-1998; taught English at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, OR from 1981-82 as Visiting Assistant Professor and Writing Center Director; at Humboldt State University as a Lecturer in English and Philosophy from 1978-1981; taught writing, photography and wilderness experience for the Federal Upward Bound High School Summer Program in Arcata, CA in 1978-1981; and tutored writing at Shasta College from 1974-1976. He is widely published with 17 books and numerous articles, including *Irish Wake: In Loving Memory of Us All* (Baltimore, MD: PublishAmerica, 2011); *Ishi's Journey from the Center to the Edge of the World* (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph, 2006, 1992); and *Never the Same River Twice* (with Phyllis Carol Agins, Winter Park, FL: Charles B. McFadden, 1995). Attitude, personality orientation, learning preferences, universal design and growth in writing ability heuristics research are his pedagogical passions, in addition to growing an active creative writing career. He presents frequently at teachers' conferences, such as at the Asilomar, CA Teachers of English annual seminar, the Philadelphia Writing Conference, and the Two Year College Northeast Region annual conferences.

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An Investigation on English Reading Strategy Use in Major-related Materials among Native and Foreign Language Learners

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Abstract—Researches on L2 learning strategy have always been focus in applied linguistics. Meanwhile, as one of the most vital ways to access knowledge, researches on L2 reading strategy attract more and more attention. However, cross-cultural comparison, especially between native learners and L2 learners, can be hardly seen in the circle of L2. This study adopts the questionnaire of the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) designed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) to investigate the use of strategies of 149 college students (valid questionnaires) from Beihang University (BUAA) and University of Colorado Boulder (UCBoulder) majoring in Economics while reading major-related materials in English. Results of this study reveals that, firstly, the use of reading strategy for both Chinese and the US learners fall into medium to high level, and Chinese learners report a higher use of strategy in general than their American counterparts. Secondly, except meta-cognitive strategy, there are significant differences between Chinese and the US learners in cognitive and support strategy; but both the US and Chinese learners display a similar strategy preference, in other words, all learners prefer to use cognitive strategy, followed by meta-cognitive strategy and support strategy.

Index Terms—English reading strategy, major-related reading, native learners, foreign language learners

I. INTRODUCTION

In language learning, reading is regarded as a major source of input, and for many EFL learners, it is the most important skill in an academic context (Grabe, 1991). In addition, reading can help learners to extend their general knowledge of the world. In the context of China, as Chinese learners are learning in an acquisition-poor environment, they need to depend on reading for language and culture immersion. The crucial importance of the reading skill in academic contexts had led to considerable research on reading in a second language. However, early research in second language reading was, to a considerable extent, informed by native-language (English) reading research and was considered as simple extensions of research trends in first language reading. Much of the early research in ESL reading adopted Goodman's point of view that reading is a "psycholinguistic guessing game" during which readers can make prediction about the content of passage according to the linguistic clues as well as his prior experience. It is a complex cognitive process in which reader and the text interact to (re)create meaningful discourse (Silberstein, 2002:x). It is a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text, even between the reader and the author (Widdowson, 1999, cited in Hedge, 2002:188).

Reading strategies are defined as the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively and make sense of what they are reading (Barnett 1988). Many studies have provided sufficient evidence for the efficacy of strategy training (Carrel, Pharis, and Liberto, 1989, cited in Hedge, 2002:80-81; Liu and Zuo, 2006). A number of empirical investigations have been conducted to show the positive role of meta-cognitive strategies in reading comprehension (Block, 1992; Carrel, 1989; Olshavsky, 1976-1977). Alsheikh and Mokhtari (2011) examined the use of meta-cognitive strategies by native speakers of Arabic when reading in English and Arabic and found that Arabic native speakers use more strategies when reading in English than reading in Arabic. Most of the research in the reading strategies of second language learners has dealt with learners at lower levels of proficiency or those studying at the secondary school or in pre-university programs (Block, 1986; Carrell et al., 1989; Anderson, 1999). Research on the reading strategies of advanced or proficient second language learners or that comparing the strategies of such learners with those of native speakers is rare. Therefore, the present study is intended to fill that gap by reporting on a study which compares the reading strategies of Chinese college learners with those of native-English-speaking American college learners, and performs a search for a more accurate and complete characterization of second language readers.

II. METHODOLOGY

The main aims in this study are to find out the differences in reading strategy use between learners in China and the

US while reading major-related materials, and the author attempts to identify the relationship between English proficiency and reading strategy use. To attain these research aims, a questionnaire is administered to students in Beihang University and University of Colorado Boulder respectively.

A. *Research Questions*

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types and frequency of English reading strategy used by the US and Chinese learners respectively?
2. Are there any significant differences between Chinese and the US learners in their reported use of reading strategies while reading major-related materials?

B. *Subjects*

The subjects in this study consisted of 149 college learners (73 Chinese and 76 Americans). The learners, who were predominantly undergraduate seniors in China and juniors in the US, were admitted to their respective universities for full-time academic study, representing majors in Economics. Background information collected during the course of the study indicated that, among the 73 Chinese learners, 47 are males and 26 are females by gender with the average age of 22.53; among the 76 American learners, gender distribution is 51 males vs. 25 females with the mean age of 22.14. In this study, 92 (73 available) Chinese seniors in Beihang University (BUAA) and 84 (76 available) American juniors in University of Colorado Boulder (CUBoulder) are chosen to perform a questionnaire on English reading strategies while reading major-related materials. All of them major in international finance or international trade. The reasons why the author choose Beihang University are based on: (1). BUAA is a renowned key university in China, and its learners and faculty pertain to advanced level, so it is available to ensure the quality of learners as well as curricula in international standard; (2). School of Economics and Management in BUAA pays more attention to improve learners' English proficiency, and in addition to the specialized English course, the school also offers several specialized courses in English, to some extent, to ensure the learners' English proficiency, especially the ability to read English literature; (3). As one of pioneers of the National College English reform, BUAA owns natural advantages in college English teaching, and learners' English proficiency is generally higher than that of learners in non-pilot universities. CUBoulder has a relative high rank among public universities in the US and similar to BUAA, CUBoulder is also famous for sciences. Both universities have gender distribution in common, that is, the number of male learners is higher than that of females.

What's more, the author used College English Test 4 (CET4) as a main indicator to reflect Chinese students' English proficiency. Those whose scores were under 425 (unqualified) were excluded from this study. In addition, the author took those undergraduate learners passing CET6 (≥ 425) as proficient non-native learners to compare with native English learners. Finally, there were totally 92 Chinese students taking part in the investigation and 73 are qualified ($CET4 \geq 425$). All of Chinese learners had passed CET4 and their self-reported scores range from 428 to 649 with a mean of 531.28, while 34 of them also got the certification of CET6 with the average score of 546.7. And a course of English in Economics was arranged in the third year to help them read major-related materials.

When it comes to American learners, a total of 84 learners participated in the test and 76 questionnaires were valid. Among these 76 learners, their self-reported English scores in ACT varied from 22 to 35 with a mean of 28.53. Considering their English scores in ACT, 34 proficient learners were picked out (English scores in $ACT \geq 30$).

C. *Instrument*

The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) is adopted to measure the perceived use of the type and frequency of strategies by post-secondary learners while reading academic materials in English typically encountered in secondary school and college. The SORS consists of 28 items, in the form of a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("I never or almost never do this") to 5 ("I always or almost always do this"). A background questionnaire was administered along with the SORS statements, asking learners to provide information about their age, gender, and scores of CET 4 and 6 for Chinese learners and ACT scores for American learners in reading English. The SORS measures three broad categories of reading strategies, namely, meta-cognitive strategies (10 items), cognitive strategies (12 items), and support strategies (6 items) (See Appendix)

D. *Data Collection Procedure*

The SORS instrument was administered to the subjects in a similar way in China and the US. It was administered during a regular class period, with the help of the classroom instructors who were familiar with the overall objective of the research project. After a brief overview of the purpose of the study, a description of the instrument, and an explanation of the steps involved in completing it, the learners were instructed to read each of the 28 statements in the SORS inventory, and circle the number which best described their perceived use of the strategies. On the average, the US learners completed it in 12 minutes, while it took the Chinese learners nearly 16 minutes.

III. RESULTS

After collecting the data and discarding the invalid ones, 149 (73 in China and 76 in the US) valid questionnaires had been chosen for data analyses. All data were inputted in SPSS 13.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Science), where

descriptive analyses, independent sample t-test were conducted. In regard to all statistical analyses, the significance value is defined as $P=0.05$.

A. Overall Use of Reading Strategies

In Table 3.1 MRS, CRS and SRS are used to describe the integrated trend of meta-cognitive, cognitive and support reading strategies. Chinese learners report a more frequent use of all three categories than the US learners. Except CRS whose mean equals 3.58 for Chinese student, all the rest strategies are used at medium level. Therefore, it can be seen that the mean of ORS in the two groups all fall into medium level.

TABLE 3.1
DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF ORS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINESE LEARNERS

items	Strategy	US		CHN		t	Sig.
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
MRS	Meta-cognitive reading strategies	3.24	0.406	3.34	0.464	-1.330	0.186
CRS	Cognitive reading strategies	3.45	0.356	3.58	0.416	-2.112	0.036
SRS	Support reading strategies	2.56	0.576	3.16	0.562	-6.389	0.000
ORS	Overall reading strategies	3.09	0.349	3.36	0.363	-4.712	0.000

With the exception of MRS ($p=0.186$), the p values of the rest two categories indicate statistically significant differences between the two groups, esp. SRS with $p=0.000$. As a result, significant differences of ORS ($p=0.000$) exist between the US and Chinese learners.

B. Differences in the Use of Meta-cognitive Reading Strategies

TABLE 3.2
DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF MRS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINESE LEARNERS

items	Strategy	US		CHN		t	Sig.
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
M1	Setting Purpose for reading	3.37	1.069	3.44	1.014	-0.409	0.683
M2	Previewing text before reading	2.75	1.287	3.45	1.119	-3.548	0.001
M3	Checking how text content fits purpose	3.39	1.059	3.40	1.127	-0.014	0.989
M4	Noting text characteristics	2.79	1.170	2.96	1.123	-0.901	0.369
M5	Determine what to read	3.08	1.124	3.48	1.094	-2.107	0.037
M6	Using text features	3.22	1.115	3.45	1.248	-1.179	0.240
M7	Using context clues	3.18	1.104	3.30	1.037	-0.667	0.506
M8	Using typographical aids	3.96	0.999	3.12	1.269	4.279	0.000
M9	Predicting or guessing text meaning	3.39	1.034	3.51	1.069	-0.651	0.516
M10	Confirming predictions	3.08	1.080	3.25	1.115	-0.932	0.353

From Table 3.2, it could be found that apart from M8: *Using typographical aids*, Chinese learners demonstrate a more frequent use of the 9 remaining meta-cognitive reading strategies ($t<0$); and, the means of all MET for Chinese and American learners are above 2.40 falling into medium level, which indicates a moderate use of MET while reading; there is only one MET--M8 lying in high level in the US learners' responses.

Independent samples t test shows that 3 of the 10 MET reveal statistically significant differences between two groups, including M2 ($p=0.001$): *Previewing text before reading*, M5 ($p=0.037$): *Determine what to read*, M8 ($p=0.000$): *Using typographical aids*. Among them, M2 ($p=0.001$, $t=-3.548$) and M5 ($p=0.037$, $t=-2.107$) are the two strategies more often used by Chinese learners than the US learners, but M8 ($p=0.000$, $t=4.279$) represents an opposite tendency. In other words, Chinese learners would like to plan their awareness as a whole before reading and the US learners prefer noticing typographical characteristics while reading. In addition, both M2 ($p=0.001$) and M8 ($p=0.000$) indicate more significant difference than M5 ($p<0.05$). Finally, besides these differences, through t-test we can still observe the relatively balanced preference for M1 ($p=0.683$) and M3 ($p=0.989$).

C. Differences in the Use of Cognitive Reading Strategies

In Table 3.3, it can be seen that none of the 12 CRS is used in low level by Chinese and the US learners and 6 of 12 COG for the US learners and 8 of 12 COG for Chinese learners reached high level used strategies. Chinese learners report better use of 8 items than that of the US learners, while the US learners do well in the other 4 COG. The highest frequency of strategy use in each group concerns about attention to the reading process, comprising C4 (*Trying to stay focused on reading*) for the US learners and C6 (*Paying close attention to reading*) for Chinese learners. Chinese learners report a minimum level use of C2 (*Reading aloud when text becomes hard*) while C9 (*Evaluating what is read*) is the least used one reported by the US learners. It is worthy of being noticed that the US learners demonstrate a little stronger central tendency in both top and bottom strategies with standard deviation of 0.792 (C4 in the US) to 1.013 (C6 in China) and 1.044 (C9 in the US) to 1.310 (C2 in China). Generally speaking, compared with MRS, the US learners have a better central tendency in the use of CRS than Chinese learners.

TABLE 3.3
DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF COG BETWEEN THE US AND CHINESE LEARNERS

items	Strategy	US		CHN		t	Sig.
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
C1	Using prior knowledge	3.34	0.464	3.81	0.995	-2.165	0.032
C2	Reading aloud when text becomes hard	3.09	1.358	2.92	1.310	0.797	0.427
C3	Reading slowly and carefully	3.58	0.970	3.58	1.040	0.022	0.983
C4	Trying to stay focused on reading	3.99	0.792	3.85	0.967	0.948	0.345
C5	Adjusting reading rate	3.95	0.965	3.85	1.023	0.602	0.548
C6	Paying close attention to reading	3.89	0.988	4.03	1.013	-0.809	0.420
C7	Pausing and thinking about reading	3.18	1.042	3.07	1.097	0.660	0.510
C8	Visualizing information read	3.55	1.012	3.75	0.969	-1.236	0.218
C9	Evaluating what is read	2.63	1.044	3.03	1.067	-2.289	0.023
C10	Resolving conflicting information	2.82	0.962	3.45	0.958	-4.044	0.000
C11	Re-reading for better understanding	3.80	0.994	3.90	1.030	-0.612	0.541
C12	Guessing meaning for unknown words	3.47	1.026	3.78	1.109	-1.756	0.081

T-test shows that three strategies indicate statistically significant differences, namely C1: *Using prior knowledge* ($p=0.032$), C9: *Evaluating what is read* ($p=0.023$) as well as C10: *Resolving conflicting information* ($p=0.000$), among which C10 shows the greatest significance. In particular, Chinese learners report more frequent use of the three strategies ($t < 0$). Besides, learners in two groups show approaching preference to C3 ($p=0.983$), followed by C5 ($p=0.548$), and C7 ($p=0.510$); in addition, apart from C7 which lies in medium level reported by both groups' learners, both C3 and C8 are used in high frequency. Although not achieving statistical significance, C12 ($t = -1.756$, $p=0.081$) can still be seen as a higher frequency by Chinese learners.

D. Differences in the Use of SUP Reading Strategies

TABLE 3.4
DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF SUP BETWEEN THE US AND CHINESE LEARNERS

items	Strategy	US		CHN		t	Sig.
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
S1	Taking notes while reading	2.09	1.122	2.73	1.182	-3.360	0.001
S2	Underlining information in text	3.21	1.320	3.66	1.216	-2.148	0.033
S3	Using reference materials	2.57	1.124	3.49	1.192	-4.889	0.000
S4	Paraphrasing for better understanding	2.55	1.112	2.84	1.143	-1.532	0.128
S5	Going back and forth in text	2.54	1.076	3.42	0.971	-5.265	0.000
S6	Asking oneself questions	2.40	0.955	2.81	1.089	-2.389	0.018

Table 3.4 shows that all the bottom 5 strategies for the US learners come from SUP and for Chinese learners, most of SUP (60%) fall into the bottom 5 strategies. S1 (*Taking notes while reading*) in each group is ranked at the last place in all 28 strategies with 2.09 in the US and 2.73 in China. Unlike MET and COG, SUP indicate the lowest frequency of all, that is, 2 of 6 SUP are at low level and the remaining 4 fall into medium level for the US learners; for Chinese learners, though S2 reaches high level, all of the rest strategies fall into medium level.

In terms of independent samples t-test, two points are worth noting: 1) all the t values are negative, in other words, Chinese learners use all the 6 SUP more frequently than the US learners; 2) Except S4: *Paraphrasing for better understanding*, 5 of 6 SUP are statistically significant, including S1: *Taking notes while reading* ($p=0.001$), S2: *Underlining information in text* ($p=0.033$), S3: *Using reference materials* ($p=0.000$), S5: *Going back and forth in text* ($p=0.000$) and S6: *Asking oneself questions* ($p=0.018$).

E. Most Often Used Reading Strategies Reported

TABLE 3.5
READING STRATEGIES USED MOST OFTEN BY THE US AND CHINESE LEARNERS

US				CHN			
items	strategy	M	S.D.	items	strategy	M	S.D.
C4	Trying to stay focused on reading	3.99	0.79	C6	Paying close attention to reading	4.03	1.01
M8	Using typographical aids	3.96	1.00	C11	Re-reading for better understanding	3.90	1.03
C5	Adjusting reading rate	3.95	0.97	C4	Trying to stay focused on reading	3.85	0.97
C6	Paying close attention to reading	3.89	0.99	C5	Adjusting reading rate	3.85	1.02
C11	Re-reading for better understanding	3.80	0.99	C1	Using prior knowledge	3.81	0.99
Total		3.92	0.08	Total		3.89	0.09

In the regard of five most often used reading strategies, an obvious similarity could be found among learners from two different countries. That is, they have 4 of 5 most often used strategies in common though the means of 4 items have a little difference. And neither of the dispersion degrees representing analogic similarity varies a lot. To average means of the five most often used strategies, the author obtains almost equal means of 3.92 to 3.89. Among the five strategies, both Chinese and the US learners prefer selecting CRS accounting for 100% and 80% respectively.

As for the US learners, one MRS is ranked at the second place, while there are no MRS in Chinese group. It is interesting that Chinese learners rank C6 and C11 at the first and second place while the US learners place them at the fourth and fifth place. And C5 almost owns the same rank between the two groups.

F. Least Often Used Reading Strategies Reported

TABLE 3.6
READING STRATEGIES LEAST OFTEN USED BY THE US AND CHINESE LEARNERS

US				CHN			
item	strategy	M	S.D.	name	strategy	M	S.D.
S3	Trying to stay focused on reading	2.57	1.12	C9	Paying close attention to reading	3.03	1.07
S4	Paraphrasing for better understanding	2.55	1.11	M4	Noting text characteristics	2.96	1.12
S5	Going back and forth in text	2.54	1.08	S4	Paraphrasing for better understanding	2.84	1.14
S6	Asking oneself questions	2.40	0.96	S6	Asking oneself questions	2.81	1.09
S1	Taking notes while reading	2.09	1.12	S1	Taking notes while reading	2.73	1.18
Total		2.43	0.20	Total		2.87	0.12

Table 3.6 presents the bottom 5 individual reading strategy preferences of learners in China and the US placed in descending order by their means. It could be seen that SRS are least often used strategies or least favored strategies (US learners 100%, Chinese learners 60%). Among those SRS above, the two groups share three strategies (S4\S5\S1) with nearly equal means. Means of the least used strategies in two groups are all above 2.40, that is, both of them fall into medium level.

In the US group, 2 of 5 strategies lie in low level (MeanS6=2.38, MeanS1=2.07), on the contrary, all the five strategies of Chinese group are at medium level. Chinese learners rank C9 and M4 at the first and second place but neither of them could be found in the US group. Though the means of least used strategies in two groups are at medium level, it is obvious that the mean of Chinese group is significantly higher than that of the US group.

IV. DISCUSSION

In order to answer Question 1, the author performs a series of descriptive analyses which are used to present type and frequency of reading strategy while reading major-related materials reported by Chinese and the US learners through the SORS, followed by independent t-test to examine whether significant differences exist between Chinese and the US learners. The results reveal three major findings worthy of note. These findings are summarized as follows:

A. Overall Reported Strategy Use

The data obtained concerning overall English reading strategy use show that both Chinese and the US learners demonstrate a moderate to high level of strategy use despite the differences found between the two groups that the Chinese learners report a slightly higher overall strategy use level than their American counterparts. The similarities in overall reported strategy use between the two groups are quite intriguing.

One possible explanation is that these learners are presumably skilled learners as indicated by the selection of learners (All of Chinese learners are chosen from a key Chinese university and those who haven't passed CET4 are excluded; the US learners all come from University of Colorado Boulder which ranks in the forefront of the public universities with relatively strict academic requirements). In order to meet the research needs greatly, all of the subjects are undergraduate seniors (in China) and juniors (in the US), therefore their abilities to use and understand reading strategy are better than freshmen and sophomores. In other words, all students under the investigation are considered to have medium to high level English proficiency, which may lead to difference in their English reading strategy use.

Secondly, the SORS is used here to examine learners at home and abroad using English reading strategy while reading major-related materials. That is, relative to other materials, learners would pay more attention to major-related materials, and they are exposed to these kinds of academic environment more often. So they are accomplished in using reading strategies for major-related materials.

Thirdly, compared with EFL learners, the US learners use English in a quite natural situation with low and moderate emphasis on reading strategy at college level, while Chinese learners who learn English as a foreign language have learned more and more English reading strategies through English tests and English teaching at college level. That is why Chinese learners have a slightly higher reported strategies use than the US learners. In addition, Chinese learners are all undergraduate seniors compared to undergraduate juniors in the US, so that also makes Chinese learners benefit a little bit more than their American counterparts.

B. Overall Reported Strategy Preference

Of the 28 reading strategies covering three main categories, the US and Chinese learners exhibit the same preference towards cognitive reading strategy, in other words, all of them report invoking a moderate to high strategy awareness level with a clear preference for using CRS, followed by MRS, and SRS. What's more, 100% of SRS fall into the bottom 5 individual reading strategies in the US group and 60% of SRS are the same in Chinese group; however, 100%

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about the various techniques you use when you read major-related materials in English (e.g., reading textbooks for homework or examinations, reading journal articles, etc). Each statement is followed by five numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, meaning.

“1” means “I never or almost never do this.”

“2” means “I do this only occasionally.”

“3” means “I sometimes do this” (about 50 % of the time).

“4” means “I usually do this.”

“5” means “I always or almost always do this.”

After reading each statement, circle the number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) which applies to you. Note that there are no right or wrong responses to any of the items on this survey.

	CATEGORY	STATEMENT
MET	1	I have a purpose in mind when I read.
SUP	2	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.
COG	3	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.
MET	4	I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.
COG	5	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.
MET	6	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.
COG	7	I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading.
MET	8	I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization.
COG	9	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.
SUP	10	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.
COG	11	I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.
MET	12	When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.
SUP	13	I use reference materials(e.g., a dictionary)to help me understand what I read.
COG	14	When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading.
MET	15	I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.
COG	16	I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.
MET	17	I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.
SUP	18	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.
COG	19	I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.
MET	20	I use typographical features like boldface and italics to identify key information.
COG	21	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.
SUP	22	I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.
COG	23	I check my understanding when I come across new information.
MET	24	I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.
COG	25	When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.
SUP	26	I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.
MET	27	I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.
COG	28	When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.

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The Knowledge Base of Primary EFL Teachers – Pre-service and In-service Teachers’ Perceptions

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Abstract—This exploratory study aims to investigate pre-service and in-service teachers’ perceptions regarding the knowledge and skills required for effective language teaching at primary level. A mixed-method sequential approach was employed to data collection and analysis and was carried out in two phases. Data were initially obtained through a questionnaire-based survey and supplemented by individual and focus group interviews. The findings have highlighted the primacy of subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, showing evidence that both are necessary in order to avoid fragmented language teaching. The importance of teacher language awareness in forming the bridge between these two types of knowledge has also been stressed. The issues discussed can be used for future planning in the field of initial teacher education, especially in countries where early foreign language learning forms part of their educational agenda.

Index Terms—pre-service language teacher education, primary school teachers, teacher knowledge

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the benefits of an early start in language learning have been acknowledged and supported by the majority of the state members in the EU and national governments throughout Europe, the key problem often encountered is lack of adequately trained language teachers (Commission of the European Communities 2007). This lack of unqualified language teachers has made their preparation a central issue in Language Teacher Education in Europe (Doval & Rial 2002; Kalebic 2005; Macrory & McLachlan 2009) and beyond, like Asia, Australia and the States (Breen 2006; Kirsch 2008). While there seems to be an agreement that the preparation of primary language teachers is crucial in the educational process, there is not much consensus on what kind of knowledge and skills these teachers need to acquire in order to teach their subject-matter effectively. This is the issue that this study seeks to address.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The decade of the nineties has been characterized by a growing awareness of the role played by authentic communication and negotiation of meaning in effective language learning which has resulted in greater emphasis on the teacher’s communicative competence in the target language (Bondi, 2001). Such competence is essential in providing comprehensible input and natural exposure to the target language and lack of it is likely to lead teachers with low levels of proficiency to use the target language less frequently in the classroom or in a more controlled way and rely on language they have more or less learnt by heart for dealing with routine or predictable situations. Krashen (1985) argues that this is how teachers provide learners with comprehensible input, which he sees as the essential ingredient in second language acquisition. Another interesting point made by Bondi (2001) is that the communicative competence needed by primary teachers must first of all be anchored to the materials to be used in the primary classroom, the language needed to manage the classroom and generally to the kind of teaching and learning that takes place in a primary language class rather than to general standards. A different view regarding the language competence required by a FL primary teacher is expressed by Cameron (2007) who argues that while the development and enhancement of speaking and listening skills are subject to constant classroom interaction, whether this is formal or informal, the development of reading and writing (literacy skills) present learning tasks which presuppose specific knowledge and understanding of literacy issues on the part of the teacher. She asserts that since grammar is closely tied into meaning and use of language and is interconnected with vocabulary, skilful grammar teaching would appear to be a prerequisite for successful language learning, a view supported by other scholars in the field (Johnston & Goetsch, 2000; Denham & Lobeck, 2002; and Shuib, 2009).

An understanding of how languages are learned as well as knowledge of children’s cognitive and linguistic development also form part of a language teacher’s subject-matter knowledge (Moon, 2005) which, according to Cameron (2007), are seen as central to effective language teaching at primary level. Such an understanding enables language teachers to identify possible errors made by their learners, and be able to articulate any differences that may exist between learning an L1 and learning an L2 (Yates & Muchisky, 2003, p. 139). Lightbown (1985), claims that teachers’ knowledge of relevant theories enables them to be aware of the realistic constraints of language learning in the classroom context and thus to have appropriate expectations for themselves and their students. Curricular knowledge is also seen as a fundamental component of teaching as it familiarises teachers with the expected learning outcomes at

different levels and the topics / areas that will be covered (Shulman, 1987, Richards & Farrell, 2005; Malderez & Wedell, 2007). This familiarity will, in turn, enable the teacher to decide on the appropriate methodology and materials to be used.

Peck (1999) argues that it is vital for prospective foreign language teachers to also have access to didactic knowledge, which is useful outside the classroom, before the lesson starts, which informs the teaching of the whole language and it is relevant to all classes. Gutierrez (2001) defines didactics as the “science which studies the teaching-learning phenomena as prescriptive aspects of an efficient methodology” (p.15). He asserts that, even though knowledge about the methodology is not enough to acquire the art of teaching, it is still a required step to reach that art.

From a Vygotskian viewpoint, children’s learning is embedded in a social context, in a world full of other people (peers, teachers, parents), who, in a whole range of ways, mediate the world of children and make it accessible to them (Vygotsky, 1978). Based on Bruner’s concept of scaffolding, language is the most important tool for cognitive growth and is used to offer meaningful support to the child while doing an activity. Coyle et al. (2001) and Pinter (2006) have clearly indicated how the idea of scaffolding can be transferred to the classroom and emphasised that teachers should act as mediators, encouraging their pupils to use language meaningfully. Therefore, knowing how to teach their subject involves much more than simply knowing how to do particular things in classroom. For Freeman (1996) the teachers’ ability to teach their subject-matter involves a cognitive dimension that links thought with activity, centering on the context-embedded, interpretive process of knowing what to do under particular circumstances as opposed to didactics. Shulman (1987) defined this ability or pedagogical skills as Pedagogical Content Knowledge, which, according to Raya (2001), are developed over time rather than acquired during formal education. Such a view implies that student-teachers should be educated to use reason soundly as a way of engaging in the development of their PCK, which should be seen as a lifelong process. Fenstermacher (1986) argues that sound reasoning requires a process of thinking about what one is doing and an appropriate knowledge base that should provide the grounds for choices and actions, the latter being the focus of this paper.

III. RATIONALE AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

Based on the philosophy which underpins early foreign language learning in Europe, the English curriculum followed in Primary state schools in Cyprus has been adapted accordingly. The general aim is to introduce pupils to English in an interesting way, with emphasis on both talk and activity without, however, neglecting the development of reading and writing skills (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011). However, most primary teachers in Cyprus have no specific training in EFL methodology hence there is an increased difficulty in asserting the methodology that is actually used in schools as opposed to what is recommended for use in schools (Pavlou & Ioannou-Georgiou, 2005). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus, generalist primary teachers with a four-year Bachelor’s degree in Education are the only teachers eligible to teach English at this level in state schools although they receive no training in relation to language teaching. The aim of the English courses offered within this programme of study is to develop student-teachers’ oral and written language competence rather than their language teaching skills. As a result, many teachers are often forced to teach English, despite lack of relevant training, competence in English or interest in teaching the subject which may often lead to malpractice, an over-reliance on the textbook and a lack of confidence which also results in an avoidance of initiatives (Pavlou & Ioannou-Georgiou, 2005).

Efforts have been made to enhance the in-service training of EFL teachers, who now form a significant number in the primary sector; however, there is no empirical research in the Cyprus context which has investigated the kind of knowledge primary language teachers need to acquire prior to embarking on their teaching careers. Lack of attention to an area of increasing importance in the broader context of the European Union is the major reason why pre-service language teacher education for primary level is worth investigating.

This study aims at gaining insights into the perceived professional needs of pre and in-service primary teachers in Cyprus and investigating whether their perceptions vary according to factors such as language teaching experience and in-service training. Based on the aims of this study the following research question was developed:

- What kinds of knowledge and skills do pre-service and in-service teachers consider necessary for effective language teaching at primary level?

IV. METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study employed a mixed-method sequential approach to data collection and analysis (Tashakkori, 2003), and was carried out in two phases between March and July 2011.

A. Sample

The survey sample consists of 296 primary teachers working in 210 different schools and 124 3rd and 4th year student-teachers studying in all four universities in Cyprus where the Teacher Education programme is offered. A small percentage (18%) of the in-service teachers, have a relevant Master’s degree and the majority (69%) have taught English for 1-5 years despite their relatively longer teaching careers. Most of them (78%) were assigned to teach English for reasons other than relevant qualifications (personal interest, lack of available qualified teacher). The

majority of the student-teachers are female (83%) and most of them (72%) have attended a compulsory language-improvement course during their initial education.

The interview sample consists of 9 in-service teachers selected on the grounds of different academic and professional backgrounds and two focus groups comprising eleven student-teachers. Seven in-service teachers attended language improvement courses during their pre-service education, four have had no in-service training while the rest have attended compulsory or/and optional seminars. Student-teachers were chosen based on year of study, language teaching experience during their practicum (seven out of eleven taught English during their practicum), interest in the study and accessibility.

B. Methods and Data Collection Instruments

Phase one was conducted within a quantitative approach through a questionnaire-based survey. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the personal, academic and contextual profile of the participants. The second section consisted of an inventory of 24 content areas which respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they found them necessary for the education of prospective primary language teachers on a five-point Likert scale. In order to decide on these areas, the author first conducted interviews with the two inspectors of English at primary level who gave useful insights into the professional needs of in-service teachers from their own perspective. Based on this information, on a review of the relevant literature, informal feedback from student-teachers (discussions, observations) as well as the author's understanding of language teaching and experience of language learning, the first draft of the questionnaire was developed. Ten primary in-service teachers and a group of four 3rd year student-teachers completed the questionnaire and commented on possible ambiguities or difficulties. Minor changes took place such as clarifications, better explanations of the questions, terminology, and expression of questions. The most significant of these changes was the decision to prepare a Greek version of the questionnaire as this would encourage a greater amount of responses.

The second phase was conducted within a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which aimed at explaining and further exploring the findings of the survey (Creswell, 2003). These centred on questions related to participants' language learning experiences, their beliefs about language learning and their language teaching experiences. More direct questions regarding the content areas were also asked but with reference to the responses they had given in the questionnaire.

C. Data Analysis and Presetation

For the analysis and presentation of the content areas from both quantitative and qualitative data, a structure of the primary FL teacher profile proposed by Raya (2001) was adopted. This structure reflects the teaching act in its three phases (Planning, Implementation and Evaluation) and it therefore covers all the content areas listed in the questionnaire. These three thematic areas were used as a framework and based on the findings of this study, they were further subdivided into subordinate categories (see next section) describing the knowledge and skills that each phase, entails.

Data from the questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS. T-tests were used to check for statistical significance between the samples. Inferential statistics (ANOVA) were then applied using experience and in-service training as independent variables as these, may have influenced the participants' answers regarding the content areas they valued more. The statistical results are presented for both samples in the same tables and organised under the three major themes described above. Qualitative data were recorded and transcribed verbatim and were returned to the individual interviewees or the group for respondent validation (Radnor 1994). Following guidelines in Braun and Clarke (2006), these transcriptions were analysed thematically. Participants' overlapping responses/comments related to the research question were classified under the three major themes proposed by Raya in order to explain and triangulate the quantitative results.

V. FINDINGS

Considering the results drawn from the questionnaire relevant to the teaching act, it seems that participants place less emphasis on the areas included in the planning phase (Table 1) related to teachers' knowledge and skills which form the basis for their thinking and reasoning and guide their decisions regarding the content and organization of the lesson (type of activities, the methods to be used, the level, and the objectives).

A. Planning Phase

TABLE 1
DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

	In-service		Pre-service		Sig.
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	
Theories of how languages are learnt	3.72	1.05	3.58	1.20	.010
Knowledge of the English primary curriculum	3.82	0.96	3.61	1.16	.001
Lesson planning	3.87	0.92	3.87	1.12	.012
Textbook / material evaluation	3.80	0.86	3.85	1.03	.086
Designing instructional material	4.05	0.89	4.33	0.98	.054

Despite the fact that some of the content areas as shown in table 1 seem to have been rated more highly by the in-service teachers, only one area related to planning phase was rated higher than 4 by both samples, which initially indicate that these are not considered very important by the participants or at least not a priority. Results from the qualitative data were consistent with the exception of the fifth area (Designing instructional material) which, while they did not reject its usefulness, they did not consider it an area that required training.

Regarding the first area, comments from the interviews and focus groups were similar among participants from both samples. Ten participants (4 student-teachers and 6 in-service teachers) argued that they see no connection between knowing how languages are learnt and actual teaching, two of them claiming that successful FL learning depends on the teacher's approach and the pupils' willingness to learn and not on some kind of theory. A different view was expressed by three student-teachers who asserted that the learning of such theories in initial Teacher Education can only become relevant if student-teachers receive some explanation as to how these can be put into practice. Hardly any attention was paid to knowledge of the primary English curriculum as the majority of the participants argue that this can be learnt while on the job since the textbooks follow the curriculum and teachers are expected to follow the textbook. Participants' ratings and comments in relation to these two areas indirectly show lack of autonomy in their own teaching, in the sense that they express their dependence on the textbook when it comes to deciding on the appropriate methodology and activities to be used in their lesson rather than on their knowledge of these areas which will enable them to make their own informed decisions concerning the implementation and evaluation of the lesson.

Lesson planning was reported as quite useful by six in-service teachers who emphasised the importance of being able to prepare a lesson based on the time given. Similarly, two student-teachers expressed the need to be given guidelines and opportunities to prepare lesson plans during their initial education; this need, as they claimed, emerged from the difficulties they had with estimating the time that should have been allocated to each activity when they were asked to prepare and teach an English lesson during the practicum and with choosing activities which would enable them to successfully fulfill the objectives set.

Concerning Textbook/material evaluation, three in-service teachers argued that knowledge and ability to evaluate a textbook or any relevant material are really useful and definitely something that university should prepare prospective teachers for. Another participant said that the teacher should be able to evaluate the activities in the textbook and any material that may accompany these, as these may not be as effective, as is the case of the current textbooks, and thus not achieve the required results with the pupils. Similar comments were also made by most of the pre-service teachers (N:7), who seemed to relate this area with maintaining pupils' interest throughout the lesson and with making informed decisions about what activities to use with pupils to facilitate language learning. Even though this area was not one of the highest ranked in the questionnaire, its importance was greatly valued by some of the interviewed participants.

Findings were rather inconsistent with those in the questionnaire in relation to the fifth area of the planning phase in that most participants interviewed did not seem to consider this very important. Two in-service teachers thought that while knowing how to design instructional material may be useful, it is definitely not a priority and therefore not something that needs to be taught at university since it can be done without training. Three other participants from the same sample also argued that primary teachers' busy schedule does not leave them time to create their own material so they always turn to ready-made ones from other sources. No reference was made to this area by the pre-service teachers.

B. Implementation Phase

The next three tables present the quantitative data related to the implementation phase which are divided into three sub-categories: a) Language Teaching skills, b) Classroom activities and c) The Teacher's role. Relevant qualitative data are used to back up and further explore the content areas within each sub-category.

TABLE 2
LANGUAGE TEACHING SKILLS

	In-service		Pre-service		Sig.
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	
Teaching speaking	4.71	0.56	4.44	0.85	.000
Teaching listening	4.52	0.62	4.08	1.02	.000
Teaching writing	3.70	1.09	4.16	0.92	.005
Teaching reading	4.55	0.60	4.23	0.92	.000
Teaching vocabulary	4.65	0.54	4.37	0.83	.000
Teaching grammar	4.54	0.62	4.44	0.79	.000

Table 2 shows that all the areas within this phase were given a high score by both samples, indicating that these areas are considered quite important. Results from a T-Test indicated that ‘Teaching writing’ was the only area that was rated more highly by the pre-service teachers while the rest were rated lower. As it became evident during the interviews the majority of the in-service teachers (N:7) thought that knowing how to teach writing at primary level is not so important, as its primacy in the primary English curriculum is not emphasised at this age. Another reason given was that pupils already learn how to write in private institutes so this is rarely a task required by the classroom teacher. Interestingly, all pre-service teachers thought that teaching writing is an area that prospective teachers should receive training on. The reasons they gave, however, were more related to difficulties they themselves have with the language than with the relevance of this area within the curriculum, as indicated by the comments of two participants:

“I find this a difficult skill to teach even in Greek”.

“I find it hard myself to structure a sentence; I think it will be very difficult for me to explain to them how to produce a syntactically and grammatically correct sentence”

During the interviews all participants stressed the importance of knowing how to teach the language, making reference to all aspects of it: speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, even prepositions. However, it soon became evident that in-service teachers were more concerned with how to teach the language communicatively as required by the primary English curriculum while the latter simply requested guidance on how to teach a FL. Special reference was made to grammar which was perceived as one of the most difficult skills to be taught. There were mixed signals about how the teaching of grammar should be approached; despite the fact that in-service teachers seemed to acknowledge the benefits of the communicative approach, they expressed disbelief in the effectiveness of this approach when it comes to grammar teaching. There was also evidence of a considerable confusion about the relationship between communicative language teaching and the teaching of grammar which seems to be perceived by the participants as one which involves less grammar teaching and practice which is based on playful rather than the traditional fill-in the gaps activities. Pre-service teachers’ concerns regarding the same issue were not clearly articulated; the majority (N:6) firmly believed that grammar should not be taught traditionally but when they tried to explain how they would teach grammar or how they did (those with experience) there was little evidence of implicit grammar teaching. Some of them even admitted that, even though they would not want to involve their pupils in explicit explanations of grammatical rules, they would most probably do it because they don’t know any other way to do it. It seems that participants’ stance towards grammar teaching is partly attributed to the fact that no one has received any formal instruction in relation to communicative grammar teaching (Richards at al. 2001; Wei-Pei 2008).

The three highest ranked areas within the second category of the implementation phase include playful activities like games and drama specific to FL teaching, activities for oral practice and using technology. Little attention was paid to the other three areas.

TABLE 3
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

	In-service		Pre-service		Sig.
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	
Drama and games specific to FLT	4.56	0.67	4.37	0.85	.000
Storytelling	3.79	0.96	3.89	1.00	.765
Using technology	4.19	0.78	4.07	1.07	.000
Activities for oral practice	4.53	0.59	4.33	0.88	.000
Activities which promote intercultural understanding	3.70	0.95	3.75	0.94	.585
Activities for integrating cross-curricular contents	3.86	0.90	3.88	1.06	.040

During the interviews all participants expressed the need for a repertoire of child-friendly activities, for immediate use in classroom, findings that are consistent with the questionnaire results. Six in-service teachers agreed that the current English textbooks do not offer enough opportunities for oral/aural practice or the activities offered do not encourage any kind of interaction between the pupils, in which case the teacher may want to replace them with more effective ones. Student-teachers also stressed the importance of teaching English through games and other child-friendly activities, arguing that learning a FL can be both hard and boring; therefore, such an approach can be motivating and help children develop a positive attitude towards the learning of the target language. Even though they did not refer explicitly to oral/aural activities, they all seemed to agree that speaking and listening are the most important skills for pupils at this age to develop, which may indirectly imply training on these areas. There was also consensus among participants from both samples that pupils can become really motivated and involved in the learning process when they use computers during their lesson and is therefore an area that prospective teachers should be prepared for during their initial education.

There were also similarities between the two samples as regards the areas perceived as least needed. These were storytelling, activities which promote intercultural understanding and integration of cross-curricular contents; these were the three areas within the implementation phase which were the lowest rated by all the participants. Storytelling was thought to be boring for this age and as four in-service teachers and three pre-service teachers agreed, this could probably be useful for language teachers who teach English in the first cycle of primary school (1st, 2nd and 3rd grades).

Activities for intercultural understanding were not mentioned by any of the in-service teachers whereas there was an agreement among the pre-service teachers that such an area is covered in another subject (Intercultural education) in the Teacher Education programme and it shouldn't be any different with English. As for using activities to form cross-curricular links only two in-service teachers referred to it, arguing that there is limited time for English in primary schools, so there is really no time for this.

Regarding the third sub-category of the implementation phase, the statistical results displayed in table 4 show that in-service teachers rated all areas quite high whereas pre-service teachers rated only two of these higher than 4.

TABLE 4
TEACHER'S ROLE

	In-service		Pre-service		Sig.
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	
Using language as an instrument of communication	4.51	0.62	3.98	1.01	.000
Using language as a means of instruction	4.24	0.79	3.72	1.03	.000
Adapting language to pupils' level	4.48	0.65	4.44	0.79	.019
Motivating YLL	4.34	0.76	3.93	1.02	.001
Dealing with mixed-ability classes	4.50	0.67	4.08	1.07	.000

The interview results were particularly insightful and helped in the interpretation of participants' perceptions regarding these areas. The first two areas were greatly valued by seven in-service teachers and seven pre-service teachers who taught English during their practicum. Target language use in the classroom both as a means of communication as well as a means of instruction was among the top areas in which participants felt themselves to be inadequate and to be in need of education, with the former being given more emphasis. These participants highlighted lack of confidence and occasionally 'fear' and 'anxiety' of having to use the target language as a means of communication in the classroom, especially when they had to deal with non-Greek speaking students who used English as a lingua franca. Pre-service teachers claimed to have had difficulty using the target language in the classroom, to give instructions and to communicate with children, despite the fact that they all considered their level of English high enough for the level they had to teach. One of them commented:

"I was so anxious! I didn't know what to tell them or how to introduce a new activity".

Similar comments were also reported by the in-service teachers who recalled their first years of teaching and some of the difficulties they faced at the time related to their language use in class. As one teacher recalled:

"When I started teaching I was advised to use as much English as possible in class, which I initially thought would be easy.... I was wrong! Even if you are fluent in English you still need to spare time at home to prepare".

Some admitted that this inability and at the same time insecurity they felt in relation to FL use made them resort to their L1, or repeat the instructions as indicated in the teacher's book as this did not leave much space for language mistakes. They were aware of their deficiencies and expressed the need to improve their oral speech and to receive training on the use of techniques for developing oral language as posited by current methodological thinking. These concerns and perceived needs may be due to the fact that they were all taught English in a similar way, which focused on language as a code and with little to no emphasis on communication.

It is evident that teachers' oral fluency and knowledge of the appropriate classroom language are two of the main problems often encountered by today's primary language teachers in Cyprus who are expected to comply with the principles of CLT. It is important however, to realise that it is also a matter of the specific needs of classroom language that most teachers have not been prepared for during their initial education. Bondi and Alessi (2002) argue that teachers may find themselves with a limited repertoire and a limited awareness of the importance of classroom language [until they are actually involved in real language teaching] as has become evident from this study; classroom talk was perceived as a major difficulty and expressed as a need for training only by those who have experienced language teaching.

However, fluency and good classroom language was perceived inadequate when the target language was used as a means of instruction according to five in-service and four pre-service teachers with English language teaching experience, who consider knowledge about the language equally important. This became evident from difficulties they reported to have faced in their language teaching which had to do with their use of metalanguage, their understanding of FL-related questions from students with a good language background and with providing further explanations not included in the teacher's book. Difficulties as the ones reported by the participants are quite common in the Cyprus context where most pupils, following an exam-oriented approach outside school, come to school with a fairly good knowledge of the grammar. This puts extra pressure on the teachers who are expected to have at least some basic knowledge of the grammar, which will enable them to respond to these pupils' unexpected queries.

Despite receiving a high score by both samples as shown in table 4 above, the area of adapting language to the pupils' level was hardly given any attention in the interviews. However, the comments of four in-service teachers were indicative that this is an area of special relevance, which calls for future training. These teachers seemed to have attributed their reluctance to use the FL mainly to the pupils' low level rather than their own proficiency; they explained that whenever they tried to introduce any kind of communicative activity, pupils would either fail to understand the

point of the activity when this was explained in English or have difficulty producing accurate sentences, which also led them to translate the instructions and to rely more on the textbook. In this case, learners' difficulties may be an indication of these teachers' inability to communicate this knowledge by using the target language more flexibly, in a way which will ensure pupils' understanding. This seems to be related to Bruner's theory of scaffolding which views 'language' as the teacher's most important tool in facilitating the children's SLA by providing linguistic models, prompting them to expand sentences and generally supporting their oral production. Anything that teachers plan and do in the classroom need to be verbalized and classroom interaction is crucial to the success of L2 learning. The above perceived difficulties of the participants also seem to coincide with some of the organizational strategies identified by Coyle, Valcarcel and Verdu (2001, p.150) which concentrate on different aspects of classroom management, most of which require the use of the foreign language as it is again suggested by the curriculum. It could therefore be assumed that teachers' effectiveness in managing the FL classroom could also be seen in relation to their fluency in the target language and the extent to which they feel comfortable in using it.

Strong emphasis was also placed by the majority of the interviewees from both samples on motivating young learners and on the development of pupils' positive attitudes towards the learning of a foreign language. They shared the view that it is more important for the children to enjoy the lesson at this age rather than learn, a view that seems to be more associated with the affective goals of education which is prevalent in the primary sector. Similar findings were reported by Raya and Hewitt (2001) who found that teachers conceive teaching primarily in terms of positive interpersonal relationships, that is, the pupils' feelings towards teaching and learning, rather than the effects of their teaching on pupils' language learning. Such an indication does not mean to undervalue the affective goals of education but they should not overemphasise or consider them in isolation to what is to be learnt either. This means that while motivation is a key factor associated with effective language learning, teachers should not ignore the importance of the language component in sustaining this.

Perceived needs regarding the area of dealing with mixed-ability classes were especially felt by in-service teachers and pre-service teachers with language teaching experience. All in-service teachers argued that dealing with mixed-ability classes has always been one of the main difficulties they have had to face in primary schools in Cyprus. When they were asked to define what they meant by mixed-ability classes, they referred to classes consisting of very weak and very strong students, different graders and classes consisting of English-speaking and Greek-speaking pupils. All these combinations are very common in Cyprus primary schools and when unprepared for such situations, teachers claim to be unable to deal with the lesson effectively. This is an area that was also highlighted by both the inspectors as one of major concern (see methodology section). Inability to deal with such classes was related to motivation and consequently to classroom management; five in-service teachers and two pre-service teachers argued that they have very often been unable to keep the pupils concentrated and interested throughout the lesson. Raya and Hewitt (2001), who reported a similar finding, make a link between this need expressed by the participants and Feiman and Floden's impact stage, when teachers become concerned about their effect on pupils. However, participants' reported feelings of frustration in their inability to motivate or manage the classroom when dealing with such classes were more indicative of their own well-being and thus more related to Feiman and Floden's survival stage when teachers are preoccupied with their own adequacy in conducting the lesson (see Raya & Hewitt 2001, p. 95).

C. Evaluation Phase

This sub-category presents the findings related to the evaluation phase within which the teacher is concerned with monitoring pupils' learning.

TABLE 5
EVALUATION PHASE

	In-service		Pre-service		Sig.
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	
Assessing young language learners	4.01	0.81	3.90	0.93	.046

Assessing young language learners was rated 4 only by the in-service teachers. In the interviews, the assessment of young *language* learners was seen as being no different from assessment in other subjects at this level by all in-service teachers. Little attention was given to this area by the pre-service teachers, whose views were rather controversial. Three pre-service teachers posited that it would help if the teacher were familiar with certain methods of assessing the language skills of the pupils, even though this was an area that should not be covered in much depth while the comments of two others were similar to those of the in-service teachers. According to the primary English curriculum, assessment of students in primary education should be seen as the blending of two major issues: the 'what' and the 'how'. Participants, however, seemed to be paying attention only to the latter ignoring the importance of the former. This is again an indication that participants ignore the specificity of the language component which could be attributed to lack of emphasis on the subject-matter and the principles of the primary English curriculum during their initial education.

In the inferential analysis of the questionnaires, no statistical difference was found in the ratings of the content areas among in-service teachers with different ELT experience. A significant difference was encountered, however, with the

area of teaching English through games and drama where the direction was positive, indicating that those who had received INSET rated this area higher than those who had not. This is probably due to the fact that this is the most common area that is discussed in in-service seminars or displayed in the form of demonstration lessons, something which has important implications for the role of training in raising teachers' awareness of important aspects of language teaching at primary level.

VI. DISCUSSION

Participants' goals are clearly product-related which indirectly shows lack of autonomy in their own teaching. This lack of autonomy and expectations of easily trainable competences which focus on the product rather than the process seem to reflect the broader educational system in Cyprus which is centralised and follows a more top-down approach to learning. Considering that these teachers have been educated under a system with an emphasis on top-down directionality, it would be naïve and unrealistic to expect them to be concerned with anything else other than the technical aspect of information transfer at least in the early stages of their career (Raya & Hewitt, 2001, p. 93).

The knowledge base which is perceived as essential by practising and prospective teachers is connected to subject-specific methodology rather than subject-specific pedagogy. Participants require knowledge and training on pre-determined procedures that they can use in their lesson, but at the same time ignore or are unaware of the knowledge and skills leading them to the art of teaching. Another observation that can be made is that participants' perceived needs centre around the relationship between positive attitudes (both theirs and their pupils') and their teaching. What they fail to see is the relationship between teaching and learning, attributing their pupils' low level of achievement to these pupils' language ability. While the latter does play a role in the process, it should not be always regarded as the only reason. Teachers should take this as an opportunity to identify their own weaknesses and consider changing their teaching in ways that are more likely to have a direct impact on pupils' learning. This would seem to suggest a more reflective approach to their teaching education.

Exposure to classroom realities and INSET seem to be important factors in teachers' awareness of essential content areas related to language teaching. This is evident from the fact that in-service and pre-service teachers with some experience in ELT express concerns regarding current methodologies, mixed ability classes, time management and classroom talk as opposed to those with no experience, whose needs were more associated with survival skills rather than needs related to the implementation of the curriculum.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, linguistic competence and knowledge of didactics have proved to be essential parts of the primary language teacher's knowledge base. However, this knowledge and skills are not sufficient on their own to ensure that the teacher will deal with the new content with ways which are most conducive to learning as discussed in the literature. Such ways, according to Thornbury (1997) and Andrews (2001), involve choosing appropriate examples, using the appropriate level of language for different classroom purposes, selecting the right activities and material and adapting these to pupils' level where necessary and generally mediating any kind of input available to the pupils. Relevant textbooks and teacher's manuals in Cyprus provide detailed explanations and terminology of the new content and of the methodology through which this content is expected to be taught. However, while explicit grammatical knowledge, relevant terminology and knowledge of subject-specific methodology are likely to equip the teacher with the image she is expected to 'display' and the knowledge needed to cover the particular lesson as outlined in the syllabus, she will fail at the same time to scaffold pupils' language level and consequently push them beyond their current level of development. Simply exposing pupils to L2 input from various sources or using predetermined activities is not sufficient unless it is shaped by the teacher and made accessible to the learners. In order to do that, teachers need to be familiar with how children learn foreign languages and have an awareness of the aspects which need to be emphasized, modified or further practised based on their learners' needs and the requirements of the English curriculum. Andrews (2001) stresses the importance of teacher language awareness which he views as a major sub-component of teachers' PCK, forming the bridge between subject-matter knowledge and the teachers' ability to make effective use of this knowledge. He posits that, in its absence, the teacher is more likely to show insufficient engagement with the language content and be more concerned with the affective dimension of her teaching, that is, with engaging the interest of her pupils. This clearly shows a move away from language teaching and a focus on primary teaching, which, in the case of this study, seem to stem from lack of relevant initial teacher education which failed to equip primary teachers with the knowledge and skills essential in teaching English as a foreign language.

It is therefore imperative for those responsible for the content of teacher education curricula to realise the significance of the English subject in today's primary schools and therefore their responsibility in providing prospective teachers with the required knowledge and skills which will enable them to respond to the requirements of teaching English to young learners. Finally, an identification of primary teachers' needs as regards the 'what' of their initial education seems necessary to ensure that those involved in language teaching receive the kind of education they actually require. Although the findings of this research concern directly the Cypriot situation and are limited because of

scale, they have validity in that they are likely to have broader applicability beyond Cyprus, especially in countries where early foreign language learning forms part of their educational agenda.

VIII. IMPLICATIONS

The results reveal a need for the development of teacher education programmes which concentrate both on the subject-matter knowledge and on pedagogical content knowledge and which treat student-teachers as teacher-learners rather than language learners. It is evident that poor or insufficient command of English can cause teachers to lose self-assurance, self-esteem and inevitably professional status. Student-teachers should therefore be assisted to develop both their grammatical as well as their communicative competence during their initial education. The language improvement modules should be relevant to the areas covered in the primary English curriculum as well as to specific classroom language enabling prospective teachers to deliver their lesson and respond to pupils' language-related questions confidently. Student-teachers should also attend modules which focus on the theoretical principles of language teaching and the content and philosophy which underpins the English primary curriculum. This will help them gain a better understanding of how their subject-matter should be taught, what their expectations of language learners at this level should be and of what methodologies they are expected to adopt when they go into teaching in schools. Familiarising student-teachers with a repertoire of relevant instructional strategies and material is also important as this will give them a certain amount of confidence, an essential component for dealing with language teaching in a real context, especially in the early stages of their teaching careers.

Reaching a conclusion regarding the required competences that should be acquired by primary teachers in relation to language teaching is undoubtedly an important step to be taken when designing a relevant programme. It is however, of equal importance to also investigate *how* prospective teachers can be provided with adequate opportunities to acquire such competences within teacher education curricula.

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“The Book of the Grotesque” and *Winesburg, Ohio**

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Abstract—Sherwood Anderson’s representative work *Winesburg, Ohio* portrays a procession of grotesque characters in the background of looming industrialism into the picaresque rural American small town. Its first story “The Book of the Grotesque” is not a separate story like others but serves a general prologue, intending to plant the concept of grotesque in the reader’s mind. Along with this, it links to the overall design of subsequent stories, with the old writer corresponding to George Willard, the carpenter to those grotesques, and the old writer’s bedroom to the grotesques’ entrapment of mentality.

Index Terms—articulation, grotesques, barriers of communication, industrialism

I. INTRODUCTION

Sherwood Anderson, influenced by Sigmund Freud and Henry James, published his masterpiece *Winesburg, Ohio* in 1919, a collection of 25 short stories all with psychological depth or perception. Set about in the 1890s it painted the ordinary life in the small Midwest town on the background of industrialization in American society, when city life gradually substituted town life and people there, faced with kinds of emotional or psychological lacunae, become the grotesques in others’ eyes. Those grotesques anguish in sorts of mental diseases that live inside them, struggling, clawing, shrieking at them and nearly tearing them down. Their eccentricity makes them lonely, urgently desirous for a companion to share their feelings or thoughts. George Willard, the reporter of *Winesburg Eagle* is chosen as the listener, thus combining all the stories. Professor Baym has pointed out, *Winesburg, Ohio* has explored the psychological and emotional aspects of American small-town life, as well as “the groping attempts of the townspeople to articulate their feelings and communicate with others—the repressed yearnings and obsessions which surface fleetingly or explosively from the depths of their experience” (Baym, 1999, p.1548).

The stories are plotless in usual sense because Anderson adopted the same technique—a very moment to permit the reader to grasp the nature of somewhat isolation that controls the characters’ individuality. Almost in every short story, there is a changing process of the protagonist’s mentality and in a moment he is crazy, which seems to spur him or her to make a change but the change never occurs. Anderson has his moment of craziness, too. In November 1912 Anderson suffered a mental breakdown and disappeared for four days. He was found in a drugstore in Cleveland, having walked almost thirty miles. Soon after, he left his position as president of the Anderson Manufacturing Co. in Elyria. He abandoned his wife and three small children to pursue writing. Anderson described the episode as “escaping from his materialistic existence”. The moment of revelation, or epiphany as James Joyce would call it, or “moment of being” in Virginia Woolf’s words, was the story Anderson told over and over and he “had that gift for summing up, for pouring a lifetime into a moment.” (Malcolm, 1976, p.8)

The moment, moreover, is portrayed with a combination of realism and symbolism. The former is best represented by George Willard’s occupation as a reporter, a job allowing him to have widest connection with the people. However, George could only see, hear, feel the externals, the everyday surface of life; to perceive the intricate mesh of impulses, desires, drives beneath it symbolism will help. Places, hands, walls and windows are endowed with symbolic meanings. The closed windows and rooms where those grotesques often stayed, suggested isolation and confinement. “Hands” recur in many stories are associated with different connotations like disease, trauma, desire and so forth. All the things seem to happen in the dark, rendering an air of depression in a gloomy background.

The first story, “The Book of the Grotesque”, serving as a general prologue, explains the author’s unifying conception of his characters: “Their lives have been distorted not, as Anderson tells us in his prologue, by their each having seized upon a single truth, but rather by their inability to express themselves. Since they cannot truly communicate with others, they have all become emotional cripples.” (Malcolm, 1976, pp.14-15) Because of one particular incident or event, they become grotesques and their lives are distorted, disfigured and maimed. This introductory section is not a separate story as that follows, but intends to intensify the concept of grotesque. Along with this, it links to the overall design of subsequent stories, with the old writer corresponding to George Willard, the carpenter to those grotesques, and the old writer’s bedroom to the grotesques’ entrapment of mentality.

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II. THE TITLE "THE BOOK OF THE GROTESQUE"

In the prologue, an old writer hires an old carpenter to raise his bed so that it would be level with the windows. The carpenter is a veteran from the Civil War and a prisoner once. His brother died of starvation and he cries when telling this. The carpenter ends up fixing the bed in his own way and the old writer has to use a chair to get to it. In bed, the old writer would wonder about having a heart attack since he is a heavy smoker. He would think about many people he has known; in his dreams they are all grotesques, ranging from the nearly beautiful to the painfully misshapen. The parade of characters propels him to write a book called "The Book of the Grotesque" which is never published. The old writer would have become a grotesque but he is saved by the young thing within him.

The original title of *Winesburg, Ohio* is "The Book of the Grotesque", as Anderson named it when he submitted his manuscripts to a publisher. The publisher changed the title but Anderson kept it in his first story, the general prologue of the book. Thus it attempts to set forth the tone of the subsequent stories by reinforcing the concept of grotesque in this part.

Grotesque, as the dictionary defines, is "characterized by bizarre distortions, especially in the exaggerated or abnormal depiction of human features. The literature of the grotesque involves freakish caricatures of people's appearance and behavior, as in the novels of Dickens. A disturbingly odd fictional character may also be called a grotesque." (Baldick, 2001, p.93) It is also originated from Edgar Allen Poe's masterpiece *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840). In Poe's stories the characters are elusively neurotic or even hysterical under certain circumstances. They are totally welded by their subconscious impulses and morbid psychology enveloped in a gothic-like mood. But Poe does not reveal the reason behind their grotesqueness. Anderson, however, furthers the literary history on the portrayal of grotesques by rooting it in industrialism. He states it in the story of "Godliness":

"In the past fifty years a vast change has taken place in the lives of our people. A revolution has in fact taken place. The coming of industrialism, attended by all the roar and rattle of affairs, the shrill cries of millions of new voices that have come among us from overseas, the going and coming of trains, the growth of cities, the building of the interurban car lines that weave in and out of towns and past farmhouses, and now in these later days the coming of the automobiles has worked a tremendous change in the lives and in the habits of thoughts of our people of Mid-America."

Industrialism to the writer Anderson is degrading, humiliating and despairing. It builds wall of inarticulateness, separating people, engulfing them in pragmatic business culture and indifferent interpersonal relationship. Sherwood Anderson remarks: "As a people we have given ourselves to industrialism, and industrialism is not lovely. If any man can find beauty in an American factory town I wish he would show me the way. For myself, I cannot find it. To me, and I am living in industrial life, the whole thing is an ugly as a modern war." (Rideout, 2006, p.66) In American old industrial small town people are defeated, rebuffed, so they turn inward, become new cowards, twisting spiritually. In the prologue the established tone about grotesques is a solemn compassion.

"The grotesques were not all horrible. Some were amusing, some almost beautiful, and one, a woman all drawn out of shape, hurt the old man by her grotesqueness. When she passed he made a noise like a small dog whimpering."

The prologue is told by the omniscient author. He makes a comment on the old writer's "The book of the grotesque": "By remembering it I have been able to understand many people and things that I was never able to understand before". By trying to imprint the concept of grotesque in the readers' minds, he hopes the readers will do the same.

III. OLD WRITER'S BEDROOM AND THE RECURRENT SYMBOL OF ROOM IN *WINESBURG, OHIO*

The conversation between the old writer and carpenter takes place in a small room. The old writer trapped here tries to provide the room with a view, to see the outside world of vitality and activity. It is interesting to note Anderson himself had his bed raised so that he could look out at the Loop in Chicago. Undoubtedly the small is not as a place of warmth, security and comfort in the usual sense, but one of isolation and entrapment. This narrow place cuts man off from human contact, as seen in many more stories after the prologue.

Take Enoch Robinson's New York room for instance ("Loneliness"). "The story of Enoch is in fact the story of a room." Enoch, always a childlike man, was an introverted artist, drawing and burying his thoughts in painting in his New York Apartment which faced the Washington Square. He once invited young men to his room, talking of art passionately but he himself alone was an outsider, stammering, sputtering and finally silencing. Estranged from them he fell into a habit of talking only with imaginary figures alone in his locked room because this made him important and self-assured. In Anderson's description, Enoch's New York Room with his own pictures, was "long and narrow like a hallway", which in fact resembles an art gallery, enabling him to live with his fancy persons to whom he could really talk and to whom he explained the things he had been unable to explain to living people. Only in this locked room could his sense of being alienated and minor be dispelled. Pitifully in the background of the Washington Square his small room is more devalued: trivial, insignificant, emotionally barren, for its spatial narrowness and closeness contrast to the former's openness to human contact. Lacking of such openness to others, Enoch, like all the other grotesques in this town such as Wing Biddlebaum and Doctor Reefy, his loneliness is doomed to last for the rest of his life.

IV. THE CARPENTER AND THE RECURRENT SYMBOL OF HANDS IN *WINESBURG, OHIO*

In the prologue, the carpenter cried when he told about himself and his brother's death of starvation. He is a perfect

example who metamorphosed into the grotesque but remained lovable (“he, like many of what are called very common people, became the nearest thing to what is understandable and lovable of all the grotesques in the writer’s book.”) Like this carpenter each in the subsequent stories seems eager to tell someone about himself and each chooses George who is a reporter and will become a fiction writer as soon as possible.

The grotesques are beset with all kinds of mental or emotional diseases, elusively finding their expressions through some symbols. In the subsequent stories, hands are recurrent symbols charged with meaning. Wing Biddlebaum’s hands (“Hands”) are active, expressive and affectionate, but he seems to be frightened by their power and attempts to keep them hidden. “His story is a story of hand.” He was known as Adolph Myers, a respectable teacher in Pennsylvania before moving to Winesburg. He used to caress his students’ shoulders and tousle their hair in his dreamy talks to them. But one student dreamt of unspeakable things and accused him of sexual harassment. More students followed suit. Believed to be a pedophile by the local people, he was beaten, and banished. He escaped to Winesburg where he lived a lonely life as Wing Biddlebaum, supporting himself by picking fruits in an orchard. To illustrate, with the change of his name, he has lost his identity and cut his history off from the past. This odd name also links to his “nervous little hands”, the instrument of harassment, which makes them not so much as merely human hands, but “the wings of an imprisoned bird”. Analogically his in-articulation traps him in his own mentality, like a bird in cage; his hands resembling the bird’s wings, even if widely spread, or restlessly active, are not capable to set him free to have real human contact. Therefore, his aching experience handicaps him in communication. Similarly there are Doctor Reefy’s hands (“Paper Pills”), “the knuckles of the doctor’s hands were extraordinarily large”. Later Anderson compares them to “the gnarled, twisted apples left by the pickers in an orchard, and he adds, “Only the few know the sweetness of the twisted apples”. The ugly appearance, like “knuckles” alludes to Doctor’s grotesqueness in others’ eyes while the “sweetness” inside directs readers’ attention to good qualities of these grotesques in that Doctor Reefy marries the “tall black girl” after her being seduced by the black-haired boy. To the “tall black girl”, Doctor’s knuckled hands signify solace, innocent of desire for any purpose; while the “white hands” of jeweler’s son (“Paper Pills”), one of her suitors, signify possessive lust, terrifying her in her dreams—he has little difference with another young suitor, that black-haired boy who seduces her indeed.

Hands may look symptomatic of disease. Elizabeth Willard (“Mother”), George Willard’s mother, has “long hands, white and bloodless” in a “ghostly figure”. Her hands, pointing to decay, characterize her state of life as a middle-aged woman, troubled with obscure physical disease on the one side and baffled in her unfulfilled theater dreams on the other side. In her maidenhood she dreamt of acting and travelling to have adventures in a broad world of life. But her dreams were frustrated by her unhappy marriage with a man of pragmatics, not of dreams. In despair she is restless, unable to communicate or live effectively. In this sense, her “bloodless” hands and “ghostly figure” are not only symptoms of serious disease, but may suggest a living death, or an image of apparition in all others’ eyes. There are also Tom Willard’s (“The Philosopher”) “peculiarly marked hands”, whose fingers have flaming red birthmark. The redness deepens when he becomes excited, talking politics. His hands thus become the embodiment of his own political aspiration, which, however, nobody would share with him.

Hands, a symbol throughout all the stories, have their ultimate meaning generalized by Anderson toward the end of *Winesburg, Ohio*. In “Departure” when referring to George Willard’s hands, it says “With all his heart he wants to come close to some other human, touch someone with his hands, be touched by the hand of another.” Hands, therefore, to Anderson, are not merely symbolic of desire, absurdity, disease, but a carrier of human communication and companionship, redeeming the grotesques out of their abyss of dark life.

V. THE OLD WRITER AND GEORGE WILLARD

The old writer, like George Willard, however, spares himself the fate of being a grotesque. He listened to the old carpenter so attentively that he forgot the matter of raising the bed. In the meantime the latter’s story became his inspirational force to associate with figures in his mind. The window, now below his raised bed, is a fit symbol of a narrative entry, allowing him to look below, into his past, into his subconscious.

“In the bed the writer had a dream that was not a dream. As he grew somewhat sleepy but was still conscious, figures began to appear before his eyes. He imagined the young indescribable thing within himself was driving a long procession of figures before his eyes.”

The reader may see his counterpart George Willard especially in “Departure”.

“With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dream of his manhood.” (“Departure”)

They both play a dual role as a listener and recorder of others’ stories. It is even safe to say the old writer is George Willard in his old age. As a teenager boy George does not bear the burden that life has pressed on the backs of the other characters and feels no sense of alienation. Instead, all the grotesques pin their hope on George to articulate their hearts to reestablish their connection with mankind. Moreover his occupation as a reporter in the local newspaper aspires him to be a fiction writer. They urge him to preserve and develop his gift. Kate Swift (“The Teacher”), his school teacher insists, taking hold of his shoulders, “you must not become a mere peddler of word. The thing to learn is to know what

people are thinking about, not what they say.” Dr. Parcival (“The Philosopher”) tells him, “If something happens perhaps you will be able to write the book I may never get written.” George is too young to understand their high expectation but his maturity physically and emotionally in the least illuminates a light at the end of the book, which helps to connect a maturing young man with the aging writer at the beginning of the book.

George’s maturing is chronicled in the last three stories of the book “Death”, “Sophistication” and “Departure”. In “Death”, his mother died painfully after paralysis for 6 days in bed in the year he became 18. Her death refigures her as a young graceful girl, releasing her finally from her humdrum marriage life. George, whereas, is oddly unaffected at first: her death gave him “a queer empty feeling” and he felt “annoyed”, “half angrily” because he would have to put off the date with Helen White. His disinterest or detachment is meant purposely by Anderson to point out the truth—her passing is the final moment of his childhood, enabling him to make the decision to leave Winesburg for his prospect. In “Sophistication”, he begins to look back on his childhood for the first time, giving him a new sense of manhood—“a moment of sophistication”. He and Helen took a nostalgic view about the town they lived in and would progress in their emotional lives. That night at the half decayed grand-stand in Winesburg Fair Ground, a symbol of nostalgic indulgence, he achieved his sophistication about love and sexual consciousness: he kissed Helen briefly and in the end they came back into town together in a very dignified fashion. If in his relation with Belle Carpenter, George tries all he can to prove his manhood, with Helen, now the college student, he is sure of his own manhood. In “Departure”, George is leaving Winesburg for good. He is taller than his father, symbolizing his newfound manhood; he does not see Helen running to say goodbye because she is left behind him as a part of his past. As the train started what was in his mind was not something serious or apparently important, but little details of the friendly town in which he was growing up, the trivial matters about solitary grotesques. At this point the figures in his mind on train coincide and overlap with those in the old writer at his bedroom.

“At this desk the writer worked for an hour. In the end he wrote a book which he called ‘The book of the Grotesque.’ It was never published, but I saw it once and it made an indelible impression on my mind...” (“The Book of the Grotesque”)

George leaves his small town in time to avoid the destiny of being a grotesque like his townspeople. Yet his sympathetically emotional attachment to them as their listener and advice-giver on certain occasions, or those little things in his mind, will not be erased easily no matter where he is. Particularly he will take writing as his occupation even living afar. In this sense, the old writer incarnates the old George Willard, who will become the voice of inarticulate men and women in all the solitary towns, and who has done as earnestly expected by his school teacher Kate Swift and Dr. Parcival.

VI. CONCLUSION

Winesburg, Ohio is not a detailed recording of daily life of the small town people at the turn of the century, but cuts through the surface of lives into the hidden, controlling innermost souls, or in Anderson’s words, in “moments”. In its general prologue, the tone is set forth purposely by Anderson in order to lead the reader toward the type of mood he wanted to adopt. In his small bedroom without a view, the old writer seems to be lonely, decaying and trapped, which may reduce him to a grotesque like those under his pen. Fortunately he is not as stubborn and staunch as his characters, sticking to one idea; rather he hired a carpenter to raise the bed to have a view outside window; it is writing, as a way of articulation, that has saved him.

“The Book of the Grotesque” said, the writer is inspired one night while thinking about his death. At this point, he experiences the thing inside him which is like a young pregnant woman. This image may sound bizarre but it is actually a creative way to describe the types of moments in his mind: it is a symbol of life within death, equivalent to fertility characterizing a pregnant woman. Repeatedly it says “The thing to get at is what the writer, or the young thing within the writer, was thinking about.” “It was the young thing inside him that saved the old man.” The “young”, by giving him creativity and vitality, helps to take the burden of alienation and loneliness off from the backs of those bizarre figures in his mind, and voice their hunger for love and understanding as well.

The weeping carpenter is a grotesque, flawed, ineffectual and incomplete. His existence foreshadows all others in subsequent stories. He can tell his stories only to the old writer as those grotesques in Winesburg, Ohio can only do so to George Willard. Their inability of articulation takes a variety of forms: inability to communicate feelings as seen in “Hands”, inability to communicate thoughts in “Paper Pills”, inability to communicate love in “Mother” and the like.

Characters become engrossed in a moment, which furnishes the reader with a penetrating glimpse of the innermost world of the grotesques. The moment is highly significant and pivotal in the life of the protagonist and appears as it will spur him onto a life-changing action, however it never does. For Alice in “Adventure” the moment of adventure changes into the moment of resignation, “trying to force herself to face bravely the fact that many people must live and die alone, even in Winesburg.” For Seth in “The Thinker” the moment of romantic sentiment changes into a moment of self-discovery; for Ray Pearson and Hal Winters in “The Untold Lie”, a moment of established communication changes into a moment of deliberate self-delusion. The moment slips away and so does the vivacity of the figure which Anderson has chosen to highlight. Anderson may suggest that in the industrial age and coming consumer society, spiritual food is a rare commodity like understanding, love, companionship and so forth. The grotesques are doomed grotesques in the real world but may find their counterparts in the fictional world, in this book, for instance.

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Lexical Inferencing: The Relationship between Number and Density of Lexical Items and L2 Learners' Reading Comprehension Achievement

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Abstract—Lexical inferencing denoted a process of guessing the meaning of an unknown word by employing all linguistic cues available in the text together with the reader's world knowledge, his/her linguistic knowledge, and his/her awareness of the context. (Haastrup, 1991). This study dealt with exploring the influence of number and density of unknown words on lexical inferencing. To this end, different data collection devices were used: A Quick placement test given to 90 students to select 30 same English proficiency level students for this study, a text with high density of unknown words including 357 words totally and 20 unknown words and a text with low density of unknown words including 291 words totally and 10 new words were given to the participants to show the effect of number of new words on success of learners' lexical inferencing. The guessing success of the students in the texts with low density of unknown words interpreted that the lower the number of unfamiliar words, the higher the available clues for the participants to use for inferring the correct meaning of those words. The results can be of significance to teachers and learners of English.

Index Terms—lexical inferencing, number of lexical items, reading comprehension

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the essential factors that affect language learning in general and reading in particular, is vocabulary size. According to Laufer (1989), although a foreign/second language reader cannot master the vocabulary the same as a native speaker, it is not correct to say that he/she is not able to understand the written materials.

Hu and Nation (2000) maintain that it is very good if EFL/ESL readers can cover 98 percent of the reading comprehension without help. In the same way, Hirsh and Nation (1992) suggest that "the 98% coverage can help the reader to comprehend the written text for pleasure without any assistance." Of course, it is not easy to set the best criterion for the EFL/ESL reader although there are two criteria for the amount of known vocabulary. However, it is assumed if EFL/ESL reader can cover at least 95% of the words, it means that they can understand most of the written text; that is, they need to have the knowledge of 3000 word families, or 5000 lexical items. However, it is better to say that "[the] higher the coverage, the lower the density of unknown words" (Laufer, 1997). Considering the great importance given to lexical inferencing in many studies (Read, 2000), the main purpose of this paper was to investigate the influence of number of unknown words on lexical inferencing.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading Comprehension

Souvignier & Moklesgerami (2006) define reading comprehension as the reader's ability "to read and remember, reproduce, learn from, and find deeper meaning in text for later use." Moreover, in the process of reading the reader not only needs to comprehend the direct meaning of what he/she is reading, but, he/she also needs to understand the implied meaning of the text. According to Tierney and Readence (2005), "Learning to read is not [only] learning to recognize words; it is [also] learning to make sense of texts". (Karbalaei, 2010, P.166). Pressley (2002a) states that reading involves a lot of cognitive capacity which is available for understanding the reading materials.

Some researchers believe that readers are required to employ a posteriori knowledge in examining the text and form new ideas while reading for comprehension. According to Guterman (2003), "the more knowledge a person brings to his or her reading, the more he or she will understand the text." Some other researchers (e.g., Lau & Chan, 2003) maintain that for a successful reading comprehension exercise the reader needs to be active, evaluate the text, can foresee the events in the text, be able to reread for better understanding and finding inconsistencies, assess his/her comprehension; he/she also need to be able to use his/her prior knowledge and monitor his comprehension.

The main goal of reading is reading comprehension, especially functional literacy tasks. Reading comprehension, which is a task that comprises many skills, describes outcome of taking out the meaning from a written text by using

one's intellect. Curtis (2002) believes that there are a number of skills that the reader needs to employ in order to achieve maximum reading comprehension, skills such as: deciding about the main idea of the reading text, making questions regarding the content of the text and being able to answer those questions by employing context clues, and summarizing the passage.

Block and Pressley (2002) state that reading comprehension is usually considered as a process in which several elements are integrated. These elements are the ability to decode written materials, reader's prior knowledge of the text, his/her vocabulary knowledge, and the reading strategies to comprehend the text. According to them, "comprehension involves more than 30 cognitive and metacognitive processes including clarifying meaning, summarizing, drawing inferences, predicting, and so on" (Block & Pressley, 2002). Moreover, Trabasso and Bouchard (2002, p. 177) assert that, "Comprehension strategies are specific, learned procedures that foster active, competent, self-regulated, and intentional reading"

There are a lot of studies that support the decisive role of vocabulary knowledge in a successful reading comprehension, especially in older children. For example, Ouellette & Beers (2010) have recently pointed out the important role oral vocabulary plays (contrasted with decoding skills) in foreseeing the success of Grade 6 students in reading comprehension.

Ouellette (2006), in a study involving Grade 4 students, found out that 28.5% of reading comprehension variance was the result of the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. More specifically, the weight of vocabulary depth was heavier than those of vocabulary breadth and word recognition. On the contrary, Tannenbaum (2006) reported the importance of vocabulary breadth over vocabulary depth in reading comprehension. Anyhow, vocabulary breadth and depth had a significant relationship and in more than 50% of the cases the comprehension variance was common between the two.

As Nation (2001) stated, quite a few studies have shown that there exist a high correlation between the amount of vocabulary known reading comprehension. Stahl (2003), in one of her studies, maintains that readability studies formulae have revealed that the difficulty of the words in a text is the most important element in determining the difficulty of the text itself. Therefore, the size of one's vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of one's ability in reading comprehension.

Lexical Inferencing

According to Morrison (1996), lexical inferencing is using the available linguistic cues as well as other key points in a text in order to guess the meaning on unfamiliar word. Inferencing, in the opinion of Paribaht and Wesche (1999, p. 198), is a cognitive process that employs "familiar attributes and contexts" to distinguish unfamiliar elements in reading. Moreover, Haastrup (1991) states that lexical inferencing denoted a process of guessing the meaning of an unknown word by employing all linguistic cues available in the text together with the reader's world knowledge, his/her linguistic knowledge, and his/her awareness of the context. Furthermore, "well-elaborated semantic knowledge, which includes developing knowledge of usage, collocations and other lexico-grammatical characteristics" is mainly achieved by learning new words through utilizing lexical inferencing in reading (Hunt, & Beglar, 2005, p. 28).

Advanced Students studying in English or other fields of study almost always are concerned with reading different written books and articles in English. Mostly these students suffer from lack of English vocabulary knowledge and this shortage is more problematic when it is impossible for them to access a dictionary and look that word up or to find someone with enough vocabulary knowledge and ask him/her. In such a case a thing which is very important and sometimes very useful is lexical inferencing. By lexical inferencing it is meant that a hypothesis about the meaning of a word is made actively and creatively and it is tested, if it is correct, it will enhance the accuracy and comprehension of the text otherwise it will lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the text. It is interesting to note that sometimes vocabulary acquisition can occur through lexical inferencing because in this way a relationship can be imagined and made between the written word, the inferred meaning, and even the context of occurrence, and all these processes will lead to a complex interaction which can associate and join those word and meaning to one's vocabulary knowledge. According to above mentioned ideas it can be said that to expose and learn less frequent words, one of the most useful things especially for advanced L2 learners is reading comprehension texts and one of the most recommended ways is applying lexical inferencing method while reading those texts (Huckin&Coady 1999).

Based on Haastrup's definition in (1991), lexical inferencing is the application of linguistic and non linguistic hints included in a text to form "informed guesses" about the meaning of an unknown lexicon. She conducted a study about lexical inferencing in which she found that lots of various strategies namely, the internal structure of the word; top-down contextual and sentence-level clues were used by the participants. On the other hand, in her study, she introduced taxonomy for inference consisting of contextual, intralingual, and interlingual cues, and the results showed that those participants who used a combination of inferences and those who paid more attention to available information provided for them, were more successful.

So far several researches have shown that many factors contribute in successful lexical inferencing, some of them are listed below:

- 1) The essence and area of the word and text (Paribakht&Wesche, 1999).
- 2) The amount of the attention which is paid to the details in the text by the learner and his/her background knowledge about the possible meaning of the word (Frantzen, 2003).

3) The amount of learners' basic pre-existing knowledge (Nassaji, 2006).

Studies Done in the Domain of Lexical Inferencing

During the last four decades several researchers have studied about the ways that L2 learners try to cope with unfamiliar lexical (Haastrup, 1991; Morrison, 1996; Nassaji, 2006; Babaei&Riazi, 2008).

Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) introduced three categories of knowledge sources which are used during lexical inference and played effective role in contextual understanding. These sources are linguistic, world, and strategic knowledge. Some of the recent studies also have confirmed the effectiveness of these knowledge sources. Nassaji (2006) is one of those researchers who have confirmed that the cooperation of several knowledge sources and strategies will lead to a more successful lexical inference. Moreover, he suggested an inference model which was able to distinguish strategies and the effective and appropriate use of them in association with different sources of knowledge.

Morisson (1996) is another researcher who studied lexical inferencing. In her study 20 L2 (French) learners read an authentic French text about the behaviors of pedestrian in a university context. In her study she used pairs think-aloud protocols which showed significant differences between high and low proficiency learners. In her research, high proficiency learners were more successful at lexical inferencing and they also used more knowledge sources and more combinations of various sources, and it was revealed that high proficiency learners tended to use contextual hints especially intralingual sources. On the other hand, low proficiency learners used contextual cues and knowledge sources but less than high proficiency learners, and as Morris proposed low proficiency learners should develop their lexical knowledge through word-analysis and their ability to integrate this lexical and contextual knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

So far in many studies it has been revealed that the amount of vocabulary one knows will affect his/her ability for decoding and understanding reading texts, in fact it seems that the more vocabulary knowledge causes the better text comprehension (Bengeleil & Paribakht, 2004; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). According to all previously mentioned ideas there is obviously a relationship between lexical knowledge and text comprehension but one point which is still controversial is the question that how the amount and distribution of lexical knowledge can affect comprehension especially reading comprehension (Babaei & Riazi, 2008). Clearly to get nearer to the answer to this question, this point should be taken into consideration in real EFL classes.

Research Question

Does text density in terms of the number of unknown lexical items have relationship with success of L2 learners' lexical inferencing?

Null Hypothesis

Text density in terms of the number of unknown lexical items have no relationship with success of L2 learners' lexical inferencing?

III. METHOD

Participants

The participants of this study were 30 L2 learners students selected from 90 EFL senior university students in Islamic Azad Universities of Boroujerd and Arak. All of the participants were native speakers of Persian, and they used English as a foreign language for general purposes. Their age ranged between 20 and 30, but gender was not considered as a determining factor in selecting the participants. The proficiency level of the participants was determined through the administration of a Quick Placement Test. Those whose scores in the test were between 48-55 were considered as the advanced-level participants of this study. (As it is specified in QPT ranking chart).

Instruments

In this study different instruments were used for data collections:

Proficiency Test

The proficiency level of the students was determined by administering a Quick Placement Test (version 1, 2002). The test consists of two parts; part one contains 40 items; 5 questions about situations, 15 questions on cloze passages, 20 questions of completion type. The second part contains 20 questions; 10 questions on cloze passages and 10 questions of completion type. All questions are multiple-choice items.

Lexical Inferencing Texts

In order to perform the designed research, under the direct supervision of the supervisor and advisor of the research, two passages that were supposed to be suitable for the guessing task in this study were selected from English websites.

Procedures

The research at hand was performed in six sessions, the researcher utilized the two selected passages described in instruments section for the guessing task in this study:

In the first session, the researcher piloted the texts with 15 senior EFL university students in Islamic Azad University, Arak branch. The participants were asked to read each text and underline the unknown words.(chegeni & tabatabaei, 2013,P.125).

In the second session, the piloting was done with 15 senior EFL university students in Islamic Azad University, Boroujerd branch. In this task, the words which were underlined in the first task, and also were new based on the idea of some professors given to the participants. They were asked to write their synonyms in English or Persian. The

researcher choose the words which were found to be unknown words to be used in the main study. (chegeni & tabatabaei, 2013,P.125).

In the third session, the vocabulary and the comprehension tests with the related alternatives and distracters for each text were made separately. Then, it was piloted with 15 senior EFL university students in Boroujerd Azad University to be ensured of the correct alternatives and distracters, the appropriate timing, the administration procedures for each test, during the main study (chegeni & tabatabaei, 2013, P.125).

In the fourth session, a Quick Placement Test (QPT, version 1, 2002) which includes two parts was administered to 90 EFL participants in Boroujerd Azad University and Islamic Azad University, Arak branch. After administering the test a total number of 30 students who had the same language proficiency level were selected for this study. (chegeni & tabatabaei, 2013, P.125).

In the fifth session, the text entitled *Dreams with* high density of unknown words including 357 words totally and 20 unknown words was given to the participants and were asked to read it carefully and choose the correct choice for each question. All of the new words were content words involving four nouns: alacrity, invective, Breakthrough, infraction, five adjectives: slightest, futile, fractious, pugnacious, pellucid, and eleven verb: hurl, dither, deprecate, fawn, pontificate, kick, grab, deride, construe, heal, tumble. This text consisted of 10 multiple choice comprehension questions and 15 multiple choice questions for unknown words.

In the last session, the texts entitled *The Mini Problem* with low density of unknown words was administered. The text with low density of unknown words including 291 words totally and 10 new words was given to the participants to choose the correct answers. All of the new words were content words involving one noun: fervor, four adjectives: palpable, magnificent, insurmountable, blah, one adverb: sulkily, three verbs: relegate, seethe, yell and an expression: par for the course. This text consisted of 6 multiple choice comprehension questions and 10 multiple choice questions for unknown words.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Before starting the statistical procedure, all the scores obtained from the tests employed (except for the OPT) by the participants in the two experimental groups, that is, low density, high density, were converted to the scale of 100 to come up with homogeneous scores because the highest scores for different tests were different. (chegeni & tabatabaei, 2013,P.125).

Results of the OPT

Before starting the main experiment in order to make sure that the two groups were homogeneous with regard to their English proficiency, the results of their OPT were compared through administering a one-way ANOVA. Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics and the results of the ANOVA for this test. (chegeni & tabatabaei, 2013,P.125).

TABLE 4.1
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR THE OPT

Low density		High density		ANOVA	
Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	p
50.89	1.807	51.87	2.875	.940	.427

It can be seen in Table 4.1 that the result of the ANOVA is not statistically significant ($F_{(3, 56)} = .940$, $p = .427$); as a result, it can be said that the two groups were homogeneous at the beginning of the experiment with regard to their English proficiency. (chegeni & tabatabaei, 2013,P.126).

Results of the density groups' performance

The performances of the two density groups, that is, low and high, needed to be compared to check the validity of the null hypothesis. Table 4.2 gives the descriptive statistics for the two groups.

TABLE 4.2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DENSITY

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Low	15	80.00	8.251	2.130
High	15	69.87	7.689	1.985

Regarding the information available in Table 4.2, the two means are not the same, but it cannot be told if their differences are statistically significant. To find this out, an independent-sample t-test was used. Table 4.3 shows the result.

TABLE 4.3
THE RESULTS OF T-TEST FOR NULL HYPOTHESIS

t	df	p	Mean Difference
3.480	28	.002	10.13

According to Table 4.3, the amount of t-observed (3.480) is significant at the probability level of .002 which denotes a statistically significant amount, since if the significance level is smaller than the alpha level (.05), we should reject the null hypothesis and say that the difference is statistically significant, but if it is more than the alpha level we should retain the null hypothesis. As a result, the null hypothesis stating that, "text density in terms of the number of unknown lexical items have no effect on L2 learners' successful lexical inferencing" can safely be rejected.

Discussions for the Research Question

In this study an attempt was made to answer the following research question appropriately:

Does text density in terms of the number of unknown lexical items have relationship with success of L2 learners' lexical inferencing?

According to the data gained from this study and the statistics employing an independent-sample t-test, in preceding section it was seen that the the amount of t-observed (3.480), degree of freedom (28) and p value is .002. Moreover, mean score of high density unfamiliar words (69.87) is smaller than of low density unfamiliar words which is (80.00). As a result, the null hypothesis stating that, "text density in terms of the number of unknown lexical items have no relationship with success of L2 learners' lexical inferencing" can safely be rejected.

This conclusion is in line with some previous research about the effect of text density regarding unknown vocabularies on learners' successful lexical inferencing as Liu and Nation (1985) stated that when using high and low density text, words in low-density texts are easier to guess. (Yuen Shen & Shi Wu, 2009, P.190) The findings of this research also support Laufer's (1997) suggestion that high density of unknown words in reading texts results in the inability of the learners' successful inferencing.

The results of this study are parallel with what the other researchers in the field gained as Nassaji (2006) who argue that depth of vocabulary knowledge made a significant contribution to inferential success. According to Fukkink and Block (2001) these findings support the hypothesis that lexical inference depends heavily on the richness of the learners' semantic and conceptual system (Yuen Shen & Shi Wu, 2009, P.191)

The result obtained from the first question is also supported by other researchers including Sternberg, (1987), Haynes, (1993), Fraser, (1999); Paribakht and Wesche, (1999), and Dubin & Olshtain, (1993) who conclude that contextual factors including the number of occurrences of the unknown word, the importance of the unknown word to text comprehension, the density of unknown words in the text, text length, comprehension task, and the existence of clear contextual cues influence success in guessing an appropriate meaning for an unknown word. (Paribakht,2005,P. 721).

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

To sum up, this study dealt with exploring the influence of number and density of unknown words on lexical inferencing. In order for the findings of this study to be pedagogically valid and applicable, they must be first subjected to replication and empirical validation. It is then and only then that the results and findings can be generalized to other populations. It should be mentioned that the findings of this study could enrich the literature in the area of second language acquisition development (Shoushinasab, 2013, P.42) especially Iranian EFL learners' lexical inferencing abilities.

The findings of this research revealed that text density regarding unknown vocabularies have effect on success of L2 students' lexical inferencing. In other words the guessing success of the students in the texts with low density of unknown words interpreted that the lower the number of unfamiliar words, the higher the available clues for the participants to use for inferring the correct meaning of those words. When students come across a text with high density of new words, these new words are more difficult for the students to guess because they enjoy clues which are new words by themselves and consequently may add to the confusion of the students in referring the right meaning.

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College EFL Teachers' Perspectives on Listening Assessment and Summarization for a Specific Task

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Abstract—Listening assessment has been a neglected area of research and teaching in the past due to difficulties such as separating input comprehension from output ability, rater variability, and text ambiguity. The goal of this study was to develop a norm-referenced and holistic model summary by surveying Taiwanese English listening and speaking teachers and then comparing that model summary to listening summaries created by non-expert college age native speakers. Eleven Taiwanese college English listening and speaking teachers were surveyed to determine i) their general listening assessment preferences and ii) how they would score a specific listening task, including selecting the key main ideas, key vocabulary, and drafting a model summary. For comparison purposes, the listening task was administered to 10 college-age native speakers of English and they were asked to orally construct a summary of the listening task. The results showed that the teachers were consistent in their listening assessment preferences and also in their preferred assessment choices for a specific listening task. The native-speaker produced summaries did not converge on a single model for the same listening task.

Index Terms—listening assessment, listening comprehension, teacher assessment practices, summarization, native speakers

I. INTRODUCTION

The research into listening assessment practices of language teachers, not just Taiwanese language teachers, is scarce (Alderson & Banerjee, 2002; Chen & Tsai, 2012). Even more scarce are studies investigating the construction of L2 listening summaries, as research into L2 reading summaries is only beginning to be developed (Frost, Elder, & Wigglesworth, 2012; Yu, 2013). As much of the research and practice surrounding L2 listening is derived from L2 reading, many of the most commonly adopted ways to score the listeners' understanding are modelled on assessment forms refined in the reading area such as multiple choice tests, cloze tests, completion (or dictation), and short answer questions. However, the ability to process input by constructing mental (or even written) summaries is critical for successful communication, in school and out, and summary construction has long been seen as "crucial for education" across the curriculum (Seidlhofer, 1995). For listening assessment purposes, summarizing goes beyond mere comprehension because it reflects the listener's identification and reconstruction of the most important elements of the text through his or her analysis and synthesis. In this way, summarization as assessment is a much more robust measure of understanding than multiple choice, cloze, dictation, or even short answer questions. However, the research into summaries has long been complicated by the issue of validation, namely, how to distinguish good summaries from poor summaries (Frost, Elder, & Wigglesworth, 2012). As a result, the use of summaries in listening assessment is not established well enough to practically guide EFL teachers to make use of model listening summaries in their teaching practices. These two areas—Taiwanese listening and speaking teachers' assessment practices and the construction of 'model' listening summaries—are at the focal point of this study.

a. Summaries for assessment

For advanced listening training, summarization is one of the best teaching methods. Summarization is a high-skill exercise, which requires listeners to re-organize the ideas that have been formed while listening (Kirkland & Saunders, 1991). Deciding which information should be included in a summary and how the summary should be organized are normative claims, outside the bounds of the common definition, which must be answered on a case-by-case basis, and are dependent on the context, audience, and purpose of the summary (Seidlhofer, 1995). From this, the two most consistent criticisms against using summaries to assess language ability have been (1) that numerically scoring or differentiating a good summary from a poor summary is too difficult to be practical and (2) that students may not be able to produce output in the L2 commensurate with their ability to comprehend L2 input (Alderson, 2000, pp. 232-233; Frost, Elder, & Wigglesworth, 2012; Kirkland & Saunders, 1991; Yu, 2007). This may explain why summaries, as a

form of language assessment, have been so neglected, even though their potential, as a comprehensive and integrative assessment tool, is so high.

Notwithstanding that the research into the use of summaries in L2 pedagogy is underdeveloped, there have been a few notable studies which are important for this research. Rost (1994) compared L2 student summaries, completed after listening to a lecture, to expert native speaker summaries, to identify ways to improve student lecture understanding. Rost, using content and style analysis, found that the lecture was probably too difficult for the L2 learners involved in the study and that they tended to repeat or remodel chunks and phrases from the original lecture without fully grasping the meaning of their new constructions. Keck (2006), comparing L1 and L2 writers' use of paraphrase in the construction of summaries, similarly found that L2 writers use more "near copies" than L1 writers.

Yu (2007) completed a postmodern reading-writing assessment study, comparing the rating scales of native speaking expert scorers with scales constructed by the L2 learners themselves. Although both rating scales were effectively norm-referenced, L2 learners' summaries rated higher under their own "democratically" designed rating systems than they did under the expert native speaker rating systems. Additionally, the expert-designed rating system was not significantly (statistically) better at predicting student achievement on independent measures of student ability such as the First Certification in English "FCE" and TOEFL even though the rating systems only overlapped in their "required key points" by 50%. Furthermore, although the majority of the Chinese L2 learners involved in the study preferred expert-designed rating scales, a substantial number of students thought the democratically derived rating systems were more fair because "students could have their own unique understanding of a text, which 'old' experts might not fully appreciate due to a generation gap" (p. 555).

Inoue (2009) constructed an empirical, discourses-based rating system by reviewing oral interviews of 12 L2 learners whereby they had to complete numerous tasks including oral summarization. Inoue, in line with previous research, found that the higher proficiency L2 learners paid more attention to details than lower proficiency L2 learners, mimicking the differences found between L2 learners and native speakers when performing summarization tasks. Frost, Elder, and Wigglesworth (2012) had a similar finding in that higher proficiency L2 learners included more details and had a better schematic structure to their summaries than lower proficiency learners.

Finally, Vorobel and Kim (2011) qualitatively analyzed the summaries of a diverse group of seven L2 students studying in the US. They showed the impact that personal factors, such as cultural thinking patterns, motivation, content knowledge, literacy skills, and vocabulary, have on summary construction. Vorobel and Kim advised teachers to be mindful of students' background in order to provide better instruction when dealing with summaries.

b. Difficulties in Rating Summaries

As the previous studies demonstrate, the difficulty in using summaries in language assessment is that the scoring system is not easily validated and reliability can be problematic. Traditionally, summaries were scored holistically or impressionistically, with a teacher selecting, *a priori*, the most important elements required for an "adequate" summary (Frost, Elder, & Wigglesworth, 2012; Seidlhofer, 1995). This presumes that teachers are capable of producing valid and reliable summary rubrics, something which even experts have trouble with (Cohen, 1993, p. 137). Furthermore, the fact that the definition of a "summary" may be disputed, as Cohen (1993) discovered that test takers and raters disagreed over what exactly was a "main idea" and whether or not personal commentary or general knowledge should be included in the summary, is just a reflection that a summary is dependent on components such as main ideas and key vocabulary, each with their own level of ambiguity (Seidlhofer, 1995). This inherent ambiguity is reflected in Yu's work showing a sharp distinction between what students and experts think is a valid summary (2007). Other technical explorations into summary assessment have focused on discourse analysis such as that developed by Seidlhofer (1995), Frost, Elder, and Wigglesworth (2012), and most recently by Yu (2013). Although studies such as these are making worthwhile contributions to the field generally, their elaborate and intensive methodology makes them more suited for diagnostic purposes than regular classroom use.

The difficulty in scoring summaries is compounded by the trend towards incorporating more authentic materials in the language learning classroom: since such materials are designed for native speakers, the context and subtext make clear or definitive comprehension checks, such as through a summary, even more difficult. From a broader perspective, test designers and teachers must recognize that it may not be possible to effectively disassociate our own background knowledge, assumptions, opinions, and biases to credibly claim that we have constructed a "model summary" (Alderson, 2000, p. 150).

c. Research questions

The motivation behind this study was to develop a rating scale for EFL instructors to assess listening comprehension for a specific listening task. From this, three research questions were derived for this study. First, currently which assessment practices are most frequently used by Taiwanese English listening and speaking teachers? In Taiwan, there has been no major work published surveying the practices of this particular population so any insight would be useful. Second, what degree of listening assessment conformity exists between Taiwanese listening and speaking teachers with respect to a specific listening task? This research question was designed to shed light on the degree of similarity of model summaries produced by practicing teachers.

The third research question was, if Taiwanese listening and speaking teachers do show a high degree of listening assessment conformity for a specific task, how closely do their assessment expectations overlap with native speaker

listening performance for the same task? Based on extensive research into English teachers for whom English is an L2, we expect a high degree of similarity between what teachers expect L2 learners to understand and what L1 learners understand for a short and limited listening task (Moussu & Llorca, 2008). Many studies have compared native speaking teachers with non-native speaking teachers with respect to speaking assessment (eg., Kim, 2009; Zhang & Elder, 2011), but listening assessment, specifically compared to native speaker performance, appears to be unaddressed in the literature. Using native speakers as a comparison for the teachers’ model summaries has two advantages. First, using native speakers in this study greatly reduces the possibility that the participants’ output ability is not commensurate with his or her listening ability, as is the case with many L2 study participants (Frost, Elder, & Wigglesworth, 2012; Rost, 1994). Second, using native speaking participants can offer some insight into the upper range of performance that can be expected from L2 learners. In this way, we can get a better picture of how well the teacher-constructed model summaries correlate with higher proficiency performances (Yu, 2007). Ultimately, we hoped that the results would converge to produce a robust ideal model of comprehension for our specific listening task.

II. METHODOLOGY

a. Participants

The participants consisted of 11 college English listening and speaking teachers (the “Teachers”) and 10 American native-English speaking college students (the “NS”). The Teachers were all female native Chinese speakers. To protect anonymity, no other demographic information about the Teachers was collected as part of this study.

The NS ranged in age from 18 to 21 years old and five were female. All were enrolled in college at the time, although not at the same institution: five were from a single community college, four were from two comparable state universities, and one was enrolled at a military academy. Six of the NS were majoring in psychology, and the remaining four NS were majoring in criminal justice, fashion design, engineering, and journalism. All had normal hearing ability, none had any proficiency in a second language, and none had ever traveled outside the United States.

b. Instruments

The Teachers were given an online survey consisting of two parts: the first part asked for their listening assessment preferences and the second part asked them to identify how they would assess a specific news text. The survey’s assessment preferences section consisted of two questions: the first asked them to estimate how often they used particular forms of assessment. The choices offered in the survey were: i) checking for gist; ii) checking for main ideas; iii) checking for details; iv) checking for summarization; v) checking for vocabulary identification and/or comprehension; vi) checking for accuracy (ie., dictation); and vii) genre identification. These choices were made based upon a review and synthesis of Flowerdew and Miller (2005, pp. 184-188), Macaro (2005, pp. 178-179), and Rost’s (2002, pp. 172-173) works. The second question asked the Teachers if they used any other listening assessment forms not already listed in the first question.

The second part of the Teachers’ survey involved an authentic news broadcast taken from the BBC. The broadcast first aired on April 10, 2010, and was entitled “Poland in mourning for plane crash victims” (BBC, 2010). The broadcast was 1 minute, 23 seconds in length and was structured in traditional news macrostructure (van Dijk, 1988, pp. 15-18) consisting of a lead, macropropositions, details, and conclusion. Given the topical nature and specialized vocabulary with most regular news broadcasts, the short length of this particular news clip would better facilitate student comprehension and subsequent interpretation, and hopefully reduce the difficulty associated with defining summarization (Seidlhofer, 1995). The limited subject nature of the news clip would also help avoid resorting to computational methods or deep semantic analysis to effectually summarize the text. The reporter spoke in accented British English and interviewed Polish speakers who spoke in Polish-accented English. Teachers were given the link to the BBC website which hosted the videos of the news story so that they could hear and see the content of the text. The transcript of the news article, as was also provided to the Teachers in the survey, can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1.
TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS ARTICLE USED IN THE TEACHER’S SURVEY

>>Reporter: Poland is a country of churches, but not enough for all those who wish to mourn today.
>>Reporter: An overflow congregation of thousands gathered in Royal Castle Square to hear the Archbishop of Warsaw read the 96 names of those who died. People who in exile, in the Solidarity movement, and now in government, had been at the heart of Poland’s modern history.
>>Polish man: This is a tragedy I think for eh, for the country. It’s never happened something like this, anywhere in Europe. So uh, it’s extremely, uh, sad uh story for us, especially in this week just after the Easter so it’s horrible.
>>Polish woman: The most important people in Poland died so I don’t know how we’ll, the future of our country look like.
>>Reporter: Lech Kaczynski and his identical twin had been child film stars. They both joined the struggle against communism and rose to become President and Prime Minister, leading a strongly nationalistic government, which irritated both Russia and its European Partners.
>>Reporter: Although at times a divisive figure, there has been an outpouring of sorrow.
>>Reporter: Large crowds built up outside the Presidential Palace, laying flowers and lighting candles to mourn this blow to Poland.

* (>>) represents a speaking pause.

Based on the news story in Table 1, the Teachers were asked two multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions regarding how they would assess students. The first multiple choice question asked for Teachers’ preferred

assessment type from among eight categories: summarization, main idea check, vocabulary check, check for gist, genre identification, reflection/reaction/response, dictation, and other. The second multiple choice question asked Teachers to choose the key main ideas of the news story (Table 2). For both questions, Teachers had the option of selecting multiple responses.

TABLE 2.
KEY MAIN IDEAS OF THE NEWS STORY

• people are mourning
• the most important people in Poland have died
• Poland is full of churches
• people gathered in the square to hear the archbishop
• people gathered outside the presidential palace
• 96 people died
• a tragedy has struck Poland
• the future is uncertain for Poland
• twin brother child film stars became Polish President and Prime Minister
• the Polish President and Prime Minister irritated neighbouring countries

The third question relating to how the Teachers would assess students asked for “the most important vocabulary for understanding the news text”. The final survey question asked Teachers to summarize the news story.

c. Native speaker interviews

The 10 native speaking participants were allowed to listen to the news story twice. Participants listened on headphones, after the volume was adjusted for their comfort. During the first listening participants were asked to think aloud concurrently. The second listening was used to recall the participants’ thoughts during the first listening event. The second listening involved pausing the recording at natural breaks within the story (ie., every few sentences). After each pause in the playback, participants were asked to report any additional thoughts they may have had during the think aloud or any new information they may be noticing on the second listening. Immediately at the end of the second listening, participants were asked to summarize what they had just heard. All think aloud, recall, and summarization was recorded and then transcribed for analysis.

In earlier pilot studies of this research, it was found that nearly all NS participants were unfamiliar with the subject of the news story or the recent history of Poland and Polish politics. This meant that the NS would be discovering the information in the news story for the first time during their participation in this study. For the data reported here, all but one of the 10 NS study participants reported being completely unfamiliar with the subject of the news story or Poland’s recent history. The data from the one participant who reported “vaguely” recalling hearing the news story when it first aired in April 2010 was retained because his memory did not appreciably affect his performance.

d. Data Analysis

After collecting all survey data and transcribing all interviews, text analysis was performed using text analysis software Concordance.

III. RESULTS

The first part of the Teachers’ survey concerned their preferred listening assessment practices. The first survey question asked them how often they used specific forms of listening assessment and the results can be seen in Table 3.

TABLE 3.
TEACHERS’ PREFERRED LISTENING ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Frequency	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Exclusively
Checking for gist			27%	64%	9%
Checking for main ideas			9%	82%	9%
Checking for details			27%	55%	18%
Checking for summarization		27%	36%	27%	9%
Checking for vocabulary ID and/or comprehension			18%	64%	18%
Checking for accuracy (ie., dictation)		9%	45%	45%	
Genre identification		27%	45%	27%	

As can be seen from Table 3 above, checking for main ideas, checking for vocabulary identification and comprehension, checking for details, and checking for gist were used “frequently or exclusively” by 91%, 82%, 73%, and 73% of the Teachers respectively. The second question regarding Teachers’ preferred listening assessment practices was open-ended, allowing to the Teachers to suggest any other forms of assessment not mentioned above, but no responses were given.

The second part of the Teachers’ survey asked them to design listening assessment for a specific news story. Teachers were first asked which assessment type they would most likely use for this specific news text and the results can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4.
ASSESSMENT TYPE REPORTED MOST LIKELY TO BE USED

Assessment Type	Response Frequency (%)
Main idea check	100
Check for gist	73
Genre Identification	64
Summarization	45
Reflection / reaction / response	36
Vocabulary check	36
Dictation (semi or full)	9

The second question for the applied portion of the survey asked the Teachers to identify the key main ideas for the news story and the results can be seen in Table 5.

TABLE 5.
SELECTED KEY MAIN IDEAS OF NEWS STORY

Main Idea	Response Frequency (%)
the most important people in Poland have died	91
a tragedy has struck Poland	82
people are mourning	64
the future is uncertain for Poland	36
people gathered in the square to hear the archbishop	27
people gathered outside the presidential palace	27
the Polish President and Prime Minister irritated neighboring countries	27
96 people died	27
twin brother child film stars became Polish President and Prime Minister	9

The third question on the applied portion of the Teachers’ survey asked them to identify the key vocabulary in the news story. The Teachers aggregate key word count (including word phrases such as “prime minister”) was 61 with 25 unique words. The results of the most common 12 words (2 or more occurrences) are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6.
REPORTED MOST IMPORTANT VOCABULARY OF THE NEWS STORY

Word or Word Phrase	Occurrences	Frequency (%)
tragedy	10	16
mourn	8	13
died	6	10
Poland	5	8
people	5	8
important	4	7
sorrow	2	3
blow	2	3
country	2	3
prime minister	2	3
most	2	3
president	2	3

The fourth question of the applied portion of the Teachers’ survey asked them to construct a model summary for the news story. A word analysis of the summaries found 221 words (including phrases being counted as one word) and 77 unique words. The summaries are reproduced in Table 7 and the key word analysis (for word occurrences of 3 or more) of the model summaries are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 7.
MODEL SUMMARIES FOR THE NEWS STORY

A tragedy struck Poland and people in Poland are mourning over the death of the most important people of their country.
People in Poland are mourning the loss of 96 lives, including the President and Prime Minister, who are the most important people for their supporters. The two brothers joined the struggle against communism and have been leading a strongly nationalistic government.
People get together to mourn for the death of important people in Poland.
A tragedy has happened in Poland. Large crowds gathered to mourn the death of the most important people in Poland.
Tragedy stroke Poland. Some important people died and people in Poland are mourning for the losses.
People in Poland are mourning for a tragic event that happened in their history.
There were some people in who Poland died, and many people were sad.
People in Poland gathered and mourned for the death of 96 important people and their uncertain future.
A tragedy happened in Poland that made the whole country sad, and people gathered to mourn for the death of the most important people in Poland.
96 people, including the President and Prime Minister died and many Polish people gathered outside the church to mourn for them.
The most important people in Poland, including Lech Kaczynski and his twin brother, died. Many in Poland are mourning for the tragic loss.
A tragedy struck Poland and people in Poland are mourning over the death of the most important people of their country.

TABLE 8.
WORD ANALYSIS OF THE MODEL SUMMARIES FOR THE NEWS STORY

Word or Word phrase	Occurrences	Frequency (%)
people	18	8
Poland, -ish	16	7
death, dead, died	9	4
mourn, -ing	9	4
important	8	4
tragedy, tragic	6	3
gathered	4	2
happened	3	1
including	3	1
loss, losses	3	1

a. Native Speaker Listening Performance

After transcribing all the NS summaries of the news text, the words were analyzed and 639 total words were found, with 210 unique words. The results of the word analysis of the NS summaries are shown in Table 9. Of the 10 NS summaries, only five appeared to closely follow the summary elements contained in the Teachers' model summaries. Due to their length, only selected portions of the NS summaries will be reproduced in the Discussion section below.

TABLE 9.
NATIVE SPEAKER NEWS SUMMARY WORD ANALYSIS

Word or Word phrase	Occurrences	Frequency (%)
people	15	2.3
some, some-	15	2.3
about	9	1.4
know	9	1.4
just	8	1.2
think	8	1.2
country	7	1.1
devastate, -d, -ing	7	1.1
maybe	6	0.9
Poland	6	0.9
communism, -ist, -ists	5	0.8
dead, died, death, dies	5	0.8
happen, -ed	5	0.8

IV. DISCUSSION

a. Teachers' Listening Assessment Practices

Although the sample size for this study was small (11 English listening teachers), the results are significant because there are so few published studies on Taiwan English teachers' assessment practices and this gives us a glimpse into purported listening assessment practices. That being said, some interesting findings can be gleaned from Table 3.

First, checking for main ideas and checking vocabulary comprehension were the most preferred forms of assessment with over 80% of the Teachers indicating they "frequently or exclusively" use these forms. Checking for gist was also popular as 73% of the Teachers indicated they "frequently or exclusively" use this form of assessment. As so many popular listening and speaking books in Taiwan focus on these assessment forms, it is not surprising that teachers would follow this pattern. Assessment types such as these are relatively straightforward and unambiguous and, especially if multiple choice answer formats are used, incorrect answers can be convincingly identified. On the other hand, vocabulary knowledge is important, but it is more critical for reading comprehension than for listening comprehension. For example, quite a number of words are not important for understanding most non-academic oral discourse. As such, the number of vocabulary items for understanding is fewer than many EFL listening teachers might think. In other words, the most important words appear more frequently, but they might appear in synonyms or words with close meanings, i.e. mourn, sorrow, tragedy. Furthermore, recent research has shown that vocabulary instruction is not as helpful as other forms of listening support (Alderson & Banerjee, 2002; Chang, 2007; Chang & Read, 2006; Chen & Tsai, 2012; Lim, 2009).

Second, the least popular forms of listening assessment were checking for accuracy (i.e., dictation) and genre identification, with less than half of the Teachers indicating they "frequently or exclusively" use these forms of assessment. As for dictation, just like vocabulary instruction, this result is strange in that it seems to go against much of recent research showing the effectiveness of dictation (Alderson & Banerjee, 2002; Kuo, 2010; Macaro, 2005, p. 178; Prince, 2012). Given that so much work has been done on genre identification and analysis in TESOL, it also seems peculiar that genre identification was lacking in popularity. Since both dictation and genre identification, at least facially, seem just as unambiguous and easy to score as checking for main ideas and checking for vocabulary comprehension, it is unclear why these forms of assessment should be less favored generally speaking besides the possibility that teacher practices have not yet caught up with the literature.

b. Teachers' preferred assessment and analysis of a specific news text

The Teachers were asked to identify which assessment forms they would use for the news story in Table 1. The results of this survey question are not surprising in that main idea check and checking for gist rate so highly among the Teachers. It is surprising that two-thirds of the Teachers would ask for a genre identification given that 72% of the Teachers said they only "sometimes, rarely, or never" use this form of listening assessment (see Table 3). The reason for this is unclear although this specific listening text would seem to be ideal for genre identification as the text itself does not overtly identify itself as a news piece. Additionally, only one-third of respondents indicated they would use vocabulary comprehension or identification assessment for this specific news text. This is curious since more than 80% of the Teachers said they "frequently or exclusively" use vocabulary comprehension or identification to assess listening. This result may be reflective of the limited and repetitive nature of the vocabulary (and synonyms) in the news text.

The Teachers were also asked to select the key main ideas and key vocabulary for the news story. The three most commonly selected main ideas, with more than two-thirds of respondents concurring, included words like death, tragedy, and mourning (Table 5). The main ideas involving the prime minister, archbishop, or neighboring countries were seen by the Teachers as less important. The Teachers demonstrated consistency in their assessment of this news text as the main ideas they selected as important and the main ideas' related words were more or less repeated throughout the reported key vocabulary (Table 6) and the Teachers' model summaries (Table 7). In fact, in the 11 model summaries, there were only five instances of details unrelated to these three key points. The robust nature of this data suggests that the news story, even though it may have involved an unfamiliar subject matter, was untopical and unambiguous, at least to the Teachers. The affectional and empathic nature of the Teachers' responses indicates that they paid more attention to the emotion transmitted through the story (ie., tragedy, mourning, died, sorrow) than to a deeper subtext within the story concerning Poland's political future (Table 6). The word analysis of the Teachers' summaries (Table 8) reaffirms this point in that death, mourning, tragic, and loss were among the most commonly used words. Overall, the Teachers demonstrated that they can independently produce model summaries with a high degree of similarity in terms of the summaries' main elements.

c. Native speaker news story summaries

Starting with the word analysis of the NS summaries (Table 9), it is immediately clear that the NS did not closely follow the model summaries offered by the Teachers. Specifically, affectional or emotional words such as tragic, mourn, sorrow, and loss are not among the most commonly repeated words (the exceptions are death and devastate). Instead, the NS choose content words of a political nature as the words country, Poland, and communism are more frequently used than "die." This result is also paralleled in the summaries actually made by the NS as only half produced summaries containing the elements "(i) Polish people are in mourning because (ii) a tragedy has struck Poland as (iii) the most important people in the country have died", as was preferred by the Teachers. For example, this NS summary would appear to be in concurrence with the Teachers' as it contains all the necessary elements and no others:

It was like uh tragedy about the death of the two leaders of Poland, how they are kind of coping with their death.

And this summary, although verbose, also has the required elements and little else:

...there was a uh, just something some type of disaster that devastated the people in Poland. People were mourning in Warsaw and they were just like they were just uh upset, grieving, over the loss of a lot of people. A lot of good like maybe politicians I thought, like good people, I guess.

However, only half of the summaries met this standard. The five summaries that differed from the elements contained in the Teachers' model summary focused on what would appear to have been minor details to the Teachers. These five NS transformed the story from one about the Polish people's grief into one about the political future of the country and Poland's relations with its neighbors. This summary was typical:

I would like maybe say that I saw on the news or whatever that there was an attack in Poland of high political- I would think political figures, um because they were following a movement that I caught Russia and then that I know there was another one that they didn't like and they assassinated them to stop the movement and now Poland's mourning and there is concern that they're not going to be able to rise up from this.

The summary below also focused on the elements not highlighted in the Teachers' model summaries:

They are in Poland and something happen where I think they said the leaders of the country I think like 96 leaders of the country had died so they didn't know what was going to happen and like the government, or like, I think they said something about um the European are like uh allies and they didn't know what was going to happen because their government was basically gone.

Since the NS had no problem understanding the text at the word level (as may not always be the case in studies investigating L2 learner output), why does there appear to be such a large divergence in text interpretation between the NS and the Teachers given that the text is facially very direct and unambiguous? This question can be analyzed from at least four possibilities. First, presuming that the NS had no difficulties in bottom-up processing, it is possible that the NS simply did not fully comprehend the news story in the way that the Teachers did, who were under no time constraint. In this case, subsequent additional listening or text reading would produce different results. Without this option, the NS may have resorted to background knowledge to construct their own meaning. Practically speaking, the American education system has little to say on modern Polish history, and usually the only mention of the country comes during study of World War II, the Cold War, and the birth of the Solidarity movement which started in Poland but spread out

across Europe and eventually ended in the collapse of the USSR. This perspective of modern Polish history, as a player on the larger European stage, appears to have been what was used by the NS in their interpretation of the news story. Overlooking the Polish people's mourning of the death of their leaders, the NS appear to have resorted to a method of induction, focusing on the political situation and the brief mention in the news story of both Europe and Russia.

The second possibility for the NS divergence was that the NS fully comprehended the news story as presented, but simply interpreted and synthesized it differently than the Teachers. In other words, the NS construction of knowledge was guided by background knowledge different from the Teachers. Since the question was not asked, we do not know the extent to which Teachers considered the alternate interpretation offered by the NS, if they considered it at all. Without arguing the merits of the NS alternate interpretation, it must be taken seriously as the political nature of the event and the notion of conspiracies involving Russia were widely discussed in the media at the time (Thompson, 2010). In fact, as late as October 30, 2012, more than two and a half years after the event and the conclusion of several reports on the crash, it was reported that another group conducting its own independent investigation into the crash had found traces of explosives on the wreckage, potentially implicating Russia and the region's geopolitics (AFP, 2012). It is plausible that the five NS who interpreted the news story to focus on its political aspects had this background information and perspective in mind. Such a different interpretation from the Teachers' is consistent with the notion that integrative and open-ended tasks such as listening to summarize is heavily dependent on individual test-taker characteristics and therefore not objectifiable (Jing, 2010; Yu, 2007).

Third, the Teachers model summary qualitatively differs from five of the NS summaries in degree to which each group repeats chunks of texts and elaborates on the information given. As Rost (1994) and Keck (2006) found, less proficient L2 learners tend to repeat chunks of the target text in their summary rather than paraphrase, interpret, or elaborate. The Teachers' summaries, seen from this perspective, also tended to repeat chunks of the target text more than these five NS summaries. Instead, these five native speaker summaries tended to elaborate and expand on the information given in the news story. A close reading of the news text and comparison to these divergent NS summaries shows that the NS may have over-interpreted what was said in the news text: the news text did not mention a political attack, terrorist incident, or political or governmental turmoil but this was inferred by these NS. This type of attention to detail and elaboration is what Inoue (2009) found among more proficient L2 learners when investigating their ability to orally summarize. It may be that the Teachers' expectations were calibrated for their students' ability level, presumably less proficient and less comparable to native speaker ability.

Finally, Taiwanese learners of English, when engaged in the act of listening, have been found to employ a more empathetic and affectional style (Teng, 2009). In other words, a strategy favored by Taiwanese English learners is to put themselves in the shoes of people involved in the story in order to better comprehend the listening input. Such a tactic may be reflected in the Teachers' emphasis on the emotional qualities of the news broadcast, which is also present in the NS' summaries but not as dominant. The different backgrounds of the study participants may also be reflected in the focus of each group's summaries. The Teachers all share a background in foreign languages and linguistics and the group of native speakers that produced summaries more focused on affectional aspects were all psychology majors. Of the five NS who attended more to the political aspect of the listening task, only one was a psychology major and the remaining four were studying criminal justice, fashion design, engineering, and journalism, somewhat less emotionally focused subjects. Another possibility along these lines is that the Teachers, with similar educational backgrounds and all being female, represent a segment of the population that is less interested in foreign political matters and therefore did not initially attend to the political aspect of the news story.

d. Implications

The result of the third research question, finding that the NS' summaries diverged between the Teachers' more emotionally-focused model summaries and the political aspects of the news story, is highly significant in that it reminds us of the practical difficulties when using summarization to assess listening. Summarization may be the most practical and useful form of assessment, for reading or writing, as it most closely approximates the demands of real life. However, there can and will be significant divergence among peoples, regardless of language, on what those "critical" elements are. The results of this study show that even within a relatively simple-structured and short news broadcast, there will be numerous interpretations, each with its own epistemological propositions and presumptions. The diversity of interpretations grows exponentially as one moves across populations, through age and culture (Inoue, 2009; Yu, 2007). This study does not begin to scratch the surface of the philosophical issues involved, but it is a warning for teachers that they should tread lightly when attempting to teach and assess synthetic task forms like summarization. In a more internationalized context, recognition of the cultural diversity that characterizes Taiwan university campuses and campuses around the world today is essential to successful English language teaching (see Vorobel & Kim, 2011).

Teaching L2 listening should be different from teaching L2 reading: in real life situations listeners are often not given an opportunity to go back to listen again and again. How we test or assess our students' performance will lead them in the way they attend and focus while they are listening, which, in turn, will form their habit of listening to the foreign language. Therefore, it is more important for EFL teachers to instruct learners how they should listen to different genres of English (eg., which parts of the input requires more of their attention) than to explain to their students what they hear. Hopefully this study has aroused EFL English teachers' attention to the importance of certain specific listening skills training by contrasting the differences between Taiwan EFL teachers' actual listening assessment practice and native

speakers' report of their listening performance. Since the results of this study demonstrate the difficulties in reaching a universal consensus on what are the fundamental elements of simple news text, excessive teacher focus on students getting the "correct" answers may ultimately be futile and, even worse, have detrimental effects on student motivation.

It may also be helpful to recognize that, ideally, all alternative forms of text synthesis should be scored equally when the objective is to develop students listening comprehension skills. This is especially important as language pedagogy increasingly turns towards strategy-based instruction and learning, which in turn heavily emphasizes background knowledge and inferencing. If a student relies on flawed (or what is perceived to be flawed) background knowledge in their interpretation of the text and construction of new knowledge, that should not be held against them. When possible, teachers should of course attempt to correct erroneously held beliefs or clarify the shared beliefs of the community which may not be reflected in a particular student's output. However, that is a separate question from whether the student "comprehended" the text. This idealism may seem too much a burden for language teachers and that fact is not to be denied, but if language teachers, especially in Asia and other regions where English is largely a foreign language, are going to break free from the memorize-recite model of shallow language learning, they must consciously heed this phenomenon.

The use of native speakers in this study also presents real challenges that must be confronted. As the notion of the "model native speaker" or "native-like competency" has been eroded in recent years, there may be a desire to dismiss studies such as this. Instead, the use of native speakers reveals that assessing listening ability in all but the most basic and rudimentary fashion will undoubtedly raise serious issues of validity. The native speakers in this study were not used as a normative baseline for assessment purposes, but as a calibration standard against which the measurement tool could be refined. If English learners had been used instead of native speakers, we might have easily dismissed their responses as insufficient, and incorrectly attribute it to the L2 learners' "deficient" listening or speaking ability, such as what happened in Rost's (1994) study. It is highly unlikely that the native speakers in this study did not fully comprehend the words in the news story from a bottom-up processing perspective. Just as so many studies have revealed the problems with using expert native speakers as assessors (Cohen, 1993; Yu, 2007), we have revealed the limitations of what would otherwise appear to be an acceptable, albeit norm-referenced, listening assessment rubric. The native speakers in this study were not called upon for their ability to summarize, but because they would not be encumbered by finite listening and speaking skills, as so many L2 learners are. The native speakers in this study focus our attention on an alternative way to understand the news story and even though we may be uncomfortable with that version, it cannot be dismissed. The tension here is obvious and reflected in Yu's study on democratizing assessment (2007). As language education continues to distance itself from the grammar translation and audio-lingual methods, the profound tension highlighted in this study implores us to return to the assessment drawing board to find a way to better account for these types of discrepancies.

V. CONCLUSION

This study surveyed 11 practicing Taiwanese English listening and speaker teachers to determine their listening assessment preferences and how they would assess a specific listening task which was a news report. The Teachers showed a high degree of concurrence in their listening assessment preferences and in their assessment of a specific listening task. The sample size was small and the listening task was restricted in length and content, but the Teachers appear to have used an affectional method to comprehend the listening task resulting in model listening summaries that were more oriented towards empathic observations. Additionally, 10 college-aged native speakers were also asked to listen to the same target text and orally produce summaries. Five of the native speaker summaries focused on the same elements as the Teachers' model summaries, and the other five native speaking participants focused more on the political aspects of the listening task's content. This division between native speaking participants correlated with the participants' academic majors.

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On the Significance of Learner Strategies in English Reading on Learners' Language Achievement

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Abstract—Strategies are often seen as ways used by language learners for getting out of trouble in language study in the short term, but a more positive view might be that successful strategies used by learners can promote longer term language development. This article explores the research evidence for benefits that strategy use in reading can bring in learners' language achievement in both the short term and the long term.

Index Terms—learner strategy, reading, teaching practice

I. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this article is to review current perspectives on learner strategies and have a look at the application of learner strategies in reading. Furthermore, it attempts to make a tentative discussion about the significance of learner strategies in reading on language learners' achievement both in short term and long term and testify these strategies in the author's own reading teaching practice.

This paper is composed of four parts. A brief introduction about the theoretical background of learner strategies is given in the first part of the paper. Part two concerns itself with reading strategies and their significance on learners' reading comprehension with some research evidence in reading. The application of the reading strategies to the author's own reading teaching material compared with the author's previous teaching method of this material forms the focus of part three. Part four ends the whole paper with the conclusion that learner strategies play an effective role in improving learners' language achievement and shed light on the teaching of reading. It also points out that cognitive, metacognitive, and social and affective strategies should be integrated together when they are applied in practice instead of overemphasizing or neglecting any of them.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

A. *Definition of Language Learner Strategies*

Teachers and researchers have found it amazing that some language learners are more successful than others in learning a foreign or second language even if they have the same instructors, in the same learning environment and at the same language level. What attributes to their success? Do they adopt some special and effective methods or strategies in their study? If so, what are they? A number of researchers have done a great deal of work in this field and found that learners do apply some strategies while learning a second language and these strategies can be identified and classified (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 3). But first of all, what is learner strategy?

As for the definition of learner strategies, different researchers proposed different versions. Focusing on the function of learner strategies, Cohen defined learner strategies in 1998 as

Second language learner strategies encompass both second language learning and second language use strategies. Taken together they constitute the steps or actions consciously selected by learners either for the learning of a second language, the use of it, or both (Macaro, 2001, p. 17).

In 1990, Oxford made an expansion of these definitions, which is more detailed and clearer, by saying that

Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990, p. 8).

Although the concept of learner strategies was analyzed from different perspectives, Wenden, Cohen and Oxford all agree that learner strategies are something learners take to facilitate their learning.

B. *Research History of Learner Strategies*

In terms of the history of strategy research, Wenden & Rubin (1987) gave a general review on the development of learner strategies. They point out that Aaron Carton initiated research on learner strategies by publishing his study *The Method of Inference in Foreign Language Study* in 1966 (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 19). In this article, Carton first takes making inference as a strategy used by second language learners and regards language learning as a kind of problem-solving process.

Following Carton, researchers did various studies on learner strategies from different perspectives. Some researchers concentrate on identifying and analyzing the strategies used by successful language learners. One of the researchers working in this field is Rubin, who made great contribution to learner strategies research. She proposed a classification system of strategies in terms of processes which may contribute directly to learning and those that may contribute indirectly to learning in 1981 (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 20). Her article 'What the "Good Language Learner" Can Teach Us' published in 1975 is regarded as the birth of language learner strategies research (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 11).

At about the same time, Stern and Naiman also conducted research on the strategies that good language learners employ in their learning. Stern listed the top-ten strategies which are necessary to attain second language competence (ibid). In order to match his research data with Stern's list, Naiman modified these ten strategies to five general strategies and related techniques (Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

In much of later research on learner strategies, researchers explored the evidence of the link between strategies and learners' achievement from other perspectives. Wong-Fillmore stressed social strategies in the process of language learning (Cohen & Macro, 2007, p. 13), while Bialystok examined the effects of two particular kinds of strategies: functional strategies and formal strategies (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 21). More specifically, Taron studied the communication strategies used by second language learners (ibid). Another important figure is Hosenfeld, who contrasted the successful second language learners with those unsuccessful ones on reading strategies they adopted respectively by using the "think aloud" type of introspection (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 189). More recently, Wenden emphasized the importance of metacognitive strategies in second language learning (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 22).

C. Classification of Learner Strategies

During the 1970s and 1980s, a large number of researchers conducted various studies on learner strategies. Based on the findings of their studies, they proposed different categorization systems of learner strategies. Some representative ones are as follows.

Rubin first classified learner strategies into two kinds based largely on the interviews with good language learners: strategies directly affect learning and strategies that contribute indirectly to learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). According to Rubin, the former includes clarification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferring, deductive reasoning and practice, and the latter contains creating opportunities for practice and production tricks.

O'Malley and Chamot proposed that learner strategies could be divided into three categories: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and social/affective strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 44). According to them (1990), cognitive strategies involve processing language in brain, such as rehearsal, organization, inferencing, summarizing, deduction, transfer and elaboration; metacognitive strategies involve thinking about learning processes, monitoring learning tasks and deal with planning, monitoring, and evaluating the cognitive processes. They are exemplified by planning, setting goals and self-management; and social/affective strategies refer to all the means of dealing with affective and social aspects in language learning situations, such as cooperation, questioning for clarification and self-talk in the learning process (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 137-139). The exact strategies of each category are shown in Appendix 1.

Another researcher providing a classification scheme for strategies is Oxford, who further developed the definition and categorization of learner strategies. She classified learner strategies into two classes: direct strategies and indirect strategies, which are subdivided into six groups: 'memory, cognitive, and compensation under the direct class; metacognitive, affective, and social under the indirect class' (Oxford, 1990, p. 14). It is obvious that Oxford's classification of learner strategies has much in common with that of O'Malley and Chamot.

Personally, I prefer O'Malley and Chamot's classification of learner strategies because they can be relatively easily identified and categorized in teachers' teaching practice compared with those of Oxford. In addition, Rubin's categorization seems not so overall to me because it is emerged from the observation of only successful language learners.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Theoretical Introduction about Reading Strategies

As for the definition of reading strategies, Cohen claims that reading strategies are the mental processes that readers consciously employ in accomplishing reading tasks (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 190). To better understand reading strategies, it is necessary to review reading models at first because different reading strategies may be employed in different reading processes.

Researchers established several reading models which describe the reading process when people read. Barnett provides a detailed description of these reading models: bottom-up theory, top-down theory and the interactive school

(Richards, 1997, p. 18). As Barnett states, bottom-up processes indicate that the reader comprehend a text from the smallest units, such as words or phrases, on the contrary, in top-down processes the reader bring a great deal of background knowledge to the text and ‘discern meaning at whole text-level to support comprehension’. These two models of reading appeared earlier than the interactive model which supports that both bottom-up and top-down processes occur simultaneously or alternatively in the process of reading (ibid).

Then what strategies do successful readers employ in their reading to enable them to comprehend a text well? Anderson et al. provided a list of reading strategies that good readers use, such as using text features (subheadings, transitions, etc.), using world knowledge, monitoring comprehension (Anderson et al. 1991, cited by Richards, 1997, p. 16).

O’Malley and Chamot have also observed that the principle strategies used for reading comprehension are inferencing, deduction, elaboration, transfer, substitution, cooperation and self-evaluation (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 178-179).

B. *On the Significance of Reading Strategies Based on Researches into Reading Strategy Instruction*

A great deal of research has been made to improve the reader’s reading comprehension ability through the reader’s use of some effective reading strategies. As I teach English in a university, I will mainly focus on some studies on university students.

Kitajima is one of these researchers. He designed a program involving US university students of Japanese and in the program a combination of word-level and metacognitive strategies was used (Cohen & Macro, 2007, p. 201). The instruction includes identifying referents in text which involves strategies at syntax and discourse level. After a period of 15 weeks, Kitajima found the intervention group made better achievements on all the pos-tests than the comparison group. The findings of this research indicate that students could successfully learn to use a reading strategy and improve their comprehension accordingly. As for the significance of these strategies, I think the strategies at syntax and discourse level and metacognitive strategies may have a long-term effect on improving the reader’s comprehension because these kinds of strategies guide the reader to focus on the bigger units of a text instead of smaller ones. That will be helpful for the reader to form a good habit of reading a text from a top-down process. However, such kinds of reading strategies instruction will be a challenge for the language teachers. And it will also take quite a long time for students to be able to apply these strategies automatically in their reading.

A similar research was carried out by Kern, who organized a reading strategy instruction program with the attempt to develop university students’ reading comprehension ability (Cohen & Macro, 2007). The reading strategies involved in this program include word recognition, inferring meaning, and engaging in synthesis-of-meaning. Kern divided 53 university students into experimental and control groups. After a period of time, he found that only the lower-ability students improved significantly in comprehension. Kern summarized that higher-levels students had already used the strategies instructed and suggested that students should get appropriate reading strategies from the very beginning. In my view, reading strategies adopted in this research, such as word recognition, inferring meaning and engaging in synthesis-of-meaning may be beneficial to students in short term. From the research, it can be found that after students received a certain degree of such kinds of strategies instruction they wouldn’t make much obvious improvement any more.

Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto conducted a study to measure the effects of two metacognitive strategies on students’ reading comprehension (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). There were two intervention groups in this study, one was taught pre-reading semantic mapping of information concluded from the text, the other was taught to activate students’ previous knowledge about the topic of the text before reading. They found significantly that both types of reading strategies successfully improved students’ reading comprehension. Personally, I regard these two types of reading strategies as very useful methods to improve students’ reading comprehension, especially semantic mapping. It is not only effective in reading but also in writing by helping students to form a good sense of text structure. Therefore, semantic mapping may bring benefits both in reading and writing in short term as well as in long term, and activating students’ background knowledge about the topic of the text before reading as a top-down strategy may also work effectively both in short term and long term. These two strategies will be applied in my intensive reading teaching in future.

IV. REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

A. *The Teaching Method I Used in the Past*

I teach first-year students intensive reading in a university of China. The chosen teaching reading material is the first volume of *College English* which is widely used in universities of China. Unit four *Turning Off TV: A Quiet Hour* (see Appendix 2) of this book is taken as the sample text to illustrate how reading strategies will be applied in class.

Before I learn about the knowledge of learner strategies, I think I put too much attention on the grammatical points with neglecting the impact of reading strategies on the students’ reading proficiency. Most of my teaching is test-oriented. I taught Unit 4 in the following process in the past:

1. Warming-up stage

Propose a topic related to the title of the text: What do you think of the role that TV plays on people’s life, positive or

negative? Why? Leave 10 minutes at the beginning of the class for the students to discuss the topic and then ask them to speak out voluntarily. The class lasts for 50 minutes. Because of the limited time, 10 minutes may not be enough for students to discuss and speak out their opinions. Whether there are actively enough to share their ideas in public depends on whether they are interested in the topic and the task difficulty. Sometimes it may take me a few minutes to encourage some volunteers.

2. Comparison with the author's idea

Introduce the title of the text and guide the students to find out the author's opinion on the topic they were just discussing. Provide the students with a chance to compare their views with the author's.

3. Vocabulary and grammar-focus instruction

The grammatical points and difficult vocabulary which may hinder students from understanding the text will be illustrated with examples in detail. In most cases, the words and the grammatical points required in the College English Test (CET) syllabus are overemphasized.

4. Paraphrasing

Ask the students to paraphrase some important sentence structures and vocabularies. Encourage them to use synonyms, antonyms and the words and sentence structures they have learnt before when they are paraphrasing.

5. Summary stage

Ask the students to summarize the main idea of each paragraph and the whole text. They are also expected to be able to analyze the general structure of the text.

6. Practice

Instruct the students to do some exercises related to some important vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure of this lesson, such as vocabulary match, blank-filling, paraphrasing, cloze and translation.

7. Second passage study

This is the part that I always overlook in my teaching. The second passage usually has the same topic as the first one but a little easier than the first one. I always give a simple explanation about the main idea of the text without a detailed explanation about the grammar as I do in the first passage. Actually, there is an introduction about a certain kind of reading strategies before the second passage in each unit. Before I learn about reading strategies, I consider this part as something studied by the students themselves after class. In fact, it is a part of strategy training implementation and the second passage is designed specially for practice those reading strategies.

B. Revision of My Teaching with the Application of Reading Strategies

As a number of studies (shown in the above discussion) have been done on the effectiveness of learner strategies in second language acquisition, many researchers advocate that teachers should provide students with direct training on strategy use either in classroom teaching or outside the classroom. As O'Malley and Chamot have reported some of the findings in the learner strategies research, the performance of L2 students instructed to use strategies with second language acquisition tasks is superior to those who received no such training (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p. 225). Beyond O'Malley and Chamot, Oxford also argued that strategy training is especially necessary in second and foreign languages acquisition, what is more, it should be highly practical and useful for students rather than being abstract and theoretical (Oxford, 1990, p. 201). Bearing the above discussion in mind, I intend to make some changes in the teaching of the text *Turning Off TV: A Quiet Hour* as follows and a number of metacognitive, cognitive, and social and affective strategies are immersed in the teaching process:

1. Setting a top-down task

This task is actually the same as the warming-up stage of the former one. I will choose a topic related to the content of the text, and then ask the students working in groups to express their opinions on that issue with their background knowledge. I regard this stage as a smooth transition from the students' general knowledge to the specific text. It is a good way to attract the students' attention to the text that they are going to learn. But usually it depends on whether the topics are interesting or not and whether the task difficulty is suitable for them.

2. Signpost questions, advance organization and selective attention

Prepare some questions about the text for the students. The purpose is not to test but to guide the students and help to direct their attention to the important points in the text. By doing that, I hope to give the students an overview of the text's structure and help them to better understand the main idea of the text. I will use advance organization by asking the students to skim the text quickly and make a selective attention to scan specific information related to the signpost questions.

3. Identifying and explaining language points with the strategies of inference

Explain the new vocabulary and grammatical points with the strategy of inferring from the context instead of telling students what they mean directly. Vocabulary and grammar have traditionally been the major component in English teaching programs in China and still retain this position today. But I will advise my students to reduce their dependence on English-Chinese bilingual dictionary. In addition, I will encourage them making inferences about the meanings of new vocabularies from context instead of looking up every new word and making vocabulary lists to learn by heart. Personally, I think a certain extent of tolerance of ambiguity should be allowed and encouraged as long as the new words do not prevent the readers' comprehension of the passage. Training them to infer meaning from context and ignore those unimportant new words, which Nuttall (1982) label as 'throwaway vocabulary', will greatly speed up their

reading. Taking notes while they are reading can be helpful for them to find the key points and the structure of the passage. However, as my students only have 4 English classes each week and 45 minutes each class, it is impossible to carry these reading strategies on during the class. These strategies are expected to be employed by the students automatically not only in class but also after class as well.

4. Producing summaries with semantic map, text diagram or table of contents

When I finish explaining the whole text, I will ask the students to draw a semantic map, text diagram or a table of the content or just a few sentences to summarize the main idea of the text. On the one hand, that is because I believe these strategies will provide a helpful way of probing into text organization, thus it can add to students' understanding of the whole text. On the other hand, they are also beneficial to students' writing. Personally, I prefer semantic map and always use it as a way to analyze how the writer composes an article and an effective way to help me construct the outline of my essays. However, these strategies may be limited to those able and high-motivated students mainly because of the task difficulty.

5. Self-evaluation and self-monitoring

The students will be asked to self-evaluate their comprehension of the text by doing some exercises, such as multiple choice, matching or answering questions about the text. In this process, students will be able to find out their problems and consequently direct them to self-monitor their learning process, integrating the processes of self-evaluation and self-monitoring together automatically.

6. Specific introduction of the reading skill: using context clues for word meanings

Each unit of this textbook provides a special introduction of a certain kind of reading skill which I neglect in the past. Before I learn about learner strategies, I have never realized the benefit of this part and just ask the students to read it after class. And I believe most of them didn't have a look at this part partly because of my attitude to it. After introducing the reading attack skill, I will ask the students to use this reading skill when they read the second passage in order to enhance their understanding of the skill.

7. Social and affective strategies implementation: questioning for clarification, cooperation and lower students' anxiety

Although these kinds of strategies don't make a direct impact on improving the readers' reading ability, they can help students to comprehend a text better with non-linguistic aid and learn to cooperate with others. As a result, it can help the readers have a comprehensive understanding of the reading materials, and accordingly relieve their anxiety in the study.

C. Conclusion

This essay provides a rough review of the theoretical background and research history of learner strategies. Furthermore, it has a specific look at the application of these strategies in the field of reading and an introduction about reading strategies and their application in practice go into detail. As the importance of strategies application and training has been gradually recognized and proved by more and more researchers, the author makes a tentative application of these reading strategies to her own teaching practice and believes that students will benefit from the strategy training. Yet the important point to note is that teachers should focus on the integration of all types of reading strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and social and affective rather than overemphasize or ignore a certain kind of strategy. It should also be pointed out that the application of these strategies in teaching practice may not be realistic in some teaching contexts. Some variables, such as learner's learning ability, motivation and teaching context should be taken into consideration.

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The Child-murdering Mother: Dionysian or Apollonian? A Study of Nietzsche's View on Euripidean Tragedy

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Abstract—This paper aims at delving into the play *Medea* in the light of Nietzsche's views on tragedy expressed in his book *The Birth of Tragedy*. First, Nietzsche's conception of Apollonian-Dionysiac duality will be explained, followed by a review of how he regards Euripides, and then, the pro and con views on Euripidean tragedy will be examined. Finally the play *Medea* will be analyzed to designate how and in what sense it departs from, or approaches either of the Apollonian or Dionysian spirits. In what ways, the character of a mother who commits infanticide can be interpreted as rational or insane? To what extent is *Medea* in line with Nietzsche's assertion that Euripides is the advocate of rationality, departing from the Dionysian spirit of tragedy?

Index Terms—Euripides, Nietzsche, *Medea*, Apollonian, Dionysiac, Socratism, Greek tragedy

I. NIETZSCHE'S CONCEPT OF APOLLONIAN-DIONYSIAC DUALITY

The Apollonian-Dionysiac duality underlies the constant evolution of art, just as the duality of the sexes is responsible for the reproduction of the species. Apollo and Dionysus, the "art-sponsoring" deities, must be understood in order to distinguish between "the plastic, Apollonian arts and the non-visual art of music inspired by Dionysos." These two creative tendencies grew in opposition side by side, until the pair yielded to marriage and gave birth to Attic tragedy exhibiting the traits of both parents. (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 19)

The Apollonian tendency in art corresponds to the realm of dream, and the Dionysiac, to the realm of intoxication. Apollo is the god of measured restraint, illusion, and the divine image of the principle of individuation. It expresses the "deep and happy sense of the necessity of dream." The Dionysiac power forges the bond between man and man, and between man and nature. By the magic of the Dionysiac rite, the individual, expressing himself through song and dance, reconciles with his fellow and himself and becomes a member of a higher community. He becomes a work of art, manifesting the creative power of the universe. (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 19-24)

Nietzsche (1956) believes that Greek tragedy is a Dionysiac chorus which frequently discharges itself in Apollonian images. The foundation of tragedy irradiates the vision of the drama, which is, on the one hand, completely a dream image and epic in nature, and on the other hand, the shattering of individuality as the embodiment of a Dionysiac condition. "Thus, tragedy is the Apollonian embodiment of Dionysiac knowledge and powers, and therefore, immensely distinct from epic" (p. 56-57).

In the apollonian part of Greek tragedy, which is the dialog, whatever that comes to the surface seems "simple, transparent, beautiful." The dialog, hence, reflects the Greek mind, whose nature reveals itself in dance (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 59).

II. NIETZSCHE'S VIEW OF EURIPIDES

Greek tragedy, in its oldest form, dealt only with the sufferings of Dionysus and Dionysus did not cease to be the tragic hero up to the time of Euripides. (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 65-66) Euripides is, then, responsible for the death of Greek tragedy (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 69).

Euripides appealed to the writers of the new comedy. What they found so exciting in him was his success in bringing the spectator on the stage. This way, the common man pushed his way out of the auditorium and found his way on the stage. He could now see his counterpart on the stage, taking delight in finding him speaking so eloquently. Euripides taught people how to speak, he presented ordinary living and a portrayal of life as it really is, and it was to his credit that people were inculcated with wisdom and judgment. Thus arose the New Comedy, as the chorus started to sing the Euripidean musical key. People would have wished to learn more from Euripides and praise him dearly if they were unaware that tragedy, and the tragic poets were then dead. With the death of tragedy, the belief in immortality died, and it meant the death of faith in the ideal past and also the ideal future (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 70-72)

Cowan (2007) comments that for Nietzsche, Socratism is built upon the destruction of myth which is tragedy's means to unify a culture. By death of tragedy, its irrational sources broke into parts, and the Greeks gave up their faith in immortality, the ideal past and the ideal future, because the myths that held culture together disappeared by the disappearance of tragedy. It is indicative of the inextricable role of myth, custom and tragedy in Greek's national character. (p. 548) Therefore, the imprint of what Euripides did to tragedy is as immense as the dimensions of a nation, a culture and a history.

For Nietzsche, what constitutes the bond between Euripides and Socrates is that both men feel the obligation to rely on their conscious reason to reach the effect they seek, didactic teaching is the purpose of both, and as ideal spectator, neither of them "can accept the illusion that had completed the Dionysian-Apollonian unity in Aeschylean drama." They found Dionysus incomprehensible and thus, Euripides quits Dionysus and himself is abandoned by Apollo consequently. He deals with the same myths as other dramatist did; but he substitutes naturalistic effects as he finds inaccessible the underworld which gave the myths power (Strong, 1975, p. 173). Strong concludes from Nietzsche's words that "Euripides is too critical to permit himself to accept older drama. For Euripides, to do the right in this historical situation requires knowledge." (p. 172)

III. CONFLICTING VIEWS ON EURIPIDEAN TRAGEDY

When Nietzsche (1956) asserted in his essay that Euripides, by devotion to Socrates, threw out of balance the two primary forces in human spirit and destroyed Greek tragedy, he was severely attacked by Wilamowitz who offered a modern study of Greek tragedy and a defense of Euripides. (Mitchell-Boyask, 2008, p. xvii) Wilamowitz attacked the tone of the book, its style, logic and lack of scholarship. He accused Nietzsche of being ignorant and dishonest, calling his arguments implausible and relying on unstated evidence. (Silk and Stern, 1981, p. 96)

Nussbaum (1988), being at odds with Nietzsche, believes that while many of the observations Nietzsche has made about ancient literature are deeply illuminating, his treatment of Euripides in *The Birth of Tragedy*, remarkably lacks insight. He holds the view that Nietzsche's is an astonishing account of Euripidean tragedy, because it is hard to believe that Nietzsche could interpret *Hippolytus* and *Medea* "as defenses of the omnipotence of reason." One can hardly point out a Euripidean play to which the Nietzschean interpretation is at first sight applicable. (p. 36-37)

Kaufmann (1968) asserts that Nietzsche is mistaken in claiming that tragedy died at the hands of Euripides. (p. 243) He believes that Nietzsche had fallen in with an old prejudice against Euripides and was intensely unfair to him. (p. 246)

Silk and Stern (1981) maintain that "Nietzsche is not renowned for his fairness" and his critique of Euripides is extremely unfair, but has received scholarly confirmation as well. (p. 258) His condemnation of Euripides as the destroyer of traditional myth is confirmed by D.H. Lucas, when he asserts:

In Euripides' plays... there appears a loss of confidence in the innate significance of the old stories and the readiness to give them an unnatural twist in order that they may fulfill momentarily a new purpose. Jason and Medea, selfish male and passionate woman, belong only intermittently to the heroic world. (qtd. in Silk and Stern, 1981, p. 258)

"In what sense, if any, *can* Euripides be called a rationalist?" This question was once posed by E.R. Dodds in opposition to the thesis of the *Birth of Tragedy* (Silk and Stern, 1981, p. 260). Dodds declares that Greek culture died of systematic rationalism, the attack of which, in the fifth century, is proved by the case of Euripides who shows all the characteristic symptoms such as combining skepticism and mysticism, valuing emotion over reason, despair of the state and rational theology, and "craving for a religion of the orgiastic type". (Kaufmann, 1968, p. 256-257)

Dodds pronounced Euripides an irrationalist, defining rationalism in terms of three beliefs that could not be attributed to Euripides: "reason as the instrument of truth-as the essential character of reality-as the means to personal redemption." To support his case, he takes as an example the inability of Medea's reason to prevent her from child-murder. However Dodds fails to draw the conclusion that Euripides may not adhere to this formulae for rationalism, but "he would dearly like to". So, up to a point, Nietzsche is right in associating Euripides with rationalism and Socrates. (Silk and Stern, 1981, p. 260)

As to condemn Euripides, Smith (1998) states that Euripides intended to obliterate "the Dionysian acoustical root of the Apollonian visual dream." By doing so, he gave tragedy an empty lifeless form. Tragedy was then "a mere 'game of chess', mere 'cool thoughts' into which he then imported 'fiery affects', say, in Medea's gruesome violence." He goes on to note that Euripides' Medea differs from "Aeschylus's Dionysian chorus of furies", in that she is a barbarian from the exotic east, not coming from "the underground chaos preceding Greek Olympian order." (p. 300)

Some believe that Euripides does not intend to destroy tradition and myth; rather, he has attempted to adjust his art to the demands of his era. For instance, Arrowsmith has noted that in the Hellenic world, the destructive pressure of war breaks apart tradition and nature, appearance and reality, and the Euripidean drama is an attempt to view and analyze reality in relation to the new conception of human nature which was revealed by the crisis of war. (Strong, 1975, p. 169)

Strong (1975) holds the view that in Euripides, the driving force is not a person or hero after the manner of Prometheus Bound. "Rather, one sees the working out of impersonal forces, to which the characters really have a peripheral relationship." He believes that Euripides concerns himself with "redemption from the blind order of universe." He is "a Schopenhauer of intellect. Virtue lies in resigned acceptance, in the pessimism of weakness." He presents the problem of "incommensurability of human desires" and sees its root in "a lack of prudence and definition." (p. 169-172)

For Nietzsche (1956), tragedy and rationalism were not compatible. Plato gave up his interest in becoming a tragedian under the influence of Socrates, because he regarded tragedy incompatible with truth. Nietzsche considers it as a story of loss due to the fact that, for him, tragic knowledge is deeper than logical knowledge. However, Reiss accepts the disjunction between tragedy and philosophy but he views them as having a dynamic relationship at the moment of change. (Collits, 2000, p. 6-7) As the matter of knowledge is concerned, Strong (1975) seems to agree with Nietzsche in that he believes if one tries to decide on the basis of "accurate knowledge of the prudential consequences of one's actions", as with Euripides, then, tragic and heroics will be impossible. (p. 176)

Euripides' *Medea* appears to resist being categorized as portraying either a Dionysiac or Apollonian spirit, as it is filled with dualities which fluctuate between rationality and insanity on the Dionysiac-Apollonian continuum offered by Nietzsche. Is the child-murdering mother of Euripides' play rational or insane?

IV. MEDEA, APOLLONIAN OR DIONYSIAN?

Whether or not the act of infanticide is a matter of insanity or rationality on the part of Medea has been a controversial issue. Some consider Medea as the denunciation of Nietzsche's claim that Euripides is an adherent of Socrates' rationality. However, there are other ways of interpreting the play and Medea's character, which could give the reader the clue that in Medea's case, child-murder is committed by careful thought and is decided due to good sense.

To answer the question of whether or not Euripides was an "artisan of Socrates' aestheticism" as Nietzsche claimed, Wildberg (2009) examines the evidence in Euripides plays, specifically *Medea*. He mentions a passage in *Medea* that has attracted the attention of scholars since it opposes Socrates' thinking and releases Euripides from Nietzsche's accusations. This is where Euripides portrays Medea's inner conflict as to whether to escape or take revenge. When Medea, finally, decides to commit infanticide against her good sense, she ends her monologue with the much discussed verses, which ever since Bruno Shell, have been considered contrary to the Socratic position that "reason harbors the strongest practical impulse." (Wilderberg 27-28) The passage reads as follows: "At last I understand the awful deed I am to do; but passion, that cause of direst woes to mortal man, hath triumphed o'er my sober thoughts." (Euripides 45)

Since Medea is not an insane woman, Wildberg continues, these lines could refute Socrates' thesis that "no one acts against his or her better judgment." Medea is aware of the internal conflict and in the end, she admits that her passion wins the upper hand, making her a person who "makes a terrible choice in spite of herself", what Socrates thought impossible. (p. 28)

However, as the opposition of reason and emotion is concerned, there are two other considerations of Medea's decision which are both perfectly rational. "One is the consideration of what would be right in the larger scheme of divine justice, and here the verdict was, from the beginning of the play, 'maximum penalty for Jason'." The other consideration is that, since her children were involved in the bride's murder, they would not escape the Corinthians' vengeance, thus, by killing the children herself she deprives the Corinthians of the opportunity to take revenge on her. (Wilderberg 28)

After her encounter with King Aegeus, Medea first announces her plan to kill her own children, this is when the Corinthian women protest against this change in her plan, and also call into question her intention to escape to Athens, "the birth place of harmony, home to all virtues, and especially renowned for wisdom." (Tessitore, 1991, p. 591) Finally, she takes refuge in the city of Athens. As Athens symbolizes Apollonian traits, Medea's departure to Athens after she commits murder can be indicative of the fact that she had acted logically.

Nietzsche (1956) maintains that Euripides' characters are not universalized and inspired by the power of music. To the contrary, they illustrate single, individualized personality traits, which are liable for violent passions. Their suffering is personal and does not comply with the demands of Dionysian tragedy, in that it fails to "express the eternal dialectic of the universal forces of nature and its inexorable laws." What replaces tragic action and heroic suffering is pathos and lamentation. (Pfeffer, 1972, p. 55-56)

However, in a view contrary to what Nietzsche believes, Medea appears to be looked upon as a champion by Corinthian women. "She gives voice to the injustices suffered by all women." When she expresses her will to "requite" those injustices, her promise "is not presented as the excessive desire of a fierce barbarian, but is embraced by the Corinthian women as their own." (Tessitore, 1991, p. 590) Since Medea has been treated unjustly, it seems logical for her as an abused individual to exact justice. Here, Medea becomes the voice of all women who suffer from maltreatment, and devises a careful plan to demand her rights.

Medea understands that to exact justice and uproot the house of Jason, her own children must die, for this is her motto:

Let no one deem me a poor weak woman who sits with folded hands, but of another mould, dangerous to foes and well-disposed to friends; for they win the fairest fame who live then, life like me. (Euripides 31)

As these lines suggest, she believes that she belongs to the line of heroes; therefore, she seeks a life of glory which is by no means compatible with dishonor. (Tessitore, 1991, p. 593)

Thence, Medea feels the urge to take the path towards heroism, though it might make necessary such horrid an act as child murder. The fact that she is absorbed by the thought that she has no other choice than committing infanticide is in line with Nietzsche's assertion that Euripides adds naturalistic effects to his treatment of the familiar myth. Besides, in other versions of Medea's myth, she does not kill her own children.

Regarding this relationship between Socratism and naturalism, Nietzsche (1956) believes that Euripides' intention was to evade the primordial and pervasive Dionysian element and rebuild tragedy based on a non-Dionysiac art and world-view. He pushed Dionysus out of stage and himself became a mask through which neither Apollo nor Dionysus could speak. It was Socrates, a new-born daemon, who spoke through him. He fought against Aeschylean tragedy with his Socratic tendency and conquered it. However he failed in building tragedy upon Apollonian elements and as a result he was led towards an inartistic naturalism. (p. 76-79)

It can be argued that if Medea's having no other choice than committing infanticide is naturalistic, then she has been acting upon the demands of nature, since reason and Socratic rationalism play no role in what is the inevitable outcome of natural circumstances. The question is that what is realistic is necessarily rationalistic and a product of reason? Here, Nietzsche's assertion that Euripides adds naturalistic elements to his works is true; but, it could be put under question whether these naturalistic effects appear as the dramatist attempts to build his art upon Apollonian elements, or they come to the surface as a result of his tendency for a lifelike factual representation. The latter not only is not in opposition with the Dionysiac spirit of art as it keeps its connection with nature and reality, but also leads to a balance between nature and human's way of regarding it by basing the character's decision upon her understanding of natural forces and coordinating it with her senses.

However, Medea's motto--not allowing anyone to regard her as a weak woman-- in addition to citing the need for heroism discussed earlier, is suggestive of an issue with which Socrates was also concerned. *Medea*, as Tessitore (1991) declares, focuses on a single individual, in whom Euripides tries to display the problem of spiritedness. (p. 595) Spiritedness is a necessary quality for Medea. As Tessitore (1991) mentions, the issue of spiritedness is of importance to Socrates, where the Platonic Socrates "makes explicit the problematic character of spiritedness" in the discussion of warrior virtue, and talks about the fact that to construct a just city, the guardians must be gentle towards friends, and fierce towards enemies. (p. 595)

Medea can be seen as a character exhibiting rationality in that whatever she does is thought of and planned. She has a purpose in mind and does nothing out of blind passion. She has an aim--justice and heroism. To make her plans come true, she even does not allow maternal emotions to grasp her and give her cold feet. She believes it as her right to protest against injustice and exact her position and punish the wrong doer. These are the character traits that can put Medea in line with Apollonian, thus with reason and rationalism.

Besides, Nietzsche maintains that the supreme law of Euripides' esthetic Socratism is that "whatever is to be beautiful must also be sensible", the canon that shaped Euripides' diction, language, structure and choral music. As Nietzsche (p. 1956) suggests, the Euripidean prologue manifests this rationalistic method, as it starts with a character appearing right at the beginning of the play, talking about whom he is, what has happened and what the audience must expect. (p. 79) His esthetic principle is "whatever is to be beautiful must be conscious" which is parallel to the Socratic "whatever is to be good must be conscious." Therefore, he is "the poet of esthetic Socratism." (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 81)

Moreover, it must be noted that there exists no love and passion above maternal love, but Medea breaks the bonds of maternal affection for the sake of bringing about justice to her life. It is to say that Medea is not a character who yields to emotions, and even to love for her own children, and it places her a long distance away from the Dionysian. She does not attend to her nature as a mother, does not refer to her primordial emotions, and cuts of the bond of motherhood. She does not live for love or happiness; neither does she believe in unconditional love. She is harsh. Since she thinks they have done something wrong to her, she cuts them off and takes her life under her control.

In addition, the fact that Medea makes herself a unique mother by committing infanticide is in line with Apollonian notion of individuation, of separating one's self from the mass, and focusing on self-identity instead of creating a group identity with which the audience can identify themselves, a character trait that by no means comply with the Dionysiac.

At the beginning of the play, Medea's nurse complains that the poets' hymns completely lack wisdom and that they do not understand the pains and difficulties of life; rather, they try to accompany celebrations and music where they are least needed. Holding such a view, Euripides tries to expose the terrible misfortunes of life rather than pleasing his audience. (Tessitore, 1991, p. 601) The lines uttered by the nurse correspond to Nietzsche's assertion that Euripides has broken away from the Dionysian spirit of tragedy, rendering unintelligible the musical origins of drama.

Jason's character bears almost the same conflicting interpretations. On the one hand, he seems to hold a logical view of his intention to marry the princess. He explains to Medea that he wants to get married for the well-being of his family and to give his sons the opportunity to have royal siblings and so getting them connected to the royal blood. On the other hand, his decisions are conceived to be irrational, not thought of, and due to passion when Medea's side is taken into account. His mistake is scolded by the chorus where they sing: "When in excess and past all limits Love doth come, he brings not glory or repute to man." (p. 24) This perception of love could be taken as exhibit of Euripides's un-Dionysiac tendency towards the notion of love.

Jason's being blinded by passion and his ignorance is more clearly revealed when he yields to Creon's order that his sons be banished from Corinth, showing that he does not actually care for his family anymore; rather, he is absorbed in his passions. As Euripides puts in the mouth of the character of the nurse: "What! will Jason brook such treatment of his sons, even though he be at variance with their mother?" (Euripides 7) And later again the nurse laments: "O children, do ye hear how your father feels towards you? Perdition catch him, but no he is my master still; yet is he proved a very traitor to his nearest and dearest." (p. 8) And the attendant replies:

And who 'mongst men is not? Art learning only now, that every single man cares for himself more than for his neighbor, some from honest motives, others for mere gain's sake? Seeing that to indulge his passion their father has ceased to love these children. (p. 8)

Thus, from the bystanders' point of view, Jason is seen as one who has succumbed to his passions, and it could give his betrayed wife, Medea, adequate reasons to take revenge and demand justice. Burian (1997) explains that the first and most obvious characteristic of conflict in tragedy is its extremity, meaning that "it does not ordinarily admit of compromise or mediation." Reconciliation of enemies generally occurs where there is "direct divine intervention." For Medea, accepting Jason's marriage is to deny her very nature. (p. 181)

V. CONCLUSION

As Nietzsche introduces the Dionysian as the origin of tragedy, and pronounces its death at the hands of Euripides by his attempts to dissolve the roots and tilt the scale in favor of the Apollonian, the question of whether or not Medea, the child-murdering mother, complies with the tenets of Socratism and rational thinking comes to the surface. At first glance, we would hardly doubt that a mother who murders her children is blinded by passion or insanity, and we would take Medea as the embodiment of Dionysiac spirit in Euripides's tragedy, serving as a release from Nietzsche's accusations. Infanticide is naturally a shocking act of insanity and extremity, but when placed in the context of the play, it could be viewed from a different angle, justifying the deed as one of careful observance and devotion to logic and law. As a woman who has been treated unjustly, a victim who feels the vitality of exacting justice, and a champion who feels the urge to behave heroically, Medea dismisses maternal love, emotions and prosperity, and by murdering the children of her own, tries to punish the wrong doers. She is at the possession of immense ends, hers is an end put high above love and motherhood, by devotion to rationality.

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A Framework for Investigating Foundation Year Students' Needs in General English in KAU: Needs Analysis Extended to Curriculum Development

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Abstract—This research aims at describing a framework for investigating the general English language needs of foundation year students in King Abdul-Aziz University. Questions were raised about the skills and sub-skills in English language students should have upon finishing the foundation year and joining their prospected faculties in the university. Response came from two sources: Twelve representing faculties and 100 foundation year students. The methods used to obtain data were: semi-structured interviews and open discussion focus groups. A model of needs analysis based on the Learning –Centered Approach for Hutchinson and Waters (1987) was developed. The research findings are filtered and written into one final list. This research concludes by considering the implications of these findings and the importance of consulting the clients while designing or developing any curriculum.

Index Terms—clients, KAU, ELI, home team, visiting team, the new headway plus

I. INTRODUCTION

Needs analysis is acquiring more and more importance in the field of curriculum development and curriculum design. It is a device to know the learners' necessities, needs, and lacks in order to develop courses that have a reasonable content for exploitation in the classroom (Huchinson and Waters, 1987). Needs Analysis is therefore a process for identification and defining valid curriculum and instructional objectives. These objectives facilitate learning in an environment that is closely related to the real life situations of the student. It brings into focus the settings and roles that a learner is likely to face after he finishes his formal education. (Fatihi, 2003).

(Negretti, 2001; Kikuchi, 2004 Cowling, 2007; Kandil, 2009 cited in Ali & Salih, (2013); Kaewpet, 2009) emphasized the necessity of needs analysis for the development of educational programs, syllabi and materials. They said that teaching everything is a loss of time and effort and may be you end up with confusion and your energy is not consumed in the right direction. Abbott, (1981) cited in Cowling (2007) described the case of teachers and course planners paying little or no attention to any concept of need as TENOR- teaching English for no obvious reason. In many cases syllabus design is a greatly overlooked area of course planning with many EFL schools and institutions relying on a textbook as the only syllabus regardless of what objectives students are going to achieve in the end. In other words, if students don't know what language they need in order to function effectively in the target situation, foreign language instructors cannot measure the gap between what students know at present and what they are required to know at the end of a certain program. As a result, freshmen in the majority of the Arab universities get stuck between the weak, language instruction that they received at school and the high expectations of their university professors. (Kandil, 2009) cited in Ali & Salih, 2013).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recently, researchers start to know the importance of needs analysis. They realized that it is not practical and it is not possible to teach the whole of a foreign language. Accordingly, it is advisable to focus on the reasons why learners need to learn the foreign language. This will enable professionals to cater for their learners' specific needs and save a lot of wasted time and effort. (Sysoyev, 2000; Songhori, 2008; Kayi, 2008; Kavaliauskiene, 2003) said that it is very important to start a course developing process with an analysis of the target group of students. Many problems in L2 classes are a result of teachers not paying attention to learners' interests, attitudes, expectations and learning habits and ignoring students as a source of essential information.

Although it was believed that needs analysis is rarely carried out in the general English classroom, (Seedhouse, 1995) mentioned an example of the analysis of psychological and social needs in a particular general English classroom. Such analysis can be useful with respect to problem- solving and a basis for designing aims, courses, and materials and to provide a link between needs, aims and materials and what actually occurs in the classroom. Valdez, (1999) suggested that grouping students after their needs have been collected enables teachers to modify the existing syllabus. Under

language proficiency, a teacher makes a shift of emphasis for one of the skills on account of the other. A teacher can also know what teaching strategies are more appealing to his students, what kind of intelligence they have in common and what materials, teaching aids, activities are motivating to them.

In the literature about needs analysis, there are four models cited in (Kaewpet, 2009). These models are a Sociolinguistic Model (Munby, 1987), a Systemic Approach (Richterich and Chancerel 1977), A learning -Centered Approach (Huchinson and Waters, 1987), Learner-Centered Approach (Berwick, 1989; Brindly, 1989) and a Task-based Approach (Long 2005a, 2005b). The sociolinguistic model means specifying target situations, communicative events, purposive domain, medium, mode, channel of communication, setting of communication and communicators. After all these are created, the communication needs are developed into a syllabus. The systemic approach considers the learners the center of attention whose present situations are thoroughly investigated. In this approach, the emergent nature of learner needs is taken into account; learner needs are approached by examining information before a course starts as well as during the course by the learners themselves and by the establishments such as their place of work and sponsoring bodies. Hutchinson and Waters, (1987) identified the following divisions of needs analysis: target needs and learning needs. Under target needs they included necessities that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation, lacks mean the gap between the target proficiency and the existing proficiency and the learners' wants and their views about why they need language. The other main component is learning needs which explain how students will move from the starting point to the destination. In the learner centered approaches, three ways to look at learner needs are offered: perceived vs. felt needs; product vs. process oriented interpretations; and objective vs. subjective needs. Perceived needs are from the perspective of experts while felt needs are from the perspective of the learner. In the product-oriented interpretation, learner needs are viewed as the language that learners require in a target situation. In the process-oriented interpretation, the focus is on how individuals respond to their learning (Brindley, 1989). Finally, objective needs are explored prior to a course, whereas subjective needs are addressed while the course is underway.

(Cowling, 2007) mentioned four steps of data gathering. The first of which is discussion with the client. This is done through an informal interview set out to examine the reasons behind course needs as well as to gather more information about the target group in an attempt to understand what their English needs are. The second step is a semi-structured interview with the target group teachers. Interviewing these teachers may give useful insights into their students' language abilities. A third step is making interviews with the target group of students. Using target students as informers depends on how much knowledge they have about the objectives they are supposed to achieve. The last step is open-ended structured questionnaires for students to complete with their senior employees. These students have experience in the target situation as well as in previous English language courses.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. *Question of the Study*

The question of the study is:

What are the English language needs of foundation year students in King Abdul-Aziz University?

B. *Procedures*

Adopting the Learning -Centered Approach (Huchinson and Waters, 1987) explained in the review of literature above, the process of needs analysis went through the following steps:

Step 1: Investigating the placement test of the students enrolling in the foundation year 1432/1433 in KAU to decide on their existing proficiency as soon as they arrive to ELI.

Step 2: Discussion with the clients. These are formal interviews with the home teams of the different faculties at the university to answer one major question: *What are your expectations of the foundation year students with regard to English language skills and sub-skills after they finish the foundation year?* To conduct this discussion, a list of questions reflecting the four skills and sub-skills was prepared to help the home team- the deans and selected instructors from faculties- answer the questions and talk about students' weaknesses and their expectations of the new students joining their faculties later. (See Appendix 1)

Step 3: Focus-groups for foundation year students who have already sat for the placement test. A list of questions that cover expected students' interests and preferences was prepared for the foundation year students to discuss. (See appendix 2)

Step 4: The outcome of the three steps above was filtered and arranged in a final list. This list is given to a sample of 10 instructors with varying qualifications and experiences who are asked to decide according to their experience which objective are achievable and realistic and which are not keeping in mind the level of students.

Step 5: The resulting list was compared to the lists of the Common European Framework lists for better writing of objectives.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

A. *Results of the Placement Test*

The results of the placement test were really alarming. Most of the students lack the basics of English language in the four English language skills. More than 87% of students fall in level one and level two according to the results of the placement test. This is due to the huge gap between the school education and the university education in KSA. The students who were able to reach level three and four were either graduates of private schools or they had the chance to accompany their parents while doing their higher studies in English speaking countries.

TABLE I
SHOWS THE NUMBER OF FOUNDATION YEAR SECTIONS AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH LEVEL AFTER CONDUCTING THE PLACEMENT TEST.

	Level 1	Level 2	level 3	Level 4	Total
No. of Sections	155	35	20	8	218
No. of Students	3100	700	400	160	4360
Percentage of Students in Each Level	71, 1%	16%	9,2%	3,67%	100%

Where level one students got 0% to 14%, level two students got 15% to 29%%, level three students got 30% to 49% and level four students got 50% to 100% on the placement test.

B. Results of Interviewing Home Teams at University Faculties

While visiting the different faculties in King Abdulaziz University as the second step in doing the needs analysis, the home teams (the deans, vice deans or faculty members who responded to the interview about needs analysis) had nearly the same comments about the level of students who join their faculties after finishing the foundation year programs. They complained that students don't have the minimum of English that enables them to understand what professors talk about or to take notes for further revision after lectures. In addition, they said that students usually ask for the Arabic translation for the questions in quizzes and exams.

The faculties also have some peculiarities about the kind of English they need in their faculties. The Faculty of Pharmacology suggested that students in the foundation year can do seminars about topics related to their expected studies (Chemistry, Biology, Physics, medicine... etc. and that the English Language Institute (ELI) may invite specialists from these faculties in addition to a language specialist to assess students contributions. The Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences suggested teaching more general English and ESP and they summed up their suggestion in two points:

First, Teaching ESP within the English language load starting from level102 by dedicating three hours of the 18 hours- the weekly load of English classes in ELI- for ESP after grouping students according to their prospected fields. Second, students should take an intensive summer course in general English and ESP just after finishing the foundation year then pass a proficiency test as a pre requisite for joining their faculties. They also suggested using the internet as a teaching strategy to consolidate the four skills.

The Faculty of Medicine complained about the large number of students in their classes which minimizes the chances of interaction and suggested that ELI makes workshops for their staff on teaching strategies. The Faculty of Geology suggested sending their interested students back to ELI to attend classes. In addition to their complaints about students' weakness in the four main skills. The faculty of engineering management suggested that students should be taught how to write a research paper including rephrasing, documenting references, analyzing, browsing the internet for articles relevant to a topic of study and recommending solutions for problems. The faculty of computing suggested getting a five hundred and above result on the TOEFL as a precondition for joining the faculty of computing.

The leader and the members of the visiting team (the Needs Analysis Committee coming from the English Language Institute) explained to the home teams what they are doing in ELI and how much ambitious their plans of teaching and assessment are and their visits to their respected faculties are enough proof that they are very much concerned about providing students with the necessary skills. The visiting team also explained that the weakness in some sub skills might be attributed to reasons like students' motivation in general that is not as it used to be. In fact, this is not a local or even national problem and something should be done to increase students' motivation. Another reason is that most of the teaching in other courses in the foundation year like Chemistry, Biology, Statistics and Physics is done in Arabic except for the terminology which undermines the plans of ELI administration and loses much of their efforts instead of supporting them and accelerating getting to their ultimate goals.

A third reason is that the teaching strategies followed by instructors in the faculties after the foundation year don't guarantee the right extension and consolidation of what the staff in ELI are doing. This appears in the following practices: First, instructors follow a short cut to communicate their ideas to students; that is, they translate into Arabic which makes students wait for their translation and saves them the effort of trying to understand or think in English. Furthermore, in some faculties the whole book is minimized to a small leaflet instead of referring students to the main book and encouraging them to read not only the book but other references and articles. Moreover, The testing system follows the MCQ type which makes students and instructors test oriented and less or even not interested in any writing because all what they need is to circle the correct answer.

To sum up, it appears from the comments and suggestions of the home teams in the faculties that students coming from the foundation year lack the minimum of the four English language skills and sub skills that enables them to

manage throughout their studies. They need listening skills and sub skills in order to understand and take notes as their professors are explaining. They also need speaking skills and sub skills to give presentation and to interact with their teachers and classmates. Writing is a very important skill for them as they take notes, answer questions in exams and quizzes and write reports and assignments. Finally they need to focus on the reading skills and sub skills as university life depends mainly on different sources other than one book or notebook to memorize.

C. Results of Students' Focus Groups

While asking foundation year students at KAU a group of questions in focus groups about the English language teaching process and about the syllabus they are currently using (See Appendix 2), their answers were mainly focused on the implementation of the syllabus, the activities, the shift of emphasis on the four skills and other formalities. The details below show the different opinions of students in the focus groups.

Question One

What do you like most about being in your English class?

Most of the students liked the idea of portfolio where students keep their contributions throughout the semester, then finally given a grade for their regular participation and improvement. Reading circles where students are given a story to prepare and assigned different roles to discuss it in the class is an activity that most students appreciated. Projectors, smart boards and other teaching aids used in the class in addition to having not more than twenty students in the class are among the things they pointed out during the discussion.

Question Two

What haven't you enjoyed in your English Class?

The 11:00 to 4:00 Sunday and Tuesday time slots are too long and boring for most of the students. They also complained about the big amount of copying in portfolio assignments and the writing booklet- a handout they fill weekly in order to develop their writing. The inconsistency in applying the classroom code, the big number of tests per module, the rare use of teaching aids and technology are among the things students mentioned as inconveniences in the English language classroom. All the students agreed unanimously that the English classes are boring because they lack the variety of activities, group work, pair work, role playing which turns the class into a traditional lecture.

Question Three

Do you think your English has improved? How much? What has improved most?

Most students said that they have improved but it is still below expectations. They also said that listening and speaking need to be given special interest as they are a problem for most of the students.

Question Four

What hasn't improved? Why not?

The majority of the students in the focus groups refer their weakness in writing and listening to the following comments: writing needs more practice, listening is too fast and difficult to understand due to big number of students in the class, students are usually not involved in classroom activities, teachers don't correct students' pronunciation mistakes.

Question Five

What changes would you like to see in the way English is taught in ELI?

Most of the students have concerns about listening and they suggested giving more attention and focus to this skill. They also recommended creating a website for listening in addition to making a listening lab for students to practice. Their second comment was about teaching strategies, the weekly load and the classroom environment. They thought that shorter time slots per day, longer period for each module, offering an additional course in summer may be solutions to some of their problems. They also suggested that teachers prepare them for the TOEFL exam. The third suggestion was about the placement test, they think that the MCQ questions allow chance for guessing and cheating and may end with displacement to many students.

Question Six

If there were one thing you could change about the English class, what would it be?

Almost every student has different opinion about what to change in the English class. Writing assessment, the instructor, moving from one section to the other are among the things they want to have a word in doing. They also want to be consulted while choosing the syllabus; they want materials about everyday English. They are not happy with the way speaking is tested where instructors test students individually, they suggested that an open discussion suits them more and encourages them to talk. Surprisingly, they want more activities in the class which makes it less boring. The big number of students in the class was a common complaint for most of the students.

Question Seven

What do you like or dislike about New Headway Plus- *The syllabus they are currently using in ELI?*

Upon asking the students in the focus group what they like about the book they said that there is a variety of topics and it contains important themes about different parts of the world. The four books of the New Headway Plus suit the four levels used in ELI. The quality of paper and the colors are great. It has a grammar reference, audio material and a very rich workbook. On the other hand, most of the students said that the examples and texts have nothing to do with the Saudi culture. Some of them also protested about the pictures used in the book as the Saudi culture has a certain peculiarity even among the Arab countries; any naked part of a woman's body is unacceptable. In addition, there are

sentences about boyfriends, girl friends, kissing and dating. Level one students found the New Headway Plus – beginners a big challenge for them. The listening content is too fast for students to understand and the activities in the syllabus don't lend themselves to pair work or group work.

V. CONCLUSION

In fact, there are many approaches to needs analysis, but I found Hutchinson and Waters' learning -Centered Approach the most practical and easy to use. Although the home teams- deans, vice deans and members of the staff- in the faculties were very welcoming and cooperative, they were at the same time very unrealistic in their demands. They want the students in the foundation year to move from almost zero to competent students who are able to score 500 in the TOEFL and to be able to write a research paper. These demands are impossible to achieve in one year taking into consideration the lack of motivation on one hand and the heavy load students have to finish in the foundation year on the other hand. Students not only study English, they also study Chemistry, Biology, Statistics, Math and communication skills.

Taking all these conditions into consideration, the demands had to be refined and written in a more realistic way that matches the time limits and the very modest level of the students coming from schools to join the foundation year.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking at the results of the interviews of home teams in the twelve representing faculties in KAU and focus groups of foundation year students, the researcher has these recommendations:

1. Decision makers and educational leaders should pay more attention to needs analysis as the first unavoidable step before choosing any syllabus.
2. Students interests and preferences, the teaching environment or the teaching strategies should be taken into consideration.
3. Although the main concern in the foundation year is teach a common core of English Language skills, there is no harm if teachers give some ESP material if they find that a certain group of students is so confident about joining a certain faculty.
4. The content and the mechanism of the placement test in ELI should be reconsidered so that it becomes more reliable and valid.
5. ELI managing staff should try their best to have not more than twenty students in each classroom.
6. The ELI in KAU should take the skills and the subs skills in appendix 3 in addition to the results of the focus groups into consideration while choosing or developing any syllabus.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the managing team of ELI at King Abdulaziz University for their cooperation and technical support which made my job easy. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Mr Simon Best- the Head of the Curriculum Committee and his team for their invaluable contribution in conducting the focus groups through an ongoing well-done professional process.

APPENDIX (1)

A List of Questions for Faculties in KAU Meant to Help the Home Team and the Visiting Team Conduct the Interviews.

Below are suggested objectives for you to look at while asking the home team. If any one of the objectives agrees with the home members' suggestions, just tick yes. If they suggest any new objectives, skills, sub skills, please write them under OTHER SUGGESTIONS. I hope you good luck and well done job.

SKILL	No.	SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	YES	NO	OTHER SUGGESTIONS
LISTENING	1	What listening sub skills do your students need? Do they understand the general meaning and specific details of a lecture or a presentation given in English (native or non-native) about their field of study?			
	2	Do they understand and respond to your questions during the class?			
	3	Do they catch the main idea of a TV program or any recorded audio material on topics related to their study?			
	4	Do they understand and respond to instructions in a lab or workshop related to their field?			
	5	Are they able to work out the meaning of unknown word(s) in a familiar context?			
	6	Are they able to take notes while a lecture in English is being delivered? How much out of 100%?			
READING	1	What reading sub-skills do you want your students to have? Are they able to find and understand relevant information in everyday material (brochures, short official documents, catalogue, short reports, job adverts?)			
	2	Are they able to skim and scan texts for general or specific information?			
	3	Can they read a map to find a place in a city or a room in a building, or a country or a city in the world map?			
	4	Can they summarize a short text of a familiar nature?			
	5	Are they able to follow clear routine instructions (for a game, recipe, using equipment, or installing computer software?			
SPEAKING	1	What speaking sub skills do you want your students to have? Can they receive and respond to a phone conversation of familiar nature spoken at normal speed?			
	2	Are they able to agree and disagree politely, exchange personal opinions, compare and contrast alternatives?			
	3	Can they express and respond to feelings and attitudes (e.g. surprise, happiness, sadness, interest, uncertainty, indifference?)			
	4	Can they ask politely about things they didn't understand or need more clarification?			
	5	Can they give a short and straightforward prepared presentation on a chosen topic in their academic or professional field in a reasonably clear and precise manner?			
	6	Can they repeat back what is said to check if they have understood?			
	7	Can they start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or related to their study?			
	8				
WRITING	1	What writing sub skills do you want your students to have? Can they write their C.V in a summary form?			
	2	Can they describe or write a report about an event like: a recent trip, an experiment in the lab, a workshop they attended recently, a lecture related to their study?			
	3	Can they fill an application for a job or a bank or a travel agency or joining an institution like a university, institute... etc?			
	4	Can they write a letter (formal / informal) to complain, order, apologize, recommend, inquire, invite ...etc?			
	5	Can they write a short e-mail to communicate a message?			
	6	Can they write a summary of a short narrative given at normal speed?			

It is also a good idea to ask these questions:

1. Is English the main instructional language? In all courses, most courses, senior courses only, a course or two?
2. Is the main text book in English? In all courses, most courses, senior courses only, a course or two?

3. Is the language of tests English or Arabic?
4. Are there other books or notes suggested or provided to the students as alternatives for textbooks? If yes, Are these in English?
5. Are the references, learning resources, self learning materials important during his study or after his graduation available mostly in English?
6. Number (or percentage) of non-Arabic speaking faculty.

APPENDIX (2)

The Questions Used for the Foundation Year Students’ Focus Groups

No.	Question
1	What do you like most about being in your English class?
2	What haven’t you enjoyed in your English Class?
3	Do you think your English has improved? How much? What has improved most?
4	What hasn’t improved? Why not?
5	What changes would you like to see in the way English is taught in ELI?
6	If there were one thing you could change about the English class, what would it be?
7	What do you like or dislike about New Headway Plus?

APPENDIX (3)

Students Outcomes Emerging from the Interviews with Faculties and Students’ Focus Groups

By the end of the foundation year students should be able to:

SKILLS	No.	OBJECTIVES
LISTENING	1	interpret standard spoken language on both familiar and unfamiliar topics in everyday situations.
	2	identify information, ideas and opinions in extended speech and follow complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar and/or related to their study and delivered in standard spoken language.
	3	identify the overall meaning of most films, TV news programs, documentaries, interviews, chat shows in standard speech.
	4	interpret complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specifications for familiar products and services.
	5	interpret a wide range of recorded and broadcast audio material, including some non-standard usage and identify finer points of detail including implicit attitudes and relationships between speakers.
	6	practice taking notes and summarizing listening texts.
READING	1	interpret in details texts related to their specialist or general interests.
	2	interpret articles on a range of specialized topics using a dictionary and other appropriate reference resources.
	3	examine the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a variety of topics connected with their interests or study, and decide if a closer reading is worthwhile.
	4	apply reading strategies and activities like skimming, scanning, prediction, providing ellipsis, choosing the suitable title, knowing the writer's attitude, doing a cloze test...
	5	interpret lengthy instructions (e.g. in a user manual for a TV or technical equipment used in their work), as long as they can reread difficult sections.
	6	distinguish and identify information, ideas and opinions from highly specialized texts in my own field, e.g. research reports.
	7	apply word attack skills (parts of speech, derivations, suffixes, prefixes, grammar rules and context clues) to discover the meanings of new vocabulary items.
SPEAKING	1	create, maintain and close a simple face-to-face conversation on any topic of personal interest or related to study, with generally appropriate use of formal or informal language.
	2	employ most practical tasks in everyday situations (e.g. making telephone inquiries, answering telephone calls, asking for a refund or replacement, negotiating purchase, asking for and giving directions ...)
	3	express and respond to feelings and attitudes (e.g. surprise, happiness, sadness, interest, uncertainty, indifference).
	4	practice agreeing and disagreeing politely, exchange personal opinions, discuss what to do next, compare and contrast alternatives.
	5	describe familiar subjects related to their work, study or interests.
	6	produce a presentation on a chosen topic in their academic or professional field in a clear and precise manner
	7	construct and understand messages while talking to native speakers of English
WRITING	1	complete their CVs
	2	describe an event (e.g. a recent business trip or holiday, accident, an experiment in the lab, history of patients, a prescription, a recipe, a report, a diagnosis ...)
	3	create and respond to e-mails in a standard format communicating inquiries and factual information, explaining problems.
	4	create standard letters giving or requesting detailed information (e.g. replying to an advertisement, applying for a job).
	5	create personal letters giving news, describing experiences and impressions, and expressing feelings.
	6	produce a well -developed essay nearly free of spelling and grammar mistakes on a given topic.
	7	Write a reflection about a reading, fill a (KWL) table before and after studying a certain topic, write take a stand assignments based on reading passages, create a summary of a story or a reading text.

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Concerning publication, the author admits that he wakes up late first in his higher studies and second in his research for reasons out of his hand. Anyway, to arrive late is better than not to arrive at all. In the last two years, he has already published three articles and "Needs Analysis for Curriculum Design" is his fourth and currently working on the fifth. His first article "The Effect of Using L1 in the L2 classroom on Foundation Year Students' Achievement in General English at King Abdulaziz University." was published by David Publishing Company in 2012. The second article "The Impact of Using SMS in the EFL Classroom on Students' Achievement in Writing And Speaking," was published by the Center for Promoting Ideas-USA. The third article "Integrating Mobile Learning in the EFL Classroom..." was published by the English Language Teaching Journal in Canada. To sum up, the author's main concern in his research is how to integrate the new technology in the EFL classroom.

Finally, Dr Mahmoud has participated in many local committees inside King Abdulaziz University and has given many workshops and seminars about teaching methods in Jordan and in KSA. ESP has been one of the author's concerns; he has already finished a book "English for Art and Design" which is now used in a big college in Jeddah.

How Chinese Culture Goes to the World through Literary Translation

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Abstract—The fact that Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize for Literature is a landmark event of the evident increase of Chinese culture's international influence. In the light of literary translation, culture occupies an important position. Thus, the way of handling cultural difference is of great importance in improving translations' quality and promoting cultural exchange among countries. However, the shortage of qualified literary translators makes literary translation a worse situation. This dissertation will mainly discuss about the cultural transmission through literary translation and the cultivation of talented translators. The ultimate goal of this paper is to expand Chinese culture's international influence through improving literary translation.

Index Terms—literary translation, cultural difference, literary translators

I. INTRODUCTION: THE CURRENT CONDITION OF CHINESE LITERARY TRANSLATION

With the integration of global economy, politics and science technology, the tendency of multi-cultural coexistence is underway. Culture is becoming greatly important in the exchange among countries. As a branch of translation, literature translation is kind of cross-cultural language transforming art. In the sense of culture, literature translation is to have the content, the style, the spirit of a book under a certain cultural context reappear in another cultural context. Concerning the cross-cultural nature of literature translation, the translator is required to transcend cultural differences and take up literature translation in a creative way so that the aim of literature communication and cultural exchange can be met.

Nowadays, following the departure of such literature translating masters as Fengzhi, Xiaoqian, Luxun and Feng Yidai, the literature translating sector soon entered a declining period and falls into an embarrassing situation. And we have to admit that the quality of Chinese literature translation works is not very satisfactory and that there is an increasing lack of excellent translators. Chinese literature translation is regarded as one way of pushing Chinese culture towards the world. This paper will reflect on some key and practical issues in connection to helping Chinese culture through literature translation go to the world, and propose relevant suggestions.

II. THE BLOCKING FORCES THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF CHINESE CULTURE IN LITERATURE TRANSLATION GOING TO THE WORLD

The blocking forces standing in the way of Chinese culture through literature translation going to the world can be divided into two categories. One is the difficulty in translating Chinese works, which is the cultural translation and reproduction. The other is the lack of translators, who are devoted to the field of Chinese literature translation.

A. Cultural Differences between the East and the West

1. Different Historical Backgrounds

Under different historical backdrops, different nations have accumulated massive vocabularies featuring rich implication, unique images and culture. In translating those words, we can not comprehend them literally, otherwise, the translated text may appear confusing and elusive to readers. What's more, It can often be seen that different culture has a different understanding of the same thing or the same concept. For instance, in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (Mo, 1996), there is an excerpt: 她阴沉沉的说:“如果我没错的话,你戴的,” 她用手做了一个摘帽子的姿势, “不是‘手提帽’, 你是极右派, 是属于永久性、永远找不掉帽子的右派, 对不对?” and the translation is “Unless I'm mistaken,” she said darkly, “you have been capped.” She reached up as if taking a hat off her head. “Not a cap you can remove at will. No, you're an ultra-rightist and that will be with you forever, a rightist who will always wear the cap. Am I right”. “Cap” is a feature word used in the period of Chinese Cultural Revolution. It refers to “setting somebody up”. In the course of translation, the translator only presents the image of the character without telling readers the loaded culture. Readers may get confused in doing reading and can hardly figure out the cultural implication. Thus, I think a foot note is needed here-“cap” is a special word used during The Cultural Revolution, Which means to stick unwarranted labels on someone. This, to some degree, reveals the cultural meaning of “hat” in accordance with the context.

2. Different Ways of Thinking

Ways of thinking is bound to the origin of a nation's rich culture, which reflects the language psychological tendency a nation of a certain language formed in the course of history. The western people are used to logical and abstract

thinking, while Chinese are inclined to visual thinking. Both sides hold lots of great differences in religious and historical tradition, philosophy, language and culture. Compared with the impact of relatively abstract thinking, material factors like geographical conditions have more concrete and trivial impacts on translation appreciation. Take *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out* by Mo Yan as an example.

“而黄合作又对他频频进攻，于是他跟她又有了云雨之情。”(Mo, 2006, p. 252)

“When Huang Hezuo made her move, and they sported among the clouds and rain.” (Goldblatt, 2008, p. 278)

The Chinese people are not as bold as many Westerners when talking about sex, so they usually use euphemism to imply the things related to sex. “云雨” is a more literary speaking of sexual intercourse, an euphemism that derives from ancient Chinese poetry. Convinced that the target readers could understand it within the context, Goldblatt renders the euphemism into “among the clouds and rain” in the foreignizing method. Therefore, the Chinese cultural metaphor is well preserved, and at the same time, the target readers could experience the exotism and uniqueness of the Chinese culture.

3. Different Habits and Customs

Different nations have different living customs. For instance:

附骥尾莫言巴结常团长 (Mo, 2006, p.305)

A Fawning Mo Yan Rides on Commander Chang's Coattails (Goldblatt, 2008, p.327)

The idiom “附骥尾” comes from Records of the Grand Historian (司马迁《史记》). It literally means to “adhere to a splendid steed's tail” and its figurative meaning is “to come to fame by relying on an influence or put oneself under the patronage of a bigwig”, used often in a self-effacing speaking. The word “coattails” literally means the skirts of a dress coat, or frock coat and its figurative meaning is the influence of a popular movement or person. The English phrase “to ride on one's coattails” means to get promoted politically by relying on another person's fame and prestige, which is similar to “附骥尾”, though their derivations are different and have different cultural images. In this sense, Goldblatt's translation is as visual as the original.

B. A Lack of Excellent Groups of People Engaged in Literary Translation

Literature translation covers a wide range of subjects. Jeremy Munday defines translation in *Introducing Translation Studies* as a new subject in close connection to translation theories and behaviors. This definition obviously reveals the cross-subject quality of translation, which goes for literature translation. Therefore, a solid foreign language basis does not equal excellent translation competence which also needs wide general knowledge, good language expressive skills, long-term practice and accumulation.

The main reason which results in lacking translators is that literature translation demands high level of literature of translators. Literary works present a whole society, a nation and people's life. Before translating a book, a translator should have a good understanding of the whole ideological basis and cultural tradition. As a literary translator, he or she should have a comprehensive storage of mother language, Chinese Classics, wide scope of knowledge, rich life experience and cultural accumulation.

However, the common problem that most translators face is a weak Chinese Classics basis and narrow scope of general knowledge. Recently an increasing number of Doctoral supervisors of foreign language call that students in foreign language majors must strengthen the study of Chinese Classics and general knowledge, otherwise, they will lack confidence whether in their further study or at work. What's more, the multiplicity and cross-cultural quality of literature translation show us that the only foreign language basis can not afford to help literary translators make great accomplishments in the field of literary translation.

Generally speaking, the reserve literary translators are mainly from foreign language majors. Nowadays, despite the fact that the environment for foreign language study has improved a lot, many students learn it with a strong utility. In this connection, He Gangqiang, Doctoral supervisor of Fudan University, pointed out that many students regard English as a means of seeking a satisfactory job after graduation.

In addition, the major difference between literary translation and other types of translation is not only a simple literary translation, but rather a hard process of reproduction. For example, during the time when Mr Luo Xinzhang translated the *Red and the Black*, he almost went on his translation word for word and translated just 300 words a day. This explains why many of the older generation of translators are writers, literary critics and masters of general knowledge. All in all, literary translation is a cause which needs many translators to devote themselves to.

III. WAYS TO SOLVE THOSE PROBLEMS

A. Ways to Address Cultural Differences in the Course Of Literary Translation

1. A Good Analysis of Literary Genre

Translation practice is in close connection with the style of translated works. Translated works of different styles has distinctive language characteristics. Only when translators have a good grasp of the language characteristics of both source language and target language and can apply the two languages freely can their translations truly reflect the style of source language.

The difference between language styles means different culture involved. For example, in terms of scientific articles,

a relatively small amount of culture is loaded. In doing such translation, an exact information rendering of source language into target language is much more important than the culture rendering of two languages. By contrast, as regards literary works like novels, poems and essays, culture is what should be taken seriously in translation. From readers' perspective, the translation lacking culture is one having no soul. Thus, a qualified translator should fully take into account the way how to handle the cultural difference among works of different styles in literary translation practice.

Of all literary works, poem carries the most cultural elements in light of forms and contents. For instance, the English sonnet and the Chinese poems with seven patterns respectively present deep cultural feature. Many translation techniques such as supplementation, annotation, back-translation and replacement, all can be used to deal with cultural difference so that the readers of target language can fully comprehend the cultural style of source language. It is known that Chinese stresses parataxis while English emphasizes hypotaxis. Therefore, in Chinese-English translation, we can generate coherent context and resolve cultural difference through adding the subject, the object or the linking words. Take On Hearing the News that My Friend Bai Juyi Is Relegated to Jiujiang(闻乐天授江州司马) by Yuan Zhen for example, the line “暗风吹雨入寒窗” is translated into “Into my window a dark wind with a cold rain blows strong” by Guo Zhuzhang. This translation matches the characteristics of English and illustrates the culture involved in the poem as well.

Before starting translation, it is a crucial step to go on a thorough analysis of the literary genre and language characteristics. Translators should adopt supplementation, annotation and replacement to reduce the cultural difference between Chinese and English.

2. The Application of Dynamic Equivalence

In order to set a standard for the transformation of source language and target language and reduce cultural difference, Eugene ·A ·Nida, from linguistic perspective, has put forward the famous translation theory of Dynamic Equivalence or Functional Equivalence. In this theory, he pointed out that translation is to use the most appropriate, natural and equivalent language to reproduce the information of source language from meaning to literary genre(Guo, 2000, p.65). The information translation should convey includes both superficial word information and deep cultural information. Dynamic equivalence covers four aspects: word equivalence, syntactical equivalence, textual equivalence and stylistic equivalence. With a view to the four aspects, Nida supposed that “meaning is the most important, and the style secondary”(Guo, 2000, p.67) . Style is very likely to cover up the source language's culture and block cultural exchange. Thus, in literary translation, based on the theory by Nida, the translator should make the culture of source language exactly reappear in the target language.

To recreate the culture of source language and eliminate cultural difference, the translator can follow the 3 steps. Firstly, efforts should be made to achieve the translation in accordance with the original meaning and reflecting its culture. However, two kinds of culture have something in common but can not be exactly the same. Hence, it is impossible to completely reproduce the original culture and the translator can only recreate it the best they can. Secondly, if meaning and culture can not be preserved at the same time, the translator can only desert stylistic equivalence and keep the meaning and culture of the original. For example, “太岁头上动土” is translated into “How dare they touch a single hair on the head of the mighty Jupiter!” (Goldblatt, 2000, p.116). “太岁头上动土” means, in the Chinese culture, “to provoke a person far superior in power or strength, or to scratch Buddha's head”. This expression appears in Mo Yan's novel *Goat* and Goldblatt adopts the domestication strategy to render it into “mighty Jupiter” in Roman Methology so that the target readers could get the same meaning as the source readers do. In *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, Goldblatt renders “太岁” into “Wandering God” on all occasions, which creatively reproduces the people's mystification of “太岁” that the author expects to convey to his readers in the original. Thirdly, if the second step does not work, another translation technique called “re-creation” can be used to resolve cultural difference. Re-creation is meant to transform the deep structure of source language into the surface structure of target language (Guo, 2000, p.67), namely, use the target language to illustrate the culture of literary works. For example, According to Nida's theory, the dealing of cultural difference is related to reproducing source language from meaning to literary style. Only when the style and spirit can be grasped in the target language can a translation be called an excellent one.

3. The Application of Domestication and Alienation

In light of culture, there are generally two translation strategies of domestication and foreignization. Foreignization reflects the culture of source language. Lawrence Venuti, an advocate of foreignization, advanced the concept of "resistancy" translation, that is to say, translations should keep source language's characteristics in style and form while overlooking whether readers of target language can understand the cultural image of source language. For translators in favor of alienation, translation promotes cultural exchange and has readers understand and accept other kinds of culture. Thus, translators should transplant source language's culture into target language so as to allow readers to directly appreciate the foreign culture. For example:

“站住！”他愤怒地一拍桌子，烟缸里烟灰被震飞起来，他说，“你是个彻头彻尾的混蛋！兔子还不吃窝边草呢，何况也不是什么好草！”(Mo, 2006, p.456)

“Stay where you are!” he shouted angrily, slamming his fist on the desk and sending the ashes in his ashtray flying.

“You’re a bastard, through and through. A rabbit doesn’t eat the grass around its burrow, and in this case, it’s not even very good grass.” (Goldblatt, 2008, p.457)

Although there exists an English proverb similar to “兔子不吃窝边草” (A villain doesn’t harm his neighbors.) in meaning, Goldblatt still keeps his translation (A rabbit doesn’t eat the grass around its burrow.) faithful to the original both in form and in content so that the vivid Chinese idiom could be perceived and understood by the target readers.

On contrary to alienation, adaptation reflects the culture of target language. Nida, the advocate of this theory, thinks translation should be functionally equivalent and that not only expression ways but also culture should follow target language’s standard. For people who are for this idea, the duty of translation is to remove language and cultural barriers and make readers accept translations with ease. For instance:

你的角上挂着两只破鞋，这是孙家的那个善于侍弄汽灯的小子胡乱挂上的，只是为了丑化你，并不象征着你一头牛也搞破鞋。(Mo, 2006, p.145)

A pair of tattered shoes had been hooked on your horns. That was the brainchild of the Sun brother who was such an expert in the use of gas lamps. He meant only to make you look bad, not imply that you dallied with loose females, as such things symbolize. (Goldblatt, 2008, p.173)

“破鞋” is a heavily culture-loaded expression with “tattered shoe” as its literal meaning. According to Wikipedia, “tattered shoe” is now an antonomasia or a metaphor and often used on the occasion of cursing a loose woman. “搞破鞋” in Chinese means that a man and a woman have the improper sexual relations. Goldblatt’s rendering “dallied with loose females” couldn’t convey the exact meaning of the original because “dally” only means “to play amorously or to flirt”. Therefore, “had sexual behavior with loose females” might be a better translation.

Though foreignization is diametrically opposite to domestication, nevertheless, they are not conflictory. Translators can adopt the two methods to tackle cultural difference for different outcomes according to specific conditions.

4. The Application of Creative Treason

In doing literary translation, translators often get into a dilemma of translating the works according to source language’s rules or target language’s. However, translations are not only the reproduction of original works but rather a re-creation of them. Robert Escarpit, a French literary sociologist, say that translation is just a sort of creative treason. Rightly owing to its existence and use, many translations are more excellent than original works come into being. For example, the poet Whitman assumed that the German version of *Leaves of Grass* by Freiligrath is much better than his own original. Creative treason is widely applied in literary translation for two purposes. One is to facilitate readers’ cultural thinking and habits and make it easier for them to accept it. For instance, Goldblatt explained that since “Shengsi pilao” is from the Buddha’s saying, the Chinese people are aware of its source, but the Americans lack such a religious background. He must find something interesting, and then he came up with the sentence “Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out”. By lengthening the short four Chinese characters deliberately, Goldblatt presents the target readers an interesting and easily followed novel title with a distinctive embodiment on the plots of the stories.

The other is to introduce source language and its culture to readers of target language in a forcible way. Take the example for the famous translation by Xu Yuanchong, who rendered the palindrome sentence “Able was I ere saw Elba!” into “不到俄岛我不倒” (Xu, 1984, p. 2). Mr. Xu creatively translated the original sentence into rhythmic Chinese one with the similar forms and sounds between “到” and “倒”, “我” and “俄”. Although the rendition is not a palindrome like the original, Mr. Xu creatively reproduces the rhetorical beauty apart from fidelity to the original sentence in content.

From the perspective of literary translation means, creative treason is a crucial approach. It requires translators to add their subjective creation on the basis of correct understanding of original works and make translations more appealing. Apart from this, translations should be loyal to the translated works’ gist and decrease the effect of cultural difference. To conclude, only the proper use of creative treason can effectively deal with cultural difference.

B. *Literary Translators’ Improvement in Bilingual Competence*

Translation is the exchange and the transformation of two countries’ culture. To get familiar with those cultures for translators is much more important than mastering the two languages. Nowadays, translation teaching of English major should give more weight to guiding students to know the cultural background of their mother country and foreign countries when focusing on the mastery of knowledge and language techniques. To put it in detail, curriculum should be reformed and so does translation teaching mode.

Translators’ study and efforts are essential to their progress and accomplishment. The growth of translation abilities is a long-term course of practice and constant accumulation. Superb translation knowledge and skills are the goal of translators’ life-long hard work. To be an excellent translator, first of all, you need to have a good mastery of mother tongue. Besides, a wide scope of knowledge and consistent learning from others and mistakes are also necessary. Only by doing so can a translator make great achievement and become qualified keeping pace with times.

What’s more, young translators’ literature cultivation needs improving. Huang Yuanshen said that looking at current situation, there is a noticeable problem that young translators can not deeply understand the original works and express them correctly in words. He also added for literature translators, a deep perception of works is the crucial first step of translation. Literature translation demands translators of complete focus. The wrong mentality of translating for the sake of translation is the taboo of the cause. And the good literature cultivation is the foundation of good literature

translation.

IV. CONCLUSION

Literary translation is a rather complicated process and it has two inseparable characteristics—to be faithful and to be creative. What we have concluded from above is that culture is an extremely important factor in literary translation. How to handle cultural differences between source language and target language exerts direct influence on the quality and effect of translations. Besides solid language foundation, translators should also equip themselves with knowledge of bilingual cultural backgrounds and cultural awareness. With a thorough knowledge of cultural differences and proper handling of them, translators can present vivid translations to readers and contribute to cultural transmission.

What's more, our traditional culture can be constantly presented to overseas countries and more people will be lured to learn about the essence of Chinese culture. As an increasing number of literary works are translated and introduced to other parts of the world, chances of promoting cultural exchange and expanding our international influence will be growing.

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EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards Being Supervised in an EFL Context

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Abstract—This study was an attempt to explore Iranian EFL teachers' attitude towards supervision and its influence on their classroom decision making. The study also examined the relationship between teachers' teaching experience and their attitude towards classroom supervision. 74 male and female English teachers holding BA, MA, or PhD degrees participated in this survey. Classroom observation and a teachers' questionnaire were used for the purpose of the study. The findings reveal that among the less experienced teachers those who had less than five years of teaching experience were found to be more influenced by the supervision process when it came to making decisions in the classroom. These teachers indicated the importance of supervision for their classroom improvement and their teaching skills and appeared to hold positive attitudes towards supervision program they were experiencing. Teachers with six to ten years of teaching experience appeared to be the most pessimists amongst others. In addition, from the results of the qualitative analysis it can be concluded that the supervision program obviously failed to function for those teachers who had 16 years of teaching experience and more as well. In this case, the program seemed to be only a paperwork job.

Index Terms—supervision, supervisor, attitude, EFL context

I. INTRODUCTION

Supervision is an indispensable process for organizational effectiveness. Being unsupervised causes organizations to be alone, disorganized, impenetrable and stabile (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990). As in all organizations, supervision is a very important process in educational organizations. The need for and importance of educational supervision have been emphasized by many authors (Pajak, 1993; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993; Waite, 1995; Wiles & Bondi, 1996; Sullivan & Glanz, 2000; 2005; Oliva & Pawlas, 2001; Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005; Aydın, 2005; Zepeda, 2006a; 2006b).

Supervision is commonly used in education as a tool to support understanding and development and it is one of the most challenging areas in program management. English language teaching (ELT) classroom observation has traditionally been seen as a part of teacher evaluation and supervisors are typically administrators and senior teachers. Feedback from supervisors as Sheal (1989) notes is usually unsystematic, subjective, and impressionist. Also, the relationship between observers and observees can be tense; the observers are evaluative, while the observees tend to be defensive. Classroom observations under such conditions might not help much in the observees' professional growth and development.

ELT classroom observations nowadays, however, have emphasized the need for holding more developmental than judgmental view in classroom observations. The main purpose of observations is not to judge subjectively what is good and bad teaching, but to work with the observee to explore and identify the limitations as well as the positive aspects in a class, thereby promoting the observee's critical thinking and professional growth. Such a view, as Williams (1989, p.85) states in an in-service teacher-training program, helps teachers to "develop their own judgments of what goes on in their own classrooms, sharpen their awareness of what their pupils are doing and the interactions that take place in their classes, and heighten their ability to evaluate their own teaching practices." This implies that observation can serve as an intermediary between teachers' teaching philosophies and practices. Nunan (1989, p. 76) also holds that since classrooms are "where the action is", spending time looking in classrooms can enrich our understanding of language learning and teaching.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Supervision in Iran's EFL context seems to be a one dimensional practice that needs improvements in both theoretical foundation and classroom practice. In some institutes and English Language Centers there is no observation

system and the teachers (especially novice teachers) are faced with many problems in classes while they have passed TTC. In some other institutes where supervision is part of the policy of the institute, it is restricted to a paperwork job rather than a tool for teaching and hence learning improvement. Some other institutes have based their supervision practice on traditional theories of supervision in which the teacher has no role and his creativity and independence are mostly ignored.

Cooperation of knowledgeable and experienced supervisors with language teachers to have an effective teaching is a necessity. By systematic and focused observation of classrooms, the teachers and supervisors can gain insights into the nature of classrooms and into their teaching. They can use these insights to help them become more effective teachers.

For many years there has always been a question in the researcher's mind as to why some EFL institutes that have an experienced supervisor and a proper observation system for their teachers are more successful. One reason might be the role of suitable supervision on teachers' attitude and decision making in EFL Classes.

The purpose of this study is to discover Iranian EFL teachers' attitude towards supervision and its influence on their classroom decision making. The study also accounts for their differences and similarities in this respect and explores the relationship between teachers' teaching experience and their attitude towards classroom supervision.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

An appropriate observation system can help facilitate the achievement of the goals and expectations of an English teacher preparation program. Although a sufficient supervision is an important component of any teacher preparation program, little information is available about its effects on teachers' attitudes and decision making in EFL classes.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study will be an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Is teachers' attitude towards classroom supervision positive?
2. Is teachers' decision making in EFL classes influenced by classroom supervision?
3. Are attitudes of teachers towards classroom supervision significantly influenced by their teaching experience?

V. METHODOLOGY

A. *Supervision and Its Purpose*

Supervision of instruction includes monitoring and analyzing classroom teaching practice and gathering appropriate data according to standards set by the administrator with the aim of providing meaningful feedback and direction to teachers to improve teaching and accordingly learning process. Through effective supervision of instruction, teaching practices can be strengthened and enhanced in order to contribute to improved student learning (Sergiovanni & Starrat, 1983; Wiles & Lovell, 1975; Harris, 1985).

It is clear that supervision is aimed to improve teaching instruction and to contribute to teacher's growth in order to enhance student learning. Because student learning is the primary goal of the schools, the effective supervision of instruction is an important tool in achieving that (reference). Administrators hold teachers accountable for providing an appropriate and well-planned program in which equal access to quality educational materials is provided for all students.

B. *Teachers and Instructional Supervision*

As explained in details, instructional supervision is meant to be "assistance for the improvement of instruction" (Glickman et al., 1998, p. 8), which is a "process that engages teachers in instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and learning and promoting student achievement" (Glanz, 2006, p. 55). However, not all teachers may view supervision as a positive force for program improvement or as source of assistance; some may consider it as a threat to the teacher's individuality (Wiles & Lovell, 1975).

Research has shown that the improvement of the teaching-learning process through Instructional supervision is dependent upon teacher attitudes toward supervision (Fraser, 1980). In fact, instructional supervision will not promote teaching practice growth and enhance student learning unless the teachers perceive it that way.

In the following sections the notions of attitude and belief will be discussed and the related theories, models, and studies will be presented first. Then I will move on to integrating these concepts with the concept of instructional supervision in foreign language teaching context.

C. *Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs towards Instructional Supervision*

Historically, teachers saw themselves as tools that could be closely examined to ensure that they carried out methods and procedures settled by the supervisors. Over the years this attitude has been noted and still exists among teachers, but some teachers now see the more positive aspects of supervision.

For example, in his study about the perceptions of Canadian and Ukrainian beginning high school teachers Kutsyuruba (2003) shows that the Canadian and Ukrainian participants indicated the importance of supervision for their professional growth and future career. The participants agreed that as beginning teachers they needed to grow and improve in order to become effective teachers.

Cogan (1973) too says that some teachers now consider supervision as a necessary part of the administration of. They see the merit of the whole program if the supervisors are democratic and fair.

Gordon (1990) shows that although American teachers conveyed generally positive perceptions of the three supervisory approach of directive, non-directive, and collaborative, their response to non-directive supervision was less positive compared with the directive and collaborative approaches. He explains this by proposing the probability that these teacher might not be used to being given decision making responsibilities.

In Turkey, however, the situation was not the same. In an attempt to explore the supervisory process from the standpoint of Turkish supervised English language teachers Kayaoglu (2012) found that most of the EFL teachers were found to be pessimistic, depicting the current supervision as a negative experience and supervisors as bureaucratic administrators. Kayaoglu concluded that the current supervision that teachers of English receive does not lead to the growth of teachers and to the improvement of instruction. He proposed that some of the negative attitude towards the supervision results from the fact that most of the supervisors have no expertise in the field, and fail to diagnose problems specific to the field.

In Zimbabwe many teachers dislike or even fear being supervised because historically supervision has always been biased towards evaluation or inspection. Zimbabwean teachers seemed to have a negative view about supervision because supervisors were seen as inspectors who came on a fault-finding mission to the teachers' classroom. (Acheson & Gall, 1997).

Human relations in supervision play an important role. Cogan (1973, p. 15) suggests that one of the main factors that affect supervision efficiency is the "unclarified, ambivalent relation of teachers to supervisors". Teachers prefer discussions with their supervisors about the observation. The relationship between teacher and supervisor is expected to be collegial rather than authoritarian. Wiles and Lovell (1975) suggest that teachers can perceive supervision as a useful activity if the supervisor gives teachers security by supporting their judgments and treat them fairly in the supervisory activities.

D. Participants

Seventy four EFL teachers participated in this study. The majority of the participants teach at Jahad Daneshgahi Language School in Kermanshah, Iran and the rest are from other English Language Institutes where teacher observation is regularly practiced. The participants are 43 males and 31 females. They are between 20 to 45 years old and their teaching experience range from one year to more than 20 years divided into five groups accordingly (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and +20 years). In addition, five participants from these five groups of experience were randomly chosen for classroom observation procedure.

The supervisors who observe and supervise the sample group regularly are also varied in their experience, gender, academic background and expertise. This diversity helps us in finding more accurate and inferable results.

E. Materials

A questionnaire was designed to collect data on how supervision affects Iranian EFL teachers' attitude and their decision making in EFL classes. The questionnaire was based on a tripartite approach to attitude which hypothesizes that there are three different components of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral that make up attitudes.

Accordingly, following the first part of the questionnaire that contains demographic questions in order to gain information about the teachers' and their supervisors' academic qualification, gender, age, and teaching experience, four sections will measure different aspects of Iranian EFL teachers' attitude toward classroom supervision based on the mentioned model of attitude using Likert-scale items. To be more precise, the second part measures how teachers evaluate the overall supervision program; the third part explores the teachers' beliefs and thoughts about mode of supervision and the teacher-supervisor relationship; the fourth part asks for teachers opinion about how the supervision program they are exposed to affects their professional growth; and finally in the fifth part teachers' reactions and behaviors towards supervision is explored.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaires and the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items, some experts in the field will be consulted. Moreover, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of instruments will be estimated and the results will be reported in the next chapter.

F. Procedure

For the quantitative part, a number of the questionnaires were distributed among teachers in Jahad Daneshgahi Language School in Kermanshah and the rest was submitted to teachers in other language institutes across the country via email. A few teachers answered the questionnaire after or between their class times, but most teachers assigned a time for returning the questionnaire, between 3 to 5 days. Participants were asked to take positions towards 21 statements. They were explained that these positions must most closely reflect their opinion about the current classroom supervision they are exposed to. Then the collected data was tabulated to be analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 19.0 for Windows.

In addition, classroom observations were done to find how supervision influences teachers' decision making. 5 teachers from different teaching experience groups (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and +20 years) were chosen randomly for

the purpose of the study. This enables us to compare supervision methods according to the experience of the teachers as well as different teachers' behavior towards supervision.

To explore the influence of the supervision on teachers' decision making observations took place in two phases: phase one at the session of classroom supervision, and phase two the session after the results of the observation has been reported to the teachers. Observations in the second session were done based on the feedback reports that were provided by the supervisor in the first session. That is, in the second session I check if the teacher has made changes in his teaching practice and decisions that he makes in the classroom based on the feedback report of the first session.

The results of classroom observations are also analyzed and reported based on the supervisors' feedbacks in the first session.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using *Cronbach's alpha*. Table 1 shows the result of the reliability test.

TABLE 1.
RELIABILITY STATISTICS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.905	25

The Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire was 0.905 that indicates an excellent internal consistency of the questions, therefore a reliable measure.

G. Teachers' Attitude towards Classroom Supervision

Different aspects of teachers' attitude towards classroom observation were explored through the questionnaire. Bellow I will report the results of each part separately.

H. General Evaluation of Supervision by EFL Teachers

The initial part of the questionnaire explored the EFL teachers' general evaluation of classroom supervision according to their personal experiences. Table 2 summarizes their responses.

TABLE 2.
SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' GENERAL EVALUATION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid negative	5	6.8	6.8	6.8
neutral	44	59.5	59.5	66.2
positive	25	33.8	33.8	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

As Table 2 shows, among the 74 participants only 5 expressed negative judgments about classroom supervision. The table also shows that the majority of the teachers declared themselves to be neutral towards supervision and about 34 percent of the participants said that classroom supervision is good.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of teachers' responses to the first question where they were asked about the usefulness of their supervision program.

TABLE 3.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE FIRST QUESTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	7	9.5	9.5	9.5
no idea	18	24.3	24.3	33.8
agree	49	66.2	66.2	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

As Table 3 shows the majority of the participants considered their classroom supervision program useful, about 24 percent were neutral toward it and only 9.5 percent found the in progress supervision program unproductive.

In the second question teachers were requested to evaluate the necessity of their classroom supervision. Table 4 reveals the summary of their evaluation.

TABLE 4.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE SECOND QUESTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	15	20.3	20.3	20.3
no idea	21	28.4	28.4	48.6
agree	38	51.4	51.4	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that about half the participants found the supervision program necessary while the other half either disagreed or were on the fence.

Finally, teachers were asked to rate the matter of paperwork formality of their classroom supervision and table 5 reveals the descriptive statistics of their evaluation.

TABLE 5.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE THIRD QUESTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	27	36.5	36.5	36.5
no idea	32	43.2	43.2	79.7
disagree	15	20.3	20.3	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

As the table suggests the teachers were not unanimous about the third question. While 36.5 percent considered their classroom supervision a matter of inevitable organizational and administrative paperwork duties, about 20 percent were in opposition to this view and the rest remained undecided.

I. Teachers' Perceptions of the Mode of Supervision

The next part of the questionnaire taps the EFL teachers' perceptions about the mode of supervision. In these questions the perceptions of teachers about the aims and objectives of the supervision, its influence on the teacher, and the supervisor-teacher relationship are explored. Table 6 provides us some clues to suggest possible trends and to give reasons why these teachers may develop certain attitudes towards supervision. Table 6 shows that the feeling of teachers towards supervision seems to be mixed. Their perception is mostly characterized by an apathetic feeling that is evident in the percentage of 'no idea' responses (an average 20 percent of the participants were undecided in answering the questions).

TABLE 6.
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MODE OF SUPERVISION

The current supervision	Percentage		
	Agree	No Idea	Disagree
is more or less "looking for errors"	39.2	23	37.8
is authoritative rather than democratic	45.9	23	31.1
includes sharing mutual responsibilities and participation between the teacher and the supervisor	38.1	4.1	57.8
is done with the aim of control, rather than improvement	41.9	17.6	40.5
is inspection rather than a collaborative process	44.6	23	32.4
creates fear and excitement in teachers	66.2	17.6	16.2
focuses mostly on the teacher	75.7	20.3	4

Setting aside the undecided responses, comparing the views of the supporting and opposing participants gives us some clues that from teachers' point of view, the current supervisory practice is mostly characterized by inspection and evaluation. The percentage of teachers to whom the current supervision is authoritative and with the aim of inspection is higher (45.9 % and 44.6 %). For the majority of the teachers (66.2% and 75.7%), supervision causes fear of being penalized, focuses mostly on the teacher, and does not invite participation on the part of the teacher, indicating that the supervisor- teacher relationship is a superior-inferior kind of relationship.

These interpretations are confirmed if we look at the overall evaluation of the participants in table 7.

TABLE 7.
SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' EVALUATION OF THE MODE OF SUPERVISION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid negative	29	39.2	39.2	39.2
neutral	42	56.8	56.8	95.9
positive	3	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

As the table shows the majority of the teachers (56.8%) were neutral towards the questions. A surprisingly low percentage (4.1 %) evaluated the mode of the current supervision they were exposed to positively and 39.2 percent were unsatisfied

J. Teachers' Views about Contributions of Supervision to Their Growth

Another aspect of teachers' attitude toward supervision that was tapped by the questionnaire was their views about how supervision helps with their professional improvement. Table 8 deals with their responses to this part.

TABLE 8.
TEACHERS' VIEWS ABOUT CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUPERVISION TO THEIR GROWTH

<u>The current supervision</u>	<u>Percentage</u>		
	Agree	No Idea	Disagree
guides us in problem-solving	47.3	24.3	28.4
provides educational materials and assists in our courses	28.4	39.2	32.4
increases our motivation and morale	31.1	29.7	39.2
made contribution to my professional growth	23	51.4	25.7
increased my teaching skills and practice	37.8	29.7	32.4
helped me to discover my shortcomings	54.9	8.1	37
helped me to overcome instructional problems	47.3	27	25.7

Surprisingly, the percentages of unconcerned responses in table 7 are again relatively high that seems to suggest that either the participants are indifferent towards supervision, or the supervision programs are mostly a matter of paperwork formality in the institutes that the study was implemented.

Once again due to high percentages of neutral responses, I have to put these responses aside and compare the affirmative and negative responses only. Accordingly, from the majority of teachers' point of view class supervision helps discover the teacher's shortcomings (54.9%). In fact, more teachers find classroom supervision useful in guiding them to solve issues and help them overcome instructional problems (47.3%). Though more teachers (37.8%) agree that the current supervision they are exposed to enhances their teaching skills and practice, fewer of them consider the supervision a plus in their professional growth (23%). They (32.4%) think that the classroom supervision does not help them in their courses by providing educational materials. In addition, the supervision does not seem to be a stimulating and motivating factor to more teachers (39.2%).

Table 9 summarizes the participants' evaluation of the contribution of supervision to their professional growth.

TABLE 9.
SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF SUPERVISION TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid negative	18	24.3	24.3	24.3
neutral	25	33.8	33.8	58.1
positive	31	41.9	41.9	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

All in all, table 9 shows that though 33.8 percent of the teachers were indifferent towards what classroom supervision may or may not add to them, 41.9 percent evaluated the contribution of supervision to their professional growth positively and a lower percentage of 24.3 hold opposing positions.

K. Teachers' Manners and Reactions towards Supervision

The last aspect of teachers' attitude is how they react towards supervision. This part attempts to explore the actual behavior of the teachers toward the supervision program they experienced. Table 10 shows the results.

TABLE 10.
TEACHERS' VIEWS ABOUT CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUPERVISION TO THEIR GROWTH

<u>After supervision I</u>	<u>Percentage</u>		
	Agree	No Idea	Disagree
study the evaluation report carefully	68.9	6.8	24.3
try to use the feedback to improve my teaching practice	55.4	6.8	37.8
try to change my teaching method according to the feedback	45.9	2.7	51.4

Table 10 shows an average positive behavior towards the supervision program results as the majority of teachers expressed that they read the report carefully (68.9 %) and make an attempt to utilize the feedback in improving their teaching practice (55.4 %). However, what is evident is that more teachers seem reluctant to change their teaching approach according to the feedback.

L. Teachers' Decision Making and Classroom Supervision

Classroom observations were done to find how supervision influences teachers' decision making (second research question). Five teachers with different teaching experiences were randomly chosen. This makes it possible to compare different teachers' behaviors and reactions towards supervision. Table 11 shows the participants information.

TABLE 11.
OBSERVATION PART PARTICIPANTS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE

	Teaching Experience
Participant 1	15 months
Participant 2	8 years
Participant 3	11 years
Participant 4	16 years
Participant 5	25 years

As was explained in chapter 3 in order to explore the influence of the supervision on teachers' decision making observations took place in two phases. In the first phase the actual supervision takes place and the evaluation forms are filled by the supervisor. Table 12 summarizes the negative points that the supervisors have made for each class separately. It is noteworthy to mention that the supervisors have mentioned the strength points of the teachers and their teaching practices however, I skip that part and focus on the criticisms and weak points for the purpose of the study.

TABLE 12.
SUPERVISORS' NEGATIVE POINTS

Participant 1/ Class 1 15 months of teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching procedures, aids and evaluation techniques are sometimes inconsistent with the objectives: the objective of the teaching session was to teach past tense and instead of linking the new material to the previously known material the teacher used Persian language to teach grammar. • The teaching of grammar lacked warm-ups. • The class lacked group work. • Teacher correction was the dominant form of error correction.
Participant 2/ Class 2 8 years of teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher did not link the new lesson to students' personal experiences. • Reading was only practiced by the teacher (the students were not asked to repeat after the audio track). • The class lacked the game part.
Participant 3/ Class 3 11 years of teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment
Participant 4/ Class 4 16 years of teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment
Participant 5/ Class 5 25 years of teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment

The results of the qualitative analysis in the first session of observation suggest that in the first two classes that the experience of teachers was less than 10 years supervision was based on the instructional steps of a predefined teaching method that these teachers have been taught in TCC (Teacher Training Course) at the time of starting their job at the language institute. Therefore, it seemed to be an inspection and control mechanism rather than a collaborative process.

However, this was not the case for the more experienced teachers. The experienced teachers and the supervisors seem to consider the supervision a paperwork job rather than an evaluation of the class for the purpose of improving teaching and learning and did not seem to care much about it.

The supervisor-teacher relationship in the classes that the teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience was completely different. While the supervisor was strict with less experienced teachers and their relationship was more of a hierarchal relationship, the supervision process did not seem to be an important matter with more experienced teachers.

After the teachers had been provided with the feedbacks from the supervision session, the second phase of observation was conducted based on the points summarized in table 12. In the second phase I observed the classes comparing their present practices with what they were asked to do in the feedback report. The results are pointed out in table 13.

TABLE 13.
RESULTS OF THE COMPARISON OF THE TWO OBSERVATION SESSIONS

Participant 1/ Class 1 15 months of teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher did not use Persian language and appropriate warm-up activities were performed by the teacher. • Group work practices were performed. • Peer correction was practiced by the teacher as well as the teacher correction.
Participant 2/ Class 2 8 years of teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lesson was not personalized again. • In the reading practice the students were asked to repeat after the teacher for only some parts. • The class still lacked the game part.

As table 12 and 13 reveal the only classes that received negative feedbacks were the first two classes and the second class was uninfluenced by the supervision program. In the first class the teacher did his best to follow the guidelines he was provided with and it was evident in the next session of observation. In the second class the teacher who was from the second teaching experience group (6 to 10 years) did not pay any attention to the supervisor's feedback and

continued to attach to his own method of teaching. A look at the questionnaire responses of this group also reveals that these teachers tend to develop more negative attitudes towards teaching supervision. These attitudes are analyzed and explained in details in the next part.

M. Teachers' Attitude and Their Teaching Experience

To examine the influence of teachers' experience on their attitudes towards classroom supervision a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was run. The reason for using a non-parametric test was that the distribution of the data population was not normal. Table 14 demonstrates the descriptive results and table 15 shows the results of non-parametric test.

TABLE 14.
NUMBERS AND AVERAGE RANKS OF TEACHERS WITH DIFFERENT TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Years of Experience	N	Mean Rank
1-5	20	2.5
6-10	27	1.2
11-15	7	2
16-20	14	2
+20	6	2
Total	74	

TABLE 15.
RESULTS OF KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST WITH FIVE INDEPENDENT GROUPS OF 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, AND +20 TEACHING EXPERIENCE

	Teachers' attitude
Chi-Square	22.443
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

As Table 15 reveals, there is a statistically significant difference in teachers' attitude towards classroom supervision depending on the number of years of teaching experience, $\chi^2(4) = 22.443, P = 0.000$.

Since there is not a post hoc option for non-parametric test in SPSS, I compared the groups two by two running Mann Whitney tests to see which pairs of groups differ significantly. Table 16 shows the results of these comparisons.

TABLE 16.
RESULTS OF MANN-WHITNEY TEST WITH TWO INDEPENDENT GROUPS OF BA AND MA

Groups	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
1-5			
6-10	100.500*	-3.876	.000
1-5			
11-15	35.000*	-2.219	.027
1-5			
16-20	89.000*	-2.073	.038
1-5			
+20	39.500	-1.415	.157
6-10			
11-15	56.000*	-1.827	.048
6-10			
16-20	99.000*	-2.759	.006
6-10			
+20	41.500*	-2.025	.043
11-15			
16-20	42.000	-1.026	.305
11-15			
+20	17.500	-1.080	.280
16-20			
+20	41.000	-.133	.894

* The difference is significant.

According to the table, at a critical level for rejection of 0.05, teachers with 1-5 years of experience differ significantly with teachers with 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20 years of experience (U= 100.500, Z = -3.876, p = 0.000; U= 35.000, Z = -2.219, p = 0.027; and U= 89.000, Z = -2.073, p = 0.038).

In addition, the attitudes of teachers who have been teaching English for 6 to 10 years towards supervision are significantly different with the attitudes of those who have more than 11 years of teaching experience (U= 56.000, Z = -1.827, p = 0.048; U= 99.000, Z = -2.759, p = 0.006; and U= 41.500, Z = -2.025, p = 0.043).

All in all, the results reveal that the attitude of less experienced teachers towards their class supervision seems to be different from more experienced ones. A look at table 14 and the mean ranks shows that teachers who have been teaching English for less than five years appear to hold more positive attitudes (mean rank = 2.5). Another interesting point in table 14 is that those teacher with six to ten years of teaching experience were the most pessimist amongst others (mean rank = 1.2).

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study was an attempt to discover Iranian EFL teachers' attitude towards supervision and its influence on classroom decision making and an account of their differences and similarities in this respect. The study also explored the relationship between teachers' teaching experience and their attitude towards classroom supervision. Below, I bring the summary of findings in separate sections according to the research questions.

A. Teachers' Attitudes towards Classroom Supervision

The first thing to be noticed is that Iranian teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards classroom observation are mostly characterized by an unconcerned feeling as the percentage of undecided responses in almost all questions and parts were relatively high.

When asked to evaluate classroom supervision generally, the majority of the participants considered it useful, half the participants found the supervision program necessary however only one teacher in four considered classroom supervision beyond inevitable organizational and administrative paperwork duties.

From the results of the participants' evaluation of the mode of supervision it is evident that from Iranian EFL teachers' perspective the current supervision is more of an authoritative practice mostly characterized by inspection and evaluation. The majority of participants feel that supervision focuses mostly on them therefore feel the fear of being penalized by bureaucratic administrators. This shows that the current supervision seems to be a stressful experience for the teachers.

The findings of the study regarding the teachers' perceptions towards the contribution of supervision to their growth shows that from Iranian EFL teachers' point of view the current supervision that they receive helps them better understand their shortcomings and solve problems in the classroom and lead to the growth of their teaching skills and improvement of instruction. However, fewer participants believed that supervision has a positive impact on their professional and career development in the long-term. In addition, classroom supervision does not seem to help teachers in their courses by providing educational materials.

The results of the analysis of teachers reaction to their supervision program shows that the majority of teachers showed a positive behavior towards supervision. Most teachers said they read the report carefully and use it to improve their teaching practice. However, the number of teachers who were unwilling to change their teaching approach based on the notes of the supervisor in the supervision report are considerable.

B. Supervision and Teachers' Decision Making

The results of the qualitative analysis revealed that supervision as an educational practice with the aim of teaching and learning improvement is only meaningful for those teachers having less than 10 years of teaching experienced. For the more experienced teachers it seems to be matter of official procedure and formality.

The results of the second session of observation showed that only those teachers who have been teaching for less than five years were attentive to the supervisors' feedbacks and their classroom decision making was influenced by the comments the supervisors provided. In the second class whose teacher had eight years of teaching experience, however, the teacher seemed reluctant to change his method of teaching and his instructional decisions according to the feedback he was provided with. In other words, teachers of the second teaching experience group (6 to 10 years) seemed uninfluenced by the supervision program.

C. Teachers' Attitude and Their Teaching Experience

The results of the quantitative analysis revealed that the attitude of teachers who have been teaching English for less than five years towards their class supervision was significantly different from others. These teachers hold more positive attitudes towards supervision.

Teachers with six to ten years of teaching experience also react to supervision significantly different from other teachers. These teachers appeared to be the most pessimist amongst others.

VII. DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the earlier parts, the study revealed that the Iranian EFL teachers seemed indifferent towards classroom supervision in general when compared with teachers in other countries and contexts (Kutsyuruba, 2003; Kayaoglu, 2012; Acheson & Gall, 1997). Further qualitative and quantitative analyses showed that the high number of undecided items in the questionnaire can be attributed to the fact that supervision is a matter of official rules and regulations rather than a process for educational improvement for teachers who have been teaching English for ten years

and more. In fact, it can be argued that in the Iranian context supervision as it is defined and with objectives it is meant to achieve is only meaningful for less experienced teachers.

Among the less experienced teachers those who had less than five years of teaching experience were found to be more influenced by the supervision process when it came to making decisions in the classroom. These teachers indicated the importance of supervision for their classroom improvement and their teaching skills and appeared to hold positive attitudes towards supervision program they were experiencing. This is contrary to the cases of Kayaoglu (2012) in Turkey and Acheson and Gall (1997) in Zimbabwe.

It is also contrary to the attitudes of those Iranian teachers who had teaching experience of between 5 to 10 years. These participants appeared to hold negative attitudes towards supervision. In the qualitative part of the study though the supervisor mentioned negative remarks in the observation form, the case study teacher refused to take them into account. This pessimistic view about supervision and the denial seems to be due to the fact that these teachers have enough experience to claim originality and refuse the supervision program that is biased towards evaluation or inspection. Keep in mind that the Iranian EFL teachers who participated in this study thought that the supervision program is authoritative rather than democratic in general. This calls for a change in the mode of supervision according to the characteristics of teachers and an invitation of a more equal and collaborative manner of supervision as according to Cogan (1973) one of the main factors that affect supervision efficiency is the relation of teachers to supervisors. This relationship is expected to be collegial rather than authoritarian in order to attract the teachers' positive attitude.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Supervision of instruction includes monitoring and evaluating classroom teaching practice and collecting data according to a set of predefined standards appointed by the administrator with the aim of providing appropriate feedback and guidance to teachers to improve teaching in order to enhance student learning. However, as the results of the presents study shows this was not the case for all the teachers in the Iranian EFL context.

A conclusion than can be drawn from the available evidence is that the supervisory in Iran needs to take into account the capabilities and characteristics of every teacher. Not a similar model of supervision is suitable and efficient for all the teachers. In the case of this study while the particular method of supervision that was generally characterized as an error finding procedure with the aim of standardizing and control seemed to be efficient for the teachers who have had less than five years of experience it seemed ineffective for experienced teachers.

In fact the teachers who have had between 5 to 10 years of teaching experience found the program delimiting and a barrier to academic freedom. These teachers showed their disapproval by ignoring the feedback they received.

In addition, from the results of the qualitative analysis it can be concluded that the supervision program obviously failed to function for those teachers who had 16 years of teaching experience and more as well. In this case, the program seemed to be only a paperwork job. That is, instead of adapting the supervision program with these teachers and their characteristics, the administrators tried to keep up appearances.

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Skill-based Categories: An Alternative of Language Learning Strategy Measurement

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Abstract—Many studies have been conducted to identify and classify language learning strategies (Rubin, 1975; Naiman et al, 1978; Fillmore, 1979; O'Malley et al, 1985 and 1990; Politzer and Groarty, 1985; Prokop, 1989; Oxford, 1990b; and Wenden, 1991a). Different studies have used different classifications and different ways of measuring learning strategies. This study attempted to explore what language learning strategies employed by students at EFL setting and to propose an alternative of learning strategy measurement for learners who study English as a foreign language. In the current study a total of 88 enrolled at English Department participated. After a series of reliability and correlation analysis the current study proposes an alternative of language learning strategy measurement. The learning strategy measurement in this study consists cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies which are grouped under skill-based categories: listening category, listening category, reading category and writing category.

Index Terms—learning strategy, strategy classification, learning strategy measurement, learning strategy in EFL context, skill-based strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

It seems obvious that there is no second language learning acquisition without learning strategies, either conscious or unconscious. This is the area to which the research conducted by Rubin (1975), Naiman et al. (1978), Fillmore (1979), Politzer and McGroarty (1985), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford and Nyikos (1989) and Wenden (1991b) has been devoted. They have elaborated on language learning strategies and suggested different ways of classifying language learning strategies. Some studies on language learning strategies have shown that the learning strategies contributed to the success in learning English. A study suggesting that learning strategies affect language achievement was conducted by Bialystok and Frohlich (1978). Their study, which explored variables of classroom achievement in second language learning, showed that many factors were correlated with language achievement, but only two of them: aptitude and strategy use were significant in predicting performance. Another study by Dreyer and Oxford (1999, p.73) also provides evidence on a significant relationship between strategy use and ESL proficiency. The studies have proved that the use of learning strategies discriminates between successful and unsuccessful learners.

Learning strategies, which are defined as steps or actions taken by language learners to enhance any aspect of their learning (Oxford 1990a, p. 70), seem to be more than a reflection of learning style. It seems difficult to categorize whether certain learning strategies of an individual are originally his/her own, or developed and adapted from certain external factors. Oxford's definition implies that learning strategies are conscious activities because students are learning a language while they are conscious of the process. However, not all writers agree with a concept that learning always takes place while subjects are conscious or aware of this. Some researchers have argued over the conscious-unconscious distinction (McLaughlin, 1990, Krashen, 1979). Kihlstrom (1996, p. 33) states that subjects may be simply unaware of some stimulus response, or of what they are learning; subjects can engage in learning when they are not conscious at all, for example when they are asleep or anaesthetized. Referring to Oxford's definition (1990a), in this study, learning strategies refer to conscious activities since students seem to be aware what actions or steps they are taking to enhance their learning process to acquire another language. Or, at very least the students initiate the use of those strategies purposively and they may later be said to have become an automatic part of the students' repertoire of behavior for learning. This concept of learning strategies is also commonly used by many researchers, providing a framework for their predefined questionnaires of language learning strategies (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; and Awang Hasyim and Syed Sahil, 1994; Green and Oxford, 1995; Park, 1997; and Kaylani, 1999).

Different researchers have proposed different ways of classifying learning strategies and different ways of measuring the strategies. One of the most commonly used measurements was the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which has been introduced by Oxford. This measurement has been used around the world (Awang Hasyim and Syed Sahil, 1994, Oxford, 1996, Vahid Baghban, 2012, and Nosidlak, 2013). However, Park (1997), who conducted a research on the English learning strategies used by Korean students, provides an argument that not all strategies the students used in learning English were inventoried in Oxford's SILL (p.217). That the SILL might be inadequate in accurately reporting strategy use was also suspected by Grainger (1997, p.383), who explored the relationship between strategy use and ethnicity of learners of Japanese. He suspects the inadequacy of the SILL since he found that in

learning Japanese the students of Asian backgrounds do not follow traditional patterns of strategy use as identified in other major studies of language learning strategies.

Learners from different cultures seem to learn a foreign language in different ways; learners who live in a society where the target language is spoken as a foreign language, like Asian students, may use different learning strategies; therefore, we need a measurement of learning strategies that provide them with enough choices of strategies employed in their learning. This study is aimed at developing a measurement of learning strategies of tertiary EFL students.

II. METHODOLOGY

The participants of this study were 88 English Department students who had been enrolled for 6 semesters at the Faculty of Education of the University of Lampung, Indonesia. The reason for selecting such a sample was that all subjects were studying English in an EFL tertiary setting.

To collect data about language learning strategies, a questionnaire has been developed in a predefined questionnaire of language learning strategies and it is measured in a Likert-scale. The classification of the language learning strategies in the questionnaire was based on theory driving decision making and theories of skill-based learning strategies. These strategies cover four areas of the language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing and each area consists of 20 items (see Appendix A). In each category, the language learning strategies were classified into cognitive processes, metacognitive processes, and social processes (see Appendix B).

In this study the items were grouped into one single scale that was called *Language Learning Strategy Classification* (LLSQ). Some items of the LLSQ have been taken from the previous researchers (Rubin, 1975; Fillmore, 1979; Naiman et al., 1978; Politzer and McGroarty, 1985; and Oxford and Nyikos, 1989) and some others have been newly developed based on interviews with English learners and teachers (for detail information, see Setiyadi, 1999). Inspired by the SILL of Oxford, the questionnaire measures learning strategies employed by English learners by providing choices ranging from “never “ to “always” and the scores range from 1 to 5.

To increase the internal consistency of the hypothesized scales, Cronbach Alpha coefficients of internal consistency were computed for the scales of skill-based areas, namely: speaking, listening, reading and writing, and then continued to measure how the items of the LLSQ measure the same construct, namely learning strategies of students in EFL tertiary setting. An effort was also made to inspect correlation matrix to see if justified to consider the concept of the four skill areas of English included in the LLSQ.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research has been initiated with students taking a three-month English course at Language Centre, numbering 79 participants (Setiyadi, 2001 and 2004). The study showed that the Cronbach alphas of sub-scales of the LLSQ were .73, .67, .69 and .80 for speaking, listening, reading and writing respectively (Setiyadi, 2004) . The Cronbach's alpha of the strategies were not high and the intercorrelation among the strategies developed in the LLSQ was not measured in the study. This recent research was conducted with English Department students who had learned English for six semesters in EFL context. The participants were assumed to have enough exposure to English learning. Compared to the original study, the recent research shows that the Cronbach alphas of the recent research are higher: the alphas of the strategies are .75, .71, .77 and .72 for listening, speaking, reading and writing respectively. The finding of this research also shows that all items of the LLSQ are highly correlated with the Cronbach’s alpha is 0.88.

To measure the reliability of the strategies of listening, reliability analysis was run. The criteria on reliability of internal consistency with the Cronbach’s alpha 0.75 were met in this analysis (see Table 1). The strategies of this category were justified to be grouped into one single scale that was called listening strategies. The listening category of the LLSQ has 20 learning strategies (see Table 2).

TABLE 1:
THE CRONBACH ALPHA OF LISTENING STRATEGIES

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.753	.750	20

TABLE 2:
ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
L1	63.1932	63.422	.213	.222	.750
L2	62.5227	63.816	.197	.491	.751
L3	62.0114	64.471	.170	.509	.752
L4	62.5341	63.999	.167	.270	.753
L5	64.3295	61.304	.275	.418	.746
L6	64.0114	62.678	.239	.393	.748
L7	63.5341	63.286	.207	.414	.751
L8	62.7273	60.568	.387	.356	.737
L9	62.4545	63.009	.221	.361	.750
L10	62.5909	60.819	.353	.355	.740
L11	63.3068	64.008	.189	.315	.751
L12	63.3182	59.277	.390	.461	.736
L13	63.5795	58.798	.378	.409	.737
L14	63.3523	60.829	.326	.372	.742
L15	62.7841	58.010	.523	.567	.726
L16	62.5682	57.880	.565	.675	.723
L17	62.7386	60.655	.369	.429	.739
L18	62.1023	61.633	.322	.403	.742
L19	62.3068	61.043	.459	.466	.734
L20	62.7841	62.217	.307	.356	.743

The Cronbach's alpha for the 20 items of speaking category was 0.52 (see Table 3). Since the criteria on reliability of internal consistency were not met, speaking strategy no. 1 was evaluated and justified to be dropped from the scale (see Table 4) and the speaking category has 19 strategies with the Cronbach's alpha 0.71 (see Table 5) and the speaking category of the measurement has 19 learning strategies (see Table 6).

TABLE 3:
THE CRONBACH ALPHA OF SPEAKING STRATEGIES WITH 20 ITEMS

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.528	.698	20

TABLE 4:
ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S1	62.7159	58.757	-.015	.190	.717
S2	62.0341	77.298	-.035	.248	.539
S3	61.9432	72.307	.257	.447	.506
S4	62.8636	72.855	.260	.403	.507
S5	62.5000	72.667	.226	.459	.509
S6	62.4432	73.330	.168	.312	.516
S7	64.2159	75.413	.131	.233	.522
S8	61.8409	73.147	.180	.255	.515
S9	62.4091	74.796	.110	.428	.524
S10	62.8295	70.005	.336	.415	.492
S11	62.0114	69.988	.381	.470	.489
S12	61.9545	71.377	.376	.509	.495
S13	62.2955	67.544	.527	.514	.469
S14	62.0455	71.745	.304	.343	.501
S15	62.3864	67.918	.431	.468	.477
S16	62.5682	72.524	.189	.473	.513
S17	62.2955	72.096	.250	.505	.506
S18	64.0000	75.563	.042	.430	.533
S19	62.7727	74.844	.148	.373	.520
S20	62.2045	69.682	.356	.365	.489

TABLE 5:
THE CRONBACH ALPHA OF SPEAKING STRATEGIES WITH 19 ITEMS

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.717	.714	19

TABLE 6:
ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S2	58.9432	58.077	-.005	.248	.729
S3	58.8523	53.116	.331	.447	.703
S4	59.7727	54.224	.292	.402	.706
S5	59.4091	54.176	.244	.458	.710
S6	59.3523	54.254	.215	.312	.714
S7	61.1250	56.364	.179	.219	.715
S8	58.7500	55.017	.168	.235	.718
S9	59.3182	54.633	.228	.389	.712
S10	59.7386	52.908	.284	.372	.707
S11	58.9205	50.304	.513	.467	.685
S12	58.8636	52.924	.412	.509	.697
S13	59.2045	49.084	.598	.505	.676
S14	58.9545	52.343	.403	.336	.696
S15	59.2955	49.544	.481	.464	.685
S16	59.4773	52.873	.275	.435	.708
S17	59.2045	53.084	.308	.500	.705
S18	60.9091	57.417	.010	.418	.733
S19	59.6818	56.082	.172	.366	.715
S20	59.1136	51.274	.394	.360	.696

The criteria on reliability of internal consistency for the reading strategies were met in this analysis. The strategies were justified to be grouped into one single scale that was called reading strategies. The reading category has 20 learning strategies with the Cronbach's alpha 0.77 (see Table 6 and 7).

TABLE 6:
THE CRONBACH ALPHA OF READING STRATEGIES

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.770	.771	20

TABLE 7:
ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
R1	62.6136	62.194	.196	.327	.770
R2	62.8295	62.764	.197	.240	.769
R3	63.4659	57.884	.405	.320	.756
R4	63.0114	61.804	.251	.308	.766
R5	63.1591	60.434	.267	.253	.766
R6	62.5682	60.363	.410	.419	.757
R7	62.5455	62.963	.165	.317	.771
R8	63.7045	62.739	.130	.257	.775
R9	63.2841	56.872	.441	.368	.752
R10	63.4886	58.575	.481	.437	.752
R11	63.0341	58.700	.437	.520	.754
R12	62.7955	60.647	.334	.364	.761
R13	63.2159	58.079	.420	.355	.754
R14	63.1023	54.966	.627	.569	.738
R15	62.9091	57.716	.507	.416	.749
R16	63.2841	61.010	.332	.302	.761
R17	63.1023	62.920	.128	.139	.775
R18	63.1591	58.871	.415	.508	.755
R19	62.6136	60.723	.282	.407	.764
R20	64.3182	59.507	.237	.292	.771

The criteria on reliability of internal consistency of the learning strategies of writing skill were met so that the strategies under the writing category introduced in the LLSQ were justified to be grouped into one single scale that was called writing strategies. The Cronbach's alpha of the writing strategies was 0.71 (see Table 8) and the writing category of the LLSQ has 20 strategies (see Table 9).

TABLE 8:
THE CRONBACH ALPHA OF WRITING STRATEGIES

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.718	.728	20

TABLE 9:
ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
W1	60.3636	54.280	.220	.392	.713
W2	60.5114	52.437	.335	.459	.702
W3	61.9545	51.354	.291	.304	.708
W4	60.9886	52.379	.381	.328	.699
W5	61.0000	54.529	.314	.340	.706
W6	61.0455	52.067	.422	.513	.696
W7	61.9659	53.275	.279	.588	.708
W8	60.6932	57.479	.013	.337	.728
W9	61.4773	52.942	.245	.563	.712
W10	61.8409	53.882	.252	.300	.710
W11	60.1023	54.116	.300	.340	.706
W12	61.5909	53.118	.333	.455	.703
W13	60.4091	52.888	.470	.524	.695
W14	60.9205	54.948	.243	.454	.711
W15	61.0341	53.413	.340	.376	.703
W16	60.3750	54.329	.223	.530	.713
W17	60.6591	52.871	.374	.449	.700
W18	61.1364	55.315	.139	.359	.720
W19	62.3409	52.434	.267	.396	.710
W20	60.7727	51.856	.350	.384	.701

The criteria on reliability of internal consistency for the 80 items were actually high in this analysis (see Table 10) but, referring to one dropped item from the speaking category, the internal consistency was measured only for 79 items so that the strategies in this measurement were justified to be grouped into one single scale that was called Language Learning Strategy Classification or the LLSQ and the Cronbach's alpha of the items was 0.90 (see Table 11).

TABLE 10:
THE CRONBACH ALPHA OF ALL ITEMS (BEFORE 1 ITEM OF SPEAKING STRATEGIES DROPPED)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.881	.904	80

TABLE 11:
THE CRONBACH ALPHA OF ALL ITEMS (AFTER 1 ITEM OF SPEAKING STRATEGIES DROPPED)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.905	.905	79

Since the classification of the language learning strategies in the recent study was based on theory driving decision, correlation analysis was run to consider the concept of the four skill areas of English. As shown in Table 12, the four skill-based categories of the strategies are positively and significantly correlated. The relatively high levels of Cronbach's alpha showed that the scales were internally consistent.

TABLE 12:
CORRELATIONS AMONG THE FOUR SKILL STRATEGIES

		mean of speaking strategy	mean of listening strategy	mean of reading strategy	mean of Writing strategy
mean of speaking strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	.528**	.521**	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	88	88	88	88
mean of listening strategy	Pearson Correlation	.528**	1	.739**	.481**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	88	88	88	88
mean of reading strategy	Pearson Correlation	.521**	.739**	1	.664**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	88	88	88	88
mean of Writing strategy	Pearson Correlation	.445**	.481**	.664**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	88	88	88	88

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

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After a series of reliability, the items under the skill-based categories were assumed to belong to the hypothesized scales. Language learning strategies grouped under listening category, reading category and writing category consist of 20 items and speaking category consists of 19 items. Speaking strategy no.1, namely *I use rhymes to remember new English words.* was dropped since the item was not very correlated with the other strategies grouped under the speaking category. In total, the measurement has 79 language learning strategies even though, considering the high magnitude of Crobach's alpha of the 80 item reliability. To measure the use of learning strategies, we may use 80 language learning strategies introduced in the LLSQ. The classification of the strategies suggested in this study is probably not final and the dropped strategy from the speaking category may be evaluated. There may also be overlap between the strategies classified under different categories. It needs to be confirmed with other future studies on language learning strategies.

The intercorrelations among the categories mean that increased frequency of strategy use under one skill-based category is associated with an increase in the use of those of the other categories. This is interesting because originally the strategies were developed in different areas of the language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The findings in this study, supported by Purpura (1997) and Wenden (1991b), may be interpreted as a sign of mutual conceptual dependence among strategies that language learners use in learning the target language. This is probably understood as evidence that, in learning a foreign language, they do not rely on a single category or certain groups of strategies only, but they employ many strategies. This calls for further studies to determine whether the use of strategy combination in a certain way plays an important role in the successful learning of a foreign language and, if so, how the strategies are effectively combined. Further research also needs to explore how differently successful learners learn a foreign language from less successful ones.

APPENDIX A. LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE (LLSQ)

Directions

You will find some statements about learning English. On the separate worksheet, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

In Listening

1. I try to guess what somebody is saying by using grammatical rules.
2. I learn English by watching English TV programs.
3. I learn English by listening to English songs or other listening scripts.
4. I try to understand what somebody is saying by translating into Indonesian.
5. I draw an image or picture of the word in order to remember the word.

6. I connect the pronunciation of the word with the Indonesian word which has a similar sound.
7. I concentrate on the grammar rather than on the communication.
8. I try to understand the idea by referring to previous experiences I have had.
9. I try to guess by using a word (s) that is familiar to me.
10. In Listening, I take notes to remember ideas.
11. I try to understand every individual word to understand the passage
12. I listen to what I say to practice my listening skill.
13. Before practicing my listening skill, I prepare a topic, pronunciation or grammatical rules which give me the greatest trouble.
14. I try to remember a sentence(s) spoken face-to-face or on cassettes and analyze them by myself.
15. After a listening practice, I check and recheck my understanding.
16. I correct the mistakes that I produce orally.
17. I try to be aware of which sounds give the greatest trouble. In this way I can pay special attention to them while I listen and practice.
18. If I cannot understand what somebody is saying, I ask him/her to slow down or say it again.
19. Listening to what somebody is saying improves my listening skill.
20. In a group discussion, my listening skill is improved.

In Speaking

1. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
2. I try to remember new English words by pronouncing them.
3. I speak a word or a sentence several times to remember it.
4. I try to learn a new pattern by making a sentence orally.
5. I try to translate Indonesian sentences into English sentences and produce them orally.
6. I try to remember what the English word equivalent to Indonesian word is.
7. I tape record the sentences I produce.
8. I mix Indonesian words and English words if I do not know the English words.
9. I put words into rules that I know in speaking.
10. Before I respond orally to questions, I write out the answers.
11. I try to correct my mistakes that I produce orally.
12. I try to speak with myself to improve my speaking.
13. I try to evaluate my utterances after speaking.
14. I notice my English mistakes, and use that information to help me do better.
15. I prepare a topic or grammatical rules in speaking practice.
16. I ask somebody to correct me when I talk.
17. I practice speaking with my friends or my teachers.
18. I practice English with native speakers.
19. I ask questions in English.
20. If I cannot think during a conversation in English, I use gestures.

In Reading

1. To understand unfamiliar English words while I am reading, I guess from available clues.
2. I learn English by reading English books or magazines.
3. I connect the spellings of English words with similar Indonesian words to understand the meanings.
4. I try to understand sentences by analysing their patterns.
5. I try to translate word for word.
6. I try to understand the passage by using my general knowledge and experience.
7. I use the key words to understand the whole ideas.
8. I read the passage aloud.
9. I take notes to remember the ideas.
10. While I read a text, I try to anticipate the story line.
11. I read a text more for ideas than words.
12. I correct my mistakes by rereading the text.
13. I choose a topic or certain materials for my practice.
14. I check and recheck my understanding after reading a passage.
15. If I cannot understand a reading passage, I try to analyse what difficulty I actually have.
16. In reading, I pick out key words and repeat them to myself.
17. I try to be aware of which words or grammar rules give me the greatest trouble. In this way I can pay special attention to them while I read and practice.
18. I discuss reading passages with my friends.
19. If I do not understand the content of a reading passage, I ask my friends or my teachers for help.
20. I improve my reading skill by reading letters from my friends.

In Writing

1. If I do not know how to express my ideas in English while writing, I keep writing using certain rules that I know.
2. I write what I am thinking about.
3. I keep a diary.
4. I try to remember the meanings of words or the patterns by writing them
5. I write sentences to apply certain rules.
6. I try to translate word for word.
7. I mix Indonesian words and English words in writing.
8. I write the main ideas first as a guideline.
9. I use Indonesian words if I do not know the English words.
10. I use Indonesian patterns to keep writing in English.
11. I consult a dictionary to find out the meanings of words.
12. I write out new material over and over.
13. I try to memorize the meanings of words.
14. I rewrite my composition by correcting the mistakes that I notice.
15. I choose a topic to improve my writing skill.
16. I read my writing and correct the mistakes.
17. I try to be aware of which words or grammar rules give the greatest trouble, this way I can pay special attention to them while I write and practice.
18. I write a message to my friends in English for practice.
19. I write letters in English to my friends.
20. I ask my friends or my teachers to correct my writing.

Worksheet

Name:

IN LISTENING		IN SPEAKING		IN READING		IN WRITING	
1		1		1		1	
2		2		2		2	
3		3		3		3	
4		4		4		4	
5		5		5		5	
6		6		6		6	
7		7		7		7	
8		8		8		8	
9		9		9		9	
10		10		10		10	
11		11		11		11	
12		12		12		12	
13		13		13		13	
14		14		14		14	
15		15		15		15	
16		16		16		16	
17		17		17		17	
18		18		18		18	
19		19		19		19	
20		20		20		20	

APPENDIX B, CATEGORIES OF SKILL-BASED STRATEGIES

	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
Cognitive Strategies	Item nos 1-10	Item nos 1-11	Item nos 1-11	Item nos 1-13
Metacognitive Strategies	Item nos 11-15	Item nos 12-17	Item nos 12-17	Item nos 14-17
Social Strategies	Item nos 16-20	Item nos 18-20	Item nos 18-20	Item nos 18-20

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A Gender Perspective of Translation: Taking Three Chinese Versions of *The Purple Color* as an Example

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Abstract—*The Color Purple* is one of the best-selling novels in the west, which is very popular among people of different colors, different levels and different countries. Many Chinese translators have tried to translate it into Chinese. Because it is a typical feminist novel, so it is very meaningful to compare its translations and to analyze the gender awareness of translators in the translation process. This paper selected the versions of Yang Renjing (male), Tao Jie (female) and Lu Shujiang (female) to make a comparative study. The three translations have different stylistic characteristics. The main difference lies in their comprehension and expression of some words and phrases featured feminism. Male and female translators reflect significant gender differences.

Index Terms—feminism, gender differences, translations of *The Color Purple*

I. INTRODUCTION

Everyone will be shocked by the prosperous translation history if we take a look at the translation's development. As recorded, the history of translation can be traced back to the third century B.C. when seventy Judaic scholars translated *The Old Testament* in Alexandria in ancient Egypt. For a long time, traditional translation studies have tended to consider the source text as the "absolute standard" in the judgment and evaluation of a translation work. As a result, translators should try their best to reduce their subjective involvement and "reproduce in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style" (Nida, 1982, p. 55).

When Simone de Beauvoir (1949) wrote "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman", she was talking about gender. But it was in the 1970s did western translation study take its cultural turn and translation studies be recognized to be a separate discipline in the 1980s. Since translation was sexualized in ancient times, it provided a metaphorical framework for translation studies. Feminism has long been influenced by deconstructionism, post-colonialism, cultural studies, etc and since the 1980s, has taken effects in translation theory. The feminist thoughts, which originated from the two waves of women's movement in 19th century and 20th century, have influenced many fields, including translation. Since then, gender theory and feminist literature criticism have influence on translation studies. And different feminism schools have emerged and been developing at a surprising speed. Some scholars have noticed that feminism also have given great impact on the field of language studies and literature studies.

II. *THE COLOR PURPLE* AND ITS WRITER

A. *About Alice Walker*

Alice Walker, one of the most distinguished black woman writers in American today, was born in 1944, in a black family located Georgia Southern Ethan Dayton. At that time, Alice Walker attended college through her mother's income by working as a maid even though black children were not supported to be educated. She deeply appreciates the difficulties and hardships of being black. And at the age of eight years old, her eye was accidentally shot by his brother when they were playing a game named "cowboys and Indians". Because of not getting immediate treatment, she became blind, and because of the scar on her face she became shy. From then on, she began to write poetry, which was an outlet to release her own feelings. When she was fourteen years old, fortunately, the scar was removed. And later she became high school prom queen and class valedictorian. She began to learn to see the nature of things and people from this miserable experience. *The Color Purple* created in 1982 is her most successful one. Immediately upon publication of the novel caused widespread concern the U.S. critics. Critic Peter Scott had called it "an American novel of permanent importance. In 1984 she was awarded the Literature Pulitzer Prize, the highest award in American, and the National Book Award. The book continues to get reprinted, sold nationwide in the latter years.

B. *The Background of The Color Purple*

The Color Purple is an excellent literary work of black feminism. Alice Walker in this novel, from the perspective of the black feminist literary creation, fully describes and shows the black women by gender and racial oppression and

living conditions. The heroine, Celie, was awakened from the numbness to independence, to autonomy and to the equal status with men in life. Fighting experience as the main trail, it highlights the dual oppression of black women and the desire to live and chase perfection. To express this theme, Alice Walker used a lot of symbolic image which is full of feminine meaning, so that the entire novel is full of marvelous colors and thought-provoking philosophy highlights of black feminist thoughts and ideas. Many comments had praised the novel *The Color Purple*. Smith says (1995) "The book is like a jewel. Any way you hold it to the light you will always see something new reflected" (p.232).

III. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE TRANSLATION OF *THE COLOR PURPLE*

A. *The Feminism in the Translations of The Color Purple*

As Simon said (1996), "translation has at times emerged as a strong form of expression for women—allowing them to enter the world of letters" (p.39). Feminist translation theory aims to distinguish and make comments on the tangle of concepts which concerns both women and translation to the bottom of the society and the literary ladder. Feminist translation theory has introduced the gender perspective into translation studies. For feminist translation, "fidelity is to be directed toward neither the author nor the reader, but toward the writing project—a project in which both writer and translator participate" (Simon, 1996, p.2). The influence of gender identification on translation has been under investigation. In translating gendered texts, the translator may present a gender perspective which is different from his/her own. Feminist translators "have tried out new words, new spellings, new grammatical constructions, new images and metaphors in an attempt to get beyond the conventions of patriarchal language that, in their view, determine to a large extent what women can think and write" (Flotow, 1997, p.15).

In some cases, female translators also add their own ideas which more strongly highlight the intent of the original. Feminist translators see "a parallel between the status of translation, which is often considered to be derivative and inferior to original writing, and that of women, so often repressed in society and literature" (Munday, 2001, p.131). When Celie decided to leave and shouted out,

"I'm poor, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here." (Walker, 1982, p.17)

In translation, Lu Shujiang profoundly realized that the voice of Celie is so strong: she is no longer the girl that was abused by his stepfather Mr-; she has her own thought. Therefore, she translated these words:

"我是贱，我是黑，也许连饭也做不好，我听见一个声音在对所有倾听着的万物说。可是，我就站在这儿，谁也不能看不见我。谁也不能。" (Lu, 1986, p.13)

In the end of the sentence was added "谁也不能看不见我。谁也不能", which shows Celie's determination of winning independence and others' respect by repeating what she said. This creation shows the gender awareness of the translator.

Furthermore, Tao Jie made it clear that she translated *The Color Purple* because it related to gender translation. She said: At that time my American friend send me this book, I'm very moved by it, I think of my mother and other women in that generation. I think the Chinese women out of the home in the fifties and sixties, becoming economic independence is one of the major achievements of women's movement, and the degree of Chinese women's liberation was higher than elsewhere, especially than the United States. She proposed to translate the book, mainly because the heroine is getting more and more confident after having her own career. This indicates that from the beginning of the selection, female translator is influenced by gender awareness.

Translation is not just a simple one-to-one transfer between two languages, it is known that:

"Every translation is directed at an intended audience, since translation means to produce a text in a target setting for a target purpose and target addressees in target circumstance" (Nord, 2004, p.12).

The female translator Tao Jie was born in 1936 and she graduated from western language and literature department in Beijing University. In the year 1986 her version of *The Color Purple* was first published out by Foreign Literature Press in Beijing. As for the choice of the literary work *The Color Purple*, Tao Jie admitted that it derived from her own sympathy for Walker's description of the black women's low social status and suffering from oppression under the patriarchal dominance, which Tao Jie thought are similar to Chinese women's situation that need people's attention and activity to change the situation.

Therefore, from the above analysis, we can draw definite conclusions that female translator is indeed subject to the influence of gender and this effect which sequence from the translator and the translation between the lines and the initial selection of translation can be manifested. Just as Sherry Simon held that,

"My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speaks for women. So my signature on a translation means: this translation has used every translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language" (Simon, 1996, p.15).

B. *Gender Differences in Women'S Social Status*

Through comprehensive and detailed comparison of translations, I found female translator in the preface and translation reproduces more prominent feminist ideology of the original text, showing more intense gender awareness. In a word, Lu Shujiang and Tao Jie put more emphasis on the novels for women issues, and also more clearly highlights

the feminism thought of the novel. While Yang Renjing also mentioned the novel's feminist intention, but he paid more attention to social issues, not the women's social status.

Although men and women can be translators of the original, dealing with feminist plot and some gender-related details, female translator, under the impact by the gender awareness, can more accurately grasp and reproduce the original, even prominent. Whereas male translator because of the lack of gender awareness, not only did not notice these details of original feminism expression, but also weaken or even distort the original feminist intent. Such as,

1. a. The original version:

The original: She has the nerve to put one hand on her naked hip and bat her eyes at me. (Walker, 1982, p.17)

1. b. Tao Jie's version:

她居然敢把一只手放在光屁股上对我飞个媚眼。(Tao, 1986, p.10)

1. c. Lu Shujiang's version:

她满不在乎地把手搭在她那光光的屁股上冲我眨了眨眼。(Lu, 1986, p.13)

1. d. Yang Renjing's version:

她厚着脸皮把一只手放在光屁股上, 还对我挤眉弄眼。(Yang, 1987, p.12)

This scene took place when Celie helped ailing Shug bathing. Celie feared men, but when she saw Shug's body, she felt the need of self, which made she cannot help staring at her. Shug was aware of it, but did not care, even boldly show herself. She in the sentence refers Shug. Tao Jie and Lu Shujiang have insight into Celie's surprise and envy to the body style of Shug, and thus chose these neutral words, such as “居然敢”, “对我飞个媚眼”, “满不在乎”, and “冲我眨了眨眼”, to express Celie's surprised tone. In the treatment of her eyes on dissolute Shug, Yang Renjing not only did not realize Shug beyond ordinary women's self-consciousness, but also not realize that at this time Shug shocked Celie's heart. How fade Celie's true feelings is! She was changed into his own moral judgment officer: Shug dared to pose bare ass and blink to me, what a shame ah! Therefore, the translator chose “厚着脸皮” and “对我挤眉弄眼”, two derogative and hostile phrases, that shows his own distaste for Shug.

From analysis and comparison of the three examples, we can find that in the translation of the sentence about the women's social status, male translators and female translators shows the differences. Female translators are more sensitive to the words of description of women in the novel, and they choose the words to uplift women's social status, or they call on other women to fight for their own social status uplifting. But male translators are unaware of it, and they just choose the words in their willing.

C. Gender Differences in Sex Description

The sex description in *The Color Purple* is an important part in the source text. Celie's discovery of sexy features of being a woman and sexual desire showed the process of her growth to an independent woman who should be equal with man. And she gradually realized that sexual desire was a normal human desire instead of some scoundrel thing. So the sex description is very important in expressing feminism in the novel. Such as,

2. a. The original:

Listen, she say, right down there in your pussy is a little button that gits real hot when you do you know what with somebody. It git hotter and hotter and then it melt. That the good part. But other part good too, she say. Lot of sucking go on, here and there, she say. Lot of finger and tongue work. (Walker, 1982, p.69)

2. b. Tao Jie's version:

听着, 她说, 你下身有个圆东西。你干那种事的时候, 这个圆东西会发热。它越来越热, 热的化掉了。这是最好的地方。别的地方也好极了, 她说。这儿那儿, 吮啊吸啊的, 她说。手指头, 舌头都忙个不停。(Tao, 1986, p.55)

2. c. Yang Renjing's version:

听着, 她说, 在你的下身的正下方有个小小....., 你跟男人相好时,。....., 然后自己渐渐消失。这是个好部位, 但别的部位也不错, 她说, 全身都可以.....。.....。(Yang, 1987, p.77)

Celie told Shug that Mr.- did not care about her feeling but just regarded her as a vent tool. Shug was so surprised to know that to be a married woman and a mother for two children, Celie could not find any pleasure in her sex with Mr.- and even did not like it. And what's more, Celie did not know anything about her body. Shug led Celie to know about her own body, to find the physiological features of her body as a married woman. She introduced female physical organ to Celie, helped her to know her body, and introduced her to enjoy her sex.

The first step for woman to get confidence and self-confirmation is to recognize and validate her body. And Tao Jie realized this point and translated all the sentences about physiological feature of female genital. She translated the feeling of sex vividly, conveying the author's intention to help the women under the oppression of man to get confidence and self-confirmation and find the significance and value of being a woman, and to enjoy their lives. It is a course of self-confirmation, the first step to get independence, indignity and equality in the patriarchal society. Yang Renjing may think the sexual description sentences too offensive according to Chinese implicit culture, and he did not translate the sentences out. But he did not realize that this was an important part for women to get confidence and self-confirmation.

From analysis and comparison of the translation from three examples above, it shows that female and male translators have different attitudes towards sentences concerning sex and female translator was much careful in choosing the words to manifest heroine's feeling in sex, calling on them to get free from body and soul constriction.

D. Gender Differences in Appearance and Action

The main characters in the novel are women, so appearance and action description is an important part in the novel. Through the analysis of the translation of the appearance description in the original, we found that different translators in different genders show different attitudes towards women's appearance and beauty in translation.

3.a. The original:

And she dress to kill. She got on a red wool dress and chestful of black beads. A shinny black hat with what look like chick in hawk feathers curve down side one cheek. (Walker, 1982, p.41)

3.b. Tao Jie's version:

她打扮得讲究极了。她穿着一件红色的羊毛裙，胸前挂着好些黑珠子。一项耀眼的黑帽子上插了几根好像是鹰身上的羽毛，羽毛弯下来贴在面颊上。(Tao, 1986, p.33)

3.c. Yang Renjing's version:

她穿的过分讲究。她穿了一件红色毛线衣，胸口挂了黑珠子，戴了闪亮的黑帽子，帽子上插着野鸡毛，一半弯到半边脸上。(Yang, 1987, p.46)

Shug was Mr.'s mistress. Contrary to Celie, the heroine in the novel, Shug was a woman dared to love and to do the things that her heart desired to. She dressed herself very well, sang in bars to earn the money and liked showing herself off in the public. But she was scored and despised by the people in that patriarchal society. Knowing Shug's character, Celie adored and admired her. In her heart she was eager to get escaped from Mr.'s dominance. When Shug got sick—it was said that she got some woman disease, and nobody was willing to take after her. But Mr. - took her home. It is the first time Celie saw Shug who she admired and wanted to be the people like her. The author used many words to describe Shug's appearance. And in Celie's eyes' she "dress to kill" (Walker, 1982, p.41) It shows her admiration to Shug. Tao Jie used "讲究极了" to show Celie's envy and surprise to see that Shug dressed so beautiful. But Yang Renjing used the derogative term "过分", which misunderstood the author's intention. And he translated the sentence in a man's angle, which shows his despise to Shug. Why the differences can be seen from their versions. We first take a look at the explanation of the words "red wool dress" in the Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary.

For the words "red wool dress", two meanings of the dress are "a piece of woman's clothing that is made in one piece and covers the body down to the legs, sometimes reaching to below the knees, or to the ankles" and "clothes for either men or women" (Hornby, 2004, p.520).

Yang Renjing chose the origin meaning "红毛线衣", which is just like describing a common woman but not the woman who pursued beauty and was fond of dressing up delicately. And Tao Jie chose the characters "红色的羊毛裙" to show Shug's beauty and the female's self-affirmation to readers, and it also gives the readers the feeling that Shug cared about her appearance and desired to give good impression to others even if she was badly sick. Being a woman, Tao Jie paid attention to the beauty of the woman.

IV. CONCLUSION

Since the "Cultural Turn" in the 1970s, translation study has broadened its research boundary under the influence of many intellectual theories, including feminism. As a political and literary activity, feminism has great influence on the theory and practice of translation. Western feminist translators begin to explore the metaphoric relationship between gender and translation. By doing so, they want to change the traditional concept that original (man) is superior to translation (woman), and to raise the status of translation (woman). For feminism project, feminist translators in the West have employed many radical and unconventional translation procedures like supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and hijacking to highlight women translators' subjectivity and creativity. Feminist translators make their creative intervention in translations with the purpose to eliminate the gender discrimination and make the public aware of women's unequal treatments. In 2002, the Western feminist translation theory was introduced into China and then has undergone rapid development. However, most of its research remains on the theoretical level. We are expecting more researches on translation practice. Gender difference is the foundation of feminist translation theory, which holds that this difference takes effect throughout the whole process of translation, especially in translator's gender and genders in translation. The aim of advocating feminist translation is to make women visible and resident in society, to allow women's voices to be heard. In feminist translation, translation becomes an activity influenced by translator's identity, views of the world, living background and environment. Feminist translators emphasize the subjectivity from the perspective of the women by stressing independence and equality. The purpose of the feminist translators is to challenge the patriarchal language and to raise the status of female translators on the cultural intervention in the translating process. Feminist translation theory has enriched translation studies with new insights. This thesis, adopting comparative study of the feminist translation theory, makes a detailed comparative study of three Chinese versions of *The Color Purple* translated by Tao Jie, Lu Shujiang and Yang Renjing by exploring feminist consciousness and

feminist translation studies applied in these versions. This thesis discloses feminist consciousness of translators, so that it can guide the application of feminist translation studies to practice.

Generally speaking, female translator promotes gender neutrality in language and makes use of auxiliary words and emotive words of mood to strengthen the female's features lively and vividly to challenge the patriarchal language and uplift women's social status, to get equal right with men. Study of the versions of the novel *The Color Purple* can be carried in other key feminine features in the novel. But the thesis is just a small part in the whole feminist translation study. It should be studied and figured out that the translators' feminist consciousness might be constricted or affected by some other internal factors.

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Application of Computer and Technology in EFL Syllabus Design

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Abstract—Since computers were first introduced into educational facilities, foreign language educators have been faced with the problem of integrating high-tech multimedia techniques into a traditional text-based curriculum. As studies of language teaching have pointed out, ‘Language teaching tends in practice to be eclectic.... There are not only exceptionally many paths and educational means for arriving at a given educational goal, but there are also very many types of educational materials which can be used to achieve that goal’. For language educators who are trying to incorporate technology into their curricula, the choices seem endless. Yet the quantity, as well as the limitations, of available computer programs does not guarantee that these programs can be successfully integrated into a curriculum.

Index Terms—computer, technology, curriculum development

I. INTRODUCTION

In common practice, the opposite tends to be true. Many existing language programs only cover specific areas of language learning, such as reading or grammar, without addressing the full scope of language learning skills. Moreover, every program on the market makes certain assumptions regarding the skill level of its users, the best teaching style, and the elements of language that are most important to learn. Though these programs all stress necessary aspects of language learning, trying to arrange them into a meaningful, comprehensive curriculum often creates confusion and redundancy. Because of the lack of compatibility between individual language programs, it is often difficult to incorporate such programs into a complete language-learning experience. The more serious issue of technical incompatibility is no less severe than content problems. Too often, CALL programs designed for one computer platform may not be compatible with others, rendering the program useless for potential users who lack the correct hardware. For example, many CALL materials that are designed for Macintosh computers are not compatible with Windows-based PC's, and vice versa. In an article from the early 1990s which is still pertinent today, Pusack indicates that many

of these compatibility issues arise when software developers try to take advantage of the full capabilities of the platform they happen to be using—incorporating graphics, sound, and video—yet neglect to make the program compatible with other hardware platforms (Pusack 1991).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Advances in technology may also cause programs to become incompatible with the computer for which they were intended. Levy stated that the production of computer-assisted multimedia materials had several recurring problems. Among the problems noted in the case of educational software applications, one of the most pressing was that programs and modules are generally not reused within applications and that there was a lack of shared teaching knowledge between applications. A serious problem exists in the current methodology of developing educational software. Each application is developed independently, and teaching knowledge is hard-coded into individual applications. There is little re-use of teaching code or teaching knowledge between applications because we lack a standard language for representing the knowledge, a standard interface to allow applications to access the knowledge, and a set of tools to allow designers to manipulate the knowledge. Due to a lack of technical support, learning how to develop multimedia materials can be a frustrating and even discouraging task. Although technology has been widely adopted and supported in educational systems for over a decade, there are many schools that lack the resources to support CALL development. Beyond these initial difficulties, many larger issues compound the problems associated with independent multimedia development. Because there is so little shared knowledge in the field of courseware development, faculty who produce multimedia materials usually start the development process from scratch, building all necessary coding, scripting, and digitizing and editing audio-visual materials on their own. Yet many institutions are unwilling to support such endeavors, especially on an individual level. As Stephen Ehrmann (2003) notes, courseware development requires just as much investment by the school system as it does by the individual teacher. Changing a course, especially to integrate technology, involves shifts to unfamiliar materials, the creation of new types of assignments, and the invention of new

ways of assessing student learning. Such a shift poses a great risk to an institution. The steep learning curve, time requirements, and availability of funding dictate the development of courseware, and as a result, projects almost always remain small scale and are rarely developed into full curricula. In addition, the quickening pace of technology makes software development a risky game; it takes so long to develop a comprehensive multimedia program that software often becomes obsolete before it has been fully integrated into curricula. To further exacerbate the problem, small-scale projects are often only suitable to the needs of the faculty developer and are difficult or impossible to adapt even by other faculty members at the same institution. Because expected foreign language skill levels differ from student to student, class to class, and university to university, development of a one-size-fits-all courseware is a misguided and impossible project. Adaptability is key. Without it, programs are unsuitable for extended use. Because of their limitations, most computer language-learning materials are never seen beyond the confines of the campus where they were created.

Writing about the need for teacher training in technology, Teacher laments the fact that ‘the mere availability of technologies like the Internet does not automatically translate into enhanced learning experiences, particularly when student and teacher training are lacking’ According to Tognozzi, inadequate training, the fear of computers, the lack of technical knowledge, as well as issues of teaching loads and intellectual property rights are among the reasons which prevent teachers from using computers as language-learning tools (2001:487; cf. Lam: 2000:395). Furthermore, she adds, the fact that technology used in foreign language training is constantly changing simply heightens ‘confusion and fear among educators’ (2001: 487). Those of us who teach language, particularly those involved in the training of future teachers, are acutely aware of the problems posed by the situation Tognozzi describes. There is an urgent need to train teachers and future teachers¹ to incorporate new technologies into the language curriculum. Researchers in pedagogy for the teaching of Italian have regularly discussed the need to train those who teach Italian as a foreign language how to evaluate instructional software for effective use in the classroom. Training teacher candidates in CALL is an essential first step in bridging theory and practice. Not only will appropriate training allow teachers to overcome any fear of computers born of a lack of technical knowledge, it will also give them the ability to adapt to the constantly changing technologies for language teaching. The reward potential of technology hinges on its efficacious use, which can take place only if both the instructor and the student have control over the medium. The training itself should incorporate two fundamental stages: 1) the preparation of teachers in effectively evaluating language technologies (software, courseware, and language websites); and 2) the training of teachers to become users of such technologies and to be actively involved in their creation or modification. Training teachers to evaluate language technologies effectively is fundamental in an ever increasing student-centered teaching approach to foreign-language learning. In this environment the role of teachers has changed; their new role is that of guides, coaches, interlocutors, mediators, evaluators, resource advisors, and facilitators. New technologies are compelling teachers to guide the learning path of their students through activities which are gradually more difficult and complex. Even though this new role has been commonly accepted in the foreign language teaching profession for over a decade, teaching is often reduced to lecturing, to a simple communication of information, to a teacher-fronted lesson. Such an approach is definitely not the most productive for students. Cremascoli (1998) has made the point that one of the problems in pedagogy today lies in the very formation of teachers and in the fact that they are too often attached to a historically determined model of transmission of knowledge and fundamentally tied to the practice of a face-to-face or teacher-fronted lesson. Our role as teachers in the technological age is not only to impart new knowledge, but to give students the tools to acquire knowledge, to recognize the value of what they see in books and software as well as on the Internet. As Murphy points out: ‘The emphasis in the new era of language learning is on construction as opposed to transmission of knowledge.’ A teacher cannot be simply a ‘knowledge dispenser.’ He or she must be a ‘facilitator’ as well. In today’s view, the teacher is transformed into a coach and consultant on the strategies used to solve problems. Teachers will not be able to fulfill their new role and guide students if they are uncomfortable with new technologies and unable to evaluate them properly. As CALL pedagogues it is our duty to focus the critical abilities of our students on the uses of technology at every level of study and training. Teachers and prospective teachers need a greater appreciation of the communicative and interactive elements of teaching. Learners/teachers who are able to apply the theories they study to the creation of technological aids for instruction will take a more active part in the learning/teaching process, which consequently should increase their motivation in using technology in their own classroom. We need to apply the same principles when training teachers; we need to motivate instructors at every point in their training by showing them how technology can make them more successful instructors.

III. ARGUMENTATION

Teachers need also to understand that there is little difference between evaluating technological resources and evaluating traditional resources given that the pedagogical principles are the same. The second phase of training consists of encouraging teachers to become actively involved in the creation or modification of new courseware/software. My own students report that experimenting with software requires a great deal of concentration and practice. However, they also note that any drawbacks are counterbalanced by:

- A. the satisfaction of creating authentic and pedagogically useful lessons with the Technology;
- B. the ability to deliver lessons which are both pedagogically sound and interesting;

C. the opportunity to be innovative and creative in planning lessons.

We need to appeal to these motivational elements to encourage teachers to create their own materials. However, active involvement does not necessarily mean that teachers must become programmers or graphic artists. What they do need is a clear understanding of the way different technologies work so that they can give pedagogically sound input to the creators of the new courseware. In an interview with teachers emphasize the need for language teachers to be more actively involved in creating the technological resources they will use in the classroom. The task of creating pedagogically sound and effective courseware cannot be left to programmers with little or no expertise in second-language education. Nor can the task be left to our teaching assistants or part-time language instructors who, even though fluent in the language, do not necessarily have a sound foundation in language pedagogy. If course software is going to be effective it must function in pedagogically appropriate ways. If that is to happen, then trained pedagogues must be involved in establishing evaluative criteria for software (Bancheri: 1997:499–502). In the past few years, the situation has improved somewhat, but not significantly. Didactics is still a “servant of technology,” and pedagogy often plays second fiddle to programming. Many of the so-called second-language software, courseware or websites are lacking basic language-learning principles because the procedure to create L2 technologies is often initiated not by the users (teachers) but by software companies, which are largely interested in making a profit (Bancheri: 1997:501). As Benyon *et al.* point out: ‘We have also found that current tools are severely lacking in a number of important respects—particularly with respect to the design of pedagogically sound courseware’ (1999:197). In spite of the advantages of multimedia for language learning, Warschauer argues that there are problems related to its use for language teaching. The lack of programs based on sound pedagogical principles combined with the lack of interactivity and intelligence of these programs limit the ability of multimedia technology to allow for the integration of meaningful and authentic communication. Hanson-

Smith (1997) argues in a similar vein about the lack of an “appropriate pedagogy” of multimedia whereby the media aspects often drive the content rather than the other way around.

New technologies for language teaching should be the fruit of the collaboration between an expert programmer, a graphic artist, and a teacher trained in second-language pedagogy (Hendricks: 1998:216). In such collaboration no compromise should exist as far as the essential didactic elements of the program. The system I use to solve this problem comprises two steps. The first step consists of the identification of some possible student errors so that every time a student supplies a wrong answer which has been anticipated, he or she will receive recorded feedback specifically tailored to that mistake. The second step consists of recording all of the students’ wrong answers in what I call the “bank of errors.” These answers can be added with an individualized comment to the original database. The process, especially in its second step, is continuous and never ending, but after a while the database will become very solid and direct in its ability to supply individualized feedback. Furthermore, the bank of errors can also be used to create new activities, thus giving the teacher the opportunity to tailor the courseware to target specific areas of weakness. The creation of CALL materials should be an extension of the methods, techniques, and theories used in the language classroom, adapting pedagogically effective techniques to a new medium. The first step in the process is to envisage the same exercise or activity in a classroom without a computer, analyze it in all its different aspects and steps, and then imitate the same procedure in a computerized setting. Furthermore, in creating any computerized activity, I consider not only the teacher’s perspective, i.e., the pedagogical view, but also the different perspectives of the student, the software developer, the programmer, and the graphic artist. Viewing courseware development from the teacher’s perspective insures that all the pedagogical elements of the activity (in its computerized and non-computerized. form) are analyzed carefully to ensure its pedagogical soundness. To illustrate, I will reconstruct the pedagogical choices and structure I adopted for *Testmaker*, a computerized program which allows language instructors (Italian, Spanish, French, Chinese, Arabic, etc.) to create and administer quizzes, tests, final exams, etc., and which I use for in-class tests in my language courses. The advantage of creating a computerized testing program for language courses stems first from the need to maximize the use of the teacher’s time and resources and, second, to give students an opportunity to better prepare for their exams. The decision to use a non-web-based application is tied to pedagogical issues. Web-based testing applications are generally less secure, and therefore there is a stronger possibility of students’ falsifying the results. Moreover response time on the Web is somewhat slower, with a consequent possible loss of student concentration and motivation. Finally, the implementation of what I call the “circular” structure of the test—which I consider a pedagogical priority in this activity—is more difficult to apply in a web-based application. The circular structure works as follows: In *Test maker*, as in a regular test, the student can start with the last exercise, answer a few questions, then go to the second exercise, answer other questions, then move to the first exercise, and so on. The computer will remember each answer the student has given. This format lowers students’ anxiety because they have more time to consider each answer carefully without feeling pressed for time, and they can revisit at any time the questions that they find more challenging or on which they had previously drawn a blank. It illustrates the circular structure of *Test maker*. The program also includes several other elements which directly or indirectly promote effective teaching: online help; and a button indicating “Time Left;” which only appears on mouse-over, thereby hopefully decreasing the anxiety a student might feel if faced with a ticking clock. Motivation is an important element in language learning which can be fostered in software, courseware and language web pages through appropriate feedback, transparency, and variety. *Feedback*

In commercially available software/courseware, the first element to be compromised is often the “feedback,” a fundamental element in language teaching. Although creating personalized and precise feedback in grammar exercises, for example, can be very time consuming for programmers (and also for teachers), effective feedback is nonetheless an essential part of the learning process. Our students improve their language skills through specific and individualized feedback (Bancheri: 1997). “Transparency” is more than user-friendliness. Rather, a program should be considered “transparent” when there is “navigation by intuition,” where a student-user can use it automatically. These buttons eliminate commands for accented vowels which often constitute an obstacle to concentration and increase a student’s anxiety level and they ignore the mechanics of the program and fully concentrate on the language task. As Hendricks cautions: the ‘integration of multimedia should be seamless,’ as a clumsy and tedious navigational interface will distract from the learning activity and ‘its inherent power as a learning tool is handicapped’ (1998). In *Test maker*, for instance, there are buttons which a student can use to type accented vowels automatically. Selecting a variety of activity types not only boosts student interest and motivation it supports a variety of learning styles as well. An obvious way to provide variety is by using audio, video, and graphic sources, which could also be used for a visual or auditory presentation of culture. One needs to find, however, a balance between the immediacy of the information and its multi-mediality. Especially in web-based programs these elements may slow the program down with the consequent risk of distracting the students. All of the activities in *Test maker* are audio, graphic, video and text-based; they all offer immediate and direct feedback; they are based on specific semantic fields and presented within a cultural context. For this reason, I have created computerized activities using: both linear and circular structures; clickable cultural pages; clickable text; audio dialogues; clickable audio, video, and graphics; dictionaries for semantic fields; crossword puzzles; word searches; word- and sentence-level hangman, word- and sentence-based scramble modules; psychological tests; knowledge tests; personality tests; interactive dictation; dialogue reconstructions; text-, audio-, graphic, and video-matching games; video puzzles; paragraph builders; compositions; open-question modules; and the typical multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank templates. Each of the activities mentioned has been carefully considered from a pedagogical perspective and has been incorporated, whenever possible, within a cultural context and a specific semantic field. Let me briefly comment on these pedagogical implementations. In the clickable culture pages, students are presented with cultural notes on a specific topic; when they click on a selected highlighted word, the program will respond with a grammatical, vocabulary or cultural explanation with either text, graphics, audio or video. The clickable text and audio dialogues offer the same features. The feedback fosters student reading and listening skills, promotes cultural understanding, and appeals to different learning styles. The goal of clickable audio/video/graphics semantic fields, dictionaries, crosswords and word searches, word- and sentence-hangman/scramble modules is to build and test students’ lexical skills. In the clickable dictionaries, students are presented with words, expressions, or full sentences on a specific semantic field. They will be offered a translation, with grammatical or cultural explanations, if appropriate; pronunciation through an audio file; images illustrating the object or the action, whenever appropriate; a video dialogue in which the word, expression or sentence is used in a contextualized situation. The definitions in the crosswords are also presented with either text, audio, graphics and video. The hangman, word searches and scramble modules deal not only with words, but also with expressions and full sentences drawn from the specific semantic field. The psychological/personality tests as well as the tests of knowledge are used often as warm-up activities and give the instructor the opportunity to introduce vocabulary, culture, cultural differences in the specific semantic field discussed. Even though the program which runs the actual test in *Test maker* is fairly complex and takes advantage of the multimedia features of instructional technologies, the creation process is transparent in that the instructor has to prepare only two text-files. The first contains the test questions, score, answers, etc; the other controls the parameters for the test, such as the time allocated for the completion of the test, the path to save the results, the order in which the questions are presented, the manner in which the answers and score results are presented to the student, etc. All that is required to create a computerized activity from a text-based file is a simple click of the mouse. The ease of creating tests and activities should encourage even the most computer-phobic instructor to supplement classroom instruction with CALL materials. Some of the questions one should ask in applying this perspective are: how are the students going to react to this activity? Is this computerized activity a mere duplication of another activity that could be done with traditional methods in a regular classroom setting? If so, how would the computerized form of the activity be more beneficial to the students? How would the students carry out this activity in a regular classroom setting, and how could I imitate it in a computerized environment? To apply a students’ perspective, one needs not only to keep open all channels of communication with them before, during, and after the activities, but also to translate their feedback into programming features.

Students need to concentrate on the activity, not on how the computer works. Transparency will lower the student’s affective filters. The student should be familiar with the format of the activity. For example, in testing activities, I prefer a circular format instead of a linear one because, as in regular pen and-paper tests, it will allow test-takers to start with any task and review, compare, modify, or completely change answers at any time and as many times as they like during the test. Students need to feel at ease with the process and content of the activities, especially when they will be assigned “official” marks. An assessment program might comprise the actual tests as well as offer students the possibility of preparing for a test using the same database of activities in different modes. For example, a study-mode can be offered in addition to a test-mode. The study-mode gives students individualized and immediate feedback on

their answers, their score, a report with all their answers, which can be printed or saved, and the possibility to check the right answers after the completion of the activity. Such a system could offer students the possibility of creating their own study/test-mode activities and therefore to work only on those sections where they need more practice. These features aim once again at lowering student anxiety by creating a familiar environment, and by allowing them to work at their own pace with actual testing items. One of the possible features in the template applications envisioned here is the collection of the data produced by the students. A student's answers can be recorded, with a score, if applicable, along with the time needed to complete each activity.

When students use the composition module, as previously discussed, their output is saved and analyzed; among the data collected is a list of all the different words used and a list of words which have been possibly misspelled. All the files are saved in a secure place on the server, which the instructor can access instantly from his or her own computer. The collected data may be used to improve and update existing materials or to create new activities according to the students' needs (or errors) as evident from the stored files. In grammar tasks, for example, students' wrong responses already saved in the database may be edited so that the students will get a personalized feedback whenever they make the same error. Students' answers can also be used to correct typographical mistakes in the database or to supply an additional answer which was not included in the original database. Obviously, this process requires a lot of dedication and can be very time-consuming, but it can also provide valuable information for both the teacher and the researcher (for a discussion of the usefulness of logs in student learning). In creating applications for language teaching and learning, it is important that the teacher and the programmer establish a strong working relationship. The programmer needs to understand the pedagogical issues, and the teacher needs to be able to envisage the proposed computerized activity from a programmer's perspective. Designing and creating a multimedia CALL package is an extremely demanding task, calling upon a range of skills and meticulous attention to detail. Such is the complexity of computer programs these days that it is highly unlikely that a single person will have all the necessary skills to undertake a CALL development project alone. *Team work* is therefore essential, and each member of the team must have some understanding of the roles of the other members of the team ... The language teacher who joins a software development team, for example, does not have to possess computer programming skills but he/she must have some understanding of basic programming concepts. Similarly, those responsible for the programming do not have to have knowledge of foreign languages, but they need a good understanding of natural language processing.

Today, people of all ages and backgrounds are seeking to enhance their language experience with multimedia tools. There is an enormous demand for new technology that can blend with traditional teaching methods in order to create an exciting, versatile language-learning environment. The burden is on educators to develop effective courseware that is both pedagogically sound and technologically sophisticated.

IV. CONCLUSION

Despite the significant demand there is still a marked shortage of high quality, curriculum-based multimedia courseware available to foreign language educators. Moreover, there has been much criticism of the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) materials that have been produced. Most programs are limited in scope and structure, making them less than ideal as supplements to language curricula. These programs are plagued by a number of problems, in particular a general lack of program reusability, adaptability, and compatibility. For all but the most technically proficient language instructor, CALL programs that cannot be readily integrated into the syllabi of language courses are of very little use.

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The Basque Bilingual Education System: A Model for a Kurdish Bilingual Education System in Turkey

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Abstract—The main target of the study is to demonstrate how the Basque bilingual education system in the Basque Country of Spain works, and how it may be used as comparative analysis of a possible bilingual system for the Kurdish population in Turkey. Basque bilingual education models used where minority languages are prominent will be considered, taking into account their historical and political contexts. This study is also to discuss the benefits of Basque Country's bilingual education models in Turkey and what they can offer in regard to issues related to the lives of Kurds in the country. The overall design of this study uses a qualitative method consisting of data collection through a survey used to get a rich data set that explains the issues surrounding bilingual education in the Basque region. This survey involved 26 participants from K-12 teachers and scholars in the Basque Country. From the survey, the participants' answers were gathered and reviewed. Emergent themes in the survey were coded. Results indicate that currently, the Basque Country in Spain has a reputable ongoing bilingual education system. Over the last decade, the Basque region has established a model for bilingual education that offers multiple options for the linguistic study of the Basque language. Thus, as the Basque Region has an advanced and institutionalized bilingual education system, it is logical to study how minority language issues were addressed previously so it may inform the Kurdish situation.

Index Terms—bilingual education, Basque Country, Kurdish, Turkish

I. INTRODUCTION

For decades, Turkey has been a monolingual nation. The largest ethnic subgroup in Turkey is Kurds, who have been fighting for linguistic recognition for years. Ucarlar (2009) affirmed that some of the primary Kurdish concerns are language and culture. At present, the Turkish state dictates the curriculum, language of instruction, and educational goals. In some circumstances, this has left those who are not familiar with Turkish culture, outsiders in the community, without access to education, which is only offered in Turkish. In the spring of 2012, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, announced that students would be able to take Kurdish language as an elective in certain schools in the eastern parts of Turkey. This eastern region is also inhabited by groups who can speak multiple Kurdish dialects and languages other than Kurdish. Therefore, Kurdish education should not be developed in single model form; rather, multiple educational models need to be developed for education in the mother tongue and be continuously revised according to the needs of the students. Thus, scholars in Turkey continue to investigate the appropriateness of other linguistic models such as bilingual education.

An important issue for Turkey is to ensure that all students are able to receive education in their native language (McCarus, 1960). Kurdish language is derived from the western Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. According to Ethnologue Language of the World (2011), the Kurdish language has 16 million speakers in Turkey today. In addition, KONDA (2011) showed that 11.97% of the entire population of Turkey speaks Kurdish language as their first or second language. The Kurdish language has many different dialects, but these are connected through a single written language. Campbell (2000) emphasizes that there are two main dialects of Kurdish: Sorani and Kurmandji. Sorani is spoken predominantly in Iraq and Iran, while Kurmandji is spoken in Turkey and the regions directly to the east, northeast, and southeast.

Currently the Kurdish population inhabits virtually all provinces in Turkey, making up approximately 17-25% of Turkey's population; however, the majority of the Kurdish people dwell in the southeastern provinces, in the rural and highland territories close to northern Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Turkey's 95% of the population is Sunni Muslim. Huge numbers of the Kurdish people also are Sunni Muslims. A few numbers of the Kurdish populations inhabiting in Turkey are Shi'a Muslim (Polat, 2007).

In Turkey, published material in the Kurdish language was prohibited until the 1990s. The government also placed constraints of speaking Kurdish in education and media (television and radio) in 2002. Speaking Kurdish language in private institutions is allowed but not in basic public education institutions. Furthermore, it is an ongoing debate whether or not the Kurdish language should be allowed to be used in the either public or private institution within the

country. However, Turkey permitted private television channels to commence programs in Kurdish in 2006, which shows that the political establishment is becoming more open to the use of the Kurdish language (KONDA, 2011).

Even though there are few cultural and linguistic similarities between the Basque and the Kurdish people, what similarities there are, are of vital importance to those observing and studying the process of similar nationwide cultural conflicts and the impact they have on the people themselves as well as their language. These similarities comprise the connection of the Basque country to the Kurdish area. Both of the Kurdish and Basque people have lived in neighboring regions close to larger countries, and thus have had similar cultural experiences at the hands of those countries' military regimes and their persistence for conquest. Because of the effect of military force against both of these groups of people, both the Basque and Kurdish have had their linguistic and cultural freedom oppressed and severely restricted. This being said, there are particular differences between these two regions, from the level of prosperity between people in the Basque country and in the Kurdish territory to differences in the direction of their inner migrations (Coskun, Derince, Ucarlar, 2011).

Spanish and Basque people have been in touch in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) for along time and there was a long built motive of dialogue among them, even though it is quickly altering in the near future (Zuazo, 1995). In a 2008 study, Zalvide and Cenoz asserted that Basque language was used everyday in the whole informal circle of life for the population of the Basque Country in Spain. On the other hand, Spanish was the formal language, the literacy- associated powerful language, of academia and of the high-status communication complexes. Conventionally, education was mostly in Spanish, even though one of its essential factors, religious generation, was bilingual in its written system and, at least in the beginning, mainly Basque was spoken in the region. However, this dialogue has declined considerably because of many reasons for instance industrial revolution and transportation, urbanization and universal education, and non-Basque speaking immigration or language policy following a single language state. These circumstances in the Basque territory could be defined as incomplete bilingualism. Spanish has appeared in the home in most regions. Basque, however, has started to speak in schools, in the local media and in the street; nevertheless, never so far as to diminish Spanish's main role, excluding at school.

Another difference is that Spain and the Basque region have established a system regarding minority education, whereas Turkey has yet to address this issue as fully. By more fully examining the Basque system, it may help to inform developments in Turkey.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since 1923, the Kurdish issue is still the most serious internal issue in Turkey. In a 2007 study, Polat affirmed that the Turkish republic's governmental policy in 1923 attempted to build a personal identity and sense of belonging to one nation under the appearance that Turkey was inhabited by only one nation and only one language which was Turkish. The formal language was thus deemed solely Turkish. However, the learning and speaking certain languages for instance German, French, and English were approved and encouraged within this period. Kurdish people, however, were not permitted to speak their native language in the streets, in any social areas, not even in their own homes, let alone governmental institutions, and in schools (Akreyi, 2011).

In 1923, Turkey's constitution, prohibiting Kurdish language was written into law (May, 2001). The law indicated that Kurdish had no grammatical rules and a vocabulary of approximately only 8,000 words, of which only 300 were originally Kurdish, the rest being from Turkish, Arabic, and other languages of region, that Kurdish was not an actual language, (Hassanpour, 1992).

By the 1950s, use of the Kurdish language in everyday private life was legally tolerated, however use of the language in public was still prohibited (Kendal, 1980). In the early 1960s, according to Polat (2007), Turkey accepted a new organic law in which some publications in Kurdish were permitted. However, from the 1960s to the 1990s, between the controlling government and the political Kurdish movement there was an enlarged restraint on Kurdish language and culture due to the increasingly hostile relationships. During this period of time, Turkish politics, and numerous military coups took place were ruled by the army. In the constitution of 1982, the laws prohibiting the use of Kurdish in the public territories written in 1923 were reenacted (May, 2001). Furthermore, greater militarization and political control of the Kurdish territories were extended through new assimilation programs with a general campaign to develop reading and writing abilities in Turkish with more Turkish language courses introduced in elementary school by the late 1990s (Hassanpour, 1992).

In the way of language rights, Skutnabb-Kangas and Bucak (1995) pointed out that Kurdish activists pursued firstly to remove the ban contrary to the Kurdish language to acquire tolerance rights, as had been existing throughout the Ottoman Empire before 1923. Nevertheless, afterward accomplishing tolerance rights at several times in the previous half century, Kurdish people began to pursue their language rights to facilitate language maintenance. The purpose has been primarily to succeed not only in gaining the freedom to write and speak the language, but also the right to teach Kurdish and have education in the Kurdish language.

Currently, on June 12, 2012, the Turkish government has proclaimed plans to allow schools to teach Kurdish as an elective subject. Prime Minister Recep Tayip Erdogan pointed out that

“Kurdish language can be taken as an elective class in Turkey; it can be taught and be learned. This is a historical step. This way, our citizens with different mother tongues can develop their languages and cultures according to their needs and demand.”

Lessons in the Kurdish language will be granted in schools from now on. This is a big step for bilingual education in Turkey. The government in Turkey has been taking democratic steps about Kurdish people’s rights, but Turkey worries that consenting education in Kurdish might divide the country along different ethnic groups (Albayrak, 2012).

III. BILINGUAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SPAIN: THE CASE OF BASQUE BILINGUALISM

The Basque Provinces are located in Northern Spain, bordering the Atlantic Ocean and France. The Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) has three regions: Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, and Araba within Spain, and culturally including a fourth province (Nafarroa) and a small portion of France: Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea, and Zuberoa. As Zalbide and Cenoz (2008) pointed out, the Basque Country’s population is roughly three million and almost two-thirds of the population lives in the BAC in Spain. In this area, Basque is a minority language, which has survived along with Spanish. According to the most recent sociolinguistic survey, 557,600 speakers, or 30.1% of the population are aged 16 or older (Cenoz, 2012).

Basque language history

The rapid urbanization around Spanish and Basque industrial provinces caused the Basque language to disappear entirely from the economic and public arena until the late 19th century (Lasagabaster, 2001). The Basque language was officially prohibited from education throughout the Franco’s dictatorship and resistance fighters often hid in the Basque country from 1939 to 1975. However, in the 1960s, in spite of legal structures, groups of eager teachers and parents in the BAC struggled for and achieved the re-opening of several private Basque schools. When these schools first opened they were not officially accepted; however, the government under the Franco regime was finally forced to accept the new Basque schools since they had attracted a large number of students that could not be ignored. After the Franco regime ended, a new political environment that was more inclusive to Basque and the Basque Country came out and exists to the present day.

In 1959, under Franco’s dictatorship, ETA (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, in English: *Basque Homeland and Freedom*) a nationalist group, emerged that claimed to fight for the independence of the Basque Country. This coincides with a second wave of industrialization and immigrants from other parts of Spain. ETA is one of the oldest nationalist organizations in the world (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2008). It claimed its first victim in 1968, and it is still active at present, after having killed approximately 750 people (until the end of 2007) and wounded thousands of others.

Lasagabaster (2001) emphasizes that the overwhelming political atmosphere deriving from internal conflict, international war, and the military despotism that dominated the 20th century has hurt the conservation and development of the Basque language. While in the early 20th century, the rate of those who spoke the Basque language in the Basque province was around 83 %, by the end of the century this rate had decreased to 24 %. Haddican (2007) affirmed that the Basque Language Academy, which was activated once again in 1960, attempted to standardize the Basque language to a version named Batua. At the same time it also worked for grounding of the essential infrastructure for official Basque education to be established in later years. Additionally, Haddican also affirmed that Basque education was created non-officially, via a night school network prepared secretly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The education held in these secret schools, known as *Ikastola*, would obtain first legal and then special status in later years and would become an element of public service.

At the end of Franco’s regime bilingual education models were founded beginning in 1975. Mandatory education in the BAC comprises six years of elementary education for 6 to 12-year-old children and four years of secondary school for 12 to 16-year-old children. Many students go to school from the age of two and many attend Basque day-care centers from an even earlier age (Zalbide & Cenoz, 2008). This current system is successful in its incorporation of both mainstream Spanish language and the preservation of Basque culture.

Current models (A, B, D)

Zalbide & Cenoz (2008) emphasized language instruction; both Spanish and Basque became mandatory focuses in all schools and education in the Basque language, which started officially in 1976, was established through three different models of schooling: Model A, Model B, and Model D. These three models are voluntary to students. In Model A, virtually all subjects are taught in Spanish and as a second language Basque is taught for three to five hours a week. In this model, students as a second language obtain minimal proficiency in Basque. The purpose of this model is to make stronger positive attitudes towards Basque culture, to help students understand the Basque language, and to get ready students to participate in Basque environments (Gardner, 2000). Model B is planned for Spanish native speakers who want to be bilingual in both Spanish and Basque. Basque is taught for roughly 50% of the instruction time and the other half is taught in Spanish (Arzamendi & Genesee, 1997). The purpose of this model is to obtain appropriate capability to be fluent in Basque, to prepare students to perform further studies in Basque, and to secure a high level of comprehension (Garden, 2002). In Model D, Spanish is taught as a subject and Basque is the language of instruction for four to five hours a week. The purpose of the model is to reinforce capability in Basque, convert Basque into an instrument of communication for conversation and enrich language abilities, and teaching and to acquire a satisfactory knowledge of Spanish (Gardner, 2000). Eventually, Model D can be appeared as both a total immersion program for

native speaker of Spanish students and first language maintenance programs for native speakers of Basque. Each of the models is available both in the private and public sectors; parents can select the model that they want for their children. In some areas of the country where there are not sufficient students interested in a particular model, Accessing to all three options is restricted (Gardner, 2000). According to statistics for the numbers from 2003 to 2006, Etxeberria (2006) pointed out the enrollment in the different linguistic models in the BAC: Model A accounts for only 8.10% of pupils, model B for 30.5% and model D for 61.4%. In the 1980s, although student registrations in model A outnumbered that for models B and D put together, model A is currently declining.

Curriculum

In a 2000 study, Gardner affirmed that the introducing Basque into teaching on an extensive official base brought with it the need to describe the curriculum, especially for Basque literature and language. Other subjects, for instance History and Geography, where a specific Basque-centered element earned to be introduced would need to be incorporated into the curriculum. Additionally, the materials essential to teach all topics in Basque were immediately required as well. The government needs to be more supportive in the incorporation of bilingual education whereas currently funds are mostly left to private means. Nevertheless, the government provides various economic funds, yet not nearly enough. Gardner also affirmed that finance mechanisms have improved with time. *Ikastola* schools by the end of the Franco regime were completely funded by the parents. Public schools were completely reinforced by central government (Madrid) finance. On the other hand, with parents paying various additional amounts, private schools were considerably funded and supported by central government. After Franco's death, central government to *ikastola* schools provided various restricted financial supports. Individuals and companies who got funding from the Basque Government produce the teaching materials. According to Gardner and Zalbide in 2005, this funding is hinged on the primary of equal opportunity so that parents who have to buy Basque materials do not have to spend more than if people bought them in Spanish.

Teachers' proficiency

Zalbide and Cenoz (2008) found that in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), to be hired for the teaching of Basque in the level of command of the Basque language required of a teacher is one of the chief challenges for the educational system. In order to be qualified, according to Zalbide and Cenoz, teachers have to get a diploma of proficiency. Before teachers got a job, they acquired this diploma; however, many others were already teaching through the medium of Basque and studied Spanish to be qualified. In many instances there were teachers who had native in Basque, but had only used Basque verbally since the language of instruction at that time they were students was in Spanish. In these instances special courses to obtain literacy abilities and strengthen their grammar and vocabulary have been organized.

To conclude, in the Basque Country, there is a innovative legal condition, more potential learners and speakers than ever before. Gardner (2000) affirmed that the new Basque generations of native speakers are completely literate and well educated in the Basque language, an entirely new phenomenon that is giving growth to a new wave of printed materials. Gardner also pointed out that many books have been printed in the Basque language per year. Using Basque as bilingual in the church, in secondary and elementary education, and in printed materials continues to enlarge. The Basque language is being used in zones it has never been used in before: University, administration, audiovisual materials, and computer software. To sum up, the people who have predicted the near-immediate death of Basque over the last 200 years have made a blunder. The existence of Basque has now been ensured at least well into the 21st century.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Design

The overall design of this research project is a qualitative method consisting of data collection through survey in order to obtain a rich data set that explained the issues surrounding bilingual education in the Basque region. The researcher used the case study method of qualitative research in which a single person, event, program, institution, process, organization, phenomenon or social group is examined within a specified time frame, using a appropriate compounded knowledge collection devices (Creswell, 1994). Because this study examine the Basque bilingual program and historical backgrounds, this study is appropriate for case study of research methods. This study's research questions and surveys are useful in providing answers to 'Why?' and 'How?' questions, and in this role can be used for explanatory descriptive or exploratory research. Therefore, this study is appropriate for a Case Study of the research method's procedures.

Setting and Procedures

There were 26 participants from K-12 teachers and scholars in the Basque Country. Participants were asked to volunteer to be part of a master's thesis research study. The researcher sent the survey link to an assistant professor who in he Basque Country in Spain. He then sent out the request for voluntary participation through his network of professional and organizational contacts. He contacted the participants via email to cover the most potential participants because the recruitment material needed to be written in Basque, Spanish, and English. Participants who agreed to partake in the survey had limitless time to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

Cross-case theme analysis was used as an appropriate analysis technique for case study. It reassembles the data based on logical connections between categories (Creswell, 1994). The researcher developed categories for the different themes. Coding categories were a means of sorting the descriptive data so that the material represented patterns among and between the survey questions. Researcher's notes were also examined for themes in the bracketing way.

V. FINDINGS

This paper explains questions surrounding the bilingual education curriculum in the Basque region. This survey was taken from 26 participants, 8 males and 17 females, from K-12 teachers and scholars in the Basque Country. From the survey, the participants' answers were gathered and reviewed. Emergent themes in the survey were coded.

Theme One: Forbidden Language

Participants were asked to answer how language schooling was done before the establishment of the current system in the Basque Country. This question was answered by 11 participants, 7 K-12 teachers and 4 scholars. According to literature, the Ikastolas were privately and publicly supported schools with a special legal status. These schools do not exist as a legal entity any more and they were related to a movement supporting the Basque language. However, they have merged with state and private schools and they operate within the Federation of Ikastolas (Haddican, 2007). One participant pointed out, "during the Franco regime and resistance fighters often hid in the Basque Country. The Basque language was prohibited around the Basque Country in educational zones." According to K-12 teachers, school monolingualism in Spanish was characterized through 1935 to 1960. During this period consistently within the principles of the "Movimiento (Movement) National," i.e. Franco's doctrine, the key concern was to educate students in a uniform way. Because of the Franco regime, people were forced to speak only Spanish. One of the teachers pointed out, "we went from a dictatorship to a 'democracy', and then we had huge changes. In the past, Basque language was not allowed to be taught, and only Spanish and Spanish cultures were taught in the classroom." Participants also mentioned that in the last 30 years, the development and beginning of bilingual education in the Basque Country is relevant to the movement for schools in "Euskara, the Ikastolas."

Theme Two: Bilingualism is expanding in the Basque Country

Participants were asked to answer how the current bilingual education system works. This question was answered by 14 participants, 10 K-12 teachers and 4 scholars. According to one of the teachers' answer, "current bilingualism works perfect...because there are three different bilingual models...all three are optional...if you want to learn Spanish or Basque it is up to you, you can learn either Spanish or Basque language." Bilingualism has a legal position and many speakers are steadily increasing. According to participants, the sociolinguistic condition of Basque language is better than ever before. It has extensive societal support and more books are published in Basque than in all the precedent centuries combined. One of the scholars asserted that, "Basque language is being used in areas it has never been used in before such as in universities, in technology, computer software, churches, and official zones, among others." Participants also affirmed that the Basque bilingualism is of huge interest in the context of the European Union. Currently, it represents a dynamic, changing scenario, full of contradictions and new proposals that are hard to interpret, yet ideal for studying all the questions raised as challenges for the future.

Theme Three: Perception of the Model D

Participants were asked to answer questions about the advantages/disadvantages of bilingual models in the Basque Country. This question was answered by 14 participants, 9 K-12 teachers and 5 scholars. According to participants' answers, they are convinced of the benefits compared to their monolingual counterparts in Basque bilingualism models. One of the scholars emphasized that, "model D is the only one that is close to a balanced bilingual approach because its graduates are equally fluent in the two official languages (Basque and Spanish) around the Basque region. Student competence in both languages is quite good." According to participants, model D is the best one because the students obtain a good level of Basque language but are bilingual when they finish their studies. Model B is also good one however, one of the teachers affirmed that, "it is not as good as model D because students learn some Basque, but they can't communicate fluently so they avoid using it." Participants also pointed out Basque bilingualism promotes biculturalism, which students need to understand the value of their culture and language. Besides this, Basque bilingual models help improve students' self-esteem and the willingness not to hide their feelings about his or her culture.

As disadvantages of Basque bilingual models, participants asserted that currently model A has been used very rarely because it would mean that all learning be carried out only Spanish. One of the teacher participants pointed out, "Basque is just another school curriculum subject, and therefore, model A is now tending to disappear." According to participants, for bilingual models, there is a "lack of classrooms" that can accommodate students who require instructions in both Basque and Spanish languages. Students are expected to sit together in one class irrespective of their age and the differences in the required level of education. This brings out a big problem for teachers who have to display a certain level of comfort in handling distinct levels of education at the same time. Participants also affirmed "the lack of teachers" in schools. The teachers in school felt stressed when they needed to teach the same subject in Basque and Spanish. Therefore, participants suggest that government should provide training to teachers who teach Basque and Spanish in the same subject. The teachers, they said, should spend more time to explain things to the students and communicate with them.

Theme Four: Nondiscrimination area in the Basque Country

Participants were asked to answer how bilingualism affects relation between different ethnic groups. This question was answered by 11 participants, 9 K-12 teachers and 2 scholars. According to most of the participants, bilingualism does not negatively affect any ethnic groups in Basque country. One of the teachers asserted that, "bilingualism does not affect any ethnic groups negatively in the Basque Country... on the contrary, I think bilingualism makes very good strong relationships between different ethnic groups (Spanish and Basque). I don't think bilingualism creates a discrimination environment." Bilingual models in Spain are a portion of the country's policies in addressing the demands and needs of ethnic population groups. According to one of the scholar's answers, "the bilingual education system does not separate any ethnic groups such as Spanish and Basque people in Basque Country." Participants also affirmed that they all live as brothers in the same country.

Theme Five: Language preserves culture

Participants were asked to answer if bilingualism helps preserve Basque linguistic and cultural heritage in the Basque Country. This question was answered by 12 participants. All participants' answers were quite affirmative. According to one of the participant's answers, "language, religion, and customs are usually described in ethnic identification." Basque language is "the cultural symbol of Basque identity," and all history and cultural customs of the Basque groups have been recorded in their language. Another participant pointed out, "If anyone's language disappeared, this mean this person's cultural heritages are going to be disappeared...if you don't use your mother tongue it will be getting rusty." Without the language, the history and cultural success could not be inherited by the new generation. According to participants, the right to preserve their own language and traditional culture is one of the basic human rights supported by international society today. Participants also affirmed that if bilingualism did not emerge in Basque Country, Basque language might vanish, as its functions as a communication tool decline with modernization and globalization. The disappearance of any language is predictable, though many people cannot emotionally accept this reality. If a small group insists on preserving its own language but rejects learning other useful languages, the group's limited capacity to learn and communicate will place them at a disadvantage in social and international competition, and obstruct their future development opportunities.

Additional results not clearly fitting a theme:

Participants were asked to give their advice on how to establish a bilingual education system. This question was answered by 11 participants, 8 K-12 teachers and 3 scholars. According to participants' answers, the first and biggest difficulty was the "lack of qualified teachers." One of the scholars highlighted that, "bilingual teacher-training departments should be set up at universities, particularly in minority areas." According to scholars, teachers who are already working in schools attended by minority students should be given in-service training on teaching students whose mother language differs from the language of instruction. Secondly, participants pointed out there should be an extensive variety of materials to select from in elementary and secondary school. A teacher participant asserted that "materials for primary and secondary school should be increased and accessible." Participants, teachers, also asserted the minister of education in the country should establish numerous programs to incentivize the production and creation of different language material. The third important thing is governmental support. One of the scholars affirmed that "government should cover the publication of textbooks." Participants also informed that government's support is fundamental and vital; therefore, the government should fund audio-visual resources, software and the formation of working groups dedicated to the design of new materials. Lastly, participants emphasized that bilingualism should be used in many areas such as universities, administrations, computer software, audiovisual materials and media, among others.

VI. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a parallel situation of the in regard to Kurdish language education in Turkey to Basque language in the Basque region of Spain. The Basque model in Spain, where minority languages are used in education, are discussed, taking into consideration their political and historical circumstances. The purpose of these discussions was to establish a sense of the shortcomings and benefits of particular bilingual models and their relevance to the Kurdish situation in Turkey. An effective and enhancing education should require flexible school systems that can respond rapidly and efficiently to different regions' various needs. "The implementation of a bilingual educational policy that accepts the use of the mother tongue in education necessitates decentralization of the administrative structure" (Coskun, Derince, Ucarlar, 2011, p.127). Essentially, this can be seen in cited examples of Spain's incorporation of the Basque language. Adapting a model in Turkey similar to Basque models would allow students to recognize and display a more positive attitude towards school. Implementing a bilingual model would also help students' self-confidence and therefore affect their school achievement. Additionally, students who acquire such an effective and enhancing education will be able to improve communication with other cultures and languages and will feed on the intercultural dialogue essential for societal peace. The benefits brought about by these measures can be seen in the Basque language example. Implementation of Basque bilingual education models should positively be taken into consideration during the development of policies in Turkey regarding the use of the mother tongue as a bilingual education.

Kurdish-Turkish bilingual educational models should be developed for the education of Kurdish and Turkish students. In parallel to this development, essential work should be carried out for the implementation of other educational measures like the measures currently being employed by Basque programs. It must not be forgotten that it is essential to

continuously revise bilingual education models in line with changing needs and conditions. In respond properly to these issues, Turkey needs to develop its own model. During the development of this model, the students', teachers' and parents' needs like those of citizens of the Basque Country should be taken into consideration; experiences of countries that have cooperate with and are continue to handle such issues and academic and pedagogical studies conducted on these experiences can be beneficial to Turkish education. All in all, I hope that monitoring Basque Country's efficient bilingual models will provide inspirations for the development of a Turkish model for use in Kurdish bilingual education.

The problems inherent in Basque bilingual models should be studied while establishing policies for education in the mother language in Turkey. The conclusion that only education in the mother tongue can be applied equally all over the country or all over the relevant area may cause new results to be drawn easily from the Basque education. Kurdish people are spread all over Turkey and not simply located in the Eastern Provinces. Likewise, the Kurdish region is also inhabited by groups who can speak languages other than Kurdish and, amongst the speakers of Kurdish, a variety of dialects. Therefore, it should not be forgotten that education in Kurdish should not be developed in the form of a single static model. Educational models need to be developed for education in the mother tongue and be continuously revised according to the needs of the students.

Recommended Model for Bilingual Education Implementation in Turkey

From the findings of this study, it is possible to put forth a number of linguistic, social and cultural recommendations concerning the educational policy and practices to be followed in schooling of Kurdish students who speak little or no Turkish when they start school.

In a current study, Coskun, Derince, and Ucarlar (2011) found that Kurdish language should be used in Turkish education and bilingual educational models should be developed and implemented. A permanent way to get rid of the discrimination experienced by Kurdish students would be to use their native language in the education system. On the other hand, the assimilation of the Kurdish language into Turkish education is undoubtedly an extremely complex and complicated problem. The design and usage of school models aspiring to be a balanced bilingualism in Kurdish and Turkish should play a vital role in lifting the damages and disadvantages of Kurdish students. In addition, bilingualism will aid the literacy in the two languages and support the education of Kurdish children. The development of bilingual educational models can be gleaned from bilingual educational models in different countries such as bilingual education models in Spain, the case of Basque Bilingualism. Nevertheless, taking an educational model that has been successful in another country and implementing it with new languages will probably produce weak results resembling submersion models. To develop strong models to be used in the education of Kurdish children, the current issues, detailed observations, and various circumstances should be taken into consideration. However, in order to develop models that will be implemented in the future, it is essential to begin building the necessary infrastructure right away.

According to DISA's (Diyarbakir Institute for Political and Social Research) report in 2011, bilingual educational models should cover all school levels because learning and culture are lifelong experiences; in order to be proficient in both, they must be a consistent presence in life. Conditions, needs, and accessible objectives should be identified, and the models to be developed should not be restricted to the first years when students gain the skills of reading and writing. Besides, students should involve long-term programs covering all stages of education, from primary school to higher education. An alternative model would not play a role or have any influence on the secondary and higher education. Also, using a single language educational model in either language that students would not be accountable for in countrywide centralized examinations such as OSS (university entrance examination) will prevent students from learning one of the languages and the model from being completely successful.

Teacher Preparation

Cummins (2000) affirmed that training bilingual teacher departments should be a main focus. The essential infrastructure should be built up and relevant departments should be opened in educational faculties for the training of teachers who will make possible the implementation of Kurdish-Turkish bilingual education. Teachers who are already working in schools attended generally by Kurdish students should be given in-service training on teaching students whose first language (L1) differs from the language of instruction. Training Kurdish teachers on bilingual education is also necessary. Kurdish teachers who sometimes prefer speaking Kurdish with their Kurdish students in an attempt to allay their disadvantages should be given seminars on bilingual educational methods, strategies, and textbooks.

Coskun, Derince, and Ucarlar (2011) pointed out that teachers who work in the Kurdish region should be encouraged to learn Kurdish. The significance of learning Kurdish for teachers who will teach in the Kurdish region is that they can be taught the Kurdish language, culture, and literature. It is necessary to provide free Kurdish language courses specifically for these teachers. From this point of view, teachers who learn Kurdish may be able to build more productive, genuine, and constructive relationships with both Kurdish students and their parents. This will encourage an identity negotiation and may positively contribute to Kurdish students' school achievement and help reduce the existing social and economic inequality and discrimination. Free Kurdish language literacy courses should also be provided for students who speak Kurdish but do not know how to write and read in Kurdish so as to re-establish certain attitudes to language and their self-efficacy. Seeing students' native language in written texts and being able to make use of these texts may have a corrective and constructive process on their relationship with the school and with their native tongue. Literacy courses will provide the ground for the implementation of bilingual educational programs in Turkey.

Availability of Resources to Teach

A concern that Anderson (2009) voices in his study is the availability of resources to teach in Kurdish. Manufacturing new teaching materials – such as textbooks -- can be very expensive. However, Anderson emphasized that given the considerable size of the population of Kurdish people, the relative cost of publication of books would be reduced considering the high number of people. Because the standards for education are already in place and textbooks already exist, the challenge will be in producing logical and authentic translations of these resources into another language. There can be some cost associated with this process, but it should not be high-priced. The government should provide some economic support.

Bilingual teacher-training departments should be set up at universities, particularly in the eastern part of Turkey. Teacher training should be provided for the transformation of coercive teacher-student relations (Cummins, 2000). Kurdish-Turkish education models should be developed very well for the education of Kurdish students.

It is also necessary that parents should be considered part of the bilingual educational process. Providing free Kurdish literacy courses for Kurdish parents, whether or not they are already able to read and write Turkish language, would be a positive first step in this direction. The steps would provide parents the skills and knowledge to become empowered and assist in their children's education. Such courses would also be vital in that they would provide access to broader resources.

Sheyholislami (2008) pointed out that Kurdish television programs should be created to help Kurdish students' develop language skills. Considering the significance of first language proficiency in accomplishing better social and academic development, television programs aiming to develop children's mother tongue should be created by the government or private television channels broadcasting in Kurdish. Resources should be provided for the preparation of programs of this kind. In this same mindset, the prohibition on children's programming for radio and television broadcasting in Kurdish should be abolished (DISA, 2011).

VII. CONCLUSION

From the findings, the researcher has learned that the development of a strong language policy to protect and promote the use of Basque in education and in the BAC in general has resulted in the spread of the use of Basque at schools and universities. The use of a minority language as the language of instruction and in some instances as the language of research has had an affirmative impact on the status of the language. At the same time, the use of a minority language for functions that have traditionally been implemented by the majority language faces many challenges that have been explained in this paper. These challenges change over time because bilingual or multilingual contexts are dynamic and affected by the development of languages in society. When Basque was starting to be used in higher education 30 years ago, one of the main challenges was the standardization of the language and the availability of teaching materials. Now many textbooks and other publications including on-line resources are available. The situation has improved enormously even though it cannot be compared with the availability of materials in the case of majority languages.

Findings indicate that the fundamental issue is that although measures have been taken so as to help its use in the technological and scientific world (which affects a small number of users), language planners have not taken measures to stimulate its social use, which is what actually has a more direct influence on many Basque speakers. The opportunities to use the Basque language in everyday activities varies significantly from one place to another because of the massive of existing sociolinguistic diversity in the BAC. Many Spanish and French speakers in the past and a few still today have usually regarded Basque as a rural language, suitable perhaps for rural and domestic purposes, but not for the contemporary world, technology or university.

The data analysis in the Basque Autonomous Community leads us to the consequence that the bilingual subjects enjoy certain cognitive advantages compared to their monolingual equivalents. Students should be provided with the linguistic tools that will allow them to take part in a successful learning of the minority language and to socialize in a more integrated way in the community. The outcome of the data also coincide in a consequence: since model D's students are approximately equally fluent in the two official languages in the BAC and their competence in both languages is well developed, model D is the only one which is close to balanced bilingualism. Similarly, Model A needs to be reviewed, else, the social fracture between Spanish and Basque speakers (with different attitudes and values) might be aggravated (Etxeberria, 1999).

Finally, in the case of the BAC, the researcher believes that the outcomes of this research should be made known to society in the aggregate in a much greater way than has been done as yet, so that parents select the sort of education that they ponder most satisfactory or enough for their children. It has to be said that where general agreement exists is in the fact that research into the cognitive development of bilingual subjects in bilingual educational setting is a fascinating field, and that there is still much to be covered.

Researcher can conclude that the Basque language is a prestigious language and gaining in strength, with strong social and institutional support. Nevertheless, its position in comparison with Spanish, in the way of many speakers and the development of communications media, make it a feeble minority language. Therefore, Basque is 'strong' in terms of prestige while being 'feeble' in comparison with Spanish.

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Study on Developing Chinese College EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence in Relation to Language Proficiency and Overseas Experience

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Abstract—Pragmatic competence refers to both knowledge of the linguistic forms which realize particular illocution, and knowledge of the appropriate use of the linguistic forms in certain social contexts. It is an important part of the language proficiency construct. However, studies in China show that College English students' pragmatic competence is poor. Unlike second language learners, students learning English as a foreign language in China do not have many opportunities to be exposed to authentic language use. If they are not provided with sufficient pragmatic knowledge, they will have more difficulty in understanding and producing appropriate use in the target language. This paper focuses on the development of pragmatic competence and awareness on the part of college English learners in China. Overseas experience and language proficiency are treated as two main variables which may influence students' PC development. With some data collection from students in Shanghai Second Polytechnic University, findings shows that there are significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence between students with overseas experience and students without overseas experience, yet no significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence between students with high and low language proficiency.

Index Terms—pragmatic competence, developing, Chinese college students

I. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

There is no doubt that English is becoming an international language for trade and education in the global context (Pakier, 1999). The role of English, especially communicative competence in English, which refers to both the knowledge of language and the ability to use that knowledge in social interactions (Barron, 2003; Hymes, 1972; Widdowson, 1992) has become more and more important in the daily life of people in China. Therefore, it is important to investigate how EFL learners in China acquire their language knowledge in common learning contexts, which will help them improve their language competence much. Chinese College students, as a major group of EFL learner in China, should be particularly examined around both their communicative competence and the sub-theme of pragmatic competence in the current research. Pragmatic competence is the ability of a second language learner or a foreign language learner to use the target language appropriately in corresponding social contexts (Taguchi, 2009).

A. Chinese College English Syllabus and Curriculum

College English is an integrative university course. It is a two-year compulsory subject for non-English major students at university level. College English teaching in China is guided by the curriculum document. The first version of College English Curriculum Requirements was implemented in 1985, which indicated that the objective of college English teaching was to develop learners' language skills, such as reading, listening, speaking and writing, and laid great emphasis on linguistic competence. It also required students in key universities to pass the College English Test (CET-4) before graduation. The second version of College English Curriculum Requirements was published in 1999. It aimed to further strengthen learners' linguistic competence. Developing learners' communicative competence was also mentioned, but there was no explicit explanation on what communicative competence was and how to develop it. All university students were required to pass College English Test (Band Four) before graduation. Under the guidance of these two requirements, College English teaching was teacher-centered, examination-oriented with emphasis on developing linguistic competence. Since that late 1990s, the notion that language teaching should not only include grammar, semantics, but also pragmatics, has been introduced to the College English teachers in China. This inclusion is further emphasized with the release of a new College English Curriculum Requirements in 2007. It emphasizes "language use, social interactions, and cultural quality". English teaching and learning in China should no longer be confined to the acquisition of grammatical knowledge. The development of communicative competence should also become a primary goal of the teaching of English as foreign language. College English teacher need to focus on the development of communicative competence, among which pragmatic competence is one of the main components.

B. Chinese Current College English Learning

With continuous education innovation and the fast development of Chinese economy, college English students are facing great challenges. They are required to learn pragmatic and cultural knowledge as well as linguistic knowledge in order to become competent in cross-cultural communication. According to Requirement 2007, the focus of College English learning has changed from reading to listening and speaking. What's more, special attention is given to independent learning by means of multimedia tools. This movement suggests a shift from the long established grammar-translation and teacher-centred language practices towards learning for communication and communicative competence (Lamie, 2001).

However, some studies in China show that College English students' pragmatic competence is poor (Liu, 2004; Men & Liu, 2000; Zhang, 2002). Like the non-English majors in my university, students can do well in a test but fail to use English effectively when they engage in spontaneous conversations. Students complain that after years of language study, they still cannot order breakfast in English. The general concerns of language practitioners and students all point to a less than desirable sentiment, which culminates in a disgruntled dismissal of the current language teaching as producing "mute" or "deaf" language learners with poor pragmatic competence.

Unlike second language learners, students learning English as a foreign language in China do not have many opportunities to be exposed to authentic language use. If they are not provided with sufficient pragmatic knowledge, they will have more difficulty in understanding and producing appropriate use in the target language. Being a main source of input in the learning environment, classroom input play an important role in English language teaching, particularly in the English as a foreign language classroom (Kim & Hall, 2002; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001) as they are the essential elements in determining learners' pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the importance of pragmatics in College English learning and teaching processes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ON PC STUDIES

Before constructing the theoretical framework, it is necessary to review the empirical studies concerning development in L2 pragmatic competence worldwide.

One of the first longitudinal developmental studies on L2 pragmatic competence was conducted by Schmidt (1983). In this study, Schmidt collected data on the acquisition of English by a Japanese adult living in Hawaii. He mainly analyzed an obvious transfer of Japanese sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic norm. Later, Schmidt and Frota (1986) kept on doing this research and provided certain evidence of the development in conversational ability.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) focused on 16 adult L2 students' developing ability of producing suggestions and rejections in the environment of academic advising sessions. It was found that students' sociopragmatic ability seemed to develop faster than their pragmalinguistic ability.

Siegal (1994, 1996) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the speech production of three English learners and one Hungarian learners of Japanese as L2. It found that the learner subjectivity and proficiency had great influence on the development of learners' pragmatic competence.

Barron's (2003) study also made a contribution to the research on the pragmatic development. She examined how 33 Irish learners of German developed their ability of speech act realization in a studying abroad context.

Besides the longitudinal studies, a number of cross-sectional studies are also concerned with. Scarcella (1997) examined politeness strategies applied respectively by 10 beginners and 10 advanced learners of ESL. It showed that the participants' ability of choosing politeness forms outweighed that of using the forms appropriately.

The Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (Blum-kulda & Olshtain, 1984) investigated the speech act of requests and apologies in eight language varieties. With those data, Blum-Kulka's (1989) study showed one of the frequently used request strategies was conventional indirectness.

Fukushima's (1990) study was aimed at the request performance of Japanese EFL learners. Results showed that the participants' request was direct regardless of different social contexts.

Garcia (2004) investigated the pragmatic awareness of low and high proficiency ESL learners. It was found that the target speech act could be successfully identified by the ESL learners to different extents.

The above reviewed studies can be summarized as follows: first, most of them managed to record the development of L2 pragmatic competence by working on the development of either production or comprehension of particular speech acts (Request, apology, greeting, etc.). Second, most of the subjects investigated were with L1 backgrounds other than Chinese. Third, the data were collected by means of learning diaries, Discourse Completion Task, oral production task, etc. It is evident that there are very few empirical studies investigating the development of L2 pragmatic competence in China.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Participants

A total of 40 non-English major students from Shanghai Second Polytechnic University participated in the current study. Among them twenty-two are males and eighteen are females, age ranging from 19 to 22. Twenty of them are from regular English classes and another twenty are from advanced English classes (Regular and advanced classes are divided by their English language proficiency when they entered university, advanced classes enrolled the students who

ranked the first 25% in enrolment English proficiency tests). Ten students from the advanced classes attended the overseas study and internship project held by SSPU (study or internship abroad for 90 days), who spent 90 days in Queensland University of Technology and lived as home stay, so they encountered genuine communicative situations in Australia. In the group of regular class students, nine of them got overseas experience. 4 of them spent around 30 days in English speaking countries in order to attend summer camp there; 3 of them spent more than 30 days there for family business and they had a big chance to communicate with English native speakers; And another 2 students just travelled around English-speaking countries around 20 days, and as interpreters because they were all not led by any travel guide. In the researcher’s perspective, those low-language-proficiency students all got similar overseas experience to practice their English in genuine English contexts, though they did not receive any formal education there.

Besides, before administering the questionnaire to the students, the researcher encouraged the participants to attend IELTS in order to confirm their language proficiency. Consequently, 19 of them achieved 6 and 6 above, 3 of them achieved 5.5-6, and 18 of them achieved 5.5 and below 5.5. According to their objective language proficiency, the participants have been classified as shown in table 1.

TABLE 1
CLASSIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Group	Number of students	Descriptions	Abbreviation for group
1	10	Low English language proficiency without overseas experience	L-O
2	8	Low English language proficiency with overseas experience	L+O
3	13	High English language proficiency without overseas experience	H-O
4	9	High English Language proficiency with overseas experience	H+O

B. Instruments for Data Collection

The data of this study are collected via questionnaire consisting of 2 parts. The first part contains a series of demographic questions about students’ gender, linguistic proficiency, year of learning English, overseas experiences and self-comment on English learning. The second part includes nine communicative situations which students are likely to meet in real life contexts. These items are selected on the basis of an extensive review of literature on pragmatic competence. Those open-ended questions aim to draw out the students’ personal responses. Students were free to answer these questions by providing any information of their language learning experiences that was relevant. The total nine situations included 3 about declining an offer or refusing, 3 about responding to a compliment, and 3 about giving apologies, which are all displayed in the Speech Act Theory to show the level of pragmatic competence. Since the researcher came to the UK, those items have already been examined by random-selected native English speakers. They approved that the questionnaire was appropriate and provided their normal answers for further references.

When evaluating the acceptability of the responses given by the students in relation to nine different situations, the researcher not only collaborated with a native speaker expert but also had a control group of native English speaking correspondents. They are English teachers working in park hill primary school and university of Birmingham. By the great help of them, the researcher can determine whether the given responses by the students are acceptable (√) or unacceptable(×).

C. Data Collection Procedures

The instrument required 30 minutes to complete and administered in those students regular English classes. Before students started, they were informed that their responses to the questionnaires would remain confidential and their answers should be written as clearly as possible, which is crucially important to the success of this research.

D. Data Analysis Procedures

The data obtained via the questionnaire were coded descriptive analysis, which is utilized to obtain patterns demographic information from the personal details part of the questionnaire and pragmatic competence. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 16.0) was employed for statistical analysis. A series of independent samples were employed to explore whether there were significant differences in the learning of pragmatic competence by linguistic proficiency and overseas experience.

E. Hypothesis

This study was performed to explore how language proficiency and overseas experience are related to the acquisition of pragmatic competence. It set out the hypotheses:

- a. There are significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence among Chinese college EFL students of non-English majors in relation to linguistic proficiency.
- b. There are significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence among Chinese college EFL students of non-English majors in relation to overseas experience.

IV. FINDINGS

A. *The Overall Pragmatic Competence Analysis of Chinese College ELT Students*

In the questionnaire, all the students show a high level of grammatical competence in English language. 29 students (72.5%) did not make any grammatical mistakes when providing all the answers. While only 12 (30%) students exhibited a high level of pragmatic competence by giving acceptable answers to all the items. Comparing to NS participants' answers, students are lack of competence to show their ideas in an appropriate way.

In situation 1, a friend invites you to go to the cinema on weekend. Yet you have to do some revision for the exam. Then you will say___. The frequency of the individual components of the speech as set for this prompt can be found in table 2.

TABLE 2

Components	Frequency of Use
Expression of regret	55%
Excuse	85%
Offering alternative	12%

The findings showed that most subjects avoided refusing directly by employing an indirect refusal. More than a half students expressed their regret of not being able to accept the invitation, and most of them provided excuses or reasons as a way to convey their inability or unwillingness. However, there a small amount of students who tried to give an alternative for their absence at the party. It was found that college students had realized that they need to show politeness in social interactions. It is impolite in china to give a direct refusal "no" to decline an invitation. When a small group of students used direct refusal, they provided additional excuses as well. These findings confirmed that non-native speakers produced few offers of alternative excuses (Tanck, 2004) but did not neglect the social interaction of politeness.

In situation 2, your American boss asks you to work overtime today. Yet you do not want to do any extra work. Then you will say___. The frequency of the individual components of the speech as set for this prompt can be found in table 3:

TABLE 3

Components	Frequency of Use
Expression of regret	85%
Direct refusal	10%
Excuse	96%

Students tended to respond to this prompt using a polite refusal, perhaps considering the relationship between an employee and a boss. However, almost every student provided excuses for their not being able to work overtime.

The data indicated that students responded appropriately for the relationship in this prompt, and tried to indicate the correct kind of politeness in the interaction. These data complied with the notion of sociopragmatics, in that language learners needed to obtain proper knowledge of relevant social and cultural values that could help them vary their speech strategies in communication (Harlow, 1990; Kasper, 1997). Yet, in low-language-proficiency group, 2 students had a very low level of pragmatic competence for this particular situation. Not understanding cultural and social elements and lacking social strategies in using English may lead to pragmatic failures in social interactions.

In situation 3, your friend asks you to lend him some money, and promises to return it to you in two weeks. You do not want to lend him. Then, you will say___. The frequency of the individual components of the speech as set for this prompt can be found in the following table 4:

TABLE 4

Components	Frequency of Use
Expression of regret	97%
Direct refusal	20%
Excuse	90%

Friends keep an equal and close relationship with each other. The data indicate that almost all the students show their regrets and gave excuses in making refusals. Most of them avoided using direct refusals. Speakers need to consider face-saving strategies to protect the requester's face when refusing the request. Only 1 student in group H-O directly responses "no way, guy, you need to earn by yourself". The requester would feel awkward in such a context.

The findings in relation to giving refusals highlighted that Chinese college students had learned what speech acts of refusals were, but not all of the participants understood how to correctly apply them appropriately to all situations. The improper use of refusal speech acts led to pragmatic failures in communication.

In situation 4, a friend compliments you on your new hair style. Then you will say___. The frequency of sequence categories used to make responses to the compliment can be found in table 5:

TABLE 5

Category type	Frequency of Use
Accept	88%
Reject	9%
Deflect/evade	4%

The data indicated that most students accepted the compliment and show their acceptance of compliment by saying “thank you”. Students applied an appreciation token, agreeing utterance, and return compliment to show their politeness and pleasure to accept the compliment. 1 student in group L-O rejected the compliment by employing a disagreeing utterance. Students employed phrases and norms that were often used in Chinese to achieve the same purpose in applying the target language. (Schauer, 2009). 10 students gave deflective responses by providing the information comment. Such responses are acceptable in the Chinese context as it is a common way for Chinese people to respond in their mother tongue. People try to show their modesty when offering compliment responses. It is considered as one of the core values of Chinese culture that guides Chinese communication behaviour (Wu, 2011) which is a further indication that language learners’ first culture affects the use of their target language (Liaw, 2006).

In situation 5, a friend compliments you on the presentation you gave in speech contest. The frequency of sequence categories used to make responses to the compliment can be found in table 6:

TABLE 6

Category type	Frequency of Use
Accept	71%
Reject	19%
Deflect/evade	8%

Students tried to appear humble and used excuses to downgrade their efforts in order to show their modesty. Chinese people are taught to keep lower when they receive a compliments or praises. This does not mean that the Chinese do not think positively of themselves but the norm of Chinese society is to be modest (Chen, 1993)

In situation 6, you are a newly appointed sales manager. One of your employees praised you much when having lunch with a group of colleges. The frequency of sequence categories used to make responses to the compliment can be found in table 7:

TABLE 7

Category type	Frequency of Use
Accept	60%
Reject	22%
Deflect/evade	15%

The speaker has a “top-down” relationship with the interlocutor in this situation. The identity of a manager has to be considered in giving the appropriate response when responding to compliments. The data indicate that most of the students used appropriate acceptance strategies, amendment strategies and combined strategies in providing compliment responses.

The findings highlighted that college English students were familiar with situations of giving compliment responses. They could provide the basic appreciation tokens to accept compliments, and they were able to consider the speaker’s identity and the relationship when giving responses. Some were able to select appropriate strategies to give compliment responses (Yu, 2003). However, a number of students directly translate their response from Chinese to English without considering the context and the appropriateness of their responses. They were not able to recognize errors and repair pragmatic failures that may cause the breakdown of communication.

In situation 7, you are late for group study because you sleep in. Then, you will say___. The frequency of use of the components of the speech act for this prompt can be found in table 8:

TABLE 8

Components	Frequency of Use
Regret	98%
Responsibility	70%
Remedy	28%

The data indicated that almost every student apologized for the lateness. Responsibilities were explained. Less than 30% of the students express their willingness to make up for the offense. In this situation, the speaker and recipient held an equal relationship. Students provided similar reasons that might be often used as excuses for lateness in the Chinese context. 1 student in group L+O could not convey intentions effectively.

In situation 8, you broke the vase borrowed from your friend, you will say to him. Then you will say___.The frequency of use of the components of the speech act for this prompt can be found in table 9:

TABLE 9

Components	Frequency of Use
Regret	92%
Responsibility	50%
Remedy	31%

The data indicated that most of apologies offered by the students contained an apology and regret for the offense. More than half students the apologies stated the speaker's responsibility for the offense, and more than 30% of the apologies provide a remedy and promise for committing the offense. It demonstrated that many college students were able to recognize the apology situation and apply proper expressions of apology. Many provided an apology together with an indication of taking responsibility as well a promise to rectify the situation in order to win forgiveness from the recipient.

In situation 9, as an English teacher, you have realized the mistake that you failed one student because of wrong calculation of score. Then you will say to the student ____. The frequency of use of the components of the speech act for this prompt can be found in table 10:

TABLE 10

Components	Frequency of Use
Regret	95%
Responsibility	68%
Remedy	80%

As discussed above, speakers' different identities influence the choice of discourses. As a teacher, it is necessary to show politeness always. Almost all the students were aware of the identity and employed suitable words and speech acts to express their regret. Remedies provided by the students showed their willingness to make up for the mistake. This kind of appropriate social behaviour in such a social interaction helps to avoid pragmatic failure in communication (Rose & Kasper, 2001).

Findings from the questionnaire (DCTs) indicated that on the whole Chinese college EFL learners were not high level language practitioners in pragmatic competence. Although they could recognize different situations, they were still lack of ability to apply their language knowledge to the real situations effectively. Most of them merely provided simple responses without extended well-organized information, which might be a block in intercultural communication.

B. The Acquisition of Pragmatic Competence by Linguistic Proficiency

In order to measure whether there were significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence among those four group students, a paired sample T-test was employed to compare the groups. According to participants' overseas experience, the four groups had been organized into two pairs. The first pair included students with overseas experience, and another pair included students without overseas experience. In each pair, high language level and low language level students displayed no significant differences, which was opposed to the previous hypothesis. There were no significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence between H+O and L+O, or H-O and L-O by their language proficiency ($p > .05$, See table 11).

TABLE 11
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 H+O - L+O	.375	1.685	.596	-1.034	1.784	.629	7	.549
Pair 2 H-O - L-O	-.100	1.969	.623	-1.509	1.309	-.161	9	.876

C. The Acquisition of Pragmatic Competence by Overseas Experience

To analyze whether there were significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence among four group students, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the means of the four groups. In high language proficiency and low language proficiency groups, significant differences could be displayed here. As predicted, there were significant differences in the acquisition of pragmatic competence between students with overseas experience and students without overseas experience ($p < .05$, table 12), no matter they are high language proficiency or low language proficiency students

TABLE 12
 PAIRED SAMPLES TEST

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 H+O - H-O	2.444	1.740	.580	1.107	3.782	4.214	8	.003
Pair 2 L+O - L-O	1.625	.744	.263	1.003	2.247	6.177	7	.000

V. CONCLUSIONS

Findings from the current study indicated that students with higher linguistic proficiency gave more acceptable responses to the communicative situations than those students with lower linguistic proficiency. This result was in coordinate with previous studies conducted by Carrel (1984), Takahashi and Beebe (1987).

Similarly, overseas experience has helped the participants of the current study to develop their pragmatic competence. Those students with overseas experience had a high level of pragmatic perception, which supported the idea that second language learning contexts proved richer input than foreign language learning contexts for learners' exhibiting convergence to native speaker pragmatic behaviour (Jular, 2007)

Since intercultural communication tasks are more related with participants' intercultural social relationships and entail intercultural communicative acts, the language teacher should try to give those tasks in foreign language classroom. Students need to be engaged in various social roles and speech events by means of incorporation of activities, such as role play, simulation, and drama into the classroom. Cultural elements are necessary to be involved in college English learning, and cultural comparison activities are quite helpful.

To sum up, PC should be treated as a prominent ingredient of language development as phonological, morphological syntax and semantic improvement. Promoting pragmatic competence is crucial to cultivate a powerful communicator in the target language. Youngsters in China need an opportunity to become such communicator in the future international competition. The current study indicated that teaching pragmatics must be included in the EFL context in Chinese college English teaching, furthermore, the overseas study and internship projects should be necessarily widespread in colleges, which will much trigger the development of Chinese college students' pragmatic competence.

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The Efficacy of Delineating L2 Sources of Grammatical Errors with Reference to the Students' L1 for Increasing Iranian EFL Learner's Production and Recognition Accuracy

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Abstract—The purpose of the present study is to investigate the impact of delineating L2 sources of grammatical errors with reference to the students' L1, instead of other types of error correction strategies, to help learners become familiar with sources of their errors and avoid making them in their text reconstruction task production and recognition test. To this end, two groups of Iranian English major (N=61) were compared. The result showed a main effect for the above- cited treatment as a result of which the experimental group outperformed the control group concerning their text reconstruction task accuracy and receptive knowledge improvement.

Index Terms—delineating, reconstruction task accuracy, receptive knowledge

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

When we review the second language acquisition literature, we realize that lots of teachers and researchers have been concerned about the issue of grammar for a long time. Most of them tried to find suitable methods and strategies in order to facilitate the acquisition of this challenging subject (Song and Suh, 2008). Lee (2007) states that in fact, the reaction against form – oriented instruction (grammar translation method, Audio-lingual method – total physical response), motivated teachers and researchers to consider new language teaching methods which were mainly based on the meaning. By the appearance of these methods, Lee (2007) claims that language teachers have been encouraged to follow the objectives of communicative competence and fluency, while grammar teaching which was not related to communicative aims has been considered as "counterproductive"(p.88). But an immersion study shows that only meaning focused instruction cannot help us to have learners who produce target language form accurately and some stress on form is also necessary to help learners make better their language accuracy over time. (Swain, 1995, 1998).

Yoshida, 2008 claims that in fact, by the appearance of a theory that emphasized some exclusive attention to form, researchers gave their attention to written corrective feedback more than. For example, Schmidt (2001) argues that meaning oriented activities are not sufficient for second language acquisition and learners should also pay attention to specific form. Pica (2000) states that:

"Learners must be given L2 input that is made meaningful and comprehensible. They must selectively attend to form of their input as well as its meaning. They must produce L2 and be given feedback in order to modify their production toward greater comprehensibility, appropriateness and accuracy. (p.7)

Swain (1995, 1998) claims the teacher can provide learners with feedback opportunity based on the content and grammar. Izumi and Bigelow (2000) also highlight the role of error feedback claiming that students within output production will formulate and test a hypothesis in order to put their next production based on it and they can change their incorrect hypothesis through various feedback strategies. Adams (2003) says that when learners are engaged in the process of output production, they may realize that they can't communicate what they want. So in this situation, the teacher can give them the corrective feedback. They may notice their problems and understand to what extent it is different from their original output. Havranek and Cesnik (2001) believe that in different classrooms, teachers use corrective feedback in order to grant and make their learners aware of some parts which do not match the target language forms.

As it has been mentioned this focus on form led second language acquisition researchers to appreciate the role of corrective feedback. This renewed attention to form in SLA has made the issue of providing grammar the topic of very

heated discussion. Based on it lots of research have been designed concerning different kinds of feedback (Rahimi, 2009; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen, 2009; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005), factors affect corrective feedback successfulness like students characteristics, types of error correction, context and form of error correction (Havranek and Cesnik, 2001) and teachers and learners preferences regarding feedback (Yoshida, 2008). Teachers provide corrective feedback explicitly and implicitly to the erroneous productions of learners. Explicit feedback refers to providing the students with the correct forms of their errors (Bitchener, Yung & Cameron, 2005; Sheen, 2004). Whereas the proponents of indirect feedback employ various strategies such as underlining the errors and providing the marginal feedback. A great number of the studies on error feedback have been conducted in the area of explicit or implicit correction (Ferris, 2006; Chandler, 2003).

As we know the cross- linguistic difference between two languages can be the source of errors for language learners. Rahimi, 2009 claims that since teachers in a lot of English classes in Iran use grammar translation method and they focus on explicit teaching of grammar, cross- linguistic differences seem to be significant in Iran context. So despite the fact that there is significant variation in the purposes and designs of the previous studies on error feedback explicitly or implicitly, concerning those errors caused by the differences between learners' L1 and L2, it is also important to know whether delineating the problems with reference to the students' L1 would make learners familiar with the sources of their errors and help learners avoid making them in their subsequent tasks. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Does delineating L2 sources of grammatical errors with reference to the students' L1 would help learners improve their text reconstruction task accuracy overtime?
2. Does delineating L2 sources of grammatical errors with reference to the students' L1 would influence students' receptive knowledge of target form as measured on a recognition test?

II. METHODOLOGY

Participant

The participants in the study were 61 Iranian male learners of English as a foreign language, aged 17-25 .They shared the following characteristics a) their major was English and b) their level of proficiency in English was intermediate. These participants were randomly selected from 110 students of university and all of them took part in TOEFL test of English proficiency. Among the participants in the final subject (N=61), 31 learners were in the experimental group (EG), and the remaining 30 were in the comparison group (CG).

Instruments

In order to address the first research question, students were provided with four text reconstruction tasks within 4 treatment sessions. Learners were asked to reconstruct a passage after reading a text. According to Ellis (2003), output task refers to a kind of form-focused task which learners listen to or read a text, and after it, they are required to reconstruct the text based on their words. As Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), state" the assumption underlying this task is that in processing a text for meaning learners store the propositional content but not the linguistic forms used to encode the content" (P.33). Izumi and Bigelow (2000) claim that output activities catch learners' attention to form and meaning at the same time and the learners begin target language production with the intention of expressing meaning. Based on it, they finally conclude that we can be sure that this function of output completely lays stress on the combination of focus on form and meaning. Thornbury (1997) declare that the first thing for this activity is that students will listen or read a text and then try to reconstruct it. Storch (1998) state that we can use text reconstruction task by selecting a text in which function words have been omitted (in order to make it suitable for students proficiency level) and it will help students to consider semantic unit on the basis of the whole text rather than the sentence. More clearly, Storch (1998), explains that

"Students are presented with the content words and instructed to reconstruct the text by inserting appropriate function words (e.g. articles, prepositions), linking words, inflectional morphemes (e.g. tense and aspect markers, singular/plural markers), and/or changing word order in order to produce an accurate, meaningful, and appropriate text"(p.292).

In order to address the second research question, the following test was used:

The recognition tests were based on *Understanding and Using English Grammar*, and *Grammar in Use, Intermediate Course Book*. Each version consisted of 20 items, of which 16 served for four above- cited target items and 4 used as detractors. Of the 16 sentences which included the target structure, 6 of them were correct and 10 incorrect. The participants were required to read the tests and to determine whether they were correct and, if incorrect, to underline the incorrect part and produce the correct form.

Treatment and Procedure

Each participant completed four text reconstruction tasks during 8 sessions, staged at sessions 1, 3, 5 and 7. They were asked to read a text. After reading and collecting the texts, the reconstruction task was carried out by all the two groups. They were asked to reconstruct the content of the passage they had just read as accurately as possible on a sheet of paper. Four selected grammar errors including article errors, questions errors, verb errors and noun ending errors made by the learner in each of the task were then delineated with reference to the students' L1 by the researchers. It should be mentioned that there was no delineation with reference to students'L1 for the errors made by the control

group. To observe the ethical consideration, they were provided with some comments on the organization and content of their text reconstruction tasks as well as very general comments on grammar at the bottom of their papers.

The how of error delineation with reference to the student's L1 in order to raise our learners' awareness of their target language ill-structured form, highlight the differences between English and Persian structures and show the cause of their errors is extracted from the following information and is illustrated as follows:

Article errors:

These errors were largely related to exclusion of articles. Since there is no observable or overt definite or indefinite article in Persian, learners will make the article related errors (Khanchobani, 2010; Rahimi, 2009).

He is teacher. ----- /? *u moaelem aest!*.

It should also be mentioned that since there is no definite article in Persian too, language learners did not use the definite article correctly to make a difference between the specific singular and generic (Khanchobani, 2010). As Rahimian (1995) states most of the time the context will make a noun definite in Persian so one can expect a Persian speaker makes such erroneous structures as below;

Book (specific) is good. ----- /? *Ketab khob aest!*.

Book (generic) is good. ----- /? *Ketab khob aest!*.

Questions

The researcher explains that this error occurs due to difference between Persian and English interrogative structures. As Rahimian (1995) and Yarmohammadi (1996) say Persian speakers keep their questioning tones even dealing with embedded questions. So the tendency to keep the structure of question in Persian environment will lead to the following errors in English context.

Do you know what should I do?

I can't remember when did he get married.

Some of the errors are also related to variable questions and it can be due to the fact that 'wh' movement is optional in Persian but it is obligatory in English.

You saw who in the street. /? *shoma ċe kæsi ra dær xiyaban didid!*/?

Verb errors

As Rahimi, 2009 states "Persian speakers usually use the same structure to talk about past and present perfect, the past progressive and a past habit, and the present progressive and simple present tense" (p. 233). We can also add that Iranian EFL learners while producing a sentence in the target language try to translate the meanings which have been shaped in their minds into English. Therefore, since Persian speakers use the same structure to talk about different tenses and due to the fact that the time issue in Persian is not as significant as in English; the following kinds of errors can be expected:

He went (past). /? *u raft!*.

He went (present perfect). /? *u raft!*.

Noun ending errors

It was highly based on the possessive endings. Due to lack of elements such as 's to join the possessor and the possessions in Persian, its speakers clarify the relation by the vowel sound /e/, which does not appear in writing (Rahimi, 2009; Fallahi, 1991). So we can expect the following kinds of errors:

Book Bab. / *ketab-e bab!*.

Noun endings errors were also seen while making a plural form of a noun in English. It can be made because Persian speakers never add any particular element to the nouns in Persian to make a plural form of them when the nouns come after figures.

He has seven book. /? *u haft ketab darad!*.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the result of investigation to see the extent to which delineation with reference to students' L on four targeted linguistic errors helped learners improve the accuracy of their text reconstruction task when producing new texts.

As evident in the table 1, the error means of EG and CG in their first text reconstruction tasks are 11.28 and 12.57, respectively. The error mean of the fourth text reconstruction task was 4.60 for EG and 7.32 for CG. The standard deviations for the two groups are very close in their first text reconstruction tasks; however, the standard deviation of CG is almost twice as much as that of EG (4.65 and 2.52, respectively) indicating a larger disparity among the error means of CG. Overall, one can see a slight difference between the error means of the two groups at the beginning of the experiment, while this difference has increased in their last text reconstruction tasks.

TABLE 1
ERROR MEANS IN TEXT RECONSTRUCTION TASK 1 AND 4 IN EG AND CG

Task	M	SD
1EG	11.28	9.56
1CG	12.57	9.23
4EG	4.60	2.52
4CG	7.32	4.65

In order to further confirm this hypothesis, as a follow up test, two independent-tests were run to show whether the difference between error means of the first text reconstruction tasks of the two groups as well as that of their last text reconstruction tasks was significant or not. The results of the first t-test showed that the difference between the error mean of text reconstruction task one for EG and that of the same text reconstruction task for CG was not significant ($T = 0.47, p > 0.05$), indicating that the two groups were equal with respect to their text reconstruction task accuracy at the beginning of the study. On the other hand, the second t-test indicated that the difference between the last text reconstruction task written by EG and CG was significant ($T = 2.12, p < 0.05$), with EG making fewer errors than CG (4.6 and 7.32, respectively).

As Table 2 shows, the error means for both experimental and control groups decrease from the first to the last text reconstruction task. The difference between the error means of text reconstruction task 1 and text reconstruction task 4 for EG is 6.68 while this index is 3.25 for CG. Thus, it implies that EG have made more improvement than CG. The same is true with the standard deviations. That is, the standard deviations for both groups have decreased from the first to the last text reconstruction task, though the decrease in EG is much larger than in CG, indicating smaller disparity among the error means of CG. The results of the repeated measures test of ANOVA showed significant differences between the means of the four text reconstruction tasks in both groups ($F = 13.16, p < 0.01$) for EG; $F = 4.01, p < 0.05$) for CG). Bonferroni test was used as the post hoc test to correct the significance level and to eliminate the effect of repeated analyses for the same group of students. The results of the post hoc Bonferroni test showed that except for text reconstruction tasks one and two, there are significant differences between the error means of all the other text reconstruction tasks for EG, whereas, for CG, significant difference was observed only between the error means of text reconstruction tasks one and four.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ERROR MEANS OF THE FOUR TEXT RECONSTRUCTION TASKS BY EG AND CG

Task	Error mean		SD	
	EG	CG	EG	CG
1	11.28	12.57	9.56	9.23
2	10.84	11.71	7.94	9.27
3	7.20	10.02	5.72	6.65
4	4.60	9.32	2.52	4.65

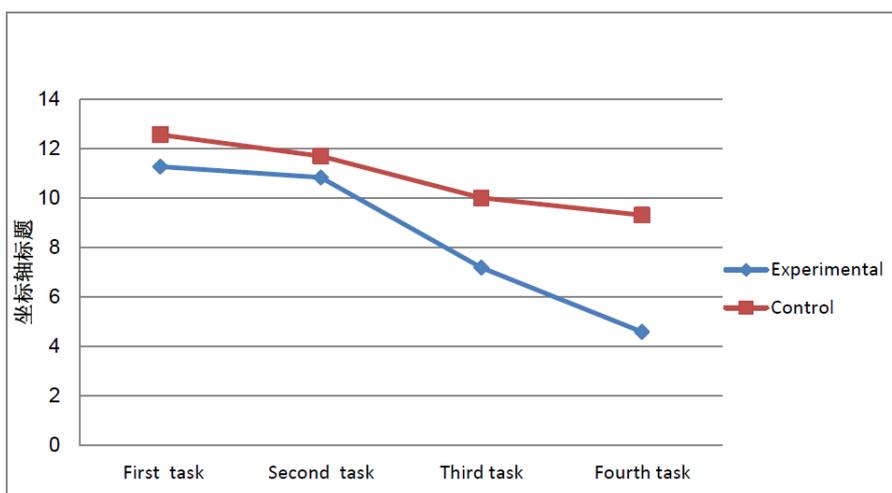


Fig. 1. Error mean scores graph of the four text reconstruction tasks by EG and CG

In order to answer the second research question, the data obtained from pretest indicated a difference between the two groups' mean scores; the experimental group scored higher than the control group. The statistical analysis of the results of the pretest, and the group mean comparison revealed that $T_{observed}$ to be .85, with probability value: $P < .05$. It is clear that the value of $T_{observed}$ does not exceed $T_{critical}$ that is 2. Therefore the difference between two groups was not significant at $P < .05$. It means that the two groups turned out not to be significantly different at the beginning of the study. Therefore, based on this result, any differences on the post – test found for experimental groups can be attributed to treatment effects rather than to pre – existing differences.

The analysis of the results of posttest, and the group means comparison showed the $T_{observed}$ to be 5.71 with the probability level of $P < .05$ and is much higher than $T_{critical}$. It means that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control group. Therefore this significant difference between the experimental and control group can be attributed to treatment effect with EG acting on the recognition test better than the control group.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR RECOGNITION TEST SCORES

	Experimental Group			Control group		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain
M	65.66	86.21	20.55	65.15	67.42	2.27
SD	32.71	19.70		34.12	30.15	

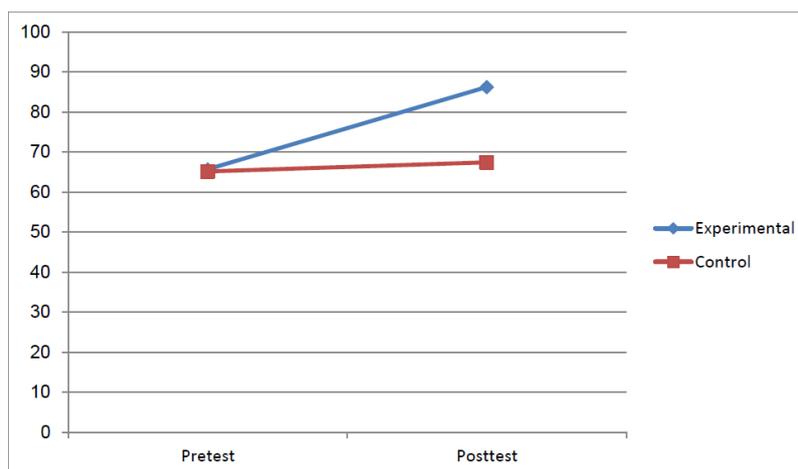


Fig. 2. Mean scores graph of recognition test by the two groups.

The results of the present study are interpreted as an indication that English learners, native speakers of Persian, benefited from delineating L2 sources of errors with reference to their L1 as a result of which the experimental group learners improved their production and recognition levels. The control group production patterns concerning the first and second research questions do not show gain a finding which doesn't seem to weaken our claim. We interpreted the results of this study as an indication that delineating L2 sources of grammatical errors with references to the students' L1 induced salience which drew the learners' attention to L1 – L2 differences, made them notice the differences. In this study, learners who were able to comprehend the differences between L1 and L2 on the basis of the desired treatment improved their production and recognition levels. Concerning the positive role of delineating with reference to the students L1, the findings of this study are consistent with Manuchehri (1974) claiming that English teachers must be familiar to some extent with learner's native language. She continues that "this kind of information enables teachers to develop insights into the problems that his students are likely to encounter as the result of the differences between English and their native language" (Manuchehri, 1974; p. 171). In order to make teachers able to help students preventing errors, Isfahani(1989) claims that errors made by Persian students learning English as a foreign language show that pre-systematic and systematic errors are due to transformational rules used by learners in creating simple and complex sentences.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study found that delineating L2 sources of grammatical errors with reference to the learner's L1 can help the experimental group learners to gain accuracy. It was found that the above-cited treatment contributes to the text reconstruction task accuracy and can also be conducive to add to the learner's receptive knowledge measured through recognition tests.

The pedagogical implication of this study can help teachers, researchers, syllabus designers and material developers to consider the role of cross-linguistic differences between any two languages while teaching in the class, conducting different studies on language acquisition issues and also selecting or grading of materials to help second language learners to learn a language. Another important implication can be due to the fact that since a lot of Iranian teachers prefer to apply a lot of error correction strategies, it will be helpful to know how cross-linguistics differences can influence the efficiency of error correction while treating different kind of errors in the classroom. The underlying objectives of these kinds of studies are to help teachers to know about those errors resulting from language differences and diminish the difficulty acquiring second language.

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A Critical Examination of Motivation in the Omani English Language Education System

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Abstract—This study asks questions and elicits answers about the factors that influence E/FL motivation in the Sultanate of Oman from a critical perspective. It triangulates data from semi-structured interviews made with different informants involved in the Omani English language teaching (ELT) system and representing different social, cultural, and academic backgrounds, the *Philosophy and Guidelines for the Omani English Language School Curriculum* (Nunan, Walton, & Tyacke, 1987) – herewith referred to as the National English Language Policy/Plan (NELP), the pertinent literature and the national textbook *Our world Through English* (OWTE). The critical discussion has revealed variable ideologies and statements about various factors influencing motivation for learning F/EL. The findings of this study have their direct and important implications for other similar F/EL planning and policy contexts.

Index Terms—ELT, NELP, OWTE, motivation, ideology

I. ENGLISH IN OMAN

English in the Sultanate of Oman is the only official foreign language. It has been receiving political, economic, and legislative support from the government, which has determined its place on the social hierarchy. It has institutional domains like the mass media, education, and business (Al-Busaidi, 1995). People in Oman learn English for several significant purposes like inter-lingual communication inland and abroad, conducting business, finding a white-collar job, pursuing higher education domestically or abroad, acquiring science and technology and analyzing and understanding the English language cultures. In their *Philosophy and Guidelines for the Omani English Language School Curriculum* document (Nunan, Walton, & Tyacke, 1987) – herewith referred to as the National English Language Policy/Plan (NELP), the three authors describe English as central to Oman’s continued national development and a pivotal tool for transition and “Omanization” – a process through which gradual replacement of expatriate manpower by Omani qualified and skilled working force occurs. The statistics revealed by the 2010 national census indicate that the number of the expatriate labor force has exceeded 800,000, bearing in mind that the overall population of Oman is about 2.9 million. Most of this relatively cheap workforce comes from countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

In spite of the importance of English as a powerful tool for achieving multiple purposes, students have always exited the Omani system with a poor functional level. Much of this is attributed to motivation, as a powerful factor that drives foreign language learning and success. This study, therefore, attempts to discuss the factors that influence E/FL motivation from an “ideological” perspective. A thorough survey of the literature on F/EL has revealed that no work discussing this issue from an ideological perspective has been carried out or published.

Within this context, the following research questions are asked:

1. What are the key discourses in NELP about the factors influencing motivation?
2. What discourses inform the views of the different informants involved in the Omani ELT system about factors influencing motivation and their role in them?
3. What ideologies inform the views of the different informants involved in the Omani ELT system about factors influencing motivation and their role in them?
4. What are the key discourses in Our World Through English (OWTE) about factors influencing motivation and the role of the teacher in it?
5. What is the role of the teacher in influencing motivation in OWTE?

II. IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN NELP

Nunan et al. (1987) consider language as a “living entity” and not a fact-based school subject, which can be memorized for exam purposes. They consider language learning as a “complex, multifaceted, multifunctional entity” (p. 2)

The authors of NELP believe that one of the goals of the Omani English curriculum should be “To assist students acquire the competence to use English as a vehicle for learning and communication within the classroom, and as a medium of interpersonal communication in situations outside the classroom” (p. 28).

Nunan et al. also mention success and see that it is important that students are given tasks and meaningful activities that provoke cognitive challenge and promote problem solving and critical thinking to arouse the students' motivation and positively impact their attitudes about learning English. This should be coupled with making the "... system more accountable for student proficiency/less for achievement grades" (NELP, p. 9). They propose incorporating authentic materials, which provide "naturalistic samples" of contextualized language like "... books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, documents, signs, notices, films, television, slide, tape, radio, public announcement, lecture or written report etc." (p. 14), which facilitate carrying out "real world tasks" using the target language. It is interesting to see that computers (and the Internet) are missing from this list, which can be attributed to the fact that Nunan et al. wrote their document at a time when computers and the Internet were not largely used as a significant tool for supporting teaching enhancing learning in education in general and language education in specific.

It is, therefore, important that learners are clear about why they are learning English since this is very likely to have a strong impact on their motivation, attitudes and attainment. The three authors claim that "... there are instances in which the purposes for which the learners need to learn English are not clear" (p. 14). They also claim that English in Oman is "seen as 'subject' like any other, not as skill" (p. 9). Nunan et al. believe that this results from the students developing "... integrative rather than instrumental motivation" (p. 9). The development of integrative motivation is associated with the exam-based system implemented in Oman. Nunan et al. critique the assessment system in Oman and describe it as "traditional". They propose that "... focus should be on the extent to which the ability to carry out communicative tasks ... has been improved through instruction" (p. 25). In other words, the three authors are advocating "criterion-referenced tests" (p. 25), which help involve students in "... communication and cooperation, rather than competition" (p. 24).

However, assessment in Oman gives priority to mastery of content, which comes at the expense of comprehension and performance. Students in Oman take four monthly tests and two end-of-semester exams, except for the Grade 12 students, who take only two end-of-semester exams. Scores determine their success or otherwise. Those who fail more than two subjects repeat the year. Parents and the society value formal tests and the marks scored in tests and look at them as a reliable source of gauging their children's performance. The authors view this as lack of awareness on the part of the parents. They, therefore, propose involving parents and students more in "... the understanding of curriculum objectives" (p. 9). They further suggest involving administrators, teachers and parents in a gradual awareness process to help influence the students' motivation. The writers of NELP additionally suggest that developing a system by which focus is on performance rather than on mastery of content can help resolve the problem of perceptions toward examinations.

The writers of NELP, moreover, mention that students in Oman do not see English having functional relevance to their existence. The three authors believe that one of the reasons behind this is lack of resources and practice opportunities. Examples of resources provided by the team of writers are self-access resource centers, check-out audio cassettes and telecasting. They also suggest encouraging visits from various private companies like the Petroleum Development of Oman (PDO) and from public organizations like Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) – the only state-owned university in Oman, to "... show English as living, working part of Omani context" (p. 9).

Nunan et al. discuss the importance of educational technology through developing software to help reinforce the students' language skills and motivation beyond the classroom environment and provide extra opportunities for language interaction and train students to use language for cognitively challenging purposes like problem solving.

Furthermore, the writers of NELP promote exposure to the native speaker through various means other than direct verbal and physical contact with the native speaker. They mention films, TV and radio programs as important aspects of culture that can impact on the students' language proficiency.

In addition, Nunan et al. would like to see teachers as critical reflectors, needs analysts, competent language users and professionals, skilled, informed, confident, and autonomous decision makers, who can pick the right materials and design appropriate activities that arouse their students' integrative and intrinsic motivation, which the Omani education system seems to have overlooked, and foster and encourage meaningful language use to help bring about positive change to the system.

III. ELT AND MOTIVATION

Motivation is one of the most researched complex, critical, dynamic and forceful internal language development factors. Many authors have described it as a key factor and acknowledged and stressed its significance and centrality for successful foreign language learning. Gardner & Lambert (1972), argue that motivation leads to increased effort and energy, enhances cognitive process, increases persistence in learning activities, and leads to improved performance.

Several authors have also linked positive attitudes about studying a foreign language and making effort to excel in it with strong motivation (Ellis, 1997, Gardner, 1985). High motivation has been also directly linked with a high desire to learn autonomously (Dahmardeh & Hunt, 2012). Autonomous learning, in turn, has been highlighted as boosting student's confidence to overcome learning obstacles (Li & Pan, 2009).

Motivation has been divided into "instrumental" and "integrative" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). While the former is associated with learning a foreign language for practical goals, the latter is associated with learning to become closer to the target language's communities, as it is the case the English language today. Motivation has been further classified

into “intrinsic” and “extrinsic”. While the former is associated with integrative orientation and learners are motivated to learn a foreign language for its own sake and the enjoyment it provides, the latter is commonly associated with instrumental orientation and the learner is mainly driven by some kind of external reward or fear of punishment, such as achieving better grades or receiving their teacher’s approval.

Motivation has been perceived as a challenging issue facing teachers today (Dahmardeh & Hunt, 2012). Humaida (2012) lists a number of factors that allow for the development of the student’s motivation in English or foreign language learning. He mentions the home environment, school-related success and failure, teachers’ performance, school-wide goals, classroom climate and policies and procedures. In addition, Brown (2007) lists the individual learner, teaching methodology, social interaction, cultural milieu and educational context as factors determining student’s integrative and instrumental motivation. Moreover, Zhao (2012) discusses the teacher, activities and materials, relevance of content and instruction and the classroom environment as external factors affecting motivation. Baldauf (1990) thus places teachers at the heart of language education and values their professionalism. He views them as the sole interpreters of the syllabus that usually embraces and reflects the philosophies and ideologies set by the government, that resemble the close relationship between “... the use of language and power, socioeconomic development, national and local identity, and cultural values” (p. 18).

Petrides (2006) and Li and Pan (2009) suggest that use of communicatively popular and joyful activities play a crucial role in arousing students’ motivation about learning English. Petrides (2006) considers students’ active involvement in a task as a sign of motivation. Petrides discusses the importance of designing a variety of fun activities, new technologies, pictures, objects, signs, attractive visual aids and the provision of opportunities to help the learners use the language for real life situations and for actual communication. This is in order to help them come across native speaker models either in real life (visits, teleconferencing and e-mails) or through the use of new technologies and available resources. Examples here can be web sites with authentic material. Petrides considers these as materials that can be used to promote motivation in ELT classroom. Costa (2011) suggests that “... the possible uses of technology in the classroom are endless” (p. 210). Shyamlee (2012) also argues that the “21st century is the age of globalization and is important to grasp on various foreign languages and English language comes first” (p. 151). Shyamlee adds that “technological innovations have gone hand in hand with the growth of English and are changing the way we communicate. It is fair to assert that the growth of the internet has facilitated the growth of the English language” (p. 151). Davies and Pearse (2000) and Al-Mamari (2007) thus consider the use of the Internet as positively impacting motivation and learner-centered teaching. Use of advanced technology, hence, is considered to help produce independent learners, who rely less on the teacher, while more on their ability and knowledge. The Internet, thus, has become a necessity in Oman rather than luxury. Almost every house in Muscat particularly has a computer or more and access to the Internet.

Kong (2009) thus stresses the responsibility of teachers as primary motivators of their students through using various and interesting activities, involving new and effective teaching techniques, high performance expectations, appropriate use of rewards, creation of a relaxed and positive learning climate inside the classroom, implementation of cooperative activities and provision of activities for students to experience success.

In an attempt to analyze the use of motivational strategies by English language teachers in Oman, Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-Ul-Hassan and Cofie (2012) found that teachers in Oman overwhelmingly endorse motivation strategies related to the teacher’s personal performance in the classroom. Those are promoting learner’s self confidence, recognizing students’ effort and celebrating their success, presenting tasks properly, making learning tasks stimulating, creating a pleasant and relaxed climate in the classroom, familiarizing learners with L2 related values, increasing learners’ goal-orientedness and promoting learner autonomy.

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The Omani situation under investigation is unique in itself. The aim of this study is thus to expand and generalize a theory and to suggest complexities for further future research, rather than provide statistical generalizations or enumerate frequencies. Multiple sources of evidence interviews – “critical” content analysis, written texts and documents, and the pertinent literature are used to make genuine contributions to the Omani context under investigation.

All these data sources encompass “ideologies” and “discourses” – two key concepts in this paper. Ideologies, as defined by van Dijk (1998) and within the context of this study mainly refer to systems of thoughts and conceptions of the world, and are general, abstract, collective, and socially and historically positioned, developed, produced and reproduced through communication and discourse. Gramsci (1971) views ideologies as articulated via discourses and produced by different social classes and are the result and the product of different social practices and history. Gee (1990) considers texts and discourses as rich sources through which knowledge, ideas, and beliefs about a particular notion are held and revealed, or a situation experienced by a particular person or a group of people.

The major source of data collection in this paper is the 15 informants involved in the Omani ELT system – teachers, inspectors, teacher trainers, school heads, SQU ELT faculty, English Language Curriculum Department (ELCD) officers, SQU Final Year ELT student teachers and Grade 12 students, who were selected on the basis of opportunity sampling technique. The reason for choosing Grade 12 students and SQU Final Year ELT student teachers is because their experience about learning English is longer due to having spent more years in the system. Certain criteria like

gender, age and experience, were kept in mind when selecting the informants, who are all inhabitants of Muscat Area – Oman’s cosmopolitan capital to guarantee ideological diversity. Moreover, factors such as the informants’ linguistic, academic, educational, cultural, and social backgrounds were taken into consideration for the aforementioned reason.

All agents received an interview protocol letter, which states the aim of this research and their role in it. They were further asked to fill out a descriptive information sheet, which requested different personal details pertinent to the study such as age, nationality, academic qualifications, present status, years spent in Oman, languages known and used most, place of and purpose behind learning English, and current use(s) of English. Their consent prior to conducting, tape-recording, and transcribing the interviews was obtained.

All the agents in this study are directly or indirectly involved in ELT. Their diverse but direct and explicit systems of thoughts and conceptions of the world were reflected through their various discourses about ELT (see Table 1).

The three main questions which constructed the semi-structured interviews and aimed at eliciting the informants’ statements about factors influencing motivation in E/FL are:

1. How did you learn English/a foreign language?
2. Why do you think some people learn English better and faster than others?
3. How do you consider English as a school subject within the Omani curriculum?

Other equally significant sources of data are NELP and the pertinent literature. These texts include variable sorts of information that can make a relevant source of data for this study. All these sources of data reveal knowledge, ideas, beliefs, and experiences and are used to contribute to the generation of a hypothesis and construction of a theory about factors influencing F/EL motivation.

The data extracted from the aforementioned sources was analyzed inductively, moving from specific to general and with insufficient knowledge available about the studied phenomenon. The aim behind this was to identify key lexical items structuring the discourses of the informants, NELP and the pertinent literature, and help identify any inter-textual similarities, agreements and harmony. Semantic and syntactic content analyses thus contribute to the author’s general thinking and interpretation and the development of a relevant hypothesis. There is a substantial amount of relevant information about the political, social, and cultural forces influencing motivation about E/FL in the Omani language education system.

To improve quality, reliability and validity, the interview questions were piloted on six volunteers from SQU and the Ministry of Education, who represented different backgrounds and held different experiences, notions, values, perceptions, beliefs and thoughts about factors influencing E/FL motivation.

V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Different themes have emerged from the analysis of the data, which have been inspired by the pertinent literature and NELP. Those are: The environment, media, family, total immersion, work and school.

A. *Environment*

Informant #1 compares between Adam, her hometown, and Muscat and believes that the latter environment furnishes better chances for language exposure and practice.

For example, when I was in Adam (a small remote village in the interior region of Oman) in my secondary school I didn’t use it [English] at all. I think those who live here in Muscat use it a lot with others, in dealing with others, for example, at big centers, big supermarkets, or other places like that.

The places used as examples by this informant – “big centers” and “big supermarkets” or as they are known today by “hypermarkets” – are often visited by male and female Omani youth, especially during the summer holiday when schools are closed and the weather is very hot with temperatures exceeding 40 degrees centigrade even during the night sometimes. Such places facilitate socialization and social gatherings through the wide array of shopping facilities and experiences they offer.

There is indirect reference made in this informant’s statement to the role intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play in English language practice and use. While the two types of motivation are different, they can exist side by side in an individual.

B. *Media*

Informant #2 claims that she learned English through variable sources. “I learned English through reading some books ... I also learned it from the TV and from the radio”. Similarly, informant #3 believes he learned English through channels external to the school and teacher “I learned English through watching TV, series, movies and reading books”.

These informants learned English because they had a variety of sources to acquire the target language from. Such sources can contribute to students’ oral and written English language development. In addition, such sources mostly presented the target language through fun and entertainment. These informants were intrinsically motivated to acquire English in a pressure and anxiety-free environment and through the use of accessible tools and ones which they presumably enjoyed using most beyond the school and classroom boundaries and with minimal or no interference from the teacher.

C. *Family*

Informant #4 looks at motivation from a broader angle. She thinks that the family and the home environment have a major and supportive role to play in driving and fostering motivation about acquiring English language leading to linguistic development.

If a child is learning English, for example, let's say like in Oman, and they're just doing a sort of five classes of English a week ... and they go back to their home environment, they have either family or people working in the home environment, who actually use English as a medium of communication. Then, I think naturally that child is going to have more exposure to the language and is going to pick up the language faster and more easily than a child in the same class, who goes back into an environment where there is no English spoken; there's no exposure to English either through people working in the house, parents talking in English, radio being listened to, films being watched, there are no books around at home. Then, I think it would be naturally more demanding for that child to learn English at the same rate as the other child.

There are a number of effective out-of-classroom target language learning strategies mentioned here.

Informants #2, #3 and #4 highlighted the role of materials and sources that include a high degree of the culture(s) of the target language. Examples have been the media, books and the native speaker.

Reference is being made to the role of the family in providing a stress and control-free environment for accessing the target language and positively impacting the students' motivation. The role of the family in language maintenance is also considered important. English here is seen as one of the languages that can be maintained by the families in Oman, as it is the case with Arabic and the several indigenous languages, for example.

It is further interesting to note that informant #4 is very familiar with the structure and functions of the Omani society, as she has been in Oman for over 25 years and worked as a teacher of different levels in different areas of the Sultanate until she became an Inspector. However, it is interesting to note that she is using the "radio" and reading "books" as examples of exposure to language. I argued above that such sources of language exposure are not as commonly used as three or four decades ago, especially in Muscat the capital. However, this informant mentioned "exposure to English either through people working in the house". Reference here is being made to servants. Almost all middle-class families in Oman in general and in Muscat in particular recruit female servants from India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines. This expatriate labor force mostly uses English as a medium of communication. English is, therefore, used for inter-lingual communication purposes even by the non-Arab tourists and visitors. It bridges the linguistic gap between the Omanis and the non-Arab guest workers.

Informant #5 thus states that she acquired her English at home. "I used to speak English at home with my sisters and brothers and with the maids. So the whole environment at home was English". This informant has the power to influence her student teachers' beliefs and attitudes about using English all the time with their students in the classroom. She can do this through transmitting her personal experience to them.

Another natural source of language exposure and practice leading to motivation consolidation and highlighted by the last two informants is the housemaids or the servants. This informant comes from a high class family. Such families in Oman and the neighboring Gulf countries usually hire more than one servant from the aforementioned countries at the same time and opt for those with a certain level of education and experience to ensure provision of the best care for their children.

D. Total Immersion

Informant #6 looks at the environment from the total immersion perspective. She lived in Hungary for three years and learned Hungarian as she was immersed in the culture and the language. "I learned Hungarian in three year. I lived in Hungary so I was immersed in the culture and the language. I spent a lot of time with Hungarians, who could not speak a lot of English". This informant is an outgoing, self-confident, and motivated person with positive attitudes, who adopted an out-of-classroom strategy through mixing with the natives of the language and sought interaction and practice opportunities to reach her appropriate goal of mastering a foreign language.

On the contrary, informant #7 describes her experience in learning French in USA, which included the element of anxiety. However, she thinks that she learned French better when she lived there for some time and mixed with the natives of the country.

When I learned French I wasn't that fluent. When I went to France and lived there my French improved really a lot. But when I was in the United States I was afraid I would make mistakes if I talked French or people would laugh at me.

This informant suffered from a psychological strain represented in anxiety and poor confidence, which has impacted her motivation. She was afraid of being evaluated negatively by the people.

E. Work

Informant #8 believes that a foreign language is learnt better and faster for reasons associated with instrumental motivation. He thinks that "there are a few factors here. There's motivation ... for jobs ... for a career ... for more money". All the reasons provided here are goal-governed and economically-driven. The same informant (#8) believes that working with French made him acquire a native-speaker like ability. He learned the language formally and acquired it through social contact. These two channels of exposure to the target language helped him develop a native-speaker like competence. He perceives his situation as very closely resembling the Omani students' situation about learning English for job purposes.

I also had some French and my French now is much better. I was more or less like a native speaker at one stage, because I was working in the language. I was working in French, attending meetings in French. That was the key thing – having to use the language.

Informant #9 also advocates the concept of instrumental motivation using his own experience. “Now, if you look at people, for example, the drivers or the cleaners and the salesmen. These people learn Arabic fast because it is a necessity for their job”. These laborers in Oman mainly come from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. While few Omanis speak Hindi or Urdu, none speaks Bengali. Acquisition of and communication in Arabic for the Indians, Pakistanis and Bengalis is hence driven entirely by instrumental motivation.

Thus, informant #10 looks at the Omani students as lacking instrumental motivation and that it is affecting the Sultanate’s economic growth. English is necessary for national development and for bringing about positive social change.

Students don’t understand why this language is taught in the country, in spite of the fact that Oman’s revenue come possibly from 90%-95% ... from those who use English in their work places, and English is very important in all industries, business and a number of other professions in Oman. It is really important for those students to know why it is taught in the country and its importance in the labor market, which is the future of this country. Unfortunately many kids are not aware of it at all.

This informant is in a position to influence positive policy implementation through educating the students he meets with when he accompanies his student teachers to their practicum. He can also advise his student teachers to play the same role as his with their students at school. As a teacher trainer, he is a powerful socialization agent and an individual, who possesses substantial sanctioning power over his student teachers.

This informant, who has received his school education in Zanzibar where English enjoys an official status, examined and investigated in his Doctorate thesis the place of English in the private sector and what future lies ahead for English. His mention of the industrial and economic role of English is directly influenced by the study he has conducted in 1995.

The mention of “industries” and “business” here indicates the importance of English for business and technology and working in these two fields. This appears evident from his reference to the “labor market”. Oman needs acquisition of technology since it is fundamental for business and industry development. Oman is not an industrial country, but it has trade links with the world, which largely uses English for trade and business transactions. In the age of globalization and where the world is shrinking and becoming one small village, Oman cannot live in isolation from the rest of the world.

Informant #11 believes that students in Oman do not see the relevance of English for socioeconomic purposes.

They [the students] should be aware of the current situation. They don’t know really why they are learning English. They should be enlightened with the current situation because you know the English language is very important nowadays for someone to get a job in our country. These things should be discussed with the students.

This informant, who has highly positive attitudes towards learning English has been learning it for the past 13 years and his social contacts with the various students have made him believe that many of them still cannot see the relevance of English. Being a future English teacher and someone who has decided to work in ELT, he believes that English is very important for getting a job. This informant has instrumental motivation and is aware of the important role of English to the extent that he has been to an English speaking country already to improve his English proficiency.

F. School

Those who see the relevance of English are the ones who see it through the lenses of passing exams with high marks. Exams as an indication of success in second language learning present a big problem to the Omani students. Informant #12 thinks that “students do not learn English for the sake of learning a language. Rather, it is just to pass the examinations”.

Informant #4 states that “teachers train for the exams” and that “the whole nature of the exam system is an absolute fuss and it reflects badly when they are [the students] at Grade 12”. This is the case in Oman where some teachers give private tutorials/lessons to Grade 12 students whose parents can afford the fees and are willing to invest in tutoring in order to prepare their children specifically for the exam. The fees can reach as high as U.S. \$30-40 per student per hour. This even occurs sometimes during school hours and applies to subjects like Arabic Language, Maths, Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Teachers giving these kinds of lessons, and those teaching at public schools too, usually use past exam papers to train the students to answer the end-of-semester exam questions.

Informant #13 critically describes the way he was taught English and the level he had reached.

We are learning English strictly for exam purposes. I can translate in writing, but I wouldn’t be able to talk, despite the fact I have good vocabulary. This is what we miss today, the modern way of teaching English. There has to be a kind of solution to this problem. It cannot be solved through our curriculum. This is of course the concern and the responsibility of the educational system, not ours.

Higher education institutions in Oman, almost like anywhere else in the world, accept those with the highest scores in Grade 12 exams. Exam score is critical for a student’s career path and future earnings. Public higher education institutions implement this policy more religiously than the private institutions due to the limited available seats at the different undergraduate academic institutions.

Thus, informant #14 thinks that “students should be motivated by their parents, by the society, by the headmaster, and by the academicians”. She further thinks that “schools should hold a school council and invite parents to attend and discuss the problems related to their children”. The role of the society, hence, in accepting and understanding the values of English is important in facilitating successful language education implementation. Societies influence language spread and maintenance perhaps as much as governments do. Involving parents in such forums can positively impact the English language policy implementation. Language change is primarily concerned with bringing about positive change to the society.

There are, however, some Omani parents, who do not work in English. There are also many parents who cannot read and write, or can read but not write. There are additionally many parents, who cannot even speak Arabic fluently. There are also many parents, who live in areas in Oman, where exposure to English is extremely limited or hardly exists. Moreover, there are many parents, who are a product of Quranic schools, or who have never been to school themselves. Furthermore, there are parents, who prefer to see their children find a job immediately after completing Grade 12 for economic reasons. Parents with this level of literacy, education, circumstances, attitudes and perceptions surely cannot contribute to their children’s awareness or motivation.

It is noteworthy that some schools in Oman hold councils and invite parents to meet with teachers. However, discussions mostly revolve round students’ achievement and the marks they have scored in their tests. Another aim for such councils is to raise funds to help construct various projects related to the school premises. Such meetings are usually held once every semester or once a year.

Informant #11 states that “at school we learned English compulsory, not for interest. We studied grammar rules. We had to read books at school, activity and pupil books”.

This informant has instrumental and intrinsic motivation and has opted for becoming an English teacher. He is apparently enjoying what he is doing and learning at present. As an ELT student teacher, who has been exposed to different educational, social and psychological theories of teaching and learning, he has developed a firm belief about the key role of motivation for activating learning, especially in EFL contexts, where the uses and values of learning English are not visible. His critical statement is based upon his reflection on his personal knowledge and experience as a school student and college student, which have shaped his ideologies.

Informant #10 believes that English is one of the least popular subjects because the students fail to see its communicative and functional value and fail to use it interactively.

Most students are just surviving from day to day wanting the hours to go as quickly as possible. Most of them have lots of problems with their English. While language is for communication they fail to communicate even simple sentences. As a result, due to lack of success these students lose interest, lack motivation and as a result it is not one of the loved subjects in many schools in Oman.

This informant is describing Omani students of English as “demotivated” and “amotivated”, who have lost their interest in learning the language and have no goals and motivation to make any move due to lack of self-esteem and interactive use and practice of the target language.

Informant #15 thus believes that students fail to see the significance of English for communicative purposes due to the fact that it is just another fact-based-like school subject, which they need to pass and forget about after leaving school. “Students have to memorize it, pass the test and forget it ... English is not seen as means of communication, but like any other fact-based subject. Some students see it as a mountain or a hurdle that should be really overcome”.

The last two informants have been teaching at SQU for over 20 years. They taught English at different schools and institutes prior to obtaining their Ph.D. They have been involved in different activities and technical committees about ELT at SQU and beyond, which have exposed them to sufficient ELT theory and practice. They are aware that students at SQU are indifferent from those at school in terms of possessing extrinsic motivation that strongly influence their way of perceiving English. Many faculties at SQU concentrate on short tests (quizzes) and give them a distinct edge over continuous assessment. Such tests gauge students’ memory rather than their cognitive skills, which is typical of education in the Arab World and which contradict the aims of progressive and humanistic education. Such a situation further negatively impacts the preparation of national manpower for the local and global job markets in an ever evolving, demanding and challenging economic world almost entirely driven by globalization and internationalization.

VI. IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN OWTE

Language in OWTE is described as communication, “that is giving and receiving information” (*Teacher’s Guide, Elementary Level*, p. 2) and that “speaking is the most common form of communication” (*Teacher’s Guide, Preparatory Level*, p. 37). Both books claim that language is used mainly for three functions: “descriptions, narratives and instructions” (*Teacher’s Guide, Elementary Level*, p. 3). There is no place here for literary language.

Knowledge goes from the teacher to the children ... the teacher exposes the children to the new language ... sometimes actions or realia are used to help understanding ... later in the lesson when the teacher is sure that most of the children understand what they have heard, they are given the chance to produce language about the topic ... it is important that you use as much English as possible ... if you do, you may find your children learn more from you than from their books (*Teacher’s Guide, Elementary Level*, p. 2).

Teachers are invited to go beyond the Teacher's Guide and bring some of their own experience and knowledge to the classroom, even though this is more confined to the experienced teachers. "If you are a new teacher follow the procedure in the Teacher's Guide very closely. Do the same if you are using a new book. If you do this, you will achieve the aims of the lesson" (*Teacher's Guide, Elementary Level*, p. 31). Even the experienced teachers are allowed to supplement the textbook and go beyond the Teacher's Guide under certain conditions represented in completing the syllabus. "It is important ... that you complete the syllabus as this is what you test" (*Teacher's Guide, Elementary Level*, p. 33).

Sometimes the Teacher's Book makes suggestions for extra activities. You must decide how you spend this time ... with a difficult lesson and a weak class you will need to find some extra time perhaps by omitting some easy steps or even by using extra lessons ... once you have used a Teacher's Book from start to finish, you are free to adapt it or even use different texts or tasks as long as you achieve the same aims ... you must plan any changes very carefully. Your inspector, for good reasons, may insist that you follow the Teacher's Book exactly (*Teacher's Guide, Elementary Level*, p. 33-34).

Teachers are not in a position to make decisions inside the Omani classrooms and resort to their creative and innovative skills. Adapting to such a rigidly controlled situation is considered a priority and has an edge over the learning process and quality of delivery, which makes teachers appear as lacking teaching skills and advocates conventional teaching methods, and hence, demotivates the learners.

The *Teacher's Guide, Elementary Level* (1997-98) states that learners learn when they are enjoying themselves and finding things out for themselves, or via discovery learning. In other words, there is emphasis laid on autonomous learning where students actively and dynamically take initiatives and direct and regulate their learning, make decisions about their learning, think independently, manipulate knowledge and create meaning with minimum reference to the teacher. This is bound to prepare students to become life-long and autonomous learners, who possess higher motivation leading to producing better and more effective work.

However, the *Teacher's Guide, Preparatory Level* (1997-98) encourages teachers to collect texts and articles related to the topics of the textbook and present them in a simplified language. The incredible and rapid growth of knowledge at present, particularly via the Internet and the press, necessitates its introduction to the students. Such control over knowledge can reflect badly on the teacher's image in terms of his/her depth and breadth of knowledge, and hence, demotivates the students.

OWTE thus contains simplified listening tasks, a few songs and rhymes on the accompanying tape, which attempt to stress certain lexical and structural aspects of the lesson or topic introduced. The tasks, which contain a native speaker, are primarily for the students to listen to and try and model their pronunciation. In other words, OWTE restricts access to the native speaker. The students listen to the mandated textbook's language and voice more through the carefully controlled presentation of the teacher. There is more or less a cycle through which the activities are used repetitively, which has been a demotivating factor for English learners.

Teachers are given freedom but within a predefined and strict limits and parameters. Cultural appropriateness still serves colonizing the students' minds and values so as to produce domesticated natives, who think within limits and acquire predefined knowledge, but do not critique or examine, which is bound to contribute to the students' demotivation and amotivation.

VII. DISCUSSION

Motivation, as found in the literature and NELP, is a significant factor in the development of the target language. Several internal and external factors have been found powerfully influencing motivation to acquire and learn a language of wider communication like English, for example, and hence, impact positive policy implementation. Gholami, Abd Rahman and Mustapha (2012) thus support schools taking students on expedition tours and arranging workshops for them to help increase their motivation through providing them with genuine opportunities to listen to and speak the target language. Tuan (2011) considers the students' awareness about the role of the second language for future career as a motivating factor. Benson (1991) suggests that students' rejection of instrumental motivation is an indication of the way they perceive English as not playing any vital role in their lives. Within the same vein, Ngeow (1998) argues that if students do not perceive English as relevant and transferable to other situations, learning to them will become meaningless and their motivation to acquire the target language will decrease. Students, therefore, and according to Warrington and Jeffrey (2005) need to see English as an international language, which is used widely by native and non-native speakers and one which stretches beyond national boundaries to help its users achieve multiple significant aims. Kachru (1986) suggests that English has "material parameter" where it is considered as a "tool for mobility, economic gains and social status" (p. 130). English, hence, is "... functionally attractive" and provides "... access to higher education" (de Klerk 1999, p. 316).

Moreover, Gholami et al. (2012) highlight the significance of the TV, radio and newspapers as rich sources that provide comprehensible input and variable exposure to the target language and the native speaker. This, according to Gholami et al., is bound to motivate the learners about learning English. The concept and definition of TV has changed today. The vast number of free-to-air and paid channels broadcasted in English has redefined the role of TV. There is a much bigger variety of channels in English to choose from than it was the case around two decades ago. There is almost

everything for every taste, age and background, which can drive people's intrinsic motivation to acquire authentic language while at the same time enjoying themselves. The same applies to the printed word in English, which has become available electronically and has become more accessible than ever. Various newspapers and magazines are available online for Internet users to browse, and hence, develop their linguistic and repertoire. Several authors have stressed the interlocking relationship between language and culture and how the two strongly complement one another (Jiang, 2000; Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Scarcella and Oxford (1992), therefore, state that "motivation often leads learners to use a variety of learning strategies that can develop greater skill in language learning" (p. 191). Schools, therefore, can be considered as powerful socialization and enculturation agencies that can have their own agendas through which they shape students' ideologies for better or worse.

Tuan (2011) found that lack of self-confidence is a demotivating factor in learning English. Teachers, according to Zhao (2012), are thus responsible for helping students to overcome such feelings and develop their self-confidence through helping them to build up positive perceptions about themselves and create motivational conditions in the classroom. Al-Bulushi and Al-Issa (2012) highlight the pivotal role of teachers in English as a foreign language contexts, like the Omani one, in encouraging, guiding, directing, advising and helping their students to improve their productive or active language capacity through adopting strategies that engage them in using the productive skills of the target language, which can have positive implications for their self-confidence and motivation.

However, Al-Toubi (1998) and Al-Issa (2010) argue that the curriculum is rigidly controlled and does not provide sufficient room for spoken language and integration of the four skills, gives usage and product an edge over use and process, and lacks both authentic materials and communicative language practice activities. Al-Alawi (1994) and Al-Hammami (1999) are thus critical of the education system in Oman and describe it as authoritative, rigid, and highly centralized. Both authors found that the Ministry of Education governs and controls the teaching methods used by the teachers. Al-Alawi (1994) further found that restrictions imposed upon the teachers to use the Teacher's Guide have had an influence on the teaching methods they have employed. Moreover, Al-Toubi (1998) found that the curriculum is implemented in a top-down mode. Al-Toubi argues that this has made it very difficult for teachers to engage in any kind of change or innovation.

Al-Toubi (1998) further found that the exam-based system is one of the reasons behind the students' poor level in English in Omani. He concludes that this has negative implications for the students' language development. Al-Issa (2010) argues that exams in Oman encourage and demand production of information in masses, while ignore proficiency. According to Shor and Freire (1987), education conducted in this manner is much more controllable and facilitates quantitative measurement learning. They view this as coming at the expense of developing the right thinking skills. Performance-based tests as opposed to criterion-referenced tests and mastery of content and achievement grades have always powerfully affected the students' and teachers' performance and motivation in the Omani ELT system (Al-Issa, 2010). Dove (1986) acknowledges that the pressures applied on the teachers by examinations restrict the teachers' conceptions of their responsibilities as professionals. Dove (1986) acknowledges that examinations are a major influence on how teachers interpret the curriculum. Gardner (1985) comments that having to learn English because it is another school subject on the curriculum cannot be considered as any kind of motivation and that it is this situation that best describes why students at school fail to perform well in English and meet the expected standards. Norris-Holt (2001) establishes a link between communicating successfully using the target language and the feeling of sense of accomplishment student develops accordingly. Li and Pan (2009) additionally state that "... students who have no success in the process of learning English may give up their learning behaviors which may lead to their failure in exams" (p. 127). Research has shown that there is significantly positive correlation between motivation in learning English and proficiency on the one hand and achievement on the other hand (Choosri & Intharaska, 2011). Teachers, thus, have a significant role to play here through recognizing their learners' effort, no matter how little and limited and celebrate their success, as lack of this can demotivate students (Tuan, 2011). Oxford and Ehrman (1993) state that research shows that "... students who are more motivated develop stronger overall L2 proficiency" (p. 191).

Accordingly, Al-Issa (2010) criticizes the teaching methodology in Omani schools for being very formal and emphasizing a largely passive role for students with an emphasis on rote learning. Ma and Ma (2012) stress that students feel highly motivated "... when their wants and needs are taken into account and when they have their voices heard by others" (p. 841). On the contrary, "compulsory" English learning, according to Tuan (2011), is a demotivating factor in ELT. Oxford and Ehrman (1993) claim that "motivation encourages greater overall effort on the part of the language learners and typically results in greater success in terms of language proficiency and achievement" (p. 191). Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between higher proficiency level and positive attitudes and motivation to learn English (Ming, Ling & Jaafar, 2011). Martin and Midgley (1991) suggest that "mastery learning" enhances students' motivation to learn. Mastery learning is a type of learning based on practice through which students develop the ability to apply knowledge in the real world. The two authors consider the educational policies responsible for emphasizing this. Oxford and Ehrman (1993) claim that "if language activities are perceived as irrelevant or uninteresting ... the learner might tune out or lower the level of involvement" (p. 191).

It is thus interesting to note that the *Teacher's Guide, Preparatory Level* (1997-98) confines the collection of texts and articles to the topics in the textbook. Topics still have the upper hand in the classroom. Emphasis is still laid on the

“selective traditions” (Williams, 1989) and “interested knowledge” (Pennycook, 1989), which guarantee the transmission of certain values, beliefs and traditions through the target language.

Textbooks within the Omani ELT context, as it is the case with many other contexts worldwide, typically guarantee transmission of selective traditions and interested knowledge and that all students receive common and fundamental knowledge through exposure to certain authorized and prescribed texts (Luke, de Castell & Luke, 1989), which focus largely on the local culture, and hence, hinders the nurturing of integrative motivation. Language, hence, becomes subservient to knowledge and culture. Textbooks, in a context like Oman’s, as it is the case in many other contexts round the world, are sacred, have supremacy over the teacher and students and are targeted to the entire student population, which makes them an economic commodity. Apple (1993) claims that standardized textbooks have an ideological dimension as they help teachers overcome problems related to large classrooms, as it is the case in Oman, where classrooms comprise of a minimum of 35 mixed-ability students and are not conducive for language learning. Tuan (2011) considers classroom atmosphere or environment as one of the significant English language learning demotivating factors.

Moreover, textbook production is an economic aspect of education. Textbooks are produced in masses and are targeted to all students without any exceptions and regardless of their backgrounds, age, needs, interests, wants, motivation, skills and abilities. Textbooks are devices for putting ideas and beliefs above criticism (Olsen, 1989) and are tools for transmitting cultural, political and economic ideologies of the elite (Havelock, 1989). Freire (1970) describes this as the “banking” concept whereby teachers “deposit” knowledge taken from the dominant culture in the minds of their students, which is particularly the case in Oman. Textbooks, therefore, should not be seen as the only source of language and as a central part of the ELT process that activate motivation, particularly that “... the OWTE materials have been written so that the average child will be aware of his progress as he uses them” (*Teacher’s Guide, Elementary Level*, p. 2).

The quality of general and higher education in general in the Arab World in general and the Gulf countries in particular, which Oman is a part of, has been thus criticized by the World Bank development report released in 2008 on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries and by Al-Dhafiry (2003) and Al-Suwaidi (2010) respectively for being “low”, “background” and one which has failed so far to bridge the gap between the economic needs and educational objectives. This has subsequently caused it to fall behind other regions in the world and lead to an unemployment crisis (Maroun, Samman, Moujaes & Abouchakra, 2008). It has further given foreign skilled labor particularly from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi an edge over their Gulf counterparts in terms of filling the available jobs (Al-Suwaidi, 2010).

The World Bank development report criticizes education in the MENA countries for focusing more on encouraging memorization and transmission of facts, repetition of definitions, passive reception of knowledge, acquisition of declarative knowledge at the expense of procedural knowledge, textbook dependency, didactic, adoption of teacher-centeredness. On the contrary, it has paid limited attention to significant issues pertinent to progressive education like individual differences in the classroom, interactive learning, student-centeredness, and introduction and development of higher-order cognitive skills. This is bound to negatively impact high productivity and rapid economic growth.

Akkari (2004) thus argues that students in the MENA countries need to be taught technical skills like problem solving, critical thinking, innovation, creativity and cooperation in order to “... function effectively in tomorrow’s world” (p. 151) and gradually reduce the high unemployment rates amongst Grade 12 graduates (Gonzalez, Karoly, Constant, Salem & Goldman, 2008). Furthermore, unemployment rates are high amongst Grade 12 graduates. Gonzalez et al., (2008) attribute this to “lack of skills and competencies necessary for productive work” (p. 165). One of these necessary skills and competencies is obviously the English language.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study critically investigated factors underlying E/FL motivation with a particular reference to the Omani ELT context. The paper triangulated data from different semi-structured interviews made with different informants involved in the Omani ELT system, NELP, OWTE and the pertinent literature.

The findings have revealed that ELT theory and practice within the Omani ELT education system are moving in two parallel lines. This can negatively influence preparing competent Omani English language users, who can contribute to effective implementation of Omanization.

Having said that, proficiency in English language, as it is the case with any foreign language is complex and motivation lies at the heart of it. The discussion has revealed that there is an urgent and pressing need for bridging the ideological gap between ELT theory and practice in Oman on the one hand and between those involved in constructing the ELT policies and those who implement them on the other. The findings and discussion have revealed that the informants have variable degrees of knowledge, experience and power stemming from their different social interactions and positions, which can have variable degrees of influence on policy implementation, but which can be directly and indirectly oppressed and suppressed in a rigidly controlled and centralized context, which slams the door in the face of change, creativity and innovation.

The ELT field has evolved at an incredible pace over the past few decades and witnessed the rise and fall of various teaching and learning theories, which lays additional responsibilities over the policy makers’ shoulders to keep abreast

with these changes and challenges to help produce linguistically adequate Omanis with a capacity to fulfill the needs and meet the expectations and demands of the ever economically-driven world.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1:
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

No.	Status	Gender	Age	Nationality	Qualification	Years in Oman	Responsibilities
1	Grade 12 Student	F	17	Omani	Grade 11		Student
2	Public School Head	F	51	Omani	Diploma		Responsible for running public schools and implementing school and ministerial policies
3	Public Education Teacher	M	54	Jordanian	B.A.	19	Teach English to and assess public school students
4	Private Education Inspector	F	59	Irish	M.A.	26	Inspect quality of ELT instruction in private schools and design and run in-service courses for ELT teachers in private schools
5	SQU College of Education Lecturer	F	29	Omani	M.A.		Teach ELT methodology and teaching practice to third and fourth year ELT specialists and supervise practicum
6	Private Education Teacher	F	32	Irish	Diploma	17	Teach English to and assess private school students
7	ELCD Assistant Director	F	51	Omani	M.A.		Execution of administrative tasks
8	ELCD Chief Inspector	M	51	English	M.A.	26	Responsible for ELT inspectors throughout Oman
9	Public Education Inspector	M	52	Indian	M.A.	21	Inspect quality of ELT instruction in public schools and participate in running in-service courses for ELT teachers
10	SQU College of Arts Assistant Professor	M	62	Omani	Ph.D.		Teach English language and English literature to second, third and fourth year ELT specialists and supervise practicum
11	SQU Student Teacher	M	21	Omani	SQU Final Year		Student Teacher
12	ELCD Curriculum Officer	F	61	Omani	M.A.		Responsible for Curriculum and syllabus design
13	Public School Head	M	56	Egyptian	B.A.	16	Responsible for running public schools and implementing school and ministerial policies
14	Private Education Inspector	M	37	Indian	M.Ed.	14	Inspect quality of ELT instruction in private schools and design and run in-service courses for ELT teachers in private schools
15	SQU College of Arts Associate Professor	M	57	Sudanese	Ph.D.	24	Teach English language and English literature to second, third and fourth year ELT specialists and supervise practicum

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A Study via Interviews of the Chinese Bouyei College Learners' EFL Classroom Anxiety Arousals

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Abstract—The aim of the present study is to investigate anxiety arousals attributive to the Chinese Bouyei college learners' EFL classroom anxiety through semi-structured individual interviews of twenty-five informants from five colleges in Guizhou Province, China. The findings illustrate nine types of the Bouyei participants' college EFL classroom anxiety causal factors reported, i.e., Low FL Ability, Teacher's Problem in Teaching, Negative Attitudes towards English Class, Societal Interferences, Lack of Confidence, Fear of Failing English Class, Fear of Losing Face, Lack of Preparation, and Sense of Inferiority, which half supported the results of the rotated component matrix of factor analysis for the FLCACSQ conducted with 320 subjects in the present researchers' previous study in use of a closed-ended questionnaire. In addition, the research findings were discussed followed by some implications in the conclusion.

Index Terms—Chinese, Bouyei, EFL learners at college, anxiety arousals, implications

I. INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is considered as a response of cognitive affection characterized by physiological arousal (indicative of sympathetic nervous system activation) and apprehension regarding a potentially negative outcome that the individual perceives as impending, as well as an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the automatic nervous system (Leary, 1983; Spielberger, 1972; cited by Wei, 2013). In such a state relating to emotion, a person usually gets nervous when s/he feels him/herself as a failure and seems guilty due to the factors that stop him/her from reaching a successful target, or the obstacles that s/he cannot conquer.

According to the theory of the "Affective Filter" (Krashen, 1982), anxiety in the foreign language (FL) context is reckoned as a negative factor that leads to a FL learner's less responses to language input, and an effort to impart more particular messages than those in a setting without anxiety. FL classroom anxiety is hence described by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986; cited by Wei, 2013) as a situation-specific anxiety originating from the particular learning process of a FL, especially when learners lowly appraise their communicative abilities in that language. FL classroom anxiety is then thought likely to bring about poor outcomes, as claimed by Gregersen (2005). This has been proved in the studies (Chen, 2002; Liu, 2006b; Tan, 2009; cited by Wei, 2013) among Chinese college learners as subjects, although learners' proficiency vary a great deal due to individual differences, linguistic differences, cultural differences, the examination-oriented education system and so on (Wei, 2012). As stressed by Wei (2012), FL classroom anxiety can negatively affect the Chinese learners' course grades and interest in English, intentions to continue their English learning, and their CET-4 scores; and irrelevant information input is usually what the Chinese undergraduate college students with high anxiety are more engaged in, and hence results in their less opportunities to receive meaningful information for their English learning. Due to the high level of the "Affective Filter", researchers (Spielberger, 1966; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Young, 1991; Yamashiro & McLaughlin, 2001) have pointed out that higher levels of anxiety are likely to bring about lower levels of proficiency in English learning. Classroom anxiety is actually a source of poor English learning in both individuals and situation as an unquestionable arousal (Horwitz, 2001; Gobel & Matsuda, 2003; Chen, 2002; Liu, 2006b; Tan, 2009). The quantitative study in use of Horwitz's FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) (1986, p.129) administered by Wei (2012) has showed that medium levels of overall classroom anxiety ($M=3.10$, $SD=.68$), as well as of communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, were experienced by Chinese Bouyei college EFL learners.

Concerning the arousals of EFL classroom anxiety, previous studies have demonstrated various causal factors, like Language Competence (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Aida, 1994; Tasee, 2009; Dewaele et al., 2008; cited by Wei, 2012), Self-Confidence (Cheng et al., 1999; Cheng, 2002; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; cited by Wei, 2012), Self-Esteem (Laine, 1987; Rubio, 2007; Wang, 2009), Introversion and Extraversion (Liu et al., 2010; Dewaele, 2002), Learners' Beliefs on FL Learning (Ohata, 2005; Dai & Wang, 2002; Bao, 2011), Instructors' Beliefs on FL Learning/Teaching (Tanveer, 2007; Zhang, 2009; Huang, 2008; cited by Wei, 2012), Instructor-Learner Interactions (Tsui, 1996; Liu, 2006a; cited by Wei, 2012), Classroom Procedure (Jackson, 2002; William & Andrade, 2008; cited by Wei, 2012), Language Testing (Chapell et al., 2005; Chen, 2007; Onwuegbuzie, 1995; cited by Wei, 2012), and Social Status and

Self-Identity (McCroskey, 1980; Chick, 1985; Zhang et al., 2003; Tanveer, 2007; cited by Wei, 2012). These factors were found closely associated with anxiety arousals by some scholars, whereas in some studies the results were a bit different, and even contradictory. One thing is for sure that based on the abovementioned statements, these factors are also closely interrelated with each other and most of them are not likely to take place separately. However, some factors might “vary” according to different settings with different subjects as well as how studies are conducted.

Nevertheless, investigations into the anxiety of minority ethnic learners are still not so common in China, especially in the remote mountainous areas. Whether these abovementioned factors are responsible for the existence of the Bouyei college learner’ EFL classroom anxiety is still not very well perceived and hence needs further research. The research hence aims to explore such learners’ possible EFL classroom anxiety arousals, as in the research question (RQ), “What are the main causal factors of the Bouyei college EFL learners in China?”, that is assumed to arise from the learner’s beliefs, the language learning process, or from the situation or social environment s/he is a part of, etc., which were investigated in present researcher’s previous quantitative study via questionnaire (Also see Wei, 2012). The second most important aim is to make some suggestions as strategies for other researchers and ELF instructors for the alleviation of the learners’ anxiety in EFL.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The 25 1st- and 2nd-year Chinese Bouyei students, the same subjects also mentioned previously in one of Wei’s (2012) studies, participated the investigation. They were randomly selected from various classes at each of the following five colleges—the South Guizhou Teachers College for Ethnic Groups, the South Guizhou Vocational College for Ethnic Groups, the South Guizhou Medical Science College for Ethnic Groups, the Xinyi Teachers College for Ethnic Groups, and the Southwest Guizhou Vocational College for Ethnic Groups. Most of the interviewees came from the countryside as the native speakers of the Bouyei language.

B. Instrument

The tool for the data collection of the present study was semi-structured individual interviews with 10 questions translated into Chinese (See Wei, 2012). The rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews is that it can provide detailed, supplementary access to things that cannot be directly or completely observed, such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, or beliefs, especially the learners’ anxiety causal factors, that the close-ended questionnaires are not bound to cover. Despite questionnaires which can draw out rich responses from the informants about their EFL classroom anxiety, it is also helpful to use interviews in the present study in order to achieve more, important information as a supplement through various elicitations (Wei, 2013). At the same time, the present study also utilizes percentage to ascertain the frequency of the interviewees’ reported anxiety.

C. Data Collection

The main areas of the interviews as well as ten refined questions for the interviews had been worked out in advance by the researcher. The researcher formally talked face to face with the interviewees in order to collect data from them in a harmonious setting.

D. Data Analyses

The researcher listened to the audio-recordings of the individual interviews and thereafter comprehensively transcribed what the subjects stated in relevant sections according to the similarities of the context or situation from which the EFL classroom anxiety were resulted (Wei, 2013). Then the researcher reduced data by coding, synthesis, etc. repetitiously based on the “open coding” and “axial coding” techniques proposed by Paunch (2005, see Wei, 2013) and Strauss and Corbin’s (1998; see Wei, 2013). Percentage of the anxiety arousals reported by the informants was also taken to illustrate the frequency of anxiety causes related.

III. FINDINGS

All possible anxiety causes were included in the results from the interviews with detailed information in order to have a general view of the informants’ anxiety arousals. Each of the informants was labeled with a code according to the time order of being interviewed. For example, a student who was the first one to be interviewed was marked as ST1 (Also see Wei, 2013). Through the data of the interviews, the present research has found nine types of anxiety causal factors. Under each of these factors are related respects, along with the informants’ utterances. What follows are the inventory of relative arousals and the presentation of necessary examples of the informants’ anxiety causal factors reported, followed by the person-time and percentage of the 25 interviewees who shared the same categories and aspects, the way as also stated in one of Wei’s previous studies (2013).

(1) Low FL Ability (LFLA) (45) (180%)

Low FL Ability was what the Bouyei students mostly expressed as a factor that resulted in their classroom anxiety. This factor covers four aspects of worries in both receptive and productive abilities, which include: “inability in listening”, “inability in speaking”, “inability in reading”, and “inability in writing”. The following are what they

reported:

• **LFLA 5.1: Inability in listening (11) (44%)**

A certain number of the interviewees said that they felt nervous when not hearing very well what the teacher was requiring them to do in class. Some claimed being unable to understand a thing the teacher was saying. They reported that they sometimes found it harder to understand the Chinese English teacher than the native speaker, because some Chinese teacher spoke very fast while the native speaker seemed to be considerate about their comprehensive ability and then spoke more slowly. For example:

ST23: ...By the way, I feel nervous while I cannot hear very well what the teacher is requiring us to do in English class.

ST7: ...I'm very anxious in English class, especially, in English listening, because we never received such training at high school.

ST12: ...I can be very anxious when not understanding the teacher speaking too fast, or when I do not prepare.

• **LFLA 5.2: Inability in speaking (15) (60%)**

Many of the interviewees reported that they were anxious when not able to answer the teacher's questions. They felt nervous when they forgot some words in bigger groups of discussions or before the class and did not know so well about how to organize words in proper order to make a sentence. For example:

ST9: ...As my mother always says, I am cowardice in doing things before others. Actually, I'm in fear of being lower in ability in class, and my face turns red when I cannot answer the teacher's questions.

ST22: ...I feel embarrassed when not knowing what to say in group discussions and...I'm not called to the Bb because my English is poor. If I am called to the Bb, I will write or speak nothing but stand there at a loss...

ST7: ...We learn English which is not needed in everyday communication. So, I'm usually afraid of being laughed at due to my inability to communicate with others when I do not know how to express my mind.

• **LFLA 5.3 Inability in reading (11) (44%)**

Some interviewees reported that they were anxious when not completely understanding the reading materials although they were not so bad at English in class. Some of them reported that their vocabulary was small which was really a handicap to them in reading and would be nervous when required to read loudly in class. For example:

ST11: ...I can feel anxious when I don't understand completely what I am reading although I believe that I'm one of the good students in English class.

ST13: ...I am so anxious that I usually stayed where I am while reading a new text although the text seems not so difficult...

ST23: ...I would be anxious when encountering more new words in reading and will not understand what is being read....

• **LFLA 5.4 Inability in writing (8) (24%)**

Inability in writing was also reported as an aspect of the factor Low FL Ability, similar to the aspect associated with speaking. As some of them claimed, they were worried if they were wasting other classmates' time when writing on the Bb because they might do it very slowly for not knowing how to organize the sentences. For example:

ST4: ...I can be less nervous while writing on the Bb, but worried about wasting others' time.

ST22: ...I'm not called to the Bb because my English is poor. If I am called to the Bb, I will write or speak nothing but stand there at a loss...

ST19: ...I fear worried while not understanding the class, especially, grammar. My grammar is poor, so I don't know how to express my idea in English.

(2) **Teacher's Problem in Teaching (TPT) (20) (80%)**

Teacher's Problem in Teaching (Wei, 2012) is a factor that some Bouyei participants very much complained as what worried them at the same time. It concludes four aspects: "unequal treatment", "talking too much", "humdrum teaching styles", and "emotion inappropriately shown" as follows:

• **TPT 8.1: Unequal treatment (9) (36%)**

Some Bouyei students complained that the teacher never asked them to the Bb or answer questions because their English might be not satisfactory. On the contrary, those students whose English was good in class were given more opportunities to speak. For example:

ST 5: ...The teacher usually asks others to the Bb but not me. Although my English is not so good, sometimes I am well prepared and also willing to show what I can in class.

ST25: ...My pronunciation is not so good, so the teacher seldom asks me to read the text in class.

ST10: ...The students better at spoken English are given more chances to answer questions.

• **TPT 8.2: Talking too much in class**

It was also complained by some of the interviewees that the teacher talked too much in class and hence providing no opportunities for them to practice their English speaking. They were willing to play a role in pair work and group discussions. For example:

ST17: ...The teacher talks too much and gives us less chance to speak. We need more opportunities to go to the Bb.

ST13: ...We have no group discussions given by some Chinese teachers, but the foreign teacher is different. The teacher talks and talks and we don't know what she is talking about.

• **TPT 8.3: Humdrum teaching styles (6) (24%)**

This aspect involves what some of the students reported as the teacher's teaching styles that did not attract their interest in class. They complained that some English teacher seemed neither so well prepared nor so energetic in class and their teaching styles were humdrum without change. What they reported is calling on the teacher's innovative teaching approaches in fact. For example:

ST8: *...Some English teachers are not so energetic in class, unlike the foreign teacher who even gives awards to us for our small progress.*

ST9: *...I don't like English class because it is quite boring and I am afraid have forgotten what I have learned before....*

ST19: *...Some teachers can make English lessons very interesting...I like those teachers' lessons which are very interesting...However, some other teachers seem to make do with their lessons... and we feel a bit bored.*

ST3: *...The English teacher's class is so boring for me. He should use new teaching approaches like the native speaker to stimulate our interest.*

• **TPT 8.4: Emotion inappropriately shown (5) (20%)**

Some interviewees mentioned that they did not like the teacher who was so serious and was likely to lose temper once s/he did not receive a rapid response from the students. They felt relaxed if the teacher smiled and liked to use humorous words in class. For example:

ST23: *...The teacher seems not so kind and friendly. She should have more smiles and not that serious...She should have more humorous words in class and make jokes in class...*

ST6: *...Some teacher seems not so kind and is likely to loose temper in class when some of us cannot answer questions as expected...*

ST11: *...I agree that the teacher should be more encouraging and not loose temper in any case. Unfortunately, our teacher is very mean in praising anybody, but often shows how unhappy she is.*

ST15: *...Some teacher seems not so well prepared and is a bit moody in class. That is not welcome by the students and makes us worried very much.*

(3) Negative Attitudes towards English Class (NAEC) (16) (64%)

The factor *Negative Attitudes towards English Class* (Wei, 2012) refers mainly to what the students negatively consider English class is like. It consists of three aspects including "more anxiety in English class than in other classes", "no interest in English class", and "nothing learned in English class", which are as follows:

• **NAEC 2.1: More anxiety in English class than in other classes (7) (28%)**

It was said by some Bouyei students that they had more anxiety in English class than in other classes (Wei, 2012) for their inability in English language. Also a language, as reported, Chinese is their second language, but easier to learn, because they found less pressure in learning Chinese with many people speaking the language around everyday since the primary school. For example:

ST14: *...Learning Chinese is easier than learning English and we started learning English when very young and had more time speaking Chinese with other people around.*

ST25: *...I feel bad in English class...It seems as if I were an idiot in English class, ... although I feel much relaxed and confident in other courses.*

ST3: *... I have more anxiety in English and less in Chinese, because English is for test and Chinese not really for test. Chinese is something we use to communicate with people around every day. ... We have people to talk with in Chinese everyday.*

• **NAEC 2.2: No interest in English class (6) (24%)**

Some of the interviewees reported that they feel terrible in class because they had no interest in it at all. The biggest anxiety was that although they showed no interest in English, they had to go to English class for fear of being punished by the school or the teacher. For example:

ST2: *...I sit in English class, but always think about other things....and I don't even know what to worry for being long terrible at English learning.*

ST1: *...Once I sit in English class, I feel worried. I'm not interested in it.*

ST4: *...Though I show no interest in English, I know I have to go to English class. The reason is that if I'm absent for English class too many times, I fear to be punished by the school.*

ST3: *...I often feel like going out from English class...because I find it too hard, and too boring, to tell you the true.*

• **NAEC 2.3. Nothing learned in English class (3) (12%)**

It was declared by some interviewees that learning English was a waste of time because they had learned nothing in the course and it was too late for them to learn it well. For example:

ST11: *...When going to English class, I have the feeling of being forced to do something I don't like, ...because I find I have learned nothing in it. ...Why should I waste my time in English class? ...Anyhow, I have to attend the class no matter how much I dislike it.*

ST5: *...I like English anyway, but I'm not so good at it. So I feel I will not learn it as well as I learn other courses...I know it might be too late for me to learn it now. I fear I am wasting my time.*

(4) Societal Interferences (SI) (13) (52%)

Societal Interferences in the present study refers to what is originated from the society outside class and distracts the students' concentrations away from normal classroom activities in English learning (Wei, 2012). This factor is reported by some students as responsible for their anxiety in English class. It includes "pressure from CET and TEM" and "concerns about other tests" as follows:

• **SI 9.1: Pressure from CET and TEM (8) (32%)**

Some of the Bouyei students stated that they occupied too much time in preparing CET and TEM that might lead to less daily course study, which is consistent with the previous factor *Lack of Preparation*. For example:

ST4: ...I find everything we do is just for passing CET, not for anything else...This makes me upset, indeed and I don't know how to overcome it in class.

ST5: ...Many people, including our English teacher, say that it is useful for our future employment—the employers see it as one of the qualifications required. En...so we spend a lot of time on it although we have to do much with normal course study...

ST23: ...TEM is more difficult than CET ... we English majors are devoted too much to such a test and hence have less time to practice our English speaking in class but do more in learning words by heart.

• **SI 9.2: Concerns about other tests (5) (20%)**

Other qualification tests are also reported by some interviewees as an aspect of *Societal Interferences* that brings constraints to them. They stated that they planned to take part in the postgraduate enrollment exams and other qualification exams like the National Computer Test (NCT), the National Lawyer Qualification Test (NLQT), etc. which are useful for future job-seeking. Therefore they spent much time on preparation for them, which also distracts their concentrations away from English class with continuous anxiety. For example:

ST8: ...My parents hope that I will prepare for the postgraduate enrollment exams, so I have to concern about more things other than English learning...

ST22: ...Nowadays, various qualifications are needed for employment. English is not the only useful thing. I don't want to waste time if I cannot succeed in English learning. I will try to pass the NLQT and other qualification exams which are also very useful.

ST12: I will make an effort to pass the postgraduate enrollment exams, so I don't like to spend more time in participating in discussions in English class, since English is really my weakness.

(5) **Lack of Confidence (LC) (12) (48%)**

The factor *Lack of Confidence* includes two main aspects: "being unconfident in communication", and "no confidence even when prepared" (Wei, 2012). They are as follows:

• **LC4.1: Being unconfident in communication (6) (24%)**

Some interviewees reported that they were afraid if they could answer the teachers' questions, when not knowing what to say in group discussions and when expressing their ideas in written English. For example:

ST12: ...I feel worried when being called on by the teacher... I am afraid I cannot answer the questions very well.

ST13: ...However, I'm a bit less confident while speaking with the foreign teacher. You know, to speak with a native speaker is a great pressure for me.

ST17: I know my English is so-so, and then always feel unconfident before high ability students in class. I usually dare not participate in discussions.

• **LC4.2: No confidence even when prepared (6) (24%)**

"No confidence even when prepared" was what some of the Bouyei students reported as the second aspect of the factor *Lack of Confidence*. They said that they felt bad in English class even when they were prepared. However, some reported their worries about CET and TEM which were too difficult for them and therefore they lost hope in passing these two sorts of tests although they seemed important for future employment. For example:

ST25: ...I feel bad in English class no matter how I'm prepared...It seems as if I were an idiot in English class, ... although I feel much relaxed and confident in other courses.

ST5: ...It's strange that I still feel anxious even when I'm well prepared. Speaking English is so different from speaking Chinese.

ST11: ... I'm always not confident when doing exercises in class because my English foundation is poor and I don't know how to prepare for English class. It's too bad for me....

(6) **Fear of Failing English Class (FFEC) (12) (48%)**

The factor *Fear of Failing English Class* (Wei, 2012) refers mainly to what the students felt worried about whether they would possibly not be able to pass in the final exam of the English course, as well as the successive result the learners were not willing to encounter. As reported by some of the interviewees, this factor consists of three aspects including "fear of doing badly in tests", "fear of makeup", and "fear of lengthened study".

• **FFEC1.1: Fear of doing badly in tests (5) (20%)**

Some students reported that they tremble when entering the examination room for fear of doing badly (Wei, 2012), get upset when not knowing what to do with some questions in the test. A few key samples were:

ST2: ...I tremble for a while when I enter the examination room until I get absorbed doing the papers.

ST21: ...I tremble for fear of making mistakes in the test, because I'm ambitious to win a satisfactory position in terms of the final scores in class.

ST8: ...I have the feeling of losing face for not doing so well in recitation in English class.

ST11: ...I cannot learn many new words by heart and always feel terrible in dictations in class, since you know our teacher likes to dictate us nearly every day.

• **FFEC1.2: Fear of makeup (4) (16%)**

Besides fear of doing badly in tests, some students reported that they are in much fear of makeup to be done at the beginning of the new term if they cannot pass the final exams. It was reported that they prepared crazily in order not to fail one exam. A few key samples are:

ST6: ...I worry if I will fail in the final exams because I know some classmates have the experience of failing courses and then have to attend additional examinations at the beginning of another term...

ST15: ...That's really a nightmare to me if I am given a makeup...and unfortunately, I have once experienced makeup which still makes me feel bad today when I think of it...This is what I fear most in English learning.

ST17: ...I don't think it necessary to have so many tests...I know tests can push us to make bigger effort, but makeup is what we do not expect and it worries us most and makes us feel tense.

• **FFEC1.3: Fear of lengthened study (3) (12%)**

Another aspect is related to students' worry about the worst result of failing the makeup which indicates they have to study the course for another term in order to obtain credits related. A few key samples are:

ST5: ...The regulations of the college manifest that if we cannot pass the makeup, we would lose the credits of the course, which mean that we have to undertake another term's study of the course. I'm a bit worried about it.

ST4: ...To study the course for another term is really a nightmare for each of us. Aha, no one is looking for it. Although it seems not possible for me if I work hard, I still concern it very seriously.

(7) **Fear of Losing Face (FLF) (12) (48%)**

The factor *Fear of Losing Face* refers mainly to what causes the students to worry regarding other's opinions, comments or judgment upon themselves in English learning. It includes two main aspects: "afraid of being laughed in class", and "upset when the teacher corrects my mistakes in public" (Wei, 2012). They are as follows:

• **FLF 3.1: Afraid of being laughed in class (7) (28%)**

Some Bouyei students reported that they feared to be laughed at when speaking with poor pronunciation, or when not knowing what to say or write in class. They reported they worried about if they would lose face when others found their English was poor. For example:

ST8: ...I usually keep silence because I'm afraid of being laughed at by others when not knowing what to say in discussions.

ST10: ...I feel embarrassed when I don't know how to write a sentence correctly on the blackboard (Bb)...At this time I may think my classmates might laugh in their sleeves...What a shame it might be!

ST24: ...Although I can adjust myself, I never expect being laughed by others in class...That is not a good thing anyway.

ST7: ...We learn English which is not needed in everyday communication. So, I'm usually afraid of being laughed at due to my inability to communicate with others when I do not know how to express my mind.

• **FLF 3.2: Upset when the teacher corrects my mistakes in public (5) (20%)**

Some Bouyei students reported that they worried when making oral or written mistakes which were right away corrected by the teachers in public, although they thought that correcting mistakes was sometimes necessary (Wei, 2012). They said:

ST18: ...It really worries me when I make mistakes on the Bb and then the teacher corrects them right away... I know it's a need for a correction which is good both for me and for the whole class.

ST5: ...I know if the teacher doesn't correct my mistakes, I will not realize what mistakes I am making. However, being corrected in public is really a shame. ...

ST3: ...I don't think being corrected in class is a big shame, but I'm still in fear of that...and I hope the teacher will give us more encouragement instead.

ST4: ...I worry if my homework is mistaken and causes the teacher's correction in class.

(8) **Lack of Preparation (LP) (12) (48%)**

Lack of Preparation was reported by some informants as the factor contributing to their anxiety. This factor consists of two aspects: "not studying so hard as expected" and "difficulty in preparation", which are as follows:

• **LP6.1: Not studying so hard as expected (6) (24%)**

Some of the interviewees expressed honestly that they did not study as hard as their English teacher had expected (Wei, 2012), which resulted in inadequate preparation for English class. For example:

ST15: ...I don't care for being asked to the Bb if I am well prepared. ...However, sometimes I'm lazy and do not finish exercises assigned by the teacher.

ST17: ...I don't study as hard as the teacher expects and not so actively do exercises after class. This is the main reason for my anxiety in class.

ST12: ...I can be very anxious when not understanding the teacher speaking too fast, or when I do not prepare as required.

ST15: ...I don't care for being asked to the Bb if I am well prepared. ...However, sometimes I'm lazy and do not finish exercises assigned by the teacher.

• **LP 6.2: Difficulty in preparation (6) (24%)**

This aspect is related to what they thought to be their FL ability lower than required that hence brings about their inefficient learning and inadequate preparation due to the hardship they encounter. They reported that English learning and other exams were not easy and they tried hard to prepare but achieved very little as a result. For example:

ST5: ...I like English very much, but I'm not so good at it. So when I feel I'm not so well prepared as I have done, I'm afraid the teacher will ask me the questions that I'm unable to answers.

ST25: ...I feel bad in English class no matter how I'm prepared...It seems as if I were an idiot in English class, ... although I feel much relaxed and confident in other courses.

ST5: ...It's strange that I still feel anxious even when I'm well prepared. Speaking English is so different from speaking Chinese.

(9) **Sense of Inferiority (SOI) (9) (36%)**

Sense of Inferiority (Wei, 2012) in the present study mainly refers to the students' feeling of self-contempt due to unsatisfactory behaviors or performances in classroom activities. It was reported by the Bouyei students as a factor responsible for their anxiety, which includes "unbalanced mentality in face of students better at English" and "feeling of low social status" as follows:

• **SOI 7.1: Unbalanced mentality in face of students better at English (4) (16%)**

Some of the interviewees reported that they felt uncomfortable while seeing other classmates answer some questions or speak better English they could not. This was likely to bring them a sense of being hurt in an unbalanced psychological situation that accompanied them in class.

ST17: ...Honestly speaking, I feel uncomfortable when seeing some other classmates able to answer what I cannot, although this facilitates my study in return.

ST8: ...I exactly experience the unbalanced psychological situation—Sometimes, I feel a bit inferior when realizing my language ability is lower than others'.

ST19: ...I am a bit worried when my classmates can speak more fluently than I do...

ST22: ... My self-esteem is too strong. I feel hurt when I am proved lower in ability in class, and sometimes even get puzzled as if I would be too much disappointed at my performance.

• **SOI 7.2: Feeling of low social status (5) (20%)**

Some interviewees claimed that they were self-contemptuous as other students did not feel like talking with them in discussions for their poor pronunciation or poor spoken English (Wei, 2012). For example:

ST1: ...I'm not so anxious if other classmates are better at English, but much unhappy when it seems that other classmates do not feel like talking with me in discussions...I think it may be because of my poor pronunciation and grammar. It seems that I'm poor in everything.

ST5: ...I don't feel inferior among the Han students, because there are many other minority students in class. However, I can feel embarrassed when not able to behave so well as others in class.

ST7: ...Actually, I used to be self-inferior to others who came from the urban areas and whose family financial conditions seemed much better than mine. ...However, they do not interfere with my English study when I have made greater progress.

IV. DISCUSSION

The abovementioned findings reveal that (1) *Low FL Ability (LFLA)*, (2) *Teacher's Problem in Teaching (TPT)*, (3) *Negative Attitudes towards English Class (NAEC)*, (4) *Societal Interferences (SI)*, and (5) *Lack of Confidence (LC)* seem to be the most frequently reported categories of the informants' anxiety arousals, followed by (6) *Fear of Failing English Class (FFEC)*, (7) *Fear of Losing Face (FLF)*, (8) *Lack of Preparation (LP)*, and (9) *Sense of Inferiority (SOI)*. The first factor is composed of "fear of doing badly in tests", "fear of makeup", and "fear of lengthened study"; the second, "fear of being laughed in class", and "feeling upset when the teacher corrects my mistakes in public"; the third, "more anxiety in English class than in other classes", "no interest in English class", and "nothing learned in English class"; the fourth, "being unconfident in communication", and the fifth, "no confidence even when prepared"; "inability in listening", "inability in speaking", "inability in reading", and "inability in writing"; the sixth, "not studying so hard as expected", and "difficulty in preparation"; the seventh, "unbalanced mentality in face of students better at English", and "feeling of low social status"; the eighth, "unequal treatment", "talking too much in class", "humdrum teaching styles", and "motion inappropriately shown"; and the last, "pressure from CET and TEM, and "concerns about other tests". It is noteworthy that four categories (i.e., the 3rd, the 5th, the 6th, the 8th) of the anxiety arousals share the same with what were found in the rotated component matrix of factor analysis for the FLCAS which was adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986) and conducted in the present researcher's previous study (Wei, 2012: 75-90), whereas most of the other causal factors are different except for the 7th that is similar to "Fear of Negative Evaluation" defined (Wei, 2012: 75-90).

These results demonstrate that the Bouyei informants felt most anxious about their FL competence which accounts for the first anxiety causal factor category *Low FL Ability*. The learners also had common problems in their personal traits that might include *Lack of Confidence*, *Fear of Failing English Class*, and *Fear of Losing Face* as they may be classified into a same category, because these factors are closely interrelated with each other by sharing the similar

collective character, behavioral temperamental emotional, and mental characteristics of a person (McCrae & Costa, 1997; cited by Wei, 2012). These arousals mean that the Bouyei college students need to alleviate their anxiety by enhancing their self-confidence via the improvement of the FL proficiency (Wei, 2012). As for the *Negative Attitudes towards English Class*, the learners complained that they have learned very little in EFL class which resulted in their losing interest in it, which further explained why they also complained about *Teacher's Problem in Teaching*. It seems that they had strong "Filters" of their English input, and it is the teacher's responsibility to give up humdrum, ever-lasting teaching styles by playing their part to help alleviate learners' FL anxiety, including keeping rapport with learners, helping learners develop their sense of involvement, and treating them equally in class, as also claimed by Liu (2006a) and Marwan (2007). Concerning *Sense of Inferiority*, It is claimed that a young individual who represents an ethnic minority culture in a classroom is likely to have anxiety and then gets very quiet because of ethnic/cultural differences that may cause learners' to sensitively have the feeling of low social status and self-identity (McCroskey, 1980). Since more interaction usually refers to equal teacher-to-student relationship, FL learners may feel worried in face of social or cultural embarrassment and a threat to their social identity (Doughty and Pica, 1986; cited by Wei, 2012). However, the results show that the Bouyei informants did not feel embarrassed among the Han students but had unbalanced mentality when talking with learners better at English. They also had a feeling of low social status as other learners did not feel like communicating with them in pair work due to their poor pronunciation or poor oral ability. These statements were also found supportive to the studies by Zhang *et. al.* (2003) and Tanveer (2007). Regarding *Societal Interferences*, the Chinese Bouyei college learners complained a lot about "pressure from CET and TEM" and "concerns about other tests", which distracted their concentrations away from their formal EFL learning in class, since they had to spend much of their precious time being worried about how to pass various tests for certificates as possible qualifications for their future job-seeking. This anxiety arousal is scarcely reported in the literature of EFL classroom anxiety studies, most possibly because it is characteristic of Chinese culture in the so-called examination-oriented education.

V. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the analysis of the data which were collected from the semi-structured individual interviews, the Chinese Bouyei college learners mainly reported nine types of anxiety causal factors in EFL classroom, as abbreviated to LFLA, TPT, NAEC, SI, LC, FFEC, FLF, LP, and SOI. Since it's not easy for learners themselves to automatically alleviate their EFL anxiety in class, the language instructors are hence responsible for lessening their FL classroom anxiety by establishing harmonious relationship with learners, giving more equal chances to them to talk, show more and adequate regard to them with various trends of EFL classroom anxiety. It is also necessary for teachers to undertake further self-education for possible accomplishments in EFL teaching in order to receive relative training for the improvement of EFL proficiency, teaching approaches, and all comprehensive abilities to make EFL class interesting. These might concern about the cultivation of instructors' cognition upon the principles of teaching methodology for blended teaching styles, their communicative competence, and, most importantly, their personality traits in an advantageous orientation associated with the eventual effect of language teaching (Wei, 2012). The results in terms of frequency of the reported anxiety arousals also indicate that the effect of "Chicken or Eggs" theory (Hider, 1997, pp. 61-68) that manifests the subtle relationship between learners' poor English proficiency and teachers' incapability in English teaching must be paid much attention to while concerning the educational system in relation to the vast investment with not-so-satisfactory achievements in the domain of EFL education in China.

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Item Preview, Proficiency Level and Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategy Use in Multiple-choice Reading Comprehension Items

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Abstract—According to some studies, there can be a correlation between item preview, stem-option and stem, and test-takers' performance on a test. The present study was conducted to investigate the effect of test format on the strategy chosen by the testees in reading comprehension based on their level of proficiency. Three groups were selected based on the test-takers' performance on the TOEFL test, namely elementary, intermediate and advanced. Stem-option and stem were the methods applied to administer the main test. After administration of the TOEFL test, the interaction between the variables, item preview, test taking strategy and proficiency level, were investigated. It was assumed that use of specific strategies depends on the proficiency level and the item preview chosen as a method to administer the test. Results suggest that use of metacognitive strategy can be manipulated based on the testees' proficiency level and the item preview applied to administer a test, but there is not any interaction between item preview, proficiency level and application of cognitive strategies.

Index Terms—cognitive strategy use, metacognitive strategy use, stem preview, stem-option preview

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is defined as “meaning-making process” which is done by application of some strategies (Zhang and Wu, 2009). Kind of strategies taken by subjects to do the task at hand can change the result. According to some linguists (e.g. Phakiti, 2003), the strategies can be categorized into two kinds: cognitive and metacognitive. Cognitive strategies manipulate the material mentally or physically. Metacognitive strategies are applied to control comprehension and learning. The method applied to administer a test can lead subjects to choose specific strategies to take a test. Yanagawa and Green (2008) categorize the methods as follows: stem-option preview, stem preview and option preview. The item preview methods investigated in the present study are: stem option and stem. It is also assumed that the students' selection of strategy in different test methods is different based on their proficiency levels. It means that certain strategies are probably employed by students at particular proficiency levels under a specific method. If the assumption is supported, the most suitable test method can be selected based on the students' proficiency level. In other words, the method applied to administer a test can be selected based on the purpose of the test and the testees' proficiency level, so the evaluation can be more effective.

A. Statement of the Problem

Bachman (1990) argues that there are two systematic sources which lead to the variations in testees' performances: 1. Individuals' differences across their communicative language ability. 2. Differences across test formats, test methods and test tasks. A test has to be administered in a way that items of the test perform as the test developer intends them to perform. The item preview has to conform to a procedure by which the testees can be motivated to employ the language material that the test purports to measure. This study investigated the effect of the item preview on the students' test-taking strategy in reading comprehension test. As mentioned above, proficiency level can influence the strategy taken by the testees. So the other variable considered in the study is proficiency level of the participants. The test method variations investigated in the study are: 1. Allowing test takers to preview both the item stems and options prior to reading 2. Allowing test takers to preview only the item stems.

B. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the different performances of testees at a multiple-choice reading comprehension test two questions can be evoked:

Q1. Is there any relationship between the type of item preview, cognitive strategy use and proficiency level?

Q2. Is there any relationship between the type of item preview, metacognitive strategy use and proficiency level?

Regarding the research questions mentioned above, the following research hypotheses can be proposed:

H0-1. There is no relationship between the types of item preview, proficiency level and cognitive strategy use.

H0-2. There is no relationship between the types of item preview, proficiency level and metacognitive strategy use.

C. Purpose of the Study

Based on a variety of studies done on reading comprehension and the variables affecting the skill, three different variables were selected to be investigated. The relationship between the three variables, test taking strategy, proficiency level and item preview in reading comprehension has not been investigated up to now. Elementary, intermediate and advanced are the levels considered in this study. By application of verbal report an insight was provided into how test method or test format may affect learner responses and how these may interact with proficiency and test-taking strategy.

D. Significance of the Study

Ozuro, Y., Best R., Bell, C., Witherspoon, A. & Mcnamara D. S. (2007) cite that effective assessment helps administrators know the testees' problems (Pellegrino, Chudowsky and Glaser, 2001). Therefore, it is critical to do research on reading comprehension assessment. To assess reading comprehension effectively, it is necessary to know restrictions related to the students because the situation and even the test structure can be manipulated based on the limitations. According to Phakiti (2003) the extent to which the application of the strategies in a reading comprehension test is similar to the real and natural use has to be clarified in order to reveal whether metacognitive strategy can be a source of measurement error or not; Messick (1996) called it as 'construct irrelevant' (cited in Phakiti, 2003). According to Cohen and Upton (2006), there are a lot of strategies employed by the test-takers, but some of the strategies were disturbing to the test validity. In fact, they were irrelevant to the task. Therefore, to improve test validity it is necessary to provide the respondents with some appropriate strategies rather than let them respond however they wish.

II. THE EFFECT OF ITEM PREVIEW ON TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

Item preview has been investigated on multiple-choice listening comprehension by Yanagawa and Green (2008). They assert that there are three different test formats in multiple-choice listening comprehension. They say that the formats are such as: stem-option preview, option-preview and stem preview. The second format, option preview, has been rejected by the researchers. They assert that the second format causes more wrong answers than the other ones. Yanagawa & Green also claim that there were no significant differences between stem and stem-option preview (2008). Yanagawa & Green (2008) say that some researchers believe that stem preview makes test-takers ready to apply test-taking strategies more effectively (Littlewood, 1981; Ur, 1984; Mendelsohn, 1995; Buck, 1995; Thompson, 1995; Vandergrift, 1999). Yanagawa & Green quote that based on Berne's investigation (1995) item preview helps the participants apply background knowledge relevant to the text effectively (2008). Yanagawa & Green conclude that question preview can improve test-taking strategy and the planning before reading the existing text, but option preview may put a bigger burden on short-term memory. It is mentioned that test strategies are selected based on the test method or test format (Yanagawa & Green, 2008). Cohen (1998) and Nevo (1989) state that, for example, in multiple-choice reading comprehension tests, lexical matching strategy is applied between answer options and the words existing in the text at hand because maybe there is a word/words in the option similar to a word in the text, or even perhaps the selected option had a word/words in the same word family as the word in the existing text, the choice can be because of existing a word in the option with the similar sound or meaning to a word in the text, and so forth (cited in Yanagawa & Green, 2008). They drew the conclusion that the kind of available information before listening can influence the test performance. Freedle and Fellbaum (1987) believe that; besides item preview, proficiency level is the other factor that can affect the applied test-taking strategy. They say that low-proficiency participants apply lexical matching to find out similar words in the options or stems to the words in the text (cited in Yanagawa & Green, 2008). After administration of a multiple-choice listening comprehension test, a verbal report developed by Wu (1998). He finds that item preview can improve and facilitate advanced listeners, but it can be problematic for less proficient listeners (cited in Yanagawa & Green, 2008). Yanagawa & Green conclude that the kind of test format influences test performance of the low-proficiency levels more than that of high-proficiency levels (2008). They state that contextualization of the questions can facilitate low-proficiency test-takers' performance, but the test-takers with higher proficiency can complete the task without the help of the questions (2008). The effects of stem preview on test performance have been investigated by Buck (1990, 1991) and Sherman (1997). They find out that there is not any significant relationship between stem preview and test performance or item difficulty (cited in Yanagawa & Green, 2008).

III. METHOD

A. Participants

153 subjects were selected from among university students. The universities chosen were Islamic Azad universities of Islamshahr and Roudehen. The subjects' ages ranged from 20 to 24. The participants were majoring English Translation and English Literature. Before administration of the pre-test to determine the students' levels, the subjects were selected based on the term in which they were studying. The participants were selected from among Junior and

senior students. They were expected to understand the TOEFL reading texts and questionnaire due to passing different courses on reading during their education. To get more exact information related to the students' levels, the scores got at the TOEFL exam, which was administered as a pre-test, were considered. The participants included both females and males.

B. Instrumentation

Two devices used in this study were: the TOEFL reading test and cognitive-metacognitive questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this study was proposed by phakiti (2006). Phakiti notes that the questionnaire was piloted to examine its reliability before the main administration. The other instrument used in the study was the TOEFL reading test taken from original TOEFL PBT which was administered in 2003 (Ebteda publication, 2005). The test consisted of three texts with 25 reading comprehension questions and 40 structure questions. The test was applied to determine the subjects' levels. For the main test, original sample of TOEFL PBT (2004) was selected (Ebteda publication, 2005). This test was composed of five texts, it contained 50 questions. The time allocated to the test was regularized based on the original test which was 55 minutes.

C. Procedure

At first, The original TOEFL reading comprehension test, composed of 40 structure questions and three passages with 25 questions, was applied to assign the participants' levels. The test was administered to 153 students. Then, their levels were determined based on their scores at the test. To identify elementary, intermediate and advanced subjects, the mean score of the subjects was calculated. The students whose scores fell at 0.5 SD above and 0.5 SD below the mean were considered as intermediate students, the subjects with the scores more than + 0.5 SD were assigned as advanced participants and the testees with less than - 0.5 SD were considered as elementary subjects. So there were three groups: elementary, intermediate and advanced.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PROFICIENCY	153	4.00	24.00	13.0784	5.27847
Valid N (listwise)	153				

There were 60 elementary, 48 intermediate and 45 advanced subjects. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study and a brief explanation was given to the students about the Likert-scales of the questionnaire. Dictionary use was not allowed. To administer the main test with two different item preview methods, the participants were divided into two groups. The groups had 90 and 63 students. As it was mentioned before, each of the groups was combination of the three elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. The first group had 36 elementary, 33 intermediate and 21 advanced participants. The second group had 24 elementary, 15 intermediate and 24 advanced subjects. An independent t-test was run to compare the Stem-Option and Stem groups' mean scores on proficiency test in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the main study. As displayed in Table 2, the mean scores for Stem-Option and Stem groups on proficiency test are 13.71 and 12.63 respectively.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PROFICIENCY TEST STEM-OPTION AND STEM GROUPS

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
STEM-OPTION	63	13.7143	6.01726	.75810
STEM	90	12.6333	4.67710	.49301

The results of the independent t-test ($t(111) = 1.19, P = .234 > .05$) indicate that there is not any significant difference between Stem-Option and Stem groups on proficiency test.

TABLE 3
INDEPENDENT T-TEST PROFICIENCY TEST STEM-OPTION AND STEM GROUPS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	9.241	.003	1.249	151	.214	1.08	.865	-.629	2.79
Equal variances not assumed			1.195	111.62	.234	1.08	.904	-.710	2.87

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is not met (Levene's $F = 9.24, P = .003 < .05$). That is why the first row of Table 3, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

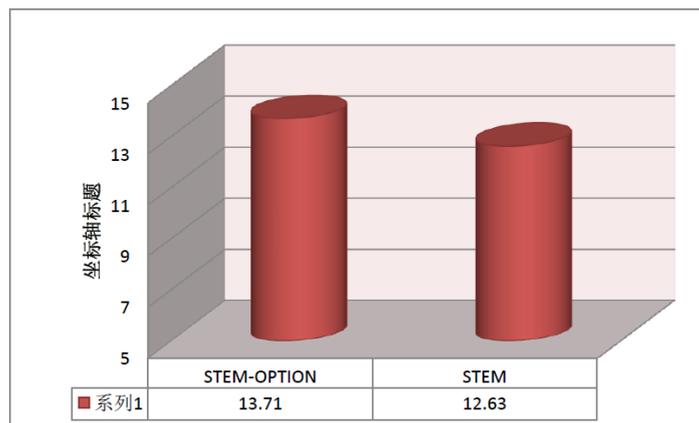


Figure 1: Proficiency Test Stem-Option and Stem groups

The TOEFL test composed of five passages with 50 questions was administered to one of the groups with stem-option preview; in other words, the group comprised of 63 subjects was allowed to have both stem and options of the tasks before reading the text. But the other group comprised of 90 participants just had stems at hand before reading the text. The first administration is typical in Iran. To administer the test with the second method each text was given to the participants just with stems; therefore, at first they were not provided with options. As it was mentioned above, the test had 50 questions. The time allocated to the test was regularized based on the original test time, so it was 55 minutes; hence, the suitable time for each of the texts was about 12 minutes. In the second administration, after reading each text and its stems in about 8 minutes, the options were provided too, so the subjects had almost 4 minutes to choose the best option which could be as the correct answer. After 12 minutes, another text was given to the students, so the test was administered in this way to the end. Immediately after the test administration, the questionnaire was administered to the testees to refer to what they did to complete the test. The answer sheets were scored in this way: each correct answer had one value. After calculating the scores, the international score chart was used to assign the test takers' real scores out of 30. The questionnaire was also scored based on the Likert-scale numbers chosen for the available items. To answer the questions of the study, two-way ANOVA was used. The statistical design used in this study is ex post-facto.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The instruments used in the study were the TOEFL reading comprehension test and a cognitive-metacognitive questionnaire. The study attempted to find out the effect of item preview on the testees' test-taking strategies based on the subjects' proficiency level. To achieve the goal of the study, the process of statistical procedures used in the study was explained in the following expressions. To investigate the test reliability, Kuder-Richardson 21 (KR-21) was used.

Analysis No.1: Is there any relationship between the type of item preview, cognitive strategy use and proficiency level?

Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for the interaction between type of item preview and language proficiency on Cognitive Strategy Use.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND TYPES OF ITEM PREVIEW COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
STEM-OPTION	ELEMENTARY	48.500	2.027	44.493	52.507
	INTERMEDIATE	54.600	2.565	49.532	59.668
	ADVANCED	47.000	2.027	42.993	51.007
STEM	ELEMENTARY	44.667	1.655	41.395	47.938
	INTERMEDIATE	49.545	1.729	46.129	52.962
	ADVANCED	46.286	2.167	42.002	50.569

A two-way ANOVA was run to investigate the effect of the types of item preview, proficiency levels and their interaction on the students' cognitive strategy use.

TABLE 5
TWO-WAY ANOVA COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE BY TYPES OF ITEM PREVIEW AND PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
GROUP	360.585	1	360.585	3.655	.058
PROFICIENCYLEVEL	877.770	2	438.885	4.449	.013
GROUP * PROFICIENCYLEVEL	110.442	2	55.221	.560	.573
Error	14502.068	147	98.654		
Total	366510.000	153			

The F-observed value for the effect of the types of the item preview is 3.65 (Table 5). This amount of F-value is lower than the critical F-value of 3.90 at 1 and 147 degrees of freedom. As displayed in Table 6, the mean scores for Stem-Option and Stem groups on cognitive strategy use are 50.03 and 46.83 respectively.

TABLE 6
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF TYPES OF ITEM PREVIEW ON COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

GROUP	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
STEM-OPTION	50.033	1.282	47.499	52.567
STEM	46.833	1.076	44.705	48.960

The F-observed value for the effect of the proficiency levels is 4.44 (Table 5). This amount of F-value is higher than the critical F-value of 3.05 at 2 and 147 degrees of freedom. Based on these results it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the elementary, intermediate and advanced groups' mean scores on the cognitive strategy use.

As displayed in Table 7 the mean scores for the advanced, intermediate and elementary groups on the cognitive strategy use are 46.64, 52.07 and 46.58.

TABLE 7
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PROFICIENCY LEVELS ON COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

PROFICIENCY LEVEL	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ELEMENTARY	46.583	1.309	43.997	49.170
INTERMEDIATE	52.073	1.546	49.017	55.129
ADVANCED	46.643	1.484	43.710	49.575

Although the F-value of 4.44 indicates significant differences between the mean scores of the three proficiency levels on the cognitive strategy use, the post-hoc Scheffe's tests must be run to locate the exact places of differences between the means of the three groups.

TABLE 8
POST-HOC SCHEFFE'S TESTS COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE BY PROFICIENCY LEVELS

(I) PROFICIENCY LEVEL	(J) PROFICIENCY LEVEL	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ELEMENTARY	INTERMEDIATE	-4.9250*	1.92341	.040	-9.6814	-.1686
	ADVANCED	-.4667	1.95871	.972	-5.3104	4.3770
INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	4.4583	2.06097	.100	-.6382	9.5549

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A: There is a significant difference between the elementary (M = 46.58) and the intermediate group (M = 52.07) on the cognitive strategy use.

B: There is not any significant difference between the elementary (M = 46.58) and the advanced group (M = 46.64) on the cognitive strategy use.

C: There is not any significant difference between the intermediate (M = 52.07) and the advanced group (M = 46.64) on the cognitive strategy use.

Based on the information displayed in Table 8, it can be concluded that the proficiency levels have a significant effect on the performance of the students on the cognitive strategy use. The F-observed value for the interaction between the type of item preview and language proficiency is not significant. The F-value of .56 (Table 5) is lower than the critical F-value of 3.05 at 2 and 147 degrees of freedom. As displayed through Fig. 2 at all three proficiency levels, the stem-option preview group performed better on cognitive strategy use than the stem group; hence, lack of interaction between type of item preview and language proficiency on cognitive strategy use is supported. Based on these results it can be concluded that the null-hypothesis as there is no significant interaction between proficiency levels and types of item preview on cognitive strategy use is supported.

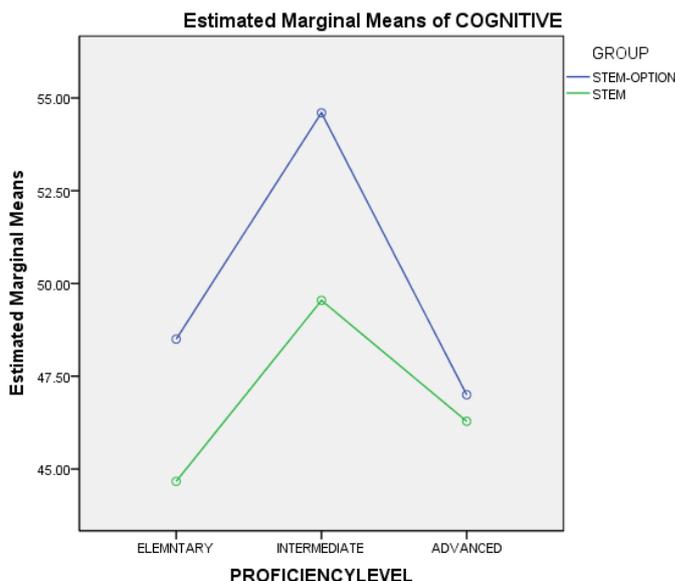


Figure 2: Lack of Interaction between Language Proficiency and Types of Item Preview on cognitive strategy use

Analysis No2: Is there any relationship between the type of item preview, metacognitive strategy use and proficiency level?

Table 9 displays the descriptive statistics for the interaction between type of item preview and language proficiency on metacognitive strategy use.

TABLE 9
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND TYPES OF ITEM PREVIEW METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
STEM-OPTION	ELEMENTARY	49.250	2.211	44.880	53.620
	INTERMEDIATE	42.800	2.797	37.272	48.328
	ADVANCED	53.000	2.211	48.630	57.370
STEM	ELEMENTARY	41.833	1.806	38.265	45.402
	INTERMEDIATE	57.364	1.886	53.637	61.091
	ADVANCED	45.143	2.364	40.471	49.815

A two-way ANOVA is run to investigate the effect of the types of item preview, proficiency levels and their interaction on the students' metacognitive strategy use.

TABLE 10
TWO-WAY ANOVA METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY USE BY TYPES OF ITEM PREVIEW AND PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
GROUP	1.972	1	1.972	.017	.897
PROFICIENCY LEVEL	577.889	2	288.945	2.462	.089
GROUP * PROFICIENCY LEVEL	3615.385	2	1807.692	15.401	.000
Error	17254.108	147	117.375		
Total	384747.000	153			

The F-observed value for the effect of the types of the item preview is .017 (Table 10). This amount of F-value is lower than the critical F-value of 3.90 at 1 and 147 degrees of freedom. Based on these results it can be concluded that there are not any significant differences between the Stem and Stem-option groups' mean scores on the metacognitive strategy use. As displayed in Table 11, the mean scores for Stem-Option and Stem groups on metacognitive strategy use are 48.35 and 48.11 respectively.

TABLE 11
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS TYPES OF ITEM PREVIEW ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

GROUP	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
STEM-OPTION	48.350	1.399	45.586	51.114
STEM	48.113	1.174	45.793	50.434

The F-observed value for the effect of the proficiency levels is 2.46 (Table 10). This amount of F-value is lower than the critical F-value of 3.05 at 2 and 147 degrees of freedom. Based on these results it can be concluded that there are not

any significant differences between the elementary, intermediate and advanced groups' mean scores on the metacognitive strategy use. Thus proficiency levels do not have any significant effect on the performance of the students on the metacognitive strategy use. As displayed in Table 12 the mean scores for the advanced, intermediate and elementary groups on the metacognitive strategy use are 49.07, 50.08 and 45.54.

TABLE 12
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PROFICIENCY LEVELS ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

PROFICIENCY LEVEL	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ELEMENTARY	45.542	1.428	42.721	48.363
INTERMEDIATE	50.082	1.687	46.748	53.415
ADVANCED	49.071	1.619	45.873	52.270

The F-observed value for the interaction between the type of item preview and language proficiency is significant. The F-value of 15.40 (Table 10) is higher than the critical F-value of 3.05 at 2 and 147 degrees of freedom. As displayed through Fig. 3, the elementary and advanced students applied more metacognitive strategies when they were provided with stem-options while the intermediate students took more metacognitive strategies when they were provided with stems only. Based on these results it can be concluded that the null-hypothesis as no significant interaction between proficiency levels and types of item preview on metacognitive strategy use is rejected.

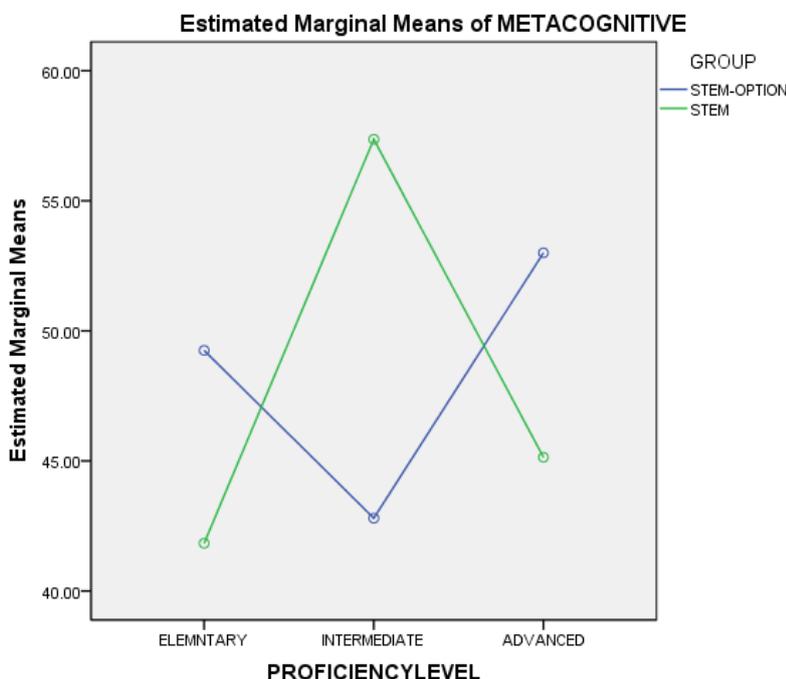


Figure 3: Significant Interaction between Language Proficiency and Types of Item Preview

V. CONCLUSION

In this study the interaction between item preview, stem and stem-option, proficiency level and test-taking strategy has been investigated. According to Kozo Yanagawa and Anthony Green (2008), in multiple-choice listening items changing of the order of the representation of the elements in an item can influence the nature of the task. They concluded that manipulating item format leads to lower performance if the students were provided with just options, but there were not any significant differences between the performances in the tests with stem and stem-option preview. But they quoted that stem preview can lead testees to apply strategies effectively (Littlewood, 1981; Ur, 1984; Mendelsohn, 1995; Buck, 1995; Thompson, 1995; Vandergrift, 1999). There were not any significant differences between the Stem and Stem-Option groups' use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in the present study. But considering proficiency levels make the result quite different. Kind of item preview can affect the performance of the intermediate testees on the metacognitive strategy use. It means that intermediate stem group out-performed the intermediate stem-option group on metacognitive strategy use. Based on the result, stem preview can lead intermediate testees to apply metacognitive strategies more than the intermediate testees in the stem - option group. Therefore, to increase intermediate testees' use of metacognitive strategy, stem preview method can be selected. But for the other levels, elementary and advanced, providing stem-option method can lead them to take more metacognitive strategies. Due to the results, the students can be provided with a situation in which the appointed strategy can be taken. In other words, a list of useful and suitable

strategies can be prepared based on the students' levels. The list can help testees apply the strategy that makes the exam result higher. Walter (2007) also states that teachers can introduce appropriate strategies to readers. He also quoted that teachers can guide the readers how to select an appropriate strategy and how to use strategies selectively (Alderson, 1991). Generally, Reading comprehension is a skill which can be improved by manipulating the kind of item preview chosen to administer a test. An instructor can motivate students to choose certain strategies based on the purpose of the exam and level of the students.

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Common Attributes of Outstanding College EFL Teachers' Teaching

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Abstract—This study looks into three outstanding EFL teachers' classrooms in a Taiwan university. They have proven to be effective in achieving results which are appreciated by their students. The study aimed to isolate some characteristics shared by the teachers. Students were surveyed via interviews to gain insight into their perceptions of learning experiences. Teachers were also observed and interviewed about how they helped students learn. A paired t-test indicated that students significantly improved their English proficiency. This study analyzed information collected from both students and teachers with the goal of finding common teaching attributes that left students satisfied with their learning experience. Finally, it revealed that there was evidence of emotional investment, stimulation, and innovation in all three classrooms.

Index Terms—emotional investment, innovation, outstanding teachers, stimulation, students' perspective

I. INTRODUCTION

When looking at Taiwanese students' English competency, a clearly skewed and bimodal distribution emerges, with each mode representing two extremes – either very good or very poor. This phenomenon reflects upon primary school and high school students from city to countryside and extends on to college (Lo, 2005; San, 2005). For example, more than 10% of the total number of students received a score of zero on the guided writing section of their English exam in the National Joint College Entrance Exam (Wang, 2009; Wang, 2010). According to a survey of 4,250 freshman non-English majors (Chien, 2008), across the board, students recognized the importance of English for the purposes of their current academic pursuits and future professional careers. They also expressed a desire to be able to communicate with foreigners in English. With the career and relational motivations, students should be spurred to make effort for improvement over the university Freshman English course of time. However, quite a portion of university students feel their English ability keeps declining year after year from the time they enter university, compared with the time in which they studied English more hours in high school. Previous studies have also shown that students' expectations of English programs in university have not been satisfied (Chia, et al. 1999; Hsieh, et al. 1988; Kuo, 1987; Kuo, et al. 1990; Wang, 2003; Yang, 1985). The complaint has been clearly shown from Student Evaluation of Teaching reports (SET). After having put in so much effort and time working with students, many teachers are disappointed by the reactions and comments on the SET. Therefore, teachers who teach non-English majors often experience great disappointment and frustration as much as their students do.

There has been plenty of research regarding foreign language learning and teaching to help foreign language learners (e.g., Brown, 2007; Cohen & Weaver, 2005; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 2003). Perhaps the most basic instructional objective in a foreign language class is to send students away with at least as favorable an attitude toward learning the language as they had when they first arrived in the classroom (Gunderson & Johnson, 1980). What students can learn from the teachers is more important than what the teachers teach them. Then, how can teachers help students learn? There is no doubt that teaching methods and practices, teaching materials and others all contribute to successful teaching, but teachers themselves as the irreplaceable facilitators play the most important role for their students' learning achievement. This study chose three model teachers who teach English as a foreign language (EFL) to look into. Model teacher is a cultural phenomenon in which parents and students often assume that they are the best and they are held examples for other teachers. The study aimed to identify some characteristics shared by the EFL teachers. Probably the findings about their practices in the context can be shared with other teachers to modify English teachers' teaching and as a result, better assist student learning.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many case studies and profiles of outstanding college teachers have been reported in the past decade. Most of these studies focus on teachers who have been selected as "outstanding", "exemplary", "effective", or "successful" (Hativa, Barak, & Simhi, 2001; Magno & Sembrano, 2007; Young & Shaw, 1999). In many these studies, the superlatives used to describe the teachers profiled were not defined, which can make it difficult to compare results across studies. For example, Hative, Barak, and Simhi (2001) used both "exemplary" and "outstanding" to describe teachers who were highly rated by their students through standardized student evaluation forms. Young and Shaw (1999) used the term "effective" to describe teachers who were selected by student surveys as being "effective", without any measure of

actual learning. In Bain's *What the Best College Teachers Do* (2004, p. 5), the "best" was defined as "success in helping...students learn in ways that [make] a sustained, substantial, and positive influence on how...students think, act, and feel". Allan, Clarke, and Jopling (2009, p. 364) described the different interpretations of "teacher effectiveness", finally settling on a definition based on student achievement. To determine the accuracy of administrators in selecting "effective" teachers, Strong, Gargani, and Hacifazlioglu (2011) compared student achievement tests to the school administrators' ratings of the same teachers.

However, the students' perceptions of their teachers cannot be overemphasized in education because they provide rich information for understanding students' cognition and classroom processes (Knight & Waxman, 1991). The students' perceptions enable researchers and teachers to appreciate students' thought processes (Tuan, Chang, Wang, & Treagust, 2000). Learning takes place when students feel like entrusting themselves to their teacher's teaching, willing to actively participate in learning activities which might be something new or challenging to them. Although substantial studies asserted the effectiveness of specific teaching methods and practices, there has been a total lack of research on EFL learners' perceptions of their own learning experiences in the existing theories on second/foreign language acquisition, especially within the EFL environments.

This study aims to discover a basic underlying theme or principle that may enhance teaching effectiveness among university English teachers in a classroom, and to answer the question of what common thread unites different teachers who are favored by their students. Although this study focuses on College English teaching and learning in an EFL context, there is no reason to expect that the results that are produced here are limited in applicability to the field of language teaching (Millis & Rhem, 2010). The generalizability of findings may be more dependent on time, place, and student demographics than on the particularities of specific subject matters. With this in mind, this study has one important research aim which is to investigate what model teacher qualities or characteristics are demonstrated in the classrooms and if any commonalities exist in the participating outstanding teachers.

III. METHODOLOGY

First of all, the researcher had to identify the three model participating teachers from 50~60 teachers of total 75~80 classes in the university. Secondly, she had to randomly select the representative, sampled students from the 7 classes the model teachers were teaching. In order to achieve the study goals, information pertaining to the teachers' teaching styles was obtained through students' interviews by audiotape recordings as well as teacher interviews by filming videotapes. The teacher interviews and student interviews were transcribed and then coded. To get a complete picture, the researcher took notes during the classroom observations, wrote analytic memos and contact summaries after watching each class video clip for each teacher and each student. Therefore the triangulation of methods was achieved by comparing the students' perspective with the teachers' perspective and the observer's perspective of the teaching styles in the classroom. In addition, to substantiate the teachers' teaching effectiveness, all the participating students were administered the MEPT pre-test at the beginning of the second semester and the same test (post-test) at the end of the second semester. A paired t-test was used to assess how much progress these students had achieved in the post-test MEPT.

A. Three Model Teacher Selection

In this study, the two basic criteria of selecting three model teachers were used, one was high ratings by students, proposed by Hativa, Barak, & Simhi (2001) and the other was complete concurrence by the supervising administrator, proposed by Strong, Gargani, & Hacifazlioglu (2011). The evaluation of a particular teacher came from the scores of the Student-Evaluated Teaching Survey (SET), administered by the Academic Office, Chung Yuan Christian University (CYCU) at the end of each semester; and the model teachers in the study obtained high scores for seven years in a row. The selection procedure conducted by the Language Center is described as follows. Seventy-five to eighty 'freshman English' classes are offered every year at the Center of CYCU, and they are differentiated into the "high-intermediate", "intermediate", and "low-beginning" English proficiency levels by the SAT-English test. For each level of classes, one out of 20 to 25 teachers is chosen as the model teacher for the study based on the SET scores documented in the Office of Academic Affairs. Teacher Chang, Teacher Her and Teacher Chen were thus selected as model teachers according to the above-mentioned procedures for three groups of students with "high-intermediate", "intermediate", and "low-beginning" English proficiency levels, respectively. With their consent, the researcher arranged a one-on-one interview with the three model teachers respectively to gather more detailed information on their teaching styles for analysis.

B. Participating Students Selection

Two hundred ninety-eight students were enrolled across 7 different classes that the three teachers were teaching: three low-beginning level classes taught by Teacher Chang, whose students' SAT-English abilities were at Level 6-8; two intermediate level classes taught by Teacher Her, whose students had SAT-English abilities of Level 10-11, and two high-intermediate level classes taught by Teacher Chen, whose students had SAT-English abilities of Level 12 or above (Level 15 is the highest level for the SAT-English test in Taiwan).

Out of these 298 students, 196 were selected as samples in the following procedures. The students were grouped into

'high-scoring', 'average-scoring' and 'low-scoring' students based on their final grades from the first semester of the 'Freshman English' course for the 7 classes taught by the three model teachers. In the 7 classes, 8 high-scoring students, 12 average-scoring students, and 8 low-scoring students were randomly selected and were composed as the sampled 196 students.

The selected 19 students were interviewed and the selection of these students was based on their enthusiasm shown in the responses to the questionnaire survey. Of the students, there were 2 high-scoring students, 3 average-scoring students and 1 low-scoring student for each model teacher plus one volunteer student was invited to conduct the 30-35 minute one-on-one interviews.

C. *Analysis of the English Proficiency Improvement of Participating Students*

There are cases that teachers are highly rated by students, but they do not actually learn much from the teachers' professional skills (Young & Shaw, 1999). Therefore, the pre-MEPT and post-MEPT tests were administered, and the results were compared and analyzed to examine how their learning was going.

D. *Research Tools*

Through the use of the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) reports, the implementation of student interviews, teacher interviews, and observations of classroom participants and the comparison of the pre- and post English proficiency tests, the analysis results of the data sets can reveal their teaching effectiveness and, hence, can lend greater impact to the teaching practices (Fenstermacher, 1986).

1. *Student evaluation of teaching (SET)*

The Academic Office, CYCU, regularly administers a student-evaluated survey of all the courses at the end of each semester; the SET is designed in the form of a Likert scale (1~5), plus open-ended questions designed for students to write comments. The Director of the Center can gain access to all teachers' SET, including average points for each question and all the questions in the evaluation survey and the students' comments.

2. *Student interviews*

Six to seven students from each teacher (total of 19 students) participated in the audio-taped one-on-one interview for 30-35 minutes. The interview questions were: *What impresses you most in the course of 'Freshman English'?* *What does the teacher do that helps you learn?* These questions prompted the students to recall what and how they had learned in the class. After all the recordings had been transcribed, the researcher and another experienced teacher went through carefully the transcriptions independently and coded all the ideas which appeared meaningful or valuable in the recalls. Scoring the transcription involved awarding one point to any positive feedback with its meaning.

3. *Teacher interviews*

Each teacher was interviewed by the end of the second semester and all the interviews were transcribed. The interview included questions such as: *How do you help your students learn English?* The questions helped reveal the pedagogical theories that the teachers used. The interviews were filmed in a very relaxing atmosphere.

4. *Classroom participant observation*

Throughout the four-month class in the second semester, ten hours of each teacher teaching her class were videotaped to record exactly what was said by the teacher and students in the classroom. The videotape was later transcribed. The researcher also attended each teacher's class for two hours. The observations helped the researcher feel and understand the impacts of teaching styles occurring in the classrooms.

5. *Michigan English Placement Test (MEPT)*

MEPT has frequently been used as an assessment tool for the English instructional programs in the U.S. and Canada. The reasons for choosing the MEPT for the study are twofold. Firstly, it is designed to assess English language ability for non-native English-speaking learners who are at the intermediate proficiency level, and it is effective in identifying the English ability level of university non-English major students in Taiwan. Secondly, it has high internal consistency, having reliability coefficients that range from 0.89 to 0.92 (the University of Michigan, English Language Institute, 1994).

IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the analytic results of the collected datasets. The results include a description of three teachers' teaching styles according to the associated pedagogy from the teacher's course syllabi, classroom observation, teacher interviews as well as students' recalls on the learning experiences in practices coded from the interview transcriptions (section 4.1), and the identified teacher qualities observed in the classrooms (section 4.2). In addition, it displays the results of the students' performance in the MEPT pre-test and in the MEPT post-test (section 4.3).

A. *Description of Three Teachers' Teaching Styles*

In order to have insight in depth about the teachers' teaching styles, in addition to the teacher interviews, the researcher also took other resources into consideration, such as each teacher's teaching syllabus, and supplementary teaching materials. Based upon the researcher's investigation and review of videotaped teaching sessions, teaching style for each teacher is summarized as follows.

1. *Teacher Chang's teaching style*

Teacher Chang can be described as a student-centered teacher, focusing on group work and activities approximately 40% of the time. Since the students in Teacher Chang's classes had relatively lower English ability, she set reachable goals to build student confidence. Teacher Chang also made significant use of Chinese in the classroom, allowing students to use Chinese when giving explanations or completing group work. As for Teacher Chang's pedagogy, she made significant use of the grammar-translation method, giving detailed explanations of the target language and requiring students to do the same in their group activities.

Based on her students' lower English ability and extensive experience with the Taiwanese English education system, Teacher Chang's strategy presumed that students had not developed an affinity towards English learning. This presumption was the basis for her conscious focus on raising student interest in language learning by making good use of group discussion and presentations. Teacher Chang also encouraged students to first seek help from group members as a way to remove the feeling that they were in competition with one another and to build up students' confidence in English learning. Teacher Chang was gentle natured and motherly in her overall style, for example, she would proactively find students who were struggling with an assignment or group activity and not wait for the students to approach her for help.

2. *Teacher Her's teaching style*

Teacher Her, who taught students with relatively modest English ability, adopted a student-centered focus approximately half the time. Teacher Her was more pragmatic in her approach to English, but she frequently varied her teaching activities and presentation formats. Teacher Her's pedagogy was more communicative in nature, holding numerous group and individual in-class activities, and conducting more than three quarters of the class in English, resorting to Chinese only for clarification. Teacher Her demanded this same use of the English language from her students, creating time for students' practice and use of English through reading texts aloud, singing English songs together, and answering questions aloud voluntarily in class, in addition to making group and class presentations. Every student had to be *actively involved* in the activities, which Teacher Her carefully prepared for each unit she taught. Teacher Her considered establishing good relationships with people to be very important, and encouraged students to open up and to interact with her and one another. Teacher Her kept reminding students to help each other to complete the assigned group work. Teacher Her also spent significant time teaching reading comprehension but also focused on higher order critical thinking skills, encouraging students to try to identify the author's purpose.

Teacher Her was notable for her strict attention to classroom rules, such as not permitting students to eat or sleep in class, requiring students to bring their books to class, and taking attendance immediately after the start of each class. Teacher Her also memorized each student's name, remarkable since her classes were only held once a week, two hours each time. This name recall allowed her to accurately record student participation during each class. Stylistically, Teacher Her dressed formally, treating her class in businesslike fashion, and demanding the same from her students.

3. *Teacher Chen's teaching style*

Teacher Chen, who taught students with relatively higher English ability, adopted a mixed of grammar-translation and task-based teaching methods. Teacher Chen's grammar-translation instruction was applied on the textbook articles, designed for EFL learners. Teacher Chen's task-based method emphasized collaborative learning through group work, such as through the creation of a movie, group translation of a text, or the deconstruction and outlining of a text. These tasks were always modeled first by Teacher Chen or students were given detailed written instructions on how to complete the task, and each task was followed with immediate verbal feedback or written feedback after class. Teacher Chen used the English language approximately 50% of the time in her classes, resorting to Chinese for detailed explanations, but allowed students to use Chinese unless they were giving their presentations for the assigned activities. Teacher Chen, like Teacher Her, also memorized all her students' names and relied on this knowledge in class.

Teacher Chen's teaching method can be explained by a short description of one activity requiring students to work together to understand essays and stories in the course. In such an activity, students translated the essays and stories into Chinese with help from Teacher Chen. Each student group was assigned a group leader who was responsible for encouraging group members' participation. Upon conclusion of the group activity, group members would be called at random to present the most important vocabulary and to share the main ideas of the target text. In this way, students learned to express their feelings or opinions in English and exercised their skills when they presented their final products to the class.

B. *Similarities in Teaching Practices Shared by the Three Teachers*

What qualities in the three teachers can keep students appreciative of their teacher's effort? Table 1 tabulates what they recalled the impressive happenings in their learning environment. T1s3 represents the 3rd student (s3) in Teacher Chang (t1)'s class, and t3s3 represents the 3rd student in Teacher Chen (t3)'s class, and so on. Column 2 of Table 1 identifies that all the 19 participating students learned communication skills by getting involved more actively in group work. All the students expressed that they benefited from group discussion, which motivated them to learn more. The English class turned some of their attention from paperwork to more communicative activities, which made the class time more enjoyable and absorbing. It is obviously shown that students were satisfied with their teachers' devotion in lesson preparation, clear instruction, material selection and fair grading, and counted 11 times for Teacher Chang, 11 times for Teacher Her and 10 times for Teacher Chen. To summarize, the teachers received 32 points from the

fundamental expectations of the students and 22 points from making extra effort and time to help students with forming good attitude or study habit, assignment check, and outside class e-mail communication between teacher and student. However, the greatest points of 46 were about the stimulative, lively and innovative classroom atmosphere.

TABLE 1.
IDENTIFIED TEACHER QUALITIES FROM STUDENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION SCORING

		Teacher Chang (Teacher 1: t1)	Teacher Her (Teacher 2: t2)	Teacher Chen (Teacher 3: t3)	Total Count	Notes
Teacher's investment	Well-prepared class	1 t1s7	2 t2s5, t2s6	2 t3s1, t3s3	5	
	Clear teaching instruction		3 t2s1, t2s4, t2s6	1 t3s1	4	
	Course material matches student's skill level	3 t1s4, t1s5, t1s7	2 t2s1, t2s2	2 t3s1, t3s4	7	
	Fair grading criteria	7 t1s1, t1s2, 1s3, t1s4, t1s5, t1s6, t1s7	4 t2s1, t2s2, t2s4, t2s5	5 t3s1, t3s2, t3s3, t3s4, t3s5	16	Students care about their grades.
		11	11	10	32	
Teacher's extra effort for personal emotional investment	Demand good learning attitude	2 t3s1, t1s4,t3s7	2 t2s1, t2s2	1 t3s1	5	
	Assign outside class readers	4 t1s1, t1s5, t1s6, t1s7	5 t2s1, t2s2, t2s3, t2s4, t2s6	2 t2s4, t2s5	11	11 of 19 students love the assigned outside reader.
	Check students' assignments regularly	1 t1s7	4 t2s1, t2s2, t2s4, t2s6		5	5 students believe that homework is necessary.
	Welcome questions via e-mail			1 t2s1	1	
		7	11	4	22	
Stimulation and innovation in the classrooms	Collaborative work through group discussion and presentation	7 t1s1,t1s2 ,t1s3, t1s4, t1s5, t1s6, t1s7	6 t2s1, t2s2, t2s3, t2s4, t2s5, t2s6	6 t3s1, t3s2, t3s3, t3s4, t3s5, t3s6	19	
	Lively and innovative class	5 t1s1, t1s2, t1s4, t1s5, t1s6	5 t2s1, t2s3, t2s4, t2s5,t2s6	4 t2s3, t2s4, t2s5, t2s6	14	
	Constant encouragement by teachers	4 t1s1, t1s4, t1s5, t1s7	5 t2s2, t2s3, t2s4, t2s5, t2s6	2 t3s2, t3s5	11	
	Share their own English learning experiences	1 t1s7		1 t3s3	2	
		17	16	13	46	
Total		35	38	27	100	

C. Students' Learning Achievement Based on Their Performance in the MEPT Post-test

There are cases that teachers are highly rated by students but they do not actually learn much from the teachers' professionalism (Young & Shaw, 1999). It was a confirmation to find through the paired t-tests that students of all three teachers had made statistically significant improvement in overall performance over the four months of work in the second semester, as seen in Table 2. Specifically, students taught by Teacher Chang showed significant improvement in reading; students taught by Teacher Her showed significant improvement in listening, grammar, and vocabulary; students taught by Teacher Chen showed significant improvement in listening and vocabulary. These results are meaningful considering each class involved in this study met only for two hours, once per week.

TABLE 2.
RESULTS OF PAIRED T-TESTS FOR THE THREE TEACHERS' CLASSES

	Teacher	p-value	Mean score Before	Mean score after	Sample size
Listening	Chang	0.51	8.86	8.66	90
	Her	0.015 ^a	10.04	11.09	75
	Chen	0.012 ^a	10.4	11.21	73
Grammar	Chang	0.55	17.88	17.64	90
	Her	0.004 ^a	20.09	21.17	75
	Chen	0.18	21.88	22.33	73
Vocabulary	Chang	0.53	15.59	15.81	90
	Her	0.09 ^b	19.92	20.52	75
	Chen	0.0002 ^a	20.71	21.89	73
Reading	Chang	0.001 ^a	7.98	10.13	90
	Her	0.23	11.31	10.79	75
	Chen	0.57	12.67	12.49	73
Overall Improvement	Chang	0.08 ^b	50.3	52.24	90
	Her	0.0158 ^a	61.36	63.57	75
	Chen	0.0008 ^a	65.66	67.92	73

^a significant at $\alpha=0.05$

^b significant at $\alpha=0.10$

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to determine what common qualities these successful teachers share. One thing that comes quickly into view when analyzing the students' reactions to their teachers' teaching is that part of the way they evaluate teaching quality is based on the way that they "feel". This corresponds with what Benson (1996) described as "subjective needs" and Aulls' (2004) finding that students emphasize emotions more than academic learning outcomes when assessing teacher quality. The result of this study also mirrors Allan, Clarke, and Jopling's (2009) finding that students have the fewest divergent opinions about the value of a teacher's excellent subject knowledge, information relevancy, patience, respect, and enthusiasm.

One of the contributing factors for the successful teaching was likely attributed to the supportive interaction between the students, but such a learning environment is not a typical one in Taiwan. Therefore it is important to look at what the teachers have done in order to allow for it to come about. Teacher Her mentioned that she is "strict with [herself] in preparing lessons and choosing teaching materials based on students' interest". This comment right away reveals the fact that Teacher Her recognizes that "students' interests" are perhaps more important than anything else when it comes to material selection, which is consistent with Benson's (1996) suggested approach and, interestingly enough, Noddings' care ethic, which focuses on listening to students' concerns (2002). Were this not the case she might have indicated that she chose material based on considerations of practicality or students' needs first. Teacher Chen expresses even more evidence of efforts made towards developing an environment where a certain amount of emotional stimulation takes place. She states: *I choose materials based on their interest. I am concerned about how they learn and what they feel. I like to encourage them, avoid placing them in an embarrassing situation.* This statement is evidence of a teacher who shows clear sensitivity towards the way in which the students "feel". Not only is there common emphasis given towards the interests of the students, but also, Teacher Chen takes things a step further and tries to put herself in the emotional shoes of her students when she coordinates classroom activities. This practice is also shared by Teacher Chang who expressed her sensitivity towards the students' emotions when she told of how "one of the course objectives is to remove their fear of their English learning." This comment reveals the fact that Teacher Chang believes that if she hopes to improve the performance results of her students, there are emotional factors that must be taken into consideration. This process clearly embodies Noddings' (2002) ethic of care which requires the caring teacher to listen to students to gain a better understanding of their feelings and situation. In sum, all three teachers have taken action in one form or another to step inside their students' shoes in hopes of meeting needs that may be described as "personal" rather than "academic" and also subjective rather than objective.

The first common "feeling" that the students of all classes shared could be described as "stimulated". That is to say the students were not indifferent with respect to what was taking place. This comment parallels Hativa, Barak, and Simhi's (2001) finding that exemplary teachers are interesting and engaging. The importance of classroom activities for Taiwanese students specifically was also reported by Chu and Huang (2007). The students of Teacher Her's class perhaps said it most candidly when they noted that "all the students are kept awake in class". This comment implies, first of all, that there is at least some level of innovation to a class in which all the students remain awake throughout. If the students are to make such a comment, it means that the teacher has done something different that has prevented students from having the opportunity or desire to nap during class time.

As with Teacher Her's students, the students of Teacher Chang also recognized a unique and more stimulating atmosphere in which they had been participating. They reflected on their experience saying, "we learned to listen to others, rather than the teacher only; we learned to discuss and express ourselves and to interact among group members

and between the teacher and students". This added involvement and new sense of personal contribution is without a doubt going to allow the students to maintain a higher level of stimulation during class, and also help the students feel as though they have a personal investment in the way things turn out. This desire for group work and cooperation is reflected in Chu and Huang's survey of 54 Taiwanese vocational college English learners (2007), as well as Allan, Clarke, and Jopling's 2009 survey of British university students.

A comment made by the students of Teacher Chen's class also indicates a certain level of stimulation taking place—yet it might not be in the form that one might expect. In reaction to a task that Teacher Chen asked her students to perform, the students said about themselves: "we were upset at the beginning, but we felt so proud of ourselves when we finished." Such a response demonstrates that the students clearly have a certain level of emotional investment that they have made in the task that they were presented with. This reveals that stimulation and emotional investment are present in classrooms where the students show improvement and feel as though they have gained something. Another important observation is the fact that they referred to themselves in the plural ("we felt proud") rather than singular, which is further evidence of the "sink or swim together" mentality described by Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1995).

Additionally the interaction, communication, cooperation, joint hardship, inter-group competition, and group pride that resulted from the assigned tasks led to cohesive group work and made the students more willing to personally and emotionally invest in the outcome of the class which was consistent with what Johnson et al. (1995) described as the 'sink or swim together' mentality. So, what kinds of emotional reactions might be found in a learning environment that produces the kind of results that teachers are hoping to attain? By examining the comments that students made in this study, some insight can be gained.

One way the researcher can see that a certain level of stimulation was maintained was because the students also took action to encourage one another. The students mentioned that they had "[learned] to encourage each other to complete the task together". In such a setting it goes without saying that the students are going to be more energized and willing to complete the task at hand which the teacher has provided. This is consistent with Millis & Rhem's (2010) description of an effective language learning environment. As the students encourage each other or as Teacher Her's students described, "help each other to accomplish the assigned task", the feelings of acceptance and significance that a student has are going to be elevated and they will be more willing to try, and less fearful of making mistakes.

In addition to the emotional considerations, there are also those that could be classified as "stimulative". As seen above, the students of all different English ability classes described how they had found themselves in situations which were relatively new experiences for them and they were required to engage in activities that called for higher level of participation – both physical and mental. This was not without its design, as all three teachers explicitly expressed the fact that they intended to create an atmosphere unlike the traditional teaching environment, in which students need to take more responsibility for their learning. In this way their approach also involved what Tudor (1996) described as the central factor in learner-centered teaching.

If perhaps, the students are exposed to a similar type of classroom setting for an extended period of time, can the same elevated level of results be expected or will they disappear along with the feeling of innovation? If it is the case that the factor of innovation turns out to be the more significant one, this means that teachers will have to work towards constantly reinventing the classroom experience in order to maintain a consistent level of achievement. In other words, other steps will have to be taken in order to maintain that feeling of novelty to continue on over a longer stretch of time.

In short, from the information collected from the three teachers' classrooms via student and teacher interviews, evidence was found of three commonalities which include "emotional investment", "stimulation", and "innovation". These three factors helped to create a learning environment where the students were able to enjoy their learning experience and simultaneously achieve tangible results.

VI. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATION

It is admirable that these three teachers have been highly appraised by the students' evaluation reports for years and they have consistently been rated as "outstanding" by students. Based on what students stated in interviews, after the one-year course, they could read English faster, read longer texts, and could understand class lectures. During interviews students expressed the fact that they felt as though they were actually making real progress as a result of their classes and this progress was substantiated by the results of the MEPT post-test. Regarding learning achievement, the paired t-test, as shown in Table 2, indicates that the students have made statistically significant English improvement in the overall performance between the pre-test and the post test. To sum up, all of the factors mentioned above contributed to creating an environment that had a certain uniqueness and novelty to it which inspired students and kept up the levels of interest and participation.

What was of greatest value to the researcher was allowed by the university and the teachers to have the access to the participating students' evaluation documents, the sampled learners themselves and the three exemplary teachers. The study has highlighted some similarities in the teaching styles used by these three teachers which might be utilized as a model for other teachers of English as a foreign language or a variety of other courses. The three main underlying factors which were most prominent were emotionally invested, the stimulated and innovative nature of each of the learning environments as experienced by the students. One thing was constant for all three teachers and that is that they were leading their students to be more responsible for their own learning and encouraging more interaction between the

teacher and students. Overall this study revealed the importance of trying to gain an understanding of both the academic needs of the students (those pertaining to language acquisition) as well as the personal or emotional needs. This was done by recognizing the fact that students may be experiencing feelings of embarrassment or inadequacy and therefore require teaching methods that diminish those feelings rather than emphasize them.

Furthermore, as suggested earlier, there was no reason to expect that the results of this study would be limited to language learning environments and after reviewing the data it would appear that the assumption was confirmed to be accurate. The main elements (emotional investment, innovation, and stimulating environment) that were consistent in the classrooms of the three teachers who acted as subjects for this study should be elements that have universal applicability when it comes to learning. The teachers in this study made use of cooperative learning techniques, by allowing the students to get involved and take on responsibility of their own rather than using traditional lecture-style techniques. With a little imagination, such techniques could be applied to many types of classroom settings. Furthermore, if the teacher is able to devise other ways to help incorporate the elements mentioned above into their classrooms it is likely that student performances would show signs of improvement.

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The Study of English and Chinese Numerical Idioms and Their Translation*

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Abstract—Numerical idioms have rich cultural connotations and are closely connected with culture. Along with the development of China's reform and opening up policy, intercultural communication tends to be wider. Contrastive studies of language-culture have become increasingly important. This article is mainly a probe into the English and Chinese numerical idioms from the perspectives of definition and cultural characteristics of English and Chinese idioms and meanwhile makes a detailed analysis of the translation of numerical idioms of both English and Chinese languages with practical and theoretical effect. It will help us with language teaching and learning, translation and intercultural communication if we have a proper understanding of the differences between both English and Chinese numerical idioms. Only by mastering the deep cultural meaning of numerical idioms can we make the translation more vivid and expressive, thus effectively improving the ability of intercultural communication.

Index Terms—numerical idioms, definition, cultural characteristics, translation

I. INTRODUCTION

An idiom is a set phrase or short sentence abstracted from people's long-term use. It is the crystallization of human wisdom. In terms of its general meaning, it includes allegorical phrases, colloquialisms, slang expressions, proverbs and so on. English and Chinese have a large number of numerical idioms that vividly throw great light on the different cultural characteristics between the two nations. Different notions of human thoughts have a decisive effect on perception and orientation of the different numbers. Numerical idioms have the profound national cultural deposits and special cultural sources, whereas religious convictions, history, cultural tradition and customs all together influence the cultural meanings of the English and Chinese numerical idioms.

II. DEFINITION OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE IDIOMS

Any language has its own long-term accumulated and stereotyped phrases or short sentences that are used to describe popularly and vividly the world. They are called "idioms" in English and "shu2 yu3" in Chinese. To make an accurate definition of numerical idioms, we must understand the concept of English and Chinese idioms first.

The term "Xi1¹ Yu3" is a Chinese counterpart of "idiom" in English. In the Chinese-English bilingual *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (2002), English "idiom" is semantically equivalent to Chinese "shu2 yu3". English word "idiom" in English dictionaries is defined as follows:

Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary (1997): a phrase or a sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit.

Cambridge International Dictionary of English with Chinese Translations (2001): a group of words in a fixed order having a particular meaning, different from the meaning of each word understood on its own.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (English-Chinese) (2009): a group of words with the meaning of its own that is different from the meanings of each separate word put together.

The Chinese word "shu2 yu3" (idiom) in Chinese dictionaries is defined as follows:

Ci Hai (1999): fixed phrases or sentences (including idioms, proverbs, sayings, aphorisms, locutions, two-part allegorical sayings and the like), whose organization can not be changed arbitrarily, should be understood as a whole.

The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (Chinese-English) (2002): fixed phrases with unchangeable ingredients and unique structure, which should be applied as a whole but could not be analyzed by usual word formation. For example: "ban4 jin1 ba1 liang3" (six of one and half a dozen of the other); "ba1 jiu3 bu4 li2 shi2" (pretty close).

It can be seen from the definitions above that two characteristics of both English and Chinese idioms are the unity of meaning and the fixity of grammatical structure. The former means that their meaning is semantically indivisible, not a simple sum of the meaning of each word, namely, literal meanings. Therefore, idioms must be understood as a whole. The latter means that each part of the idioms is fixed and irreplaceable. We have to point out: Broadly, "idiom" includes set phrases, colloquialisms, proverbs, slang expressions and others. (Note: the generalized "idiom", often interpreted

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¹ In this article, for the purpose of an easier and labor-saving intercultural communication, all the Chinese characters are represented by their pronunciations, that is, Chinese "pinyin". The numbers from 1 to 4 stand for the four kinds of Chinese tones.

into Chinese “xi2 yu2”, is generally equivalent to “shu2 yu3” in Chinese in concept. However, “shu2 yu3” in Chinese has a rather broad concept which refers to set phrases or sentences. Its organization can not be changed in a general way and must be understood as a whole. The Chinese “shu2 yu3” is classified by domestic scholar Wang (1997) into idioms, proverbs, aphorisms, locutions, two-part allegorical sayings and colloquialisms according to the nature, among which proverb is regarded as the principal part. Two-part allegorical saying is a kind of special form in Chinese, which is made up of approximate riddle and mystery including metaphoric meaning and homophonic pun. There is no such a form in English idioms); Narrowly, “idiom” refers to “cheng2 yu3” in Chinese. Although this kind of English idiom is symmetrical in structure and coordinate in rhythm, it doesn’t contain the form of “four words case” that is a significant difference from Chinese “cheng2 yu3”, which takes “four words case” as its basic form with harmonious syllables and level and oblique tones.

From the above definitions, English word “idiom” is in line with Chinese word “shu2 yu3” mostly. The common feature of both English and Chinese idioms is that: they are long-term accumulated, fixed phrases or short sentences with specific meaning which could not be deduced from the meanings of their components. This is the result of convention. In order to study idioms easier, here, “idiom” refers to English “idiom” and Chinese “shu2 yu3”, including phrases, proverbs, colloquialisms, maxims, locutions and so forth.

The current definitions of numerical idioms are as follows:

Zhang (1999): set phrases composed of numbers together with other words. This is a common means of expression shared by both English and Chinese.

Chen (1999): phrases composed of cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers and other words.

Yin & Han (2004): idioms containing numbers.

From the above, as an important part of idioms, numerical idioms are composed of cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers and other words with numerical meanings such as Chinese words “shuang1” (double or pair) and “ban4” (half), English words “double”, “every” and “a”. (Note: “a” and “one” are cognates expressing the same meaning). In this thesis, numerical idioms have two types: sentences and phrases with the exception of two-part allegorical sayings (unique to Chinese). English numerical idioms include set phrases, colloquialisms, proverbs, slang expressions and so on, while Chinese numerical idioms include phrases, proverbs, maxims and aphorisms, sayings and others.

III. CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE IDIOMS

Culture generally refers to the totality of the material possessions and spiritual wealth created by human beings in the course of social development. “Culture”, in terms of cultural linguistics, connotes cultures in spiritual and institutional forms (Dai, 1996). Spiritual culture is formed on the basis of material culture, mainly including the perceptions, modes of thinking, national personalities, national psychology, values, religious beliefs, literature and arts, aesthetic standards, customs and folkways, etc. accumulated in the long-term development of culture and history. While “the essence of spiritual culture involves the ideologies and concepts best expressed in philosophical thoughts” (Gu & Lu, 2002, p.73). Institutional culture includes institutions of life, society, family, etc.

Different people have established their specific cultural systems in their living circumstances. Meanwhile, they are also shaped by their cultures. Language is a special form of culture, bearing strong cultural attributes, cultural values and cultural functions. The cultural attributes of language are reflected in the fact that language is a cultural product with its formation and development inseparable from the culture (Deng & Liu, 1989).

The cultural values are mainly shown in the forms of reflection, transmission and supervision of cultures. In terms of reflection of culture, such aspects as the differences of English and Chinese languages in structure and connotation are exemplifications; in terms of transmission of culture, they are mainly embodied in the fact that language is a vector of national cultures on one hand—for example, we can find the distinctive cultural origins and values of the two peoples from the numerous English and Chinese idioms—and the use of a language takes national culture as the background on the other hand. This cultural background shown in language communications is a prerequisite for effective communications. Language is the mode of national culture and the symbol system that forms the national culture. A people’s language manifests a people’s culture, and the linguistic differences reflect the cultural differences. In order to have a thorough understanding of the cultural functions of a language and the influence of culture on language, we must make a profound disclose of the relationship between language and culture. A linguistic communication is also a cultural communication. The intercultural communication means decoding in another culture the information coded in one culture as there are always some underlying additional meanings restricted by the national culture, which is paralinguistic information behind any language (Guan, 2002). Language is the vector and container of culture. To put it briefly, language can be used to describe every aspect of culture. As the vector and chief expression of culture, language is restricted by culture. Language develops with the development of a nation, and is a constituent of social and national culture. Different nations live in different ecological, material, social and religious circumstances, and different linguistic circumstances produce a number of different contextual elements such as social culture, conventions and folkways, and customs and practices. Different cultural backgrounds determine the differences in people’s communicative ways and habits. Language is deeply rooted in a nation’s organism, and takes an active part in all of the nation’s spiritual activities as an important factor that forms the common psychological makings of the nation. The characteristics of a nation’s social culture, historical traditions, living style, living circumstances and religious beliefs as

well as its taste, interest, temperament, personality, sentiment and ability can all be reflected in the language. Language is a window for the perception of human psyche, through which a nation's psychological state, cognitive style and thinking trajectory could be perceived.

As an important component of a language's vocabulary, almost every idiom suggests a story and cultural background. Therefore, the understanding of the cultural connotation of idioms directly influences and restricts our grasp and use of idioms. It is especially of great realistic significance in intercultural communication. What is cultural connotation? We must, therefore, first make clear of what is connotation. According to the explanations of *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* compiled by David (2001), and *An English-Chinese Dictionary of Linguistics* compiled by Lao (2004) and some other experts, connotation is originally a philosophical and logic term referring to the total content a conception can cover, that is the totality of the essential attributes that a conception reflects, as opposite to denotation. Nowadays it is usually used to construct the theoretical framework of linguistics and semantics and refer to a group of defined features that can decide a word's adaptability. Cultural connotation means considering the essential attributes reflected by a conception as a whole from the perspective of culture. Idioms have distinctive semantic and pragmatic characteristics as well as many functions, whereas the study of connotation involves a number of subjects such as lexicology, semantics, pragmatics, etymology, social linguistics, historical linguistics, cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics and so on. Therefore a study of the cultural connotation of English and Chinese idioms must be started from multiple subjects, multiple perspectives and multiple levels so that substantial results can be achieved. Besides, except for its purely rational substance, a word also bears some kind of communicative value by virtue of its denotation. That is, when people use or hear a word, the word can suggest experiences in "the real world". So understanding of connotation varies with different people, different ages, as well as different societies, countries and times. Different cultural groups (societies and countries) show distinct psychological characteristics of personal and national preference and abhorrence in the face of the same object or conception due to their different natural ecological circumstances, economic development levels, political constitutions and ideologies. We define this kind of connotation originating from cultural backgrounds as cultural connotation of idioms (Zhang, 2007).

Both English and Chinese languages with long histories contain abundant idioms which not only carry explicit folk cultural information but also suggest profound national cultural implications. To disclose the connotations of English and Chinese idioms is like opening a portrait of the national history and culture, revealing the ethnic customs of the speakers of the two languages as well as the profound impacts history and culture have exercised on the languages. English and Chinese idioms, as a processed and refined language form, are the essence of languages. Idioms are usually brief and accurate, beautiful and vivid, profound in meaning and rich in humor, whereas the subtle use of metaphors is one of the major contributors to these characteristics. Idioms have rich connotations, either explicit or implicit. Idioms are closely related to a nation's culture. The metaphors involved are especially richer in strong colors of national cultures. "Considered from the perspective of social culture, language is the code for culture, whereas idioms are the most economical and effective ones among the linguistic codes since the cultural contents harbored in idioms are historically profound and realistically broad" (Cui, 1997, p.18). As the core and essence of language, idioms are the crystallization of a culture. It is safe to say idioms are more typical and representative in reflecting cultural differences than any other linguistic element. Any language in the world contains great numbers of idioms which not only share some similarities but also show inevitable differences resulted from the differences in their cultural backgrounds. The great differences between Chinese and Western national cultural traditions determine the sharp contrasts in the characteristics of their idiom cultures. Only after making clear the cultural differences and similarities between English and Chinese idioms can we better grasp and use them.

IV. THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE NUMERICAL IDIOMS

Language is not only the carrier of culture, but also resides in culture. The culture is spread widely by means of language. Most numbers in English and Chinese numerical idioms are carrying certain cultural elements, which is what we often call cultural load words. Therefore, in the translation of numerical idioms, our first task is to strive to explore their cultural roots and make correct comprehensive interpretation of their cultural information. Then, we could locate the cultural load words corresponding to the numbers rather than to the representation. Meanwhile, we should take various effective strategies of translation according to the following principle: domestication is primary, foreignization is auxiliary. If we find an English numerical idiom corresponding to a Chinese numerical idiom occasionally, literal translation could be applied. Some examples are as follows:

A cat has nine lives: mao1 you3 jiu3 ming4

be in twos and threes: san3 san3 liang2 liang2

A stitch in time saves nine: yi1 zhen1 ji2 shi2 sheng4 jiu3 zhen1

A drop in the ocean: cang1 hai3 yi1 li4

Two heads are better than one: yi1 ren2 bu4 ji2 er4 zhi4

One bird in hand is better than two in forest: yi1 niao3 zai4 shou3 sheng4 guo4 shuang1 niao3 zai4 lin2

Kill two birds with one stone: yi1 shi2 er4 niao3/ yi1 jian4 shuang1 diao1

Language is a reflection of the objective world and a kind of social and cultural phenomenon. The linguistic and cultural factors of Chinese and English together dominate the whole process of translation between them and also

determine semantic orientation. Actually, cultural factor plays a more important role than linguistic factor does. Mr. Wang Zuoliang said, it is better to study a language through the study of its culture. What a translator meets in the process of translation are not simple words but two cultures. There exist a huge number of numerical idioms with seemingly similar meanings but actually with different social and cultural connotations in English and Chinese, so we have to try to find ways to fill the cultural loss of connotative meanings in our translation. For example, there are many numerical idioms containing “five” in Chinese. “Five” has its original numerical meaning, but it evolves into a figurative meaning. The cultural source of the word “five” is closely associated with the number “five”. For instance, in the Chinese idiom “wu3 guan1 duan1 zheng4”, “wu3 guan1” refers to “mouth, nose, eyes, ears and body” originally. But now it only refers to four facial organs. With the development of culture, some Chinese idioms with number “five” have merely the figurative meaning expressing the meaning of “complete, various, all and so on”. Therefore, they can not be translated into English by using the English word “five” directly. Otherwise, it will deviate from the implied meaning in Chinese and even cause misunderstandings. Some examples are as follows:

- wu3 da4 san1 cu1: tall and sturdy
- wu3 zang4 liu4 fu3: the vital organs of the human body
- wu3 guan1 duan1 zheng4: have regular figure
- wu3 guang1 shi2 se4: multi-colored; all sorts and kinds; of all colors; of great variety.
- wu3 ti3 tou2 di4: admire sb. from the bottom of one's heart; worship sb.
- wu3 hu2 si4 hai3: all corners of the land; all over the country/world
- wu3 gu3 feng1 deng1: have an abundant harvest of a11
- wu3 hua1 ba1 men2: of a wide/rich variety; varied and well assorted

Similarly, the Chinese character “shi2” (ten) has no relation to the English word “ten” in culture. The Chinese character “shi2” (ten) means “all of, enough, greatest”, while the English word “ten” has no such meaning. Therefore, proper English words should be chosen to express the meaning of “all of, enough, greatest”. Some examples are as follows:

- shi2 quan2 shi2 mei3 (signifying perfect): leave nothing to be desired/ satisfactory in everyway
- shi2 na2 jiu3 wen3 (do sth. with accuracy and assurance): beyond a shadow of doubt, almost certain
- shi2 yang2 jiu3 mu4 (less people more officials): more officials than people under certain
- shi2 nian2 han2 chuang1 (painstaking and long-term study): study hard and long

Through the study on the translation of numerical idioms, it can be found: most Chinese numerical idioms have no corresponding English ones except for a few. And in many cases, these English expressions translated from Chinese numerical idioms are just simple combination of common words because the cultural loss of target language will inevitably cause the lack of format and meaning. Of course, only if we adopt free translation on the basis of understanding the specific meaning and cultural background and the cultural roots of numbers through careful analysis and in-depth research, then determine the appropriate forms of expressions to complement the cultural loss of numbers in translation, can we avoid failures in intercultural communication to the uttermost. For instance, in Chinese, the numerical idioms with “seven” and “eight” have no corresponding ones in English. They ought to be translated in terms of their implied meanings. Some examples are as follows:

- qi1 shou3 ba1 jiao3: in a flurry; all get busy
- qi1 shang4 ba1 xia4: undecided; restless; be agitated
- luan4 qi1 ba1 zao1: in a mess; disorder
- qi1 zui3 ba1 she2: all talking in conclusion; all talking at once
- qi1 niu3 ba1 wai1: crooked; uneven; disorderly; irregular
- qi1 pin1 ba1 cou4: scrape together; piece together; rig up
- qi1 ling2 ba1 luo4: throw into disorder
- qi1 zhe2 ba1 kou4: various deductions

The same case can also be found in translation of some Chinese numerical idioms with “nine”. For example:

- jiu3 quan2 zhi1 xia4: after death
- shi2 na2 jiu3 wen3: almost certain; practically certain; unquestionable
- jiu3 si3 yi1 sheng1: a narrow escape from death
- shu3 jiu3 han2 tian1: cold as hell; the coldest days in winter
- jiu3 xiao1 yun2 wai4: beyond the highest heavens
- jiu3 zhou1 fang1 yuan2: all over China
- jiu3 niu2 yi1 mao2: a drop in the ocean
- shi2 zhi1 ba1 jiu3: most likely
- jiu3 jiu3 gui1 yi1: after all; when all is said or done
- jiu3 niu2 er4 hu3 zhi1 li4: tremendous effort

The numbers of English idioms often have specific meaning, while that of Chinese idioms often have metaphorical meaning. In many cases, their figurative meanings are seemingly in harmony but actually at variance or even different. We can not take the idioms too literally. Some examples are as follows:

- one-night stand: xun2 hui2 yan3 chu1 (making a performance tour)

dressed up to the nines: chuan1 zhao2 jiang3 jiu1 (be dressed well)

on all fours think twice: zai4 san1 kao3 lv4 (turn over)

two-time: yi1 ye4 feng1 liu2 (a night of romance)

in one or two words: san1 yan2 liang3 yu3 (in a few words)

at the eleventh hour: zui4 hou4 shi2 ke4 (at the last moment)

in two minds: san1 xin1 er4 yi4 (half-hearted)

the seventh day: an1 xi1 ri4 (Sabbath day)

New brooms sweep clean: xin1 guan1 shang4 ren4 san1 ba3 huo3 (A new official applies strict measures.)

A man may lose more in an hour than he can get in seven: de2 lai2 jian1 nan2 shi1 zhi1 yi4 (hard gain easy lost)

be two/ ten a penny: fei1 chang2 pian2 yi4/ yi1 wen2 bu4 zhi2 (very cheap)

Two can play the game: yi1 ge4 bai zhang3 pai1 bu4 xiang3----gu1 zhang3 nan2 ming2 (a two-part allegorical saying)

nine to five: zhao1 jiu3 wan3 wu3 (normal working hours in an office)

One boy is a boy, two boys half a boy and three one: yi1ge4 he2 shang4 tiao1 shui3 chi1, liang2 ge4 he2 shang4 tai2 shui3 chi1, san1 ge4 he2 shang4 mei2 shui3 chi1 (a fable)

One hand washes another: you3 lai2 you3 wang3, hu4 xiang1 bang1 mang2 (help mutually)

Keep a thing seven years and you'll find a use for it: dong1 xi1 bao3 cun2 shi2 jian1 chang2, zhong1 yu2 pai4 shang4 hao3 yong4 chang3 (keep things for a long time and finally come in handy)

In *Theories and Techniques in Translation* Professor Fan (1985) points out, in general, phrases or sentences of two languages are hardly equivalent; quite a few of them are correspondent; most of them are neither equivalent nor correspondent. Translation means not only the transformation from one kind of words to another, but also involves the history and culture, religion, customs, social background as well as value hidden in the source language. This especially applies to translation of numerical idioms with national colors and local characteristics. Through the exploration of the cultural roots and interpretation and contrast of the cultural information of English and Chinese numerical idioms, it can be clearly found: numbers in both English and Chinese idioms have obvious national and cultural imprint. Different customs, religions, cultural traditions will affect the cultural figurative meaning of numerical idioms. To interpret the cultural differences between Chinese and English numerical idioms correctly is of great importance to the study of foreign languages, the mutual translation between English and Chinese, foreign language teaching and research, intercultural communication, etc. A deep understanding of cultural connotations of numerical idioms helps to make translation more vivid and more expressive, and thus promoting the intercultural communication effectively.

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Teachers' Individual Practical Knowledge about Teaching Reading Comprehension

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Abstract—The present study was conducted to study language teachers' practical knowledge about the teaching of reading comprehension to engineering major students. The participants were 36 master and doctoral holders teaching ESP courses chosen from Payame Noor Universities of Kermanshah, Islamic Azad Universities of Kermanshah and Razi University of Kermanshah. A questionnaire was administrated to the participants. The first part of this study tried to search for any shared category(s) among the categories of practical knowledge and isolated the unshared category(s). The second part examined the overall unshared category(s) in order to see whether there is a significant difference among them or not. The study didn't detect any shared category but there was a significant difference in the categories.

Index Terms—language teachers' practical knowledge, teaching and reading comprehension

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, researches on teaching mostly focused on cognition and belief that underlies teachers' classroom practice, rather than their behaviors (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). This change in focus was mainly due to development in cognitive psychology, which was based on the fundamental assumption that one's cognitions and actions influences each other and, likewise, that teachers' cognitions and their classroom behavior mutually affect each other (Meijer, Verloop&Beijard, 1999; Beijard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). In many educational contexts, teachers were considered as executors who were supposed to implement new educational innovations designed by the researchers. But the majority of the innovations failed after a while and teachers relinquish the new behavior and returned to the old ways after a period of change (Verloop, Driel& Meijer, 2001). As a result, researchers considered the centrality of teachers in education. If any of the new innovations hadn't corresponded with of the teachers' knowledge and belief, the failure would have happened.

According to Fenstermacher (1994), there's not always congruence between the knowledge that the teachers obtain during their education and the knowledge acquire through experience. Therefore, he discriminated two types of knowledge in the teachers, formal knowledge and practical knowledge the former is a knowledge that is known and made up by the researchers while the latter is a knowledge that is known and made up by the teachers themselves. To create professional practical knowledge the teachers need both kinds of knowledge. Formal knowledge is helpful to gain necessary knowledge for teaching and educational contexts provides insights, helps on the formation of explicit practical knowledge (Borg, 2003). In this study, the focus of attention is on what he refers to as teachers' practical knowledge.

Researchers have studied teachers' practical knowledge with various assumptions for different purposes. From a review of the studies on the teachers' practical knowledge, several characteristics have been identified: a) it is personal, which means it's somehow unique (Clandinin, 1986); b) it's content related meaning it's related to the subject being taught (Shulman,1986); c) it's context related which is based on classroom situation (Leinhardt, 1988); d) It's tacit which means teachers do not articulate their knowledge conspicuously (Meijer, Verloop & Beijaard, 1999)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Teacher Knowledge

Knowledge is a familiarity about a subject which is acquired through education or experience which is explicit and universally and objectively true. (Woods & Cadir, 2011). When we're talking about knowledge, It is mostly about the teachers' knowledge of their own professional identity i.e., how they perceive themselves as teachers. In this view, teachers are described in terms of an either subject matter expert, pedagogical expert, or a didactical expert (Beijarrd, Verloop and Vermunt, 2000). Lin (2005) identified three major ways that researchers in general and in language

education have approached teacher knowledge: (1) categorization of teacher knowledge, (2) "explication of sources for teacher knowledge", and (3) investigation of the impact of teacher knowledge on teaching. He believed that these three areas are not independent are often combined in a single study. According to Fenstermacher (1994), there are four fundamental questions led some approaches to the topic of teachers' knowledge.

1. What is known about effective teaching?

Fenstermacher (1994) state that the answer to this question allows the researchers to address the concept of knowledge as it appears in standard or conventional behavioral science research. The concept of knowledge is called Formal knowledge. Based on his argument, researchers in this category do not see themselves as studying teacher knowledge so much as they perceive themselves producing knowledge about teaching. They seek the factors of good (successful, effective) teaching and if the methods and designs are in agreement with accepted scientific theory and principles, their results may be accepted as knowledge about teachers and teaching.

2. What do teachers know?

Based on Fenstermacher (1994) answering this question helps the researchers to understand what teachers know based on their teaching situation and context. The kind of knowledge is suggested in answering to this question is practical knowledge.

3. What knowledge is essential for teaching?

According to Fenstermacher (1994) this question seeks for the " forms "and "types of knowledge" required for teaching. Schulman (1986) describes two important arguments related to those issues. He starts his first argument about the origin and content knowledge base of teaching and draws some categories of knowledge required for teaching. In his second argument he introduces the notion of pedagogical content knowledge and focuses upon a few of the categories dealing with content and pedagogical knowledge, arguing that these are not nearly so well understood as the other categories of knowledge.

4. Who produces knowledge about teaching?

The answer to this question allows the researchers to address the difference between knowledge generated by university-based researchers and that generated by practicing teachers (Fenstermacher, 1994).

Day (1993) draws a continuum and discusses the types of activities by which, the student teachers can form either the declarative knowledge (at left end of the continuum) or the procedural knowledge (at the right end of the continuum) of teaching profession. As it defined by MacDonald, Badger, & White (2001) declarative knowledge is knowledge *about* teaching- knowledge of subject areas and the 'theory' of education and procedural knowledge is knowledge of *how* to teach- knowledge of instructional routines to be used in the classroom. There are variety of activities between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge which depending on their position, allow the learner to develop knowledge closer to one end or the other. The continuum is explained as follows:

- 1) Teaching
- 2) Micro-teaching
- 3) Observation
- 4) Simulation
- 5) Role-play
- 6) Discussion
- 7) Studying

B. Categories of Teachers' Knowledge

There are different categorizations of teachers' knowledge in different papers which are described as follows.

A) Elbaz (1983)

- 1) Self
- 2) The milieu of teaching
- 3) The subject matter
- 4) Curriculum development
- 5) Instruction

B) Grossmann (1990)

- 1) General pedagogical knowledge
- 2) Subject matter knowledge
- 3) Pedagogical content knowledge
- 4) Knowledge of context

C) Ferguson (1997)

- 1) Knowledge of the culture of the discipline
- 2) Knowledge of the value of the different disciplines
- 3) Knowledge of the genres and discourse patterns

D) Lowe (2010)

- 1) Subject content, including history and ethics
- 2) Subject reasoning, methodology and skills
- 3) Subject relationship to other subjects
- 4) Language sub structures such as phonemics to discourse
- 5) Language skills
- 6) Teaching skills and knowledge

During the past several decades, scholarly consideration has emphasized on the concept of teachers' professional knowledge and a number of reform to rethink both the structure of teacher education in order to enhance teacher preparation process (Sandlin, Young, & Karge, 1992; Schulman, 1987; Woods, 1996; Fenstermacher, 1994). Kremer-

Hayon & Zuzovsky (1995) stresses that professional knowledge is a basic element that good teacher educators need to guide their supervision behaviors, and a lack of this knowledge can lower their confidence in discharging their duties. Schulman (1987, cited in Lowe, 2010) adds that teachers must have at least three types of professional knowledge (professional knowledge): pedagogical knowledge content knowledge, and student knowledge. The sum of those three knowledge forms PCK which is described below.

C. Teachers' Practical Knowledge

The term practical knowledge was first introduced by Fenstermacher (1994) who described it as the knowledge *of* teachers in comparison with formal knowledge which is knowledge *for* teachers. Practical knowledge is the knowledge that teachers generate as a result of their teaching in educational context. This knowledge is formed in classroom situations and includes all the practical dilemmas that teachers face in performing purposeful actions. As it stated by him: "practical knowledge is the type of knowledge which bounded by the situation or context in which it arises, and it may or may not be capable of immediate expression in speech or writing. The teachers' is generally related to how to do things, or the right place and time to do them, or about how to see and interpret events related to one's action."(p.11)

Clandinin (1992) looks at this knowledge in any individual teacher and calls it personal practical knowledge "Personal practical knowledge is reflected in the person's background, in the person's present mind and body and in the person's future plans and actions. It is knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher's knowledge and It is a kind of knowledge formed by, situations"(pp.125-126).

Schon (1987) defined four characteristics of practical knowledge. Firstly, practical knowledge is "time bound". Secondly, practical knowledge is "situation specific" and does not translate easily to other, even in similar circumstances. Thirdly, practical knowledge is "personally compelling". While information acquired in a professional development seminar might be interesting, it will not cause the teacher to alter practice unless the specific problem addressed is one that teacher is currently facing in the classroom. Finally, practical knowledge is led toward action. Elbaz (1983) describes that practical knowledge is represented in practice in three ways: First as an issue related to practice, which are brief, clearly formulated statements of what to do or how to do it in a particular situation; second, as practical principles, more inclusive and less explicit formulations in which the teacher's purposes are more clearly evident ; and third, as images, which are defined as a brief, descriptive, and sometimes metaphoric statement which seems to capture some essential aspect of teachers' perception of themselves, their teaching, their situation in the classroom.

Meijer et.al (1999) defined practical knowledge as knowledge and ideas that makes teacher action and classified it into these categories:

- 1) Knowledge about subject matter (knowledge about a particular subject)
- 2) Knowledge about student (general knowledge about student)
- 3) Knowledge about student learning and understanding (knowledge about learning and understanding of particular subject)
- 4) Knowledge about purpose (goals and the importance of teaching a particular subject)
- 5) Knowledge about curriculum (texts and the material used to teach a specific subject)
- 6) Knowledge about instructional strategy (how to design and organize the lessons for the subject)

Driel et.al (1998) categories practical knowledge as follows:

- 1) Knowledge of subject mat
- 2) Knowledge of general pedagogy;
- 3) Knowledge of student learning and conceptions;
- 4) Knowledge of purposes;
- 5) Knowledge of curriculum and media;
- 6) Knowledge of representations and strategies;
- 7) Knowledge of context

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' individual practical knowledge about reading comprehension. The first part of this study searches for a shared category among the categories of practical knowledge and isolates the unshared parts. The second part examines the unshared parts in order to see whether the difference is significant or not.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTION

Regarding the foregoing discussion, the study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. Do Iranian ESP teachers have any shared of practical knowledge
2. Is there any significant difference in the overall unshared categories of practical knowledge between ESP teachers holding master degree and doctoral degree?

V. METHOD

A. *Participants*

This study was started with 50 male and female Iranian university teachers having master and doctoral degree and teaching English for specific purpose (ESP) to students majoring in engineering .The teachers are chosen from Razi University of Kermanshah, Islamic Azad Universities of Kermanshah and Payame Noor Universities of Kermanshah. The initial number of participants was then reduced to 40 since not all participants participated in the experiment or had different proficiency level than other participants.4 other participants were also since their proficiency level went much different than others. Finally 18 teachers who had master degree and 18 teachers who had doctoral degree were chosen in this study.

B. *Study Materials*

In the present study, the questionnaire was designed is utilized to collect data. There are 10 closed ended questions and they are designed based on the goal of the study and six systems of categories that are provided by Meijer et al (1999). For each of the closed-ended items, three choices are offered. Participants were required to choose the one that corresponded to their opinions.

C. *Procedure*

At first, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Then, the questionnaire was distributed among the participants via e-mail or in person with the help of some colleague's .Then the responses were collected and prepared for analysis.

VI. RESULTS

A. *Investigation of the First Research Question*

The first research question sought to investigate the similarities and differences in teachers' individual practical knowledge and capture the *shared* category(s) of the practical knowledge. To answer this question a table 4.1 is drawn showing the number of their similar and different responses to each question.

TABLE 4.1.
DIVERSITY OF THE TEACHERS' RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS

Category	Question number	Number of similar response	Number of different responses
Subject Matter Knowledge	1	0	2
	2	0	2
Student Knowledge	7	0	2
	8	0	3
Knowledge of Student Learning and Understanding	9	0	4
	10	0	3
Knowledge of Purpose	5	0	2
	6	0	2
Knowledge of Curriculum	3	0	3
Knowledge of Instructional Technique	4	0	3

The results of the first part showed the teachers in this study did not have any shared practical knowledge. As it's seen, the great diversity exists in the category of knowledge of student learning and understanding (with three and four different responses) and low diversity in the following categories: subject matter knowledge and knowledge of purpose (with two different responses). Therefore, the first null hypothesis is supported and the teachers do not have any shared practical knowledge at all. Therefore, all the categories are considered as unshared and first must be analyzed individually

B. *Investigation of the Second Research Question*

The second research question attempts to see whether there is significant difference in the overall unshared categories of practical knowledge or not. To this end, first each category of practical knowledge must be studied individually. Each category must be analyzed in a term of having a significant difference in the responses to the question relating to that specific category. Finally the existence of significant difference in the entire categories of practical knowledge is investigated. The teachers' responses in a form of descriptive and inferential statistics in each category of practical knowledge are shown in the tables below.

TABLE 4.2
INDEPENDENT T-TEST FOR THE CATEGORIES OF PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Category	T	Df	P	Mean Difference
Subject Matter Knowledge	1.263	20	0.221	.45000
Student Knowledge	2.137	10.113	0.058	1.08654

Knowledge of Student Learning and Understanding	.376	17	0.712	.27778
Knowledge of Purpose	2.157	23	.040	.53247
Knowledge of Curriculum	2.229	10.574	.049	.675
Knowledge of Instructional Technique	1.796	23	.086	.35056

According to the table 4.1, the value of "p" is above the significant level in the Subject Matter Knowledge, Student Knowledge, Knowledge of Student Learning and Understanding and Knowledge of Instructional technique categories. Therefore, It can be argued that the difference is not significant on those categories. On the other hand, The value of "p" is below the significant level in the Knowledge of Purpose and Knowledge of Curriculum categories. So, It can be argued that there is a significant difference between the two groups of teachers on those two categories.

C. Investigation of the Overall Categories of Practical Knowledge

TABLE 4.3
ONE SAMPLE T-TEST FOR THE OVERALL CATEGORIES OF PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Mean Difference	P	Df	T	Value
.60000	.024	9	2.714	Differences

According to Table 4.3, since the value of "p" is statistically significant ($=.024$), we can safely claim that there is significant difference between the means of the groups. So, the second null hypothesis developed in chapter one is rejected. The reason for this significant difference is mostly due to difference in the Knowledge of Purpose Category and Knowledge of Curriculum Category. Based on the results, we can argue that the master holding teachers emphasized more on Knowledge of Purpose and Knowledge of Curriculum category than doctoral holding teachers.

Although the aim of this study was not to evaluate teachers' practical knowledge in order to establish knowledge base for teaching, some researchers (Verloop et.al; Beijaard et.al; Rosnidar et.al; Ajideh, 2003; Clemente et.al, 2008; Driel et.al; Fenstermacher, 1994; Gatbonton 2008; Miranda, 2008; Reynolds, 1989) focused on establishing the knowledge base for teachers which serves as a guideline for their teaching. They believed that knowledge base not only helps teachers to improve their status of teaching profession but also serves as a guideline in educating new teachers.

VII. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The result of the first part of experiment showed the Knowledge of Student Learning and Understanding category has the greatest diversity in the responses and the Student Knowledge and Knowledge of Purpose has the lowest diversity in the responses. The results of the second part of the experiment revealed that there is a significant difference in overall categories of practical knowledge. The significant difference is mostly due to the significant difference in the Knowledge of Purpose and Knowledge of Curriculum category. The teachers in this study tended to reflect on their teaching in a way that maintained the focus of their practical knowledge. For example, teachers who focusing on subject matter category in their practical knowledge tended to think that subject matter are an important issue in their teaching. Similarly, teachers who focused on student knowledge category believe that the knowledge of students (age, sex, level, major, personality, etc) should be taken into account prior teaching. They see the problematic situations are due to teachers' lack of enough knowledge about students. Likewise the teachers focusing on the student learning and understanding category are always looking for ways to improve teaching based on students learning a student-learning-oriented teacher,

As the result of the second part showed, there was a significant difference among all *unshared* categories of practical knowledge. By comparing the results of the first part and the second part, we saw that the significant difference is not in the category that has the greatest number of different responses. Therefore, we can conclude that the existence of a significant difference depends on another factor as well in addition to numbers of different response. Another factor that affect on the results is number of the teachers who agreed or disagreed on the specific category, in another word, concentration of responses in each specific choice. The master holding teachers in our study in contrast to the doctoral holding teachers had had different emphasis on different categories of practical knowledge. According to the results of the second part, we can assert the master holding teachers focused more on Knowledge of Purpose and Knowledge of Curriculum category than doctoral holding teachers, since their mean is much higher. The reason for this difference might be due to the fact that the master holding degree teachers tend to be more conservative than doctoral holding teachers. They focus mostly on the required textbook and the given syllabus and try to follow the syllabus exactly as written. On the other hand, the doctoral holding teachers do not mostly like follow the given syllabus exactly as stated. They prefer to design their own teaching material than the materials required by authorities such as textbook. They also don't focus on final exam as much as the master holding teachers do.

Based on the results of both parts we can conclude that continuing education has considerable effect on the practical knowledge and higher education seems to change the view and approach of the teachers toward teaching different subject. In addition to the aforementioned reason, there might be some other reasons the second reason can be due to the differences in their context of teaching. In some contexts the teachers must follow a specific syllabus for teaching

whereas in some other contexts the teachers don't feel such pressure on themselves. The third reason might be due to their difference in the number of teaching experience which might affect on their view and approach toward teaching.

In this study one important question arises? The question is whether this variety of practical knowledge is acceptable or not. Teachers who seem to have limited practical knowledge rarely think about their teaching profession and so lack good understanding about what is happening in their classroom environment or in their students mind. Some teachers might not find the categories of their practical knowledge useful for clarifying their practical knowledge because most of the teachers might not have thought about some categories explicitly.

VIII. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study can have implications not only for teachers and learners but also for syllabus designers. The selection and implementation of the appropriate syllabus can have a considerable effect on improving and teaching reading skill. According to this study, if syllabus designers and teachers consider all the issues in the practical knowledge, they will be able to prepare textbooks in a way which can facilitate reading comprehension.

IX. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this article, the relationship between a teachers practical knowledge their teaching method was not the focused. Further research can also be carried out to investigate this issue. Another issue that can be investigated is whether teachers practical knowledge affects on the learning process of the learners and one might find a relationship between those two variables.

APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Teaching experience (how many years):

Degree Level: Master Doctoral

Direction: There are 10 questions in this questionnaire. For most of the questions, different choices are offered. Please tick the one that corresponds to your opinion or if you're receiving this questionnaire by e-mail, highlight (bold) the best answer. If you have different suggestions, you are welcome to write them down in the last choice of each item.

1. What is reading comprehension?
 - A) to understand the essence of a text
 - B) to relate the content of the text to the real world
 - C) to have insight into the content of a text
 - D) to have insight into the structure of a text
2. What is the relationship of reading comprehension to other language skills? (speaking, listening, writing, and translating)?
 - A) reading is a separate skill basically unrelated to other skills
 - B) reading is not a separate skill from other language skills
 - C) reading is the basis of all the other language skills
 - D) reading is the least important skill among language skills.
3. What kinds of materials/texts do you use in the lessons on reading? comprehension?
 - A) only the material from textbooks
 - B) prefer to use texts focused on the final exams
 - C) prefer to select my own texts, from newspaper or elsewhere
 - D) both the material from textbooks and some other materials, like newspaper
4. How to design your lessons?
 - A) prepare lessons in detail, design them according to the textbooks I am using
 - B) not to prepare lessons, design them as function of questions, reactions and moods of the students
 - C) although prepare lessons in detail, sometimes make slight changes
 - D) sometimes prepare lessons in detail, sometimes not (as choice B presents)
5. Why is reading important?
 - A) reading is the most important part in learning English
 - B) reading is the most important part in the exams
 - C) reading is important in conveying and understanding messages
 - D) reading is important for improving other language skills(vocabulary, speaking, and writing)
6. What are the goals in teaching reading?
 - A) to expand students' vocabulary

- B) to get higher scores in the exams
 C) to enhance students' reading abilities
 D) to improve reading as well as other language skills(vocabulary, speaking , writing)
7. Do you know the characteristics of your students?
 A) Yes, I know exactly who they are
 B) Yes, I have some ideas about my students
 C) I have some ideas about some students, not all of them
 D) No, I do not know
8. How about the motivation of students in your class?
 A) they have strong motivations
 B) they need to be motivated sometimes
 C) they always need to be motivated
 D) they do not like the course at all
9. What do students consider the most difficult when reading a text in your opinion?
 A) too many words they are not familiar with
 B) hard to work up concentration on reading
 C) not familiar with the texts and they are uninteresting and unreadable
 D) have problems with the structure of a text and how it is put together
10. Students' reading abilities are different. What do you think is the most important factor for it?
 A) students' talent and self-confidence
 B) students' reading strategies
 C) students' reading level or reading skills
 D) students' practice and hard-work

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A Short Analysis of Discourse Coherence

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Abstract—As an essential element of discourse, coherence has been the focus of study for several decades. Previous researches mainly view discourse coherence as a static product and explore it on linguistic level. However, it is also a dynamic process and can be achieved by the cooperation made by the discourse producer and receiver based on their mutual understanding. It involves both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. In this article, the author reviews previous researches on discourse coherence and presents the nature of discourse coherence from cognitive perspective, aiming at giving an insight into discourse comprehension and teaching.

Index Terms—discourse coherence, cognitive, cohesion

I. BASIC CONCEPT OF DISCOURSE COHERENCE

A. Definition of Discourse Coherence

The history of discourse analysis can be traced back to 1950s. Before that linguistic studies have focused on the study of sentence level. Since 1950s, with the development of semiotics, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, psychology, communication studies etc., the focus has been transferred from sentences to linguistic units larger than sentences — discourse. Then one aspect of discourse studies becomes especially important— discourse coherence, the way by which passages can be formed as a discourse.

In this part some arguable terms should be made clear first. In books on discourse analysis, people can often encounter such terms as text and discourse. These are two terms that are in some writers used interchangeably and in others carefully distinguished. Stubbs (1983) and Coulthard (1985) distinguish text as written language from discourse as spoken language. Halliday and Hasan (1976, p.1) take text as “a unit of language in use” which can be “any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole”. While unlike Halliday and Hasan, Leech (1982) takes discourse as both written and spoken English. Some linguists also distinguish text and discourse from the functional perspective. According to van Dijk (1980, p.25), the difference between text and discourse lies in that the former is a theoretical conception related to a language user’s competence while the latter is a general term for examples of language use, i.e. language that has been produced as the result of an act of communication. Brown and Yule (1983, p.6) define text as the “verbal record of a communicative act” and distinguish text-as-product from discourse-as-process.

In order to avoid any confusion, the author adopts the idea that text and discourse are two different expressions. *Discourse is used as a coherent combination of sentences or sentence fragments that is the result of communication interacted between participants, whether speaker and listener or writer and reader.* While text only refers to written discourse. Here one point should be paid attention to is that where the work of another linguist is discussed, the author has tried to use whichever term he or she originally used.

Soon after the birth of discourse analysis, scholars continued to apply their traditional methodology, Generative Grammar, which had been used in syntax, to discourse analysis. This is called “text grammar”, which aims to produce a set of rules, similar to those used in sentence grammar, to generate discourse. The emphasis is placed on the rules and regularities and their constraints on the linear relations among discourse elements. Thus, what distinguishes a discourse from sentence becomes that of quantity and discourse grammar serves no more than a complement for the existing regularity systems and formal systems of sentences. But this approach does not work well with discourse in that discourse is much more complex than sentence. In addition, unlike sentence which is heavily reliant on grammaticality and regularity, what is most important to discourse is the choice in a semantic and pragmatic network. What is used to define discourse is not its grammaticality, but to see whether it meets the requirements in a certain context. Therefore, the focus of attention in discourse analysis has shifted from its grammaticality to its textuality, a term proposed by Halliday & Hasan (1976) to refer to what distinguishes a text from something that is not a text. And they have specified various types of cohesive devices, which are the most important sources for a piece of passage to have texture. This is the origin of the study of discourse coherence.

The notion of coherence is not strictly defined. Roughly speaking, discourse coherence is the semantic relationship between propositions or communicative events in discourse, which is a feature of the perception of discourse rather than discourse itself.

In the following part, the author will first make a general survey of studies on discourse coherence and then present a

brief view on cohesion and coherence and finally the nature of discourse coherence.

B. A General Survey of Discourse Coherence

One of the fundamental properties of discourse is its coherence. Since 1960s linguists have been on the investigation of discourse coherence. Linguistic analyses of the notion of coherence in discourse have been provided by van Dijk (1972, 1977, 1985), Halliday and Hasan (1976), Widdowson (1978, 1979), Kintsch (1974), Coulthart (1977,1985), Beaugrade (1981), Brown & Yule (1983), Tannen (1984), Blackmore (1987,1988,1992), Cook (1989), Schiffrin (1994), etc. The publication of *Cohesion in English* in 1976 by Halliday and Hasan is regarded as the origin of the study of discourse coherence. And the last three decades or more have witnessed a multifarious development in the theory of discourse coherence and a large number of theoretical systems have been proposed. The following survey will look roughly at several representative studies on discourse coherence and present the author's view of them.

According to Halliday and Hasan(1976) a text must have texture, which is guaranteed collectively by cohesion and register. And in the process of discussing the relation between cohesion and texture, Halliday and Hasan put forward the standards for coherence. In their book *Cohesion in English*, they argue that:

“The concept of *cohesion* can be usefully supplemented by that of *register*, since the two together effectively define a *text*. A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore, cohesive. Neither of the two conditions is sufficient without the other, nor does the one by necessity entail the other. Just as one can construct passages which are beautifully cohesive but which fail as texts because they lack consistency of register—there is no continuity of meaning in relation to the situation. The hearer, or reader, reacts to both of these things in his judgment of texture.”

(Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.23)

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), a text is coherent which must satisfy two conditions: one is a text must be consistent with context in which it is created, the other is a text must have cohesion, that is, all parts in a text must be connected by cohesive devices.

Halliday and Hasan put forward the formal markers to express coherence, that is cohesive ties and devote themselves to the study of various cohesive markers by which semantic relations are realized, but they failed to elaborate how context consistency influences the choice of these cohesive markers, which is more important.

In his book *Text and Context*, van Dijk says,

“*Coherence is a semantic property of discourse, based on the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences.*”

(van Dijk, 1977, p.96)

He argues that coherence of discourse is represented at two levels: linear or sequential coherence and global coherence. Linear coherence refers to “coherence relations holding between propositions expressed by composite sentence and sequences of those sentences” (van Dijk, 1977, p.95) Global coherence is of a more general nature, and characterizes a discourse as a whole or a larger fragments of a discourse.

Moreover, according to van Dijk (1977) each discourse contains an overall semantic structure called macrostructure, which is a semantic representation of discourse. And the semantic structure of a discourse is hierarchically organized at several levels of analysis. The most general macro-structure, sometimes called topic of a discourse entailed by the other macro-structures, dominates the discourse. These macro-structures determine the global or overall coherence of a discourse and are themselves determined by the linear coherence of sequences.

The theory of semantic macro-structure can operate on monologue, expository, narrative, even argumentive discourse, but the method of analysis is very complicated. Moreover, it can hardly be used to analyze the coherence of a spoken discourse, especially a dialogue with its topic shifting from one to another, and no global topic governing the whole dialogue. And the exploration is confined to the inside of discourse itself, ignoring the effects imposed upon by contextual factors, social, physical and psychological.

According to Mann and Thompson (1987), a text is composed of several functional chunks at various levels; each can be divided into smaller ones so as to form the basic functional structure of the text. Moreover, each functional chunk has its own special function, which is represented in different rhetorical relations. The so formed structure reflects the inner functional structure of the whole text and the subjective rhetorical arrangement of the author. Therefore, they call it rhetorical structure. They view coherence and unity as the same thing. The coherence or unity is realized by the rhetorical structure of the text. If smaller chunks at lower level cannot form a united structure, the text is thus incoherent.

Similar to van Dijk, Mann and Thompson are mainly concerned with elements within text.

Danes (1974) and Fries (1983) connect discourse coherence with thematic progression of a discourse. They take the point of view that the degree of discourse coherence is affected by that of the connectivity of themes in different sentences. Lack of such connectivity will lead to the discontinuity in the process of thematic progression, which in turn will result in the discontinuity of cohesive relations. A discourse thus becomes incoherent.

Thematic progression theory proposed by Danes and Fries studies discourse coherence mainly with the elements within a discourse and is only one of the important elements that influence coherence. It has nothing to do with those factors outside a discourse.

A pragmatic perspective is taken by Widdowson (1978) in his analysis of discourse coherence in terms of illocutionary act. He defines cohesion as “the overt relationship between propositions expressed through sentences,” and then perceives the coherence of a discourse as “the relationship between the illocutionary acts which propositions, not always overtly linked, are being used to perform.” (Widdowson, 1978, p.28) He explains that “in the case of cohesion, we can infer the illocutionary acts from the prepositional connections which are overtly indicated: in the case of coherence, we infer the covert prepositional connections from an interpretation of the illocutionary acts.” (Ibid, p.29)

Widdowson’s theory of illocutionary act based on Speech Act Theory is succinct, providing an account of how some apparently unconnected utterances go together in a conversational discourse to form a coherent discourse. Simple as it is, this approach seems difficult to be applied to concrete analysis. Because the general problem with the application of Speech Act Theory is that people do not know how to assign speech acts in a non-arbitrary way if they look even quickly at a transcribed record of a conversation. In practical dialogue, several utterances may be used together to perform one illocutionary act.

De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) propose seven defining characteristics of a text, which they call seven standards of textuality. According to them, any natural text, whatever text type it belongs to, shares these characteristics. They are:

- (1) intentionality (the fulfillment of the author’s intentions)
- (2) acceptability (relevance to the text receiver)
- (3) informativity (right amount of information with regard to the reader)
- (4) situationality (location in a discrete socio-cultural context in a real time and place)
- (5) intertextuality (relationship with other texts which share characteristics with it)
- (6) cohesion, and
- (7) coherence

A text then is defined by de Beaugrande and Dressler as “a communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality.” (1981, p.3) They also make a distinction between cohesion and coherence. In their opinion, cohesion “concerns the ways in which the components of the surface text, i.e. the actual words we hear or see, are mutually connected within a sequence.” (1981, p.3) Surface components depend upon each other according to grammatical forms and conventions; therefore they view cohesion as grammatical dependency. Coherence, on the other hand, “concerns the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations which underline the surface text, are mutually accessible and relevant.” (1981, p.4)

Brown and Yule (1983) emphasize the importance of participants’ backward knowledge in the interpretation of discourse coherence stored in memory, taking such forms as frame, schemata, script, scenario and plan. If the interpretation of a discourse is in consistency with the mentally stored knowledge or backward scenes and can be interpreted as an interrelated unity, the discourse is thus coherent. However, they don’t define the scope of coherence strictly and not take it as a theoretic concept, but a general concept.

From the above brief review on previous approaches towards discourse coherence, two facts are revealed: first, discourse coherence is such a complicated concept that it is related to almost every aspect of discourse communication. Secondly, there is no all-embracing rule governing coherence analysis. Every scholar presents his or her insight into one aspect of discourse coherence and views it from different angles. Based on the above illustration, the author will present a comparative view to discourse coherence.

II. COHESION AND COHERENCE

Cohesion and coherence are two hard distinguished linguistic terms in discourse analysis. Though they share the same morpheme “*cohere*”, they are different. Scholars define and classify them from various aspects. Following is a brief discussion about the concepts of cohesion and coherence so as to find the relationship between them.

Cohesion and coherence are first studied by Halliday and Hasan in their book *Cohesion in English*. They take the view that the primary determinant of whether sets of sentences do or do not constitute a text depends on cohesive relationships within and between the sentences, which create texture. “A text has texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. It derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment.” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.2) According to Halliday and Hasan, “The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text.” (Ibid, p.4) Cohesion can hold segments of a text together, making it a semantic edifice. The importance of cohesion lies in the continuity it expresses between one part of the text and another. Halliday and Hasan category five kinds of cohesive devices and sub-classify them. The categories of cohesion are showed in the followed diagram.

Category	Example
Reference	
Pronominal	The boy can't find his mother. <i>He</i> becomes very sad.
Demonstrative	<i>That</i> was the saddest story I had ever heard.
Comparative	It's the <i>same</i> story I heard yesterday.
Substitution	My bicycle is too old. I need to buy a new <i>one</i> .
Ellipsis	I wish I had more talent. My sister has a lot <i>more</i> than I do.
Conjunction	
Additive	I will not go to Beijing. <i>Furthermore</i> , I will not go anywhere.
Adversative	Cars are convenient, <i>but</i> they are expensive.
Causal	I will not buy a car, <i>because</i> I have no money.
Temporal	He left his hometown in 1979. <i>At that time</i> , he is only a little boy.
Lexical	
Reiteration	I saw a boy playing basketball. <i>The boy</i> is Tom's bother.
Synonymy	I saw a boy playing basketball. <i>The lad</i> is Tom's bother.
Hyponymy	I saw a boy playing basketball. <i>The child</i> is Tom's bother.

Cohesion plays an import role in discourse. When a cohesive relation is set up between two elements, they are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text. It is clear that cohesion, one component of textual function, is realized by lexico-grammatical units in a discourse.

By its role in providing texture, cohesion helps to create text and expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the discourse and another. In principle, a discourse of any length will employ cohesive ties. However, it is not the sufficient condition for a text. In daily life, people can often encounter sentences that are well-connected by cohesive devices, but not coherent at all. For example,

John was reading China Daily. Newspapers published in America usually contain several pages. The first page of this book was lost. The lost child had been found by policeman.

Though cohesive devices are used in these sentences, they are obviously not coherent. It gives reader a false impression of being coherent, which is called pseudo-coherence by some linguists.

Many linguists (Brown & Yule, 1983) have pointed out that discourses can be coherent without cohesion. Although they illustrate their points with some examples at the extreme end, it is necessary to go beyond the textual realization of semantic relation to search for coherent discourse. For example,

John bought a cake at the bakeshop. The birthday card was signed by all of the employees. The party went on until after midnight.

Superficially it is incomplete and incoherent, but in fact its overall meaning is unified and coherent. That's because of people's experience about birthday, they know "the cake", "the card" and "the party" are all correspond to the same event—a birthday party, so this knowledge allows them to fill some of the gaps in this passage. This also illustrates how reader or listener supports coherence by making his own contribution to the meaning of a discourse.

In their daily life, people often encounter phenomena like this:

Cognitive Pragmatics Seminar: Wednesday 26th, May 2.00 p.m

Place: The Meeting Hall in the Library

Deirdre Wilson: Department of Phonetics and Linguistics University College London

Though it is formed by fragmented sentences, it can function as a record of a certain communicative event, that is, the writer informs the seminar to the audience, and the audience receives the message. Therefore it is a discourse. It seems incoherent at the first glance, but people who see it can always understand it. That's because from the everyday knowledge they know it is a notice to tell them the news of a seminar on cognitive pragmatics given by Deirdre Wilson.

It becomes clear from the above examples that cohesion is not sufficient for constructing a coherent discourse. People also rely on some principle that, although there may be no formal linguistic links connecting contiguous linguistic strings, their continuity leads people to interpret them as connected. In other words there must be some other factor that leads people to distinguish connected discourses that make sense from those that do not. This factor is usually described as coherence.

The key to the concept of coherence is not something that exists in the language, but something that exists in people. It is people who make sense of what they read and listen to. They try to arrive at an interpretation which is in line with their experience of the way the world is. Indeed, people's ability to make sense of what they read is probably only a small part of that general ability they have to make sense of what they perceive or experience in the world. You may have found when reading the last two examples; the audience kept trying to make the discourse fit some situation or experience that would accommodate all the details. In doing so the audience would necessarily be involved in a process of filling in a lot of gaps which exist in the discourse. He would have to create meaningful connections which are not actually expressed by the words and sentences. This process is not restricted to trying to understand seemingly unconnected discourse. In one way or another, it seems to be involved in people's interpretation of all discourses.

As to the definition of coherence, different linguists have different insights. Crystal defines coherence as "the main principle of organization (which is) assumed to account for the underlying functional connectedness" of a piece of spoken or written language. (Crystal, 1985, p.53). It can be drawn that coherence involves the study of such factors as the language users' knowledge of the world, the inferences they make, and the assumptions they hold, and in particular,

involves the study of the way in which communication is mediated through the use of speech acts. Obviously, grammatical and lexical links are not taken into consideration in this definition.

Another definition of coherence held by Reinhart (1980) is that coherence is composed of the semantic and grammatical connectedness between discourse and context. According to him, coherence comprises three elements: connectedness, consistency and relevance. By connectedness he means the sentences in a text are interconnected with each other in semantics and grammar. Consistency refers to the fact that there is no contradiction between the propositions expressed by these sentences and they are true to a certain extent. By relevance he means that a text should be related to the context, the sentences in a text should be related to each other and the sentences should all be related to the general topic of the text. By this definition, coherence is not separated from cohesion, but is conflated with it. However, De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) view cohesion and coherence as two entirely separated concepts. They propose cohesion to be the structural relations on the text surface, while coherence the structural relations underlie the surface. The similar idea is held by Brown and Yule (1983), Stubbs (1983), Tannen (1984).

It is obvious that cohesion and coherence are two different concepts in discourse analysis, though they share the same morpheme “cohere”. Different linguists have studied them based on different theories. Some are from the pure-linguistic perspective such as Halliday and Hasan, van Dijk. They take cohesion as the necessary condition for coherent discourse. Some are from pragmatic perspective such as Widdowson and Crystal. They acknowledge the importance of pragmatic knowledge in the interpretation of coherence. Others may study them from cognitive and psychological perspective to explore coherence on the mental phenomenon and cognitive knowledge of the communicator and the audience.

Based on previous researches on cohesion and coherence, the author views cohesion and coherence as two different, but interrelated linguistic terms important in discourse analysis. They are formally rather than functionally different, but cohesion is more obvious than coherence, because it only deals with the surface structure of a discourse. Cohesion is neither necessary nor sufficient to create a coherent discourse, but a useful means to coherence. The relation between cohesion and coherence is outlined as follows.

Here coherence is characteristic of being overt and covert. Be overt or superficial means that coherence is something available in the surface structure. It is relatively easy to identify. Methods for investigating overt coherence are mainly directed at the description of linguistic formal markers, or in other term “cohesive devices” by Halliday and Hasan (1976). It reveals the contribution made by linguistic factors to coherence.

By covert coherence it means that coherence is achieved not by using superficial markers as linguistic, grammatical devices, etc., but by psychological, cognitive, pragmatic devices, etc. Based on this sense, the addressee needs bridges (inference, background knowledge and imagination etc.) to guide the comprehension of a discourse.

Therefore, a coherent discourse should first contain a semantically united framework and must be consistent with the context of situation. Meaning does not only refer to conventional meaning but also inferential meaning realized by cohesion and inference respectively. Coherence, thus, is a consequence of interaction between linguistic factors and non-linguistic factors.

III. NATURE OF DISCOURSE COHERENCE

In the previous part, the author has studied the concept of cohesion and coherence and the relationship between them. The following part will be focused on exploring the nature of discourse coherence.

Coherence is an important concept in discourse analysis. Linguists hold two different views towards the nature of discourse: discourse as a static product and discourse as a dynamic process. Paralleled with these two views to discourse, coherence has been approached along the two following distinctive perspectives.

Following the discourse-as-product view, linguists study how coherence relations are realized on the surface of discourse—all the linguistic devices used to connect different parts in a discourse. It is an attempt to characterize discourse coherence as a linguistic phenomenon. They define coherence as a visible and observable thing. An analysis along this line is text-based and is featured as descriptive not explanatory. It is mainly concerned with the linguistic realizations of coherent relations, paying little attention to the influence of non-linguistic factors such as context and the actual process of communication. Representatives of this approach are Halliday & Hasan (cohesion), van Dijk (macrostructure), Mann & Thompson (rhetorical structure) as well as Danes and Fries (thematic progression).

The other perspective is discourse-as-process view, which takes discourse coherence as a dynamic process and studies it from pragmatic and psychological aspects. This approach put emphasis on non-linguistic factors. Hu Zhuanglin (1994, p.180-198) discusses the contribution of context, including co-text, situational context and cultural context, to discourse coherence. Pragmatists also explore the role of inference in discourse coherence. Speech Act Theory proposed by J. Austin (1962) and conversational implicature by Grice (1975) provide theories for achieving coherence in seemingly incoherent phenomenon.

The intentions of the participants in communication can also play a crucial role in determining the degree of coherence. Givon (1995) takes coherence as a mental phenomenon.

“Coherence is not an internal property of a written or spoken text, (but) a property of what emerges during speech production and comprehension—the mentally represented text, and in particular the mental processes that partake in constructing that mental representation.”

(Givon, 1995, p.vii)

This approach concerns with how linguistic devices are operated cognitively by participants during the dynamic interactive process to communicate successfully and resulting in a coherent discourse, thus it is interpretive rather than descriptive. Representatives of this approach are Widdowson (A pragmatic perspective), De Beaugrande and Dressler (continuity of senses) and Brown & Yule. (A psychological perspective)

It can be concluded that coherence is a rather complex phenomenon, which concerns with every aspect of the communication process, both verbal and non-verbal. Studies cannot embrace only one of the approaches and ignores the other in that both of them reveal the nature of discourse coherence from different perspectives.

From the coherence-as-linguistic phenomenon point of view, it can be learned that what linguistic devices are functioning and how they are used to organize sentences into a coherent discourse.

Simultaneously, it is quiet not enough to investigate discourse coherence as a static product of communication since communication is a dynamic process of interaction between communicator and audience, during which language serves as a medium.

Therefore, in order to explore the nature of discourse coherence, these two aspects must be combined together. It should not be the case of either/or, but the complementation of each other. It is both a static and dynamic process. A coherent discourse can not only be achieved by linguistic device, but also by mutual efforts of participants in communication. Because of the differences in context and participants' cognitive abilities, what is to be communicated may take quite different forms. So attention must also be paid to the function of non-verbal factors in the dynamic process of communication.

IV. SUMMARY

This article presents a new perspective to the study of discourse coherence—the cognitive perspective. Discourse can be regarded as the coherent group of sentences or sentence fragment that function as record of a communicative event, whether spoken or written, which can be approached as a dynamic process of interaction between participants in a communicative event. Discourse can be analyzed from two aspects: one is discourse as a static product and the other is discourse as a dynamic process. From the point of view of discourse-as-product, coherence is a linguistic phenomenon, which is realized on the surface of discourse by various linguistic devices used to connect different parts in a discourse. From the point of view of discourse-as-process, coherence is the consequence of interaction between the addresser and addressee, which can be achieved by mutual efforts of both communicator and addressee. However, this is not a pure theoretical study, which can be further applied to discourse teaching. Students should be aware of the fact that discourse coherence not only depends on various linguistic devices, but also the involvement of the interpreter to figure out the implied relevance. Therefore, in discourse comprehension and teaching, both linguistic and non-linguistic factors should be involved.

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The Contract Motif in Western Literature and Identity Crisis*

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Abstract—The paper explores the evolution of contract motif in the western context of literatures, and the relation of the contract to self-identity, based on the types of the contract, which is a symbol of identity. And then, it explains the roots of the identity crisis against modern people, and points out a possible way for them to dwell upon this world.

Index Terms—contract motif, identity, culture, spiritual faith

I. INTRODUCTION

It is known to us that a contract means at least two parties come to agree with a deal and draw an agreement between the parties. And a contract motif generally refers to the motif associated with the contract, written or spoken. The word “contract” is derived from Latin, “contractus”, originally applied to ancient Greek philosophy and Roman laws, which means a deal with two parties or multiple ones to their satisfaction. The parties involved into the deal are equal, free and willing to participate, which implies the essence of the contract and is adopted in other fields like, religion, economy, political affairs and social communication. At the meantime, the parties are supposed to bear responsibilities and rights. But, the relation to deal with the parties concerned can be dated back to *Hammurabi’s Code* in about 2000 B.C., in which the relation or concept of contract can be found 120 references. Nowadays, the Code has become a mine and significant to the evolution of western law.

In western art the contract motif is very popular. Researchers can find works concerned with the motif in literature, film, music, television, games, dance, and painting (<http://en.wikipedia.org>, 19/7/2013). The author of the paper intends to confine the discussion of the motif to literatures only. From *The Holy Bible* throughout *Dr. Faustus* written by Christopher Marlowe, *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare, *The Social Contract* by Jacques Rousseau, *Faust* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville, *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and *Catch-22*, a postmodern work, somehow, by Joseph Heller, etc, readers can see the classics of the motif at hand easily. The contracts, which are adopted in the works mentioned above, are more or less transfigured in other work and are hard to be recognized at their first sight.

II. THE COVENANT WITH GOD

The first and foremost covenant of human kind is signed between God and his chosen peoples Hebrews, which is recorded in *Pentateuch* of *The Old Testament*, the first part and parcel of *The Holy Bible*; the other one is *The New Testament*; *Pentateuch* is regarded as Torah, a kind of laws, in Judaism. And from the titles of *The Old/New Testament* people know that they have something to do with the covenant, which means the testament or pact promised or signed between God and his followers. First, God promise to Abraham, the ancestor of Hebrews, that He’ll give his tribes through Abraham a promised land, flowing milk and honey, and “That in His Seed All Nations should be blessed”; God’s covenant with the Hebrew Nation is:

That, if they would Faithfully Serve Him,
They would Prosper as a nation:
That, if they Forsook Him, and served Idols,
They would be Destroyed as a nation (Halley, 1965, p.31).

By God’s promise and covenant, God chose the Hebrews to serve Him, and He will bless them; otherwise, He would give them punishment accordingly. Because the Hebrew as a nation is in its infantile stage, God has inscribed Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5: 7~21) on two tablets and handed them to Moses, a leader of the Hebrew. The Commandments are a series of rules and regulations to control the Hebrews’ behavior morally and ethically, i.e., which stress the morality and ethicality. That is God’s original intention to make the codes for the Hebrews. The proof which signifies a Jewish man has signed a pact with God is their circumcision. The mark is taken as a proof to determine that the pact was made. It was also believed that on the spot where the mark was left, the marked person could feel no pain because of his faith in God. Throughout the two parties of the covenant, God is almighty; the Hebrew nation is fragile; fortunately, the strong is kind to the fragile. And we may sum up the whole procedures of the covenant as “a pact with

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God"; we hold that it is a primordial type of the contract motif. No wonder that Jews, the offspring of the Hebrews, have the born tendency to sign a contract with other parties in a deal, which is evolved into a part of the heritage of the national culture. As to *The New Testament*, it is said that a new Messiah, Jesus Christ, will come to rescue his followers and to establish a Heavenly Kingdom in the final. Either the new or old testaments, spoken or written, denotes the concept of human vs. God, rooted in Judaism and Christianity, which is of great significance in the respective religious culture. Because, according to Judaism or Christianity, the concept of which everybody is equal before God is the motif source of the concept of which everybody is equal before the law till today. To some extent, Judaism or Christianity lays a foothold to the modern legal system. But, from another viewpoint to consider the testaments, one party is stronger than the other one, which has also set up a sample for others to follow. Probably the *Hammurabi's Code* was affected by Abraham's laws, or vice versa (Halley, 1965). So a new relation throughout the contract of *the Code* is formed. What's worse is the relation of *the Code* is imposed upon the labors by force. Then, a second type of the contract motif is evolved into the kind of strong vs. the weak. Consequently, people's identity is differentiated under the altered contract of the code, like the *Hammurabi's Code*.

Understandably, people wonder why the Hebrew has signed the covenant with God. As we know that Abraham's time is in the primitive stage of human civilization, the primitive peoples are full of admiration and cult of the world. They think everything over the world is spiritual like them, such as wind, cloud, flood, rainbow or even lightning etc. They try to communicate with the objects of the world in a unique spiritual way. Of course, we modernists regard their behaviors as mythology, which is ancient science for the primitive peoples. Therefore, in *The Holy Bible* the clouds over Mt. Sinai, the Flood, the New Rainbow, the Draught or the endless fire, and the like are considered as the signs created by God. Then, the first type of the compact is bound to contact with god, for who is thought to be a protector of the tribes.

III. THE DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

If we take a look into *Dr. Faustus* and *Faust*, we'll know that they have something in common, i.e. the plot of the two plays is closely connected with a devil. The hero of the works signed a pact with a devil, Mephistopheles. In *Dr. Faustus*, weary of the sciences, Faustus turns to magic and calls up Mephistopheles, with whom he makes a compact to surrender his soul to the Devil in return for 24 years of life; during these Mephistopheles shall attend on him and give him whatever he wants. Then follows a number of scenes in which the compact is executed, notable among them the calling up of Helen of Troy, where Faustus addresses Helen in the well-known line: 'Was this the face that launched a thousand ships...' The anguish of the mind of Faustus as the hour for the surrender of his soul draws near is poignantly depicted (Drabble, 1985). In the general character of Dr. Faustus is a tragedy.

In *Faust* of Goethe, God and Mephistopheles make a bet: The Devil, Mephistopheles, believes that the ruin of the soul of Faust would be affected by his temptation; God is confident that the Devil will fail. Then the Devil's plot against Dr. Faust is put into action. Disillusioned with the world and despairing to life, Faust enters into a compact to become the devil's servant if he should exclaim, of any moment of delight procured for him. Then follow the attempts of Mephistopheles to satisfy Faust. Because Faust fails to get love and perform his talents for his country, he is led to the Greek kingdom of classical beauty, gets married with Helen, but fails to live a harmonious life with Helen for their son Euphorion's death. Therefore, Faust has to work the land with the Devil's help. Finally, satisfied in the consciousness of good work done, he cries to the fleeting moment, 'Stay, thou art so fair', and falls dead. His soul is borne away by angels (Drabble, 1985). In the play Faust's endless pursuit of his ideals is instructive and symbolic. Faust of Goethe is different from Faustus of Marlow; the former is kind of positive, the latter passive.

Tracking down the plot of the two plays, we find that the subject of Marlow and Goethe, was a wandering conjuror, who lived in Germany about 1488-1541 and is mentioned repeatedly in various documents of the period, and is said to have sold his soul to the Devil (Drabble, 1985). From Abraham's date, about 2000B.C, to the Middle Ages, 1600 A.D., the tales of the contract motif is transfigured from the archetype, a pact with God, the relation of human vs. God, into a pact with the Devil, the relation of human vs. the Devil; one party of the contract, God, is substituted by the Devil. In the mediaeval eras the folks of Europe are religious and superstitious, which is said to be dark ages with one religion, Christianity. People at the times are illiterate, let alone make use of the science to observe the world. People still believe that there are devils, evil spirits or something mysterious in the world. One of the horrible cases is women with leprosy. The medievalists think that the women are possessed with evil spirit. And they are supposed to be burnt to death. Actually the mysterious spirit is characterized of the medieval Ages. No wonder that it is in the Middle Ages that the folktales about the Devil are derived.

The altered type of the contract motif, a pact with the Devil, gets popular in the world literatures after the Ages. For instance, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, novel by Oscar Wilde, *Pani Twardowska*, poem by Adam Mickiewicz, *St. John's Eve*, short story by Nikolai Gogol, *The Devil and Tom Walker*, short story by Washington Irving, they adopted the altered form of the motif in a less or more extent, which prove it to be influential.

IV. THE BOND WITH AN EVIL-HEARTED PARTY

Another variant of the motif appears among the world works of classics, i.e., a pact with an evil-hearted party. *The*

Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare and *Moby-Dick* of Herman Melville are good cases in point. One of the former's plots is that Antonio, a Venetian merchant, signed a bond with Shylock, a Jewish usurer, to borrow 3,000 ducats from the usurer, in which, if the sum is not repaid at the appointed day, Antonio shall forfeit a pound of flesh. But, due to the time expired, news is said that Antonio has not been repaid because of his vessels wrecked, and Shylock insists to claiming his pound of flesh. Thus, Shylock is thought to be merciless, bloody and a wild wolf. Fortunately, Antonio is rescued by Portia, who is disguised as a law judge; she pronounces that Shylock get the pound of the flesh without a ounce more or less and a drop of blood, by explaining the article of the bond word for word. Obviously, Shylock is stubborn, merciless and played by his opponent party of the bond, headed by Antonio and Portia. The two parties of the contract are Antonio and the evil-hearted Shylock. In *Moby-Dick*, Captain Ahab of the *Pequod*, a whaler, recruits new employees by signing a pact to capture whales, such as Ishmael and Queequeg, who are two of the signed employees. Ahab nails a golden coin to the mask as a reward to the man, who first has got sight of Moby-Dick, a giant white whale. Every employee's profit is tied to the bond in the *Pequod* under Ahab's hand. Ahab is not only cold-blooded, materialistic but also a good manager. We have to admit that Ahab's management of the compact is a sort of modern way. Therefore, the employees are taking great pains to work for him. Unconsciously, the two sides, the management and the labors reach an agreement. The bilateral relations between the two sides are not equal in the least, of which the evil-hearted party is controlling the pact. Only the type of contract is changed a little bit; the place of the Devil is replaced by an evil-hearted man; in *The Merchant of Venice*, the evil-hearted party is Shylock, in *Moby-Dick*, Ahab. In the commercial era of William Shakespeare or Herman Melville, which the capitalist economy begins to develop rapidly, a man easily tends to be a servant of money or wealth, like Shylock, a slave of money, and Ahab, an attendant of wealth. Hence, the mode of the contract has something to do with money or wealth, which is a product of the history and times, and the work mirrors the unfair relation between the parties.

V. THE UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT

A forth variant of the contract motif is a series of rules and regulations universally accepted by residents in a living community. Apparently, there is no party to sign the rules, whether written or spoken. They are formed among the native peoples in the times immemorial and passed down generation by generation, which are a kind of instructions to regulate the residents' behaviors. And whoever violates the rules, he/she is bound to be punished. And so, *The Scarlet Letter* of Nathaniel Hawthorne, an American novelist, can be interpreted this way, i.e. a kind of the motif. In the novel an aged scholar sends his young wife, Hester Prynne, to establish their home in Boston. When he arrives two years later, he finds Hester in the pillory with her illegitimate child in her arms. She refuses to name her lover. The husband conceals his identity, assumes the name Roger Chillingworth, and in the guise of a doctor seeks to discover her paramour. He discovers that the Rev. Arthur Dimmsdale is the father of Hester's beautiful, mischievous child, Pearl. In the plot the readers of the novel get to know that the wife Hester is an adulteress, whose behavior is a violation of the regulations of the region, Boston, especially in Puritan times, whose doctrines inhibit all kinds of instincts. Residents of the area agree to sentence to Hester to wear a scarlet letter A, signifying adultery. Committing the violation, Hester can not be exceptionally exempted from the punishment, for who is a member of the region and should bear the responsibility as well. Here in the story the contract is a loosen promise accepted by all the community members; the type of the contract is that every one is a participant and a party of the contract, based on a unanimous agreement, somewhat like a kind of public regional law. As to the type of universal agreement, the participants are supposed to abide by it willingly and conscientiously only if you are a member of the community. The promise or contract is the original mode of international public law, for which is accepted by international communities. From the novel we see its background is set in Boston, and the immigrants there mainly are from England, most of who have accepted Puritanism before they come to the new world. To the Puritans, labor, moral and inhibition of instincts are their goals to purify them. So, Max Weber, a German thinker, put forward the thesis, the Puritan ethics is the power to develop the capitalism in America; he's true indeed. And besides Boston, New England and other coastal regions of the U.S.A. are abiding by the Puritan doctrines. Hester, as a Puritan, she is bound to accept the moral code.

VI. THE COMPACT WITH THE INSTITUTION

There is a fifth type of the contract presented realistically and ridiculously in novel *Catch-22* written by an American novelist Joseph Heller. In the story Joseph tells us a regulation, called Catch-22: Any flier who is insane is allowed to be free from flying a mission and be sent to U.S.A, only on the condition that he must apply to his boss in person; at the meantime, if he is aware of the hazards of flying a mission and he applies to his boss to be free from flying, he is regarded sane and he should carry on flying more missions. If a flier has finished his missions demanded, he is able to return to America; but he must absolutely obey his boss. A careful reader of the story would find the trap hid in the military discipline. Actually no one is able to escape from the law, for which asks every pilot obey his boss absolutely. The logical formula hidden under the Catch-22 is: A is A, and A is not A, which is a clear violation of the logical laws of exclusion. And A is nowhere and is nothing according to the formula. For Captain John Yossarian of the U.S. air force in the story, after having experienced grisly events and observing his fellow officers being ridiculous in their lust for promotion, his tricks to avoid further combat is to pretend to be insane, he turns up naked at awarding ceremony. After

reading the story, a kind of absurdity and ridiculousness is presented to most of the readers. And from the foothold of the contract, we see the two parties of the discipline are neither fair nor square. One party is an institution of the country's machine, air force, whose mission is to secure the safety of the country; the other party is the miserable pilot. In the contract the air force as a party is powerful, which stipulates the most majority of rights and responsibilities; in contrast to it, the other party, individual pilot, is fragile, whose fate is predominated and hard to change. In essence, the type of the contract is not equal in the beginning. Ironically the mode like the *Catch-22* gets developed in modern firms. So most of the modern employees have to accept the mode, their living condition or index of happiness is getting worse, which exactly proves what Martin Heidegger, a modern German philosopher, said that the living condition of the modernists is anguish and anxiety.

As to the setting of the novel, it is in a small island Pianosa of Italy during World War II. The Allied are waging wars against the Axis. American Air forces are the pioneers of the war. Seemingly they are sacrificing their lives to the country. Ironically, a lot of men are taking the advantages of the wars to gather treasures or be promoted. They try every conceivable means to snatch economic and political capital even by helping the warring opponents. The pilots are just like the chess pieces played by their officer to realize their intents. And the *Catch-22* is one of the ways. On one hand average individuals, as a party, are attracted to commit themselves to a noble venture, encouraged to sacrifice the life in vain instigated by a justified power, as another party, which can be a company, an organization, or a branch of the country. On the other hand, somehow the contract is a sort of trap for the ordinary individuals. They can hardly escape from it. Only their death is the way for them to be liberated from the trap. Karl Marx, a German philosopher, says it is capitalist that exploits every worker to his last blood. What Marx says is just the situation in *Catch-22*. So, the author thinks the novel is realistic to some degree.

VII. THE BRAND-NEW CONTRACT

The brand-new form of the contract is born in France from *The Social Contract* written by Jacques J. Rousseau, one of the advocators of the modern country. He advocates an equal contract among citizens, which means the parties evolved into the contract is equal regardless of his birth, background and rank. He writes that every one is born to be equal, which implies the relation of the party signing the contract is equal (Rousseau). The equal foothold of the parties is the key to the new contract, which is the party's true appeal as well. We know that France is a rank-oriented country before French Revolution in 1789. To overthrow the contemporary ruling class, the French revolutionists call for "liberty, equality and fraternity" to unite the common mass. It is the slogan that attracts the mass to participate the Revolution. After the Revolution France starts off its road to build a modern country. The new model of the contract is echoed in the new world across the Atlantic Ocean, i.e. the U.S.A. is the practice of the French ideal. Hence, people remark that Europe puts forward new ideas; America actualizes them. In the new model of contract both parties, citizen and country, bear rights and responsibilities respectively.

VIII. THE PACT AND THE CRISIS OF IDENTITY

Though a kind of new contract, a new relation of citizen, is raised and formed its basic shape more than 200 years ago by European thinkers, modern people feel puzzled and perplexed more and more today, which indicates the new social contract is imperfect as well. Today's problems focus on their being lost in the direction of life and in the sense of belonging somewhere. In a word, they have lost their identity throughout this world.

The crisis of identity, which has stood out in the mid-19th century, lies in the western civilization itself. The scientific progress and advancement of the civilization, which human beings have been seeking for since the time created human by God, haven't solved the mental problem of human beings. The scientific rationality turns out to be a double-edged sword. The stricken-poverty is partially eradicated in some countries temporarily; however, the spiritual desolation of "waste land" has approached us without being noticed. The German thinker of Spengler declares that the western civilization is declining to its end. Especially, after Nietzsche, a talented philosopher of Germany, pronounces that the God is dead, and everything is supposed to be evaluated again. The westerners' spiritual prop is collapsed. The cultural earthquake has shattered people's faith. The author of the paper hold that it is most of modern people who have broken the first contract, i.e., the compact with God, or in other words, they don't believe a kind of spiritual faith, and only seek for money, fame, rank or physical pleasure, their confusion and chaos are inevitable. On the contrary, the Jews, descendants of the Hebrew, they not only have not lost their identity, have not assimilated by other races, but also have survived all the disasters of the Diaspora for more than 2000 years. The key factor for the Jews to achieve success is that they have persisted their old covenant, which signifies their national identity. So, a kind of spiritual bond is the guarantee to secure self-identity.

The crisis is also led by the loss of the pacts. It is easy to understand that the modern people are reluctant to keep the pact with a Devil, an evil-hearted man, a non-humanitarian institution. After the Renaissance, people begin to lose the faith of God, to unmask the mystery of the world for the rapid scientific progress; so the relation to a Devil is lost quickly. With the capitalist market economic expansion over the world, money becomes the king of the world, which conflicts against "equality, liberty and fraternity" as a principle for a man's growth. Predictably, the bondage with an evil-hearted man is abandoned. In the modern world, the branch institutions of the country take advantage of the

countrymen to perform a sort of ism. After they are aware of some deception, the modern people will escape from it and wildly protest against it, and feel lost or beat, they become a lost/beat generation. As a kind of the consequence, they are called a generation with problems.

The crisis is caused as well because of the human's fragility. William Shakespeare (2000) said, "Frailty, thou name is woman!" From the denotation, it refers to a woman's weakness, but it can be true all the same while referring to all human beings indeed. Hester Prynne, isolated and lost contact with her husband for years, falls into love with a priest, which violates the unanimous agreements and Puritan doctrines. She can not reject the instinct and inevitably leads to her crisis of identity.

The unstable status of the modern men and brevity of life are the roots of the crisis. Generally modernists have not signed an eternal contract with some party. Their status is instantly changed time after time. To their fear, they are not willing to sign an everlasting compact, for which means they will either lose freedom, change, and passion or live a repeated, boring, tedious, hopeless life. People are afraid to follow Sisyphus' step to do a repeated, mechanical work in life (Hamilton, 2011). It is a paradox for human beings to live on.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

The contract and the identity are a couple of contradictions. On one hand, a man desires an identity to dwell upon the world; otherwise he is invisible or hidden somewhere, which is unfair to everybody; and a contract is a good way to mark one's identity in a community. On the other hand, human being is born to be a lover of liberty and equality; he dislikes any restriction upon him. To find the joint to balance the two sides well, it is a life-long goal for a man to pursue, from the motto inscribed on the pillars of Greek Parthenon, "Know thyself!", which implies the life's ultimate appeal, to the ancient wise Greek, Diogenes of Sinope, who has showed us the way to live a happy free life, in fact we have too many examples to follow, and unfortunately, we still don't know where we are going to but on the way to grope.

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The Process of Developing an Academic Reading Test and Evaluating Its Authenticity

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Abstract—The study is based upon a small project of developing an academic reading test in an English language teaching class and evaluating its authenticity. The article is basically in the form of a report explaining the whole procedure of developing the test, administering it with an English language teaching class and finally evaluating its authenticity. While evaluating the test the focus is on the validity and reliability of the test. The evaluation of validity and reliability has been carried out both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results show that the academic reading test was good and worked well in assessing the learners' reading ability. However, it cannot be called a perfect test and still needs some improvement. So finally some necessary suggestions have been provided for improving the test and making it more valid and reliable.

Index Terms—academic reading test, authenticity, validity, reliability, evaluation

I. INTRODUCTION

The study is based on describing the process of developing an academic reading ability test undertaken as a class project and to evaluate its authenticity. The study is of multidimensional nature and consists of the following steps:

- Discussing the purpose of the test and the construct that underlies it.
- Describing the process of test development in relation to test validation.
- Evaluating the draft test on the basis of the results of the trial.

The basic purpose of the test is to develop the ability of designing and developing a language test of the students of a class of English language teaching. Thus, in this way along with the learning of the principles of language testing and assessment, the students have also been given a practical experience of designing and developing a test. Now we discuss the test in relation to the three steps mentioned above.

TEST SPECIFICATIONS

A test's specifications tell us about what the test tests and how it tests it. "Test specifications are the blueprint to be followed by test and item writers, and they are also essential in the establishment of the test's construct validity." (Alderson et al., 1995, p. 9). The specifications of our test are:

Purpose

The test is based on assessing proficiency in reading skill which involves the ability of drawing meaning from a text and interpreting the information appropriately (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). The test was designed for the tertiary level learners of English enrolled in Foundation Certificate in English for Academic Purpose (FCertEAP) at English Language Academy (ELA), a language centre of the University of Auckland where various English language courses are conducted for foreign learners.

Reading Texts

The test is based on two reading texts.

1. TEXT 1 "**Temptation Free Television for Children?**" has been adapted from: Dumont, P. (2001, September 28). *Temptation-free television for children? Web World [UNESCO Communication and Information website]*.
2. TEXT 2 "**Cracking the Mysteries of Birds Migration**" has been Adapted from issue 2666 of *New Scientist* magazine, 23 July 2008.

Text length

Text 1 consists of about 1000 words whereas Text 2 consists of about 1100 words.

Test Format

The test is based on objective questions and consists of two sections having a total of 40 questions. Each question carries 1 mark.

Section 1 has 18 questions and is based on text 1.

Q1-5 True/ False/ Not Given

Q 6-9 Short answers in no more than three words

Q10-14	Matching paragraphs with summarized statements
Q15-18	Matching opinions with persons
Section 2 has 22 questions and is based on text 2.	
Q 19-23	Matching paragraphs with summarized statements
Q 24-27	MCQs
Q 28-33	True/ False/ Not Given
Q 34-40	Matching terms with correct expressions

Time Allowed

Time allowed for the test is 1 hour decided in consultation with ELA staff.

II. STAGES OF TEST DEVELOPMENT

Stage 1

At first a comprehensive knowledge of language assessment and reading skill was provided by the teacher. Various topics like nature of reading ability, different skills involved in it, various types of reading test items and concepts like validity and reliability in tests were discussed in the class.

Stage 2

The two reading texts selected by the teacher were given to the students. They were divided into groups of 3 or 4 and each group was assigned to make a sample test of 20 questions/items consisting of at least 2 types of tasks.

Stage 3

Each group submitted his sample test which was analysed by the teachers. The sample tests were reviewed in the class by exchanging them among the groups in order to moderate each others tests in terms of format, item difficulty and rubrics clarity. Two more days were given to the groups to improve their tests.

Stage 4

One group took the responsibility of writing and formatting the final version of the test which was further reviewed in the class.

Stage 5

One group was given the responsibility of administering the test. The test was administered at ELA during the mid semester break. The participants i.e. the students enrolled in ELA module 3 & 4 of FCertEAP took the test and also filled a post-test questionnaire.

Stage 6

One group prepared the answer key and marked some papers. Two groups took the responsibility of marking the tests.

Stage 7

One group was given the responsibility of entering the data in SPSS software. The whole process of data entry and analysis was discussed in the class.

III. VALIDITY OF THE TEST

The validity of a test can be judged by considering “does the test test what it is supposed to test?” (Alderson et al., 1995, p. 170). According to Hughes (2003) a test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what it is supposed to measure. Here we will discuss the validity of our test with reference to a **priori validity evidence** collected before the test event and a **posteriori validity evidence** generated after the test (Weir, 1993)

A. PRIORI VALIDITY EVIDENCE

Priori validity concerns “what should be elicited by the test before its actual administration” (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). In priori validation we consider construct validity and context validity of the test. **Construct validity** refers to the extent to which a test score can be interpreted as a representative of the construct. The two major threats to construct validity are ‘construct under-representation’ and ‘construct irrelevance’ (Messick, 1995). **Content / Context validity** refers to the extent to which a test is considered representative of the real life conditions. Weir (1993) states that conscious efforts should be made to make the test representative of as many real life conditions as feasible. The two aspects of priori validity i.e. construct and content validity of our test may be discussed under the following headings.

1. Response Format

The selection of suitable task and response format is very essential for the true assessment of the skill. Firstly, we may discuss the selection of tasks in the test. If we analyse the tasks set in the test, we find that almost all the tasks represent the evaluation or assessment of macro-skills like skimming and scanning. The tasks mainly consist of following categories.

- True/False
- Short answers to questions
- Comprehension
- MCQs

Items 10-14 and 19-23 are based on matching the statements with the paragraphs of the texts from where they have been inferred. These items are based on comprehension and assess the skimming ability of the test taker as “skimming

is the process of rapid coverage of reading matter to determine its gist or main idea.” (Brown, 2004, p. 213). Similarly the items 15-18 are based on matching each opinion with the appropriate person. These items are based on assessing scanning ability of the test taker as “scanning is a strategy used by all readers to find relevant information in a text.” (Brown, 2004, p. 209)

Reading is a combination of two sub-skills ‘micro-skills’ and ‘macro-skills’. Micro-skills involve processing letters, words, orthographic patterns, recognizing word classes like nouns, verbs etc. and understanding systems like tense and syntactic structures. On the other hand macro-skills are mainly concerned with the comprehension of semantic and pragmatic knowledge. Thus, considering the above mentioned description of the two skills, it is quite obvious that tasks set in the test are suitable for the assessment of macro-skills of reading. But they may not be considered appropriate for the assessment of micro-skills.

2. Weighting

“Weighting is concerned with the assignment of a different number of maximum points to a test item, task or component in order to change its relative contribution in relation to other parts of the same test.” (Urquhart & Weir, 1998, p. 63). While considering the element of weighting in the test, it is quite obvious that some items have been given more weightage as compared to the others. For example there are ten items i.e. 1-5 and 28-33 in the form of true and false statements. Similarly, ten items i.e. 10-14 and 19-23 are also based on comprehension. While there are just four items 6-9 in the form of short answers to questions and just four items 24-27 are in the form of MCQs. Thus there is an unequal distribution of items and their score. Instead of this unequal distribution of the test items, equal distribution might have been carried out by adding some other tasks like answers to the questions in a sentence or two and summarising some part of the text. Though, it may be argued that the addition of these two items i.e. answers to the questions in a sentence or two and summarizing some part of the text may cause threat to the construct validity of the test as these two items also possess some element of writing skill. But the rationale is that all the four skills of language are integrated and depend on one another. As the assessment of speaking skill involves listening as well and without listening, speaking skill cannot be assessed, so in order to have a better and more authentic assessment of reading skill, some part of writing may be included.

3. Test Rubrics

Rubrics can be defined as: “the rubrics are the directions to the reader of what is required by the task. The way the prompt is worded can influence significantly what the candidate does i.e. what s/he perceives the purpose of the task to be.” (Urquhart & Weir, 1998, p. 58). Rubric is a very vast term. It not only includes general instructions about the whole test but also the clarity of thought and expression in each question and statement requiring the candidate to perform a specific task or answer a question in a particular way. Urquhart & Weir (1998, p. 57) state: “the test rubric should be candidate friendly, intelligible, comprehensive, explicit, brief, simple and accessible. The rubric should not be more difficult than the text or task.” So our reading test almost complies with the above mentioned qualities as the instructions in our test are vivid, written in simple words and sentences and grammatically correct. Further, the important points in each question have been bolded which also makes it easier for the candidate to understand the instructions completely and to give appropriate answers. Wherever required, ‘Note’ has also been mentioned with the instructions or statements of the questions.

4. Order of Items

It has been usually observed that some of the tests are a hotchpotch of items requiring recourse to different parts of the text in a seemingly random fashion (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). In a test of careful reading, the questions should follow a serial order as it decreases the difficulty level and increases the validity of the test. So, considering the sequence of items in the test, we find that most of the questions except a few have been set in the sequence of the text. However, scanning permits random access into the text. So, some questions which are not set in the sequence of the text are based on scanning ability.

The division of test into two sections, each based on a separate text, also makes it easier for the test taker to pay attention to one text at a time and, thus, enhances the validity of the test. Further, the division of each test into sections or paragraphs A, B, C, D, is also a good technique. The questions 10-14 and 19-23 are based on the comprehension of each section or paragraph rather than the whole text.

5. Time Constraints

In testing reading, the consideration of time constraints is very essential for the processing of text and answering the items because “if time allotment is not carefully planned, it may result in unpredictable performance (Urquhart & Weir, 1998, p. 65). Time allotted for the test is 60 minutes which is suitable as it has been reported by the candidates in the post-test questionnaire that they were able to complete their test within the specified time.

6. Content Knowledge

Urquhart & Weir (1998, p. 75) say, “The text should be suitable in terms of genre, rhetorical task(s) and pattern(s) of exposition and at an appropriate level of specificity and should not be biased or favour one section of the test population”. The two texts selected for the test are appropriate to assess the reading skill as both the texts are of general interest and are not having any element of bias or favouritism to any section of the test population.

IV. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF TEST RESULTS

SPSS software has been used to analyse the results.

A. *The Measure of Central Tendency*

The central tendency is measured in the form of mean, mode and median. Their values are:

- Mean= 22.7
- Mode= 18, 21
- Median= 21

The low value of mean indicates the difficulty of the test; its high value indicates that the test is easy. The mean value of our reading test is 23/40, which indicates that the test was neither too difficult nor very easy. So, it proves the validity of the test.

B. *The Measure of Dispersion*

The two main features of dispersion are **range** and **standard deviation (SD)**. Range is obtained by subtracting the lowest score from the highest score. The highest score in the test is 37 and the lowest score is 11. So the range of score in our test is:

$$37-11= 26$$

SD is the average distance from the mean. The value of SD is 7.22. The bell shaped histogram shows that the test was neither too difficult nor very easy as scores are not contracted to one side; rather varying over a considerable range. Hence, it also proves the validity of the test.

C. *Reliability*

The reliability of a test is determined by the consistency of its scores as remarked by Hughes (2003, p. 36) “The more similar the scores would have been, the more reliable the test is said to be.” The reliability of a test based on objective items is measured by three methods which are:

- The test-retest method
- The split-half
- The Cronbach’s Alpha

We cannot determine the test-retest reliability of our test as it was conducted just once. However Cronbach’s alpha and split-half methods are used to measure the reliability of our test. The value of reliability index (RI) for a completely reliable test is +1.0.

• In split-half method the reliability of a test is determined by dividing it into two sections. If the values of the two sections are closely related, the test will be more reliable. The value of RI for the two sections of our test is 0.994 which reveals that the test is highly reliable.

• The value of Cronbach’s alpha for our test is 0.843 which proves the reliability of the test.

However, this high value of reliability of our test is due to the objective nature of the test.

1. The inter-rater reliability

In case of inter-rater reliability a value more than 0.8 is considered good. The value of inter-rater reliability in our test is 0.994 which is very high. It is also due to the objective nature of the test.

D. *Discrimination Index (DI)*

One of the major concerns of a test is to differentiate between weak and intelligent students and it depends upon the selection of test items. The more discriminating the items in a test are, the more reliable the test is. The value of the range of DI is from 1 to-1. If an item has a “0” value of DI, it shows that the item cannot discriminate between weak and intelligent student. A value of 0.4 for DI is considered good. In our test, we calculated the value of DI for about 8 items by selecting one from each task. The values are:

Item1	Item6	Item11	Item15	Item20	Item26	Item31	Item37
0.2	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2

These values show that the test items are well discriminating. However, items with DI below 0.4 needs to be moderated.

E. *Facility Value (FV)*

FV indicates the level of difficulty of an item. The required of FV for a test item ranges from 0.33 to 0.67. A value below 0.33 reveals the difficulty of item, whereas a value above 0.67 shows that the item is easy. Some items having the value of FV below 0.33 and above 0.67 are shown in the table.

item13	item17	item24	item25	item27	item31	item33	item37
0.675	0.7	0.25	0.325	0.325	0.325	0.25	0.275

F. *Qualitative Data (Post-test Questionnaire)*

Qualitative data obtained through post-test questionnaire shows that a large proportion of students found that it was a fair test of their reading ability which is a positive comment about the content validity of the test. In response to the question about test tasks students found true/false the most difficult. It may be due to the addition of a third option i.e. 'Not Given' because sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish between 'false' and 'not given'. However, the students found the text interesting but they had some difficulty in reading Text 2 as well as searching for the answers. It may be due to the reason that Text 1 is related to our daily life, whereas Text 2 is more specialized.

V. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The objective nature of response formats reduces the validity of the test. So, some other tasks like answers to the questions in a sentence or two and summarising some part of the text may be included to increase the validity of the test.
- Considering the weight of the two questions i.e. MCQs and True/ False, we find that there are eleven questions based on true/false and four questions based on MCQs making a total of 15 out of 40, the total score of the test. Thus, in a sense we can say that approximately 37% of the total of the test is based on questions having the chance of guessing which might affect the validity of the test. So, there should be an equal distribution of test tasks on the basis of their weight.
- The tasks set in the test are suitable for the assessment of macro-skills of reading. But they may not be considered appropriate for the assessment of micro-skills. So, some more tasks involving the assessment of microskills should be included in the test.
- FV of a test is not absolute. It changes with the change of participants. So, if the test is to be conducted with the same participants again, then the items with high FV (item 13 & 17) and low FV (item 24, 25, 27, 31, 33, 37) need to be moderated.
- Similarly items having the value of discriminating index below 0.4 need to be moderated.

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