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# Metacognitive Online Reading Strategies of Adult ESL Learners Using a Learning Management System

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**Abstract**—In managing online learning, most educational institutions utilize Learning Management Systems (LMS). It is a learning platform that allows the administrators of the institution to manage and monitor learners, teachers and content of courses. Learners of this online learning environment have access to a variety of online learning tools and features that allow them to communicate with peers as well as instructors. Hence, these learners need to be equipped with appropriate learning strategies, particularly metacognitive strategies to help them manage their learning. As for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, employing appropriate metacognitive strategies may help them regulate, plan, manage and monitor their learning. The study aims to investigate the metacognitive online reading strategies of adult learners of an ESL course at Universiti Technology MARA, Malaysia. A survey was used to gather information of these adult learners in semester one and two. The survey is adapted from the online survey of reading strategies or OSORS developed by Anderson (2003). The results of the survey reveal that the learners mostly used global reading strategies followed by problem solving strategies and support reading strategies. Also, independent t-test reveals that there is no significant difference between semester one and semester two students in using global reading strategies, problem solving strategies and support reading strategies. As indicated by the results of this study, it can be concluded that the learners have learning goals and purpose since they used mainly global reading strategies, but they do not effectively utilize online learning tools and features that are available in the LMS.

**Index Terms**—metacognitive online reading strategies, socio-constructivist, ESL reading online

## I. INTRODUCTION

In managing online learning, most technology-advanced educational institutions in the world utilize Learning Management System (LMSs). It is a system that allows the institution to manage and monitor learners, teachers and content of courses. Due to this relatively new learning environment, most online learning programmes or courses have not yet incorporate pedagogic principles in teaching and learning which leads to unsuccessful learning. In second language learning, where issues such as learner background knowledge determines learning need to be given attention especially in reading. Learners in an online learning environment need to be equipped with appropriate learning strategies. Though online learning may provide the tools and features that may support reading in an online learning environment, the lack of understanding of the reading process and strategies of these autonomous learners in an LMS environment may impede the learning of reading skills. Grounding pedagogy in online learning, (i.e. socio-constructivism) and reading process (i.e. metacognitive online reading strategy) may provide teachers information in designing and developing personalized and effective instructional material.

### A. Background

The University Technology MARA (UiTM) offers various online programmes to those who seek to pursue their education in a flexible mode of learning. The programme has 4-5 face-to-face classes per semester and the rest of learning and teaching are done virtually. A learning management system (LMS) has been developed by UiTM as a platform for these learners to learn and interact in an online learning environment at their own pace and convenience.

This LMS, known as i-Class<sup>1</sup> (<http://epji.ined.uitm.edu.my/>), also allows instructors to update or upload relevant information and materials regarding courses offered. Besides that, most importantly, the system also serves as a social network where these learners communicate with each other via the technological support features that are available in the system. Institute of Education Development, UiTM, has been established to ensure the smooth running of the online learning programmes offered by the university.

I-Class can only be accessed by UiTM registered learners and staff. They are given user names and passwords upon registration. These learners and instructors can only logon to their assigned courses and programmes. To connect and interact with the learners, instructors use asynchronous features of i-Class are email, discussion board, forum and bulletin board (See Appendix A). The forum in i-Class, or *i-Discuss*, allows the instructors to post questions or instructions in order to generate a discussion thread (See Appendix B). Learners can upload assignments and store them in *myDrawer* for future references. Learners can obtain description of courses, syllabus and other relevant information through browsing or downloading documents in *myCourse*. Also, they have access to support learning materials that are uploaded by their instructors such as previous examination papers, PowerPoint slides of lecturers, course modules and other relevant documents. Other support learning materials that are made available are *i-Library* that links to digital collections of e-books and e-Journals and *References* for listing related books. For the instructors, they have the access to the control panel to develop online quizzes, upload learning materials and manage the progress of the learners online.

### B. Related Theories on Learning Strategies

In language learning, the use of appropriate learning strategy assists a learner to learn more effectively and proficiently. Learning strategy can be defined as deliberate effort or steps taken by a learner to solve learning difficulties during the learning process (Oxford, 1990). Hence, it is paramount for language learners to use appropriate learning strategy to improve and regulate their learning (Anderson, 2002; Anderson, 2003; Carrell, 1998; Chamot, 2005; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). Oxford (1990, p. 201) further emphasizes that:

*'Language learning requires active self-direction on the part of the learners; they cannot be spoon fed if they desire and expect to reach an acceptable level of communicative competence'*

Fundamentally, learning strategy can be harnessed to its fullest potential. It depends largely on the learners themselves, but instructors need to tap on the strategies to fully understand the learning process. Tools like survey and inventories give instructors an overview of the learners' potential.

However, there is a shift of focus in language learning strategy use. Researches particularly in language learning have begun to focus on metacognitive skills. Flavell (1979) describes metacognitive strategy as a mechanism that helps learners to monitor and regulate learning. This strategy is perceived as a higher order cognitive skill due to its role in overseeing other cognitive skills (Flavell, 1979). O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 44) define metacognitive strategies as, '...higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of learning activity'. To be able to manage and monitor own learning is the determining factor in the success of learning. In L2 learning, metacognitive skills are even more crucial. As Anderson (2002) maintains that, 'Understanding and controlling cognitive processes may be one of the most essential skills that classroom teachers can help second language learners develop.' For ESL learners, to be able to make the distinction between effective and ineffective learning strategy proved to be beneficial. Through metacognitive skills, L2 learners are able to develop improve their learning skills (Anderson, 2002; Grabe, 1991).

### C. Learning Strategies in Online Language Learning

In language learning, to be able to read efficiently in the targeted language is a required skill. The reading process, however, involves complex cognitive processes. Researches in English as a second language (ESL) learning indicate that reading skill is crucial because primarily through reading the learner can improve linguistic abilities and learn the structure of the language (Nuttall, 1996). Nevertheless, to achieve comprehension in reading, it is not merely deciphering words and symbols. Successful learners need to apply appropriate reading strategies. Most importantly, in second language (L2) reading, the strategy or ability to monitor and adapt his reading skills during a reading task is the determining factor to successful reading. Based on this finding, researchers such as Anderson (2002) as well as Mokhtary and Sheorey (2002) lay emphasis on the use of metacognitive skills in L2 reading. In further researches on ESL metacognitive skills, they indicate that inculcating awareness and giving training of metacognitive strategies to learners are integral aspects in ESL reading classroom (Carrell, 1998; Cohen, 2003; Cook, 2001).

With the advent of computers and Internet, online language learning creates a new realm, a new learning environment. Learning a language online has become more complex as learners share and gain knowledge at any remote locations (Chapelle, 2001; Felix, 2002; Levy, 1997; Warschauer, 1996; Wyatt, 1984). Though, the learners may be at a distance, they log in to the LMS and use online tools like email, chat, quizzes and forums to communicate. For these online learners LMS is also a means of social networking and sharing of information. Due to this relatively new form of learning environment, numerous researchers investigate in particular ESL reading in an online environment

<sup>1</sup> i-Class was initiated in July 2008 by the Institute of Education Development, UiTM, for learners of online learning programmes. The institute used the LMS framework of Open University Malaysia as the basic code to design and develop i-Class. Based on this framework, online learning features have been added on to fulfill the needs of online learning programmes of UiTM.

(Anderson, 2003; Chapelle, 2001). Though reading is described as a cognitive activity between text and reader, for an online language learner, reading process is a 'social' activity. It is a social activity due to the nature of online learning itself. In online language learning, the learners learn autonomously and interact constantly with peers and facilitators using features available in the LMS. Jonassen (2000) in Huang (2002) indicates that online tools like e-mail, listserves, chat, Bulletin Board System (BBS) allow the learners to express and reflect what they have learned. It also supports negotiation of meaning and constructs personal interpretations of information through the online interactions (Felix, 2002; Huang, 2002). From the socio-constructivist point of view, a person's learning is shaped through his interactions with the people and environment that surrounds him (Vygotsky, 1997). Hence, according to Felix (2005) in order to achieve effective language learning in an online environment, instructors need to consider both the cognitive process as well as the socio-constructivist process. By looking at both the cognitive and socio-constructivist processes of reading in an online learning environment, a sound pedagogical approach that is based on underlining theories can be developed. This will result in a more "humanized and personalised activities" for the autonomous learners (Felix, 2005). In addition, Chapelle (1997) urges that researches on the implementation of technology into the L2 classroom should be an integration of the principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the technological experiences that CALL has to offer. With this fundamental understanding, the learners will be engaged in any online language learning activities.

#### *D. Overview of the Reading Process and Metacognitive Strategies*

Reading process is viewed as a complex mental process of deciphering letters on text. This process, however, is largely dependent on the readers' prior knowledge. This knowledge is constructed by their perception of the world (Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1988; Nuttall, 1996). Thus, comprehension of text is achieved, once the information that he perceives on the text connects with his prior or background knowledge (Bernhardt, 1991; Nuttall, 1996). This process is an intrapersonal problem-solving task where the reader processes the text and interprets the data received in his mental structures (Bernhardt, 1991). Reading effectively requires the reader to interpret or to decode the message or the purpose of text being presented (Nuttall, 1996). What the writer intends to convey should be interpreted by the reader so that comprehension is achieved. Hence, the ability to read effectively requires effort from the reader in making mental connections between text and his existing knowledge.

The reader achieves comprehension based on the stimulus he gains from the reading material and also the interaction with his background knowledge. This schematic process allows the reader to make his own interpretation of the text (Nuttall, 1996). Anderson and Pearson (1984) describe this mental process as the interaction with the reader's schemata, which is regarded as old knowledge interacting with new knowledge in a text (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1988). When the reader manages to find the link or a place for this new information, comprehension is achieved. Schema theory is the basis for the three reading models: top-down model, bottom-up model and interactive model (Nuttall, 1996). "Top-down" reading model describes that the reader uses his experiences or knowledge of the world and brings it to the text. On the other hand, when the reader builds up his interpretation of the text by recognizing the letters, words and sentences, he is applying "bottom-up" reading model. However, these two processes are not exclusive from one another. Most of the time, the reader consciously or subconsciously switches from one process to another and back again. Swaffar, Arens and Byrnes (1991) further describes that the three models are highly interactive especially of fluent readers. Therefore, it is the schemata that differentiate between L1 and L2 readers due to the pre-existing culture, experience and knowledge (Grabe, 1991).

On the other hand, activating the right schema is not the only factor in successful reading. Readers have to apply appropriate reading strategies to help them achieve comprehension. Reading strategies are unconscious or at certain conditions deliberate actions done by the reader to achieve a desired reading task (Carrell, 1998). Even more importantly, having metacognitive skills is critical in the reading process (Grabe, 1991; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes 1991). Grabe (1991) identifies metacognitive knowledge and monitoring skills as one of reading components of fluent L2 readers. He highlights the fact that fluent readers use their metacognitive skills more effectively compared to less fluent readers. In L2 learning, Krashen (1987, 1988) also argues that this ability to edit linguistic output in a communicative setting is vital. The success of an L2 learner is profoundly affected by his ability to monitor or edit his own learning process (Krashen, 1987, 1988). Having metacognitive skills therefore proved to be ubiquitous in L2 reading.

Due to the importance of metacognitive skills in L2 reading, several researchers have listed and categorized these skills. Researchers like Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002, p. 4), categorize metacognitive strategies into the following:

1. Global reading strategies - readers carefully plan their reading by using techniques such as having purpose in mind and previewing text.
2. Problem solving strategies - readers work directly with text to solve problems while reading such as adjusting speed of reading, guessing meaning of unknown words and rereading text.
3. Support strategies - readers use basic support mechanisms to aid reading like using dictionary, highlighting and taking notes.

Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) also developed an instrument called Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), that is aimed to elicit metacognitive skills information from L2 students. The information gained from the survey is used to make the learners aware of their reading strategies and also for the teachers to prepare better reading lessons (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). Anderson (2002) on the other hand, classifies metacognitive reading strategies of L2 learners into five primary components:

1. preparing and planning for effective reading
2. deciding when to use particular reading strategies
3. knowing how to monitor reading strategy use
4. learning how orchestrate various reading strategies
5. evaluating reading strategy use

With regards to online reading for the L2 learners, Anderson (2003) developed Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS). This survey is an adaptation of Mokhtari and Sheorey's (2002) categorization of metacognitive strategies for ESL learners. This survey contains 38 items (18 items on Global Strategies, 11 on Problem Solving Strategies and 9 items on Support Strategies). This survey, essentially, measures or describes the ESL learners' metacognitive reading online strategies.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A number of researchers have investigated the distance online learning programme at UiTM. Recent researches on these adult distance learners of UiTM online learning programmes indicated that the learners expressed preference to the traditional face-to-face classes (Alias & Jamaludin, 2005; Hashim, Ahmad, & Abdullah, 2009). A survey revealed that these learners were anxious and unfamiliar with the customized features in i-Class. Thus, using the LMS proved to be an intimidating task in spite of the high level of computer literacy among the students (Hashim, Ahmad, & Abdullah, 2009). This contradictory finding suggests that more investigation should be done on the learners as well as the LMS itself. Moreover, the dependency on instructors reveals the fact that the learners were not equipped with learning strategies that required them to be autonomous. Merriam (2004) advocate that for adult learners to be successful in their learning they need to be self-directed and have the capability to monitor their own learning. However, Alias and Jamaludin (2005) found from a study of three local universities, including UiTM, that offered distance online learning to adults, these learners lacked the metacognitive skills that were essential for self-monitoring and regulating their learning. As O'Malley and Chamot (1990) mention that this self-monitoring and evaluating skills or metacognitive strategies ensures the learners stays on right path of learning.

The above studies reflect the need to investigate the online learning needs of the learners in an LMS environment particularly their metacognitive skills. The LMS of UiTM contains features that are state-of-the-art. However, the learners fail to take advantage of these features to help them learn (Hashim, Ahmad, & Abdullah, 2009).

## III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Therefore, the objective of the study is to investigate the metacognitive online reading strategies of adult learners of an ESL Reading online course of University Technology MARA, Malaysia. Online survey of reading strategies or OSORS developed by Anderson (2003) has been adapted to gather information the metacognitive strategies employed by these adult learners. Therefore, the study seeks to answer,

1. What are the most used metacognitive online reading strategies employed by the adult learners?
2. What are the least used metacognitive online reading strategies employed by the adult learners?
3. What is the overall metacognitive online reading strategy employed by the adult learners?
4. Is there a significant difference between the two groups (semester 1 and 2) of adult learners in using metacognitive online reading strategies?

## IV. METHODOLOGY

### A. Location

The study was conducted in University Technology MARA (UiTM) campus in Shah Alam. The survey was distributed by the researcher in face-to-face seminar sessions.

### B. Participants

Every year in the Shah Alam campus, the Faculty of Public Administration receives approximately 200-350 *bumiputera* learners which is the largest number of adults enrolled in UiTM online learning programme. Therefore, adult learners of Diploma of Public Administration of Semester 1 and 2 from the Faculty of Administration Science and Policy Studies, UiTM Shah Alam, were selected to participate in this study. These learners were selected since the learners from this faculty make up the largest group of learners compared to the other programmes every year. A total of 157 learners of 229 learners, which is 68.6%, responded to the questionnaire. 92 learners out of 151 learners from semester 1 responded to the questionnaire. While, 65 learners out of 78 learners from semester 2 responded to the questionnaire. The percentages of learners who answered the questionnaire are 60.9% and 83.3% respectively. The majority of the respondents are females. They make up 73.2% which is 115 out of 157 respondents. 74.5% of these respondents are in the age group of 20 – 30 years old.

The learners are a homogenous group since they go through similar courses offered by the faculty in semester one and two. Among the compulsory courses are English as a Second Language Proficiency courses. These courses are Consolidating Language Skills (BEL 120) for semester 1 and Preparatory Course for Malaysian University English Test

(BEL 260) for semester 2 in order for them to earn a Diploma and qualify for a Bachelors programme. For each course, there is a reading component that is geared towards reading for academic purposes.

### C. Procedure

The data were collected from learners who were in the first and second semester. The process of gathering data using the survey began in the middle of the semester. By the middle of the semester, the learners were familiar with the LMS system, i-Class. This is because the length of time permits the learners to learn about the technological support features that are available in the system as well as be acquainted with their peers and facilitators.

### D. Instruments

The study adapted a survey of metacognitive strategies called Online Reading Strategies (OSORS) developed by Anderson (2003). OSORS consists of statements of descriptions of behaviors or preferences while reading online (Anderson, 2003). Anderson (2003) describes reading as, 'Reading should be an active, fluent process that involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning'. The survey originally has 38 items (18 items on Global Strategies, 11 on Problem Solving Strategies and 9 items on Support Strategies). However, for the purpose of the research, 3 Global Reading Strategies statements have been omitted so that the questionnaire is focused on online reading in an LMS environment. Also, the Likert scale of the questionnaire, has been changed from 1-5 to 1-4 so that the students will have to be decisive in their responses instead of choosing 3- which means 'I am not sure'.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS

The data from the survey was analysed using SPSS Version 14 programme. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions. In order to determine the most and least used strategy, tests of mean and standard deviation were used. To interpret the mean score of the strategy used, the study referred to Anderson (2003) and Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) scoring guide which indicates that, high use of strategy if the mean of 3.5 or higher, moderate use if the mean of 2.5 to 3.5 and low use if the mean of 2.4 or lower. The third research question used coefficient of variation test to identify the overall strategy type used the learners. Finally, the fourth research question, which is to determine the significant difference between the two groups of learners, independent t-test was used.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is found that, overall the learners mostly used global reading strategies followed by problem solving strategies and support reading strategies. The following section addresses in detail the research questions of the study.

### Research Question 1: The most used metacognitive online reading strategies employed by the adult learners

The following table lists the top ten most used strategies of the learners.

TABLE 1:  
MOST USED STRATEGY (TOP TEN)

No.	Strategy	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Strategy Types
1	1	I have a purpose in mind when I read online.	3.35	.678	GLOB
2	6	I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading online.	3.19	.662	PROB
3	7	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	3.18	.665	PROB
4	32	When online text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading.	3.18	.741	PROB
5	20	I print out a hard copy of the online text then underline or circle information to help me remember it.	3.12	.842	SUP
6	21	When reading online, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	3.10	.705	GLOB
7	14	When online text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.	3.10	.672	PROB
8	13	I check my understanding when I come across new information.	3.04	.715	GLOB
9	12	I go back and forth in the online text to find relationships among ideas in it.	3.02	.738	SUP
10	11	I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read online.	3.00	.707	PROB

From the above table, it is observed that Global Strategy has the highest mean compared to the other strategies with the mean of 3.35. The learners indicated that the when they are assigned an online reading task they need to have a purpose. Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) describes that Global strategies are '...intentional, carefully planned techniques by which learners monitor and manage their reading...' (p. 4). Since, these learners are adult learners, to have a sense purpose or goal that is paramount in any task that they do. Merriam (2004) describes adult learners not only can direct their own learning, they also have learning needs that are related to their social roles and driven by internal motivation.

From the data, adult learners highlighted moderately other two Global Strategies which are: they decide what to read closely and what to ignore (mean = 3.10) and they check their understanding when they come across new information (mean = 3.04). The use of these two strategies suggests that these learners have decisive goals in approaching their reading tasks.

Out of the top ten most used strategy, five strategies are Problem Solving Strategies, the mean is between 3.19 – 3.00, which is considered as moderate use of strategy. Further analysis of the list of strategies, the study's top Problems Solving Strategies is found similar, though not in the same order, to that Anderson's (2003) study of ESL learners top three Problem Solving Strategies. The strategies are, 'I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading online', 'I try to get back on track when I lose concentration' and 'When online text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading'. It is important to note that there are 11 Problem Solving strategies in the survey and these studies rank the 3 strategies as among the most used strategies. This similarity suggests that the three strategies are notably common for ESL learners. In EFL context, a study which is conducted on postgraduates of a local university also revealed that the learners utilized problem solving strategies in reading (Fatema, Maasum, & Noor, 2010). The study found that problem solving strategies have the highest mean compared to Global and Support strategies. Findings from these studies support the notion that language learners mostly use Problem Solving Strategies in their reading. Therefore, in the case of this study, even though Global Strategy has the highest mean, it can be concluded that the learners also employ several distinctive Problem Solving Strategies in reading online.

From the survey, the learners also indicated that they prefer to print out a hard copy or to circle information to help them read online. This Support Strategy has a mean of 3.12. Though it has the moderate mean, it shows that some learners prefer to read the printed text and write on the text. This finding implies that they want and require this feature to be accessible when it comes to reading online. An earlier study on designing multimedia environment for ESL reading by Chun and Plass (1997) suggest that learners should not be forced to use a particular feature of the text but instead be given options for which media they prefer. Hence, as far as metacognitive strategy allows learners plan and monitor his learning, having related online features in reading online would further assist the construction of meaning and comprehension of text.

#### **Research Question 2: The least used metacognitive online reading strategies employed by the adult learners**

The following table shows the bottom five least used strategies of the adult learners.

TABLE 2:  
LEAST USED STRATEGY (BOTTOM FIVE)

No.	Strategy	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Strategy accessible
1	2	I participate in live chat with other learners of English.	2.27	.909	GLOB
2	5	When online text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	2.34	.959	SUP
3	31	I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading online.	2.75	.792	PROB
4	3	I take notes while reading online to help me understand what I read.	2.75	.903	SUP
5	10	I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading online.	2.84	.730	GLOB

Based on the scoring guide, mean of 2.4 and below is considered low. Analysis of mean of the strategies used, revealed that two strategies have the mean below 2.4. The strategies are 'I participate in live chat with other learners of English' (mean = 2.27) and 'When online text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read' (mean = 2.34). Therefore, the lowest mean (2.27) is a Global strategy that indicates these learners do not engage themselves in synchronous interaction when they are logged on to the LMS. This scenario may result from the absence of chat feature in the LMS. However, some learners may still interact with other learners using chat features in other platforms like Yahoo Messenger or Skype.

The Support Strategy that the learners seldom use are to read aloud when online text becomes difficult, (mean = 2.34) and take notes while reading online (mean = 2.75). Support Strategies are basic support mechanisms intended to aid the reader in comprehending the text such as using a dictionary, taking notes, underlining, or highlighting textual information. In reading online, learners may want to have features that enable them to manipulate the text to help them understand the text. Unavailability of these features may demotivate them from completing a reading task. Nevertheless, it does not mean they ought to be given highly interactive hypertexts. A qualitative study on the use of metacognitive strategies in accessing and studying hypertext material online on undergraduates of two local universities, regarded hypertexts as troublesome and confusing (Rahman, Yassin, Ishak, & Amir, 2008). The study suggests it is more important to equip these learners with online learning skills to help them learn effectively in a hypermedia learning environment. For instructors, selecting appropriate support mechanisms for effective reading online helps these learners have meaningful reading online experience.

#### **Research Question 3: The overall metacognitive online reading strategy employed by the adult learners**

In order to answer this research question, the study uses coefficient of variation test to compare the degree of variation from one series of means to another. The formula is,



$$\text{Coefficient of Variation (CV)} = \frac{\text{Standard Deviation}}{\text{Mean}} \times 100$$

The smaller the value of CV, the smaller the chances of having variation of means and thus shows more stability in the data. The following illustrates the results of comparing the degree of variation means of metacognitive online reading strategy employed by the adult learners,

TABLE 3:  
OVERALL METACOGNITIVE ONLINE READING STRATEGY

Strategy Types	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	CV
GLOBAL	157	52.85	8.34	15.7%
PROBLEM SOLVING	157	29.82	5.20	17.4%
SUPPORT	157	20.82	3.56	17.2%

The results show that Global Strategy has the lowest CV value (15.7%) compared to Problem Solving Strategy (17.4%) and Support Strategy (17.2%). As far as the three strategy types are concerned, Global Strategy has more consistency in variation of means which indicates that the learners when doing reading online tasks they consistently employ Global Strategy compared to the other two strategies.

#### Research Question 4: Differences between the two groups (semester 1 and 2) of adult learners in using metacognitive online reading strategies

The study also determines whether there is a significant difference between the two groups (semester 1 and 2) of adult learners in using metacognitive online reading strategies. The test is administered because there may be a potential difference in strategy use in reading online when taking into account the period of time that the learners are exposed to the LMS. The table below describes the data,

TABLE 4:  
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEMESTER 1 AND 2 OF ADULT LEARNERS IN USING METACOGNITIVE ONLINE READING STRATEGIES

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
SUPPORT	Equal variances assumed	1.972	.162	.469	155	.640
	Equal variances not assumed			.483	149.942	.630
PROBLEM SOLVING	Equal variances assumed	8.097	.005	.541	155	.589
	Equal variances not assumed			.565	153.685	.573
GLOBAL	Equal variances assumed	3.920	0.49	.001	155	.999
	Equal variances not assumed			.001	152.773	.999

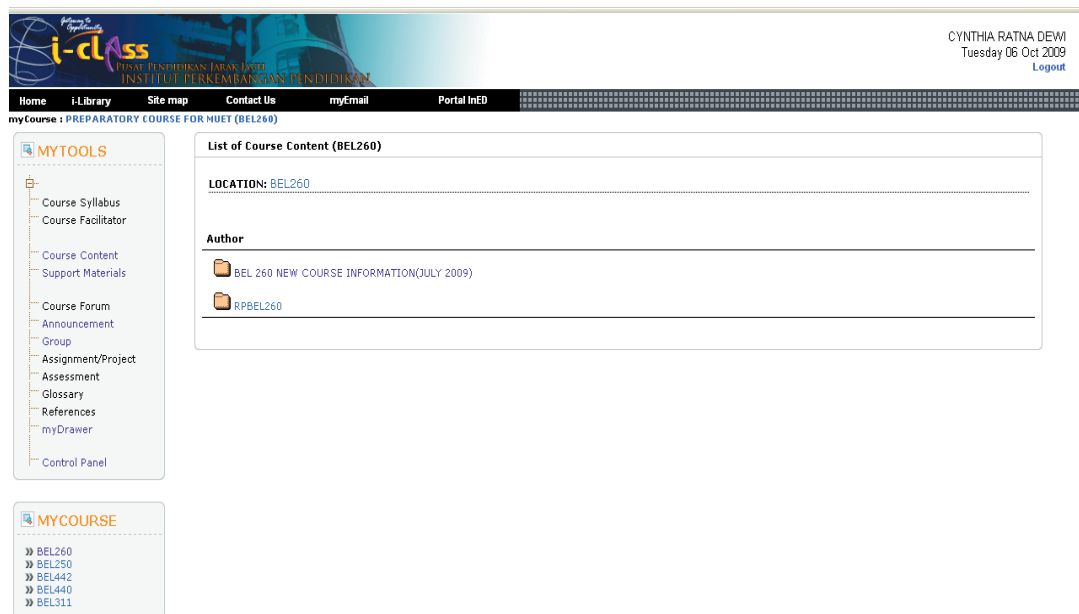
It is found that, in using the three types of metacognitive online reading strategies between semester one and two there is no significant difference. The test reveals that the three p-values (Support Strategy 0.640, Problem Solving Strategy 0.589, Global Strategy 0.999) are greater than 0.05 level of significance. This result shows that the period of time learners are exposed to the online learning environment (i.e., LMS – i-Class) may have not influenced the use of metacognitive strategies. These learners though coming from different semesters they employ basically similar strategies to tackle their reading online tasks since they learn within the same learning environment for both semesters.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data reveals that strategy use is subjective to the learners themselves and the learning environment that they are engaged in. What is accessible to them, in terms of learning facilities within the learning environment, determines how they plan and regulate their learning. In the case of this study, the learners may have the appropriate metacognitive strategies to help them read online, however, the learners also depend on the online features that are available. Though the learners may come from different background, cultures and social roles, through the available technological features, online learning has the potential to meet these needs. The needs are found in the process of learning. Vygotsky's claim to observe the process rather the product is fundamental to the establishment of higher forms of learning (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Therefore, the link between the cognitive processes of the learners and the socio-constructivist approach in online learning may provide the answers to an ideal online learning experience for the autonomous learners.

Hence, investigating strategy use of the learners offers possibilities not only to the researchers, instructors but also to learners on ways to improve reading online. With such knowledge, learners can improve their reading and ultimately learning the targeted language. Metacognitive strategies as mentioned by previous researchers such as Anderson (2002), Carrell (1989), Cohen (2003) as well as Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) proved to be crucial in second language learning. With effective use of the strategies, learners are able to regulate and monitor their learning which is even important for distant learners online. As for the instructors, such information will assist in creating a more conducive learning environment so that these distant adult learners are more engaged especially in reading online. Through investigating the metacognitive skills in an LMS environment it is hoped that the findings will give suggestions for best practices for educators in developing better learning experiences for online learners.

## APPENDIX A



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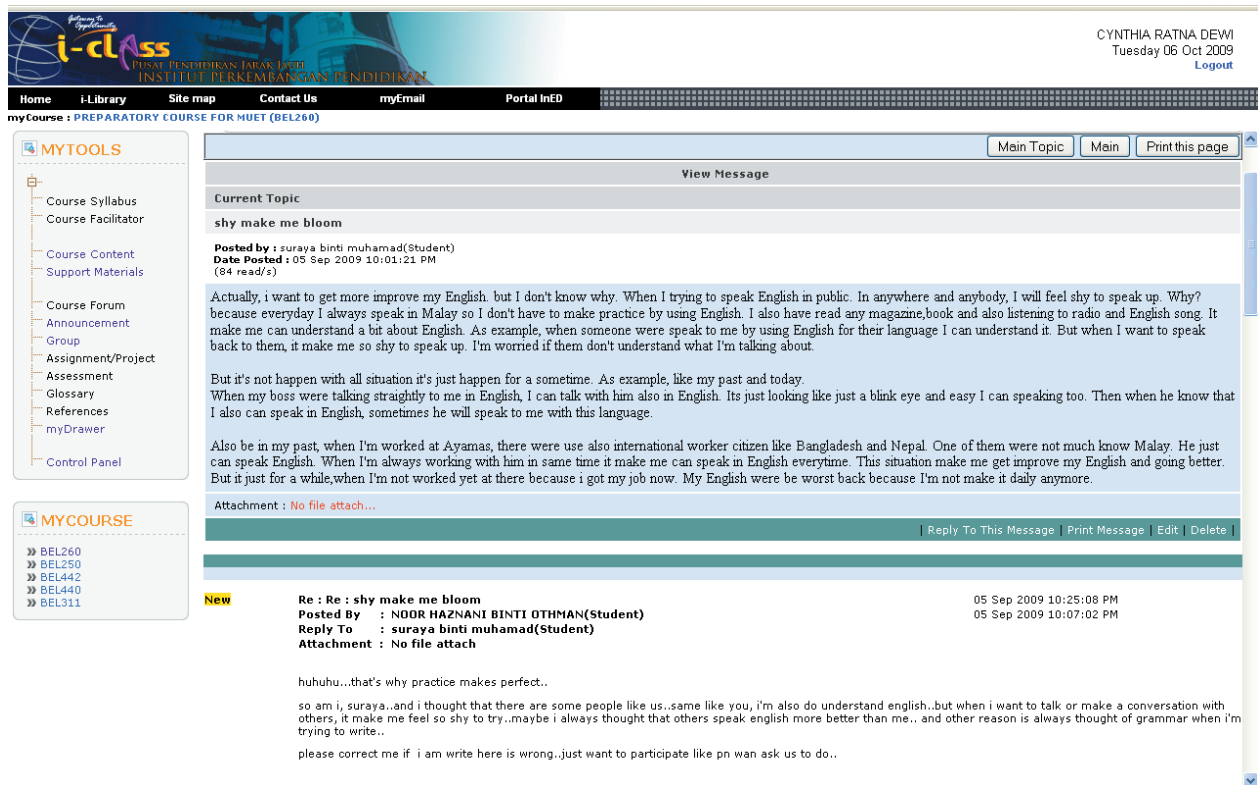
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**Author**

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## APPENDIX B



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**View Message**

**Current Topic**

**shy make me bloom**

**Posted by :** suraya binti muhamad(Student)  
**Date Posted :** 05 Sep 2009 10:01:21 PM  
(84 read/s)

Actually, i want to get more improve my English. but I don't know why. When I trying to speak English in public. In anywhere and anybody, I will feel shy to speak up. Why? because everyday I always speak in Malay so I don't have to make practice by using English. I also have read any magazine,book and also listening to radio and English song. It make me can understand a bit about English. As example, when someone were speak to me by using English for their language I can understand it. But when I want to speak back to them, it make me so shy to speak up. I'm worried if them don't understand what I'm talking about.

But it's not happen with all situation it's just happen for a sometime. As example, like my past and today.

When my boss were talking straightly to me in English, I can talk with him also in English. Its just looking like just a blink eye and easy I can speaking too. Then when he know that I also can speak in English, sometimes he will speak to me with this language.

Also be in my past, when I'm worked at Ayamas, there were use also international worker citizen like Bangladesh and Nepal. One of them were not much know Malay. He just can speak English. When I'm always working with him in same time it make me can speak in English everytime. This situation make me get improve my English and going better. But it just for a while,when I'm not worked yet at there because i got my job now. My English were be worst back because I'm not make it daily anymore.

Attachment : No file attach...

**Re : Re : shy make me bloom**  
**Posted By :** NOOR HAZNANI BINTI OTHMAN(Student)  
**Reply To :** suraya binti muhamad(Student)  
**Attachment :** No file attach

05 Sep 2009 10:25:08 PM  
05 Sep 2009 10:07:02 PM

huhuhu...that's why practice makes perfect..

so am i, suraya..and i thought that there are some people like us..same like you, i'm also do understand english..but when i want to talk or make a conversation with others, it make me feel so shy to try..maybe i always thought that others speak english more better than me.. and other reason is always thought of grammar when i'm trying to write..

please correct me if i am write here is wrong..just want to participate like pn wan ask us to do..

Sample of a forum thread in i-Class, UiTM

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# Teachers' Awareness of Second Language Learning Strategies Adopted and Used by Their Students: A Questionnaire

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**Abstract**—The present study investigates Iraqi university-level teachers' awareness of these strategies adopted and used by their students in learning a second language. A questionnaire is administered to twenty-seven teachers in five department regarding English as their major knowledge. Definitions, importance classifications and teaching second language learning strategies are dealt with. The study shows that these teachers are aware that their students are able to adopt and use a number of these strategies more proficiently than others. Aware and unaware strategies can be regarded as points of strength and weakness, respectively, if a strategy-based instruction is applied inside the classroom. Iraqi university-teachers are aware of these strategies used and adopted by their students inside the classroom. Meta-cognitive strategies are more adopted and used by students; therefore the less problematic one. Whereas Affective strategies are more problematic than other types of strategies. English academic majors, i.e., linguistics, literature, and translation proved to be effective in students' use of strategies.

**Index Terms**—second language learning strategies, Iraqi EFL learners, SILL

## I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a great shift within the field of language learning and teaching over the last decades with a lot of emphasis put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching. This change has been reflected in various ways in language education and applied linguistics: in parallel to this new shift of interest, how learners process new information, what kinds of strategies they use to understand, learn, or remember the information has been the primary concern of researchers tackling the area of second language learning strategies (abbreviated as SLLSs).

Researchers in the field of language and linguistics used a number of definitions. On early research, Tarone (1983) presented the following definition of language strategy (abbreviated as LS) as an "attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language—to incorporate to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly" (p. 87). While Weinstein & Mayer (1986) considered these strategies broadly as "behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning" which are "intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (p.351). Later, Mayer (1988) more specifically believed that LS are "behaviours of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information" (p. 11). According to Wenden & Rubin (1987, p. 19), LSs are "... any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information". In their seminal study, O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) adopted the following definition of LS as "the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information". According to Stern (1992, p. 261), "the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques." All language learners use SLLSs either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks in the language classroom. Since the classroom is like a problem-solving environment in which language learners are likely to encounter new input and difficult tasks given by their instructors, learners' attempts to find the fastest or easiest way to do what is required, that is, using SLLSs is impossible to avoid. Finally, building on the work in her outstanding book for teachers *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (1990), and affirmed in (1993, p. 18), Rebecca Oxford gives a specific definition:

...language learning strategies—(are) specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability.

We may note a change over time from these definitions: from the early focus on the product of SLLSs (linguistic or sociolinguistic competence), there is now a larger emphasis on the processes and the characteristics of SLLSs. At the same time, we should note that SLLSs are distinct from learning styles, which refer more broadly to a learner's "natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (Reid, 1995, p. viii).

Although there appears to be an obvious relationship between one's language learning style and his or her usual or preferred language learning strategies. This paper provides the background of SLLSs, presents different definitions and classifications of these strategies given by many researchers. It also emphasizes the importance of SLLSs for foreign language learning and teaching. A questionnaire will be done to present a clear portrait of these SLLSs held by Iraqi students of English indirectly by asking their teachers to answer the questionnaire paper. A statistical analysis and discussion of the results are also done.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF SLLSs

The Communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The key goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as communicative competence in the target language. These strategies can help learners develop this competence. A number of works appeared about communicative strategies in target language (abbreviated as TL) after Canale and Swain's (1994) influential article recognized the importance of communicative strategies as a key aspect of strategic (and thus communicative) competence. An essential distinction exists, however, between communication and SLLSs. Communicative strategies are used by speakers intentionally and consciously in order to cope with difficulties in communicating in a TL (Cook, 2001, p. 211-224). This term "Language Learning Strategies" is used more generally for all strategies that L2/FL learners use in learning the target language, and communication strategies are therefore just one type of SLLSs. Therefore, understanding of SLLSs is very crucial for all L2 teachers' who aim to help develop their students' communicative competence and language learning. As Oxford (1990, p.1) puts it, SLLSs "... are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is important for developing communicative competence." Lessard-Clouston (1997, p.3) points out that SLLSs add to the development of the communicative competence of the students. Being abroad concept, used to refer to all strategies used by foreign language learners in learning the TL and communication strategies are one type of Learning Strategies.

Second Language learning strategies are important, in addition to developing students' communicative competence because research suggests that training students to use these strategies can help them become better learners. Early research on 'good' language learners' by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978, 1996), Rubin (1975), and Stern (1975) suggested a number of positive strategies that such students employ, ranging from using an active task approach in and monitoring one's L2 / FL performance to listening to the radio in L2/FL and speaking with native speakers (see Ellis, 1994, ch.7). A study by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) also suggests that effective L2/FL learners are aware of the SLLSs they use and why they use them. According to Ellis (ibid., p.258), the language learner who is able to use a wide variety of SLLSs can improve his language skills in a better way.

There is a caution which we must note though, because, as Skehan (1989, p.76) remarks, "there is always the possibility that the 'good' language learning strategies...are also used by bad language learners, but other reasons cause them to be unsuccessful learners." In fact, Vann & Abraham (1990:192) found evidence which suggests that both 'good' and 'unsuccessful' language learners "apparently...lacked...what are often called meta-cognitive strategies...which would enable them to assess the task and bring to bear the necessary strategies for its completion". It seems, then, that a number and range of SLLSs are necessary if L2/FL teachers are to help students both in learning the L2/FL and in becoming successful language learners. At this point, it should be highly emphasized that the use of the same good SLLSs does not guarantee that bad learners will also become successful in language learning since other factors may also play a role in their success.

## III. CLASSIFICATION OF SLLSs

These strategies are classified by many scholars like, O'Malley et al. (1985), Wenden & Rubin (1987); Stern (1992); Oxford (2001) etc. However, most of these endeavours to classify language learning strategies reflect more or less the same categories of language learning strategies without any radical changes. In what follows, these taxonomies of language learning strategies will be dealt with:

### A. O'Malley's (1985) Classification

O'Malley et al. (1985, p.582-84) categorize SLLSs into three main subcategories:

Meta-cognitive Strategies

Cognitive Strategies

Socio-affective Strategies

#### 1. Meta-cognitive Strategies

It can be pointed out that meta-cognitive is a term used to express executive function; strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Among the main meta-cognitive strategies, it is possible to include advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, and self-evaluation.

#### 2. Cognitive Strategies

These strategies are more limited to specific tasks. They involve direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, deduction, imagery, key word, note-taking, recombination, auditory representation, elaboration inferencing, contextualization and transfer are among the most essential cognitive strategies.

### 3. Socioaffective Strategies

As Brown (2000, p. 93-94) states, socio-affective strategies relate with social-mediating activity and transacting with others. Cooperation and question for clarification are the major socio-affective strategies.

### B. Rubin's (1987) Classification

Rubin makes the distinction between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning. He states three types of strategies used by learners. These are:

Learning Strategies

Communication Strategies

Social Strategies

#### 1. Learning Strategies

These strategies fall into two main types. They contribute directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner:

a. Cognitive Learning Strategies; they refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that requires direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Rubin identified six main cognitive strategies contributing directly to language learning:

a). Clarification/ Verification

b). Deductive Reasoning

c). Guessing/ Inductive Inferencing

d). Practice

e). Memorization

f). Monitoring

b. Meta-cognitive Learning Strategies; these strategies are used to self-direct or regulate, oversee language learning. They include various processes as planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management.

#### 2. Communicative strategies

Communication strategies less relate to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. They are used by speakers when met with some difficulties due to the fact that their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker (see also Ellis, 2005, p. 170-173).

#### 3. Social Strategies

They are the type of activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. According to Wenden & Rubin (1987, p. 23-27), these strategies contribute indirectly to learning although they provide exposure to the TL because they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language.

### C. Stern's (1992) Classification

There are five main SLLSs according to Stern (1992:262-66). They are as follows:

Management and Planning Strategies

Cognitive strategies

Communicative-Experiential Strategies

Interpersonal Strategies

Affective Strategies

#### 1. Management and Planning Strategies

These strategies relate with the learner's attention to direct his own learning. A learner can take charge of the development of his own programme when he is helped by a teacher whose role is to say that the learner must:

a. set himself reasonable goals.

b. decide on an appropriate methodology, select appropriate resources, and monitor progress

c. decide what commitment to make language learning,

d. evaluate his achievement in the right of previously determined goals and expectations (ibid.,p. 263).

#### 2. Cognitive strategies

These are operations used in learning or problem solving which need direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Here, some of the cognitive strategies listed:

a. Clarification

b. Deductive Reasoning

c. Guessing / Inductive Inferencing

d. Memorization

e. Practice

f. Monitoring

### 3. Communicative-Experiential Strategies

As stated by Stern (*ibid.*) communication strategies like gesturing, circumlocution, paraphrase, explanation, or asking for repetition are techniques learners use them to continue a conversation. The aim of using these techniques is to avoid interrupting the flow of communication.

### 4. Interpersonal Strategies

Learners should contact with native speakers and cooperate with them. In addition, they should monitor their own development and evaluate performance their own performance. They must become acquainted with the target culture (*ibid.*).

### 5. Affective Strategies

Stern (*ibid.*) puts it that good language learners use distinct affective strategies. Because of the nature of language learning which is in some cases frustrating, L2 learners may have negative feelings about native speakers of L2. Good language learners are more or less conscious of these emotional problems, so they try to create associations of positive effect towards the foreign language and its speakers as well the learning activities involved. Learning training can help students to face up to the emotional difficulties and to overcome them by drawing attention to the potential frustrations or pointing them out as they arise.

### D. Oxford's (2001) Classification

The aim of SLLSs as viewed by Oxford (2001) is the orientation towards the development of communicative competence. She classifies these strategies into two main divisions, direct and indirect, which are further sub-classified into six categories. In Oxford's system, meta-cognitive strategies help learners to regulate their learning. Affective strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements such as confidence, while social strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language (TL). Cognitive strategies are the mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning, memory strategies are those used for storage of information, and compensation strategies help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication. Oxford (2001, p. 359) presents six categories of language learning strategies: cognitive, meta-cognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social. They can be summarized as follows:

1. Cognitive: practicing and repeating new words; deductive reasoning, translating, analyzing; taking notes, highlighting, summarizing.
2. Meta-cognitive: paying attention, organizing, setting goals, and objectives, evaluating one's own performance.
3. Memory-related: creating mental linkages, such as grouping and placing words in context; applying images and sounds to represent things in memory; structured reviewing; using mechanical techniques, such as physical response.
4. Compensatory: selecting a topic for discussion based on one's knowledge of the language and shaping the discussion to avoid unknown vocabulary, guessing at words based on context, using gestures and coining words to communicate.
5. Affective: using music or laughter as part of the learning process, rewording oneself, making positive statements about one's own progress, discussing feelings.
6. Social: seeking correction, asking for clarification, working with peers, developing cultural understanding (*ibid.* ,p. 363-365).

Some strategies are guided by exterior influences: teachers, activities, interactions-and others relate to the student's personality, motivation, and knowledge about how to learn.

We can notice that much of the recent work in this area has underpinned by a broad concept of SLLSs that goes beyond cognitive processes to include social and communicative strategies.

## IV. TEACHING SLLSs

The teacher's role in strategy training is very important. Therefore training students on how to use SLLSs, teachers should learn about their students' interests, motivations and learning styles. The teacher can learn what SLLSs his/her students appear to be using by observing their behaviour in class: do they cooperate with their peers or seem to have much contact outside of class with proficient foreign language users? Do they ask for clarification, verification or correction? In addition to that, the teacher can have adequate knowledge about his/her students' goals, motivations, language learning strategies, and their understanding of the course to be taught (Lessard-Clouston 1997, 5). It is true that each learner within the same classroom may have different learning styles and varied awareness of the use of strategies. The teacher cannot ascribe importance to only one group and support the analytical approach or only give input by using the auditory mode. Therefore, the language teacher should provide a wide range of learning strategies in order to meet the needs and expectations of his students processing different learning styles, motivations, strategy preferences, etc. It can be pointed out that the most important teacher's role in foreign language teaching is the provision of a range of tasks to match varied learning styles.

In addition to students, language teachers should also analyze the textbooks to find out whether the textbooks already include SLLSs or SLLSs training. They should look for new texts or other teaching materials if SLLSs are not already included within their materials.

Language teachers should also study their own teaching methods and overall classroom style. Moreover, they should



analyze their lesson plans, and can determine whether their lesson plans give learners an opportunity to employ a variety of learning styles and learning strategies or not. Furthermore, teachers can see whether their teaching allows learners to approach the task at hand in different ways or not. Again, language teachers can also be aware of whether their strategy training is implicit, explicit or both. It should be stressed that questioning themselves about what they plan to do before each lesson and evaluate their lesson plans after the lesson. In terms of strategy training, teachers can become better prepared to concentrate on language learning strategies and strategy training during the process of their teaching, and can encourage their students to experiment with a broad range of strategies after of course, describe, model, and give examples of potentially useful strategies (Lessard-Clouston 1997: *ibid*).

Strategies, like styles, can be taught, and because of their specificity, even more easily than style (Brown, 2001, 217). At least four approaches are applicable:

- 1- Teach strategies through interactive techniques.
- 2- Use compensatory techniques.
- 3- Administer a strategy inventory.
- 4- Make use of impromptu teacher – initiated advice.

Linguists, like Oxford (2001), believe that the first and third approaches are more usable than the other two since applying them is easier, with reference to the cooperation between teachers and their students is very considerable (p.361).

Considerable research has been conducted on how to improve L2 students' learning strategies. In many investigations, attempts to teach students to use learning strategies (called strategy training or learner training) have produced good results. However, not all L2 strategy training studies have been successful or conclusive. Some training has been effective in various skill areas but not in others, even within the same study. Based on L2 strategy training research, the following principles have been tentatively suggested, subject to further investigation (see Oxford (1994) and Yang (2007, p.36ff)):

- L2 strategy training should be based clearly on students' attitudes, beliefs, and stated needs.
- Strategies should be chosen so that they mesh with and support each other and so that they fit the requirements of the language task, the learners' goals, and the learners' style of learning.
- Training should, if possible, be integrated into regular L2 activities over a long period of time rather than taught as a separate, short intervention.
- Students should have plenty of opportunities for strategy training during language classes.
- Strategy training should include explanations, handouts, activities, brainstorming, and materials for reference and home study.
- Affective issues such as anxiety, motivation, beliefs, and interests -- all of which influence strategy choice -- should be directly addressed by L2 strategy training.
- Strategy training should be explicit, overt, and relevant and should provide plenty of practice with varied L2 tasks involving authentic materials.
- Strategy training should not be solely tied to the class at hand; it should provide strategies that are transferable to future language tasks beyond a given class.
- Strategy training should be somewhat individualized, as different students prefer or need certain strategies for particular tasks.

Strategy training should provide students with a mechanism to evaluate their own progress and to evaluate the success of the training and the value of the strategies in multiple tasks

## V. A QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire is administered to identify university – level teachers of English's awareness of these SLLSs adopted by their students in learning English as a second language. This questionnaire is based on Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (abbreviated as SILL), version 7.0, cited completely in Brown (*ibid.*, p. 221ff). Two basic changes are made on this inventory to be suitable for the present study. Firstly, the number of options has been decreased from five (never, usually not, somewhat, usually yes, always) to three only (never, sometimes, always), since the other two options may mislead the subjects of the study as stated by the pilot administration of the questionnaire, especially in Wassit University, College of Education, Department of English in May 2008. Secondly, the fifty strategies have been reworded in a way to be easily- understood. This rewording was given to a number of experts in applied linguistics, all of them holding the academic rank Assistant Professor, to judge the changes till the final version was reached. The same classification of these fifty strategies into six categories (see sect. 3.4 above) was adopted without mentioning this fact to the subjects.

Forty university-level teachers of English were the subject of the questionnaire. Unfortunately, only twenty- seven were accepted since the other thirteen questionnaire papers were rejected for more than one reason: some returned the questionnaire paper with no response (i.e., empty), some were half- answered, and the others with ticking the all three options. Therefore, the following two tables show the details of the subjects of the present study:

TABLE (1):  
WORK DETAILS AND DEGREES OF THE STUDY SUBJECTS

University/ College/Dept.	MA		PH D	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Wassit/Education/English	3	3		
Baghdad/Languages/English			1	
Baghdad/Arts/English	4	4		1
Mustansiriyah/Arts/English		2		
Mustansiriyah/Arts/Translation	3	2	3	1
Total	27			

This table indicates that five departments were contributed in this study. The number of subjects indicates in one way or another the range of sincere cooperation seen while the questionnaire papers were submitted to the forty- subjects.

TABLE (2):  
THE SUBJECTS AND THEIR FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Field	Degree			
	MA		PH D	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Linguistics	3	4	2	
Literature	4	3		2
Translation	3	4	2	
Total	27			

Table (2) indicates that the subjects are of the three specializations that allow their holders to teach English in the English or Translation departments, which will not be regarded as variables in data analysis. For the administration of the questionnaire, the twenty-seven subjects were given all the time needed for filling up the papers: some of them took three days as a minimum period; others took sixteen days as a maximum period. Papers of the questionnaire were submitted and gathered by the researcher himself. The researcher tried to give immediate chance of details or explanation to those needed.

The purpose of the present study is to get answers to the following questions:

1- Are teachers really aware of these SLLSs that their students adopt and use inside or outside their classroom? If this is true, this means that the subjects who are university- level teachers are able to identify the points of strength and weakness in their students' second language level. This means also that the subjects can reflect these fifty strategies to their students when they teach them in one way or another.

2- Which particular strategy university- level teachers identify that their students are well -aware of? In turn, this leads to know the opposite, i.e., which strategy is less aware of.

3- Which category of SLLSs is more problematic (or less acquainted/adopted/used by students)? This will be clear when "never" option is ticked by the twenty-seven subjects. This in turn leads to know which category of SLLSs is less problematic (or more acquainted/ adopted/ used by students).

4-Is there any difference in strategy awareness of students as far as the three specializations are compared: linguistics, translation, and literature?

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following table shows the statistical analysis of each strategy depending on the subjects ticking and Likert Scale. This Scale is an ordered, one-dimensional scale from which respondents choose one option that best aligns with their view. All options usually have labels, although sometimes only a few are offered and the others are implied. A common form is an assertion, with which the person may agree or disagree to varying degrees. In scoring, numbers are usually assigned to each option (such as 1 to 3) since the options of this questionnaire are three. The Likert scale is also called the summative scale, as the result of a questionnaire is often achieved by summing numerical assignments to the responses given. The three-point scale was applied:

1 Never

2 Sometimes

3 Always

The marks stated in front each option will help statistically, according to the application of the Likert scale, to account the weighted means for each strategy to show their means which will be compared to the standard mean which must be (2): ( 0- 1) is low use. (1-2) medium use , and (2-3) high use .Table (3) shows in detail the strategy type, strategy number and the number of ticking for each one of the three options, then followed by their weighted means which is accounted according to the following equation:

$$\text{Weighted mean} = \frac{(3^{\text{rd}} \text{ option} \times 3) + (2^{\text{nd}} \text{ option} \times 2) + (1^{\text{st}} \text{ option} \times 1)}{\text{No of subjects}}$$

Thus, the weighted mean of Strategy 1 can be accounted as follows:

$$\text{Weighted mean} = \frac{(3 \times 3) + (2 \times 20) + (1 \times 4)}{27} = 1.962 > 2 \text{ (standard mean)}$$

TABLE (3):  
THE FIFTY STRATEGIES AND THEIR WEIGHTED MEANS

STR Type	ST No	Never	Sometimes	Always	W Mean	STR TYPE	ST No	Never	Sometimes	Always	W Mean
Cognitive	1	4	20	3	1.962	Memory-related	26	8	11	8	1.925
	2	2	21	4	2.074		27	7	11	9	2.074
	3	7	18	2	1.814		28	10	11	6	1.777
	4	7	15	5	1.924		29	5	11	11	2.222
	5	13	12	2	1.592		30	9	13	5	1.851
	6	19	7	1	1.333	Compensatory	31	7	18	2	1.814
	7	15	11	1	1.481		32	5	10	12	2.259
	8	4	20	3	1.962		33	6	9	12	2.222
	9	5	15	7	2.074		34	8	15	4	1.581
Metacognitive	10	6	12	9	2.111		35	11	11	5	1.777
	11	7	17	3	1.814		36	7	16	4	1.888
	12	10	10	7	1.888		37	9	12	6	1.888
	13	8	13	6	1.925		38	6	10	11	2.185
	14	7	13	7	2	Affective	39	8	10	9	2.037
	15	5	15	7	2.074		40	7	13	7	2
	16	11	12	4	1.740		41	11	8	8	1.888
	17	10	10	7	1.888		42	8	9	10	2.074
	18	9	12	6	1.888		43	18	9	---	1.333
	19	8	10	9	2.037		44	6	10	11	2.185
	20	8	14	5	1.888	Social	45	4	8	15	2.037
	21	9	13	5	1.851		46	9	13	5	1.851
	22	10	11	6	1.851		47	6	10	11	2.185
	23	10	11	6	1.851		48	10	12	5	1.814
	24	8	8	11	2.111		49	4	15	8	2.148
	25	6	11	10	2.148		50	11	10	6	1.814

Statistically speaking, this table shows clearly these twenty strategies that are students are aware of. They are represented by shaded rows. Also, it can be concluded that arranging the fifty strategies according to their weighted means may help to draw a clear picture of students' awareness and use of these strategies. That is, strategies with weighted means (2) or more means they are more adopted and used by the subjects' students at least inside the classroom( or less problematic). And the opposite is correct, i.e., those strategies with weighted means less than (2) are less adopted and used by students (or more problematic). This picture is represented by the following line curve of these weighted means:

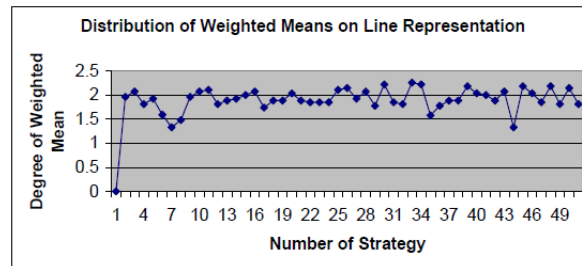


Figure (1): Distribution of Weighted Means on Line Representation

Fortunately, this indicates, as a conclusion, that teachers are well-aware of these SLLSs adopted and used by their students since they are able to identify ,even relatively, which strategies are more usable and adoptable inside the classroom. In other words, are able to identify the points of strength in SLLSs ( those with shaded rows in the above table) and points of weakness ( the non-shaded rows).And due to the fact that SLLSs are teachable ( Lee & Oxford,2008), focusing on these points of weakness is very important to have proficient learners(p.3-14). Table (4) below indicates the total performance of subjects to Oxford's six categories of strategies:

TABLE (4)  
TOTAL PERFORMANCE OF SUBJECTS IN OXFORD'S SIX STRATEGIES

Strategy No	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	76	31.2	139	57.2	28	11.6
2	118	31.2	173	45.7	87	23.1
3	44	27.3	63	38.8	55	33.9
4	68	28	114	46.9	61	25.1
5	58	35.8	59	36.4	45	27.8
6	44	27.3	68	41.9	50	30.8
Total	408	30.2	616	45.6	326	24.2
1350						

This table can be represented by the following histogram.

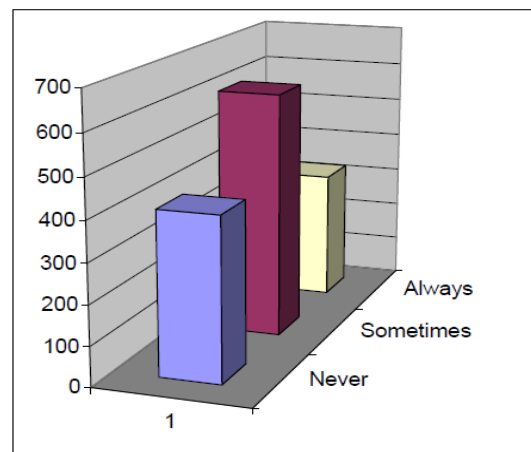


Figure (2): Histogram of Total Responses

Statistically speaking, the numbers in Table (4) above are not sufficient to conclude which type of strategy is more adoptable than others. Thus, after consulting specialists in statistics another statistical measure is used, namely, Expected Opportunity Loss (or EOL) as detailed in Al-fahdi (1994).This measure is used in situations where exact decision could not be obtained as in measuring or identifying the exact strategies that students adopt or use (p.83ff). Instead, the maximum percentage of use will be regarded as the less EOL, which will be used in turn to measure other percentages of use. This is done in the following way:

1- Obtaining maximum EOL by the following equation

$$L' = \max_j \sum_i L_{ij} \times P_i$$

$i = 1, 2, \dots, n$

$j = 1, 2, \dots, n$

2- Selecting Mini EOL to be the optimal alternative for minimum expected opportunity lost. Then this minimum can

then be used to find EOL for others by the following equation:

$$EOL(ai) = \sum_{j=1}^m L_{ij} \cdot P_j$$

$$P_j = P(\Phi = \Phi_j), \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

By applying these equations the following table is obtained:

Option = i

Strategy = j

$$P(i1) = P(i2) = P(i3) = 1/3$$

TABLE (5):  
EOL FOR THE SIX TYPES OF STRATEGIES

Strategy \ Option	1 j1	2 j2	3 j3	4 j4	5 j5	6 j6
Never i1	42	0	74	50	60	74
Sometimes i2	34	0	110	59	114	105
Always i3	59	0	32	26	42	37

$$EOL(1) = (1/3 \times 42) + (1/3 \times 34) + (1/3 \times 59) = 45$$

$$EOL(2) = (1/3 \times 0) + (1/3 \times 0) + (1/3 \times 0) = 0$$

$$EOL(3) = (1/3 \times 74) + (1/3 \times 110) + (1/3 \times 32) = 72$$

$$EOL(4) = (1/3 \times 50) + (1/3 \times 59) + (1/3 \times 26) = 45$$

$$EOL(5) = (1/3 \times 60) + (1/3 \times 114) + (1/3 \times 42) = 72$$

$$EOL(6) = (1/3 \times 74) + (1/3 \times 105) + (1/3 \times 37) = 72$$

Thus, the second type of strategies, i.e., Meta – cognitive strategies, is the most adoptable or used since it gives the less EOL. As a conclusion, these six types of strategies can be arranged as follows:

- 1- Meta-cognitive strategies
- 2- Cognitive and Compensatory strategies
- 3- Memory-related, Affective and Social strategies

Consequently, the above discussion gives answers to the first three questions of the questionnaire. The following is a statistical treatment for obtaining an answer to the fourth question.

TABLE (6):  
TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND THEIR SPECIALIZATION MAJOR

S	Linguistics				Literature				Translation			
	N	S	A	WM	N	S	A	WM	N	S	A	WM
1	16	55	10	1.95	34	34	13	1.74	26	50	5	1.74
2	28	62	36	2.06	71	24	31	1.68	19	87	20	2.00
3	12	23	19	2.12	28	7	19	1.83	4	33	17	2.24
4	23	46	12	1.86	37	13	31	1.92	8	55	18	2.12
5	19	25	10	1.83	24	---	30	2.11	15	34	5	1.81
6	10	38	6	1.11	24	---	3	2.11	10	30	14	2.07
Total	108	249	93	1.96	218	78	154	1.85	82	293	75	1.98
	450				450				450			
	1350											

By adopting the above-used EOL measure, the following results are revealed:

Strategy = S

Major fields of knowledge (Linguistics , ....) = T

$$P(S1) = P(S2) = \dots = P(S6) = 1/6$$

TABLE (7):  
EOL FOR TEACHERS' MAJOR FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE

T S	T1 (Linguistics)			T2(Literature)			T3 (Translation)		
	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A
1	12	7	26	37	0	18	0	37	15
2	0	0	0	0	10	0	7	0	0
3	16	39	17	43	27	12	22	44	3
4	5	16	24	34	24	0	18	22	2
5	9	37	26	47	34	1	11	43	15
6	18	24	20	47	34	28	16	47	6

$$\text{EOL T1(N)} = (1/6 \times 12) + (1/6 \times 0) + (1/6 \times 16) + (1/6 \times 5) + (1/6 \times 9) + (1/6 \times 18) = 10$$

$$\text{EOL T1(S)} = (1/6 \times 7) + (1/6 \times 0) + (1/6 \times 39) + (1/6 \times 16) + (1/6 \times 37) + (1/6 \times 24) = 20.5$$

$$\text{EOL T1(A)} = (1/6 \times 26) + (1/6 \times 0) + (1/6 \times 17) + (1/6 \times 24) + (1/6 \times 26) + (1/6 \times 20) = 18.83$$

$$\text{ELO T2(N)} = 34.67$$

$$\text{ELO T2(S)} = 21.5$$

$$\text{ELO T2(A)} = 9.83$$

$$\text{ELO T3(N)} = 12.33$$

$$\text{ELO T3(S)} = 32.17$$

$$\text{ELO T3(NA)} = 6.83$$

These results reflect, on the one hand, how much these majors are different in their students' strategies; strategies that are obtained mainly from their teachers. This means those teachers reflect different types of strategies in their classrooms. Also, these reflect the gap will be seen among students as far as learning strategies are concerned, on the other hand. The less EOL are EOL T3 (A), EOL T1 (N), and EOL T1 (S). This indicates relatively the influence of linguistic aspects or issues on this respect. So, students in these three majors are users and adopters of different strategies. And this is the answer of the questionnaire's fourth question. Specifically, the following points derived from Table (6) above can support this conclusion:

i- There is a kind of approximation in selecting options between Linguistics and Translation, especially in 'sometimes' and 'always' options for cognitive, meta-cognitive strategy.

ii- Literature are more decisive in their selection, especially for affective and social strategies. No instance is registered for 'sometimes' in these strategies. Whereas the other two options are similar for both types of strategies. This can be justified unfortunately of being unaware of the distinction between these two types of strategies.

iii- Weighted mean reaches its high point in compensatory strategies for both Linguistics and Translation whereas in affective strategies for Literature.

iv- Literature are the less in selecting 'sometimes' for all types of strategies compared with Linguistics and Translation.

v- "Always" is resisted as the highest selection for all the three majors in meta-cognitive strategies compared with other types of strategies. This in turn supports the above- stated conclusion that meta-cognitive strategies are more usable and adoptable inside classroom for Iraqi EFL.

vi- The less number of "always" is registered in social, cognitive and affective, and compensatory strategies for Linguistics, Translation, and Literature, respectively.

vii- By ordering the different types of strategies according to their weighted means from the more to the less, the following orders can be revealed:

#### Linguistics

Compensatory  
Meta-cognitive  
Cognitive  
Memory-related  
Affective  
Social

#### Translation

Compensatory  
Memory-related  
Social  
Meta-cognitive  
Affective  
Cognitive

#### Literature

Affective  
Memory-related  
Compensatory  
Cognitive  
Meta-cognitive  
Social

These results are indicators of the different techniques used by teachers of these majors inside the classroom. This can be justified positively and negatively. From a positive viewpoint, students adopted and used these strategies that help them in their studies. For example, students of literature and translation need more memory-related strategies than in studying linguistics. This is proved its validity in the above order of strategies where memory-related strategies are ordered the second in Translation and Literature compared with the fourth order in Linguistics. Negatively, students in their study have focused on some strategies which may affect their learning process in general (see Beckma, 2002).

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

The main findings of the present study are:

1- Iraqi university-level teachers are aware of these strategies adopted and used by their students since the results of the questionnaire have indicated that some strategies, but not all, are more usable and adoptable by their students. This point will be more illustrative if a large sample is used.

2- If 1 is TRUE, teachers can raise their students' awareness and use of these important strategies by focusing on these less-used strategies. The three majors can apply them inside their classroom since their courses are with social, affective, and cognitive orientations. That is, strategy-based instruction is advisable since more successful learners have better and more meta-cognitive awareness.

3- Indirectly, the statistical analysis indicated that the individual differences among our students are considerable since less number of strategies is identified as points of strength. As believed by many researches like Oxford (1990, 2001, and 2008), the learning strategies of good language learners, once identified and successfully taught to less proficient learners could have considerable effects of facilitating the development of SL skills.

4- Meta-cognitive strategies are used and adopted by Iraqi EFL more than other types of strategies; therefore, they are less problematic than other types of strategies while Affective strategies are found to be the more problematic category.

5- The profile of L2LSs in Iraq needs more attention since majority of strategies are reflected as unaware.

#### APPENDIX

##### Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

This form of the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) is for students of English as a second or foreign language. You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement and write the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE 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

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. This questionnaire usually takes about 20-30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, let the teacher know immediately.

##### Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
7. I physically act out new English words. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. I review English lessons often. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

##### Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
11. I try to talk like native English speakers. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
12. I practice the sounds of English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
13. I use the English words I know in different ways. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
14. I start conversations in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
16. I read for pleasure in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
20. I try to find patterns in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
22. I try not to translate word for word. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
27. I read English without looking up every new word. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
35. I look for people I can talk to in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
38. I think about my progress in learning English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



**Part F**

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
47. I practice English with other students. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
48. I ask for help from English speakers. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
49. I ask questions in English. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

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# Identity Negotiation in Relation to Context of Communication

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**Abstract**—This paper explores how tour guides negotiate their identities in a multiple context of communication. The context is characterised as professional, commercialized and Chinese. The discussion is based on an investigation into the communication between Chinese tour guides and their international tourists. Findings indicate that to communicate effectively and appropriately in these contexts, tour guides have to actively construct meaning through a negotiated balance of content, identity and relationship.

**Index Terms**—identity, context of communication, tour guides, intercultural communication

## I. INTRODUCTION

In intercultural communication, perceptions and strategies of communication, to some degree, are determined by the context of communication. In terms of context, there are two perspectives: a specific context of situation and a larger context of culture. The latter includes tribal economics, social organization, kinship patterns, fertility rites, seasonal rhythms, concepts of time and space. It is a more abstract, and not easy to change (Kramsch, 2008, p. 26).

With the development of globalization, communication between people from different cultures is increasing every day. People travel cross-culturally for different purposes: education, tourism, business, leisure and so on. Among them, tourism has attracted quite a large number of people. As an important component in tourism industry, tour guides' service quality means quite a lot to the experience of the tourists.

In China, foreign language speaking tour guides are also called international tour guides. They are employed by travel agencies which are authorised by China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) for receiving foreign tourists. International tour guides provide service to people from a country other than China. Their service is different from the service to domestic tourists because they will encounter both language and cultural barriers (Cai & Woods, 1993). When international tourists visit China, they bring with them different cultural baggage filled with cultural norms, behaviours, value systems, and communication styles. These differences may lead to misunderstanding, miscommunication or even conflicts. But what strategies do tour guides employ to overcome these difficulties, to solve problems and to sooth conflicts? In front of conflicts, how do tour guides negotiate their identities? To answer these questions, a research was conducted in Yunnan Province of China.

Ting-Toomey's mindful intercultural communication model was chosen as the starting point to build a possible theoretical framework. In addition, this study take into account the perspective of tourism as the context for understanding the essence of tour guides' communication and the strategies they employ in their interaction with international tourists, and how they negotiate their identities in the specialized context.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Ting-Toomey's (1999, p.28) identity negotiation perspective, identity means "the reflective self-conception or self-image that we each derive from our cultural, ethnic, and gender socialisation processes. It is acquired via our interaction with others in particular situations". According to this definition, identity is the reflective view of a person's self, and this reflection is relevant to his or her culture. Identity meaning is relevant to questions such as "Who am I and who are you?"

Ting-Toomey differentiates two groups of identities: primary and situational identity. The primary identities include cultural identity, ethnic identity, gender identity and personal identity. Situational identity includes role identity, relational identity, facework identity and symbolic interaction identity. The four situational identities change from situation to situation. She argues that these two groups of identities have interactive relations, and they play a critical role in the mindful intercultural communication process. There is a mutual influence between the two groups, and there is also an interactive and relevant relationship between these eight identities. For example, a threat to ones' cultural identity can be perceived as a threat to the personal self-esteem level (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.30). Through competent or incompetent communication skills, situational identities can influence the way people view themselves, either negatively or positively. Individuals have these identities either consciously or subconsciously. What identity or identities they make salient depends on the particular situation they are in. When this person is in his or her own culture,

usually his or her cultural identity is not as important as when he or she is interacting with an out-group person (Gudykunst, 1994).

Ting-Toomey argues that individuals compare their salient identity groups with others for they need to keep positive social identities. There are three bases for their comparison: lateral comparison (essentially the same level), downward level comparison (less powerful groups), and upward comparison (more powerful groups). Individuals try to maintain distance from their in-group by de-emphasising the importance of their social identities and maximising the importance of their personal identities. This happens when there is negative comparison. On the other hand, they enhance their personal identities by allying themselves with members of high-status groups (p151). Or when group boundaries are permeable, they switch group membership. From the social identity theory perspective, people have in-group favouritism and out-group differentiation (p147). There are some conditions under which people's cultural or ethnic identities unconsciously become salient, for example, when they are facing emotional vulnerability, and when their membership identity is negatively or positively stigmatised.

Personal identity includes any unique attributes that people associate with their individual self in comparison to those of others. Individuals develop distinctive personal identities due to their unique life histories, experiences, and personal traits, and via their observations of role models around them and their own drives and reinventions. Ting-Toomey emphasises in her theory that culture plays an influential role in personal identity development. This is because the perception of a "unique self" (p35) is developed via their observation of role models around them. So the context an individual is in plays an important role in developing this perception. Personal identity has two facets: actual personal identity and desired personal identity. Any communicator has a desired identity which is the attribute he or she prefers. To reach this desired identity, communicators need the feeling of being understood, respected and supported. The desired identity is more important in the identity negotiation approach than the actual identity is.

Role and role identity are fundamental elements in understanding tour guides' strategies in intercultural communication. According to Ting-Toomey (1999, p36), role is "a set of expected behaviours and the values associated with them that a culture or ethnic group defines as proper or acceptable". It is more situation-bound because it is valued and judged by people with varied expectations. These judgments and expectations are influenced by personal, situational and cultural variables. This applies to tour guides who might have different perceptions on their role identity, as well as the expected role identities of other people.

Everybody in a society has within himself or herself the varied identities. What distinguishes one person from another is what identity or identities they emphasise or make salient at a certain time. The varied and complicated roles of international tour guides also mean they have different identities, or they have to make some identities salient in a specific situation. They have professional identities, national/ethnic identity, cultural identity, and personal identity. Their cultural identities might be more prominent in this situation than when they are interacting with their in-group peers (Gudykunst, 1994). The question is what identity do they present at a certain time? Who do they represent, themselves, the company or the country?

Culture is an important element in developing identities, especially personal identities. Tour guides' pre-existing perception and images of themselves come not only from schooling but also from word of mouth, from mass media, from their interaction with other people, and from other social relations. Their perception of professional identities will be changed after they enter the profession through their experience, their observation, and communication. How do tour guides balance or negotiate these identities, especially when there are conflicts among them? If tour guides are not able to maintain a balanced identity, their communication with their international tourists is unlikely to be considered appropriate or effective, that is, successful, by tourists.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

To find out how Chinese tour guides negotiate or balance their identities, and how they have effective or appropriate communication with their international tourists, an investigation was carried out in Yunnan Province of China. Yunnan is located in the southwest of China. It has become one of the most attractive tourist destinations due to its picturesque landscape and colorful ethnic culture. In 1998, Yunnan received 760,000 overseas tourists, and 10 years later, in 2007, the number of international tourists grew to 4.58 million. And now the provincial government is making efforts to develop its unique tourism resources under the globalization environment.

The research adopted a qualitative research methodology from a constructivist perspective. This research started from an assumption that tour guides' individual agency is a key factor contributing to different perceptions of the goals and strategies of intercultural communication. It employed Ting-Toomey's model of mindful intercultural communication through the construction of meaning by understanding and interpretation. To achieve this goal demands communicative skills that help enhance mutual understanding, repair relationships and create "shared meanings". Culture and context are also crucial, but the fundamental process is generated through mindful agency.

Nineteen professional English-speaking tour guides and 5 tourism educators and administrators in Yunnan were interviewed. The guides' ages range from 22 to 45 years, and their years of being professional tour guides ranging from 2 to 20 years.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews (in either Mandarin or local dialect) were conducted with these 24 participants. They discussed a variety of topics relating to communication strategies with international tourists. Topics include

perception of identities in intercultural communication, and perceptions of effective communication, and strategies used when communicating with international tourists.

Participant observation was used as an important supplementary tool to overcome reliance on participants' self reports. Guides were observed interacting with international tourists: styles of communication, content of interactions, supervision of tourists, and the influences of contexts on interpretation and relationships. Six groups of 131 tourists (from America, Australia, Sweden, Poland, Britain and Holland) were observed during 13 days of guided tours within Yunnan.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### A. Major Findings

Findings from the data lead to an argument that, in this intercultural context, ethnic identity is a key component for negotiating effective and appropriate communication. As was previously identified, there are three main aspects of identity, namely professional identity, ethnic identity and personal identity. Not all of these identities are stressed equally by the tour guides interviewed. Rather, ethnic identity is more strongly emphasised and it appears to be a dominating element among the three when communicating with international tourists.

Tour guides agree on the importance of keeping a professional identity. The essential requirements for this are to provide service, to maintain an appropriate relationship and to avoid conflicts with tourists. They do not agree on what aspect is most important in order to be a good professional tour guide. Essentially there is again agreement on the qualities of good tour guides, which include good language competence, knowledge of both tourist and local culture, and attitudes towards the profession. But individuals emphasise different things. Some focus on communicative competence and keeping good relationships with tourists; some focus on delivering a good and comprehensive interpretation of local culture; some emphasise that tour guides have to know how to "zuo ren" (act as a human being); and some emphasise "ren qing wei" (human feeling).

The strongest differences relate to "keeping relationships" and having "ren qing wei". There are different strategies for keeping relationships. The younger tour guides seem to be good at using a variety of "superficial" strategies such as singing, dancing, and telling jokes to make tourists happy. By contrast, the older tour guides emphasise drawing attention to similarities and impressing tourists by their interpretation and their broad knowledge. Both groups are able to make tourists happy.

The concepts of professional identity involving "zuo ren" (acting as a human being), and "ren qing wei" (human feeling) in communication are very Chinese. They are emphasised in Chinese communication theory and practice (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). It is not surprising that some tour guides raised these as essential qualities of professional tour guides. The younger tour guides were more sentimental and showed their "human feeling" in a lot of ways. They stressed friendly relationships with tourists, and some easily developed "human feeling" with tourists. So they cried at tourists' departure, and were more eager to write back to tourists. Compared with them, the older tour guides seemed to be more sensible. They emphasised that quality service involves good interpretation with abundant deep knowledge, good attitudes to communication and respect for cultural differences.

When talking about professional identities and roles, ethnicity was never far from the surface. This could be in relation to the importance of their metaphorical roles ("windows" of China or Yunnan), or in relation to the importance of providing good information, handling sensitive questions, dispelling prejudices, stereotypes and misinformation, defending national or local honour and selling local products to foreign tourists at a healthy profit. Theorists of intercultural communication, such as Gudykunst & Kim (1997, p.108) point out that social identity rather than personal identity usually has a greater influence when communicating with strangers. Their definition of social identity includes cultural identity, ethnic identity, gender identity, role identity and age. Since Chinese culture is in many ways a collectivist culture, people focus on interdependent identities such as group, professional and ethnic identities, rather than on the more western notion of independent identities such as personal identity (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Several inferences could be drawn from conversations with the guides, on the idea of an interdependent identity among tour guides. Data shows that only two interviewees directly mentioned the term "identity" and they used the English term instead of Chinese. One reason for this is that "identity", when translated into Chinese, can have several meanings such as "shen fen" (identity) and "ren tong" (identification) and "shu xing" (distinguished characteristics). In western literature, the more independent identities are often argued in relation to "Who am I?" While in a collective society like China, there is a strong emphasis on "interdependent identity". That is, "Who are you?" or "Who am I?" often involve "Who you are/who am I in relation to others?" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.78-79). How to behave oneself is not referring to your own will, but in relation to how to behave in order to satisfy others. This is partially what the concept of "zuo ren" implies (Yi, 2000). That is, one has to behave appropriately in relations to others.

It is noteworthy that the issue of ethnic identity rather than personal identity is the focus for the older generation of tour guides' criticism of the younger ones. The young are un-Chinese for being money-driven, for having no culturally appropriate internal ethical compass, and because some of them would give up their ethnic identity in order to please tourists and to get money. They give in at the cost of humiliation and the loss of ethnic face. They (allegedly) cheat and bend the truth in communication with tourists. Naturally the younger guides do not agree with these assessments. Their

own rationales for their strategies are expressed in different terms. They suppress their own wills, and endure humiliation or loss of self-esteem in order to keep a relationship with tourists—"suppress yourself", "Don't get yourself in trouble", and "Not worthwhile to do so" are their ways to avoid conflicts and to maintain relationships.

There is a real generational difference here. The older guides think it is inappropriate to claim the purpose of the younger guides is to maintain their professional identity. While this action is right in some way, in the Chinese context, to be "patriotic" and "to have a standpoint" is also advocated as part of professional requirements. Compared with the younger ones, the older tour guides are more able to cope with this situation. They do so not only through their skills, but also through a perception that they should do so; because they believe they should they strive to find an appropriate way to do so. Sometimes they convince tourists by facts, and sometimes they carry on the communication in accordance with a strongly Chinese cultural framework that both upholds and cuts across the service provider basis of their profession.

There are several problems involved in making strong inferences about the relative salience of ethnic and personal identities from the guides' criticisms of their fellow professionals or of their Chinese tourist clients. There is the temptation to over-generalise about the intergenerational basis and to exaggerate the effects of rapid change on the older guides' perceptions. The older guides are possibly merely trying to paint themselves in the best colours: they are Chinese, but do not share the negative traits of fellow Chinese. The discussions with the guides indicate that shared culture and language are not absolutely necessary for successful communication, and that tour guides feel that lack of respect for their professional expertise and identity have created problems for good relational communication with their fellow Chinese. This is a reminder of the complex inter-relationships between ethnic, personal and professional identities.

The interviewees' responses show that perception of identity is inter-related with expectations. These expectations include the desire for being accepted in a certain way as well. In addition identity is related to hopes as well as actual self-realisation. Tour guides are seeking appreciation, understanding and respect in their communication with tourists. It is not to be denied that financial benefit is one thing tour guides care about. This is a real aspect of the profession. What should be emphasised is that the negotiation of identity and its related strategies is strongly concerned with one's value system. The feeling of achievement in return affects tour guides' attitudes towards the profession and their feeling of power, which then affect their strategies in communication.

#### *B. A Special Context for Communication*

The tour guides carry on their intercultural communication in a special context characterised as professional, commercialized and Chinese. In this context, values and role requirements affect perceptions and behaviours. Tour guides' perceptions and strategies in intercultural communication are relevant to both these contexts of tourism and culture in modern China.

##### *1. A professional context*

The guides have all identified themselves as members of a profession, with its special obligations and constraints on communication. In order to keep their professional identities, guides try to maintain a polite and appropriate customer-service relationship. For professional reasons, most tour guides are prepared to accept the differences and the "cultural baggage" international tourists bring with them. This is perhaps another reason why these English speaking tour guides do not recognise cultural differences as the biggest difficulty in achieving effective and appropriate communication and why it is sometimes more difficult to communicate effectively and appropriately with their own people.

Since there are competing needs and demands on them, guides are faced with choices. Are they oriented to communication in order to get more financial and self-promotional benefit from the communication? Or are they trying to have good communication for the purpose of finishing their task, then be rewarded according to what they have done?

The guides know it is crucial to master a broad range of technical competencies in communication. However, when they analyse what they do, they are describing a style of communication that is extremely subtle and complicated. They essentially have to become experts in a continuously reconstructed and transactional panoply of rapid verbal and non-verbal communication to establish appropriate identities and relationships with many people at once. They are not just transmitting technical knowledge related to the points of interest in the itinerary.

The professional requirements and rituals to some extent restrain how tour guides play their roles. Tour guiding, like other service providing professions, has a strong communicative function (Cohen, 1985; Wu, 1999), but this communication demands knowledge of cultural differences, both general and specific. The effectiveness of this intercultural communication to a large extent contributes to the success or failure of trips. This also gives tour guides the chance to exercise their power in the communication. With these powers comes an ethical dilemma. Should they take advantage of their position and subvert their professional goals by using subterfuges and fabrication to achieve their commercial goals? As was shown in the data, some of the guides allegedly do so, using their knowledge for additional financial rewards. For example, based on their knowledge of cultural differences, they make judgments on what international tourists would be interested in and what products to promote, and which shop to take them to for bigger financial rewards. Then at a certain time, they do market promotion.

On the other side of the ethical ledger, it could be argued that "guiding shopping" is one function that tour guides should perform. Usually tourists like to buy some local products as souvenirs or gifts when they visit a new place, although the purpose of shopping is different from culture to culture (Park, 2000).

However, what makes the ethical difference between the guides is how much tour guides emphasise this function, and how much they value this function and what strategies they use to perform this function. While to some extent improving the financial return is part of the tour-guiding profession, the bigger commercialised context can make some tour guides exaggerate this function and make “unprofessional” choices when there are conflicts between the professional and commercialisation. And a different balance of these two can change the essence of communication between tour guides and tourists. If guides’ expectations are strongly money-oriented, they will employ different skills in their communication to enable them to reach the financial goal, sometimes in face of criticism from clients and even (as has been alleged) at the cost of ethnic identity.

## 2. A commercialised context

The importance of commercialisation as a contextual influence has been made evident by the different perceptions and strategies of the three generations of tour guides. These differences to some extent reflect broad social changes, which extend to changes in tourism policy and practice.

Between the 1950s and 1980s, when tourism was just established in China, tourism was one government strategy to strengthen friendship with other countries. Then tour guides were government and non-government diplomats. Tourism during that time was not an industry. After the implementation of the Open Door Policy and Deng Xiaoping’s advocacy to hasten reform in China, the government began to shift the orientation of tourism towards building an industry (He, 2000).

From 1978, international tourist guides were strictly chosen for political purposes: they were government cadres, they worked for the government, got strictly determined wages, and their behaviours were also modelled on governmental requirements. The values they developed in the environment they were brought up in strictly restrained their professional behaviour and personal conduct.

However, with the demands of social development, more travel services and tour companies were established, and more and more people were involved in the industry. Privatisation was one prominent reform, and the systems for management of tour guides were also reformed. In 1987, qualification examinations for tour guides were conducted. With the market demands, more people become tour guides and part-time and freelance tour guides emerged, giving more freedom for markets to regulate the supply and demand. Some tour guides no longer had monthly wages. Instead their income was based on how much work they did. Some today earn only 300 to 500 RMB yuan in monthly wages as the basic retainer. To survive, they also rely on commissions and kickbacks. On this, a senior guide showed some sympathy to them and called them “sparrows who fly anywhere that has millet”.

So a major problem in the industry is regulating the extent to which these tour guides commercialise their communication with tourists. At the beginning, taking commissions and kickbacks was strictly prohibited by the national tourism regulations, but the administrators found it hard to control. Then they made regulations to stop “cheating” and too much shopping in the itinerary. In particular, different key travel agencies try to prevent the unethical practices of some guides who take tourists to shops which offer overpriced, poor quality or fake goods. However, it is hard to control. When advertising was done by word of mouth for tour guiding as a money-producing profession, more people wanted to join and to earn money.

The changing commercial context in turn creates changes in views about acceptable professional behaviour. With the number of both inbound and outbound tourists increasing, some behaviour, such as taking commissions, is gradually being accepted by tourists. The issue is how tour guides make the advertisements and control the groups and how they try to earn money from their communication. When working with international and domestic tourists, who are different in offering support and indicating politeness, tour guides perceive them differently, and the tourists’ attitudes are different.

## 3. A Chinese context

The Chinese context is the third characteristic of the special nature of communication between the tour guides in my study and international tourists. The term “Chinese context” here refers to the location as well as the social and cultural milieu. The context to be described here is that sense of what is perceived as appropriate “Chinese” behaviour by the guides.

As many theorists have pointed out, for example, Gudykunst and Kim (1997), Chen & Starosta, (1998), “national” level culture exerts a strong influence on the communication of what is desirable and what is expected. So even when interpreting tour guides’ communication as a mix of professionalism and commercialisation, it is still very important to look at the context which tour guides inhabit, and the context in which they were socialised.

One of the strongest illustrations is that, when resolving conflicts, the tour guides adopt “avoiding” or “compromising” strategies. In Chinese culture, harmony is highly advocated. Under this value, they avoid saying “No”, trying to be polite, to be respectful to others and avoid being aggressive (Chen & Starosta, 1998; Yi, 2000). This propensity to conflict-avoidance goes beyond the professional ethos of customer service, and is limited only by strongly felt insults to personal-cum-national identity.

Chinese culture also strongly determines the roles that tour guides have to play, some of which would not usually be found in other tour-guiding contexts in other cultures. The propagandist role, although not now so prominently emphasised in the present tourism industry, is still reflected in the requirements to be patriotic and maintaining the four cardinal principles (keeping to the socialist road, up-holding the people’s democratic dictatorship, up-holding Marxism-

Leninism and Mao Zedong's thoughts, and upholding the leadership of Communist Party of China). They are, officially at least, the basic qualities required for tour guides. To abide in public by these principles, tour guides sometimes have to suppress their personal views and echo government positions on major internal and external policies. This is one reason why some questions which are common to tourists from other countries are regarded as sensitive. Some tour guides, especially the novice, dismiss the sensitive questions perfunctorily, shift to other topics, or just say "sorry". Their communication could not be regarded as effective from tourists' perspective. However, from tour guides' perspective, that is an appropriate strategy because to stop the conversation is necessary to keep intact professional and ethnic identities while playing their professional roles well.

A Chinese context unavoidably requires maintaining the traditional values such as maintaining face, having "ren qing wei" (human feelings), showing "guan xin" (concern) and being careful of "zuo ren" (acting as a human being).

"Zuo ren" is a very important concept in Chinese society. If one knows how to "zuo ren", he or she should always show concerns to others, respect others, and consider others at all times. Every Chinese should learn how to "zuo ren" and to prove that "I am a human being" through reaction to others. This is because "self" is embedded in certain relationships with others (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Yi, 2000). Therefore in Chinese culture, there is no abstract "identity" but only concrete roles. This is quite different from the western cultures in which one is first of all an "individual". So the concept "zuo ren" stresses the relational meaning with others. In a collectivist culture like Chinese, people always stress, both consciously and subconsciously, the reciprocal relationship with other people. Through these relationships, they feel their goals are achieved, and their expectations are met.

In China people often say "zuo ren nan" (It's difficult to act as a human being). Yi (2000) gives a description of the difficulties in acting as a human being in a Chinese context. As a human being, you cannot control everything yourself. The responsibility is yours, but the rights belong to others. He compares "zuo ren" to dining out in a restaurant. You pay the bill for others and you have to order dishes for others. You are not sure whether "others" will be satisfied or not, and you are not sure whether you are doing the appropriate thing for others. This is the same as in communication. You are always in relation to others, so you have to be careful in communication to meet others' needs appropriately.

Chinese pay attention to relationships and concerns about what other people say about "myself". This partially explains why tour guides are cautious of domestic tourists and also why they care greatly about the relationship with coach drivers. They appreciate the significance of apparently small things such as tourists' offering tour guides bottles of water in hot days, inviting tour guides to sit down for a rest after walking and standing for a long time, and so on. In addition, tourists from southeastern Asian countries tip tour guides well. Tour guides perceive these as signs of respect and appreciation because these are the practices in Chinese culture for appropriate relationships. That is, if you like somebody, you need to show it in one way or another. A good term to describe this is "bao" (reciprocating). If tourists do not like their tour guides, they are not supposed to "pay back" in one way or another. In addition, tour guides feel that their good work has to be confirmed by tourists in one way or another.

If the responses are perceived to be "unjustly" negative, guides usually feel that their "self" has been denied. International tourists are more supportive and polite. So guides give positive responses. In contrast, domestic tourists' negative responses discourage tour guides because these negative opinions deny tour guides' "self".

As an observer of several domestic tour parties, I felt that both guides and tourists were hoping for some shared respect in the interaction, but were unable to reach it. The influence of Chinese culture applies to both tour guides and tourists. As the guides themselves pointed out, domestic tourists' sceptical attitudes towards tour guides lead them to be suspicious about every action of tour guides as potentially deceiving and exploiting them. There is not enough trust between the two, thus mutual disrespect and sometimes disappointment.

In China, a teacher-centred style of teaching has long been dominant. Students' perception of teachers is that teachers are authorities and sources of knowledge who usually give them answers of Yes and No. At least this was the situation when most of the interviewees received their education. A reasonable generalisation can be suggested that many Chinese people prefer guided tours in which tour guides give explanations and they listen passively. They do not usually prepare or ask questions. In contrast, people from western countries regard learning as a process to arrive at the truth. They are more challenging and critical of what they are learning. In the process of travelling, they are not ready to accept everything tour guides say as truth and are more likely to ask questions. Paradoxically, Chinese guides who are bilingual and culturally aware are able to accept independent, critical inquiry when they understand its cultural roots and perceive its constructive connotations, even though it contradicts a central Chinese tenet of proper teaching and learning. This situational liberation from Chinese transmission-style teaching possibly accentuates the guides' view of domestic tourists as poor students and to interpret their traditionally sanctioned passivity as evidence of uninterest in learning and disrespect for the teacher.

## V. CONCLUSION

Findings indicate that tour guides' intercultural communications are conducted in a multiple context characterized as professional, Chinese and commercialised. The contextual influences on their communication are in relation to their identities and strategies. They feel that to reach the goal of effective and appropriate communication with international tourists, they have to constantly negotiate their own identity, their relationship with tourists and some uncertain and changing professional and national contexts for tour guiding. In this context, values and role requirements affect



perceptions and behaviours. Their perceptions and strategies in intercultural communication are relevant to both these contexts of tourism and culture in modern China. Among these, the Chinese context influences tour guides' perceptions, behaviours, and strategies in quite complex and seemingly confusing ways. They actively construct their communication with perceptions from the cultural context in which they were brought up that subconsciously influence their communication through what is traditionally advocated and valued.

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# Pitfalls Encountered by Bilingual Arab Learners in Translating the Arabic Discourse Marker '*thumma*' into English

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**Abstract**—Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth, MSA) is characterized as syndetic and formulaic language. The current study aimed at investigating the problems that Arab learners of English and translators encounter in translating sentences holding the discourse marker (henceforth, DM) *thumma* into English. This may be especially true if these languages are genetically unrelated, as is the case with Arabic and English. Five functions [*sequence with span of time, sequence with no span of time, resumption, adversative and consequence*] were identified through surveying various kinds of MSA texts. A translation task of 40 Arabic sentences holding the discourse marker *thumma* was performed by a random sample of 55 senior students with similar linguistic, sociocultural and educational backgrounds studying at Al-Balqa' Applied University-Jordan. Findings revealed that the improper translation of functions of the Arabic DM *thumma* is still prominent among Arab learners of English even at advanced stages of their learning. The pitfalls were ranked hierarchically in terms of difficulty. Findings of the study were discussed, conclusions had been drawn, implications and future directions were provided at the end.

**Index Terms**—textual functions, bilingual learners, intercultural communication, contrastive linguistics translation, Arabic DM '*thumma*', coordination, EFL learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

Arab grammarians usually refer to the connectives – according to their different significance – as *adawaat-u l-rabṭ* or *ḥuruuf al-9aṭf* i.e. connective particles. Sometimes they are treated under the headings of *9aṭf nasaq* 'conjunction of sequence' and *9aṭf bayaan* 'explicative apposition'. For most of the Arab grammarians, connectives are treated as linking devices, and their function is mainly to coordinate units such as words, phrases, clauses, sentences, etc. In other words, there is a consensus among Arab grammarians that *ḥuruuf al-9aṭf* 'conjunction particles', 'discourse connectives' or 'discourse markers' (henceforth, DMs) are common cohesive devices, or *adawaat-u l-rabṭ* 'connectives' that connect one part of discourse with another- are a pervasive feature of MSA syntax (see Al-Hmouz, M.A.2001,p.364). However, in this study, the acronym DMs is used in lieu of connectives or conjunctions. Arabic sentences and clauses within a text are connected and interconnected by means of words or phrases (such as *thumma*, 'then') that subordinate, coordinate, and otherwise link them semantically and syntactically (Karin, C.R.2005,p.407). Despite the fact that DMs play an important role in information processing in both modes of communication: speech and writing, analysis of DMs in English has tended to focus on spoken conversation, whereas analysis of DMs in Arabic (Johnstone 1990, Al-Batal 1990, Kammensjo1993) has focused particularly on the structure of written discourse, because Arabic writing has always been characterized as syndetic, that is, as using conjunctions to link discourse elements; and it has also been described as formulaic, that is, relying on 'fixed sets of words' (Johnstone 1990, p.218) to make semantic and syntactic links. This linguistic phenomenon, i.e. the frequent use of DMs, results in a high degree of textual cohesion in Arabic writing that contrasts significantly with the terser style of written English. Thereby, *ḥuruuf al-9aṭf* (such as *wa*, *fa*, *thumma*) play a pivotal role in the realm of Arabic usage and they are looked upon as an indispensable devices for connecting and interconnecting parts of the Arabic discourse. In other words, they are a set of clues which create cohesiveness, coherence and meaning in discourse, when expressing our feelings, and ideas to others during the act of communication. Al-Batal (1990) rightly states: 'MSA seems to have a connecting constraint that requires the writer to signal continuously to the reader, through the use of connectives, the type of link that exists between different parts of the text. This gives the connectives special importance as text-building elements and renders them essential for the reader's processing of text' (ibid: 256). T'sou et al. (2003) observe that 'discourse connectives constitute a major linguistic device available for a writer to explicitly indicate the structure of a discourse'. Hence, this study has chosen

30 written sentences, holding the Arabic DM *thumma*, extracted from various MSA texts to be translated into English by bilingual Arab senior learners. However, translating these connectives is not a simple or easy task; as a matter of fact, it has been described (Hamdan & Fareh, 1999, p. 595) as one of the most problematic tasks that bilingual learners and translators face when endeavoring a professional performance of a text. The faulty substitution, addition or omission of a DM during a translation process of texts may lead to the decline in understanding the intended message. Crewe (1990) states that the overuse of DMs will lead to a potential communicative breakdown (ibid: P. 317).

#### A. *The Problem*

From our earlier experience as EFL learners, and later, as teachers, seems to suggest that DMs are perhaps one of the most important components of any language course. It has been observed that Arab students of English find it difficult to translate and construct an organised and coherent text in English. Also, it has been observed that little progress is made in the efficiency of their translation. The number of students who fail translation courses covering DMs every year in comparison with other English language subjects has revealed this, which means that something has to be done to improve it and lessen the number of repeaters.

Hence, it is a *sine qua non* in this situation to investigate the difficulties that may account for translating Arabic sentences holding the DM *thumma* by Arab university students majoring English. In other words, what concerns this study is the focus on the Arabic DM *thumma*, its impact on the process of translation performed by Arab university students majoring English, in the sense that DMs facilitate grasping the intended meaning conveyed in the discourse; and vice versa is true, that is, the improper translation of a connective into a target language is likely to lead to drastic changes in meaning or to unintended meanings, in other words, DMs can explicitly indicate the function that each sentence has in a text, and they contribute to utterance interpretation effectively. It is with this research problem and its possible causes in mind; the investigators pave the way and present the research objectives in the coming section.

#### B. *Objectives of the Study*

The main purpose of this study is to identify major difficulties that Arab EFL university students and translators might face through translating sentences holding Arabic DM *thumma* into English. It also aims at clarifying how this Arabic connective is interpreted and rendered into English. The implications to translating from the source language into the target language will also be highlighted. To be more specific, the study seeks answers to these questions:

- 1-What difficulties may translators encounter in translating Arabic texts holding the DM *thumma* into English?
- 2-How do the functions of *thumma* rank order in terms of difficulty?
- 3- What is the nearest English counterpart of each function of Arabic *thumma*?
- 4-What implications for teaching translation from Arabic into English does this study have?

#### C. *The Rationale of the Study*

The rationale and need of this study emerges from two-fold justification. The first one could be attributed to the fact that, within the past twenty years or so there has been an upsurge interest in studying the theoretical status of DMs, focusing on what they are, what they mean and what uses they manifest, in spoken and written discourse, but for some reasons few studies have been conducted cross-linguistically. 'The contrastive method proves to be a useful heuristic tool capable of throwing valuable light on the characteristic features of the languages contrasted' (Firbas, 1992, P.13). Language comparison is of great interest in a theoretical as well as an applied perspective. It reveals what is general and what is language specific and is therefore important both for the understanding of language in general and for the study of the individual languages compared, (Johansson and Hofland, 1994, P. 25).

The second one, is that, most of old classical Arab grammarians were mainly interested in *Al-i9raab*, 'parsing' i.e. they examine each word and clause in order to work out what grammatical type each one is, in their descriptions of the DMs. That is, the textual function fulfilled by the DMs in discourse has been neglected or overlooked; while the present study has been found to focus on the functions of Arabic DM *thumma* '(and)then' that may constitute difficulties to Arab learners when translate them into English. To the researchers' knowledge no studies have been conducted on 'thumma' cross-linguistically yet. However, recently, the importance and need to investigate the textual function, i.e. the role of connectives in discourse has been noted and has attracted the attention of many discourse analysts (e.g. de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981; Halliday and Hassan, 1976; McCarthy, 1991; Schiffrin, 1987; Wright, 1974; Cantarino, 1975; Al-Jubouri, 1987; Williams, 1989; Holes 1995; Stubbs, 1983; Al Batal, 1990, etc.). For example, Stubbs (1983) stated that 'another set of items which have not received any natural treatment within grammar are items known variously conjunctions, connectives or connectors ...' (ibid, P.72). In his book, *The Syntax of Modern Arabic Prose* published in (1975), Cantarino puts forward a full account and detailed analysis and description of the syntactic and semantic features of the cohesive category 'connectives in Arabic. He investigates the different functions a single connective may perform in different contexts.

To sum up, all languages make use of DMs or some such devices although the repertoire of devices and their various functions may vary from one language to another. The study will discuss how the Arabic DM *thumma* is interpreted and translated into English by Arab university senior students majoring English. Generally speaking, there is no one-to-one correspondence between two languages in the field of coordination particles: most of the time their correlates in the target language have not the same pragmatic meaning, constituting translation problems to Arab learners of English and

translators. This might be true if these languages are genetically not related, as is the case with Arabic and English. However, translation students also should know that in certain instances short function words such as *wa-* 'and', actually function in Arabic texts as punctuation marks would function in English texts. These connective words are therefore not always translatable because they sometimes perform strictly grammatical functions rather than adding semantic content. At the discourse or text level, the presence of appropriate connectives is an important feature of 'acceptability', according to Al-Batal, who notes that 'although 'no explicit or formal rules exist,' interconnection between sentences is essential to authentic Arabic texts' (1990, P.253). Having discussed the rationale and need for this study will bring us to our next point, which is why a translation task is employed for data elicitation procedure in this study.

#### D. Why a Translation Task?

The reason for the choice of the translation task, for eliciting the data of this study, is related to the fact that translation is one of those tasks that are most frequently used by the Arab students as EFL learners in their academic work at university. It is said that one of the most serious problems of contrastive linguistic studies is the problem of equivalence. How do we know what to compare? What is expressed in one language by, for example, *thumma* - 'then' could be expressed in other languages in quite different ways. Then we do not get very far by a comparison of connectives. Most linguists have either explicitly or implicitly made use of translation as a means of establishing cross-linguistic relationships. For instance, in his book on contrastive analysis James, C. (1980) reaches the conclusion that translation is the best basis of comparison: 'We conclude that translation equivalence, of this rather rigorously defined sort [including interpersonal and textual as well as ideational meaning] is the best available TC [tertium comparationis] for cross-linguistic analysis (ibid, P, 178). Also, in his paper on 'the translation paradigm' Levenston suggests that contrastive statements ... may be derived from either (a) a bilingual's use of himself as his own informant for both languages, or (b) close comparison of a specific text with its translation. (Levenston 1965, P. 225).

To conclude this section, when an EFL or a translator wants to understand the speaker's/writer's intended meaning, he should consider that an extra meaning is there, not because of the semantic aspects of the words themselves, but because the reader/hearer shares certain contextual knowledge with the writer/speaker of the text.

#### E. The Significance of the Study

It is believed that Arab university students and translators working into English as a foreign language can be evaluated by means of examining their ability to translate selected sentences holding the Arabic discourse marker *thumma*, 'then' 'and then', i.e. focusing on the functions of the Arabic DM *thumma* and on its English counterparts, can tell us a good deal about the students' cross-linguistic competence, and may provide important data which help in evaluating translation students and in syllabus design.

This study can also be considered significant, in that, it addresses one of the important academic issues confronting Arab students at different levels of English learning in the Arab world. In respect of this academic issue, the empirical research regarding students' performance of translating Arabic sentences containing Arabic DMs such as *thumma*, in their writing is not only scarce, but urgently needed due to the continuous faulty translation of connectives yielding a big number of mal-semantic sentences and distorted pragmatic production as referred to by several researchers (e.g. Saeed & Fareh, 2006; Hamdan & Fareh, 1999; Illayyan, 1990). Therefore, the primary significance of this study lies in taking a further step towards investigating and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the translating process, by providing concerned people with some new insights to facilitate the process of translating Arabic DMs, e.g. *thumma* into a target language.

#### F. Possible Causes of the Problem

The problems that EFL students and translators often encounter in the process of translating conjunctive particles from one language into another may be ascribed to several causes. The fact that DMs do not have exact equivalents cross-linguistically may contribute to these problems. That is to say that there is no one-to-one correspondence between two languages in the field of coordination particles: most of the time their correlates in the target language have not the same pragmatic meaning, constituting translation problems to translators and learners, especially if these languages are genetically unrelated, as is the case with Arabic and English. A DM may indicate more than one logical relationship and the same logical relation may be signalled by more than one conjunctive. For instance, the Arabic DM '*thumma*' as in (1) below signals sequential function without delay, i.e. succession and immediacy are meant. Consider: (1) شرب زيد ثم ارتوى = Šariba zaidun *thumma* ?irtawa=Zayd drank water then he quenched. That is to say, Zayd was thirsty and he drank water until he quenched. Also *thumma* 'indicates sequence with time span, i.e. succession and non-immediacy are meant. Consider: (2) زرع الفلاح بذور القمح ثم حصده = zara9?a ?alfallah-u bu ōura al-qamḥ-i *thumma* ḥaṣada-haa = The farmer sowed the wheat seeds; and then he reaped it. i.e. the farmer first sowed the seeds of wheat in winter and then (after span of time could be four, five or six months ) he reaped it. However, the same conjunction indicates *adversative* function. Consider:

(3) أعطيتك ألف دينار ثم تطمع أن أزيد! = 9taytuka ?lfa dinar *thumma* taṭma9u ?n ?zeed! = I gave you a thousand dinar; *but nonetheless*, you covet more!

The problem becomes more aggravated when a DM in a learner's native language is best translated into a grammatical device other than a connective in the target language (e.g. adverbial conjuncts such as: e.g. *causal*

*conditional*, e.g. then, otherwise; *emphatic*, e.g. moreover, furthermore; *proper adversative*, e.g. however, despite this; *contrastive*, e. g. in fact, however; *dismissal*, e.g. in any case, anyhow; *general causal*, e. g. therefore, consequently,...etc.), a non-lexical device such as punctuation marks, or even nothing (zero). As I mentioned hereinbefore, Arabic writing has great tendency to make use of DMs to link discourse elements, that is, syndetic linkage (particularly 'θumma, wa and fa as well as other DMs) whereas, in English, terseness and asyndetic linkage is commonly preferred. Sometimes in an idiomatic translation, a lot of these DMs are rendered into zero in English. Moreover, the functional polysemy that most DMs have leads to significant problems for learners and translators as well.

The faulty translation of a DM into a target language is likely to lead to drastic changes in meaning or to unintended meanings. Dickins et al. (2002, P. 87) assert that when an inappropriate DM is used, translation loss may occur on the prosodic level, for example, because the use of this DM in this particular context implies an informationally inappropriate intonation pattern. This involves that EFL learners and translators need to use DMs with utmost care and discrimination, taking into account the multiplicity of functions that DMs have in discourse. Several researchers (e.g. McCarthy, 1991; Hamdan and Fareh, 1999; Saeed & Fareh, 2006) assert that the accuracy of translated texts should not be superficially evaluated by examining the target language text without matching it with the source language text. For example, McCarthy (1991, P. 46-47) states that discourse analysts have sought to find out whether the categories and realizations of DMs are similar or different cross-linguistically. This is considered an invitation to discourse analysts to conduct contrastive studies that aim at determining the similarities and differences between the various discourse functions of DMs for the sake of displaying the difficulties that translators and foreign language learners encounter. In this respect, Fareh (1998,) compared and contrasted the discourse functions of English 'and' and its nearest Arabic equivalent 'wa'. The results of this study revealed that the two connectives have various functions that do not often match. This mismatch, although partial, may lead to translation problems. Illayyan (1990) conducted a study to find out the difficulties that translators face in translating English texts holding transitional words into Arabic. The results of his study showed three major problems. The first problem was the unnecessary addition of an Arabic DM leading to different meaning relationships. The second problem was substituting one or more Arabic DMs or transitional words for a certain English one, which yielded in changing the intended meaning relationships between the two conjoined discourse elements. The third problem was in ignoring the explicitly stated English connective.

Hamdan and Fareh (1999) conducted a study that aimed at investigating the problems that translators confront in translating the Arabic DM *wa* into English. They examined six functions of *wa*, namely, the resumptive, the additive, the alternative, the comitative, the adversative and the circumstantial. They, also suggested conducting further contrastive studies in the area of DMs, and Karin, (2005:416) provide a very brief discussion of the functions of Arabic DMs including *θumma*. Her discussion of the functions of *θumma* is far from being exhaustive. She hold that *θumma* has only one discorsal function, a sequential action coming later in time than the action in the preceding sentence or clause. In fact, *θumma* has more elaborate discorsal functions than the sequential action with span of time. This succinct review of related studies shed light on the scarcity of cross-linguistic studies on DMs and the need for more in-depth studies that investigate the difficulties that Arab learners of English and translators may encounter in translating from Arabic into English, especially in the area of DMs. The current study is an endeavour in this direction. Having given the problem of this study and its possible causes through a brief review of related studies, will take us to the next section which is the methodology of this study.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Subjects

A total of 55 senior students of 21-22 years old were selected randomly. They constitute about 31 % of total number (179) which is the population of 4<sup>th</sup> year-1<sup>st</sup> semester in the academic year 2009/2010, at Al-Balqa' Applied University-Princess Alia University College, Amman-Jordan. Like most of the Jordanian students, the subjects live in an exclusively Arabic-speaking community and had learned English as a foreign language at public schools prior to taking it up as their major field of study at the university. All subjects are homogeneous in terms of their linguistic, socio economic, cultural and educational background. Opportunity for naturalistic acquisition is almost all the same to all subjects. They also passed through an English placement test to measure their proficiency when they joined the department of English. The original number of the subjects was 57 students. The responses of two subjects were excluded because they did not completely translate the required translation task. When the experiment was conducted, the subjects had already studied several specialized courses of linguistics and literature including Writing I, Advanced writing, grammar, language skills, translation I & II, syntax I & II morphology, semantics, short story, drama, novel,...etc.

### B. Data Elicitation Procedure

The instrument employed in this study for collecting the data was a translation task particularly designed for the purpose of this study. The 55 participants were asked to translate sentences from Arabic into English. Although almost all of the given sentences seem decontextualized, they were extracted from longer texts including utterances from Arabic literary textbooks, articles from magazines and newspapers, etc., (see appendix D). It is undeniable that the

context is fundamental for comprehending the meaning of utterances and for identifying the intended functions of DMs in written discourse. However, the functions of Arabic DMs such as the *thumma*, are more often than not determined by considering the relationship holding between the two elements, sentences or clauses that a certain DM links. The task was a two-hour session, and since (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, P.27) their translation task was timed, students had no access to reference tools such as dictionaries and grammars during the test, but they were given the chance to ask questions about some words believed to be unfamiliar to them because the focus was on how they would translate the DM *thumma* from Arabic into English. When analyzing the data, the researchers focused only on the translation of the targeted DM, ignoring all other types of grammatical or lexical errors, as they are beyond the scope of the study. Each student, therefore, was assigned to translate the given 40 Arabic sentences within the allotted time of a 90-minute session (the allotted time of the translation task was decided upon their translation instructors' experience in similar exams and population). Each of the five targeted functions of *thumma* was represented in 8 tokens. Five well-known Arabic grammar references were examined in order to identify the discourse functions of *thumma* together with the frequency of each function, these are: *Al-nahw al-waafii* (1963); *Al-Jana Addani fii Huroof Al-Ma'anii* (1992); *Al-Kitaab*.2 vols (1966); *Muğni Al-Labiib ?an Kutubi- AL ?9aariib*(2002); *AL-mu9jam al-waafii fii adawaat al-nahw al-Arabi* (1993). The functions of the DM *thumma* in our data were found to be the only five, and they were selected on the basis of frequency and practicality. It would be a heavy burden on the subjects if each function was to be represented in more than eight tokens in the translation task, therefore, the study focuses on the five identified functions, and each of them represented in 8 tokens so totally will be forty sentences. We believe that it might be helpful, before embarking on the analysis, to provide a brief account of the five functions of *thumma* with illustrative examples.

### C. The Functions of 'thumma'

The Arabic DM *thumma* ثم ('then', 'and then', 'subsequently') is one of the most commonly used connective particles in Arabic. Generally speaking, the DM *thumma* is an adverb that indicates a sequential action, coming later in time than the action in the preceding sentence or clause. Syntactically, it works as coordinating conjunction that links between two elements (clauses, sentences, etc.) in order to make a compound element. It emphasizes the sequence existing between two structurally independent statements as an interval, thus, before 'thumma', a pause or an interval in the context to be understood. In other words, it links clauses/sentences by specifying how one clause /sentence is related to another in terms of time. *thumma* holds five functions as illustrated in the following.

#### 1. Sequential Function with Span of Time

The sequential *thumma* ثم introduces a clause subordinate to the main clause by indicating time relationship between the two clauses. Semantically, this DM indicates that the two events involved in the resulting compound sentence, occurred successively, with pause of time between the two events in the sequence, and in the order indicated in the sentence. Often, the interval of time between the two events in a sequence is unspecified, consider this example:

(4) تزوج علي ثم رزق بمولود =

Tazawwja ?ali-un *thumma* ruziqa bimawlud=Ali got married *and then* he got a child.

In this compound sentence, there is a logical sequence of the two events: 'getting married' and 'getting a child', the span of time between the two events is logically understood, but not specified, i.e. whether it lasted for seven, eight or nine months. That is, the length or the shortness of the span of time is determined according to the context and meaning the DM signals. But in some cases, the duration of time between the two events occurred in the sequence is specified. This is an illustrative example:

(5) أمضى زيد عشر سنوات في الغربة ثم عاد إلى وطنه

?amḍa Zayd-un 9ašru sanawaat-in fii al- ġurba *thumma* 9aada ?ilaa waṭanih.=Zayd had spent ten years abroad (and) then he returned to his home.

This sentence means that Zayd had stayed 10 years (outside his country) continuously, (that was the first event which took 10-year duration), after that he returned back to his country, (that is the second event). So, it is obvious that there is a delay of time between the two events. Hence, on the face of it, this *thumma* may translate as 'and' forming a sentence which is both grammatical and acceptable, though 'and' does not entail the implication of sequence, i.e. 'and' is unmarked for sequential temporality. So, when a semantic precision in a translation context involves a high priority, the DM *thumma*, which is the only conjunction entails sequence and non-immediacy, is likely to be better rendered as 'then', 'and then', subsequently and 'after that' (after long time, after a while or after few hours) rather than 'and' or 'next' According to Baker, (1992:193) what determines the function that a DM indicates in discourse is very often governed by the context in which the DM is used. In this particular instance, context plays a significant role, as the context is a logical sequence of two events with a ten-year span of time between them.

#### 2. Sequential with immediacy or with a short Span of Time

Syntactically, the sequential *thumma* in sentence (6) works as a coordinating conjunction that links between two elements (clauses, sentences, etc.) in order to make a compound element. Semantically, it indicates sequence (in order) with no interruption between the two involved events.i.e. immediate succession of the two actions that come before and after *thumma*. Consider:

(6) استيقظت من النوم ثم رتب فراشي

Istayqa ḍ-tu mina al-nawm *thumma* rattabtu firaashii =I woke up from sleeping (and) then I tidied my bed.

The *thumma* in sentence (6) signal a sequential and temporal relation. As a consequence of its temporal meaning, *thumma* implies that the action (waking up) of the preceding sentence has been completed, thus, immediately (without much delay = might be after, e.g. one, two or three minutes) introducing the new action (which is tidying the bed). *thumma* may translate as *wa* 'and' producing a grammatical and acceptable sentence, whereas, the precise function that *thumma* signals, i.e. the event in the second clause 'tidying the bed' is chronologically sequent to the event occurs in the first 'waking up from sleeping', with immediacy or without much delay, is no longer implied, simply because Arabic conjunction *wa* 'and' does not indicate any implication of temporal sequence of the events. This interpretation of the function of *wa* 'and' goes in line with the majority of Arab grammarians and jurists (e.g. Sībawayh, 1966; al-Juwaynī, 1996; Ibn Hisham, 2002, among others) who believe that the terms conjoined by *wa* 'and' enter into a participatory relationship without any implication of sequence. So, when a semantic precision is demanded as a high priority for a translation context the DM *thumma* 'then' is likely to be better translated as 'then' or 'and then' rather than 'and', simply because 'then' is an adverb that indicates a sequential action coming later in time than the action in the preceding sentence or clause.

### 3. Resumptive Function

'Resumption' = *Al-isti'naaf* in Arabic can be introduced by the Arabic DM *thumma*. It is very frequently used at the beginning of clauses, sentences and paragraphs but not the first. In such cases, the resumptive DM *thumma* comes after a clause/sentence that had finished and, introducing a clause/sentence in order to serve the sequential function with span of time (whether it is short or long), in addition to the presumptive function where it is used to indicate speech continuity (but not topic continuity), i.e. the speaker resumes his speech, but with a new topic, presenting new information and takes the reader/hearer into quite new territory of new thought. The clause/sentence introduced by *thumma* is related pragmatically in a way to the sentence mentioned before, and this pragmatic relation is being understood by both the speaker and the hearer/reader. This is an illustrative example:

(7) استرد زيد ماله. ثم عاد علي إلى البيت.

Istaradda Zayd-un Maalahu. *thumma* 9aada 9ali-un ilaa al-bayt-i. Zayd restored his money. Then 9ali-un (Ali) returned home.

In this sentence (7), *thumma* links two sentences which are irrelevant syntactically. Each utterance is an independent meaningful sentence. The speaker/writer informs the hearer/reader two messages; each one is different from the other in its basic meaning. In the first sentence, the speaker informs the hearer that Zayd got his money back. In the second sentence, which starts with '*thumma*', the speaker resumes his discourse by introducing a new topic, that is: 9ali-un returned home. Three factors make the two utterances, before and after *thumma*, are related pragmatically, that is, the two concerned utterances encoded by the same speaker, decoded by the same hearer and both utterances were said and heard in the same context. i.e. there is a pragmatic relationship between "Zayd getting his money back and 9ali-un returning home" is only understood by the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader. Of course, there is a presupposition that the two sentences are extracted from linguistic texts which are known and understood by both the speaker and hearer. Arabic tends to use extracted clauses/sentences instead of employing the whole texts for conveying such pragmatic meanings, and '*thumma*' is the tool which paves the way to indicate the speech continuity (but not topic continuity). The Arabic DMs *wa* 'and' and *fa* 'next' can be used to indicate *Al-isti'naaf* = 'Resumption', but the sequential and temporal relation (which it could be short or long span of time) indicated by *thumma* (Al-Hmouz, M.A. 2001:365) is no longer implied, because *wa*, which is unmarked for *sequentiality and temporality*, has the additive function, and *fa* which stresses the connected series, indicates an immediate succession of events without any delay or pause of time between the two events. Additionally, *thumma*, unlike *wa* 'and', and *fa* 'and', 'so' or 'next', implies the meaning of *mihaad* = (create the circumstances to enable something to happen). It creates new development, event or change of direction, i.e. new territory of new thought. Holes (1995:220-21) describes *thumma* as 'a superordinate staging marker for the discourse as a whole'. In other words, it makes a situation in which it is very possible or more likely to enable both: the speaker to resume speech with a new topic and the hearer to understand the pragmatic relation between the two utterances, and to decode the intended meaning. Hence, translating '*thumma*' to *and*, *so* or *next*, the pragmatic function *mihaad* of '*thumma*' is no longer implied.

### 4. Adversative Function

Adversative = *Al-istidrakīyah* in Arabic is usually expressed by the DM '*thumma*'. The adversative *thumma* is used to connect two utterances (clauses, sentences) in order to make a compound element, the second of which stands in adversative relation with the preceding one. This is an illustrative example:

استيقظ زيد مبكراً ثم تأخر في الوصول إلى عمله! (8)

Istayqaḍa Zaydun mobakkir-an *thumma* ta'axara fii al-wuṣul ?ilaa 9amalihi! = Zayd woke up early; however/but he arrived his work late!

In this example, *thumma* introduces the second clause which expresses an unexpected result, i.e. arriving his work late'. The most appropriate translations of adversative *thumma* in a translation context where semantic precision has a high priority are likely to be *but*, *however*, or the like. The use of other devices might change or distort the logical relation between the two clauses. We use the DMs such as *however*, *but*, or the like, in the foregoing example, when you are adding a comment which is surprising or which contrasts with what has just been said. The speaker's *adversative* attitude in the second clause expresses negative feeling implying some sort of astonishment mixed with shock, pain or

anger towards Zayd's being late. The two clauses of the context are linked by *thumma* sequentially, i.e. the clauses of the sequence are fixed, and the tone or the quality in the speaker's voice (which shows what he is feeling or thinking when producing his utterance) determines the degree of the astonishment implied by *thumma*, and also determines whether this *adversative* reflects the speaker's negative or positive feeling (shock, surprise, admiration, excitement, or anger, etc.). *thumma* may translate as 'and' producing a sentence that is both grammatical and acceptable, but the precise function that *thumma* serves, i.e. the fixed sequence of the two events and the time relationship between them, in addition to some sort of blame forwarded to Zayd, is no longer implied. In principle, however, either event might have been occurred before the other. Hence, in a translation context where semantic precision has a high priority, any translation that does not keep this logical relation held between the two parts of the sentence may be deemed faulty, though the fact that the outcome could be acceptable.

#### 5. Consequential Function

The logical relation that this DM indicates is that of result or consequence. In Arabic, *thumma al-sababiyah* = 'the consequential *thumma*', usually betokens a relationship between two clauses of a context such that the second clause describes a state or an action which occurs as a consequence of the first one. This is an illustrative example:

استيقظ علي مبكرا ثم وصل المدرسة نشيطا (9)

Istayqaḍa 9ali-un mobakkir-an *thumma* waṣala al-madrasa naṣiit-an=9ali woke up early; consequently, he actively arrived the school.

Sentence (9) means that 9ali actively arrived the school as a consequence of his waking up early. In other words, the second clause of this sentence, i.e. 9ali was energetic and full of life, is the result of waking up early. Hence, in a translation context where the semantic precision has a high priority, any translation that does not keep this logical relation existing between the two parts of the sentence deemed flawed, though the outcome might be acceptable. For example, when students translate *thumma* '(and) then' into *wa* 'and', the consequential function of *thumma* is no longer implied.

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The above mentioned five functions are the only functions of *thumma* in Arabic, and which were represented in the translation task. Each one of these functions was manifested in eight tokens which might sound to be a limitation of this study. However, each clause/sentence was excerpted from a larger text, which is not included in the appendix for the sake of time, room, economy and practicality. The full texts were not given to the subjects either, for the same reasons. The functions of '*thumma*' were identified and determined by the two researchers who are native speakers of Arabic. One of them is specialist in semantics and pragmatics of Arabic, and has long experience in teaching Arabic linguistics. The other researcher is specialist in English applied linguistics, and has long experience in teaching linguistics and translation courses. The researchers teach at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. When the researchers were in dispute over some cases, they consulted specialists in Arabic language and literature to confirm their decisions. With the help of two other colleagues whose expertise in linguistics & translation, the researchers produced renderings of the sentences in the translation task that were deemed acceptable by all involved. In determining the acceptability of a translation, semantic accuracy as a main criterion was adopted by researchers. The researchers are fully aware of the fact that, by and large, semantic accuracy is not the only consideration that should be taken into account in launching a verdict on the acceptability of a translation. Dickins et al. (2002, P. 228-230) throughout their book '*Thinking Arabic Translation...*', they highlight the notion of strategic prioritising in translation in which a creative translation strategy means 'prioritizing the cultural, formal, semantic, stylistic, and genre-related properties of the ST'. The number of functions under question in this study represents all functions of '*thumma*' in Arabic language. Each function represented in 8 tokens, so totally would be 40 sentences. As the translation task was given to 55 students, we would expect 2200 translated tokens. Table 1 shows the types of '*thumma*' and the number of tokens in the translation that represent each type. Table 2 shows the percentage and rank order of all possible correct responses for each function including the zero alternatives.

TABLE 1:  
TYPES OF '*THUMMA*' AND NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVE TOKENS IN THE TRANSLATION TASK

Functions of <i>thumma</i>	No. of tokens	Sentence No. in Translation Task
Sequence with span of time	8	1, 2, 11, 12, 21, 22, 31, 32
Sequence with no span of time	8	3, 4, 13, 14, 23, 24, 37, 38,
Resumption	8	5, 6, 15, 16, 25, 26, 33, 34
Adversative	8	7, 8, 17, 18, 27, 28, 39, 40
Consequence	8	9, 10, 19, 20, 29, 30, 35, 36
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	

Table 2 shows that the translation of Arabic '*thumma*' into English was rather difficult. The percentage of correctly translated tokens was 62%. This means that more than one third, i.e. 38% of the subjects translated the tokens incorrectly. It also shows that translating the resumptive '*thumma*' was the most difficult, as only 43 % of the responses were correct. The second most difficult function was when succession with non-immediacy were meant (i.e. sequence



with span of time), followed by 'exclamation', then the 'consequence' and finally when the 'succession with immediacy' were meant (i.e. sequence with no span of time).

TABLE 2:  
NUMBER, PERCENTAGE AND RANK ORDER OF CORRECT RESPONSES

Functions of 'θumma'	No. of Tokens	Expected Responses	No. of Correct Responses	% of Correct Responses	Rank of Difficulty
1- Sequence with span of time	8	440	221	50	2
2- Sequence with immediacy	8	440	337	77	5
3- Resumption	8	440	191	43	1
4- Adversative	8	440	290	65	3
5- Consequence	8	440	311	71	4
Total	40	2200	1313	62	

The following will be a discussion of the results with regard to difficulties encountered in translating each function, hierarchically in terms of difficulty. What we attempt in the following discussion is to explain aspects of meaning of the Arabic DM 'θumma' which cannot be found in the plain sense of words or structures, as explained by semantics. In other words, it is a systematic way of explaining language use in context.

#### A. Responses to the Resumptive 'θumma'

Results in table 2 show that resumptive 'θumma' was the most difficult to translate from the source language (Arabic) into a foreign language (English). The percentage of correct responses was only 43%. This means that 57% of the total number of tokens representing this function was erroneously translated by Arab EFL university students. The most frequent flawed translations of resumptive 'θumma' were *and*, *also*, *next*, *while*, and *comma*, whereas the possible translations included the use of *and then*, *subsequently*, *suddenly*, *unexpectedly*, or the like. Examining the erroneous translations, one might not fail to observe that the subjects seem to have not obviously identified the 'resumptive' function of *θumma* in the representative source language tokens. It is also clear that the great majority of the subjects translated the resumptive function of *θumma* as *simultaneity*, *concession* and *addition*, as can be seen from the faulty replacements of *θumma* by 'and'. This is an illustrative example

(10) ليلى تدرس. ثم بدأ تساقط الأمطار (10)

Layla tadrus-u . θumma bada?a tasaqaot al-amṭaar

Layla is studying. And then it has started raining.

The DM *θumma* was erroneously rendered by 36% of the subjects as 'and', 11% as 'also' and 10% as *comma*, *zero* (nothing) respectively. The faulty responses indicate that the subjects failed to recognize the logical relationship holding between the two sentences. The faulty use of *and* or *also* instead of the possible DM 'then' or 'and then' changed the intended meaning of the target language text. Moreover, the wrong use of the *comma* leads to the formation of a run-on sentence, a feature that is unacceptable in formal written English. Since we do not use a comma with the conjunctive adverb 'then' *θumma*, a *semicolon* or *full stop* followed by *then* or *and then*, etc., would have been more appropriate than a *comma* alone. Anyway, it is acceptable in English as well as in Arabic to use a *semicolon* or *full stop* immediately at the end of the first sentence, followed by the DM *θumma* (then, and then, subsequently, etc.) to introduce the second sentence to indicate speech continuity. It bears repeating here that one should consider that an extra meaning is there, not because of the semantic aspects of the words themselves, but because the reader/hearer shares certain contextual knowledge with the writer/speaker of the text.

#### B. Responses to the Sequential 'θumma' with Span of Time

The results in table 2 show that this function was found to be the second most difficult one. Only 50% of the responses were correct. The possible translations of this type of *θumma* include: *then*, *and then*, *after that* (after long time, after a while or after few hours) *subsequently*, etc. Findings showed that about 30% of the subjects mistakenly translated *θumma* into English 'and' instead of 'then', 'and then', 'subsequently'...etc. The DM 'and' does not entail the idea of temporal sequence, i.e. 'and' is unmarked for temporality, therefore, when translating 'θumma' into 'and', the sequential- temporal function of 'θumma' is no longer implied. The analysis of the data also revealed that 17% of the subjects inappropriately replaced 'then' or 'and then' by 'next' which indicates two events occurred consecutively and without delay. In the remaining portion of the flawed responses, the subjects used *comma* to conjoin the two clauses which gives the formation of a run-on sentence, a feature leads to malformed structure in formal English, though in Arabic is allowed to employ 'θumma' ('then' or 'and then') without *comma* or *semicolon* before or after the DM 'θumma'. This is an illustrative example.

(11) مشيت نصف ميل ثم استرحت = Maṣayt-u niṣṣa miil-in θumma istraḥṭu =

I walked a half mile; and then I rested.

This sentence means that first, 'I walked half a mile', *then*, *and then*, *after that* (after long time, after a while or after few hours) *subsequently*, etc., 'I lied down and took some rest', i.e. The DM 'θumma' indicated the sequence of the two events with significant delay between the two clauses. The translation 'I walked a half mile *and* rested' does not necessarily impose any absolute ordering of the events of walking and resting although its most normal interpretation would be that the writer walked half a mile first. In principle, however, either action might have been occurred before

the other. This shows that 'and' is not the most precise semantic translation equivalent of *thumma* in such a context. The flawed translations suggest that the subjects were not able to determine the intended function of *thumma* in the source language tokens.

### C. Responses to the Adversative 'thumma'

Table 2 showed that the third most difficult function to translate was the *adversative thumma*. The correct responses constituted 65% of the total answers. The possible translation of *adversative* function includes the use of *nevertheless*, *but*, *however*, *on the contrary*, *despite this*, *but nonetheless*, etc. The analysis of the data indicated that 31% of the subjects inappropriately translated 'thumma' into 'and'. Furthermore, 4% of the subjects wrongly used *comma*, *semicolon* instead of 'thumma'. Anyhow, all the faulty responses *and*, *semicolon*, *comma*, employed by translation students as a replacement of *thumma* do not precisely capture the intended meaning of this Arabic DM. Here is an illustrative example:

(12) ترعى الأم أبناءها حتى يكبروا ثم لا تلقى منهم معاملة حسنة!

tar9aa al?ummu abnaa?ah-aa hatta yakbaruu thumma laa talqaa minh-um mo9aamala hasana! = The mother takes care of her children until they grow up; *nevertheless*, she does not receive the good treatment from them.

### D. Responses to the Consequential 'thumma'

Translations such as: 'The mother takes care of her children until they grow up; *and/semicolon/comma* she does not receive the good treatment from them', are unacceptable because there is an obvious change in the intended relationship holding between the two clauses of the source language token (the *adversative* relationship). The resultative 'thumma' usually indicates a relationship between two clauses of a context such that the second clause describes a state or an action which occurs as a result of the first one. Numbers in table 2 indicated that the fourth difficult function to translate was the consequential 'thumma'. The percentage of the correct responses was 71%. The possible translations of the consequential 'thumma' include *therefore*, *thus*, *hence*, *consequently*, *and so*, *so that*, *so*. The relatively high percentage of correct answers may be attributed to the fact that the consequential 'thumma' in Arabic can easily be replaced by *liḍaalika* = 'so', which commonly translates into English as 'so' introduces the clause that provides the result or consequence of the first one. The inappropriate translations of consequential 'thumma' include the use of *so as*, with a percentage of 21%. However, *so as* is used to introduce the reason for doing the thing that you have just mentioned. In the remaining portion (8%) of the faulty responses, the subjects used *as...so*, *as*, *because*. This type of *thumma* is best rendered as *so*, *therefore*, *thus*, *hence*, *consequently*. The faulty translations show that some of the subjects confused between functions of the Arabic DM *fa* which is called *fa al-sababiyya* (causal *fa*) (=so as, because, since or as) and the resultative *thumma* (=so, therefore, thus, hence, consequently). The former one, i.e. the causal *fa* introduces the second clause that provides the cause or the reason of the event stated in the first clause of the compound element. Consider the following example (13) لا تبك فان البكاء ضعف = laa tabki fa?inna al-bukaa?a ḍa9f-un.=Don't cry because crying is weakness.

In sentence (13), the clause introduced by *fa* 'because' provides the cause or the reason of the action/event stated in the first clause, which is 'don't cry'. Whereas, the latter, i.e. *thumma* al-Natiija = consequential/resultative *thumma*, usually indicates a relationship between two clauses of a context such that the second clause describes a state or an action occurs as a consequence/result of the cause/reason which occurs in the first clause; Consider the following example:

(14) = الذي حضر ثم قام الأولاد المعلم

?al-la ḍi ḥaḍara thumma qaama al-awlad-u al-mu9alim = The teacher came; so the boys stood up.

In sentence (14) which consists of two clauses linked by *thumma*, means that 'the boys stood up as a respect for their teacher who came to their classroom. In other words, the cause or reason that the boys stood up was the teacher's coming. Therefore, the faulty translations (so as, because, just as...so, as...so, that) show that the use of a DM that does not signal a consequential relationship between the two clauses joined by Arabic *thumma* would yield an unacceptable translation because of the change in the intended meaning of the source language token.

### E. Responses to the Sequential thumma with Immediacy

Findings in table 2 show that the sequential function with no pause or delay was the easiest to translate. The analysis of the data showed that 77% of the responses were correct. The possible translations of the sequential 'thumma' with no span of time include *and ...immediately*, *soon*, *then*, *and then*, *at once*, *in a second*, *followed by*. The analysis of the data revealed that 19 % of the subjects inappropriately used 'and' instead of 'then'. Furthermore, 4% of the subjects mistakenly used 'so' or 'and so'. It might be worth mentioning at this point that 'thumma' does not usually translate as 'and', because 'and' is unmarked for temporal relationship and does not necessarily indicate sequence with order. In this kind of the sequential function, Arabic 'thumma' is used to mean that two events occurred consecutively and without delay; whereas 'and' does not necessarily imply the successive occurrence of events, i.e. happening one after the other without unusual interruption. This is an illustrative example:

(15) = دخل محمد الغرفة ثم أغلق الباب

Daxala Moḥammed-un alḡurfa-ta thumma ?aḡlaqa al-baab.= Mohammed entered the room; then closed the door.

Sentence (15) means that Mohammed entered the room first and he closed the door immediately without any significant delay. The translation 'Mohammed entered the room *and* closed the door' does not necessarily impose any

absolute ordering of the events of 'entering the room and closing the door', although its most normal interpretation would be that the writer entered the room first. In principle, however, either action might have been before the other. In other words, 'and' indicates grouping, but doesn't specify order or timing. Therefore, translating 'thumma' into English 'and' does not precisely capture the intended meaning of 'thumma' in the source language text. An exception might be there is that *and* implies sequence only when combination is untenable. This entails that 'and' is not the precise semantic translation equivalent of 'thumma' in such a context. The faulty translations suggest that some of the subjects failed to determine the intended function of 'thumma' in the source language tokens.

#### IV. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

A careful look at the results warrants these observations:

(1) EFL Students do not usually have much difficulty in understanding certain rules or classifications, but when they need to apply them they sometimes fail to do so. As Goldman and Murray (1992:505) rightly state 'ESL students frequently are very good in reciting the prescriptive rules of usage for various [conjunctions], but to master the appropriate use of conjunctions is 'extremely difficult'. Geva also (1992:735) highlighted that 'adult L2 learners may demonstrate familiarity with the meaning of conjunctions, yet fail to utilize them in extended discourse'.

(2) The translation of the Arabic DM 'thumma' was, on the whole, not easy. The average percentage of the correct responses was 62%, which means that more than 1/3 (38%) of the total responses was incorrect. However, it was observed that the resumptive and sequential functions of 'thumma' were more difficult to translate than the other three types.

(3) The use of 'then' in translating the resumptive 'thumma' was more frequent than its synonyms; and the use of 'and then' in translating the sequential 'thumma' with or without pause, was more frequent than its synonyms. Similarly, the use of 'so' in translating the consequential 'thumma' was much more frequent than its synonyms.

(4) Very often, the subjects did not distinguish between the causal and the resultative functions of the Arabic DMs *fa* and 'thumma' respectively. This might account for the subjects' use of *as*, *because*, instead of 'so' in translating the consequential 'thumma'.

(5) The use of punctuation marks, the semicolon in particular, to connect two related sentences was very seldom. However, the comma was inappropriately used to link two clauses where the result was often a run-on sentence, a feature which is not acceptable in appropriate English. Also, the sequential 'thumma' in both cases (with or without span of time) was frequently rendered as 'and', with the result of changing the logical relationship holding between the two sentences.

(6) The improper translation of functions of the Arabic DM *thumma* is prominent among Arab EFL students even at advanced stages of their learning. This indicates their insufficient knowledge of what, when and how to translate textual functions of Arabic DMs into English.

#### V. IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The results of the study and the foregoing observations inspire and motivate the formulation of the following implications to EFL learners, translators and to the process of teaching translation:

(1) Generally speaking, DMs are items that are notoriously difficult to describe regarding all linguistic levels involved and it is not even clear whether they constitute a class. The main problem in the description of DMs, however, is taken to be their functional polysemy. DMs contribute essentially to the interpretation process. From this theoretical perspective, DMs are considered signals the writer/speaker uses to guide cooperatively his reader/hearer's interpretative process. Hence translators and translation students need not to beware, but be aware of the multiplicity of functions that each DM may signal in discourse.

(2) In general, there is no one-to-one correspondence between two languages in the field of DMs: most of the time their correlates in the target language have not the same pragmatic meaning, constituting a usual pitfall in translation. This may be especially true if these languages are genetically unrelated, as is the case with Arabic and English. Consequently, DMs should constitute a major component of a larger whole in the syllabus of translation courses. EFL Learners should be trained to recognize and identify the role that DMs play in entailing/indicating logical relations between clauses and sentences in discourse.

(3) Since the findings of this study shed light on the difficulties that EFL learners encounter in translating the DM 'thumma', it might be helpful, in teaching writing courses, to focus on the use of intra/inter-sentential relations as well as the devices used to create these connections.

(4) Since determining the function that a DM signals in discourse is usually governed by the context in which the DM is used; in a translation context where semantic precision has a high priority, EFL learners and translators should consider that an extra meaning is there, not because of the semantic aspects of the words themselves, but because the reader/hearer shares certain contextual knowledge with the writer/speaker of the text.

(5) The results of this study back up the recommendations suggested by McCarthy (1991), Hamdan and Fareh (1999), Saeed and Fareh (2006), that the accuracy of translated texts should not be superficially evaluated by examining the target language text without matching it with the source language text. For example, McCarthy (1991: rightly states

that 'discourse analysts have sought to find out whether the categories and realizations of DMs are similar or different cross-linguistically (ibid, 46-47). In other words, when EFL learner or a translator describes a relationship signalled by certain DM superficially, he means that it indicates only the explicit aspect of that relationship, and not those implicit (implied) aspects which require more effort to deal with or understand, especially where semantic precision has a high priority. In this respect, there is nothing wrong in the sentence 'I gave you a thousand dinar and you covet more'. But when matched with the source language text, the use of 'but' or 'but nonetheless' instead of 'and' would be a more appropriate translation equivalent of the source language text in which adversative *thumma* is used. This does not mean that the connective 'and' cannot be used in an adversative sense in certain contexts.

(6) EFL undergraduates and translators working into English as a foreign language can be evaluated by means of examining their ability to translate selected sentences, holding DMs, extracted from several types of literary texts of the source language. Meanwhile, focusing on the pragmatic functions of these DMs and on their English equivalents, can tell us a good deal about the students' cross-linguistic competence, and may provide important data which help in evaluating translation students and in syllabus design. Equipped with this methodology, the educator or assessor may construct instruments to profile subjects so that they can be placed in appropriate instructional grades, as well as design appropriate syllabus objectives.

(7) The poor performance of EFL Arab undergraduates in translating textual functions of *thumma*, indicates the need for instruction especially designed to clarify the implicatures stand beyond the literal sense of what explicitly stated by a DM in certain context. Therefore, we end by recommending further cross-linguistic work in this area, including other Arabic DMs such as *fa*, *wa*, *innama*, *lakinna*, *bal bainama*, *lakin*, etc., and their English counterparts which can be an interesting and fruitful topic to the real needs of EFL learners, translators and translator educators in a post-colonial world.

#### APPENDIX A: MSA VOWELS USED IN THE EXAMPLES

SR	MSA Vowel	Description and an example From Arabic and its meaning in English
1-	i	Short high front unrounded eg. Sit = English : six
2-	ii	Long high front unrounded e.g. Haziin = English : Sad
3-	u	back high rounded short e.g. sum = English : deaf
4-	uu	High back rounded long e.g. kub=English : cup
5-	a	low central unrounded Short e.g.mal =English: got bored
6-	aa	Front low unrounded long e.g.maal=English : money

#### APPENDIX B: MSA DIPHTHONGS USED IN THE STUDY

SR	MSA diphtong	Example from MSA	English Meaning
1-	ay	As in 'bayt'	'house'
2-	aw	As in 'yawm	'day'

#### APPENDIX C: MSA CONSONANTS USED IN THE EXAMPLES OF THE STUDY

S.N.	Arabic consonants	English Equivalents	Description of the sounds
1-	ء, ا	?	glottal stop
2-	ب	b	a voiced bilabial stop
3-	ت	t	a vl non-emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
4-	ث	θ	a vl non-emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
5-	ج	j	a vd palato-alveolar fricative
6-	ح	h	a vl pharyngeal fricative
7-	خ	x	a voiceless uvular fricative
8-	د	d	a voiced non-emphatic denti alveolar stop
9-	ذ	ð	A voiced interdental fricative
10-	ر	r	A voiced alveolar flap
11-	ز	z	A voiced palato-alveolar fricative
12-	س	s	A vl non-emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
13-	ش	ʃ	A voiceless palato-alveolar fricative
14-	ص	ʂ	A voiceless emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
15-	ض	ɖ	A voiced emphatic denti-alveolar plosive
16-	ط	ʈ	A voiceless emphatic denti-alveolar plosive
17-	ظ	ɗ / ʐ	A voiced emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
18-	ع	ɣ	A voiced pharyngeal fricative
19-	غ	g	A voiced uvular fricative
20-	ف	f	A voiceless labiodental fricative
21-	ق	q	Voiceless uvular plosive
22-	ك	k	A voiceless velar plosive
23-	ل	L	a voiced alveolar lateral
24-	م	m	a voiced bilabial nasal

25-	ن	n	A voiced alveolar nasal
26-	ه	h	glottal fricative
27-	و	w	Labial-velar semi-vowel
28-	ي , ي	y	A palatal semi-vowel

## APPENDIX D: TRANSLATION TASK: (A QUESTIONNAIRE OF 40 ARABIC SENTENCES)

عزيزي الطالب: ارجو التكرم بترجمة الجمل التالية للغة الانجليزية علما بانها فقط لاغراض البحث , مع الاحترام والتقدير:

- 1 - أمضى زيد عشر سنوات في الغربية ثم عاد إلى وطنه
- 2 - درس زيد في الجامعة الأردنية ثم عمل فيها أستاذا جامعيا
- 3 - شرب زيد ثم ارتوى
- 4 - توقفت الحافلة ثم صعدنا للركوب فيها
- 5 - ركب الأولاد الحافلة. ثم إنك ما تزال واقفا
- 6 - غادر زيد البيت. ثم أخوه يشاهد التلفاز
- 7 - أعطيتك ألف دينار ثم تطمع أن أزيد!
- 8 - ترعى الأم أبناءها حتى يكبروا ثم لا تلقى منهم معاملة حسنة!
- 9 - من يزرني ثم أكرمه فعليك احترامه
- 10 - الذي حضر ثم قام الأولاد المعلم
- 11 - زرع الفلاح بذور القمح ثم حصده في الصيف
- 12 - تزوج علي ثم رزق بمولود
- 13 - توقفت السيارة عند ممر المشاة ثم عبر الواقفون هناك
- 14 - استيقظت من النوم ثم رثيت فراشي
- 15 - بدأت العطلة الصيفية. ثم يساعد الأولاد أباهم في العمل
- 16 - استمرت أعمال البناء في المدينة. ثم دخل فصل الشتاء
- 17 - رضي زيد بكل ما كلف به من أعمال ثم طلب منه المدير المزيد!
- 18 - اجتهد علي في أداء واجباته ثم قصر في الامتحان
- 19 - من يسألني ثم أجبه فله جائزة
- 20 - إن اجتهدت ثم نجحت فاشكر الله
- 21 - يمر الإنسان بمرحلة الطفولة ثم الشباب ثم الكهولة
- 22 - عمل زيد في الجامعة سنتين ثم استقال
- 23 - أنهى الممثلون عرض المسرحية ثم أسدلت الستارة
- 24 - دخل محمد الغرفة ثم أغلق الباب
- 25 - اصطاد علي سمكة. ثم ألقى زيد صنارته
- 26 - أنهيت أداء واجبي. ثم استمر إخوتي في أداء واجباتهم
- 27 - اعتنى الفلاح بأرضه طوال السنة ثم أهمل في جمع المحصول
- 28 - استيقظ زيد مبكرا ثم تأخر في الوصول إلى عمله!
- 29 - إن أكلت ثم شبعت قوي جسمك
- 30 - إن عملت الخير ثم شكرك الناس فلا تتكبر
- 31 - نمت ثم قمت نشيطا
- 32 - مشيت نصف ميل ثم استرحت
- 33 - ليلى تدرس. ثم بدأ تساقط الأمطار
- 34 - زيد يلعب. ثم عاد والده إلى البيت
- 35 - استيقظ علي مبكرا ثم وصل المدرسة نشيطا
- 36 - امتلأت السماء بالغيوم ثم نزل المطر
- 37 - دخل زيد الصف ثم جلس
- 38 - جلست في السيارة ثم أدت محركها
- 39 - أمضيت سنة في التدريب على القيادة ثم لم أنل رخصة القيادة
- 40 - عمت الأمطار أنحاء البلاد ثم عانى الناس شح المياه

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# Reading through Interaction: From Individualistic Reading Comprehension to Collaborative Reading

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**Abstract**—Group work and interaction play significant roles in the learning process and much of the evidence comes from studies of foreign language learners' interaction with native speakers. This study aimed at finding out whether interaction among learners also facilitates reading comprehension. For this purpose, a number of Iranian EFL students at Abadeh and Shiraz Islamic Azad Universities were selected and divided into two groups. While in the first group individualistic reading was encouraged, the second group read together and had interaction and collaboration in understanding the texts. The results revealed that collaborative reading improves the learners' comprehension better than individualistic reading.

**Index Terms**—reading comprehension, interaction, collaborative reading, individualistic reading

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is considered as a process which involves the integration of decoding ability, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge and the use of a set of strategies to make sense of a text and understand it (Kintsch and Kintch, 2005), and it is one of the basic activities done in every language classroom since it functions as a means of increasing learners' knowledge of the language being learnt.

What the teachers do is to help the learners develop their reading habits in order to understand the texts with no reference to their native language translation. There are different strategies followed in language classrooms. Block and Pressley (2002) pointed out that there are over thirty cognitive and metacognitive processes involved including meaning clarification, summarizing, predicting and so on. Duffy (1993) defines reading strategies as "plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning" (p. 232). According to Trabasso and Bouchard (2002), comprehension strategies are specific, learned procedures which strengthen active, competent and intentional reading. These strategies can range from vocabulary search, or looking up the unknown words in a dictionary to more comprehensive actions, that is, making links between what is read and the learners' background knowledge. They are referred to as cognitive strategies (Oxford, 1996; cited in Carter and Nunan, 2002).

Jimenez, Garcia, and Pearson (1995) point out that using different strategy types depends on the level of readers. More proficient ones know many strategies and use each of them in a certain way. Yet, these strategies are teachable and evidence shows that when they are taught, they can strengthen students' performance in tests of comprehension and recall (Pearson and Fielding, 1991).

Learning strategies not only help learners to be autonomous and independent learners but they also increase self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Oxford (1996) contends that among different language learning strategies such as cognitive, mnemonic, affective, social and metacognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies help learners manage themselves as learners, the general learning process and specific learning tasks. While some learning tasks direct learners to be independent learners and learn individually, some others foster learning through interaction and cooperation. As for reading comprehension, Himes (2007) for example mentions that cooperative strategies which help the students work together to learn will improve reading comprehension significantly. Renandya and Jacobs (2002) also offer a set of activities in which language learners can be involved in for the better comprehension of a text. They include both individualistic tasks such as copying interesting words and expressions into a notebook or writing a letter to the author and talk about the content of the book as well as tasks which require participation in group work and interaction such as sharing views about the content of the book with classmates, reading interesting parts aloud, or role-playing the story.

Following Himes (2007) and Renandya and Jacobs (2002), the present study aimed at finding out whether using individualistic activities and reading independently from peers will foster reading comprehension to the same extent as reading through interaction and participation in group work. In other words, the main objective of the present study was to see which one improves EFL learners' reading comprehension more: individualistic reading or collaborative reading. The second goal of this study was to see whether males or females could improve their reading comprehension better through individualistic reading and collaborative reading.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Glancing back at the history of language teaching, one would find that reading skill was sometimes considered a passive skill as the reader is not involved in any kind of language production in the same way as a speaker or a writer is. Then, there was a shift in emphasis from being passive to active. Being defined as the process of activation of knowledge to accomplish an exchange of information (Chastain, 1990), reading comprehension is now considered an active decoding skill as the reader is expected to arrive at the meaning of the message of the language as a code. It has been a long time since researchers considered reading as a process in which the reader uses his background knowledge in order to recreate the writer's intended meaning. Once again, in recent years the ground shifted to think of reading as interactive rather than simply active skill because meaning is partial in the text and what is intended by the writer might not be interpreted the same way by the reader. In other words, readers negotiate meaning. This perspective considers the text, the reader, and the social context in which the activity of reading takes place (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Since reading skill is one of the basic language aspects the foreign language learners need to work on from the early days of their long journey of language learning, it is under the special focus for both language teachers and researchers. Depending on the perspectives adopted by teachers, reading can be considered as practice, product, or process (Wallace, 1992). If reading is linked to everyday life uses, it is a practice, if the focus is on the form and meaning of the written text, reading is a product, and if attention is on the reader who is involved in the processing of written language and the strategies he uses to draw meaning out of the text, reading is a process. Since the third orientation is usually adopted in language classrooms, teachers take into account the processes language learners are involved in and strategies they use to come to the intended meaning of the writer.

Weaver (1994) classifies approaches to reading comprehension into two categories. Part-centered or code-emphasis approach views reading instruction as moving the learning from part to the whole. This is what is sometimes referred to as bottom-up. Meaning-emphasis or top-down approaches emphasize the construction of meaning from the whole texts and then draws on both the reader and writer's schemata or background knowledge and personal experiences. According to Carter and Nunan (2002), taking reading as a process means that we should consider it a top-down phenomenon since it sheds light on the kind of background knowledge the reader brings to reading. In contrast with the text-based or bottom-up approach in which the language forms required to comprehend the text are taught, top-down or inside-the-head approach implies that reading comprehension is based on the students' knowledge base. The stronger a learner's background knowledge is, the more comprehension will be achieved through reading.

In order to process the information in a top-down fashion, a set of strategies need to be applied. According to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), as the goal of each strategy is "the engine that fires language learning action and provides the direction for the action", the theory of language learning which is adopted by the learner to achieve his goal is the tapestry approach (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992). This approach reflects Vygotsky's (1986) view that learning occurs in interaction with other people. That is, in order to achieve the goal of processing the information in reading materials, it is useful to develop cognitive learning strategies through participation in group work using strategies such as analyzing, synthesizing, and reasoning to comprehend the materials. Cognitive strategies involve hypothesis testing, for example seeking the context and one's background knowledge to determine if a particular meaning makes sense or not. According to Oxford (1996), social strategies facilitate learning with others. For example, learners can ask each other questions for clarification. However, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggest that cognitive information-processing theory downplays social strategies for cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

For a top-down processing to be done in a reading comprehension activity, three phases should be followed: before during and after reading (Cunningham & Creamer, 2003). They state that there are a number of activities which should be taught and practiced for the learners' comprehension. With reference to Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, and Echevarria (1998), they state that there is a "practice of comprehension strategies but virtually no instruction in strategy use" (p. 170). Pressley et al. also contend that "we were struck by the almost complete absence of direct instruction about comprehension strategies" (p. 172). Cunningham and Creamer (2003), however, referring to a number of strategies taken by the teacher to teach to the learners in 'before, during, and after reading' puts it this way that using group tasks after reading increases motivation and guarantees students' success in a better comprehension of the reading materials.

According to Brigham, Berkley, Simpkins, and Brigham (2007), teachers are required to adopt an interactive style of instruction which means that the learners are given sufficient guided practice to ensure that they develop their comprehension not just independent of each other but through interaction and participation in group work. Research suggests that direct and explicit teaching of comprehension strategies can result in improved comprehension. Comprehension strategies should be taught with a combination of modeling, feedback, and opportunities for later practice.

Celce-Murcia (2001) suggests a set of strategies to facilitate second language reading comprehension development. They include exposing the students to written language as much as possible, reading more extensively, providing authentic purposes for reading, using oral skills to support reading development, and providing scaffolding for learning. To Perego and Boyle (1997), scaffolding means the setting up of temporary supports that permit learners to take part in the complicated process of comprehending before they can do it without assistance.

One of the perspectives on learning individually and interaction is proposed by Petrovsky (1985) in his book entitled *Individual and the Collective*. He addresses the issue that collaboration and group work means group conformity. On



the one hand, in collaboration the individual is “unique and derivative of the social”, and on the other hand it is based on cooperative efforts to achieve common understanding. With regard to reading comprehension and collaboration, with an emphasis on extensive reading, that is reading large quantities of materials for general understanding, Renandya and Jacobs (2002) suggest a set of tasks that teachers should employ in the ‘after reading’ or postreading which is the third phase of reading activities in the classroom. They include both individualistic activities as well as group work. Examples of the first type are copying interesting words and expressions in a notebook, writing a letter to the author to discuss the content and expressing views on different parts and the tasks which require more group work, collaboration, and interaction are underlying and reading interesting parts aloud, share views about the book with classmates and role-playing the story. The idea that collaboration and group work play a great role in cognitive, social and affective development is very much accepted in education and developmental psychology (Donato, 2004). Learning, in this view, is seen as “improved participation in an interactive system” (Greeno, 1997).

Wenger (1998) believes that learning language through collaboration and participation in group work creates and sustains the relation of mutual accountability with other members of the community. Collaborative activities pave the way to enable the learners to participate in social activities, promote their understanding of others as well as the materials being learned, foster future learning and development through expanding participation, and create the potential for the individual’s reciprocal contribution to the community (Dyson, 2000).

Kim and Hall (2002) reported a collaborative reading project for Korean learners of English. Using elaboration, questioning and paraphrasing, the learners had interactions with each other. It was found that participation in collaborative reading led to significant changes in the learners’ pragmatic ability and conversational management.

Following Himes and others who supported collaboration, interaction, and group work to boost language learning in general and reading comprehension in particular, the present study was an attempt to answer the following questions first introducing collaboreading, a new concept for the learners to help each other understand reading materials better:

Q1- Do the Iranian EFL learners who use individualistic activities to enhance their comprehension improve their reading ability differently from those who use collaboreading?

Q2- Do male and female students using collaboreading outperform the other students using individualistic activities to enhance their reading comprehension?

Then based on these questions, three null hypotheses were formed:

H1- The Iranian EFL learners who use individualistic activities to enhance their comprehension do not perform in their reading test differently from those who use collaboreading.

H2- Male and female students using collaboreading do not outperform the male and female students using individualistic activities in their reading comprehension.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Participants

The participants were a number of 85 EFL learners majoring in English translation at Islamic Azad Universities, Abadeh and Shiraz Branch. They were 20 male and 65 female freshmen who had taken their Reading Comprehension Course (2) at the university. Since they already had passed their Reading Comprehension Course (1), they were all assumed to know the basic reading skills including skimming and scanning.

#### B. Instrumentation

The NTC’s Reading Comprehension Test was used as the instrument to measure the learners’ improvement in reading comprehension. The test was piloted with a group of participants who were similar to the subjects of the study, and it was proved to be reliable. For its content validity, the test was reviewed by two language experts. The test was then considered as a valid and reliable instrument to be used in the study.

#### C. Procedure

In order to answer the research questions, the NTC’s Reading Comprehension Test was administered along with a TOEFL reading comprehension test to a group of subjects similar to the participants of the study for the reliability purposes. Since the correlation between the two tests turned out to be 0.7, it was concluded that the test was a reliable one. For its content validity, the test was given to two language experts to be reviewed. As they confirmed the test content, it was used as the instrument to measure the improvement of the learners’ reading comprehension.

A number of 85 EFL students, 20 males and 65 females majoring in English Translation at Islamic Azad Universities, Abadeh and Shiraz Branch were selected. They were then divided into two groups. The NTC’s Reading Comprehension Test was administered prior to the instruction as the pre-test. A t-test was applied to see if the participants’ performance was the same or differently. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the performance of the participants in both groups. In other words, they were proved to be homogeneous.

The next phase of the study was the treatment. The participants took a four-month instruction on reading comprehension. The kind of activities the participants in each group were involved in was different. Following Kim and Hall (2002), in the first group, for the ‘after reading’ activity, the students were required to use elaboration, questioning and paraphrasing, and this way the learners had interactions with each other. In the second group, however, the students

read the texts individually and answered the comprehension questions at the end of the texts for their ‘after-reading’ activity. At the end of the instruction, again the same test administered for the pre-test was readministered as the post-test. A one-way ANOVA was applied to the students’ raw scores to see if there has been improvement in any of the groups ‘performance in reading comprehension better than the other one. A sheffé test was then applied to see whether there was a significant difference in the performance of male and female students in both control and experimental groups.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to see if the participants in the control group who were to have individualistic reading activity and the experimental group who were supposed to have interaction and collaboration in understanding the texts were homogeneous, and therefore, randomly selected, the NTC’s Reading Comprehension Test was used and a t-test was applied. The results are as follows:

TABLE 1.  
T-TEST TO EXAMINE THE HOMOGENEITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Pre ex		N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std error of Mean		
Pre	control						
	1	43	11.9302	2.87349	.43820		
	2	42	12.3810	2.87082	.44298		
Levenes test for equality							
of variance							
		F	sig.	t	df	sig.	mean dif.
equal variance assumed		.020	.887	-.723	83	.472	-.45072
equal variance not assumed				-.723	82.957	.471	-.45072

As table 1 suggests, there is not a significant difference in the performance of control and experimental group since the value of F ( $F=.020$ ) does not exceed the significance level ( $\text{sig.} = .887$ ). It can, therefore, be concluded that both groups were truly randomly selected. The students’ raw scores in this test were also taken as the pre test.

After the instruction, the participants again took the same test they had taken in the pre-test. A one-way ANOVA was then applied to the students’ scores in the pre and post test to see if there has been any improvement in the participants’ performance in reading comprehension. The results are revealed in Table 2:

TABLE 2.  
ONE-WAY ANOVA TO COMPARE THE PARTICIPANTS’ PERFORMANCE IN THE PRE AND POST TEST

		Sum of squares	df	mean square	F	sig.
Post	between grps	1523.889	3	507.963	2.199	0.094
	within grps	18708.064	81	230.964		
	Total	20231.953	84			
Pre	between grps	12.765	3	4.255	.510	.677
	within grps	676.247	81	8.349		
	Total	689.012	84			

According to table 2, comparing the observed value of F ( $F=2.199$ ) with the significance level ( $\text{sig.} = .094$ ), one can come up with the idea that the difference is big enough to claim that there has been a change in the performance of the two experimental and control group. In other words, table 2 shows that there has been an improvement in the performance of the participants in the reading comprehension test in the experimental group compared to the control one. Thus, the first research hypothesis stating that the Iranian EFL learners who use individualistic activities to enhance their comprehension do not perform in their reading test differently from those who use collaboreading is rejected here.

To find out about the performance of male and female students using individualistic and collaboreading activities to comprehend a text in both experimental and control group, a sheffe test was applied. The results are presented in table 3 as follows:

TABLE 3.  
THE FOUR GROUPS' PERFORMANCE IN THE READING COMPREHENSION POST-TEST

Group	N	subset for alpha = 0.05
4	34	14.9706
2	11	15.1562
1	8	20.0000
3	32	29.1250

Sig. = .108

In table 3, group 4 represents females who were in the experimental group, i.e. those who used individualistic activities in comprehending the texts; group 2 represents males who had collaboreading activities in the experimental group; group 3 refers to females who enjoyed collaboreading activities; group 1 refers to males who had individualistic reading activities in the control group. As the table reveals, the first group of participants who outperformed the others were female students who had collaboreading activities in the experimental group. The second best performance belonged to the male students who enjoyed collaboration in enhancing their reading comprehension. The next two groups, males and females in the control group could not, in fact, improve their reading ability as much as those in the experimental group. Thus, the second research hypothesis stating that male and female students using collaboreading do not outperform the male and female students using individualistic activities in their reading comprehension is rejected.

## V. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study is in line with Kim and Hall (2002) and Donato (2004) who support the use of interaction and collaboration in the improvement of language abilities. The results of the present study are useful for syllabus designers and materials developers who plan and develop textbooks and activities to be used in foreign language classrooms. The results also help language teachers have an empirically-based support in using pair and group work as well as other interactive activities in their reading comprehension classes.

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# Study of the Writing Strategies Used by Chinese Non-English Majors

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**Abstract**—The present study aims to investigate writing strategies used by Chinese non-English majors, the correlation between writing strategies and writing achievements, and the predicative power of writing strategies for writing achievements. The results indicate: (1) Ranked in terms of total frequency, stage strategies used by the subjects are while-writing strategies, pre-writing strategies and revising strategies; (2) Pre-writing strategies and revising strategies positively correlate with students' writing achievements; (3) Writing strategies as a whole have certain predictive power for writing achievements.

**Index Terms**—English writing strategies; English writing achievements; college English writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Studies on L2 writing processes could be viewed as a succession of approaches or orientations to L1 writing studies (Silva, 1990). According to Kroll (2003), the notion of writing as a process was introduced to L2 writing studies by Zamel (1976) who argued that advanced L2 writers were similar to L1 writers and could benefit from instructions emphasizing the process of writing. This was confirmed by many later studies committed to the general process of L2 writing.

Zamel (1982) studied eight university-level proficient L2 writers and concluded that L1 process-oriented writing instruction might also be effective for teaching L2 writing, and when students understood and experienced composing as a process, their written product would improve. Zamel's (1983) study of six advanced L2 students further confirmed that L2 writers compose like L1 writers. Cumming (1986, 1987, and 1989) also found that L2 writers were able to rely on their L1 strategies in a series of highly controlled empirical studies on the relationship between writing expertise and L2 proficiency. Hall (1990) revealed striking similarities during the revision process among L2 learners with different backgrounds. Pennington and So's (1993) comparison of both the processes and products across L1 and L2 writing of six Singaporean university students proved that their writing processes were not linear, involving a constant interplay of thinking, writing, and revising throughout the whole process.

Studies and teaching of L2 writing, mainly of English writing, in China began in the early 1990s, much later than those in the western countries. The following are some of meaningful findings on writing strategies in China. Yang' (2002) study is one of the few attempts undertaken in China to explore students' strategy use during their writing process. Using questionnaire design and think-aloud composing as the source of data, Yang found that successful writers differed from unsuccessful ones in planning, focusing and revising. Deng et al (2003), from a theoretical perspective of view, also called for the need to introduce writing strategies into English writing classes. Wang (2007) describes and evaluates studies on the general pattern of the L2 writing process, the relationship among linguistic proficiency, writing ability and L2 writing, the comparison of writing processes in L1 and in L2, the use of the mother tongue and translation in the L2 writing process, learning strategies and the L2 writing process, and writing processes of Chinese ESL/EFL learners.

However, as far as the relationship between the use of learning strategies and students' learning outcomes is concerned, there seems to be inadequate evidence. As for the specific field of writing, Yang (2002) discovered in her correlation study that among all the 27 independent variables examined, only 4 items reached statistical significance. What is more, all these 4 items belonged to the same writing strategy: revising. Apart from Yang's (2002) study, very few empirical studies can be found as to how the use of writing strategies correlates with students' writing achievement. This research is intended to focus on the correlations between the writing strategies and writing achievements.

This study is initiated by the poor writing performances of the college students the author is teaching. It is aimed at investigating the English writing strategies that Chinese non-English majors employ and analyzing the correlations between their English writing strategies and writing achievements. It is also aimed at investigating whether certain writing strategies can predict writing achievements.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the current study, Petric and Czarl's writing strategy questionnaire is adapted to investigate the writing strategies used by non-English majors. Besides, Oxford's framework of language learning strategies and the process theory are

used to analyze and discuss the findings of the investigation.

According to the three writing stages identified by the process theory of writing, the writing strategies in the questionnaire can first be classified into three types of stage strategies: pre-writing strategies, while-writing strategies and revising strategies. Then, the author introduces Oxford's six groups of strategies and further classifies the stage strategies into strategy groups, that is, the pre-writing strategies include the metacognitive and cognitive strategy groups; the while-writing strategies include the metacognitive, cognitive, memory, social and compensation strategy groups; the revising strategies include the metacognitive, cognitive, memory, social and affective strategy groups. In addition, in order to get a more detailed understanding of the strategies use in the process of writing, the author adopts Oxford's classification of strategy groups into individual strategies.

In this study, the following three specific questions are to be answered:

- What strategies are the most frequently employed by non-English majors in English writing?
- What are the correlations between writing strategies use and writing achievements of the students?
- Can the use of certain writing strategies predict writing achievements? If it can, how does it predict?

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Subjects

The subjects involved in the study were 132 college students at Dezhou University. They were in the first term of their second year college study, majoring in mathematics education, pre-school education and modern textile technology. With six years' English learning experience at middle school and a year and a half college study, these subjects have generally developed relatively stable learning behaviors. The sample was narrowed down to 116 after the investigation through questionnaires, because some students did not answer their questionnaires properly: Some just left out one or more items of the questionnaire and some chose more than one answer to an item.

#### B. Instruments

The instruments used in the present study include a writing test, a writing strategy questionnaire and an interview.

A writing test to be conducted in class was designed to measure writing achievements. In the writing test, all the subjects are required to write a composition of about 150 words on the topic "Positive and Negative effects of the Internet". The internet, which is familiar to the students, was chosen as the topic in order that the writing task would not be too difficult for the students, and that they would have some ideas to write. The students' compositions would be scored according to their content and language respectively.

The data for this study were collected through a writing strategy questionnaire based on Petric and Czarl's writing strategy questionnaire in their published article "Validating a Writing Strategy Questionnaire" (Petric & Czarl, 2003). In the conclusion of that article, the authors made some suggestions for modifications of the questionnaire so that it would suit investigations into writing strategies in further research. At Petric and Czarl's suggestions, the author of the current study made a few minor changes to the questionnaire. Then the questionnaire was translated into Chinese, tested in a pilot study and finally administered to collect information on language learners' writing strategies and individual background in the current study.

TABLE I  
A DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITING STRATEGIES

Stage strategy	Strategy group	Individual strategy
Pre-writing Strategies	Metacognitive	Planning Identifying Overviewing Organizing
	Cognitive	Resourcing Translating
While-writing strategies	Metacognitive	Goal-setting Self-monitoring Organizing Overviewing
	Cognitive	Repeating Recognizing Translating Resourcing
	Memory	New-word
	Social	Peer-cooperating
	Compensation	Approximating Synonym
Revising strategies	Metacognitive	Goal-setting Self-monitoring Paying attention Identifying
	Cognitive	Resourcing Repeating
	Memory	Keywords
	Social	Teacher-cooperating Peer-cooperating
	Affective	Self-rewarding

The final version of the questionnaire, which was used as the instrument of this study, has two sections. The first section aims to investigate students' background information. It contains three blanks, four multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions. The second section is to explore information about students' writing strategy use during their writing processes. It contains a list of written statements, each of which presents an assertion about the use of a writing strategy. The format is in accordance with Oxford's SILL, which uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or almost never true of me) to 5 (always or almost always true of me). Students are asked to indicate the frequency with which they use a strategy implied in the statement by circling the number which represents their response. The higher number indicates a more frequent use of the strategy concerned. The items are sequenced following the structure of the writing process, i.e. pre-writing, writing, and revising stages, so as to provide a clear frame of reference to the students. Altogether, there are 3 stage strategies, 12 strategy groups, and 28 individual strategies involved in the questionnaire. Table 1 gives a description of the strategies.

One point needs to be noted here, that is, in order to get a clear picture of what strategies students employ in each writing stage, a strategy group with the same name in different stages is viewed as different strategy groups. For example, since the metacognitive strategy group is involved in all the three stages, it is viewed as three separate strategy groups: metacognitive strategy group in the pre-writing stage, metacognitive strategy group in the while-writing stage, and metacognitive strategy group in the revising stage. This is also true with the individual strategies. For instance, there is the organizing strategy in the pre-writing stage and the organizing strategy in the while-writing stage respectively. The whole questionnaire is compiled in Chinese for the sake of clear understanding and accurate response.

With the conviction that a single method would not produce adequate information about the subjects, an interview with some of the students was conducted to gather supporting information for the study. Ten students, five males and five females, were randomly selected and interviewed one after another by the author two days after collecting the composition. In the interview there are specific core questions determined in advance from which the author could branch off to explore in-depth information. The questions are as follows:

- Do you like English writing? Why?
- Do you often write in English?
- How do you usually begin to write on a topic and go on with it?
- What do you think is the most difficult problem with writing in English?
- How are you taught to write in English?

All the students responded the questions in a friendly way. According to the way the interview carried out, some more questions, mainly about the process of writing, were asked, and in order not to interrupt the talks, the answers were noted down in retrospect by the author during the intervals. All in all, it took nearly three hours to undertake the task of the interviews.

### C. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in September 2008, two weeks before the real data collection procedures, in order to revise the questionnaire, check testing procedures, determine the anticipated length of time needed for administering the survey, and check the reliability of the questionnaire. In the pilot study, the questionnaire was tested with 36 students from Dezhou College. Before the questionnaires were distributed, subjects were instructed that they only had to rank the choices with numbers from one to five or circle one of the five numbers to indicate their true opinions.

The internal reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by computing its Cronbach alpha to examine the consistency of the research. As the questionnaire covers three different stages: pre-writing strategies, while-writing strategies and revising strategies, their reliability was calculated separately as presented in table 2.

TABLE 2  
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Reliability coefficients			
Pre-writing strategies	No. of cases = 36	No. of items = 7	Alpha = .84
While-writing strategies	No. of cases = 36	No. of items = 13	Alpha = .89
Revising strategies	No. of cases = 36	No. of items = 15	Alpha = .93

The reliability of an instrument concerns whether this instrument will produce the same results each time it is administered to the same person in the same setting (George & Mallery, 2000). Coefficient alpha is one of the ways to measure reliability. According to the pilot study, the internal consistency reliability for prewriting strategies is .84, that for the while-writing strategies is .89, and that for the revising strategies is .93, which is acceptable.

### D. Data Collection Procedures

One point is worth mentioning for the procedures of data collection, that is, the writing test was conducted before the filling out of the questionnaire, because it was feared that the questionnaire could to some extent remind the students of the use of some writing strategies and thus influence the validity of the investigation.

A week before filling out the questionnaire, the subjects were requested to write a composition of about 150 words on the topic "Positive and Negative Effects of the Internet" after class. The 132 college students' composition were collected before filling out the questionnaire. Among the 132 compositions, 16 were picked out because later on the

writers did not answer the questionnaire properly. As a result, there were 116 compositions to be scored.

When scoring the students' compositions, one common practice in the field of L2 writing research is to use two or more teachers. In the current study, two people participated in grading the compositions. The first is the author of the study; another is an experienced teacher who teaches college English writing for a considerable number of years. The content and language of a composition were scored respectively, and then their mean was calculated out as the overall scores of the composition. Both the full language score and content score of a composition were set at 100. The overall composition scores, which are referred to as a student's writing achievements in this study, are the mean of its language scores and content scores. Thus the overall scores of a composition are also 100. An example as follows may make this calculation clearer: if a student's language scores and content scores are 70 and 60 respectively, his overall composition scores, or his writing achievements, will be the mean of 70 and 60, i.e., 65.

Referring to the CET-4 writing assessment standards, the evaluators worked out their own standards for evaluating students' writing. In addition, before the actual scoring of the subjects' compositions, the evaluators did some training: two compositions were randomly selected from those which were collected during the pilot study of the writing test, and scored according to the standards that were made; then the scores given by the two evaluators were compared and manipulation of the standards were discussed and agreed on. The two evaluators scored the compositions separately without consulting with one another.

Each subject's composition was typed as it is into a computer and printed in two copies. The texts that the evaluators scored and the texts that the students had written were the same except that the former are typed whereas the latter are hand-written. The compositions that the students turned in were not evaluated directly because the author is afraid that students' handwriting would influence their composition scores. In a similar study by Wang and Wen (2002), the students' handwriting was not considered too, and they also had the students' writing typed. Since their study was reported and published in a major journal, it can be assumed that their techniques in evaluation of the compositions are acceptable. It would be safe for this study to adopt some of those techniques.

One point was emphasized to the student before the subjects fill out the questionnaire, that is, they should be serious and honest in answering the questionnaire. Since it was the first time that the subjects had come across a questionnaire like this, after the questionnaires were distributed to the students, instructions were made as for how to answer the questionnaire. The teacher read aloud to the students the explanations at the beginning of the second section, and instructed them how to make a choice by explaining with the example provided in the questionnaire. Finally, the teacher emphasized to the students that they should not forget to answer any item. Then they were allowed to fill in the questionnaires and encouraged to ask the teacher whenever they had any question. It took about 20 minutes for the students to finish the questionnaire and meantime the students raised no question about any statement of the questionnaire. Altogether 132 questionnaires were collected, but 16 of them were picked out because the 16 students just left out some blanks or items, though the teacher had reminded them not to.

The collected data through the questionnaire are for the independent variables: 3 stage strategies, 12 strategy groups and 28 individual strategies. Since the reliability of the questionnaire has already been explained, the reliability of each independent variable is not presented here.

All the data collected through the compositions and questionnaires were put into a computer and analyzed through SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means and standard deviations, were calculated to show the students' use of writing strategies. Correlation analyses were conducted to demonstrate the correlations between the independent variable, i.e., the writing strategies use (operationalized in this study as strategy items in questionnaire) and the dependant variable, i.e., writing achievements (operationalized as the scores that students obtained in the writing test). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to measure the predictive power of strategies for students' writing achievements.

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

##### A. *Writing Strategies Commonly Used by the Students*

As can be seen from Table 3, although Chinese non-English majors do use some kinds of strategies in the pre-writing stage, while-writing stage and revising stage, they are still not frequent users of many of them. The result of the descriptive statistics on the three types of stage strategies can be interpreted in this way: in the while-writing stage, the students employ writing strategies more often than in the prewriting or revising stage. This result could be attributed to the product approach to writing teaching, in which most of the subjects have been taught.



TABLE 3  
THE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE WRITING STRATEGIES(N=116)

Stage strategy (M, SD)	Strategy group (M, SD)	Individual strategy (M, SD)
Pre-writing Strategies (2.85, .54)	Metacognitive (3.21, .75)	Planning (2.65, .84) Identifying (4.04, .74) Overviewing (2.53, .97) Organizing (3.20, 1.14)
	Cognitive (2.59, .78)	Resourcing (2.40, 1.03) Translating (2.78, 1.16)
While-writing Strategies (3.04, .43)	Metacognitive (2.99, .61)	Goal-setting (3.16, .91) Self-monitoring (2.98, 1.03) Organizing (3.47, .91) Overviewing (2.35, .91)
	Cognitive (2.97, .52)	Repeating (2.54, 1.02) Recognizing (3.84, .83) Translating (2.98, .84) Resourcing (2.52, .95)
	Memory (2.14, .84)	New-word (2.14, .84)
	Social (3.14, .90)	Peer-cooperating (3.14, .90)
	Compensation (3.95, .59)	Approximating (3.89, .79) Synonym (4.01, .61)
Revising Strategies (2.56, .45)	Metacognitive (2.87, .48)	Goal-setting (2.89, .98) Self-monitoring (2.64, .59) Paying attention (2.51, .91) Identifying (3.41, .85)
	Cognitive (2.32, .68)	Resourcing (2.56, .97) Repeating (2.08, .74)
	Memory (1.80, .68)	Keywords (1.80, .68)
	Social (3.19, .76)	Teacher-cooperating (3.74, .90) Peer-cooperating (2.63, .91)
	Affective (2.61, 1.06)	Self-rewarding (2.61, 1.06)
Total (2.81, .36 )		

As far as the individual strategy is concerned, the compensation strategies (mean=3.95) is used with the highest frequencies. It reveals that EFL learners do frequently employ various strategies to overcome problems or difficulties encountered in the process of writing. The result is consistent with Jiang Xiaohong's (2003) finding. Compensation strategies, as discussed in Oxford (1990, p.47), enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge. These are intended to make up for an inadequate repertoire of grammar and, especially, of vocabulary. Researchers have always paid attention to compensation strategies for speaking, such as using mime or gesture. However, other compensation strategies like adjusting or approximating the message, using a circumlocution or synonym can also be used in writing as well as in speaking. As far as the individual strategy is concerned, the memory strategy is used with the lowest frequencies. The memory strategy group in the while-writing stage is embodied by the new-word strategy, or the strategy of placing new words into a context. The aim of investigating this strategy is to know whether or not a student is accustomed to reading only the English explanations of a new word while using their dictionaries. It turns out that the mean of this strategy is 2.14, which suggests that 'to read only the English explanations' is close to "usually not true" of the students. This finding is exactly consistent with what Oxford (1990, p.40) has brought forward: "although memory strategies can be powerful contributors to language learning, language students rarely report using these strategies either because they do not use memory strategies very much or because they are unaware of how often they actually do employ memory strategies". As is known, the English words used to explain or define in a dictionary are usually simple ones; the students should have already learned most of them in their secondary schools. Nevertheless, they still do not get used to learning the usage of a word only in its English context. It is assumed that two possibilities may account for this phenomenon: on the one hand, the students do not learn their English well in the secondary schools and still have difficulties in understanding the English explanations; on the other hand, they can understand the English explanations well enough, but just do not get used to the way of only reading the English explanations.

#### B. Correlations between Stage Strategies Use and Writing Achievements

Pre-writing strategies and revising strategies positively correlate with students' writing achievements indicates that the more often students use the strategies, the higher scores they would get in the writing test. Further correlation analyses between pre-writing and revising strategies use and content and language scores show that the use of pre-writing and revising strategies positively correlates with content scores and language scores respectively, in other words, the more often students use strategies, the more content scores and language scores they will get. The results are showed in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN STAGE STRATEGIES AND WRITING ACHIEVEMENTS, CONTENT SCORES AS WELL AS LANGUAGE SCORES

		Pre-writing strategies	While-writing strategies	Revising strategies
Writing achievements	Pearson Correlation	.254(**)	.146	.397(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.119	.000
Content	Pearson Correlation	.275(**)	.129	.360(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.169	.000
Language	Pearson Correlation	.203(*)	.142	.381(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.128	.000
	N	116	116	116

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

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### C. The Predictive Power of the Writing Strategies

The multiple regression analyses imply that the writing strategies as a whole have significant predictive power not only for the writing achievements, but also for content scores and language scores.

From table 5, it can be seen that the writing strategies as a whole predict 16.4% of the variance in students' writing achievements, the writing strategies as a whole predict 15.6% of the variance in students' content scores, and the writing strategies as a whole predict 13.2% of the variance in students' language scores. From this, it can be concluded that the writing strategies as a whole only have certain predictive power for the writing achievements, content scores and language scores. The result further confirms the finding about learner factors in language learning, that is, besides writing strategies, there are many other factors that may contribute to the development of students' writing ability. To name a few of them, situational factors such as language learning setting, task demands, and various individual learner differences such as learning beliefs, L2 proficiency, L1 writing ability, learning style, personality, and motivation all may have direct or indirect influence on students' writing achievements. Therefore, strategy has certain predictive power for writing achievements, but it is not the only factor.

TABLE 5  
THE MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS BETWEEN WRITING STRATEGIES AND WRITING ACHIEVEMENTS, CONTENT SCORES AND LANGUAGE SCORES

Dependent variable	Multiple R	R Square	F	P
Writing Achievements	.405	.164	22.36	.000
Content Scores	.395	.156	21.071	.000
Language Scores	.363	.132	17.337	.000

In order to have a clearer idea about the relationship between various factors and English writing outcomes, a model (see Fig. 1) was designed which was adapted from Ellis (1994, p.473-530).

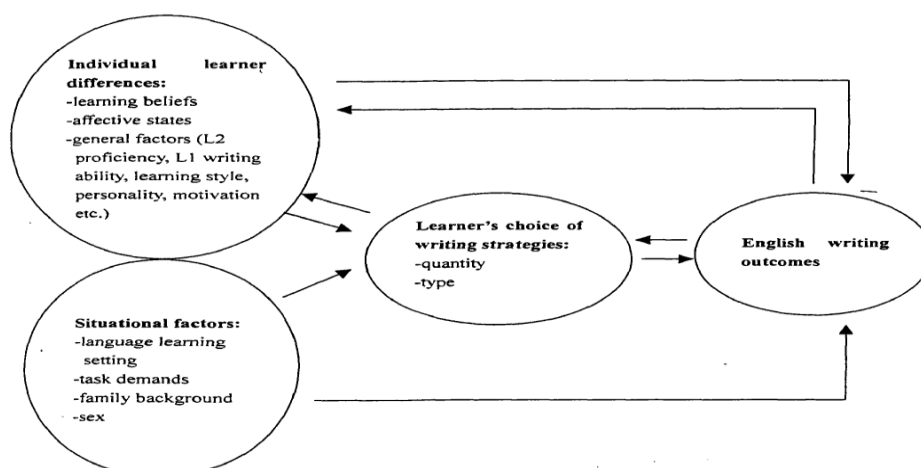


Figure 1: The relationship between various factors and English writing outcomes

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The findings in this study provide much insight into English writing teaching. Firstly, although students can frequently make use of some strategies, such as identifying strategies and compensation strategies, other strategies are receiving relatively insufficient attention. So teachers can spend some time introducing these strategies to make students to be aware of all the writing strategies available scores. Secondly, from the descriptive analysis of the three types of stage strategies, it can be seen that the revising stages are to some extent neglected; therefore, the teachers should introduce the process approach to the English writing teaching.

Although this study can shed some light on the teaching of writing for Chinese non-English majors, it has some limitations, however. First, the subjects in the present study come from the same college, and the sample is not so big. So the conclusion may not be generalized on a large scale. In addition, the classification of the questionnaire items into individual learning strategies as defined by Oxford is somewhat subjective. Therefore, further studies should be carried out to complement the results of the present study in order to confirm the effectiveness of the process approach and writing strategies to the teaching of college English writing.

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# Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*: A Modernist Study

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**Abstract**—This study tries to analyze Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* from a modernist point of view. Bellow applies some narrative techniques which closely match those of the modernist diegetic process. The narrative has a potentially representative content which opens one's horizons toward new sources of meaning and conceptual interpretation. The focal point, in this study, is to examine the epistemological level, individualism, stream of consciousness, pessimism and irony to see how tangibly these terms agree with the very context of the above-mentioned novel and to find out whether the purely abstract terms extracted from modernist theory can be concretized in a practical form. Furthermore, this study aims at scrutinizing in detail the frequency and the possibility of the modernist narrative elements in the very fabric and texture of fictional narrative in general.

**Index Terms**—Saul Bellow, modernist, epistemology, individualism, irony

## I. INTRODUCTION

The study starts with a brief introduction to modernism, modernist fiction, and a short analysis of Bellow's *Seize the Day*, which is followed by the modernist study of *Seize the Day*.

## II. MODERNISM

Literary modernism is a twentieth-century movement which takes new aspects of literature, as concerned with the changing situation of the society, into account. The exact period in which the movement appeared is much debated by critics. Brooker argues that some critics extend the period from 1880 to 1950, while some others divide the period and "give priority to the prewar years," or "post-war years". (1972, p.4) some other critics believe that the movement started in 1890 and finished in 1945 when the second world war was over. The debate over the beginning or end of modernism is not as significant as its literary ideology which is to be discussed in this research.

Modernism as a "creative violence" (Levenson, 2002, p.2) deviates from the literary tradition and turns the holistic and taken-for-granted literary concepts into new internal and mental trends. The significant point to be made here is that "modernist" must be distinguished from "modern". Modern can denote anything done or produced at the contemporary period while modernist refers to specific experimental elements which flout the conventional literary forms. In modern writings, the historical period is emphatically implied, whereas modernist writings lay stress on the dominant techniques and approaches which are deemed to be the touchstones for putting pen to paper.

Cuddon has given the following definition of modernism:

A very comprehensive term applied to international tendencies and movements in all the creative arts since the latter end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Professor Kermode has made a distinction between Palaeo-modernism and Neo-modernism. Palaeo-modernism refers to early manifestations of new movements concluding, perhaps, c. 1914-20, while neo-modernism refers to movements (like surrealism [q.v]) since that time. As far as literature is concerned modernism reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man's position and function in the universe and many (in some cases remarkable) experiments in form and style. (1977, p. 399).

The above-mentioned citation can be clarifying and revealing as to the hallmarks of the movement. The modernist movement is "a breaking away from established rules" of the previous eras and considers "man's position" and "function" from a view point which is quite bizarre to the eyes of traditionalists. Modernism as "the literature of technology" displays "introversion, technical display, internal self-scepticism" (Bradbury and McFarlane, 1991, pp. 26-27) to reflect "experiments in form and style" as man's roles and intellectuality change tremendously because of metropolitans and technological developments.

Another issue which instigated the modernist movement was the "nineteenth-century assumptions" which had established themselves as "dead conventions" (Faulkner, 1977, p. 1). Realism and naturalism were some of the touchstones by which the validity of literature was measured. But the modernists who regarded literature as a self-contained phenomenon reflecting the autonomy of the writer disagreed over the well-established rules of the Victorian period and using experimental devices created new literary masterpieces based upon their own reflections and

intellectualism.

They believed that "modernization has changed the very nature of reality" and literature "has to change its very nature" (Matz, 2004, p. 6) to dig up the unexcavated monuments of mind.

Ousby in his book called *Literature in English* came up with the following statement on modernism:

The term for an international tendency in the arts brought about by a creative renaissance during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and lasting into the post-war years. Strictly speaking, modernism can not be reliably characterized by a uniform style or even described as a "movement", since it embraced a wide range of artistic movements, including symbolism, impressionism, post-impressionism, Futurism, constructivism, Imagism, Vorticism, Expressionism, dada" and surrealism . (1996, p. 263)

As we can infer from this quotation, the renaissance that modernism follows is creative and we have a medley of different movements in modernism which point to its anti-realist and anti-traditionalist attributes. Thus, modernism which breaks with the past cannot reflect and underpin the flavor of traditional literature. It is revolutionary by nature and creates experimental backgrounds for the disintegration of man's mind and situation to match the modern environment in which consciousness is widely changed. It can mostly be ascribed to the modern era and the peculiarity of contemporary literary analysis. Therefore, it is not historically bound up with any particular period and challenges the conventions. Its aim is paradoxically gained through the literary devices and figures of traditional literature.

### III. MODERNIST FICTION

As was mentioned before, modernism breaks with the past and the conventions of literary genres which were dominant in the previous eras. In the Victorian period, realism and naturalism were the outstanding modes in which the writers would arrange their novels. Verisimilitude as "the achievement of an illusion of reality in the audience" (Abrams, 1971, p. 211) was one of the main criteria to recognize literature as authentic. This aspect of fiction was mostly reflected in the realistic features of the novel.

Realist fiction attempted "to present life as it is" and naturalism gave "an even more accurate depiction of life than realism" in the eyes of Victorian novelist. Naturalism pointed to the deterministic aspects of life which are affected by "heredity and environment" (p. 174). Modernist fiction goes against the literary norms of the past by reflecting the internal aspects of each individual as autonomous subjects and defies the fate of man as determined through rendering "redemptive hope" and "meaning or wholeness or beauty to the modern world" (Matz, 2004, p. 9)

An elaboration on "redemptive hope" can be unraveling through this quotation:

This redemptive conviction is typical, not universal: many modern novelists do not necessarily put the "pattern of hope into fiction." But for the most part to write modern novels meant to face modernity with a sense that literary form could redeem it – that it could make a supreme difference to the very life of human culture. (p. 10)

The modernist fiction deals with the changing affects of technology and modernity in different ways. In so doing:

The modernist novel has shown, perhaps, four great preoccupations: with the complexities of its own form, with the representation of inward states of consciousness, with a sense of the nihilistic disorder behind the ordered surface of life and reality, and with the freeing of narrative art from the determination of an onerous plot. (Bradbury and McFarlane, 1991, p. 393).

Basically, the above-mentioned aspects may vary from novelist to novelist based upon the perspective they hold. In modernist fiction, the autonomy of the artist has been laid stress upon as significant. Therefore, to deviate from the literary norms of the fictionalization, each artist tries to portray the internal "complexities" of his world in an experimental way which is remarkably free from the "Linear narrative", and "logical and progressive order" typical of Victorian period. (p. 393)

Postmodernist fiction-writers can be divided into two groups: 1- traditionalist modernists and 2- new modernists which are discussed here to shed some light on the issue at hand. As Brooker says,

Virginia Woolf went on to suggest that modernist fiction had to do with a perception of changed social relations and attitudes; She applied "interiorizing treatment of character and consciousness in the novel but her method was not the method of modernism" for "she finds the 'modernist' Joyce and Eliot indecent and obscure (1972, p. 5).

The traditionalist modernism was a reaction against the classical literature which was still reminiscent of Victorian period while new modernism totally breaks with the previous conventions and compensates for the loss of identity through the reflection of new experimental techniques. To illuminate the traditionalist modernism the following quotation can be clarifying:

There were cross-references for this new classicism in literature, in Hulme, Eliot, Joyce, as well as Virginia Woolf, but again the claims and tendencies they pursued (for non-representationalism, impersonality of form and design, analogies across the arts or between art and science) were not in their own terms 'modernist'. (ibid, p. 6)

In reading different types of modernist fiction, we may unconsciously notice the above-mentioned qualities: because of the advent of movements such as 'symbolism', impressionism, 'post-impressionism', 'Imagism', dada, surrealism and so on, the new modernist fiction has been enhanced to a high extent but the role of forefathers as Virginia Woolf, T.S Eliot and James Joyce cannot be ignored.

In traditional Victorian novels, the role of narrative as crucial and well-established can be totally observed. The plot, characterization, point of view, denouement and other elements are flaunted in a naturalized way so that the readers

who must sympathize with this trend of narrative writing find it impossible to escape the conventional narrative techniques. But as Woolf points out:

If a writer were a freeman and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work up on his feeling and not upon convention, there would be not plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the bond Street tailors would have it. (qtd. in Reinhead, 2000, p. 2150)

As we can infer from the above-mentioned utterances, the process of free writing and individual-oriented narrative requires a deviation from "the accepted style" and the conventional narratives can not satisfy the demands of an ever-changing individual in a world where the mentality of human beings is affected time and again by technological innovations and scientific progress.

In discussing modernist novels, we can point out their distinctions from conventional novels in terms of remarkably changed narrative techniques. The impact of Freudian psychology and the philosophy of Nietzsche and Marx on the mind of man turned his mind away from external objects and made him look into the internal affairs for which writers had not been able to find any appropriate outlets. In such circumstances, the conventional narrative techniques which mostly focused on external descriptions as the forming principles for narration did not suffice, so much so that modernist novelists turned to some bizarre processes which would portray man's mind and world in a defamiliarized manner.

In this way, experimentalism, as experiencing new forms and styles to satisfy modern man, came into existence. Modernists tried "to get beyond the over-simplified accounts of experience" and tested "new methods of organization" for their narratives" through juxtaposition (rather than simple narrative) and irony (rather than unity of mood)". (Faulkner 16). Here, the modernist narrative can be underpinned by what Joseph Frank calls "spatial form" in return for chronological form in the traditional art. (qtd. in Faulkner, 1977, p. 16) what Frank says has been elaborated on by Faulkner as saying that "the reader is being asked not to follow a story but to discern a pattern.... The tension between, 'the time-logic of language and the space-logic implicit in the modern conception of the nature of poetry'- and, as he also shows, of the novel." (pp.16-17)

The "pattern" that is asked to be followed is mostly visualized through imagery and symbolism in poetry and as extended from poetry to modernist narratives; That is to say, if the reader is to decode modernist novels, he / she should go through the repetitive or thematic images or symbols as the keys to the designed plot of the novel which of course implies open-endedness and inconclusiveness for the reader who is suspended in a land of epistemological questions.

Narrative as opposed to naturalism and symbolism does not tend to encompass mimesis or poesis. As Trotter says "in modernist writing, mimesis is not so much an end in itself as an occasion for the triumph of poesis" (1999, pp. 75-76). So we have a "dialectic between the two doctrines. We can compare the modernist narrative to a detective story in which the more we go forward the more we get closer to its poetic aspects than imitation of bitter realities of life.

Narrative in modernist fiction can not follow and obey the conventional modes theorized by Aristotle and other critics because it is the portrait of and reflection of man's disintegrated mind which is finally resolved through "instilling into it a stricter form". (p. 74). The forms which are included in modernist narrative are mostly concerned with making the "self autonomous" (Nicholls, 1995, p. 251) and self-reflexive to cope with the technological modernity. Modernist narrative "aims at making fiction itself as complex, as interesting and as strange as interesting and as strange as modern experience" (Matz, 2004, p. 6).

In this part of the study, we would focus mainly on some of the techniques which are the building blocks for my research.

#### A. *Epistemological Level*

According to Lacey:

Epistemology also called theory of knowledge, occasionally gnoseology. Enquiry into the nature and grounds of knowledge. 'What can we know, and how do we know it?' are questions central to philosophy, and knowledge forms the main topic of epistemology, along with its relation to other cognitive notions like BELIEF, understanding, REASON, JUDGEMENT, SENSATION, PERCEPTION, INTUITION, guessing, learning, forgetting. (2005, p. 96)

The above-mentioned quotation elaborates about the philosophy behind this term to a large extent, but the roots of this movement in modernism are remarkably related to modern man's situation in the society. The alienation of modern man and his exposure to scientific development and new philosophical theories based on humanism made man wonder what the truth is and how he can achieve knowledge based on his limitations.

McHale talks about the epistemological doubts raised by modernist narratives and the kind of questions emphatically posed through these narratives. He says that:

Modernist fiction deploys strategies which engage and foreground questions such as .... "How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am in in it?... what is there to be known? Who knows it? How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty? How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability? How does the object of knowledge change as it passes from knower to knower? What are the limits of the knowable? And so on. (1983, p. 9)

The significant point to be made about the above-mentioned strategies is that the modernist narratives put these problems forward either directly through questions or they implicitly raise them through the structure of their narratives

or other relevant techniques which on the surface seem irrelevant, but in a closer reading unravel their coherence and interconnectedness. The pattern may be implied through the symbols or images prevalent in the story or the underlying structure which points to the epistemological foregrounding of the text at hand.

Taking the epistemological level into account, Matz comes up with the following comments on modernist narrative:

Who is speaking, and how, and why? What aspect of mental life is explored by the writer's choice of narrative levels? And, perhaps most importantly, how is the writer developing a unique mode of narration by combining different levels-by finding some unique way to move up and down the scale that runs from the most inward narration to the most outward? (2004, p. 58)

As we can see, Brain McHale and Jesse Matz have differently posed their questions, but the fact is that the essence is the same since the two critics have observed the roles of limitedness and validity in their hypotheses. The only problem we face is that they look at the issue from different perspectives. McHale has taken knowledge into consideration which is the source behind all information and Matz looks at "Narrative" and "narration" as the hallmarks for epistemological foregrounding. The quoted comments confirm the nature of modernist fiction itself owing to the fact that its variants take different aspects into account from the viewpoints of the writers but the essence, as based on the suspension of the novels, is the same.

In modernist narratives, "the omniscient narrator" was ruled out because the "third person voice, all-knowing and all seeing" could not fulfill the demands of epistemological dimension of narrations. So, instead a "limited point of view" was adopted to depict the subjectivity of the characters and their skeptical outlook in a world where "no real person ever gets the whole truth" (p. 51). In *Saul Bellow's Seize the Day*, the limited third person point of view is an indication of Tommy's bewilderment and indecisiveness in the social circumstances.

Brain McHale brings up the following themes as practical in foregrounding the epistemological dimension:

Accessibility and circulation of knowledge, the different structuring imposed on the "same" knowledge by different minds; and the problem of "unknowability" or the limits of knowledge: (P. 9)

Which are conveyed through the following devices:

The multiplication and juxtaposition of perspectives, the focalization of all the evidence through a single "center of consciousness"... virtuoso variants on interior monologue ..., "impeded form" "(dislocated chronology, withheld or indirectly-presented information, difficult "mind-style" and so on. (ibid)

The above-mentioned factors are remarkably fruitful in instigating the epistemological level of modernist narratives, but the question which remains is: Does modernism find any answers to the raised questions? The modernist novels are open-ended and inconclusive and do not come up with denouements as we see in realist novels. In other words, they rebel against the established realistic norms; however, they create some alternatives for the problems of uncertainty and doubt through aesthetic forms. They produce "a new realism based strangely on doubt about reality itself" (p. 33)

### B. Individualism

Individualism in modernist narratives reflects the artist's perspectives and views as against the conventional narrative norms; It is covered with "individual consciousness" (Matz, 2004, p. 58) of the artist as the focal point in the development of the literary representation. In other words, the inner world of the artist is preferred to the outer world of the society (Waugh, 1988, P. 24). This technique may stem from the art-for-art's sake philosophy in which the practicality of art as useful to the society and as harmonious with the social circumstances is rejected.

Another element which has been influential in the formation of individual is the alienation of man in the modern society where each individual takes refuge in his/ her own realm of existence.

The alienated modern man is deprived of his rights and demands. He is trapped in a society which determines his way of life and philosophy of being. So he takes refuge in himself, now we observe, as put forward by MacIntyre, what an alienated modern man may utter:

I am what I myself choose to be. I can always, if I wish to, put in question what are taken to be the merely contingent social features of my existence. I may biologically be my father's son; but I can not be held responsible for what he did unless I choose implicitly or explicitly to assume such responsibility. (2003, p. 560)

This "subjective, anti-social mind of the estranged individual" can "put in question" (Matz, 2004, P. 50) all the literary norms as genre, plot, point of view and so on since the prevailing norms can not meet man's demands in portraying the inner aspects of his world disintegrated by the complicated social backgrounds. But if the depiction of characters and their alienation goes too far, it may lead to paranoid, ambiguous personalities which are not discerned by ordinary readers of literary works. Waugh makes some comments in this regard:

In modernist fiction the struggle for personal autonomy can be continued only through opposition to existing social institutions and conventions. This struggle involves individual alienation and often ends with mental dissolution (1988, p. 10).

The modernist narrative of "the alienated human consciousness" leading to individualism had remarkable impacts on the readers. The new technique of "newness would take the world and make it strange" "it would require that people see it a new" and their aim was fulfilled through "defamiliarization" as put forward by "Victor Shklovsky"; "Virtually every work of modern fiction aims to defamiliarize" the norms to the audience. (qtd. in Matz, 2004, p. 71)

The alienation of man as the portrait of individualism was achieved through some steps of which the following two strategies are meticulously organized:

The style of fiction became more poetically dense, as writers tried more self-consciously to place stranger weight on every word and every description. And, second, the fiction writer now set out self-consciously to shock; (Matz, 2004, pp. 71-72)

In Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* the two elements as brought up above are delicately presented so that the alienation of modern man is skillfully displayed to the attentive readers who notice "the stranger weight" on every description of Tommy's misery by their willingness to be shocked.

### C. Stream-of-consciousness

In modernist narrative, "loss of order" "led to the belief in its recovery at a deeper level of the mind" (Waugh, 1988, p. 24). They turned from the objective descriptive world of realism to the subjective personal world of the author. In this way, the traditional narrative techniques could not work any more; Modernists turned to "stream of consciousness" as an experimental strategy to delve into the mind of man as the ocean of knowledge. "Now human consciousness and especially artistic consciousness could become more intuitive, more poetic; art could now fulfil itself" (Bradbury and McFarlane, 1991, p. 25)

Stream of consciousness is a phrase coined by William James in his book called *principles of psychology* (1890). Abrams defines it as follows:

Stream of consciousness is the name for a special mode of narration that undertakes to reproduce, without a narrator's intervention, the full spectrum and the continuous flow of a character's mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts memories, expectations, feelings, and random associations (1971, p. 202)

The mingling of "sense perceptions" "with conscious and half-conscious" elements of human understanding may seem bizarre at first glance, but at a deeper level, all these mental processes interact to discover the "Epistemological cause" (Bradbury and McFarlane, 1991, p. 25) of human consciousness.

As was mentioned before the alienation of man from the society and the challenge of artists to be autonomous and independent were reflected in their efforts to produce unique and anti-realistic works. Stream of consciousness helped "several original minds" who "had been working, independently, towards a new method of writing fiction" prove their isolation and originality in the depiction of their loneliness and lack of communication. Modernists believed "no single view or style of explanation could ever be adequate to the diversity of modern experience"; Therefore, "heterogeneity could be accounted for through the use of stream of consciousness as one of the diversifying techniques.

Stream of consciousness as the interpretive strategy of artistic independence can take many forms here what Matz says can be of great help:

Stream of consciousness could take many forms. The main goal- the "unmediated" discourse of the mind itself-could be reached in different ways depending on the state of mind in question or a writer's theory about where to locate the mind's most basic activity stream of consciousness might mean a very random jumble of perceptions and imagings, or it might mean a very direct pursuit of some train of thought, as long as its narration proceeds as if unprocessed by any authorial intervention. (2004, p. 54)

In Saul Bellow's *seize the day*, the second form rendered by Jesse Matz has been adopted so that "a very direct pursuit of some train of thought" is followed by Tommy Wilhelm as the main character in the novel. So the kind of misunderstanding about stream of consciousness as only collecting irrelevant perceptions of thought is demystified here, as opposed to other modernist narratives in which associations are mostly unrelated and randomized according to "multitudinous thoughts and feelings". (Cuddon, 1977, p. 661)

Stream of consciousness includes interior monologue as a subcategory or "interchangeably". Interior monologue is concerned with that species of consciousness which undertakes to present to the reader the course and rhythm of consciousness precisely as it occurs in a character's mind (Abrams, 1971, p. 202)

Interior monologue is widely used in modernist narratives to foreground the epistemological level of characters' limitations (McHale, 1983, p. 9). This narrative strategy, the perceptions "would still not be wholly coherent, but they wouldn't descend so much into the irrational, the unconscious, or the nonverbal". (Matz, 2004: 56). The important point to be made here is that the writer "does not proceed" traditionally" with a view to bringing a continuity of exterior events to a planned conclusion" (Faulkner, 1977, p. 16). In this way, the traditional concepts of narrative and plot are shattered to reflect the epistemological complexities of modernist fictionalization.

The modernist narratives express a sense of pessimism in their attitudes throughout the narration. They mostly focus on this strategy because of their break with the previous pretensions of optimism. The role of urbanization and world wars cannot be ignored in this regard. Urban life and the impact of world wars made life complicated and hard to tackle. In this period, the writers flouted the conventional strategies of narrative and characterization to flaunt the disintegration of modern man. The role of alienation, which is the result of the isolation of man from a society in which lack of communication is widespread, can remarkably be observed in the pessimistic attitudes of modernists.

As we can observe, the perspective adopted here is that the "dysfunctional individual" cannot find his way in an "urban", "fragmented society". The above example is utterly existent in the characterization of Tommy Wilhelm in Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*. The other point is that the epistemological bewilderment of characters in modernist narratives is caused by the innate pessimism of modernism as a key element in the formation of modernist paranoid personality.

Another key term closely related to pessimism in modernist narrative is paranoia. "Paranoia, or the threat of total



engulfment by somebody else's system" is "keenly felt" by the modernist characters. (Lewis, 2001, p. 129). Here the skeptical paranoid characters who test truths and inquire into fundamentals, express their dissatisfaction, with life which does not work a certain way as against the Victorian narratives. The modernist characters are agonized by what Tony Tanner calls "dread that someone is patterning you life, that there are all sort of invisible plots a foot to rob you of your autonomy of thought and action, that conditioning is ubiquitous" (qtd.in Lewis, 2001, pp. 129-130)

The pessimistic modernist writers thought that the society was trying to Rob them of their "autonomy" and they had been conditioned by the traditional narrative techniques which had made them turn into anti- traditionalists. They believed in a general pessimism about the world, and rendered a rejection of society's certainties, a sense that only the artist is tells the truth. The reactions of modernist characterization in the development of this strategy can be fully elaborated in Bellow's work which will be discussed later on in the application section of the research under discussion.

#### D. Irony

Irony is defined as: "a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed" (Abrams, 1971, p. 97). In modernist narratives, the role that irony plays can be quite remarkable because its function determines the way narration is distinguished from previous conventions. In modernist narrative, we no longer rely on "unity of mood" which orientates the readers' expectations, the "irony" of narratives makes the structures of modern narrations shattered and unpredictable so that the reader faces "juxtaposition" and not "simple narration" (Faulkner, 1977, p. 16).

In modernist narratives irony is used for different purposes, but one of the eye-catching justifications behind this technique is the epistemological level of modernism. Matz has more to say on that as follows:

And worst, if truth recedes entirely, if there is a great difference between lost truths and bad realities, irony results. Irony- the bleak difference between what is and what ought to be, the wry gap between what is said on the surface and what is really meant – is often the end-point of the modern novel, where questioning and skepticism lead ultimately to the dismal discovery that things are very much not what they seem(2004, p. 34).

In modernist narratives, "writers also test reality by showing how much it is 'subjective'" (p. 23). Since the autonomy of the writers and their independence is revitalized only through the ironic distance they keep from the Victorian and realistic narratology. In realistic narratology, the events are naturalized and the readers are conditioned to follow the chronological or logical chain of events without taking the individuality of the characters into account, but modernist outlook toward narratology is uniquely constructed owing to its attentiveness to irony as the shelter from the past and "novels" which are "self-conscious about fiction's function" show "a new realism" directed at changing man's perception (p. 36).

Modernist narratives aim at flaunting realism ironically to show "aesthetic truth" (p. 77) as the alternative to the socially accepted realities. They usually pose some epistemological questions using ironic structures and the solution as opposed to realistic narratives turns ironically unexpected; consequently, a new form takes the place of traditionally accepted doctrines. They ironically break with the past to replace their subjective, epistemological creeds which are based on the internal world of the characters.

As opposed to realistic narratives, this modern novel does not begin describing the setting or mood according to literary norms, "It does not proceed from given starting point into a story", but it "works from the starting point to see how got there," (p. 33). The basis for the narration of *Seize the Day* is the epistemological foregrounding of realities as posed by the society and as perceived by the subjective character of Tommy Wilhelm.

In this study, the epistemological level, individualism, stream of consciousness, pessimism and irony as modernist techniques applicable to the novel are under discussion to see how these elements interact in conveying the message of modernist narration. The important point is that some of the above-mentioned elements may seem less obvious but the dominance of the techniques can be proved through a modernist reading.

### IV. SEIZE THE DAY

*Seize the Day* is a novel about Tommy Wilhelm who is an unemployed, middle-aged man who is waiting for a divorce from his nagging wife. He lives in Hotel Gloriana where he and his father live separately. He desperately needs his father's help, but he can never obtain it. The novel's narrative is confined to one day, but several flashbacks of Wilhelm's past are present. Wilhelm invests in trading lard and rye through Dr. Tamkin, a pseudo-psychologist. Tommy has problems with his wife and father which put him under pressure. Dr. Tamkin turns out to be a treacherous person and Tommy is deprived of his share in market, as a result. Dr. TAMkin offers the here and now philosophy to him and talks about the real soul and the pretender soul which make Tommy epistemologically confused. When he finds out about the destruction of his hopes, he goes to the street and accidentally attends a funeral in which he cries for the loss of another human being, himself and his inaccessible opportunities. The tears he sheds there are a catharsis for him and give him a new life of hope and happiness.

#### A. The Epistemological Preoccupation of Tommy

Tommy is constantly involved in a struggle with himself to see if he can find answers to the questions raised by his troubled life. Once his mother talked about Artie, wilkheim's cousin. "who was an honor student at Columbia in math

and languages". And what Tommy thought about him, as a result, can be put forward as follows: Did Artie love his languages, and live for them, or was he also, in his heart, cynical? So many people nowadays were, No one seemed satisfied and Wilhelm was especially horrified by the cynicism of successful people (Bellow, 1977, p. 20- henceforth Bellow)

Here, some philosophical questions concerning "cynicism" are problematically raised to foreground the epistemological preoccupations of Tommy as the protagonist of the novel. The narrative voice which follows the questions endorses Tommy's comments but its reliability is under question and also the shift in point of view makes the narrator difficult to read and brings about the question of how to deal with Wilhelm.

In another part of the novel, Tommy asks himself "when do you start to become a man?" (p. 19). This comment epistemologically points to the suspension and bewilderment that Tommy's character as a paranoid identity ascribes to himself. He later on asks himself "How could I have been such a jerk as not to prepare for anything and just go on luck and inspiration?" (p. 19). This epistemological questioning in the form of an interior monologue gives more credence to Tommy's changing character as a modern man.

Epistemological doubt as a dominant mode can be traced throughout the narrative; Tommy is deprived of so many rights, encounters some mental, epistemologically posed questions which are typical of modern man. Talking about his mother's death with his father he says "yes, that was the beginning of the end, wasn't it, Father?" (p. 33)

Afterwards the third person narrator says:

Wilhelm often astonished Dr. Adler. Beginning of the end? What could be mean – what was he fishing for? Who's end? The end of family? The old man was puzzled but he would not give Wilhelm an opening to introduce his complaints. He had learned that it was better not to take up Wilhelm's strange challenges. (p. 33)

Wilhelm as the symbol of modern man, problematizes the concept of death for which no answer or solution is offered up to this part. His preoccupation with philosophical issues complicates his personality.

Tommy's sense of bewilderment is evident in his daily life in criticizing his father's behavior toward him, he says:

Why did I come here in the first place, to live near him? New York is life a gas. The colors are running. My head feels so tight. I don't know what I'm doing, He thinks I want to take away his money or that I envy him. He doesn't see what I want. (p. 55)

In this excerpt, his lack of knowledge concerning the social environment around him is underpinned through the monologue as one of the techniques in conveying epistemological doubt (McHale, 1983, p. 8).

"The multiplication and juxtaposition of perspectives" (p. 9) In Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* is associated with the epistemological foregrounding. The way Dr. Tamkin talks about life is different from the way Dr. Adler, Mr. Perls, or Tommy consider life. Tommy mostly blames his father, wife and urban life as the reasons behind his destruction, talking about city life he says:

Dad, I can't take city life anymore and I miss the country. There is too much push here for me. It works me up too much. I take things too hard. I wonder why you never retired to a quieter place. (Bellow, p. 49).

Later on his dad says:

You make too much of your problems, they ought not to be turned into a career. Concentrate on real troubles- fatal sickness, accidents. (p. 50)

As we can notice the medley of ideas leads to the dominance of epistemological limitations. We do not know who is right. Does Tommy as the protagonist come up with truth in emphasizing his subjective internal world? Does his father as the theorist of human external problems portray reality in the best way? The answer to these questions is not obvious, so it can "stimulate" us as readers towards the concept of "unknowability". (McHale, 1983, pp. 8-9)

A very interesting philosophical issue which is expressed through the third person narrator concerning Tommy goes on as follows:

Maybe the making of mistakes expressed the very purpose of his life and the essence of his being here. Maybe he was supposed to make them and suffer from them on this earth ..... and fall upon thorns of life. (Bellow, p. 61)

This comment made by the third person narrator is representative of Tommy's viewpoint. He is skeptically wondering whether "cosmic determinism" is the reason behind his destruction and questions "life" through his pessimistic metaphor of "thorns" as the actualization of his misery. But the adverb "maybe" again boosts his skepticism and bewilderment in the modern world.

### B. *Stream of Consciousness*

This technique is mostly actualized in the form of interior monologue in this novel. As was mentioned before, the modernist writers use interior monologue to foreground their epistemological bewilderment (McHale, 1983: 8). As we go through the context, Tommy's mental involvements are artistically displayed. His sense of confusion is mostly reflected in the way he describes the external objects according to his internal world as the decision-making touchstone in the formation of his personality. Describing his father's friend, Mr. Perls, Tommy comes up with the following comments: Who is this damn frazzle-faced herring with his dyed hair and his fish teeth and this drippy moustache? Another one of Dad's German friends? Where does he collect all these guys. (Bellow, p. 36)

As we can see, the interior monologue reflects the way Tommy considers the inner world as the basis for designing the external world and his subjective perspectives in his judgment on facial descriptions. In this novel; the role of interior monologue is multi-faceted. If you take Tommy into account, you will see how the interior monologues

question his personality and the concept of self.

Tommy criticizes himself as offending his father and through the animal imaginary, he looks down on himself as a human being but the paradoxical point to be made about the interior monologues as opposed to the afore-mentioned comments is that Tommy is not always "forced to be extroverted". In other words his characterization cannot be described in the form of conventional modes; otherwise he could not be called a modernist character. His changing mood is aesthetically pointed out in the constant development of the interior monologues. In another part of the context as paradoxically oriented against the previous statements he says:

Dad thinks I'm too simple, but I'm not so simple as he thinks. He doesn't forget death for one single second, and that's what makes him feel like this. And not only is death on his mind but through money he forces me to think about it, too. It gives him power over me. (p. 62)

Here, Tommy fixes his faults on his father and seems to be an all-knowing man analyzing a faulty old father's personality in a psychologically proved manner. So his previous admittance of his faults is totally reflected through the justifications that are directed against his old man.

*Seize the Day* is a typically modern novel because its theme, Consciousness of selfhood, is centered on modernism. Tommy's Consciousness is a Conscious gesture that dignifies mankind even if it is fundamentally ridiculous. In realistic and Victorian novels. Characters are to a high extent types and they have the same attributes in different narratives, but here stream of Consciousness in the form of interior monologues helps the characters express their individuality and sense of loneliness. The realistic modes cannot meet the demands of modernist narratives because order, as was adopted by realism, does not exist anymore. The fragmentation of human personality must be shown according to a system which best matches the human Consciousness.

In *Seize the Day*, the interior monologues are not chronologically created and do not follow the same pattern, but as opposed to other modernist novels in which the stream of Consciousness as free associations show the originality of modernism. It goes beyond human understanding; *Seize the Day* "is a very direct pursuit of some train of thought" (Matz, 2004, p. 54) in which interior monologues function as the proposers of the epistemological dimension of Tommy Wilhelm's mind. In realistic novels, the more we go forward the more the questions are solved for us. But here the more we move on, the more we encounter the epistemological questions posed by Wilhelm's monologues. As an example, we can refer to what Tommy says when he is offered a poem by Tamkin called: "Mechanism vs. Functionalism" (Bellow, p. 80) in which he does not associate the poem with some other events in his life but "utterly confused, Wilhelm said to himself":

What kind of mishmash, claptrap is this! What does he give me this for? What's the purpose? Is it a deliberate test? Does he want to mix me up? ..... why do people naturally assume that you'll know what they are talking about? No, I don't know and nobody knows. (p. 81)

### C. Individualism

In *Seize the Day*, the individuality of Tommy Wilhelm is ironically foregrounded. He has not been able to reach "individual Consciousness" (Matz, p. 58) because as against his wish, his father still calls him "Wilky" which seems childish and banal. Also, the descriptions expressed by Tommy about himself are mostly indicative of his inner world, as opposed to the outer world, in which he regards himself as "Fair-haired hippopotamus" (p. 10) in the form of animal imagery which is reminiscent of the sense of alienation from the society of human beings. The animal imagery mostly reflects lack of communication in modernist's novels owing to the fact that animals and human beings are not able to keep in touch mentally. They may have some physical confrontations but in the spiritual dimension, they are far apart and isolated because of the obstruction caused by technological developments and modern innovations.

There are a number of justifications behind individualism in this modernist narrative. Ciancio points to three elements. In the formation of individualistic leanings in Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*. He talks about the "individual and his authentic self, the individual and contemporary urban world, the individual and humanity." Concerning the first one he refers to the "real and pretender soul" in the novel; The second element can be quoted as follows:

That sick Mr. Perls at breakfast had said that there was no easy way to tell the sane from the mad, and he was right about that in any big city and especially in New York- the end of the world, with its complexity and machinery, bricks and tubes, wire and stones, holes and heights, and was everybody crazy here? What sort of people did you see? Every other man spoke a language entirely his own, which he had figured out by private thinking, He had his own idea and peculiar ways. If you wanted to talk about a glass of water, you had to start back with God creating the heavens and earth, the apple; Abraham, Moses and Jesus, ... after reviewing this and getting it all straight again you could proceed to talk about a glass of water. (1969, pp. 89-90)

The sarcastic comment about "a glass of water" clearly points out the alienation of man and lack of knowledge in modern urban world which is replete with obstructions. In addition, absurdity has been implicitly expressed. That talking about "God" and "creation" and the prophets has nothing to do with "a glass of water", confirms the issue of absurd inclinations.

The third element to be elaborated on as "the individual and the humanity" has been clarified by Tommy: once in the market, he was in need of an old man's help, which could be even in the form of a gesture but:

It was not in the code to give information to anyone. Sick with desire, Wilhelm waited for Mr Rappaport to make an exception in his case. Just this one! Because it was critical. Silently, by a sort of telepathic concentration, he begged the

old man to speak the single word that would save him, give him the merest sign. Oh, please –please help. If Rappaport would close one eye or lay his head to one side, or raise, his finger and point to a column in the paper or to a figure on his pad, A hint! A hint!(p. 94 )

Here, Tommy does not expect too much of the old man. He wants him to tell whether "lard" and "rye" will rise in the market, but the "code" of the business is to sacrifice everyone and think about your own self. In the last statement above, the misery of modern individuals has been utterly presented so that the isolation of humanity is delicately shown to emphasize the impact of modernity and human disintegration.

As was mentioned before, individualism raises the artist's views as against the literary narrative norms, to point out such perspectives, modernist narratives use some strategies: two of the strategies mentioned by Jesse Matz are to be applied here to the interpretation of *Seize the Day*; The first one is the "poetically dense" "style" of the authors "to place stranger weight on every word and description" as was explained before and the second one is the attempt "to shock self- consciously" (Matz, 2004, pp. 71-72)

Concerning the first one, the following excerpt can best present the discussion:

You have some purpose of your own, said the doctor. In acting so unreasonable. What do you want from me? What do you expect? What do I expect? Said Wilhelm. He felt as though he, were unable to recover something. Like a bal in the surf, washed beyond reach, his self-control was going out. 'I expect help! .... Wilhelm's hair, the color of whitened honey rose dense and tall with the expansion of his face, and he said. When I suffer – you aren't even sorry. That's because you have no affection for me, and you don't want any part of me. (Bellow, p. 58-59)

The second strategy can be elaborated on, as followers, Wilhelm asks the manager of a bank whether all his money goes to Dr. Tamkin according to their trade contract, and the manager says "No, it doesn't give him." Any rights. "only over, the funds I deposited with you,"(p. 66) he can trade. But we get shocked by what goes in Tommy's mind:

Thank you, that's what I wanted to find out; Wilhelm had said, grateful. The answer comforted him. However the question had no value. Not at all. For Wilhelm had no other assets. He had given Tamkin his last money.(ibid)

Here through the conversation between Bank manager and Tommy, we come closer to his sense of alienation and loneliness because he is trying to "shock" himself "self consciously" to get rid of his problems. Even the reader is affected by his policy and the sense of alienation becomes more logically obvious to the reader.

#### D. Pessimism

A sense of pessimism can be traced in the modernist narratives. They mostly focus on this strategy because of their break with the previous presentations of optimism. The role of urbanization and world wars can not be ignored in this regard because they make life complicated and hard to cope with. Consequently, the writers flouted the traditional literary strategies of narrative and characterization to flaunt the disintegration of modern man's life. Concerning the impact of urbanization the following excerpt can visualize the pessimistic viewpoints, Here is what Tommy says in response to his father's complaint in using pills:

No, Dad, it's not the pills, it's that I'm not used to New York anymore. For a native, that's very peculiar, isn't it? It was never so noisy at night as now, and every little thing is a strain. Like the alternate parking. You have to run out at eight to move your car. And where can you put it if you forget for a minute, they tow you away. Then some fool puts advertising leaflets under your wind shield wiper and you have heart failure a block away because you think you've got a ticket when you do get stung with a ticket, you can't argue. You haven't got a chance in court and the city wants the revenue. (Bellow, p.38)

The urban life led by Tommy and his father and living in a hotel has caused them lack of communication. Tommy is trying in vain to make sense of a predominantly urban and fragmented society. He also fixes his pessimism on his father. His paranoid attitudes maintain his pessimism:

But how we love looking fine in the eyes of the world how beautiful are the old when they are doing a snow job! It's Dad, thought Wilhelm, who is the salesman, he is selling me. He should have gone on the world. (p. 17)

In *Seize the Day*, There is "the conviction that society is conspiring against individual" (Lewis, 2001, p. 130) and the sense of paranoia in terms of Tommy Wilhelm's characterization in a modernist narrative can be conceived remarkably; Talking about "truth", Tommy says:

But what of the truth? Ah, the truth was that there were problems, and of these problems his father wanted no part. His father was a shamed of him. The truth, Wilhelm thought was very awkward. (Bellow, p. 17)

But Tommy's interpretation of "truth" does not go beyond the epistemological limitations nor does it lead to schizophrenia in which delusions about reality dominate the characters, to confirm, the above mentioned comments, The narrator can be quoted as follows:

But his memory was good, he could still separate what had been invented from the actual happening. (p. 19)

Tommy suspects that he" is trapped at the center of an intrigue, often with some justification." (Lewis, 2001, p. 130). He thought "that Dr Alder was using him" (36) and "thing were chaotic all over" (p. 37). His paranoid pessimism has been beautifully portrayed in the quotation below:

The spirit, the peculiar burden of his existence lay upon him like an accretion, a load, a hump, in any moment of quiet, when sheer fatigue prevented him from struggling, he was apt to feel this mysterious weight, this growth or collection of nameless things which it was the business of his life to carry about. That must be what a man was for. (Bellow, p. 44)

Here, "the business of his life." To "carry about" his ideality as an alienated man in a bizarre world can imply his sense of epistemological pessimism because as he says: "that must be what a man was for." This comment is not reliably uttered and even the viewpoint behind it comes out of a paranoid, trembling man who has lost his sense of orientation in a world where values have changed and reliance upon other people is like hanging on the edge of a cliff.

In *Seize the Day*, the psychological tips of Dr Tamkin which finally turn against him as a liar maintain and support Tommy's pessimism to a high extent, he is actually the one who traps Tommy with the use of his intrigues, Tommy as an epistemologically confused man:

Was inclined to agree that many businessmen were insane. And he supposed that Tamkin, for all his peculiarities, spoke a kind of truth and did some people a sort of good. It confirmed Wilhelm's suspicions to hear that there was a plague, and he said, I couldn't agree with you more. They trade on anything. They steal everything. They're cynical right to the bones. (p. 69)

The interpretive point to be made about the quotation is that there is an ironic sense and the reader is directed toward an unbeliability in Tommy's exaggerated cynicism. A paranoid personality would generalize his personal trials and tribulations to mitigate his pains. This characteristic is obviously marked in Tommy's comments. But also it is typical of modernist characterization and changing social circumstances.

The ironic look at pessimism and its epistemological bewildering aspect reaches a point where "abandoning the intractable problems of attaining to reliable knowledge of our world" is dominantly observed and narratives "improvise a possible world" (McHale, 1983, p. 10). This perspective about modernism is specifically obvious in this novel and the aesthetic outlook as an alternative will be further discussed in the next section.

### E. Irony

Throughout the novel, ironic structures are evident. First of all Tommy's, characterization has been ironically conducted as opposed to realistic novels in which the characters can be described in one single sentence and Tommy's changing mood has been ironically conveyed, in one section, we encounter the description that "Wilhelm was used to active life and liked to go out energetically in the morning. (p. 8). As ironical to the previous description, we see that "he had put forth plenty of effort but that was not the same as working hard, was it? The contraction between the two comments leads us to epistemological bafflement and points to the fact that he can not be restricted to a single description of personality.

The function of irony in modernist narratives is also concerned with the epistemological doubt. Modernist novelists use the following four testing strategies as concerned with irony to reach their goals:

Modern novelists tend, First of all, to concern themselves, with difference between appearance and reality. Second, they tend to wonder about subjective and objective perception. They search for essential meanings, in the hope that these might replace the structures and custom that modernity has destroyed. And finally modern novelists begin to become self-conscious about the way fiction works as a form for mediation or interpretation of reality. (Trotter, 1999, p. 34).

All the above-mentioned factors have been put forward in Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* with the use of irony. For example the difference between appearance and reality" in the ironic pessimism of the narration is evident, Dr Tamkin says that:

If you only know one percent of what goes on in the city of New York !You see, I understand what it is when the only person begins to feel like an animal when the night comes and he feels like howling from his window like a wolf. (Bellow, p. 72)

Here, what Dr Tamkin says makes us more doubtful and we look at his statements ironically because as we go through the events we find out that he is not reliable.

Talking about "the pretender soul" and "the real soul" can ironically questions the "objective and subjective perception" (Matz, 2004, p. 34) of human beings in recognizing the essence of reality in modernism as opposed to realistic narratives. Dr Tamkin says:

The interest of the pretender soul is the same as the interest of the social life, the society mechanism. This is the main tragedy of human life, the society. Oh, It is terrible! terrible!.....The true soul is the one that pays the price.. It suffers and gets sick, and it realizes that the pretender soul can't be loved. Because the pretender soul is a lie. The true soul loves the truth. (Bellow, p. 76)

Tamkin, here, preaches something that he can not practices so the ironic aspects is revealed to the reader as they find about the treacherous intentions of the so-called Dr. Tamkin so much so that the ironic difference between the statements and fulfillments make the reader more epistemological bewildered.

The important point which has been ironically conveyed in *Seize the Day* is that through the ironic twist at the end "aesthetic truth" as the alternative to Tommy's problems is brought up. He cries for a human being in his funeral and participates in an aesthetic experience.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this study, a number of modernist and postmodernist techniques were applied to Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughter-House Five* respectively to see how the shift from Modernism to Postmodernism can be

accounted for in terms of literary development.

In *Seize the Day*, the epistemological dominant as proposed by McHale, was widely used throughout the novel. The important point is that the novel is replete with epistemological questions which are self-consciously crystallized. From the very beginning, this characteristic is evident; Therefore, McHale's proposition at least can be applied to this modernist novel.

The role of stream of consciousness as the focal point through which the autonomy and individuality of the author is conveyed, is also predominantly foregrounded so that thoughtful readers will notice its significance as soon as they start reading the novel.

Individualism has been expressed and actualized through the new outlook that we obtain in the context of *Seize the Day*. The unique and far-fetched descriptions of the protagonist as an antihero who does not appease the demands of conventional readers fortifies the anti-traditional dimension of modernism.

The use of irony in *Seize the Day*, is totally new in terms of structural patterns; Irony makes us aware of what we regard as true and what the contextualized truth refers to; This quality arouses the sense of epistemological questioning in the readers.

Pessimism as actualized in the form of paranoia is prevalent in *Seize the Day*. This technique mostly reflects the situation of Modern man as dismal and pathetic. Pessimism can be the offspring of modernization and technological innovations. The important point to be made here is that in Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* all the above-mentioned techniques are simultaneously existent in a chain-like manner. They eventually point to the dominance of epistemology in this modernist literary work. They interact together to problematize what the modern man is looking for as the final limit of knowledge.

The important point is that *Seize the Day* as a modernist novel offers a solution to the epistemological engulfment of Tommy Wilhelm as the protagonist.

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# Brainstorming and Essay Writing in EFL Class

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**Abstract**—The current study aimed at investigating the effect of using the brainstorming technique on developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL. The study attempted to answer the following questions: 1-What are the essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL? 2-What is the effect of using the brainstorming technique on developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL? Tools of the study included a checklist to identify the essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL as well as a pre- post essay writing test and its scoring scale. Results revealed the effect of using the brainstorming technique on developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL.

**Index Terms**—brainstorming technique, first secondary grade, essay writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *Brainstorming and Essay Writing*

Language has an essential role in helping learners develop their thinking and creative skills through using the language in several processes such as, relating, commenting, connecting, predicting, recalling, comprehending, applying, associating, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and solving problems.

Bello (1997) indicated that writing, as a productive language skill, plays an essential role in promoting language acquisition as learners experiment with words, sentences, and large chunks of writing to communicate their ideas effectively and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they learn in class. He added that “one of the major failing in the traditional curriculum could be attributed to lack of attention given to writing, which is an important avenue for thinking”.

As for writing in EFL, French and Rhoder (1992) stated that writing could be viewed as the main area in the curriculum that we associate with creativity, noting that writing is one of the most tasks that we can be asked to perform.

Thus, improving students' essay writing is believed to be one of the most important skills which EFL learners need to develop throughout their schooling.

During their schooling, EFL learners need to develop some writing skills such as: the ability to write complete and meaningful sentences, coherent, clear and well- organized ideas, use communicative language, choose suitable words and idioms and use writing mechanics appropriately.

Darayseh (2003) noted that teaching writing no longer means simply having students do grammar exercises in writing or getting writing which is free from grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes, instead, we are after writing about what students are interested in and what they really want to communicate to the reader, and how they reach their final writing products.

In spite of the importance of the activities included in the various writing stages, many teachers give little or even no attention to such stages.

Colantone (1998) cited that many EFL teachers follow the traditional method in teaching composition concentrating on the final product rather than on the process of writing. "In writing classes, teachers emphasize mechanics, spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, width of margins, and so on, with little attention to development or style.

In addition, the stages of writing: pre-writing, while writing, and post-writing are expected to contribute to strengthening students' thinking skills because they engage them in processes such as connecting, analyzing and evaluating ideas, a fact that leads to sharpening students thinking skills.

With regard to means to help learners generate ideas, Manktelow (2003) highlighted some strategies that could be followed to develop students' creativity such as: problem solving, attribute listing, morphological analysis, brainstorming, and checklists.

Thus, the current study comes as an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of using the brainstorming technique in developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL.

#### 1. Essay writing:

The essay is defined as a short literary composition on a subject expressing a personal view. The essay consists of the following parts:

- The introduction.
- The body.
- The conclusion.

### 1.1. The introduction:

The purpose of the introduction is to introduce the reader to the essay. It tells the reader what the essay is about and why he or she should read it. From reading an introduction, the reader should be able to determine the thesis statement of the essay and the main points that will be discussed, and the order in which they will be discussed.

The thesis is a clear concise statement of the position that the writer will defend in the essay. It also contains the focus of the essay and tells the reader what the essay is going to be about. The thesis statement is usually stated clearly in one or two sentences at the end of the essay's introduction.

### 1.2. The Body:

The body is where the supporting points and details are found. Through body paragraphs, the reader gets more specific information and can form an opinion. Paragraphs must be logically arranged and provide a seamless framework for ideas. Each paragraph should include a topic sentence indicating the main idea of the paragraph.

### 1.3. The Conclusion:

The conclusion serves two specific functions: 1) it summarizes what has been said in the body of the essay without repeating it. 2) it provides the reader with a relevant final thought on what the writer wants him/ her to do, think, believe, or understand.

## 2. Essay Types:

Essays could be classified into four types:

- 1- The Expository Essay.
- 2- The Descriptive Essay.
- 3- The Argumentative Essay.
- 4- The Narrative Essay.

The expository essay, which is also called the analytical or information essay, is that kind which explains and analyzes a specific issue. It requires students to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea, and set forth an argument concerning that idea. This can be accomplished through comparison and contrast, definition, the analysis of cause and effect, etc...

On the other hand, the descriptive essay is that kind which describes an object, person, place, experience, emotion, situation, etc...

As for the argumentative essay, it is that one which attempts to persuade the reader of the writer's point of view. The writer tries to convince the reader of the validity of his / her opinion.

Finally, the narrative essay is that kind which tells a story. Generally the narrative essay is conversational in style, and tells of a personal experience. This essay could tell of a single, life-shaping event, or simply a daily experience.

## 3. Brainstorming Technique:

Brainstorming is a technique used to encourage individuals to generate ideas and come up with a list of possible solutions to a certain problem.

In 1953 the technique was popularized by Alex Osborn in a book called "Applied Imagination". Osborn proposed that groups could double their creative output with brainstorming.

During the brainstorming session, a number of rules should be taken into account including:

- No criticism of ideas.
- Building on what others have suggested.
- Strange and wild ideas are accepted.
- Welcoming the large quantities of ideas.

## B. *Need for the Study*

In the light of the researcher's observations and experience in the field of English language teaching, he observed the little attention attached to essay writing in EFL composition classes in Jordanian schools.

Moreover, the researcher analyzed a random sample of first secondary grade students' composition papers in EFL. Results showed that most students were not able to come up with deep, coherent and logically sequenced ideas.

In addition, a number of studies, which were conducted in TEFL field called for creating a motivating climate and using suitable technique to develop learners' language skills including writing.

Khwaileh (1991) highlighted the importance of the pre-writing stage, pointing out that "nearly most teachers of English as a Foreign Language usually ask their students to write a short composition on a certain topic without giving the adequate support or help apart from the meaning of a few related words". Accordingly, students who are not given the opportunity to generate ideas about the given topic, record them and refine them, usually face a great difficulty in writing comprehensive and logical sentences.

Alsouqi (2001) stated that one reason for Jordanian students' writing problems might be the use of a traditional approach of composition instruction. He noted that "through this traditional approach, teachers roughly explain what features characterize a good text, emphasizing the importance of correct grammar and spelling".

Based on the above-mentioned argument, the current study comes to examine the effectiveness of using the brainstorming technique in developing learners essay writing skills in EFL class.

## C. *Statement of the Problem*



The problem of the study could be stated in the low level of first secondary grade students in Jordan in essay writing in EFL.

Consequently, the present study attempted to answer the following main question:

-What is the effectiveness of using the brainstorming technique in developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL?

Two questions were derived from the main question:

1-What are the essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL?

2- What is the effect of using the brainstorming technique on developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL?

#### *D. Aims of the Study*

The current study aimed at:

1- Identifying essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL

2- Developing Jordanian first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL.

#### *E. Significance of the Study*

The current study is expected to help in the following areas:

1. Ministry of Education: Helping the Ministry develop outcomes of the educational process in Jordan.

2. Supervisors and curriculum planners: -Providing them with the essay writing skills needed to be taken into consideration while planning EFL curriculum.

3. EFL Teachers: Helping them follow suitable techniques for developing students' essay writing skills in EFL.

4. Students: Developing their essay writing skills in EFL

5. Researchers: Paving the way for other researchers to conduct further studies on developing students' writing skills.

#### *F. Limitations of the Study*

1-The study was confined to developing students' essay writing skills.

2- The study was confined to four classes of first secondary grade students randomly chosen from Amman public education schools. (Two classes for the experimental group and the other ones for the control group)

3-The study was conducted in the first term of the academic year 2010- 2011, two months, two periods per week, 45 minutes each.

## II. METHODOLOGY

#### *A. Sample of the Study*

The sample of the study consisted of 84 first secondary grade students classified into four classes, two served as an experimental group and the other ones as control.

The students were assigned randomly from Amman public education schools.

#### *B. Tools of the Study*

1- A checklist to identify the essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL.

2- A pre- post essay writing test and its scoring scale.

The tools were developed by the researcher.

#### *C. Hypotheses of the Study*

1-There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post- test in essay writing in favor of those of the experimental group.

2-There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- test and post- test in essay writing in favor of their post- test scores.

#### *D. Variables of the Study*

1- The independent variable:

- The brainstorming technique

2- The dependent variable:

- Performance of the experimental group on the essay writing post- test.

#### *E. Method of the Study*

1- The study followed the descriptive method in collecting data on writing in EFL general, and essay writing in particular.

2-The study also followed the quasi- experimental design. Two groups were chosen from Amman public education schools. One served as an experimental group and the other one as control. The researcher administered a pre- post test to the experimental and control groups to test the effectiveness of using the brainstorming technique, which was applied to the experimental group.

### F. Definition of Terms

- Effect: the change caused by the use of the brainstorming technique on developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL.
- Brainstorming is a group creativity technique designed to generate a large number of ideas to solve a certain problem.

### G. Procedures of the Study

To answer the main question of the study, the following procedures were followed:

1- To answer the first question: "What are the essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL?" the researcher has:

- 1)- Reviewed the related literature in the field of creative writing in general.
- 2)- Reviewed the related literature in the field of essay writing in EFL in particular.
- 3)- Designed a checklist including the essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL.
- 4)- Submitted the checklist to specialized jury members to identify the essay writing skills needed for first secondary grade students in EFL.

2- To answer the second question: "What is the effect of using the brainstorming technique on developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in EFL?" the researcher has:

- 1)- Reviewed the related literature that includes tests to measure students' writing skills in general and essay writing skills in particular.
- 2)- Prepared the pre- post test.
- 3)- Submitted the test to specialized jury members to ensure its validity and made the necessary modifications in the light of their observations.
- 4)- Ensured the reliability of the test.
- 5)- Chosen a random sample (control and experimental groups).
- 6)- Administered the essay pre- test writing to both groups.
- 7)- Applied the proposed technique.
- 8)- Administered the essay post- test writing to both groups.
- 9)- Collected and analyzed data.
- 10)- Discussed the results of the study.
- 11)- Introduced recommendations and suggestions for further research.

### H. Review of Related Studies

Reynolds (1983) conducted a study to determine the comparative effects that two methodologies (Expressive Writing Methodology and Traditional Writing Methodology) have on the ability of high school students to write stories and essays. The study also aimed at determining if an interaction exists between sex and method of instruction and English achievement level (high achiever or low achiever) and method of instruction on essay and story writing ability.

Subjects 'forty-eight students' were classified into two different groups: one group was instructed by the Expressive Writing Methodology and the other group was instructed by the Traditional Writing Methodology. They were given a pretest story and essay, received a twelve-week period of writing instruction, and then were given an identical posttest.

The main difference between the two groups was that the expressive group participated in expressive writing exercises while the traditional group participated in traditional worksheet exercises. Both groups were involved in the writing process.

No significant differences in story and essay posttest scores between the two groups were observed. No significant interaction effect on story and essay posttest scores between sex of the student and method of instruction was observed, and no significant interaction effect on essay posttest scores between English achievement level and method of instruction was observed. However, a significant interaction effect on story posttest scores between English achievement level and method of instruction was observed.

El Abed (1991) investigated the effect of selected prewriting activities (class discussion and pair discussion) and the effect of no prewriting activity on the quantity and quality of students composition.

The sample of the study consisted of sixty first year students in Hakama Vocational Training Center in Jordan. The students were randomly assigned to one of the three groups: 1) class discussion. 2) pair discussion. 3) No prewriting activity (as control group).

Students of each group completed four compositions, one in each week for four weeks. The first composition (pre-test) was followed by three treatments, each 20 minutes long. After each treatment, the students wrote a composition. The last composition was the posttest.

The compositions were evaluated for quantity (number of words in the composition) and quality (general impression holistic scoring). The composition writing time was ten minutes.

Results of the study showed no significant differences in writing quantity between the selected prewriting activities, class discussion and pair discussion, and the control group.

No significant differences were found in writing quality between the selected prewriting activities and the control group. No significant differences were found among the selected prewriting activities (class discussion and pair

discussion) for either writing quantity and writing quality.

Holden (1996) compared the effectiveness of two approaches to teaching writing (formal grammar instruction and the process approach) in students' knowledge of grammar and writing improvement.

The sample of the study consisted of 70 college students divided into two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group was taught using the process approach. No formal grammar instruction was given to the experimental group.

Results indicated that the experimental group scored a higher number of correct answers on the posttest than the control group did. Furthermore, the experimental group attempted to answer more test questions on the posttest than the control group did.

Furthermore, findings revealed that the process approach to teaching writing, which deemphasizes formal grammar instruction, is more effective in improving students' knowledge of grammar than formal grammar instruction.

Shi (1998) assessed whether peer talk and teacher-led prewriting discussions affect the quality of students' compositions.

Forty-seven adult ESL students from three pre-university writing classes participated in the study. Each student wrote three drafts of opinion essays under conditions of peer discussion, teacher-led discussion, and no discussion.

Nonparametric tests of rating scores showed no statistically significant differences overall in the writing under the three conditions. However, students were found to write longer drafts in the condition of no discussion, shorter drafts after teacher-led talk, and drafts with a greater variety of verbs after peer talk.

Comparison of students' use of verbs in both written and spoken texts traced the effects of various prewriting conditions, whereas the no discussion condition led to longer drafts (presumably because students had more time to write than in the talk-write sessions). Prewriting discussions provided social contexts where either the teacher scaffolded

Students in the whole class situation to conceptualize their thinking or students assisted each other in peer groups to explore more freely and generate diverse vocabulary and ideas for the writing tasks.

Zhang and Vukelich (1998) investigated the influences of prewriting activities on the writing quality of male and female students with varying academic achievement across four grade levels.

Participants were public school students in grades 4, 6, 9, and 11. At each grade level students were assigned to one of two groups: writing with or without prewriting activities. Researchers rated each student's writing piece holistically and on five quality aspects of writing.

Results indicated that on average, students who wrote with prewriting activities performed better than students who wrote without prewriting activities. Students' gender and academic achievement level had strong influences on the effectiveness of prewriting, with females consistently scoring higher than males.

Ismail (2002) investigated the effects of an integrated process-product approach to writing instruction on developing the creative writing skills of first-year EFL majors at Sohag faculty of Education.

The sample of the study involved seventy-four students from Sohag Faculty of Education (Egypt). They were randomly chosen from the population of first-year EFL majors and randomly assigned to a control group and an experimental group.

The experimental group students were taught writing using the integrated process-product approach while the control students did not receive such instructional treatment.

Findings of the study indicated that the process-product approach to writing instruction had significant effects on improving the experimental group EFL majors knowledge of the writing processes, their creative writing skills and products as well as their attitudes towards writing in English as a foreign language. The study recommended that 1- EFL teachers at various educational levels be trained in the implementation of the integrated process-product approach to writing instruction. 2- pre-service as well as in service EFL teachers be systematically trained in fostering and evaluating creativity in the language arts especially writing.

Hashem (2005) investigated the effectiveness of a proposed program in developing the creative thinking abilities of Egyptian third preparatory pupils in English language.

Tools of the study included an opinion- seeking questionnaire, the suggested program and the teacher's guide, the creative thinking abilities test and an observation sheet.

The sample of the study consisted of 132 pupils classified randomly into experimental and control groups.

The experimental procedures of the suggested program lasted for eight weeks. Ten hypotheses were presented by the researcher to test their validity.

To implement the suggested program, the researcher followed several strategies including brainstorming, creative problem solving, discussion, role playing, simulation, self-assimilation, open- ended stories, wordless stories, language games, puzzles and riddles, attribute listing, and skits (innovating a comic solution to a certain character).

Results revealed the effectiveness of the suggested program in developing pupils' creative thinking abilities.

Pupils of the experimental group performed much better on the post-test in the overall creative thinking abilities (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration) than the control group pupils.

Shorofat (2007) investigated the effect of using brainstorming and 'synectics' in developing creative writing skills of ninth female students and their attitudes towards writing in Arabic.

The study sample consisted of 132 students -from Zarqa Governorate Schools- and they were classified randomly into one control group and two experimental groups, one of them used brainstorming and the other group used 'synectis'.

The researcher applied a pre-test on the three groups, and then she taught them during a period of five weeks, after that she applied the post test to investigate the effectiveness of the used strategies.

Results showed that using brainstorming and 'synectis' were effective in developing students' creative writing skills in terms of content, organization, style and mechanics of writing. Results also showed that there was no effect of the used strategies on students' attitudes towards writing.

Banat (2007) investigated the effectiveness of a program based on the process approach and learning style in developing EFL writing skills among Jordanian secondary stage students.

The sample of the study consisted of 90 male first secondary class, scientific stream students enrolled in the academic year 2006- 2007 in public schools in the city of Jarash, Jordan.

The students were allocated in three intact classes. The classes were chosen randomly. Two classes served as experimental groups and the third as a control group.

The students in the first experimental group received instruction through a program based on both the process approach to writing and learning style preference for developing their writing skills.

The students in the second experimental group received instruction through a program based on the process approach to writing only.

In the control group the students received instruction through the traditional method of teaching writing (the product approach). A pre-post test was given to the three groups before and after the treatment.

Findings of the study showed that the three groups achieved tangible progress in their writing skills on the post test as compared to the pretest. Moreover the two experimental groups outperformed the control group on the posttest in overall writing performance. Nevertheless, the process approach and learning styles group (the first experimental group) was better than the process approach group (the second experimental group) on the post test. This means that the program proved to be effective in developing EFL secondary stage students' writing skills.

### 1. Tools of the Study and Procedures

#### 1. Design of the Study:

The study followed the Quasi- Experimental Design. Four classes were chosen randomly from Amman public education schools. Two classes served as an experimental group and the other ones as control.

Students of the experimental group received instruction through the proposed technique (brainstorming), whereas students of the control group received instruction through the traditional method.

A pre-post test was administered to both groups before and after the implementation of the proposed technique on the experimental group.

#### 2. Sample of the Study:

The sample of the study, as shown in table (1), comprised 84 first secondary grade students allocated in four classes, randomly selected from Amman public education schools. Two classes served as an experimental group and the other ones as control

The students' average age was 17 years old. According to their school files, all the students were from a nearly similar socio- economic environment.

TABLE (1)  
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDY SAMPLE

SARAFIYAH GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS				
No.	School	Number of Sections	Number of Students	Method of Teaching
1	Abu Alia School	1	23	Traditional Method
		1	19	Brainstorming
2	Sharif Hussein bin Ali School	1	23	Traditional Method
		1	19	Brainstorming
total		4	84	

#### 3. The Essay Writing Skills Checklist:

##### 3.1. Purpose of the checklist:

The checklist aimed at identifying the essay writing skills necessary for first secondary grade students.

##### 3.2. Content of the checklist:

Having reviewed the related literature on developing students' writing skills, the researcher designed an essay writing skills' checklist and submitted it to specialized jury members in the of English Language Teaching (ELT) so as to determine the degree of importance of each skill on the checklist..

The list included 16 skills classified under four categories: content and organization, language use, mechanics of writing, and creative abilities.

The jury members stated that the skills included in the checklist were generally adequate and appropriate to its purpose. Still, some skills were deleted since they had been considered above the first secondary grade students' level.

The checklist was modified according to the jury members' suggestions to be as follows:

No.	The Criterion	Related Skills
1-	<b>Content and Organization</b>	
		1- Clarity of ideas.
		2- Relevant supporting details.
		3- Dividing the essay into introduction, body and conclusion.
		4- Moving smoothly from introduction to body to conclusion.
		5- Well- organized paragraphs.
		6- Logically- sequenced ideas.
2-	<b>Mechanics of Writing</b>	
		1- Punctuation.
		2- Spelling.
		3- Grammar.
3-	<b>Language Use</b>	
		1- Appropriate choice of words.
		2- Accurate use of expressions.
4-	<b>Creative Abilities</b>	
	(Fluency)	1-Many ideas.
	(Flexibility)	2-Variied ideas and points of view.
	(Originality)	3-Unique titles and ideas.
	(Elaboration)	4- Embellishing ideas with details.

#### 4. The Pre- Post Essay Writing Test:

##### 4.1. Purpose of the test:

The test aimed at measuring the essay writing skills of first secondary grade students in English.

The test was administered to both groups before and after the implementation of the proposed technique (brainstorming).

##### 4.2. Validity of the test:

Test validity refers to the degree to which the test actually measures what it claims to measure.

To ensure validity of the test, the researcher submitted it, in its initial form, to a number of specialized jury members.

The jury members were asked to comment on:

- Clarity of the test instructions.
- Suitability of the topics to the level of first secondary grade students.
- Clarity of the questions.

The test was modified according to the Jury members' comments and suggestions.

##### 4.3. Reliability of the test:

Reliability is the extent to which the measurement of the test remains consistent over repeated tests on the same subjects under identical conditions.

To establish the reliability of the test, it was administered to a sample of 15 first secondary grade students other than the sample of the study. Then, the same test was administered to the same group under nearly similar conditions after two weeks.

The reliability coefficient of the test was estimated using Cronbach Alpha Formula. The estimated value was (0.89), which is considered reliable for the purpose of the current study.

##### 4.4. Duration of the Test:

Duration of the creative writing test was estimated by calculating the time spent by the fastest and the slowest students in answering the test divided by 2. Thus, the time allotted for the test was:

$$\frac{65+35}{2} = 50 \text{ minutes}$$

#### 5. The Scoring Scale:

##### 5.1. Purpose of the scoring scale:

After reviewing a number of writing scoring scales, the researcher prepared the current study's scoring scale to evaluate each skill on the pre- post essay writing test. Students' essays were scored out of 75 points as follows: Content and Organization 30, Mechanics of Writing 15, Language Use 10, Creative Abilities 20. Each skill has a five- level scoring scale ranging from excellent to poor.

##### 5.2. Validity of the scoring scale:

To ensure validity of the scale, the researcher submitted it, in its initial form, to a number of specialized jury members in the field of curricula and instruction (TEFL).

The jury members were asked to comment on the suitability of the scale to assess first secondary grade students' performance on essay writing pre- post test.

The scale was modified according to the jury members' comments and suggestions.

##### 5.3. Reliability of the scoring scale:

To establish the reliability of the scoring scale, the researcher followed two ways:

- 1- The inter-reliability of raters: The researcher and other two experienced raters used the scoring scale to evaluate

students' writing.

A sample of ten papers was chosen randomly and scored by the researcher and other two raters independently. The inter-raters' reliability was computed using Cronbach Alpha Formula. It was (0.89), which is considered reliable for the purpose of the current study. (Table 2)

TABLE (2)  
THE INTER- RATERS' RELIABILITY

The inter- rater correlation	Correlation coefficient
The inter-rater correlation between the first and the second rater.	0. 89
The inter-rater correlation between the second and the third rater.	0. 88
The inter-rater correlation between the first and the third rater.	0. 89
<b>Average</b>	0. 89

2- Intra-reliability of the rater: A sample of students' papers (fifteen papers) was scored by the researcher himself according to the scoring scale. The researcher scored the same papers after two weeks. The intra- rater reliability coefficient was computed through Cronbach Alpha Formula, it was (0.96), which is considered high and reliable for the purpose of the current study.

6. Equivalence of the experimental and control groups:

To establish the equivalence of the two groups, the pre-essay writing test was administered to the experimental and control groups before applying the proposed technique (brainstorming) to the experimental group.

The t- test was implemented to compare the means of both groups on the pre- essay writing.

Table (3) shows the results of the pre- administration of the essay writing test on the experimental and control groups.

TABLE (3)  
SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE PRE-TEST

Pair		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	D.F	P-Value
Essay	Experimental	42	32.50	8.275	0.350	82	0.728
	Control	42	32.00	6.487			

Based on the above table, it could be concluded that the two groups were equivalent in their essay writing skills. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of both groups, thus, any later significant change in students' essay writing skills will be due to the effect of the implementation of the brainstorming technique.

7. The Statistical Methods:

The current study used the following statistical methods:

1- T- Test:

- To measure the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- post essay writing test.
- To measure the difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post – essay writing test.

2- Etta Square Equation. To measure the effect size, the following equation was used:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{T^2}{T^2 + D.F.}$$

### III. DATA COLLECTION AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY

#### A. The First Hypothesis

"There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post- test in essay writing in favor of the experimental group ".

TABLE (4)  
SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE POST-TEST IN ESSAY WRITING

Pair	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	D.F	T	η2	P- Value	Level of Significance at 0.05
Exp.	42	38.74	10.32	82	2.836	0.071	0.006	1.66
Cont.	42	33.76	7.50					

Having analyzed scores of the experimental group and control group on the post-test in essay writing, the researcher concluded that there was statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post –test in essay writing in favor of the experimental group. T value (2.836), η2 value (0.071) and level of significance at 0.05 equaled (1.66).

This proves that the proposed technique had a positive effect on developing essay writing skills of the experimental

group students, since that students of the experimental group, who received training through the proposed technique showed progress in their essays writing skills in terms of content and organization, mechanics of writing, language use as well as skills emerged from creative thinking abilities (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration).

#### B. The Second Hypothesis

"There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- test and post- test in essay writing in favor of the post- test scores ".

TABLE (5)  
SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST IN ESSAY WRITING

Pair	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	D.F	T	$\eta^2$	P-Value	Level of Significance at 0.05
T1	42	32.50	8.28	41	9.915	0.650	0.000	1.67
T2	42	38.74	10.32					

Having analyzed scores of the experimental group on the pre- post test in essay writing, the researcher concluded that there was statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in essay writing in favor of the post-test scores. T value (9.915),  $\eta^2$  value (0.650) and level of significance at 0.05 equaled (1.67).

This also proves that the proposed technique (brainstorming) had a positive effect on developing essay writing skills of the experimental group students. Students of experimental group showed progress in their written essays in terms of content and organization, mechanics of writing, language use and skills emerged from creative thinking abilities (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration)

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Results of the study supported the two hypotheses presented by the researcher. It was proved that the experimental group performed much better on the post- essay writing test than the control group.

Thus, the proposed technique (brainstorming), had a positive effect on developing first secondary grade students' essay writing skills in terms of content and organization, mechanics of writing, language use and skills emerged form creative thinking abilities (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration).

The researcher believes that the use of the brainstorming technique highly contributed to enabling learners generate ideas, exchange opinions and crystallize new thoughts about the raised topics, a fact that positively affected their performance on the post-essay writing test.

In addition, using the brainstorming technique motivated learners to get involved in the learning process and express themselves freely without hesitation, since they were told that their ideas will not be judged during the brainstorming session, thus they felt free while generating their ideas and came up with unique and unexpected thoughts.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings of the study, the researcher recommends the Jordanian Ministry of Education to:

- 1- Place more emphasis on developing students' writing skills in general, and essay writing skills in particular.
- 2-Take the brainstorming technique into account while designing English language curricula due to its role in motivating the students to get involved in the learning process.

Moreover, the researcher recommends teachers of English language to

- 1- Place more emphasis on teaching writing as a process not only as a product.
- 2- Place more emphasis on the pre- writing stage due to its vital role in the writing process.

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# Constructivism and Learner Autonomy in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: To what Extent does Theory Inform Practice?

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**Abstract**—Teachers' definition of what knowledge is, how people acquire it, and how we determine whether knowledge has been acquired or not influence greatly how we understand the teacher's role in the classroom and to what extent we promote learner autonomy in the classroom. Learner-centeredness is one of the most important principles of constructivist FLT. Thus, we could say to a great extent constructivism in education informs the promoting of learner autonomy in the language teaching and learning today.

**Index Terms**—constructivism, learner autonomy, extent, inform

## I. INTRODUCTION

Like the proverbial horse led to water but which must do the drinking itself, even with the best teachers and methods, students are the only ones who can actually do the learning. As Nyikos and Oxford (1993: p.11) put it: "learning begins with the learner". However it takes me many years to truly understand this as a language teacher.

I have studied English as a foreign language since 1978. My English teachers in China were using a mixture of the grammar-translation method and the audio lingual method. Most of my classmates couldn't communicate in English but some of them develop very good reading and writing competence in English. When graduated from a teacher's college, I started to work as an English teacher in 1982. The communicative language teaching movement started in the area where I was working 10 years later. We finally threw away the text books which I used ten years ago as a student, and had new task-based text books. No matter what method the teachers use, I noticed that there were always some learners more successful than the rest in the same classroom using the same materials with the same teacher. What makes some students better language learners?

I found that one group of Year 8 girls of my mandarin lesson became very noisy, and I was thinking of a new seating plan when a girl asked me whether it was possible they did the seating plan for me. To be honest, I was hesitant. But the girl said she thought friends learnt better when they sat together and "you can rearrange it if it doesn't work." So I agreed and it worked perfectly until now. The first time when every girl was seated, the girl who made the seating plan stood up and gave a short speech to her peers saying that they should all appreciate the opportunity to sit next to their friends in Mandarin lesson, therefore they should not take advantage of it by talking instead of studying, otherwise they would have to sit where the teacher ordered them to. I dare say that was one of the best Chinese Mandarin lessons I have had since I came to the UK. They were so cooperative and the atmosphere in the classroom had never been so good. What is behind the magical change?

Better language learners are not necessarily more intelligent but they are more or less more autonomous if we observe carefully how they learn languages. The same group of students behaved so differently just because I had learned to let go, and they had taken hold once. According to Kumaravadelu (2003: p.131), in a rapidly changing world where instant and informed decision making is a prerequisite for successful functioning, helping learners become autonomous is one way of maximizing their chances for success. Considering the importance of learner autonomy, I would try to find out what ordinary teachers can do to promote learner autonomy in the language classroom. I will begin by looking at the basic theory behind the learner autonomy which is constructivism in education, I will then discuss definition and classification of learner autonomy, and go on from there to look at it from a theoretical perspective and rethink my own practice of promoting learner autonomy in my teaching practice. At the same time I will examine how Constructivist teaching and learning led by constructivism encourage learner autonomy. Later I would consider the problems we might encounter when promote learner autonomy.

## II. WHAT IS CONSTRUCTIVISM?

Constructivism is not a new concept. It has its roots in philosophy and has been applied to sociology and anthropology, as well as cognitive psychology and education. The first constructivist philosopher may be Giambattista Vico who commented in a treatise in 1710 that "one only knows something if one can explain it" (Yager, 1991). But the first major contemporaries to develop a clear idea of constructivism as applied to classrooms and childhood

development were Jean Piaget and John Dewey (1966). Piaget's constructivism is based on his view of the psychological development of children. In a short summation of his educational thoughts, Piaget (1973) called for teachers to understand the steps in the development of the child's mind. The fundamental basis of learning, he believed, was discovery: "To understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition."

The Russian Lev. S Vygotsky is also important to constructivism although some commentators believe that Vygotsky is not a constructivist because of his emphasis on the social context in learning, but others see his stress on children creating their own concepts as constructivist to the core. Vygotsky considered an individual's cognitive system to be a direct result of and inseparable from social life (Vygotsky, 1987).

According to Audrey Gray (1997), constructivism is a view of learning based on the belief that knowledge isn't a thing that can be simply given by the teacher at the front of the room to students in their desks. Rather, knowledge is constructed by learners through an active, mental process of development; learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge. So a constructivist classroom should be learner-centered, and the teacher provides students with experiences that allow them to hypothesize, predict, manipulate objects, pose questions, research, investigate, imagine, and invent. The teacher's role is to facilitate this process.

Similar to this Duffy & Jonassen (1992) claims that Constructivists believe that knowledge and truth are constructed by the learner and do not exist outside of his mind. Therefore, according to constructivists, learners construct their own knowledge by actively participating in the learning process. Constructivist instructional developers value collaboration, learner autonomy, generativity, reflectivity and active engagement.

Review the main principles of constructivism in the context of education, we could say that constructivism emphasises learning and not teaching, encourages learner autonomy and personal involvement in learning. Numerous researchers, educators and authors are actively engaged in using constructivist principles to design and implement new learning environments showing that theory can effectively guide educational practice.

### III. DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF LEARNER AUTONOMY

Holec defines learner autonomy as: 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning', which he then specifies as 'to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning,' (1981: p.3). Trebbi argues (1996: p.290) that 'taking charge of one's own learning' is a tautology as no learning takes place unless the learner is in charge; it is a prerequisite of learning.

Many researchers like Dikenson and Wenden (1995); Pemberton et al. (1996); Benson and Voller (1997) are involved into the topic of autonomy in Language learning. Littlewood (1999:71) summarise the central features of their opinions as follow: Students should take responsibility for their own learning. This is both because all learning can in any case only be carried out by the students themselves and also because they need to develop the ability to continue learning after the end of their formal education. 'Taking responsibility' involves learners in taking ownership (partial or total) of many processes which have traditionally belonged to the teacher, such as deciding on learning objectives, selecting learning methods and evaluating progress.

Kumaravadivelu (2003: p.133;141) thinks there are two complementary views on learner autonomy, particular with regard to its aims and objectives. He calls them a narrow view and a broad view of learner autonomy. The narrow view of learner autonomy involves, simply, enabling learners to learn how to learn. He explains that this enabling process includes equipping them with the tools necessary to learn on their own, and training them to use appropriate strategies for realizing their learning objectives. Like Benson and Voller (1997: p.2), he believes that the broad view treats learning to learn a language as a means to an end, the end being learning to liberate. Therefore he took a step further by naming the narrow one as academic autonomy which enables learners to be strategic practitioners in order to realize their learning potential, and the broad view one as liberatory autonomy which empowers learners to be critical thinkers in order to realize their human potential.

The idea of the broad view of autonomy has been posed by many educational philosophers such as Paulo Freire (1970), by social scientists such as Ivan Illich (1971), by general educationists such as Henry Giroux (1988) and Roger Simon (1987) and other scholars such as Phil Benson (1997,2001) and Alastair Pennycook (1997) in the L2 field share the similar idea also. While these scholars tell us what learner autonomy actually is, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003) they also tell us what it is not: Autonomy is not independence, that is, learners have to learn to work cooperatively with their teachers, peers, and the educational system; Autonomy is not context-free, that is, the extent to which it can be practiced depends on factors such as learners' personality and motivation, their language learning needs and wants, and the educational environment within which learning take place; and Autonomy is not a steady state achieved by learners, that is, autonomous learners are likely to be autonomous in one situation, but not necessarily in another, and they may well very well choose to look for teacher direction at certain stages in their learning.

Now we could say that underlying the concept of learner autonomy is constructivist psychological theory. We try to make sense of the world around us based on our previous experience and pre-knowledge. According to Kelly (1953: p.50) we anticipate events by 'construing their replications'. In other words we interpret them so that they assume meaning. In themselves they carry no meaning: meaning is applied by the individual who interprets. We differ from each other in the way we construct events and we have different approaches to our anticipation of the same events (1953:

p.55). Thus learning processes are individual, based on the learner's pre-knowledge and can only be monitored by the learner himself. In classroom terms this means that each learner will encounter the foreign language and the material through which he is expected to learn the language in an individual way, which varies from one learner to the other. That is why the focus has to be on the individual learner and on his needs in the learning process.

#### IV. PROMOTING LEARNER AUTONOMY IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

If autonomous learners are more successful language learner, what can a teacher do to promote learner autonomy in a second language classroom?

Stern (1975) believed that the good language learner is characterised by a personal learning style or positive learning strategies. As a result, for encouraging learners to improve their learning processes and products it is important that teachers and lecturers recognize the learning styles and strategies of their learners. When teach Chinese, I found the students depend on too much on Pinyin and reluctant to focus on the Chinese characters. So I make flash cards of characters and play the game: Listen and Touch. I read the character, two students stand near the characters. The first who touch the character win the game. I thought it might be very popular and fun. But the truth is that some students enjoy it very much while others especially those who are a little bit shy don't want to participate at all. The same situation happened when we do another game like Listen and draw. Although most students like the game, however there are always some students complaining that they can't draw at all. I realised there is not a size suit for all. Each student has his/ her own learning style. Tactile Learners might enjoy drawing and board games but not auditory learners. Visual Learners might like the posters and pictures you choose but kinesthetic learners probably not. Analytic Learners perhaps prefer to be taught the rule of grammars but how about global learners who do not like to be bored. Information needs to be presented in an interesting manner using attractive materials. However it is not enough only we teachers notice different student has different learning style. It is much more important to let the students know about their own learning style if they are to take responsibility of their learning process.

We can find many different theories of learning strategies. One very useful theory has been developed by Oxford (1990). She has divided the strategies into two main classes: direct and indirect ones. Direct strategies are those that directly involve the target language. They are composed of memory strategies for remembering and retrieving new information, cognitive strategies for understanding and producing the language. Indirect strategies are those that support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language. They are composed of meta-cognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating emotions and attitudes, and social strategies for learning and working with others. These research provided us with useful insights into how different students will approach language learning differently and therefore it is important for language teachers to help them to understand what the general learning strategies are and more importantly, to identify the strategies which suit their learning objectives and their personality traits best. Gail Ellis and Barbara Sinclair (1989) and Anita Wenden (1991) offer useful suggestion for teachers on this task. They think it would be useful if we, as language teachers, encourage discussion in the classroom about language and language learning; help learners become aware of the wide range of alternative strategies available to them for language learning; create a learning environment where learners feel they can experiment with their language learning, counsel and give guidance to individual learners when possible and negotiate with learners about course content and methodology if appropriate. From my own teaching experience and my observation of my colleagues', I find most of these suggestions useful and reasonable. However, I found it hard to negotiate with learners about course content in secondary schools especially with learners younger than 15 no matter in China or the UK. First, we have to face the reality that students have limited knowledge about the language and language learning as well. For example, if we do ask students to choose the topic they like, it is very likely that they will choose according to their mood and taste. And different students have different opinions. There are normally about 50 students in one class in China and around 30 in the UK. I admit that it is not realistic to negotiate this with the students during the class time and it is also meaningless in my eyes. Involve learners into the learning process doesn't mean that learners don't need the guide of the teachers although I do agree that negotiation unites teachers and students in a common purpose.

In a recent summary of learner autonomy in language education, Benson (2001) distinguishes five different types of practice to foster autonomy: Resource-based approaches, which emphasize independent interaction with learning Materials(e.g. individualised learning or peer teaching); Technology-based approaches, which emphasize independent interaction with educational technologies (e.g. computers); Learner-based approaches, which emphasize the direct production of behavioural and psychological changes in the learner (e.g. various forms of leaning strategy training); Classroom based approaches, which emphasize changes in the relationship between learners and teachers in the classroom and learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning; Curriculum-based approaches, which extend the idea of control over the planning and the evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole.

As a language teacher, I have used the first four approaches to promoting learner autonomy in my classroom. When in China, I have tried the learner-based approaches and the classroom based approaches because I noticed many of my students who failed to learn English well due to the fact that they don't know how to learn it effectively. What I have done was designing a questionnaire aiming for help them identify their own language leaning style and their learning strategies. And I would introduce the knowledge of general learning style and strategies to make sure every student

know how people should learn languages. Later I would talk to them individually to help each student analysis the problems of the strategies they use and what strategies might be more suitable for him/ her according to her/his own learning style and habit as well. In fact, students learn much more effectively after they have been trained to learn "how to learn" and as for the Classroom-based approach, I tried to ask my pupils to design the end of term test themselves. I assessed them by the quality of their paper. In this way, I found them much more motivated. Because normally they just sit there waiting to be tested but now they have the control of test. Resource-based approaches and Technology-based approaches proved very useful in my mandarin lessons in the UK. Peer teaching are sometimes much more effective than you stand in front struggling to catch the students' attention who are already bored. And it also offers opportunity for talented students to "show off" a bit in front of their peers which is a resource of motivation, too. Students rarely get bored in the computer room because there they are in control of the topic and the pace of learning. And they are not afraid of making mistakes there. With some well designed program like Euro-talk Chinese beginners, you have choices over easy game and hard game after practice. But in the long-term goal, I think Curriculum-based approaches should play a very important role in the process of promoting learner autonomy. Many researchers who see education from the constructivist' point of view share the same opinion.

Negotiation is an important aspect of a constructivist classroom. It unites teachers and students in a common purpose. Smith (1993) confirms that negotiating curriculum means "custom-building classes every day to fit the individuals who attend" (p. 1). Boomer (1992: p.14) explains that it is important when negotiating for teachers to talk openly about how new information may be learned and about constraints such as obligatory curriculum. Cook (1992: p.16) explains why negotiating the curriculum with students is important: Learners will work harder and better, and what they learn will mean more to them if they are discovering their own ideas, asking their own questions, and fighting hard to answer them for themselves. They must be educational decision makers. Out of negotiation comes a sense of ownership in learners for the work they are to do, and therefore a commitment to it. The basic philosophy of Benson's five approaches of fostering autonomy in the language classroom is: learner-centered. While a Constructivist Classroom is a 'Student-Centered' Classroom. According to Audrey Gray (1997) Constructivist classrooms are structured so that learners are immersed in experiences within which they may engage in meaning-making inquiry, action, imagination, invention, interaction, hypothesizing and personal reflection. Teachers need to recognize how people use their own experiences, prior knowledge and perceptions, as well as their physical and interpersonal environments to construct knowledge and meaning. The goal is to produce a new learning environment that provides meaningful learning experiences for autonomous learners. Back to the question at the beginning, what can a language teacher do to promote learner autonomy in the classroom? .... Thinks it is crucial to 'increase learner involvement in organizing the learning process' which means share responsibility with the learners about their learning process and 'a change in the teacher's role' which means the teacher dose not consider the students empty vessels that need to be filled with words of wisdom coming from the teacher and the course book- but views him/herself as a helper and instructional designer who leads learner to discover and create their own meanings about the world.

## V. THE RISK OF PROMOTING LEARNER AUTONOMY

The raising of learner autonomy is not always pure joy and fun. It involves risks. Some conflicts among the students or between you and the students may –and almost inevitably will- develop. As Dam (1995) summaries the problems you may encounter:

It might be difficult to bring learners to make decisions and accept responsibility for these decisions. And it might not be easy to respect the students' right to make 'wrong' decisions... You may not find enough ready-made activities in the course book that are suitable for autonomous learning and have to spend some time designing new ones... It may be and in fact it is scary to relinquish the traditional means of classroom control and rely on new or modified methods of discipline. In general, it might be difficult for you to 'let go' and trust the pupils' ability to 'take hold'.(the y8 student example) On the other hand, required course content and externally applied assessments are realities that teachers must accommodate. Thus it is very likely that sometimes we may panic and believe everything was a mistake. We might fell angry and blame the students for not appreciating the wonderful opportunity they have been offered. As a result, we might go back to traditional teacher-centered classroom to get control. However, if we always bear in mind that 'learning begins with the learner', we may calm down and do our job more patiently and in the end more effectively.

## VI. CONCLUSION

I believe a teacher's job is watching, listening, and asking questions of students in order to learn about them and about how they learn so that we may be more helpful to them. Lester and Onore (1990) claims that a teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning affect his/her classroom practice, as well as his/her ability to change his/her practice. Especially, teachers' definition of what knowledge is, how people acquire it, and how we determine whether knowledge has been acquired or not influence greatly how we understand the teacher's role in the classroom and to what extent we promote learner autonomy in the classroom. Learner-centeredness is one of the most important principles of constructivist FLT. According to Marcus Reinfried (2000) the content of learner-centeredness is individualization

learning and autonomy of learner. Thus, we could say to a great extent constructivism in education informs the promoting of learner autonomy in the language teaching and learning today.

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# Subjacency Access by Afghan Learners of English

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**Abstract**—The present study aimed to investigate the question of availability of universal grammar (UG) to Afghan learners of English in terms of Subjacency Condition. To achieve this goal, two groups of Afghan learners of English were classified as high and low in line with a General Proficiency Test (GPT). The participants were then tested on Subjacency Condition in English. The performance of the high group was much better than that of the low group. However, compared with the performance of the native speakers of English, the high group was ranked lower. Considering the level of Subjacency availability, the cards are stacked in favor of a partial access to UG by English foreign language (EFL) learners.

**Index Terms**—UG, Subjacency Condition, GPT, EFL learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

It has long been claimed that there are so many things in life which we human beings have never had any experience of, but can make sense of. This is usually encapsulated in a principle known as *Plato's problem*. This intriguing lack of balance between knowledge and experience has led lots of scientists to be constantly in search of a convincing explanation for the phenomenon. Language is no exception in this regard. To date, lots of suggestions have been made, but probably none has been as intriguing as Chomskyan explanation, attributing the phenomenon to a language faculty known as language acquisition device or LAD (Cook & Newson, 1996).

In recent years, researchers have associated this innate device with a universal grammar (UG) (Brown, 2000). They have argued that language is universally acquired in the same manner, and moreover, the deep structure of language and its deepest level may be common to all languages (Catell, 2000).

Although it was originally developed for L1, UG is not exclusively limited to L1. Conversely, UG-based second language acquisition (SLA) investigations abound in the field of language, and their implications for SLA can also be investigated (Schachter, 1990). These investigations usually focus on the role of knowledge of a UG principle in L2, and try to find evidence in support of UG in SLA. The main question facing scholars in the field is availability and applicability of UG principles to SLA. One interesting area of interest within which researchers can investigate the role of UG in SLA is the *Subjacency Condition* (Newmeyer, 1991).

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the question of the availability of UG to Afghan learners of English in terms of Subjacency Condition. Given the state-of-the-art in UG-based research, the answer to this question might be of great importance to L2 pedagogy.

The Subjacency Condition states that a constituent cannot be moved (in any single application) across more than one bounding node (Radford, 2004). Bounding nodes are not the same in every language. They are nodes that immediately dominate a domain in which a transformation can be applied. Bounding nodes in English include S, NP, and CP. Take the following examples:

- (1) a. Faez believes that Ahmad knows the story.
- b. What does Faez believe that Ahmad knows?
- c. Faez believes the fact that Ahmad knows the story.
- d.\* What does Faez believe the fact that Ahmad knows?

In (b), the *wh*-word has crossed only one bounding node (i.e., IP) both in the first movement and in the second movement; (b) does not violate the condition because the requirement for Subjacency Condition is met. So, it is considered a grammatical sentence. However, in (d), although the *wh*-word has crossed only one bounding node (i.e., IP) in the first movement (i), it has crossed two bounding nodes (i.e., NP and IP) in the second movement (ii). It is a violation of Subjacency Condition, and it is deemed ungrammatical.

The following diagram is illustrative of the abovementioned explanation about the *wh*-movement and the resulting violation of the Subjacency Condition:

- (2)
- a. What<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> does Faez believe [<sub>CP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> that [<sub>IP</sub> Ahmad knows t<sub>i</sub> ]]]?
- (ii) (i)
- b. \*What<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> does Faez believe [<sub>NP</sub> the fact [<sub>CP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> that [<sub>IP</sub> Ahmad knows t<sub>i</sub> ]]]]?
- \*(ii) (i)

Here is another example of the violation of the condition:

- (3)
- a. He asked where she spent her holiday.
- b. \* What did he ask where she spent?
- \*What<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> did he ask [<sub>CP</sub> where [<sub>IP</sub> she spent t<sub>i</sub> ]]]?
- \*

Unlike (2a) and (2b), the wh-word *what* in (3) cannot land in the place of the specifier of the CP because it is already filled by another wh-word, that is, *where*. Therefore, *what* has to make one long movement, which results in crossing two bounding nodes (i.e., two IPs).

## II. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A number of studies (e.g., Johnson & Newport, 1991; Uziel, 1993; White & Juffs, 1998) have been conducted into the possible involvement of UG role in SLA and FLA. The findings are not clear-cut, in the sense that there are conflicting views regarding the possible position of UG in SLA and FLA.

White (as cited in White, 2003) enumerates three different rival positions on the question of the availability of UG in SLA and FLA:

1. UG is not available in SLA and FLA.
2. UG is fully available in SLA and FLA.
3. UG is partially available in SLA and FLA through L1.

In support of the first position, Schachter (1989) investigated the Subjacency access to Indonesian, Korean, and Chinese learners of English. He made use of both a syntax test and a Subjacency test. The results of the research corroborated the first view. In spite of their excellent performance on the syntax test, almost all of the subjects performed poorly on the Subjacency test. The results were suggestive of a lack of UG principle in FLA. Also, Johnson and Newport (1991) conducted the same line of inquiry, this time with a focus on critical period hypothesis (CPH). The subjects were Chinese speakers of English. This time again, the findings supported the first position. The adults had a poor performance on a grammaticality judgment task. The researchers found that UG access by the adult learners was limited with the increase of age.

As to the second position, White and Juffs (1998) questioned the results of the research by Felix and Weigl (1991). They carried out their experiment with Chinese-speaking learners of English. The results rejected the first position. The findings revealed that the Chinese group outperformed the Canadian group. The Chinese group even had almost the same performance as that of the native subjects in the control group. In the same way, Yusa (1999), exploiting Japanese learners of English, investigated the availability of UG principle to FLA in terms of reflexing binding. Again, the end result was in favor of UG playing a definite role in FLA. The subjects attributed the same references to the reflexives as those attributed by the native control group.

And finally, White (1985) explored Subjacency with the help of bounding nodes. He chose French and Spanish speakers of English with different ability levels. The subjects transferred the relevant L1 parameter. However, curiously enough, they showed improvement with increase in their level of proficiency. Following the same line, Uziel (1993) investigated the Subjacency access by speakers of Hebrew and Italian. Compared with the performance of the native control group, the other two groups had a poor performance on the grammaticality judgment test. The researcher justified the results by resorting to the need on the part of the learner for a parameter-value reassignment.

Given the above conflicting views regarding the role of UG both in SLA and FLA as well as the supported availability of UG in some languages, evident from the above brief discussion, it makes good sense to investigate the existence of such linguistic phenomenon in other languages of the world and see how consistent the results are with the previous ones. Can UG be also applicable to SLA and FLA? If so, is it also the case for Afghan learners of English? These are the questions that prompted the present researchers to undertake this research. It is hoped that conducting this research and its following results will pave the way for the related lines of inquiry in future. At the same time, it is hoped that the findings will increase our understanding and awareness, as English teachers, of the nature of human language in general in order to help L2 learners of English to experience a much easier and smoother learning task. The study, therefore, sought answers to the following questions:

1. Do Afghan learners of English have knowledge of the Subjacency Condition in English?
2. If they do have knowledge of the Subjacency Condition in English, is there a significant difference in this knowledge across learners with different levels of English ability, namely high and low groups?

3. Does the high group mean score on the Subjacency grammaticality judgment significantly differ from that of native speakers of English?
4. Does the low group mean score on the Subjacency grammaticality judgment significantly differ from that of native speakers of English?

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participants

The participants were 30 Afghan male students, aged 19 to 21, studying at Kavesh Language Institute in Esfahan. The participants were taking summer English classes at the time of the experiment, August, 2009. They were taking classes at the intermediate (both pre- and post-intermediates) and advanced levels. The rationale for the choice of this miscellaneous ability levels was to focus on the second hypothesis of the study: to examine the probable impact of general English proficiency on Subjacency judgment. All the participants had the same linguistic background, Afghani, as their L1, with no formal education except such summer English classes at their leisure time. The control group in this study were the present researchers' e-pals from the United Kingdom.

#### B. Materials

The tests consisted of a General Proficiency Test (GPT) and a Subjacency Test (see sample items in the Appendix). The GPT was used to divide the participants in two ability groups: high and low. It gauged the grammar skill in the form of 80 multiple-choice items. The Subjacency Test, on the other hand, consisted of 50 test items which consisted of both 23 ungrammatical items violating Subjacency Condition in *wh*-movement and 27 grammatical sentences sticking to the Subjacency Condition.

#### C. Procedure

At the first stage of the experiment, the GPT was given to the 30 participants to screen them based on their current proficiency level. The participants who scored above one standard deviation were placed into the high group and those who scored below this were placed into the low group.

At the second stage of the experiment, the participants were tested on the Subjacency Condition through the second instrument, the Subjacency Test. It took the form of a grammaticality judgment task. In this second sitting, the participants were asked to judge the 50 items as grammatical or ungrammatical, along with explanations in case of ungrammatical sentences. The selection of the items for the Subjacency Test was based on the items chosen by researchers in previous studies (e.g., Bley-Vroman, Felix, & Ioup, 1998; Johnson & Newport, 1991).

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

In order to test the first hypothesis, a *t* test was calculated. Each mean score of the low group and the high group was compared independently with chance performance, 50%, 12.5 in raw scores. Both groups performed significantly better than chance (the low group,  $t = 4.026$ ,  $p < .05$ ; the high group,  $t = 19.987$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected.

In order to test the second hypothesis, two *t* tests were calculated for each group. Looking at Table 1, one could easily find out that the mean scores of the high group were significantly better than those of the low group in both grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. The results confirm that the difference between the two Afghan groups is significant—the high group outperformed the low group:

TABLE 1.  
T TESTS ON THE MEAN SCORES OF GRAMMATICAL AND UNGRAMMATICAL SENTENCES

Variable	N	Mean	Std.	t	sig.
Grammaticality (low group)	12	15.5	3.76	3.70	.002
Grammaticality (high group)	12	19.88	1.90		
Ungrammaticality (low group)	12	17.33	1.54	3.96	.003
Ungrammaticality (high group)	12	18.23	0.32		

\*  $p < .001$

In order to test the third and fourth hypotheses, four *z*-tests were calculated for each group. As Table 2 indicates, the mean scores of both high and low group regarding Subjacency violations and grammatical sentences are significantly different from those of native speakers of English. Therefore, the hypothesis of no difference is rejected, too:

TABLE 2.  
Z TESTS ON THE MEAN SCORES OF GRAMMATICAL AND UNGRAMMATICAL SENTENCES

Variable	N	Mean	Std.	z
Grammaticality (low group)	12	15.5	3.76	4.93
Grammaticality (high group)	12	19.88	1.90	5.3
Ungrammaticality (low group)	12	17.33	1.54	4.89
Ungrammaticality (high group)	12	18.23	0.32	2.6

\*  $p < .001$



## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research program investigated UG availability in SLA using Afghan speakers learning English in Iran. The Subjacency Condition was chosen as the UG principle under investigation. The two experimental groups, high and low, took the GPT and the Subjacency Test. The GPT measured the participants' general grammar knowledge, and the Subjacency Test measured their knowledge of wh-movement constraints in English. The first null hypothesis was that Afghan learners would not perform on the grammaticality judgment task significantly better than chance. The performance of both high and low groups was significantly better than chance, rejecting the first null hypothesis. Furthermore, the difference across the two groups was statistically different. Therefore, the hypothesis of no difference was also rejected. Finally, regarding the last two questions, the mean scores of Subjacency violations and grammatical sentences both for the high and low groups differed significantly from the native speakers of English.

As discussed before, White (as cited in White, 2003) assumes three conflicting views regarding UG position in SLA and FLA. Position A, stating UG is not available in SLA and FLA, is rejected because the high group was successful and the low group performed significantly better than chance on the Subjacency Test. Therefore, the commonsense approach to this problem does not give credit to the first position. As for the second position, full-access hypothesis, the results of the present study in all probability rejects it. If UG was fully available in L2, as the position claims, the performance of, at least, the high group would be tantamount to that of the control group. The statistical results of the study do not make such a claim.

However, considering the fact that all the participants in the high group were advanced-level students studying in the advanced level, and all those in the low group were students of pre- and post-intermediates, we can make out the case for the third position—partial access hypothesis. Because the performance of the low group was significantly inferior to that of the high group and also the control group, we can attribute this to the high group having received more instruction in English and the control group having more exposure to the natural language. Also, in case of the two Afghan groups having the same linguistic background, their significantly lower performance can be justified through their L1. The performance of the low group and the relatively better performance of the high group can be attributed to the partial existence of UG in L2.

As the final note, the present researchers, considering the findings of the study, should remind L2 teachers, particularly those teaching English, to be aware of the fact that resetting the values of parameters in UG will not happen overnight. It requires time for L2 learners to reset these values after receiving adequate level of instruction in the L2. Also, due to the fact that we cannot find such explicit instruction in the case of Subjacency Condition (Ozaki, 1998), we encourage such consciousness-raising on the part of L2 teachers.

## APPENDIX A SAMPLE ITEMS

**Instruction:** Please decide whether each sentence is grammatically correct or not and mark it in the space provided for you.

If you think that the sentence is grammatically incorrect, please make it correct.

- Who does Maryam want to see?

Correct ☐ Incorrect ☐

.....  
- What did Reza believe the fact that Ali had bought?

Correct ☐ Incorrect ☐

.....  
- What did Ahmad wonder who would break?

Correct ☐ Incorrect ☐

.....  
- Who should I give the pen to?

Correct ☐ Incorrect ☐

.....

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# On Pragmatic Failures in Second Language Learning

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**Abstract**—Pragmatics is the study of the use of language in communication, which includes the study of how the interpretation and use of utterances depends on knowledge of the real world; how speakers use and understand speech acts; how the structure of sentences is influenced by the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. When the pragmatic force of a language is misunderstood, the communication fails, leading to pragmatic failures. The pragmatic failures are composed of pragmatic linguistic failures and social-pragmatic failures. By improving learners' linguistic and communicative competence and cultural quality, the pragmatic failures might be avoided.

**Index Terms**—pragmatic failure, second language learning, linguistic pragmatic failures, social-pragmatic, failures, communication

## I. INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is the study of the use of language in communication, particularly the relationships among the sentences and the context and situations in which they are used. Pragmatics includes the study of how the interpretation and use of utterances depends on knowledge of the real world; how speakers use and understand speech acts; how the structure of sentences is influenced by the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. The definition tells us that pragmatics stresses on the relationships among the utterances and the context and the speaker's intention. It is unavoidable to fail in cross-cultural communication because one is not likely to understand all that he hears and what he can understand is his own utterances. When the pragmatic force of a language is misunderstood, for example, if an apology is interpreted as an excuse, the communication fails, which is called pragmatic failures. Pragmatic failures can be divided into two types: pragmatic linguistic failures and socio-pragmatic failures. By pragmatic linguistic failure, we mean that the failures result from the fact that what the speaker says does not agree with the habit of the native speaker, by socio-pragmatic failure, we mean the utterances do not agree with the social culture, customs of the native speaker's.

## II. LINGUISTIC PRAGMATIC FAILURES

Second language learners are used to selecting the language materials in the target language to communicate in their own thinking set. Many pragmatic failures occur because English and Chinese are different in systems and the language proficiency of Chinese students is restricted. These failures prevent the communications sometimes, and sometimes English people may understand the speaker's meaning, but what the speaker said does not agree with the English language habit, making the utterance difficult to accept.

### A. Linguistic Pragmatic Failures from the Phonetic Transfer

Influenced by the accent and pronouncing habit, Chinese students often mispronounce / $\theta$ / and / $\phi$ / as /s/ and /d/, because there are no dentals / $\theta$ / and / $\phi$ / in Chinese. When pronouncing them, Chinese students are not used to putting the tip of the tongue between the teeth. So the word "thank" is mispronounced as "sank", "they" as "day". Only one sound is mispronounced in these two words, but their meanings have been changed completely. Such acoustic failure would affect the understanding of English.

### B. Linguistic Pragmatic Failure from Lexis

English beginners in China just believe that each Chinese word and phrase has the equivalent word in English. As a matter of fact, most words have many different equivalent forms in the other language according to different context and situation. For example, Chinese character "发展," is equivalent to "develop" in English. However, "develop" has more than one meaning when it collocates different words in English, such as "develop a habit" (means form a habit), "develop the film" ( means treat the film with chemical substances), "develop a good attitude" (means set up a good

attitude), etc. All these seem abnormal and absurd to English beginners. It is easy for Chinese students to make transfer from Chinese to English concerning the collocation in this field. If students cannot get the correct understanding of a word, they also can make negative transfer.

### C. *Linguistic Pragmatic Failures from Syntax*

The syntax reflects the thinking mode of a nation. As a thinking tool, a language is acquired along with the establishment of thinking ability. Characteristics of a language are inevitable to be reflected in thinking set. To learn a new language implies to establish a new mode of thinking. So learners have to overcome the difficulty of Chinese thinking set and try to think in English. To change it is far more difficult. For example, when we ask someone to do something, there are different expressions in English and Chinese. According to indirect speech act, the more indirect and optional the speech act is, the more polite it will be. Chinese tend to use a more direct and imposing, or less indirect and optional speech act than native speakers do in a similar context of situation. Such as when offering something to eat or drink: Chinese often say “*Have another sandwich.*” While English say “*Would you like to have another sandwich?*”. In order to succeed in communicating, the speech act must agree with English linguistic habit.

## III. SOCIAL-PRAGMATIC FAILURES

In cross-cultural communication, when we speak a foreign language, though our grammar may be OK, we cannot speak it tactfully and appropriately just because of cultural difference. If we make mistakes in grammar when we speak, we are said to speak badly only; however, if we cannot speak tactfully and appropriately, we are said to behave badly. Therefore, socio-pragmatic failures may lead to communicative failures. Grice (1975) advanced the cooperative Principles: A. Quantity Maxim; B. Quality Maxim; C. Relative Maxim; D. Manner Maxim. He stresses that people can understand and co-operate each other only when they obey the rules in communication. But in daily life, people do violate the cooperative principles for the aim of politeness. After Grice, Leech (1983) put forward the Politeness Principle: A. Tack Maxim; B. Generosity Maxim; C. Approbation Maxim; D. Modesty Maxim; E. Agreement Maxi; F. Sympathy Maxim. In communication, socio-pragmatic failures often results from various social, cultural factors and customs. Sometimes, the speakers break the cooperative principle or violate the politeness principles in communicating. Even, sometimes, the occurrence of socio-pragmatic failures is due to the fact that the speaker and the hearer obey different principles in communication. Influenced by the deep-structure of cultural negative transfer, people always make some cultural mistakes in using language by adopting the way of native cultural sense plus target cultural form and thus caused the socio-pragmatic failures. As mentioned previously, social-pragmatic failure is related much to the background and context. And it's not unusual to be seen in translation.

“巧妇难为无米之炊。(qiaofu nanwei wumizhichui.)

The two versions of translation for it are: A. ‘Even the cleverest housewife can not cook a meal without rice.’ B. ‘Even the cleverest housewife can not make bread without flour.’ If the translation is for Chinese readers, version A is OK, if the translator’s work is for readers of native English, version B is a better one” (He Ziran, 2006, p. 227). Social-pragmatics refers to the pragmatic studies which check the conditions on language that originates from the social and cultural situation. In communication, this consideration is dependent on the speaker’s beliefs and his cross-cultural knowledge. There are different pragmatic rules in different linguistic cultures. If the nation-specific pragmatic rules are ignored, the pragmatic failures would occur, affecting the communication.

## IV. WAYS TO AVOID PRAGMATIC FAILURES

In cross-cultural communications, in order to make the communications smooth, language learners have to overcome the pragmatic failure by improving their own linguistic competence, communicative competence and their cultural quality.

### A. *To Improve the Linguistic Competence*

Linguistic competence, by Chomsky, is considered to be the implicit system of rules that constitutes a person’s knowledge of a language. This includes a person’s ability to create and understand sentences, including sentences they have never heard before, knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language, and the ability to recognize ambiguous and deviant sentences. Linguistic competence is the basis to master a foreign language. Without it, it is impossible to use the language correctly. Language learners should begin with the linguistic knowledge to improve his linguistic competence. When second language learners’ linguistic knowledge increases, their linguistic competence increases, too. The basic requirement of improving learners’ linguistic competence is that learners have to master the standard pronunciation, accurate grammatical rules and vocabulary.

### B. *To Improve the Communicative Competence*

Communicative competence is put forward by Hymes, based on Chomsky’s linguistic competence. Hymes (1970) thought it as the knowledge of not only if something is possible in a language, but also the knowledge of whether it is feasible, appropriate or, done in a particular Speech Community. It includes, 1) formal competence--knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary, phonology and semantics of a language. 2) sociocultural competence--knowledge of the

relationship between language and its nonlinguistic context, knowing how to use and respond appropriately to different types of Speech Acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks and invitations, knowing which Address Forms should be used with different persons one speaks to and in different situations, and so forth. 3) discourse competence --knowing how to begin and how to end the conversations. 4) strategic competence--knowledge of communication strategies that can compensate for weakness in other areas. In fact, Hymes' formal competence amounts to Chomsky's grammatical competence, the other three are equal to his pragmatic competence. The former refers to linguistic accuracy and the latter the appropriateness when language is used in a certain context.

Generally speaking, second language learners begin to study and use foreign language after they have mastered their native linguistic competence. Therefore, there must be the influence from L1. In order to overcome the interference from L1, learners have to have the communicative competence of L2. In this way, they would know what to say, how to say on one occasion to make the language they use agree to the linguistic habit and national customs of the target language. The language that learners use would be accurate and appropriate if they had the communicative competence.

### C. To Improve the Cultural Quality

Language is inseparable from culture. A particular language is associated with a particular culture, the language provides the key to the understanding of the associated culture, and language itself cannot be really learned or fully understood without enough knowledge of the culture in which it is deeply embedded. Without language, culture would not be possible. On the one hand, languages is influenced and shaped by culture; it reflects culture. In the broadest sense, language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking. What needs to be stressed here is that language and culture interact, and that understanding the language requires understanding the culture. Learning a foreign language well means more than merely mastering the pronunciation, grammar, words and idioms. It also means learning to see the world as native speakers of that language see it, learning the ways in which their language reflects the ideas, customs, and behavior of their society, learning to understand their language of the mind. Learning a language, in fact, is inseparable from learning its culture. So language and culture must be studied together, and great efforts must be made in the study of the culture in which the TL operates. Improving our cultural quality may make our language fluent, vivid, and elegant.

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# Corpus-driven Learning in Collegiate Translation Course

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**Abstract**—Translation teaching methodology in China needs innovation and corpus has found an increasingly important application in translation studies because its large amounts of stored data of naturally occurring language can enhance learner awareness about the language. The present paper aims at investigating the role of corpus-driven learning in student translator training at the university level in China.

**Index Terms**—corpus, corpus-driven learning, student translator training

## I. INTRODUCTION

Student translator training is troublesome for a number of reasons. Firstly, translation is usually considered difficult for ESL/EFL learners because it involves an important factor: the transfer of mother tongue, which shapes learners' inter-language. Oldin (1989) asserts that transfer has been documented to occur at all the levels of linguistic analysis such as phonology, syntax, lexis, and grammar. Towel and Hawkins enumerate five observable phenomena about second language acquisition of which transfer of L1 patterns into L2 is of prime significance: "Transfer seems to affect all linguistic levels: pronunciation, syntax, morphology, lexicon and discourse." (Towel and Hawkins, 1994, p.7) Translation into a foreign language involves all these aspects of transfer, demanding a comprehensive capacity on the part of the student translator.

Secondly, in the context of Chinese collegiate curriculum, the credit hours of the translation course are far from adequate. In Shandong Jiaotong University, a non-key university in China, the English majors are allocated only 72 credit hours for both English-Chinese and Chinese-English translation, theory and practice all inclusive, lasting only 2 semesters. In Shandong University, one of the key universities in China, things are in a better condition, with the credit hours of translation totaling 144, lasting 4 semesters. In both universities translation, however, is given fewer hours than comprehensive English and advanced English. Considering the complex factors involved in the translation process, the long history of development of translation theories and the vastly diversified discourses of translation practices, such an allocation of classroom hours is all too inadequate.

Thirdly, teacher of translation in China are almost exclusively those whose native language is Chinese and whose English is mostly acquired in the Chinese context, from primary school up to collegiate level. When native speakers of English find it difficult to explain why one word is preferable than the other in certain circumstances and have to resort to language instinct, Chinese teachers teaching C-E translation are faced with an even greater challenge since their feel of the foreign language is far less reliable than native speakers.

With these reasons confronting the student translator training in China, the quality of the trainees falls short of satisfaction. One possible way out is to find a teaching methodology that can help teachers to teach with more confidence and students to translate with more efficiency and accuracy. The recent corpus-driven learning is a possible solution, as it emphasizes the constructive learning process with the support of large quantity of naturally occurring language materials. The present paper aims at investigating the role of corpus-driven learning in student translator training at the university level in China.

## II. CORPUS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TRANSLATION TEACHING

Just at the same time when Noam Chomsky made his impact on modern language studies in the 1960s, advocating the generative power of rules, other linguists such as Randolph Quirk became more and more aware of the inadequacy of a linguistic theory characterized by introspection alone. Real language data were needed for a more adequate and accurate description of language features. Started in the late 1950s, Quirk's *Survey of English Usage* is a collection of language data for empirical grammatical research, which led to one of the first corpus of English that became the source for studying standard English grammar for many decades.

Such real language data are of special use in foreign language teaching. A corpus of naturally occurring language data tells us what language is like, and it is a more reliable guide to language use than native speaker intuition is. Hunston exemplifies this by saying that "native-speaker language teachers are often unable to say why a particular phrasing is to be preferred in a particular context to another, and the consequent rather lame rationale 'it just sounds better' is a source of irritation to learners" (Hunston, 2002, p. 20).

With the advance in computer technology, the collected language data can be computerized into an electronic corpus. The electronic corpus is stored in such a way that it can be retrieved by corpus access software. The advantage of the data retrieval program is that it can automatically present all the instances that meet the search condition(s), which can best bypass arbitrariness and partiality of any human mind. Being nothing but a store of used language, a corpus in itself does not offer new information about language, but the corpus access programs such as those presenting concordance lines and calculating frequencies can serve as good tools to facilitate the researcher. Gerbig summarizes the possible uses of corpus in applied linguistics (Gerbig, 1997, pp. 43-44):

For lexicology, corpus provides inexhaustible instances and statistical evidence for the usage of words in actual contexts.

For syntax, corpus is the only way to conduct a quantitative probability survey of language structures.

For stylistics, general and specific corpora can offer a wide range of samples and background data for contrastive study of linguistic features.

Leech is even more confident in computerized corpus linguistics, regarding it as a new philosophical approach to the study of language. To him corpus linguistics (Leech, 1992, qtd. in Thomas and Short, 2001, p. 12)

...defines not just a newly emerging methodology for studying language, but a new research enterprise, and in fact a new philosophical approach to the subject. The computer, as a uniquely powerful technological tool, has made this new kind of linguistics possible. So technology here (as for centuries in natural science) has taken a more important role than that of supporting and facilitating research: I see it as an essential means to a new kind of knowledge, and as an 'open sesame' to a new way of thinking about language.

Short et al (2001, p. 112) highlighted the advantages of the corpus approach in that it "enables us to test out hypotheses in an explicit, empirical way, and to quantify the presence of categories and patterns of categories across text-types." They went on to point out the objectivity of such a machine-readable corpus approach, saying that it "forces the analyst to label every single part of a text and not to ignore examples inconvenient to the theory." (ibid) The last point is the very reason why the empirical approach outweighs the traditional intuition-based method; the repeatability and verifiability of the outcome is the true essence of any scientific research. The corpus approach is, therefore, a step forward towards the elimination of possible partiality and prejudice in selecting data in linguistic analysis.

Since the 1990s, corpus has found an increasingly important application in translation studies. Because corpora can enhance translation learner's awareness about language and culture, they are very "useful in training translators and in pointing up potential problems for translation." (Hunston, 2002, p.123). Bernardini (2003) suggests that by learning to effectively retrieve data from large-scale corpora, students majoring in translation can develop their translation skills effectively. Through numerous examples she has proved that corpora are able to help students understand the source text and translate it into a more readable target language.

### III. CORPUS DESIGN FOR THE TRANSLATOR TRAINING COURSE

Both comparable and parallel corpora are useful in student translator training. Comparable corpora contain two or more corpora in different languages or in different varieties of the same language. This means that a comparable corpus may collect texts in a particular field, but they are not actually translated from one another. They are collected because of their common text types and, therefore, their possible usefulness in facilitating translators and learners to identify differences and equivalences in each language. A comparable corpus of different varieties of the same language is actually a monolingual corpus. Such a corpus is useful in revealing whether and how translational language is different from original language, providing an empirical basis for the study of the often criticized "translationese". Parallel corpora usually comprise two or more corpora in different languages, each containing texts that have been translated from one language into the other. "Parallel corpora can be used by translators and by learners to find potential equivalent expressions in each language and to investigate differences between languages." (Hunston, 2002, p. 15).

There are some issues for consideration in designing corpora for student translator training.

#### a) Corpus design

With advanced technology in computer science since the 1960s, it is possible to store and access corpora of ever-increasing size. Finished in the 1990s, The British National Corpus (BNC) has largely expanded its size to 100 million words, and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the largest corpus of English up to now, contains more than 400 million words. These two large-sized corpora are on-line accessible for free use, therefore they can be used by teachers to serve as reference for students to use for checking idiomatic English expressions in their translation learning processes.

Besides BNC and COCA, the translation teacher has to build other materials into the comparable corpora, depending on what particular purpose the translation class is aimed. In the university where I am now working, the English majors in the beginning of the third year are streamlined into two directions: philology and commerce, with different curriculum. We therefore decide to include not only literary texts but also texts of English for special purposes (ESP) in our corpora. For the sake of balance the literary corpora should include both modern and classic English literary works and the ESP should be as all-inclusive as possible: forensic, journalistic, clinic, economy, transportation and the like.

The design of the parallel corpora is more complex than the comparable corpora as it involves a translation relationship between two languages. The parallel corpora can comprise two parts, one is the reference corpora, which



contain translations done by professionals, and the other is the learner corpora, which are composed of the assignments done by the students. The professional translations can again be divided into two, one is closely related to the classroom teaching and home assignment, providing recommendable versions to student assignment and it surely is more desirable if more than one version are provided for the same source text so that students can compare and contrast; and the other part is more comprehensive, providing a vast number and variety of translated texts with their source languages, covering all type of genres that the students are assigned to translate, so that students can pick up knowledge of style or a particular expression from the sea of information.

The learner corpora consist of the translation work done by the students. Each student is tagged with information about his or her age, sex, linguistic performance or other relevant data. What is especially interesting to the teacher as well as translation scholars are the progress the student makes in the course of learning with a time span of a semester, an academic year or even longer. This can be easily accessible with the electronically stored data. Such a diachronic study on student progress will also be encouragement to the students themselves.

Granger (2007, p. 21) outlines a figure of corpora in cross-linguistic research.

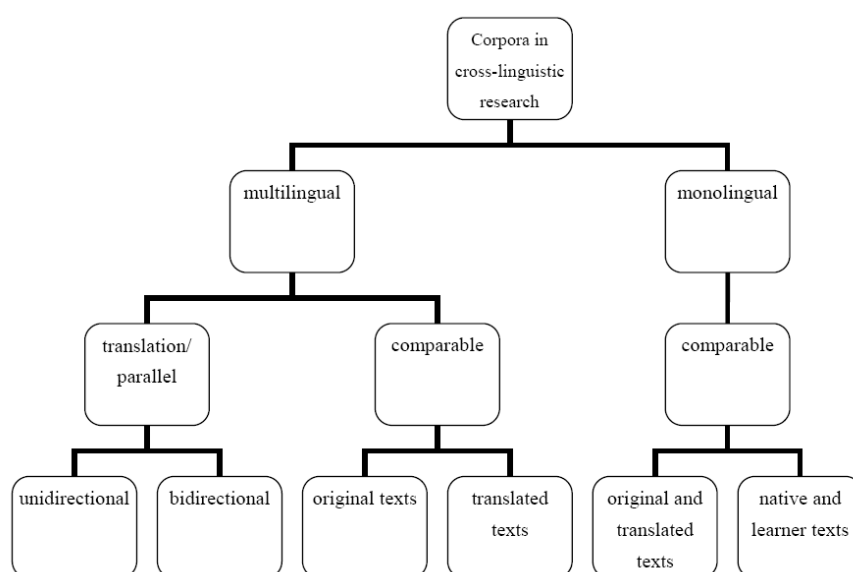


Figure 1 Corpora in cross-linguistic research

#### b) Sentence alignment

To align sentences in the parallel corpus, the initial step is to manually align the paragraphs in the source and target texts. Then sentence alignment can be done automatically with a software based on sentence or word boundaries or lengths, lists of anchor words, a bilingual lexicon, probability score, or a combination of algorithms. Mismatching sometimes occurs since automatic alignment may have difficulty in coping with restructured sentence orders in the translated text. A “txt” format of the aligned texts can make it more convenient to edit and proofread. All these correcting work must be done manually and can be very time-consuming, but it is a necessary procedure to ensure statistic accuracy as well as quick and exact retrieval of data for analysis. Sentence alignment is important in parallel corpora processing. Once a parallel corpus is aligned, a parallel concordancer can be employed to produce instances of occurrence of a word or structure in the source text and its equivalents in translation, or vice versa, thus valuable information can be extracted for translation studies. For example, how is a word in the source text translated in the target text under different contexts? How is the sentence structure changed after translation? Is there any recurrent pattern to be found? In addition, the information about the corresponding sentence ratio of the translated and the original provided by the sentence alignment software can also be very instrumental in a study of translation units and translation strategies such as combination and division at the sentence level.

#### c) Corpus annotation

The texts in the corpus are annotated with a header that can provide extra-textual information. The header includes the title, author/translator, language, text type, field, style, mode, time of publication, publisher and size of text. Besides header, annotation about the linguistic features of the texts is generally regarded to be more useful because annotation “adds value to a corpus, making it easier to retrieve information and increasing the range of investigations” (Hunston, 2002, p. 80). Automatic annotation software such as CLAWS has been developed to tag the part of speech of a word (POS tagging). Some researchers, however, are not keen on imposing POS labels on texts. One reason is that POS tagging has to be based on a specific grammatical theory, which is by no means agreed upon among all linguists. Experiments with manual checking of automatic tagging shows 2 percent disagreement among a group of linguists (Kennedy, 1998, p. 221), making the results and conclusions of different researches incomparable to some extent. Some researchers choose not to tag their corpora simply because their research does not require automatic linguistic

differentiation.

d) Data-retrieval tools

The most frequently used tools in corpus-based learning is Wordsmith Tools. WordSmith Tools is a toolkit developed by Mike Scott at Oxford University. An integrated suite of programs for looking at how words behave in texts, its main functions include (1) the concord, which is a program that makes a concordance of a specified search word in the text file(s); (2) wordlist, which is a program that automatically generates word lists based on one or more ASCII or ANSI text files; and (3) the keywords, whose purpose is to locate and identify key words in a given text by comparing the words in the text with a reference set of words usually taken from a large corpus of text.

The “concord” function is basic in a corpus study, so the most common tool for data extraction is the concordancer. Using the concordancer, the user enters a search word, a “node”, and the software will find all instances of the node in the corpus. Each instance is displayed with its immediate co-text and its filename, with the node highlighted and centered for prominence. All the instances can be sorted alphabetically or reverse alphabetically to the left or to the right of the node. This sorting function is very useful in that it allows the user to uncover possible patterns in all of the instances, and discard irrelevant instances for a particular study. The wordlist function is a frequency list of all the word in the corpus. Ordered either by frequency or by alphabet, it can be used to study word type, identify word clusters, compare the frequency of a word in different texts, compare translation equivalents between different languages, or to get a concordance of the words in the list. Kenny (2001) uses the wordlist function to analyze lexical items that occur only once, the “hapaxes”, in her corpus in order to study lexical creativity in translation. A word or phrase with an extremely high (or low) frequency is worthy of scholars’ attention because the frequency most convincingly reveals information about the idiosyncrasy of the text producer. The “keyword” function of WordSmith Tools is used to produce a keyword list, which is an extension to the frequency list. This is done by comparing frequency lists of two corpora with the help of the software. For example, by comparing the list from a large, general corpus with that of a smaller specialized corpus, the keywords of the smaller corpus can be identified.

#### IV. EVALUATION OF CORPUS-DRIVEN LEARNING IN TRANSLATION

Why do learners, after eight or more years of instruction in English, continue to feel headache in doing translation from Chinese into English? Apart from the vast discrepancy between the two languages, other possible factors may be attributed to improper teaching methodology. Corpus-driven learning is a recently developed methodology that is recommendable in its effectiveness to enhance students’ language awareness and facilitate their lexical choice, syntactic variety and stylistic appropriateness in translation. When students are given access to more genuine language materials relevant to their current focus of study, they are endowed with more resources so that they can make better choices than when they have merely a few Chinese-English dictionaries at hand, which often fail to serve purpose. Since most entries in the bilingual dictionary are single words, and for most words we find many alternatives for how to translate them, but in most cases, the dictionaries can not tell us which of the alternatives we have to choose in a particular case, let alone what proper collocation that chosen word usually goes with. That is the reason why Teubert and Čermáková (2009, pp. 114-115) claim that bilingual dictionaries are not very helpful when the target language is not our native language.

That is where corpus, both comparable and parallel, comes into use. Just as Osborne (2009, p. 259) declares, “A major advantage of using corpus data in language learning is the possibility of making regularities in the language immediately more salient, by collecting dispersed naturally-occurring examples together as concordance lines, or by using these examples as a basis for language awareness exercises.” Granger and Tribble (1998, pp. 199-209) also maintain that a corpus “can contribute to a better understanding of students’ use of the foreign language”.

In corpus-driven learning students can learn with the help of the data retrieval software, a concordancer, for example, which depicts frequent lexical/grammatical patterns of language within authentic contexts, presenting all the search results from huge amounts of linguistic data. Johns and King (1991, p. iii) describes data-driven learning as “the use in the classroom of computer-generated concordances to get students to explore regularities of patterning in the target language, and the development of activities and exercises based on concordance output.” Batstone (1995) claims that data-driven learning is a pedagogic continuum from product to process. It has the advantage of product approach since the specific aspects of language are presented to the learners by multiple exposures within contexts. Corpus-driven learning also promotes creativity and self-discovery among learners. In corpus-driven learning, learners are not seen simply as recipients of knowledge, but as researchers who become more and more aware of the regularity of the language under study. In such a teaching method teacher’s role is to encourage the learners’ search for truth and enjoy the fun of discovery learning.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The use of electronic corpora is widespread in linguistics and translation pedagogy. The most obvious advantage of corpus over traditional teaching methodology is that it enables students to have a quick access and analysis of large quantities of material. Through learning from such extensive material it will be possible for students to obtain more reliable information on translation norms and patterns. This is of special significance in translation education in China, given the limited credit hours of E-C and C-E translation in the curriculum design in some universities.

The application of corpus methodology in classroom translation teaching does not mean that the teachers can finally stay away, leaving students to sink or swim on their own. On the contrary, corpus-driven learning methodology poses even more challenges to the teachers. They must devote more time to building the most facilitating corpus for use, specifying learning tasks that can take the best advantage of the corpus, and, most importantly, to help students to arrive at a sound interpretation of the (large) data retrieved from the corpus. Good facilitator as the computer is, it can never totally replace the human role assumed by the teachers in the process of interactive learning, especially in the field of translation, which is, by nature, a very complex process of cross-lingual, cross-cultural communication.

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# Major Phonetic Processes in Sabzevari Dialect

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**Abstract**—Sabzevar with an area of 19500 square kilometer is located in Northeast Iran, In Khorasan Razavi province. Northward, it is bounded to Quchan and Esfaryen, Eastward to Neyshabour, Southward to Kashmar and Shahrood and Westward to Semnan province. With a phonetic approach and after giving a short definition for “dialect”, this piece of writing attempts to introduce the most prominent phonetic processes of Sabzevari dialect –one of the Western new Iranian dialects- and introduce vocal changes of this dialect compared with Standard Persian. The findings of this research show that in Sabzevari dialect “mutation” is the main phonetic process and “metathesis” is of the lowest frequency.

**Index Terms**—Iranian dialects, Sabzevari dialect, phonetic processes, vocal change

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sabzevar with an area of 19500 square Kilometer is located in Northeast Iran, in Khorasan Razavi province. Northward, It is bounded to Quchan and Esfaryen, Eastward to Neyshabour, Southward to Kashmar and to Shahrood and Westward to Semnan province.

Sabzevar city is located on Mashhad- Shahrood way with 950 m above sea level. It is 226 km from Sabzevar to Mashhad and 664 km to Tehran. It is bound to Joghatay Mountains on the North and to Koohmish on the south. There are fertile plains and prairies within the high lands. The most important seasonal river is Kalshoor originated from Binalood Mountains in North of Neyshaboor and flowing to the West. After Mongols invasion to Iran, Sabzevar was called Sarbedaran for a while to the memorial of its brave defendants called "Sarbedaran". It was also called "Sasoyeabad, Biyeh and Beihagh.

Most people of Sabzevar and the surrounding villages talk in Sabzevari dialect which is a variety of modern western Iranian dialects. But in Northern villages different varieties of Turkish as well as Kurmanji are also prevalent. As other Iranian dialects and accents, Sabzevari dialect is moving backward affected by Standard Persian and only businessmen, craftsmen, and representatives of Sabzevar former generations talk it.

Since "The major part of history and cultural identity of people is hidden in their language and dialect"(Cristal, 2006, P. 7) and as Oliver Vandel Holmes puts it, "Each dialect is a temple containing the soul of its speakers and guards them."(Cristal, same, P. 85) Dialectology, as a branch of applied linguistics holds a high position in modern linguistics. "Studying dialects and their various aspects not only provides raw materials for other language researches, but also can help comprehend other language universals. Therefore the study of major phonetic processes in Sabzevari dialect and indicating their similarities and differences with standard Persian are the main subject of this article.

It should be noted that the language data used in this study are mainly gathered through field study, that is recording illiterate or little-literate local native speakers talks and interviewing in addition to getting benefit of the linguistic perception of one of the writers who is the native speaker of Sabzevari dialect to have an even more precise analysis of the data.

## II. DIALECT

Dialect is sometimes defined as an incorrect and inferior variety of standard language common in remote regions. While in linguistic point of view, dialects are to be considered as language, even though they are not "Formal" languages.

Dialects of a language are, in fact, varieties of that language with differences in phonetics, structure and vocabulary. If the difference among two or more variety is limited only to phonetics, they are called accents. Each language can have different dialects and accents and at the same time each dialect can have a variety of accents.

Dialects are divided in two groups: Social and Local. Social dialects are those current among people with common social, economic or cultural positions. Local dialects are those common in different geographical regions. (Fathi, 2001, P. 1)

### III. LITERATURE

"The history of systematized studies of dialects goes back to more than one century." (Mohebbi Bahmani, 2005, P. 21) a comprehensive list of the researches made on Iranian dialects are mentioned in "A list of Iranian languages and Accents" by Ross (1953) in the first chapter of the first volume of Iranzamin Glossary and "Iranian languages and accents bibliography : by Afshar (1955) in the first chapter of third volume of Iranzamin Glossary.

Among the researches made on Sabzevari dialect so far, we can refer to:

Mr. Behroz Ashnay Ghasemi Thesis for receiving Postgraduate Degree (1987) titled "Morphological Study of Sabzevari Dialect in First Volume of Kelidar" (Books 1&2)

Parvin Sedayee Postgraduate thesis (1987) titled "Morphological Study of Sabzevari Dialect in First Volume of Kelidar " (Books 3&4)

Zahra Safavi Mobarahan (1987) Postgraduate thesis titled: "Sabzevari Dialect in Kelidar" (Books 5&6)

Yasaman Taghibeigi Postgraduate thesis (1987) titled "Morphological Study of Sabzevari Dialect in Kelidar" (Books 7&8) and Alireza Sahebinezhad Postgraduate thesis (1994) titled "Study of Sabzevari Dialect"

Azam Staji has studied Vocal Coordination in Sabzevari Dialect in the article with the same title. Other researches made in this regard are: "Linguistic Study of Sabzevar Dialect "(2002) by Abolfazl Broghani and "Sabzevar Local Glossary" including Sabzevari Dialect Vocabulary and Expressions with samples of local poem (1996) and "Analytical Glossary of Sabzevari Proverbs" (1999) written by Hassan Mohtasham.

### IV. SABZEVARI DIALECT SOUND SYSTEM

#### A. Consonants

As in Persian, this dialect contains 23 Consonants as follows.

Phone Persian Equivalent	Phonetic description	Phonetic Sign
پ	Voiceless , Bilabial, Stop	/p/-
ب	Voiced , Bilabial, Stop	/b/ -
ت، ط	Voiceless , Dental, Stop	/t/-
د	Voiced , Dental, Stop	/d/-
ک	Voiceless , Velar ,Stop	/k/ -
گ	Voiced , Velar ,Stop	/g/ -
ق، غ	Voiced , Uvular ,Stop	/q/-
همزه، ع	Voiceless , Glottal ,Stop	/ʔ/-
چ	Voiceless ,Affricate , Alveopalatal ,Stop	/č/-
ج	Voiced ,Affricate Alveopalatal ,Stop	/j/ -
ف	Voiceless ,Labiodentals ,Fricative	/f/ -
و	Voiced ,Labiodentals ,Fricative	/v/ -
ث،س،ص	Voiceless ,Alveolar ,Fricative	/s/ -
ذ، ز، ض،ظ	Voiced ,Alveolar ,Fricative	/z/ -
ش	Voiceless ,Fricative Alveopalatal	/š/-
ژ	Voiced , Alveopalatal , Fricative	/ž/ -
خ	Voiceless ,Uvular, , Fricative	/x/ -
ح، ه	Voiceless , Glottal , Fricative	/h/ -
م	Voiced ,Bilabial ,Nasal	/m/ -
ن	Voiced ,Dental , Nasal	/n/ -
ل	Voiced ,Alveolar ,Lateral	/l/ -
ر	Voiced , Alveolar ,Trill	/r/ -
ی	,Palatal,(Semi-Vowel) Approximant Voiced	/y/ -

It should be noted that:

a) Some words in this dialect are pronounced with more force like /qand/ in which phoneme q is pronounced with more force and is an allophone of /q/ and makes no meaning distinction.

b) In some words (like /haykal/, phoneme /h/ is pronounced as in Arabic language which makes no meaningful distinction and therefore is considered an allophone.

Points on Consonant Distribution:

All existing Consonant in this dialect can appear at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the word like their counterparts in Standard Persian.

Phoneme /ʔ/ can be omitted in the middle and at the end of the word, as: /do'a/:/do'ā /:Pray, /šam'/: Candle /ša:m/:

In Sabzevari dialect /h/ in the middle of the word is usually omitted as: /behtar/:/be:tar/ "Better"

This phoneme is also omitted at the end of the word after phoneme /ā / like

Well /čā/ Road and /rā/

#### B. Vowels

Like standard Persian, this dialect has 6 simple vowel (Short and long) as follows.

SIMPLE VOWELS:		
Phone Persian equivalent	Phonetic Description	Phonetic Sign
ای	Closed, Front, Spread	/ī/ و /i/ -
اِ	Semi-closed Front, spread	/e/ -
اَ	Open, Front, spread	/a/ -
اِ	Open, back, spread	/ā/ -
اوِ	Semi-closed, back, Round	/o/ -
او	Closed, Back, Round	/ū/ و /u/ -

DIPHTHONGS: THIS DIALECT HAS 8 DIPHTHONGS AS FOLLOWS:			
Meaning	Example	Phone Persian equivalent	Phonetic Sign
Wine	/may/	ای	/ay/ -
Link	/peyvan/	ای	/ey/ -
Second	/doyyom/	ای	/oy/ -
Slipper	/dempāyi/	ای	/āy/ -
Morbouy( A desert plant with yellow flowers)	/murbuy/	اوی	/uy/ -
Fever	/tow/	او	/ow/ -
Shoe	/kawš/	او	/aw/ -
Father	/piyar/	ای	/iy/ -

As in standard Persian, no word begins with vowel in this dialect.

#### V. MAJOR PHONETIC PROCESSES IN SABZEVARI DIALECT

"Phonetic units affected by Syntagmatics are changed. These changes are called Phonetic processes." (Haghshenas, 1992, P. 147)

##### A. Elision

Sometimes under certain conditions a phone is omitted from speech chain. Generally there are two elision processes in language.

1. Historical Elision: In which a phone is omitted from certain phonetic chains during the time, having passed historical procedures of the phone subject to certain historical-linguistic structures. (same, P. 157)

2. Structural elision: which is pursuant to the language sound system and governs phone combination in speech chain, that is, whenever an syntagmatics between segments occur, that is contrary to the language sound system or seems difficult based on language phonetic nature, a phonetic unit is omitted from speech chain to solve the problem.(Same, P. 158) beside historical and structural elision, there also exist some exceptional elisions for which no justification can be found. (Same,P. 159)

##### a) Middle Elision:

CONSONANT ELISION		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Akbar, The craftsman	/ʔ Ostād akbar/	/ʔ este akbar/
Old	/kohne/	/kona/

VOICED ELISION:		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
You, Yourself	/xod-e- šomā/	/xad šomā/
Scrambled eggs	/xāgine/	/xāgna/

VOWEL & CONSONANT ELISION:		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Veil	/čādor/	/čār/
Mohammad	/mohammad/	/mammad/

##### b). Ending Elision

VOICED ELISION:		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Gluttonous	/xorande/	/xorand/

## CONSONANT ELISION:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Miserable	/badbaxt/	/bedbax/
Kissed	/busid/	/busi/
Cooked	/poxt/	/pox/
Link	/peyvand/	/peyvan/
Soul	/jān/	/jo/
Wood	/čub/	/ču/
Street	/xiyābān/	/xiyābo/
said	/goft/	/gof/
Bread	/nān/	/no/
Deserted	/virān/	/veyrū/

## B. Addition

Sometimes in certain conditions a phone (or a segment) is added to the speech chain. This process is called "Addition". Like elision, addition follows language sound systems. That is whenever a syntagmatics occurs between language segments which is regarded as heavy based on the language phonetic nature or is contrary to language sound system, a chain segment is added to speech chain to remove this problem.(Same)

## 1. Beginning Addition:

Sometimes an inflectional "b" is added to the beginning of past tense verbs.

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
I read	/xāndam/	/boxondum/
I went	/raftam/	/beraftum/
I escaped	/gorīxtam/	/bogruxtum/

## 2. Middle Addition:

## VOWELS:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
wide	/pahn/	/pahen/
Fat	/čarb/	/čarob/
Noon	/zohr/	/zoher/
On odd	/qahr/	/qaher/
Weight	/vazn/	/vazen/

## CONSONANT:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Picking	/čidan/	/čīdan/
Abscess	/doma/	/demba/
All	/hame/	/hamma/

## 3. Ending Addition

## CONSONANT:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Jinn	/jen/	/jend/
Lawn	/čaman/	/čemand/
What do you like?	/če-mixāhi/	/češ-mexi/
Living room	/nešiman/	/nič imand/

## C. Vowel Harmony

In vowel harmony a vowel affected by another vowel in adjacent syllable loses some of its phonetic features or takes the features of the adjacent vowel or takes features similar to that. Vowel harmony can be progressive or regressive. (Haghshenas, 1992, P. 155,156)

## SOME EXAMPLES OF PROGRESSIVE VOWEL HARMONY:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Why	/čerā/	/čere/
Grate	/rande/	/randa/
Book-seller	/ketāb foruš/	/kotāb foroš/
I said	/goftam/	/goftom/

SOME EXAMPLES OF REGRESSIVE VOWEL HARMONY:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Fire	/ʔātaš/	/ʔataš/
Came	/ʔāmad/	/ʔama/
Iron	/ʔāhan/	/ʔahan/
Fountain-Pen	/xodnevīs/	/xādnivīs/

#### D. Assimilation

Sometimes a consonant loses some of its phonetic features in syntagmatic with another consonant and takes the phonetic features of its adjacent consonant instead. This process, perhaps one of phonetic universals, is called "Assimilation". If this process causes one of consonants to turn completely into another consonant, it is called "Complete Assimilation". However, if the assimilation does not end in complete assimilation, then it is called "Partial Assimilation." (Same, P. 152)

Assimilation can be progressive or regressive. In progressive assimilation of two syntagmatic consonants, the one in the first place remains fixed and unchanged and the one in the second place is assimilated. In regressive assimilation of two syntagmatic consonants, the one in the second place remains fixed and unchanged and the one in the first place is assimilated.

INSTANCES OF COMPLETE ASSIMILATION:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Worse	/badtar/	/battar/
Ill-natured	/badzāt/	/bezzāt/
Wicked	/badjens/	/bajjens/
Wrong	/badjūr/	/bajjūr/

INSTANCES OF INCOMPLETE ASSIMILATION:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Pants	/tonbān/	/tembo/
Trace	/donbā/	/dombāl/
Ghanbar	/qanbar/	/qembar/

#### E. Consonant-vowel Assimilation

It is possible that regressive and progressive assimilation occur between a syntagmatic consonant and vowel. This frequently happens in Persian. For instance, in syntagmatics with all palatal consonants /s/ ,/z/ ,/c/ and /j/ ,/e/ loses its half-closed feature and turns into "closed" although naturally they are pronounced closer than /e/ because they are consonants. (Same, P. 154)

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Eye	/čašm/	/čiš/
Boots	/čakme/	/čikma/
Gloves	/dastkeš/	/diskaš/

#### F. Consonants Dissimilation

In this process which is contrary to assimilation, a consonant, common with its syntagmatic consonant in one or some phonetic features loses some of its common features and gain other phonetic features. Dissimilation process can be progressive or regressive. (Same, P. 155). This process is much more unusual than assimilation. (Arlato , 1994, P.125)

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Map	/naqše/	/nexša/
Joy	/vajd/	/važd/
Conscience	/vojdan/	/voždān/
Time	/vaqt/	/vax/

In all said above examples the assimilation is in regressive type.

#### G. Mutation

"Sometimes in speech chain a chain segment turns into another segment with no justification within assimilation, dissimilation, vowel-consonant harmony or other processes. (Haghshenas, 1992, P. 160) This process is called "Mutation." The only justification for this process can be the inadequacy of phonetic chains.

1). Vowel Mutation:



## 1- /A/ → /E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Morals	/ʔaxlāq/	/ʔexlāq/
If	/ʔagar/	/ʔeger/
Ax	/tabar/	/tevar/
Pants	/šālvār/	/šelvār/
Unless	/magar/	/mege/

## 2- /A/ → /O/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Spring	/bahār/	/bohār/
Pray	/namāz/	/nomāz/

## 3- /E/ → /I/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Razor	/trɪ/	/teɪ/
Scream	/jɪ/	/jeɪ/

## 4- /E/ → /A/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
A saw	/ʔarre/	/ʔarra/
Cream	/xāme/	/xāma/
Letter	/nāme/	/nāma/

## 5- /E/ → /O/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Book	/ketāb/	/kotāb/
Tall	/derāz/	/dorāz/

## 6- /O/ → /A/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Fountain Pen	/xodnevis/	/xādnivis/

## 7- /A/ → /E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Ewer	/ʔāftābe/	/ʔeftave/
Game	/bāzi/	/bezi/
Sweep	/jāru/	/jeru/
Carpet	/qālī/	/qeli/

## 8- /ā/ → /o/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Five Hundred	/pānsad/	/ponsad/
Duck	/morqābi/	/morqovi/

## 9- /A/ → /A/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Home	/xāne/	/xana/
Grain	/dāne/	/dana/
Womanly	/zanāne/	/zanana/
Comb	ne āš/	/šana/

## 10- /U/ → /E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Pottage	/šurbā/	/šervā/

## 11- /U/ → /O/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Teapot	/quri/	/qori/
Book Seller	/ketāb foruš/	/kotāb foroš/

## 12- /U/ → /I/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Pennyroyal	/pune/	/pina/
Coffin	/tābut/	/tābid/
Knife	/čāqu/	/čeqi/
Knee	/zānū/	/zeni/
Bride	arus/	/ʔaris/

## 13- /l/→/E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Shovel	/bīl/	/be/
Patch	/pālīz/	/pelez/
Forehead	/pišāni/	/pešeni/
Sharp	/tīz/	/tez/
Late	/dīr/	/der/
Garlic	/sīr/	/ser/
Pin	/mīx/	/mex/
That is	/ya' nī/	/ya.ne/

## 14- /ow/→/Ā/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Bright	/rowšan/	/rāšan/
Oil	/rowyan/	/rāyan/

## 15- /Ā/→/Ū/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Roof	/bām/	/būm/
Cup	/jām/	/jūm/
Dinner	/šām/	/šūm/
Palate	/kām/	/kūm/

The word "Salam" "Hello" is an exception, it does not change.

## 16- /A/→/U/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Has gone	/rafte/	/rufta/

## 17- /O/→/U/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Has said	/goftē/	/gufta/

## 2) Consonant Mutation

## 1- /M/→/N/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
possible	/momken/	/monken/

## 2- /B/→/P/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Dome	/qobbe/	/qoppa/

## 3- /B/→/V/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Open	/bāz/	/vā/
Axe	/tabar/	/tevar/
Pottage	/šurbā/	/šervā/
Duck	/morqābi/	/morqovi/

## 4- /P/→/F/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Visible	/peydā/	/feydā/
Victory	/pirūzi/	/firūzi/

## 5- /T/→/D/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Nursing	/parastāri/	/peresdāri/
Circumcision-Party	/xatne sūrān/	/xedne sūri/
Peach	/šeftālu/	ofdeli/š/
Kitchen	/matbax/	/modbax/

## 6- /Č/→/Y/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Female animal	/māče/	/maya/

## 7- /x/→/h/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Ditch	/xandaq/	/handaq/

## 8- /d/→/t/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Headman	/kad-xodā/	/ket-xodā/
Kick	/lagad/	/leqat (y) /
Mosque	/masjed/	/meččet/

## 9- /D/→/Z/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Jonbad (Name of a Village)	/jonbad/	/jombaz/
Dome	/gonbad/	/gombaz/

## 10- /D/→/Č/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Female Donkey	/māde xar/	/meče xar/

## 11- /R/→/L/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Fattened Animal	/parvār/	/polvār/
Cucumber	/xiyār/	/xiyāl/
Wall	/divār/	/difāl/

## 12- /Z/→/J/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Ugly	/zešt/	/jiš/

## 13- /S/→/Š/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Very hard land	/saxt/	/šax/

## 14- /Ž/→/J/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Dew	/žāle/	/jāla/
Eyelash	/može/	/mija/

## 15- /K/→/G/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Akbar	/akbar/	/egbar/
Bank	/bānk/	/bāng/

## 16- /G/→/K/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Loose	/gošād/	/kešād/

## 17- /V/→/F/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Wall	/divār/	/difāl/

## 18- /V/→/Y/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Second	/dovvom/	/doyyom/
Third	/sevvom/	/seyyom/

## 19- /V/→/B/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Opium smoking tube	/vāfur/	/bāfur/
A barrier against water	/varq/	/barq/

## 20- /H/→/B/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Toilet	/mostarāh/	/moterāb/

## 21- /H/→/Q/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Kidding	/mezāh/	/mezāq/

22-/s/→/z/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Asqar	/ʔasqar/	/ʔezqar/

23- /L/→/R/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Mantle	/ʃenel/	/ʃener/

## 3). Sound Cluster Mutation to a Vowel

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Gardener	/bāqbān/	/bāqvū/
Shop	/dokān/	/diko/
Hayrack	/kāhdān/	/kādo/
Nail	/nāxon/	/nexi/
Animal	/heyvān/	/hayvu/

## H. Metathesis

Sometimes two consonants in a combination change their place by syntagmatic in a way first consonant takes the place of the second and the second consonant takes the place of the first. This process is called "Metathesis" (Haghshenas, 1972, P. 156) the frequency of this phonetic process which is a rather unusual type of sound change is low in Sabzevari dialect compared with other processes.

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Photograph	/ʔaks/	/ʔask/
Wick	/fetile/	/pelita/
Lock	/qofl/	/qolf/
Kalyan	/qalyān/	/qeylu/
Shoulder	/ketf/	/keft/
Damn	/la nat/	/na lat/
Prescription	/nosxe/	/noxsa/

Metathesis is also occurred in the second example.

## I. Compensatory Lengthening

A special type of change covering both vowels and consonants is a trend called "Compensatory Lengthening. When a vowel is followed by two consonants and one of consonants is omitted, the previous vowel is lengthened to compensate the omitted phoneme. (Arlato, 1994, P. 127)

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Better	/behtar/	/be tar/
Affection	/mehr/	/me r/
Seal	/mohr/	/mo r/
That is	/ya 'ni/	/ya ne/

## VI. CONCLUSION

The finding results indicate that mutation is the major phonetic process and metathesis holds the lowest frequency in this dialect. It should be said that the mutation seen in this dialect is mostly of consonant type.

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# On the Development of Reading Ability

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**Abstract**—English reading is not only the purpose of the study, but also the main means and paths of learning English. English reading skill is one of the important language skills, which students have to master. Therefore, in order to improve students' reading ability, teachers should particularly focus on the development of students' effective reading skills and good reading habits.

**Index Terms**—reading ability, skill, habit

## I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of College English teaching is to develop students' ability to use English in an all-round way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future work and social interactions they will be able to exchange information effectively through both spoken and written channels. However, a good reading ability is necessary for students to learn English well. Reading is an important way of gaining information in English language learning. It's a basic skill for a foreign language learner.

Students learn reading to solidify and extend basic knowledge, and develop the lingual basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. So fostering good reading ability is a leading task of learning English. The key of reading is comprehension. Reading comprehension means extracting the required information from the material as efficiently as possible. In order to get the information you need from what you read, you must be able to read both accurately and quickly. A good reader is an accurate and fast reader. For example, there are lots of reading exercises in different types of examinations today. But all these readings must be done in limited time. So students are asked to read them correctly and at a certain speed. To do this, slow students should change their reading skills, reading habits, and enlarge English knowledge.

## II. EFFICIENT READING SKILLS

In today's fast-paced information age it is simply not good enough to be an **OK** reader. It is more important than ever to have **efficient** reading skills. It is interesting to note that efficient readers are not only reading faster, but they are also reading with better comprehension. An efficient reader has learned the art of reading text in much the same way that most of us look at objects in the world around us. When an efficient reader comes across the word "blue", they don't repeat the word "blue" to themselves, then think about the meaning. Instead, an efficient reader will understand and visualize the color much in the same way most people do when they look up at a blue sky. When you look up at a blue sky, you are typically not saying "blue sky", then thinking about the meaning, but instead you simply absorb the meaning immediately and effortlessly.

Efficient reading requires the use of various problem-solving skills such as holding the main idea of an article, understanding facts and details, guessing unknown words, making inferences and so on. Among them word-guessing skill is one of the most important. No matter how large your vocabulary is, it is impossible for you to know the meaning of every word you read. Even if you are allowed to look them up in a dictionary, you not only slow down your reading speed but also interrupt your thinking. Therefore, you have to deduce the possible meanings of unfamiliar words by using context clues or word analysis.

### A. Using the Context

Context refers to the sentence and paragraph in which a word occurs. In using the context to decide the meaning of a word you have to use your knowledge of grammar and your understanding of author's ideas because they can indicate the relationships among parts of the sentence and the paragraph. Thus, the other words in the sentences that come before and after can often help you to guess the meanings of the unfamiliar words by providing a definition, an example, a restatement, a synonym or an antonym. Such as "means", "refer to", "unlike", "however", "on the other hand", "on the contrary", "in other words", "furthermore", "in fact", "consequently" are all the hints.

Another way to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word is word analysis. That is, looking at the meanings of parts of words. Many English words have been formed by combining parts of older English, Greek and Latin words. If you know the meanings of these words' parts, you can often guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word, particularly in context.

### B. Using a Dictionary

There are some cases in which you can find very few context clues to use or there are too many new words to guess that you have to go to a dictionary. Besides it is also necessary for you to consult a dictionary after finishing reading in order to make sure you understand the exact meaning and usage of the unfamiliar words. Only in this way can you really grasp the words and make them become your active vocabulary.

A good dictionary provides lots of information about a word: spelling, pronunciation, part of speech, definitions, example sentences, derivations, and phrases etc. Some even provide usage labels, origin of the word, synonym or antonym, how frequently the word is used and so on. Almost every English word has more than one single meaning. In order to quickly locate the right meaning you should first have a rough idea of what part of speech it belongs to. After that you can scan the dictionary to find the right meaning. When you are not quite sure whether you have found the right one or not, the example sentences can often help you. Sometimes you can find some words used together in a sentence whose meaning cannot be understood from the ordinary meanings of the words in it. These words probably are an idiom or a set phrase. In this case you should decide the key word in the idiom and look it up in the dictionary.

Nowadays some students prefer an electronic dictionary to a paper one, because they think it is operated very conveniently and quickly. However, they don't realize that the paper dictionary usually provides more information of a word than an electronic one, and the process of consulting a paper dictionary is a very helpful way to develop scanning ability. Thus you should keep the habit of using a paper dictionary when possible.

### C. *Scanning Skill*

Scanning is a technique you often use when you search for key words or ideas. In most cases, you know what you're looking for, so you're concentrating on finding a particular answer. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases. Scanning is also used when you first find a resource to determine whether it will answer your questions. Once you've scanned the document, you might go back and skim it. When scanning, look for the author's use of organizers such as numbers, letters, steps, or the words, first, second, or next. Look for words that are bold faced, italics, or in a different font size, style, or color. Sometimes the author will put key ideas in the margin.

### D. *Skimming Skill*

Skimming is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. When you read the newspaper, you're probably not reading it word-by-word, instead you're scanning the text. Skimming is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading. People often skim when they have lots of material to read in a limited amount of time. Use skimming when you want to see if an article may be of interest in your research.

There are many strategies that can be used when skimming. Some people read the first and last paragraphs using headings, summarizes and other organizers as they move down the page or screen. You might read the title, subtitles, subheading, and illustrations. Consider reading the first sentence of each paragraph. This technique is useful when you're seeking specific information rather than reading for comprehension. Skimming works well to find dates, names, and places. It might be used to review graphs, tables, and charts.

### E. *Making Inferences*

If you want to accurately understand an article, you should make correct inferences. Sometimes, the author is describing a certain matter or discussing a certain problem, while he doesn't tell us the answer. Then you should make inferences according to the contents and the general knowledge that you already have. To make the result correct, you must focus on the topic, the fact and proofs that the article has provided.

### F. *Using the Title*

Reading is an interactive process -- it is two-way. This means you have to work at constructing the meaning from the marks on the paper. You need to be active all the time when you are reading. It is useful, therefore, before you start reading to try to actively remember what you know, and do not know, about the subject and then formulate questions based on the information you have. You can then read to answer these questions. Title, sub-titles and section heading can help you formulate questions to keep you interacting. The title is a summary of the text. Sometimes we have to make quick decisions based on only the title. Therefore it is useful to try to understand it well. This may mean looking up unfamiliar words in a dictionary.

It is a good idea to ask yourself the following questions, based on the title.

Is this text relevant to your needs? Is it related to the subject you are studying?

What do you expect to learn from the text? Ask yourself some questions that you expect the text to answer.

## III. IMPROVING READING ABILITY

### A. *Reading Habits*

If you want to raise your reading efficiency, you should pay attention to your reading habits.

Someone reads word by word, or someone reads with his finger pointing to the words or with his head shaking. Those are all bad habits. You should read phrase by phrase. Don't blink your eyes so often and don't shake your head. Just move

your eyeball. That's enough. If you want to get more word information, there must be a proper distance between your eyes and the reading materials.

#### B. *Extensive Reading*

Extensive reading is one of the ways of teaching reading. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 193), "extensive reading means reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read." Thus, although there are variations in the ways in which an extensive reading programme is administered, extensive reading programmes share the basic tenet that students read a relatively large amount of texts compared with what is called intensive reading, which usually involves a slower reading of a relatively small amount of materials and often with translation exercises, particularly in a foreign language situation. In extensive reading programmes, students read relatively simpler materials than in intensive reading programmes, and they are not usually required to demonstrate understanding to a degree as detailed as they would in intensive reading programmes. Instead, students are expected to read a large amount of texts while enjoying reading. Extensive reading, as partly mentioned above, "is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 193-194).

#### C. *Basic Conditions for Increased Reading Rate*

A well planned program prepares for maximum increase in rate by establishing the necessary conditions. Four basic conditions include: Have your eyes checked. Before embarking on a speed-reading program, make sure that any correctable eye defects you may have are taken care of by checking with your eye doctor. Often, very slow reading is related to uncorrected eye defects. Eliminate the habit of pronouncing words as you read. If you sound out words in your throat or whisper them, you can read slightly only as fast as you can read aloud. You should be able to read most materials at least two or three times faster silently than orally. If you are aware of sounding or "hearing" words as you read, try to concentrate on key words and meaningful ideas as you force yourself to read faster. Avoid regressing (rereading). The average student reading at 250 words per minute regresses or rereads about 20 times per page. Rereading words and phrases is a habit that will slow your reading speed down to a snail's pace. Usually, it is unnecessary to reread words, for the ideas you want are explained and elaborated more fully in later contexts. Furthermore, the slowest reader usually regresses most frequently. Because he reads slowly, his mind has time to wander and his rereading reflects both his inability to concentrate and his lack of confidence in his comprehension skills. Develop a wider eye-span. This will help you read more than one word at a glance. Since written material is less meaningful if read word by word, this will help you learn to read by phrases or thought units.

#### D. *Comprehensive Knowledge*

Besides those skills mentioned above, to improve reading ability, we should enlarge students' comprehensive knowledge about English. Encourage students to read something in their spare time about novel, play, biography, poem, history, culture, story and so on. For example, there are two pieces of materials of the same difficulty. One explains something about China's Spring Festival; the other is about Thanksgiving Day of the western countries. The former is easy to understand but the latter is more difficult. Why? It is clear that students know little about the latter. There are many foreign articles, from which we can know a lot about the flavors of English-speaking countries. So you must read lots of classical model essays, and recite some excellent texts, wonderful paragraphs or sentences, and accumulate a large of English materials, phrases, idioms, fixed sentence patterns and habitual expressions, then you can express them with your own words or even rewrite them.

### IV. CONCLUSION

To improve reading ability efficiently, you should develop some good reading skills in the first place. Secondly, you must have good reading habits. Thirdly you need to know well about the questions of reading comprehension and enlarge your English knowledge. Finally, there are different styles of reading for different situations. The technique you choose will depend on the purpose for reading. For example, you might be reading for enjoyment, information, or to complete a task. If you are exploring or reviewing, you might skim a document. If you're searching for information, you might scan for a particular word. To get detailed information, you might use a technique such as SQ5R. You need to adjust your reading speed and technique depending on your purpose. As long as you insist on using scientific skills, reading every day, and summing up continuously, the efficient reading ability is not difficult to be achieved.

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# Reducing Cognitive Load in Multimedia-based College English Teaching

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**Abstract**—Based on empirical research and qualitative analysis, this paper aims to explore reducing cognitive load in multimedia-based college English teaching. According to cognitive load theory of multimedia learning (CLTML), rational distribution of cognitive resources can effectively reduce cognitive overload. The findings of the study between the experimental group and the controlled group show that the average performance of the former in the test is much better than that of the latter, proving that instructional design guided by CLTML may facilitate reducing cognitive overload and enhance meaningful processing.

**Index Terms**—reducing cognitive load, multimedia, college English teaching

## I. INTRODUCTION

Multimedia refers to the concurrent use of different material presentations through different sensory channels. Presentations can be either verbal (written text or audio) or pictorial (animation pictures. (Mayer, 2001) It cannot be denied that multimedia assisted approach can make English learning more interesting, and well-designed courseware can present the visual and auditory information the students needed easily and efficiently, saving a lot of time otherwise used in lecturing and blackboard writing. So multimedia has the potential to enhance people's cognitive capabilities (Mayer, 2001).

But the pre-study result that multimedia approach did not show its advantages over the traditional methods prompt us to reflect on the disadvantages of multimedia assisted approach in college English teaching. Long hours of watching courseware screen which is filled with text, sound, graphics, pictures, photographs, animation and moving video may constitute cognitive load and make the students become tired. What's more, in the face of so much information, some students will feel lost and not know what to choose. So the factors affecting the efficacy of computer-based multimedia must be assessed, and reduce cognitive load such as unnecessary pictures and animation, to maximize the probability of success when using multimedia.

## II. METHOD

### A. Subjects

The subjects for the study were selected, according to their English results of National College Entrance Examination and Pre-test, from first-year undergraduates of non-English majors in Qingdao University of Science and Technology where the researcher worked. Chinese was their L1, and English their L2 or foreign language. And there is no obvious difference among the two selected groups (Experimental group and Control group), we may take it for granted that the subjects roughly the same English proficiency.

### B. Instruments and Procedures

In this study, the instrument used to elicit and collect information was in the form of test. The use of language tests as tools to measure the EFL learners' literacy has been well justified in the literature. In the current study, the subjects under different teaching courseware (experimental group, modified courseware, rationally distribute cognitive resources according to the Cognitive Load Theory of Multimedia Learning; while control group, courseware guided by Information Delivery Theory) took part in the same test. Their test results were collected and analyzed to see whether the multimedia teaching based on CLTML has positive effect on their English learning.

During the four-month experimental process, 117 subjects from two classes were taught English by the same teacher with the same textbook *New Horizon College English*. In the experimental group, the researcher, based on CLTML, presented the teaching materials according to the principle of dual channel presentation, spatial contiguity, temporal contiguity, coherence, modality, redundancy and so on, made full use of well-designed multimedia courseware which involves a rational combination of communication elements – text, sound, graphics, pictures, photographs, animation and video clips. Each media element has its own particular advantage in conveying particular kinds of messages and evoking particular kinds of learner responses. While in the control group, the courseware was designed according to IDT, paying attention to presenting large amounts of information with attractive graphics, pictures, photographs, animation, sounds, anecdotes, puzzles, giving more examples and practices to promote the students' cognitive schemata

automation. The presentation of teaching materials was not limited by CLTML.

At the end of the experimental term, with a purpose of comprehensive test of the language proficiency of the subjects, both groups were asked to take part in the same test – the final examination which included writing, speed reading, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, cloze and translation. After the test, the test papers were carefully collected by the researcher.

### C. Data Analysis

#### 1. Data Preparation

In the quantitative study, a few steps were followed to prepare the data for statistical analysis. The raw data in the study was first inspected and as expected, some missing scores were found for the tests. However, to determine whether these scores should be treated as “missing” or “wrong”, the researcher established the following procedures. First, if a subject made a reasonable attempt to answer the questions in the test, the questions left unanswered were treated as wrong and scored zero. However, if a subject left an entire test paper blank or if more than half of the questions were unanswered, the data were regarded as missing, and the subject was dropped from the statistics. In accordance with these conditions, the final number, which was of statistical value, of subjects in experimental group was 57, and the control group was 60.

#### 2. Scoring of the Tests

In the data analysis, all the object answers sheets were marked by the computer, and in order to get more convincing and persuasive results, the subject answers (writing and translation) were objectively marked by three different teachers rather than the researcher himself and the mean of the three scores were the final scores for the subject parts.

And the raw scores were carefully typed into the SPSS data table in order to gain the desired data.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results have been fed into SPSS (12.0) and analyzed using independent sample T-test analysis.

MEANS COMPARISON FOR THE TEST

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Experimental Group	57	75.52	9.79	2.251	.028
Control Group	60	70.36	8.35		

The table shows that, in the test, experimental group and control group are different in the means; the former is 75.52, and the latter 70.36, 5.16 lower than the experimental group. And the difference is significant ( $P=.028, < .05$ ). This means that the two groups have different English proficiency. Therefore, the results of the test prove that, under different teaching courseware, the two groups do show difference, and the two different coursewares do affect the scores of the subjects. Or in another way, the cognitive load of the subjects can be controlled, guided by different theory; the teaching approach may affect the information cognitive processing of the subjects.

Limited by English proficiency, computer literacy, multimedia network learning environment adaptability, cognitive ability and learning style, self-efficacy, learning concept and emotional support, cognitive load may fluctuate, and English learning is a dynamic balance process of “input – output”. Based on cognitive load theory of multimedia learning, the researcher of experimental group integrated the requirements of syllabus with the students' needs, facilitating students' cognitive processing of learning materials, expanding their working memory information processing capacity; and reducing their cognitive load. While based on the information delivery theory, in control group, the researcher's teaching highlighted information transmission, rich in content and informative, focusing on recreating the same materials to enhance students' memory, but limited working memory capacity making the students difficult to process them effectively. Invalid information flood can only lead to distraction effect.

## IV. FURTHER DISCUSSION

The objective of multimedia research for educational purposes is to determine the factors that enhance the information cognitive processing. The final goal is to improve learning outcomes (Mayer, 2001).

The CTML is based on three premises, (1) dual channels for processing visual and auditory information, (2) limited capacity to process information in each channel, (3) and the learners' active processing of information. Humans have two information processing systems that can be used simultaneously and complementarily but are qualitatively different (Paivio, 1986). Multimedia college English teaching enables the students to obtain auditory input while strengthening a lot of visual information, which might produce cognitive overload to the students, for too much visual input may be beyond the students' ability to have meaningful information processing. Generally speaking, the verbal channel might be appropriate for abstract information, while sensory experience, such as simulation or illustration of phenomena behavior can be presented visually. But when students need to focus their attention on abstract information the use of pictures or animation creates an external stimulus competing for cognitive resources (Mayer, 2001). In this case, pictures or animation distract students rather than help them (Mayer, 2001; Rieh, 2002). So the excessive use of pictures or animation, though may make the presentation seemingly attractive, more often than not, will have negative effect on the students' information processing. Pace of exposure, which refers to speed of material presentation, should also be

paid attention to. Written information is self-paced, as opposed to audio and video, which are forced-paced. Pace of exposure is particularly important when considering the complexity of a message. People have less opportunity to process complex messages when pace of exposure is forced (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Layout design is another factor influencing multimedia effectiveness. According to Mayer (2001), based on extensive research, to develop effective multimedia presentations, pictures and their related words must be placed nearby and must be presented simultaneously. The extraneous materials should be avoided. And for animation it is better to use audio rather than written text. Due to the limited processing capabilities of the human brain, learners must select the relevant words and images to be processed. That is, the images and words processed on the working memory are already filtered. Therefore, the audio and pictures must be pleasant enough not to annoy, disturb or bore the learner. However, it can be speculated that the attractiveness should not be overdone because the most important feature is to present learners with relevant information to construct knowledge and not to distract them from the main objective.

Individual characteristics influence learning outcomes. Empirical findings suggest that domain-specific knowledge and spatial ability affects learning outcomes (Mayer, 2001). Learners with a low level previous knowledge about the presentation benefit more from a well-designed multimedia presentation than do learners with high level of previous knowledge (Mayer, 2001). In terms of spatial ability, learners with high spatial ability benefit more from a well-designed multimedia presentation as compared to learners with low spatial ability (Mayer, 2001). So the teachers might also need to cultivate the students' spatial skills so that they will be able to learn more from the multimedia presentations.

## V. CONCLUSION

Foreign language learning is an unconscious transforming process. Compared to learning their mother tongue acquisition, English learners have to master more cognitive schemata and offer more efforts. Cognitive load theory of multimedia learning tells us that in real teaching situation we should pay attention to the contradiction between students' limited cognitive resources and excessive information processing. It is clear that multimedia can be an effective learning tool depending on how it is used. Multimedia per se does not ensure improved students' performance and satisfaction. The proper use of multimedia should be assessed to increase the probabilities of an effective use. For example, instructors must be aware that the match of information and channel is critical for multimedia success. And multimedia will be effective only if it is properly designed so as to reduce the learners' cognitive overload and improve the learning performance.

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# The Sociology of Language Teaching and Learning

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**Abstract**—Any language must be treated in a social context. For a language teacher, it is important to relate language to society, because languages are taught and learnt to establish contact and communication across language boundaries. In fact society and culture are more than background and context. They both represent people with whom the learners eventually must make contact if language learning is to have any value in human terms. Language teaching can be looked upon as a deliberate intervention into ethno-linguistic relations which can be planned more or less effectively and which can contribute to the bilingualism of a society. Socio- cultural factors that affect motivation, such as the relative social status of the first language and the second language, the instrumental value of the second language, the cultural value of the second language and political factors should be considered. Sociolinguistics and other social sciences have a major role to play in second language pedagogy, profoundly influencing the quality of language programmes and provision of language in a speech community. The scope of this paper is to ascertain the role of social scientists, educational linguists, and language teachers who must come together to facilitate better teaching and learning of language.

**Index Terms**—sociolinguistics, linguistic competence, communicative competence, culture

The language teachers did not wait for sociolinguistics to come along in order to realize the relationship between language, culture and society. Language teachers and linguists have faced the common question of overemphasizing either the linguistic forms or people and countries. If they emphasize linguistic forms and neglect the people who use the forms in ordinary communication, the basic purpose of using the language is distorted. If they emphasize people and country and neglect linguistic forms, teaching becomes superficial and ineffective. In fact language teachers have been teaching language as a purely formal system. They forget that their students need to contact with native speakers and that a language class should create an introduction to a country and its people.

Language cannot be taught without coming face to face with social context factors which have significant impact on language teaching and learning. Language and society are closely linked. Comparing human and non-human societies, it has been observed that, “it is this inability to produce language...that keeps the apes as they are. For culture is only transmissible through coding, classifying and concentrating experience through some form of language. A developed language therefore is a unique and distinctive human trait...” (Worsley, 1970, p.25). The language learner should not only study the cultural context but he/she should also be made aware of the interaction between language and culture. The British anthropologist cum linguist Malinowski says, “Language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of the people, and...it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterance” (1923, p.305). He further says that ‘an utterance becomes only intelligible when it is placed within its contexts of situation...’ (op.cit. 306).

According to William Labov, the chief exponent of sociolinguistics, the study of language within the context of a speech community is linguistics. While studying the common topics of linguistic analysis, phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse analysis, semantics etc in their pure and abstract form, leaves out the most interesting; the infinite varieties of language use. He says that “the basic data for any form of general linguistics would be language as it is used by native speakers communicating with each other in everyday life” (1971, p. 153). The mode for the analysis of languages has shifted from the utterance in isolation and the study of a context into which this utterance must be placed towards an attempt to regard the interpersonal social act as the primary event and the speech forms as secondary. The act of communication is not seen as an exchange of linguistic messages, but rather as a socially meaningful episode. Let us take an example of two friends A and B.

A (waving his hand) to B: How are you?

B: How am I in regard to what? Health, finance, school, work or peace of mind?

A (angrily): Look! I was just trying to be polite. Frankly, I do not care how you are?

The concept of ‘Communicative Competence’ is widely accepted in language pedagogy. It is “a competence of when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (Hymes, 1972, p. 277). This concept definitely challenged Chomsky’s ‘linguistic competence’ which is confined to internalized rules of syntax and abstracts from the social rules of language use. Communicative Competence no doubt implies linguistic competence but its main focus is the grasp of social and cultural rules and meanings that are carried by any utterance. Language teaching must recognize social, interpersonal and cultural dimension as important as grammatical and phonological aspect.

Language learning in the classroom continues to be conceived as training rather than as real communication or as an introduction to a foreign society. This emphasis on learning of language forms, developing mental associations, and acquiring speech habits or the emphasis on the acquisition of skills, independent of communication in society prevailed until most recent times and in many ways is still dominant today. Language teaching theorists have repeatedly stated that an important purpose of language learning is to learn about a country and its people. A widely read book during World War I recommended “some knowledge of the history of the people who speak the languages” as a necessary part of the language programme (Atkins and Hutton, 1920, p. 247).

The treatment of culture in language programmes concentrates on non- linguistic features. From the point of view of language pedagogy it is important at anytime not to separate too rigidly language from society and culture. In practice, integration of language with its socio-cultural context hasn't been easy. The description of language on which language pedagogy is based is generally ‘a-social’ and ‘culturally neutral’ (Stern, 1983, p. 256).

The social context of language learning can be regarded as a set of factors that is likely to exercise a powerful influence on language learning and it is therefore necessary to take note of such contextual factors in analyzing a given language teaching situation. Socio- cultural factors that affect motivation, such as the relative social status of the first language and the second language the instrumental value of the second language, the cultural value of the second language and political factors should be considered.

The question of the relationship between the social milieu and language learning has become particularly acute in recent studies on bilingual education. Paulston (1975) argued ‘that we can begin to understand the problems and question of bilingual education only when we see bilingual education as the result of certain societal factors’. In order to study the environmental influences on language, Mackey (1970) developed a typology showing the intricate varieties that may occur when we relate the language of the school to the home, area or nation. Mackey identifies the following nine different ways of arranging the language curriculum in schools leading to no less than ninety different patterns of interaction between home, school, area and nation.

- i. The school may be located in a place where neither the language of the area nor the national language is that of the home.
- ii. It may be in a country where the language of the home but not that of the area is the national tongue.
- iii. The language of the area and not of the nation may be that of the home.
- iv. Both are and national language may be that of the home.
- v. the national language may not be that of the home but the area may be bilingual, with both the home and national languages being used.
- vi. The country may be bilingual and the area unilingual.
- vii. Both the area and the country may be bilingual.
- viii. The area may be bilingual and the national language may be that of the home.
- ix. The county may be bilingual and the area language that of the home.

If we apply Mackey's categories to language teaching in general, it shows how different social variables interact with language teaching and learning.

The most obvious contextual factor against which to view language learning is the language situation. Some countries are linguistically homogeneous e.g. Germany, France, Britain, Argentina or Thailand. In these countries language learning takes place against a fairly uniform language background and students are likely to have many language learning problems in common. Moreover a uniform language environment creates among students the illusion of universal unilinguality which can lead to resistance to second language learning. Heterogeneous language situations are much more complex. For example, learning English in India as a second language has to face a sociolinguistic context of many languages and dialects.

This has the advantage that students approach language learning on the basis of experience with different languages and varied language contacts in their own environment, but the diversity of language backgrounds in the language class may complicate the teaching task. Another linguistic aspect to bear in mind is the learner's language. The linguistic and cultural distance between the first and second language suggest some learning problems. Most of the European languages such as English, French, German, Russian, Italian and Spanish share common European linguistic and cultural assumptions, reflected in the vocabulary and grammar of these languages. Equally many of the languages in India like Hindi, Gujrati have much in common. A European learning an oriental language such as Chinese, Japanese, and Hindi faces many unfamiliar linguistic and cultural factors. Similarly, a native speaker of Hindi or Japanese faces similar problems in learning English as a second language. Linguistic similarity is no absolute guarantee that the second language will be easily learnt. Other factors may be more important than linguistic similarities.

Socio-cultural factors are closely associated with the language situations. They are, the social organization of the community and different groups that constitute the society, its social and occupational classes, ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Socio-economic and socio-cultural differences are equally important. Particular languages are sometimes held in either high or low esteem because of economic, political or cultural values associated with them. Students therefore frequently come to language learning with positive or negative attitudes derived from the society in which they live and these attitudes influence their motivation to learn the second language. However the relationship

between socio economic or socio-cultural factors and language learning can't be treated as self evident. At times this relationship is far less evident.

The geographical distance between linguistic communities may have some bearing on language learning. The geography of the situation must not be interpreted too mechanically. Ease of communication has served to overcome geographical distance to some effect; but in spite of that, it makes a difference whether a second language is used within or close to the environment in which the language is learnt or is one available at increasing distances from it. The distinction that is often made between second language and foreign language is primarily a distinction between the geographical settings in which the language is used and the socio-linguistic and socio-cultural implications of these settings for language teaching and learning. In the second language situation where the language is used within the environment in which it is learnt, teachers and learners have immediate and regular access to opportunities of language use. In the First Language situation the environment support is lacking and therefore has to be compensated for by special pedagogical measures.

In general, it is probably less the geographical distance as such that affects learning than how the language is perceived by teachers and learners. In assessing a language teaching situation it is important to ask whether the second language is available within the learning environment or if not at what distance from the learning environment it is.

Economic and technological factors are important as far as language teaching and learning are concerned. The acquisition of technological skill depends upon the knowledge of a major world language through which these skills may be acquired. Thus, in the third world countries English as a second language is a pre-requisite to scientific or technological training. Language learning demands an economic investment and a society may have to weigh up the importance of language learning against the importance of other educational needs. Language teaching in advanced industrialized societies has been characterized by abundance of teaching materials and of electronic audio and video equipment. Many developing countries lack such materials or equipment and can't afford to buy them. They may also lack the skilled manpower to install and maintain such equipment. It is therefore important for an analysis of the context of language teachers to take account of economic and technical capabilities in determining curriculum materials or in recommending techniques or a technology. Most of the developing countries may be interested in a simple technology of second language learning than in costly gadgets because of economy and shortage of technological skill to service equipment.

In the realm of language teaching and learning, social context is very important. In fact language itself must be treated in a social context. It is very important to relate language to society, because languages are taught and learnt to establish contact and communication across language boundaries. Society and culture are more than background and context. They represent people with whom the learner eventually must make contact. Language teaching can be viewed as a deliberate intervention into ethno linguistic relations which can be planned more or less effectively and which ultimately contribute to the bilingualism of a society. Sociolinguistics and other social sciences have major role to play in second language pedagogy, influencing the quality of language programmes and the provision of languages in a speech community. The relationship between the social sciences and language pedagogy has developed differently from that between linguistics and language teaching. Social scientists unlike linguists have been indifferent to language pedagogy and have hardly recognized the importance of theories and descriptions of society and culture for language teaching. In the long run the best hope for the future lies in cooperation between social scientists, educational linguists and language teachers.

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# Exploring How to Ensure the Quality of Bilingual Education in Advanced Mathematics\*

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**Abstract**—International market and talent competition presented a higher requirement of advanced education. This paper explores how to ensure the quality of bilingual education with “Advanced Mathematics” in universities from several aspects, such as objectives, patterns, practice, and evaluation, etc.

**Index Terms**—bilingual education, advanced mathematics, practice, evaluation

## I. INTRODUCTION

International market and talent competition presented a higher requirement of advanced education. To cultivate foreign language and suitable capabilities of the professional and technical personnel becomes one of the teaching goals of advanced education. Therefore, bilingual education is paid to attention increasingly in order to adapt to development needs of the trend of internationalization of advanced education, it is also an important approach to develop compound talents with international cooperation, international exchanges and competitiveness. To carry out bilingual teaching in China not only helps college students master the latest theory and cutting-edge technology quickly, but also is conducive to the introduction of foreign advanced educational resources, teaching ideas, and teaching methods. In addition, it can prompt teachers to learn continuously in order to improve the level of expertise and foreign language application.

## II. THE MEANING OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ITS OBJECTIVES IN ADVANCED MATHEMATICS

The word “Bilingual” means two kinds of language. The literal meaning of bilingual education should make use of two languages (usually with Chinese and English in China) to teach and learn. Bilingual teaching is not teaching English, nor is the teaching of English as a foreign language. It is that English only is as the second teaching language in the whole process of teaching (A teaching method of using English as the second language). The whole process of teaching should include teaching materials, teaching reference books, teacher lectures, courseware, tutoring, homework and exams and other factors.

The goal of bilingual teaching in advanced mathematics, first of all, should enable students to achieve the same knowledge and skills’ objectives taught in native language, namely in Chinese. Secondly, it should achieve the basic requirements of this course. Thirdly, after taught and trained in bilingual teaching, students should improve their English level, can communicate with international scholars in the “common language” smoothly, read foreign math materials, and understand foreign math ideas and approaches. Ultimately bilingual education achieves to develop comprehensive quality of students, especially math and language quality with advanced international ideas and thinking ways.

## III. PATTERN OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN ADVANCED MATHEMATICS

In teaching, the academics divide bilingual teaching pattern into three types including immersion bilingual education, maintenance bilingual education and transitional bilingual education. Immersion bilingual education is a pattern that is for teachers to teach advanced mathematics knowledge in non-native language completely. It stresses full use of English to teach professional knowledge. Maintenance bilingual education is a type of transitional study subjects that is the initial full use of mother tongue to teach, and then gradually shifted to using a second language to learn some subjects. Transitional bilingual education is more prominent of the final transition to all disciplines in a second language. To study the feasibility of three models mentioned above reasonably and realistically, maintenance bilingual education is the most suitable to Chinese current situation and conditions, because Learning environment for Chinese students is Chinese, and students’ learning, thinking and other cognitive activities are in Chinese. The implementation of the “maintain the style” in bilingual education can make maximum use of existing teachers and teaching resources. Furthermore, the gradual penetration mode helps students to understand and apply the two cultures gradually.

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#### IV. PRACTICE OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN ADVANCED MATHEMATICS

Advanced Mathematics is an important and basic course in University for the science and engineering students, for the course will directly affect the quality of learning to follow-up courses and graduate professional examination's success. As Bilingual teaching mathematics in China has little experience for reference. Even if we can select an excellent original textbook which is suitable to Chinese students' mathematical cognitive style, a corresponding translation versions in Chinese is relatively small. So it is very important that we can choose an original-textbook and supporting materials in Chinese. At present, the book that is pressed by Prentice2 Hall Press in the United States, written by Dale Varberg etc. The textbook covers the content that is similar with our current mathematics. The chapters are as follows: 1. Prior knowledge, 2. Functions and limits. 3. Derivative. 4. Applications of Derivatives. 5. The integrals. 6. Integral application. 7. Transcendental functions. 8. Techniques of integration. 9. Indeterminate Forms and Improper Integral. 10. Infinite series. 11. Numerical methods and approximate. 12. Conics and polar coordinates. 13. Geometry in the Plane, Vectors. 14. Geometry in Space, Vectors. 15. n-dimensional space. The book has common features with other excellent textbooks by the United States- language easy to understand, focusing on the visual interpretation of concepts and theorems, focusing on students to use technology tools such as graphics calculators and mathematical software such as Maple and Matlab for visual learning-methods, focusing on integration of ideas and methods of mathematical modeling. These points coincide with the ongoing of teaching reform in Chinese domestic mathematics. Compared with other excellent materials, such as one by Thomas' Calculus, the book also has more emphasis on rigorous mathematical theory of the characteristics, which is quite similar with domestic materials. It is very suitable for bilingual education.

##### A. *Selecting Excellent Textbook and Reference Materials, and Writing Suitable Teaching-Cases*

Whether imported and domestic publication, or translation of the school's teaching has some limitation. Team of bilingual teaching mathematics should depend on students' level of English and mathematics, and write excellent teaching-cases combined with the mathematical basis, ways of students' thinking, English acceptance ability and other factors. In this way, bilingual teachers can choose the most suitable teaching approach, teaching content, and teaching speed to have their lessons. Furthermore they can adjust the foreign penetration of mathematical thinking in order to ensure maximum teaching-quality of advanced mathematics, and to achieve the goal of bilingual education requirements. On the other hand, as there are learning cases for students before class, they can clearly know important content, English nouns of Mathematics and the expression of mathematical reasoning, as well as reference information in this lesson which should be previewed. It is certainly helpful for the lesson.

##### B. *Using Advanced Teaching Methods to Stimulate Students' Interest in Learning and Communication*

Because advanced mathematics is very abstract and learning time is so little, during the implementation of bilingual education, the problem of study intension stands out in particular. Thus how to have abstract mathematical knowledge visualization, complex issues simple, boring math vivid is what mathematics teachers dedicate to do. In this situation, teachers should request students to preview English vocabulary used at the beginning of class, use multimedia electronic courseware in English for Electronic courseware for teaching can reduce time, improve teaching efficiency, and greatly help students understand and learn.

In classroom, teachers express definitions, theorems in English, explain in Chinese. In addition, to improve teaching effect of classroom, teachers should pay attention to advanced teaching-idea and methods presented in foreign materials in the teaching process, such as active learning idea, problem solving method, and group studying and other teaching methods. Meanwhile teachers should reform the traditional teaching-model of "teacher talk, students listen to", allow students to actively participate in the teaching process, maximize to mobilize the students' enthusiasm. They can encourage students to make full use of study case, the English multimedia courseware and related reference materials and supplementary materials on the web site for students to review and free supplementary learning.

#### V. EVALUATION EFFECT OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION EFFECTIVELY

Teachers can know all aspects of teaching through evaluation so that they can judge teaching effectiveness, shortcomings, contradictions and problems. Comprehensive evaluation not only can estimate students' grades, the extent of carrying out teaching goals, but also can explain the reasons for poor performance. The basis of teaching evaluation mainly refers to certain objective standards according to related and various data, teaching activities and their effects are determined by the evaluating system. Teaching evaluation is an indispensable basic one of teaching-links, which play multiple role in the teaching process, namely from the overall regulation to control the conduct of teaching activities that ensure to achieve intended goal ultimately. The role of teaching evaluation mainly in: 1. Diagnosing teaching problems. Through teaching evaluation teachers can understand whether their own teaching goals is reasonable or not, whether teaching methods and means are properly used or not, whether the teaching focus and difficult points are clarifying or not, whether students can understand the lesson. Furthermore teachers can know students' learning situation and existing problems so that they can adjust teaching strategies to improve teaching facilities in time. 2. To provide feedback. Practice shows that the results of teaching evaluation, which not only provide a lot of feedback for teachers' judging teaching condition, but also provide direct feedback for the students' learning. 3. Incentives. The

teaching evaluation plays the important role of supervision and control to teaching and learning process, it is to promote and strengthen for teachers and students, to reflect the teachers' teaching effectiveness and student performance. Experience and studies show that the test results which are often recorded can greatly inspire students within the limits set because students can get the psychological and spiritual encouragement to motivate them to a higher goal of the initiative as the teacher can give a higher rating; even lower rating also encourage students to think about, see the gap between themselves, and find the error and the "crux" of the where with the teachers' help. 4. Teaching function. The evaluation is itself a mathematical activity. In this activity, students' knowledge and skills will grow, even leap. Testing can be thought as an important learning-experience, which requires students to review the teaching materials in advance, consolidate and integrate mathematics skills learned before. Subsequent analysis of examination questions can confirm, clarify and correct some ideas. In addition, in the premise of estimating the students' learning teachers can give learning content in test questions' form that include some interesting topics questions in order to let students explore, comprehend, get to learn added learning -experience or to achieve higher objectives.

## VI. SETTING OF MATHEMATICS CLASSES IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION

To ensure the effectiveness of bilingual education, firstly the classes of bilingual education in advanced mathematics should be formed by students who are good at both mathematics and English, and offer to participate in bilingual education classes; Secondly, the number of students in bilingual education classes should not be more than 60 in order to facilitate the exchange.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Bilingual education is required by times, it is a good way to learn advanced teaching-philosophy, advanced teaching-methods and educational means. Mathematics is the foundation of science and engineering discipline, its bilingual education will surely benefit the bilingual teaching of other professional courses. Although the practice of bilingual teaching will meet some questions such as shortage of qualified bilingual teachers, the insufficient preparation of teaching materials, unideal language surrounding, etc., this is temporary. With the tireless efforts of educators, bilingual education will be getting better and better.

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# Interpretation on the Dill-pickle of Love

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**Abstract**—On the analysis of major writing devices of “A Dill Pickle” as symbolism, stream of consciousness and further contrasting heroine and the hero of A Dill Pickle, the paper aims to find out the essence of love that true love maintains its passion and dynamism through mutual trust and the art of communication in case that love should fade away over years like the tasteless pickles.

**Index Terms**—symbolism, stream of consciousness, contrast, character, love

## I. INTRODUCTION

Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), a famous female short story writer, is often compared to Chekov, the great storyteller. Critics praised her for her capturing the essence of Chekhov’s art for stories emphasizing atmosphere and actual life rather than exciting plot, and for her “refreshing originality” and “sensitiveness to beauty”. *A Dill Pickle*, completed in 1917, is one of her the most significant masterpieces and it is based on her own experience. She ended her early marriage in 1909 and encountered Francis Hayman in 1910 and fell in love with him. They shared the plan to travel in Russia and arranged their marriage while his family opposed to their marriage for Katherine Mansfield’s divorce. Francis Hayman was forced to end their relation. It was not long before Mansfield was pregnant and writing to Hayman in hope that he would come to see her, however in vain. Alone and lonely, she went to Germany and the child was aborted. Then six years later, they met with each other in a restaurant. *A Dill Pickle* reveals the loneliness and disillusionment of the female in reality as well as the author’s passive, doubtful attitude towards love, as Mansfield put that there would be no happy ending for the man and the woman, since the woman was always the victim of the man, who was cool and arrogant.

*A Dill Pickle* is about the encounter between a young woman and a young man who have been lovers six years ago and their lost love and changes over the years. Vera, the heroine, not much of a speaker is very sensitive inside while the Man, the hero, good at the flowery words seems so insensitive and self-centered. Their different characters vividly reveal in the text in spite of almost the equal importance the author attached. Through the disharmony between their ways of communication, it could be inferred the divergence of their love and the shortcomings in their personality traits. Short as the text is, it shows the striking features of modernism between the lines: the trivialized plot, stream of consciousness, symbolism which make the text delicate and thought-provoking.

Integrated with the theme, writing devices of the text and contrasting between the heroine and the hero, it makes sense to further apprehend and appreciate the text.

## II. THE THEME AND WRITING DEVICES OF THE TEXT

Katherine Mansfield reiterated her consistent theme in *A Dill Pickle* that the incomprehensible loneliness and pursuit of independence of personality of the female. Vera is the image of herself that they are both weak, fragile and love music, travelling, and have a deep complex to Russia. Through Vera’s eyes, Katherine depicts the mysteriously exotic Russian scenery and presents her confusion and doubts to love.

With the unfolding of the conversation between Vera and the man, the writing devices as symbolism and stream of consciousness, their destiny and characters of the heroine and the hero appear more vivid and striking.

The story is set in a café, in which each prop, a scene serves the theme of the story yet appearing irrelevant. Vera’s decent dressing suggests her weak health and middle class social status; the Japanese vase, the bamboo table, and cigarette case shows the Man’s unusual taste; the warm afternoon on which various flowers came into blossom tells the happiness of Vera; while the darkening Vodka river, mysterious Black Sea, and the melancholy tress indicates the worsening sentiments of Vera. The Dill Pickle, the preserved vegetable as a piece of snack, comes up twice in the text - first in the Man’s recollection and then in Vera’s imagination. Although Vera doesn’t see the pickles in person, she is so sensitive that she can feel the bright color and the sour taste of the pickles all out of her intuition. The dill pickle symbolizes the loss of the dynamism of their once fiery love as much as the lost flavor of fresh vegetables, besides it further tells that as for the man, love between a man and a woman is like nothing but the ingredient of his colorful life - once tasted, and tasteless afterward. Hence, symbolism helps to invent the vivid figures of the text and makes the theme of the text more profound.

Katherine Mansfield doesn’t make Vera’s speak much in the text, on the contrary, she goes deep into Vera’s inner world. Through Vera’s recollection, association and imagination-the flowing of consciousness, the whole story over the

six years unfolds. With the writing device as the stream of consciousness, Katherine Mansfield lets Vera tell and introduce her relationship with the Man. The Man keeps speaking and Vera listening to him, searching memory over the six years, piecing together their relations and presenting their story to the readers. Say, his interrupting her speaking reminds her of his irritating trick of interruption six years ago; his talking of those flowers leads her to remember the absurd scene over the tea table, his waving away the wasps like a maniac, out of all proportion to the occasion; his speaking of traveling around the places they have planned together, especially that informal, free Russian life wakes up the strange beast which has long slumbered in her bosom- her long cherished wish for the carefree and impulsive life.

With the stream of consciousness, characters of the heroine and the hero are more than alive.

### III. DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TO LOVE THROUGH CONTRASTING VERA AND THE MAN

Katherine Mansfield was good at inventing female characters as well as the male characters. Besides, the images of the male display the Katherine's observations on the problems between men and women brought forth by their respective social status and family background, and their intricate relations in that male chauvinist society. From her unique female perspective and extraordinary writing techniques, she reflected on the living situations of the female, revealed and sharply criticized the society of male chauvinism, which was ahead of her time and far from precious.

#### A. Contrast on their Styles of Communication

The disharmony between their styles of communication exposes the drastic differences in their characters. Six years ago they were lovers, interruption her speaking was his annoying trick in Vera's eyes; six years later, he is with habit of interruption. He is so excited to be listened to. Indeed, he is too much of a good speaker. The conversation between them through the whole text is almost voiced by the Man about his experience, his feelings, his decent life, which serve his own purpose that he enjoys his success and mocks and trivializes the deterioration of Vera's situation.

Vera has to be listening upon their encountering. Delicate, melancholy as she is, she is sensitive to each of his words. Her love to him has been intricate and complex, as bitter and sour as the preserved pickles. She has been doubtful about whether it was wise to leave him. She is hesitant as his sweet words pour out till eventually she realizes he is still he used to be and she leaves him again with him "sitting there, thunder-struck, astounded beyond words".

#### B. Contrast on the Social Status between Vera and the Man

The abovementioned differences between their way of communication comes from their family background and social status which further result in their separation six years later.

From the very beginning of the text, Vera "raised her veil and unbuttoned her high fur collar", the decent dressing indicates Vera's special taste to her appearance; as the story develops, it tells that Vera once enjoyed a pleasant life and her decent family background; she has the great interest in flowers, perfumes, music and travelling, which further suggests her special sensitivity to beauty. On the contrary, the Man, six years ago, young and naïve, had the dreamy vagueness and indecision what he behaved on that particular afternoon out of proportion to the occasion was like the nightmare for Vera.

Then in the following six years, they both have experienced drastic changes that Vera faces the declining of her middle-class family, down and out, struggles to live a life in the harsh reality while the man has been enjoying a decent life-he has the air of a man who has found his place in life and he must have made money too. But he remains the same as before in that he still has the trick of interrupting Vera, boasting all about his success and indulging in his dreams in negligence of Vera's sentiments.

For all the reasons, it can be inferred in the text the drastic difference of their social status and values result in their separation. Their social status seems equal but the rooted differences written in their genes remains as much as six year ago.

#### C. Contrast on the Differences between their Personality Traits

In the story, the author artfully points out the Man's insensitivity to others and Vera's sensitivity. The initial glimpse of the Man's self-involvement comes in that: he doesn't recognize her at first, then after a few words, he resorts to his old habit of interrupting her; then his egoism blinds him from seeing and caring Vera's deterioration and feelings and he has been imbued with the fantasy of what he has done in the six years, by himself, all the things they have dreamed of doing together-in particular, travelling to Russia, the best-cherished place in Vera's heart. At the end, he has the audacity to claim that they are both egotistical and self-engrossed which sharply proves his egoism.

Throughout the text, Vera doesn't do much taking, and it is plain to feel her sensitiveness between the lines: she is not only sharply aware of his feelings, in fact more so than he himself is, and feels more strongly his pains and joys. She was also courageous to end the relationship with him because he was too egoistical. Six years later, she leaves him again since she recognizes that he has not changed.

Contrasting the differences of the personality traits of Vera and the Man, Katherine Mansfield tried to reflect and explore the art of communication between the female and the male. And it could be better noticed the limit that Katherine Mansfield focused her attention mainly on the lost love between the two persons without offering effective solutions to amend their relations in the confusing and complicated reality.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

The ending of the story indicates the failure of love that for all of their regrets over the love in the past six years, and in the end love still fades away like the preserved pickles which have long lost their taste and flavor. It should further be stressed that the fatal weaknesses in their personalities- egoism and lack of art of communication result in the failure of love.

That Vera's leaving in the end represents Katherine's attitude to love and disappointment with the male and disillusionment of the female in the society, which makes the readers think over the flavor of true love, or the love as tasteless as the preserved dill pickles is not worth cherishing.

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# Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

## Aims and Scope

**Theory and Practice in Language Studies (TPLS)** is a peer-reviewed international journal dedicated to promoting scholarly exchange among teachers and researchers in the field of language studies. The journal is published monthly.

*TPLS* carries original, full-length articles and short research notes that reflect the latest developments and advances in both theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching and learning. We particularly encourage articles that share an interdisciplinary orientation, articles that bridge the gap between theory and practice, and articles in new and emerging areas of research that reflect the challenges faced today.

*Areas of interest include:* language education, language teaching methodologies, language acquisition, bilingualism, literacy, language representation, language assessment, language education policies, applied linguistics, as well as language studies and other related disciplines: psychology, linguistics, pragmatics, cognitive science, neuroscience, ethnography, sociolinguistics, sociology, and anthropology, literature, phonetics, phonology, and morphology.

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Special issues feature specifically aimed and targeted topics of interest contributed by authors responding to a particular Call for Papers or by invitation, edited by guest editor(s). We encourage you to submit proposals for creating special issues in areas that are of interest to the Journal. Preference will be given to proposals that cover some unique aspect of the technology and ones that include subjects that are timely and useful to the readers of the Journal. A Special Issue is typically made of 10 to 15 papers, with each paper 8 to 12 pages of length.

A special issue can also be proposed for selected top papers of a conference/workshop. In this case, the special issue is usually released in association with the committee members of the conference/workshop like general chairs and/or program chairs who are appointed as the Guest Editors of the Special Issue.

The following information should be included as part of the proposal:

- Proposed title for the Special Issue
- Description of the topic area to be focused upon and justification
- Review process for the selection and rejection of papers
- Name, contact, position, affiliation, and biography of the Guest Editor(s)
- List of potential reviewers if available
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- Estimated number of papers to accept to the special issue
- Tentative time-table for the call for papers and reviews, including
  - Submission of extended version
  - Notification of acceptance
  - Final submission due
  - Time to deliver final package to the publisher

If the proposal is for selected papers of a conference/workshop, the following information should be included as part of the proposal as well:

- The name of the conference/workshop, and the URL of the event.
- A brief description of the technical issues that the conference/workshop addresses, highlighting the relevance for the journal.
- A brief description of the event, including: number of submitted and accepted papers, and number of attendees. If these numbers are not yet available, please refer to previous events. First time conference/workshops, please report the estimated figures.
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