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# Impact of EFL Teachers' Collective Efficacy and Job Stress on Job Satisfaction

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**Abstract**—This study examines the impact of EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers' collective efficacy (TCE) and job stress on job satisfaction. The participants were 25 EFL instructors from English Foundation School, Girne American University, North Cyprus who responded to the TCE, Job Stress and Job Satisfaction Questionnaires. Findings supported the hypotheses that TCE predicted job satisfaction in EFL setting in North Cyprus and job stress was negatively related to job satisfaction for EFL instructors. The results from this study provide evidence that TCE and job stress in an EFL context influence job satisfaction. At a broader level, the study is the first to examine teachers' collective motivation beliefs in an EFL setting. For educators, this study underlines the importance of TCE as a source of individual job satisfaction.

**Index Terms**—teachers, collective efficacy, EFL setting, job satisfaction, job stress

## I. INTRODUCTION

Concept of self-efficacy perceptions was introduced by Albert Bandura (1977) with a meaning of “beliefs in one's capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Since then, research studies conducted in many fields have shown the power of efficacy judgments in human learning, performance, and motivation. For instance, these efficacy beliefs have been found to be related to smoking cessation, adherence to exercise and diet programs, performance in sports, political participation, and academic achievement (Bandura, 1997).

The last field is of particular importance to educators. During the last two decades, links between student achievement and three kinds of efficacy beliefs —the self-efficacy judgments of students (Pajares, 1994, 1997), teachers' beliefs in their own instructional efficacy (Goker, 2006b; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), and teachers' beliefs about the collective efficacy of their school (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000) were studied by the researchers in the field of education.

Perceived collective efficacy is the most recent construct developed and has received the least attention from educational researchers among these three efficacy beliefs. Despite the fact that the large number of studies on teacher efficacy have been done in different subject areas, no study addressing the role of collective-efficacy and job stress in job satisfaction has been done with the population of teachers in an EFL setting. This study examines how teachers' collective efficacy (TCE) beliefs and job stress are associated with job satisfaction for EFL instructors in North Cyprus.

Almost all discussions of the effectiveness of teaching and learning process have placed a great emphasis on teachers' actions and behaviors that are associated with their attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, and motivation levels. When they gain satisfaction from their work, teachers naturally display higher levels of motivated behavior and performance as well as lower levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout (e.g., Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Green-glass & Burke, 2003).

### Teachers' Collective Efficacy

Findings of recent studies have demonstrated that teachers' self-efficacy is related to a host of positive factors in the classroom, including better student outcomes, reduced stress, and career longevity (Woolfolk-Hoy & Davis, 2006). However, less attention has been given to TCE, which refers to the beliefs teachers possess in their collective capabilities to influence the lives of their students (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). When teachers are satisfied with their work, they may possess a strong sense of their own capabilities in their work. Effective schools are characterized by stakeholders who have a collective sense in their efficacy to help students develop and learn.

Bandura (1997) asserted that individuals do not work as social isolates, and therefore people form beliefs about the collective capabilities of the group(s) to which they belong. He defined *perceived collective efficacy* as “a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments” (p. 477). Such group referent perceptions show an emergent organizational property known as *perceived collective efficacy* (see, e.g., Bandura, 1997; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002). Within a school, perceived collective efficacy, then, represents the judgement of teachers that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the necessary courses of action in order to have a positive effect on student learning.

According to findings of some studies, TCE is found to be related to student achievement and academic climate, even after controlling for previous student achievement and demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status (e.g., Bandura, 1993; Klassen, Chong, Huan, Wong, Kates, & Hannok, 2008). In most of these studies, links between TCE and professional commitment and teachers' sense of community have been found (Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008; Ross & Gray, 2006; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). Schools, where teachers have high collective efficacy beliefs may also be those in which administrators, students, and parents are generally more supportive (Goddard & Goddard, 2001).

### **Job Satisfaction and Job Stress**

According to Bandura (2000), groups with higher levels of collective efficacy are more likely to persist in trying to solve problems if they face with obstacles and efficacy beliefs affect what people prefer to do as a group, how much effort they put into it and their staying power when collective efforts fail to produce results. Thus, we can say that employees with lower efficacy may call in sick rather than face another day of frustration on a job they feel unable to perform, whereas employees with higher efficacy are likely to exhibit fewer withdrawal behaviours, because they may expend more effort and persistence in task performance (Bandura, 1986). All these opinions have received support empirically. For example, Hochwarter, Kiewitz, Castro, Perrewe, & Ferris. (2003) argued that persons with low collective efficacy were less satisfied with their jobs when levels of 'go-along-to-get-along' politics increased. Jex and Bliese (1999) and Jex and Thomas (2003) found collective efficacy related to job-related stressors and strains, and collective efficacy significantly related to average levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Teachers who have higher levels of job satisfaction are likely to be better performers than dissatisfied teachers. Job satisfaction is considered to be the degree of an employee's affective orientation toward the work roles. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). Locke further argues that job satisfaction explains what makes people want to come to work and makes them happy about their job or not to quite their jobs. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) also defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable effective condition resulting from one's appraisal of the way in which the experienced job situation meets one's needs, values, and expectations". Therefore, job satisfaction could be fundamentally the result of effective behavior management.

Recently researchers have begun to empirically explore the relation between teachers' motivation and job-related factors. Teaching is considered to be a stressful occupation, with many demands from administrators, colleagues, students, and parents, shifting policies, and a lack of recognition for accomplishments (Greenglass & Burke, 2003). Teacher stress is inversely related to teacher self-efficacy (Betoret, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Yoon, 2002) and positively related to poor teacher-pupil rapport and low levels of teacher effectiveness (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Kokkinos, 2007). Teacher stress is also not inevitable in difficult conditions; teachers in schools where there is good communication among staff and a strong sense of collegiality express lower levels of stress and higher levels of commitment and job satisfaction (Kyriacou, 2001).

In spite of reported high levels of stress (Chaplain, 2008; National Education Association, 2007), teachers often find high levels of personal satisfaction from their work. Job satisfaction is considered to be associated with job commitment, and with high levels of performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca (2003) named job satisfaction a "decisive element" (p. 823) that affects teachers' behavior and performance, and he argued that self-efficacy and collective efficacy both contribute to teachers' job satisfaction.

## **II. CURRENT STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to provide an exploratory investigation into how TCE and job stress influence job satisfaction in an EFL setting. Specifically, we sought to determine what, if any, relationship existed between EFL instructors' perceived collective efficacy, job stress and job satisfaction together with two main demographic variables, which included previous teaching experience and nationality of the instructor with the following questions:

1. Do EFL instructors' perceived levels of collective efficacy influence job satisfaction?
2. Do EFL instructors' perceived levels of job stress influence job satisfaction?
3. Are there differences in the relative utility/power of the predictors of job satisfaction across the personal variables?

The hypotheses developed for this study are based on theory and recent empirical work. Firstly, we hypothesized that TCE will be positively related to job satisfaction, which is consistent with the general agreement among scholars and researchers that beliefs about group capability influence the actions of organizational members (Bandura, 1997; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2010; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992; Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 2000). Secondly, it was predicted that job stress will be inversely related to job satisfaction in EFL contexts as teacher stress reflects unpleasant negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, and frustration (Jepson & Forrest, 2006).

## **III. METHOD**

### **Participants**

A total of 27 EFL instructors from English Foundation School, Girne American University, North Cyprus were included in the study. 25 of them responded to the TCE, Job Stress and Job Satisfaction Questionnaires. The nationality

of participants in this study were identified as 70% Turkish Cypriot, and 30% Other. 60% of them had 0-5 year experience and 40% had 6-10 year teaching experience.

### Procedures

Before administering the questionnaires, permission was received from the director of English Foundation School, Girne American University, North Cyprus and TCE, Job Stress and Job Satisfaction Questionnaires were sent to the English Foundation School on January 20, 2012 with the request that it be forwarded to the secretary of the school within two weeks. Participants were volunteers and 25 of the instructors responded to the questionnaires.

### Data Collection

Teacher collective efficacy was measured using The Collective Teacher Efficacy Belief Scale (CTEBS) created by Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004). This was a 12-item scale, with six items representing each of two factors: TCE for instructional strategies (e.g., "How much can teachers in your school do to produce meaningful student learning?"), and TCE for student discipline (e.g., "To what extent can teachers in your school make expectations clear about student behavior?"). The CTEBS was constructed to reflect teachers' individual perceptions about their school's collective capabilities to influence student achievement, and it is based on teachers' analysis of the teaching staff's capabilities to effectively teach all students.

Instructors from the same school may have differing perceptions of their school's collective efficacy as the CTEBS assesses individual perceptions of TCE. The CTEBS measure is conceptually superior to previous measures because it assesses teachers' beliefs in their collective capabilities rather than the external factors that influence student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). The alpha reliability coefficient was .97, which was significantly correlated with school-level achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Consistent with the approach used in recent studies of teacher stress (e.g., Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995; Chaplain, 2008; Manthei, Gilmore, Tuck, & Adair, 1996), job stress was measured using a single item ("I find teaching to be very stressful"). Job satisfaction was measured using a 4-item scale with strong evidence of reliability ( $\alpha = .82$ ) and validity in a study conducted by Caprara et al. (2003). The following items were included: (a) "I am satisfied with my job," (b) "I am happy with the way my colleagues and superiors treat me," (c) "I am satisfied with what I achieve at work," and (d) "I feel good at work."

Ratings in the current study were completed using a 9-point response scale, (1= 'Not at all', 9= 'A great deal') with items summed to represent scores for each variable.

## IV. DATA ANALYSIS

For the four variables (TCE for instructional strategies and student discipline, job satisfaction, and job stress), descriptive statistics—reliability coefficients, means, and standard deviations—were examined. A MANOVA was used to investigate the combined variables, and bivariate correlations among the variables were further examined. Then, multigroup confirmatory factor analysis was used to test for the equivalency of the factorial measurement (i.e., item-level loadings on factors) across groups. The last analysis was the use of structural equation modeling to conduct multigroup path analysis to investigate how the independent variables of TCE and job stress were related to the dependent variable of job satisfaction.

### Reliabilities, Means, and Bivariate Correlations

Table 1 shows reliabilities, means, and standard deviations for the variables in the study. All measures displayed adequate reliability, ranging from a low of  $\alpha = .83$  for TCE for student discipline to a high of  $\alpha = .89$  for TCE for instructional strategies for EFL teachers. As demonstrated in Table 1, the reliability coefficient for the Job Satisfaction was found to be  $\alpha = 0.84$ . Finally, the reliability coefficient for Job Stress was  $\alpha = .85$ .

Turkish Cypriot EFL instructors' mean score for job satisfaction was  $28.95 \pm 3.9$ . The mean scores for the TCE for instructional strategies were found to be  $44.1 \pm 5.6$ , and  $43.75 \pm 5.7$  for TCE for student discipline. And finally, EFL instructors' mean score for job stress was  $7.05 \pm 5.5$ . Foreign EFL instructors' mean score for job satisfaction was  $24.96 \pm 4.9$ . The mean scores for the TCE for instructional strategies were found to be  $38.13 \pm 6.2$ , and  $37.26 \pm 3.7$  for TCE for student discipline. And finally, EFL instructors' mean score for job stress was  $4.26 \pm 2.2$ .

TABLE 1  
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS AND LEVELS OF TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION, COLLECTIVE EFFICACY AND STRESS ( $N = 25$ )

Variable	Instructors from North Cyprus ( $n = 17$ )			Instructors from Other Countries ( $n = 8$ )		
	$\alpha$	M	SD	$\alpha$	M	SD
Job satisfaction	.84	28.95 <sub>a</sub>	3.94	.86	24.96 <sub>b</sub>	4.95
Teachers' collective efficacy for instructional strategies	.89	44.17 <sub>b</sub>	5.65	.85	38.13 <sub>c</sub>	6.22
Teachers' collective efficacy for student discipline	.83	43.75 <sub>a</sub>	5.71	.87	37.26 <sub>b</sub>	3.75
Job stress	.85	7.05 <sub>a</sub>	5.58	.83	4.26 <sub>b</sub>	2.28

Note. Means that have the same subscript on the same line are not significantly different at  $p < .001$  using Scheffé comparisons.

Findings of the MANOVA revealed that the combined dependent variables were significantly different among the groups,  $F(7, 868) = 44.61$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .22$ . Follow-up analyses of variance (ANOVAs) showed that means were

similar on three of the four variables. Instructors from other countries rated all variables significantly lower than did instructors from North Cyprus (all  $p$ s < .001). However, instructors from other countries rated levels of job stress significantly lower than did instructors from North Cyprus,  $F(2, 568) = 96.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .23$ .

In Table 2, the bivariate correlations among the four variables are presented. The correlations among the variables demonstrated similar directions and magnitudes for the instructors from North Cyprus and other countries.

TABLE 2  
CORRELATIONS FOR TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION, COLLECTIVE EFFICACY, AND JOB STRESS (N= 25)

Variable	Instructors from North Cyprus (n= 17)			Instructors from Other Countries (n= 8)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>						
Teachers' collective efficacy for instructional strategies	35**			46**		
Teachers' collective efficacy for student discipline	38**	.51**		48**	.82**	
<b>Job stress</b>	-.23	-.15**	-.05**	.08	.30**	.24**

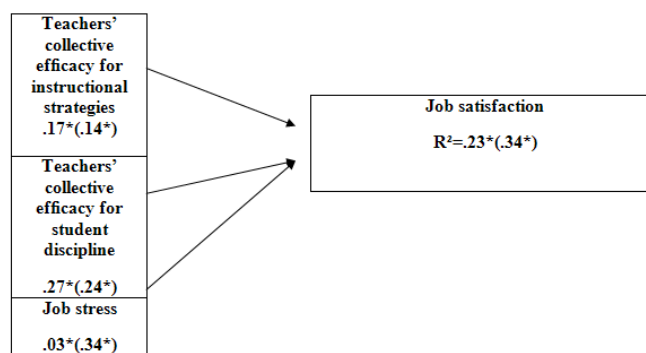
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The pattern of correlations showed similar directions for Turkish Cypriot instructors but some differences for instructors from other countries. Job stress was not significantly related to the two TCE variables for EFL instructors from North Cyprus, and it was significantly inversely related to job satisfaction. However, job stress was positively related to the two TCE subscales for EFL instructors from other countries and not significantly related to job satisfaction. In other words, for the EFL instructors from other nationalities, more confidence in the school's collective capability to influence student learning was related to higher levels of stress for individual teachers, but job stress was unrelated to job satisfaction.

For the subsequent analyses, factor loadings were examined and they were found to be significant for all items across groups, and they were moderate to high, ranging from .54 to .89.

Figure 1 graphically portrays the path analysis. The four variables explained 23% of the job satisfaction variance for Turkish Cypriot instructors and 34 % of the job satisfaction variance for EFL instructors from other nationalities.

Figure 1  
Path Diagram for Variables Predicting Job Satisfaction for EFL Instructors



The results from the multigroup path analysis revealed group differences in the contribution of teacher collective efficacy and job stress to job satisfaction for EFL instructors from North Cyprus and other countries. Findings for EFL instructors from other countries are given in parentheses. Values represent standardized coefficients. \* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the relations among teachers' job satisfaction, collective efficacy, and job stress among EFL instructors from the English Foundation School, Girne American University, North Cyprus. The results from the study clarify the relation between TCE and some important correlates in an EFL setting and specifically point to differences in the roles played by job stress in their links with job satisfaction for EFL instructors at the Girne American University, North Cyprus. At a broader level, the study is the first to examine teachers' collective motivation beliefs in an EFL setting.

Findings supported the first hypothesis of this study that TCE would be positively related to job satisfaction in EFL setting and it was confirmed. As Bandura (1986) noted, collective efficacy requires group judgment and effort, along with persistence and a willingness for a group to remain together. Mayer, Mullens, and Moore (2000) are among those who emphasized the importance of "a school faculty that collectively takes responsibility for student learning" (p. 36).



Empirical research also indicated that higher in group cohesion was associated with successful performance. For instance, Gardner, Shields, Bredemeier, & Bostrom (1996) showed that group cohesion is hypothesized to positively influence performance and success. Carron, Bry, & Eys (2002) demonstrated a strong positive relationship between cohesion and team success.

In a study of the relationship between coaching behavior and team cohesion, Gardner et al. (1996) found that higher levels of team cohesion accompanied perceptions of a coach's behavior that could be characterized by democratic behaviors including training and instruction, social support, and positive feedback. Attaching importance to peer coaching, Goker (2006b) also examined the impact of self-efficacy and instructional skills of EFL preservice teachers in Northern Cyprus, and found that peer coaching improved the self-efficacy of the teachers. It was also emphasized in the study that experiential activities, such as the teaching practicum or other mastery experiences potentially had a great impact on the self-efficacy of these preservice teachers.

Results gained in the present study also correlate with those of the studies (Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Ross & Gray, 2006; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007), which argue that schools in which teachers have high collective efficacy beliefs may also be those in which administrators, students, and parents are generally more supportive. Enhancing collective teacher efficacy by creating opportunities for teachers to build instructional knowledge and collaborate with colleagues through which, teachers will be seen as sources of expertise. By doing so, EFL school leaders will be able to transform their schools into organizations with strong collective efficacy and improved student performance. Therefore, teachers with high collective efficacy beliefs would also be great asset to EFL schools, which aim to have school-based reflective management (Goker, 2005, 2006a), where principals establish a focus on learning and students by consistently communicating that student learning is the shared mission of students, teachers, principals, and the community.

Thus, we can say that when teachers are happy with their jobs, they are likely to be better performers. In this sense, job satisfaction shows the degree of a teacher's affective orientation toward the work roles. Results of this study are also consistent with previous research that has shown TCE to explain modest but important variance in outcome variables such as student achievement and teachers' job satisfaction (Klassen et al., 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

However, the second hypothesis of this study that job stress would be significantly associated with job satisfaction in an EFL setting was not confirmed, in other words, job stress was inversely correlated with job satisfaction for EFL teachers from North Cyprus. Approached from this angle, for EFL instructors from other countries, more confidence in the school's collective capability to affect student learning was associated with higher levels of stress for individual teachers, but job stress was unrelated to job satisfaction. However, for instructors from other countries, job stress was positively correlated with TCE, which means that they find themselves amidst colleagues whom they perceive as highly competent, they experience higher levels of job stress. They may also experience higher levels of job stress due to the fact that school management fails to nurture work culture. In this connection, the collectivist cultural tendency of upward social comparison and focus on better student outcomes may result in other teachers experiencing greater stress when working in schools where colleagues are perceived as high performing (Klassen et al., 2010). To avoid high levels of job stress, EFL school principals should nurture work cultures that value and support their members' learning by modeling, guiding, and facilitating participation in professional communities that value learning, building trusting relationships among professionals in the school or district, and promoting a focus on learning and associated core values (Goker, 2006a).

Even though this finding is not consistent with more research studies except for (Klassen et al., 2010), the fact that teaching is a stressful occupation and teacher stress is inversely related to teacher self-efficacy has received support empirically (Greenglass & Burke, 2003; Betoret, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; J. S. Yoon, 2002).

## VI. LIMITATIONS

In this study, a few key limitations to the work must be noted. First, this study involved self-report data and participation was voluntary; therefore, the study is limited by the data collected from participants who were interested and willing to participate in the study. Secondly, another key limitation of this study is that the sample of instructors was drawn from one university in North Cyprus and may not be nationally representative. Finally, the job stress measure consisted of only a single item. However, recent studies have included single item measures of job-related beliefs (e.g., Dolbier, Webster, McCalister, Mallon, & Steinhardt, 2005; Nagy, 2002) due to high levels of face validity and convenience for data collection in busy workplace settings, and many previous studies measure job stress using one item (e.g., Chaplain, 2008; Manthei et al., 1996).

## VII. IMPLICATIONS

At a broader level, the study is the first to examine teachers' collective motivation beliefs in an EFL setting. The results from this study provide evidence that TCE and job stress in an EFL context influences job satisfaction. For EFL scholar and educators, this study underlines the importance of TCE as a source of individual job satisfaction. Placing a great emphasis on the fact that TCE is an important factor that influences job satisfaction, results of this study highlight

the importance of building collective efficacy by providing administrative support, couraging learner-centred teaching. Thus, developing collective efficacy may enhance job satisfaction in schools where stress may be reduced.

However, future research studies should extend these findings using longitudinal and qualitative approaches in order to better understand the relationship between collective and individual motivation beliefs in other EFL settings.

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# L1 Transfer among Arab ESL Learners: Theoretical Framework and Practical Implications for ESL Teaching

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**Abstract**—The study investigates common instances of incorrect usage of English sounds and words caused by interference. L1 interference research is an integral part of Applied Linguistics and its implications can be found in any foreign language classroom but we focus our attention here on Arab ESL students' production of English. The study examines multiple examples of spoken and written interferences in light of recent theoretical framework. The paper recommends ESL teachers to explicitly address these types of errors in order to make students aware of errors they commit due to interference.

**Index Terms**—ESL teaching, L1 interference, Arabic phonology, collocation, English spelling

## I. INTRODUCTION

In this project, we are trying to address and define the problem of low proficiency levels among Arab ESL learners and attribute that to factors including language interference. In the process, we aim to establish a historical account of the problem, discuss various points of view which tried to explain this phenomenon and consequently we tried to show the existence and the extent level of interference among Arab English learners by demonstrating some authentic examples gathered from Arab ESL learners and relevant literature alike. Finally, having reviewed the literature and examined the domains of Arabic interference in English learning, we would suggest possible ways for teachers to tackle this problem accordingly using both explicit and implicit tactics.

## II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In fact, it is difficult to give only one definition for transfer that includes all the different associated aspects. Weinreich (1953) for example, defines transfer as “those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which accruing in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language”. (p. 1) Another definition for transfer was provided by Odlin (1989) who suggests that “transfer is the influence resulting from similarity and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.” (p. 27) Similarly Ellis (1997) considers transfer as “the influence that the learner’s L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2.” (p. 51) This definition has further been extended by Gass (1996) who adds that transfer is the use of the mother tongue (or other language) information in the acquisition of an L2 (or additional language).

As well as the different views about the definition of transfer, there are also different terms for this phenomenon. Corder (1983, 1992), for example, referred to this phenomenon as “mother tongue influence” because of the recognition of the fact that there was more influence of the mother tongue than only obvious appearance of a mother tongue form. Others such as Kellerman and Sharwood Smith (1986) and Odlin (1989) also take such recognition into their consideration and referred to this phenomenon as cross-linguistic influence or cross-linguistic generalization (see Gass, 1996 and Whong-Barr, 2006).

## III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The available statistics from various sources including ETS and Cambridge ESOL suggest an alarming fact about Arab ESL learners; extremely poor proficiency levels. For instance, it appears that IELTS test takers who come from an Arabic background are among the lowest scorers from any linguistic background ever, and they scored far beyond the international average in every skill included as table (1) below shows.

TABLE (1):  
MEAN IELTS SCORE OF SOME FIRST LANGUAGES (FROM CAMBRIDGE ESOL: RESEARCH NOTES, ISSUE 40, 2010)

Academic	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall
Amharic	4.78	5.64	5.62	6.11	5.60
Arabic	5.14	4.96	<b>4.89</b>	5.65	5.23
Bengali	5.85	5.44	5.54	5.87	5.74
Chinese	5.72	5.85	5.19	5.28	5.57
Dutch	7.95	7.79	6.79	7.60	7.60

Obviously, there is a multitude of reasons for this poor performance and many stakeholders can share the blame; the educational authorities, teacher trainers, curriculum designers, teachers and learners themselves. However, we are looking at an entirely different direction to explain this phenomenon, something much more fundamental and one which has not been carefully considered in classroom, and that is the role played by the mother tongue in affecting learning English.

We are not suggesting that research has never been carried out to investigate Arabic interference in learning other languages especially English, but we rather believe that findings and recommendations of previous research have not been seriously considered in the actual classroom environment. Therefore, we intend to tackle this issue by looking into its deeper theoretical foundations and by accounting for real-life manifestations so teachers and learners alike can attribute common errors to their origins and subsequently find proper solutions. In fact, many foreign language teachers have noticed this trend among their students that is constantly referring to their existing L1 knowledge when they are learning a foreign language, a phenomenon widely known in the literature ‘L1 transfer’ or ‘mother tongue interference’.

#### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of L1 transfer has long been a controversial issue in applied linguistics, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and language teaching (Odlin, 1989). The question of the role of L1 cannot be ignored by researchers in the field of the second language acquisition because of the clear L1 effects in L2 learner data that indicate the existence of an L1 influence (Whong-Barr, 2006).

In this section, we will start with a brief historical background of the L1 interference followed by a review of the debate set forth by different schools of thoughts in language acquisition in general and SLA in particular. This review should lay the basis for our current understanding of the transfer phenomenon and subsequently enable us to better examine the issue with our students.

##### A. Historical Overview

The role of first language transfer has an extended history in the field of second language acquisition as researchers and linguists have been discussing the issue of transfer in second language acquisition for many decades. Sweet (1899), for instance, suggests that the perfect way for acquiring a new language is through a comprehensive knowledge of the peculiarity of the mother tongue, a notion which according to Odlin (1989) was widely accepted at the time. However, Odlin also mentions that the significance of transfer was not recognized during those early years. In the 1950s, in the context of language learning, behaviorist learning theory regarded language as “habit and that language learning involves the establishment of a new set of habits” (Gass and Selinker, 2001, p. 72). Then, the role of the mother tongue was very important because it was the major cause of failure in second language learning.

It can be argue that the history of the transfer concept is closely related to the different theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as Gass & Selinker (2001) mention which makes us shift our attention to examine the association of L1 transfer with some of these theories.

##### B. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

It was believed that mother tongue transfer enhanced target language learning when the same linguistic elements were present in both the native and the target language (positive transfer) but the difference between them created difficulties in learning the target language (negative transfer). This notion was known as the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). Contrastive Analysis is a structural comparison of two languages in term of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. The central point of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is stated by the two advocates of this hypothesis, Lado (1957) and Weinreich (1953):

...the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his mother tongue will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.

(Lado, 1957, p. 2)

The greater the difference between the two systems, i.e. the more numerous the mutually exclusive forms and patterns in each, the greater is the learning problem and the potential area of interference...

(Weinreich, 1953, p. 2)

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis claims that errors in the second language can be predicted by identifying the differences between the first and the second language forms and patterns. Systematic L1 effects on L2 learning have been studied by assuming that L2 linguistic patterns can be largely predicted on the basis of L1 characteristics, which

transfer to L2 either positively or negatively (Gass and Selinker, 2001). In terms of language transfer, Gass and Selinker (1992) state that comparative studies between the first and the second languages are one important preliminary step to understanding language transfer. This comparison, they add, often guides us to understanding hypotheses related to language transfer phenomena.

Furthermore, Contrastive Analysis provides a way of comparing the phonological and syntactic systems of two languages. In contrastive studies, the following procedure is commonly used in order to predict errors:

- Description (i.e., a formal description of the two languages is made)
  - Selection (i.e., certain items, which may be entire subsystems such as the auxiliary system, are selected for comparison)
  - Comparison (i.e., the identification of areas of difference and similarity)
  - Prediction (i.e., identifying which areas are likely to cause errors)
- (Ellis, 1985:25-26)

However, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis runs into problems as a theory of second language acquisition as soon as it become subject to empirical testing. One of these problems is that the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis predicts a number of difficulties that are not observed in second language learning. In other words, the differences between the first and the second language do not always highlight particular difficulties in second language learning. For example, two verbs in Spanish (*conocer* and *saber*) correspond to different meanings of the English verb *to know*. This lexical difference causes many problems for English speakers learning Spanish, while Spanish speakers learning English appear to have little difficulty in connecting the two lexical senses with one form (Odlin, 1989, p. 17).

Another problem with Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is that this hypothesis fails to predict certain difficulties that were observed in second language learning (Ellis, 1985). For instance, Odlin (1989) states that, despite the similarity in grammatical structures, Spanish speakers learning English omit the verb *to be* in the sentence "*that very simple*" instead of "*that's very simple*". Moreover, Ellis (1985) adds two more reasons to illustrate the failure of this hypothesis. Firstly, he claims that the hypothesis was criticised from a theoretical point of view because of the feasibility of comparing languages as well as the methodology of Contrastive Analysis. Secondly, he has some reservations about the role of Contrastive Analysis in the field of teaching. From this discussion, it can be said that while there is concrete evidence of L1 influence on the acquisition of the second language, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is not an adequate theory accounting for mother tongue influence because it over-predicts where the influence will occur.

However, there have been some attempts to rescue the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis by distinguishing a 'strong' and a 'weak' version. The strong version is the one that has been discussed above, which makes incorrect predictions. The weak version, as described by Gass and Selinker (2001), "begins with what learners do and then attempts to account for those errors on the basis of NL-TL differences." (p. 73) They argue that the weak version, which becomes part of Error Analysis, has a wide acceptance because of the shortcomings of the strong version of contrastive analysis.

### C. Error Analysis

As for Error Analysis, Corder (1967), cited in Gass and Selinker (2001), claims that errors are not only regarded as something to be eliminated, but rather can play an important role in L2 acquisition. In fact, Gass and Selinker (2001) argue that errors can be 'red flags', and they may provide evidence of the state of the learner's progress in second language learning. They also make a clear distinction between errors and mistakes in that a mistake is a slip of the tongue that may occur one time. The speaker who makes a mistake can recognise it and correct it. On the other hand, an error is systematic and it may occur frequently. The speaker cannot recognise it and, therefore, cannot correct it. Error analysis provides researchers with more potential explanations for errors than does Contrastive Analysis, because the latter only relate errors to the mother tongue. Error analysis divides errors into two types: interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual errors are related to the mother tongue while intralingual errors (also known as developmental errors) are related to the target language (Gass and Selinker, 2001).

However, as its critics maintain, Error Analysis is not without its shortfalls. It has mainly been criticized because of its complete reliance on errors which is not sufficient to account for the whole second language acquisition process as Gass and Selinker (2001) believe.

### D. Cognitive Response to the Behaviorist Theory

As has already been seen, behaviorist theories are not suitable for explaining SLA and they fell out of favor in the early 1970s according to Ellis (1997) which explained the emergence of new approach in studying SLA. In other words, the view with regard to the issue of L1 transfer changed because of these new trends in second language research (Pienemann et al., 2005a). One of these trends was a reaction against the behaviorist habit formation theory. Moreover, this trend was influenced by child language research and the possible similarity between first and the second language acquisition. It considers language acquisition, whether first or second, as a creative process (Gass and Selinker, 1996). The learners construct their own language to a certain extent, away from L1 and L2 (Pienemann et al., 2005a).

### E. The Creative Construction Theory

The creative process of language acquisition has come to be known as the 'Creative Construction Hypothesis' which claims that first and second language acquisition proceeds similarly and that the mother tongue has nothing to do with

the acquisition of the second language. This hypothesis became the predominant research concept in North America (Faerch and Kasper, 1987) and it was further supported by the work of Dulay and Burt (1974), who claim that the acquisition of the second language was guided by universal innate principles rather than by the first language (Gass, 1996). Moreover, as Kellerman (1984) points out, many studies tried to analyze errors in a way that would support their creative Construction Hypothesis where many errors in the target language would be classified as ‘developmental’ because these errors are similar to those made by children when they learn their mother tongue. They give the order of acquisition of a set of grammatical morphemes in English as evidence and they also noted that two groups of language learners with different backgrounds (Chinese and Spanish) have the same order of acquisition. Consequently, they argued that the role of the mother tongue in the acquisition process was very limited (Gass and Selinker, 1996). In other words, “the notion of L1 transfer appeared a less attractive explanatory concept.” (Pienemann et al., 2005a, p. 129). Additionally, there has been further work (e.g. Bailey, Madden, and Krashen, 1974) that has focused on the acquisition of a second language by adults that supports the claim made by Dulay and Burt, whose concern was focused on the acquisition of a second language by children.

However, the Creative Construction Hypothesis has also been criticized for underestimating the role of L1 transfer in second language acquisition, while, at the same time, a number of empirical studies have proved the influence of L1 transfer in L2 acquisition. Additionally, there were methodological problems in morpheme-order studies which have affected the reliability of the results (Gass and Selinker, 2001).

From the previous discussion, it can be concluded that the behaviorist Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and the mentalist Creative Construction Hypothesis represent opposite position in terms of the issue of L1 transfer.

#### F. Interlanguage Hypothesis (IL)

While the leading hypothesis in North America was ‘Creative Construction’, the situation in Europe was different. Faerch and Kasper (1987) note that in Europe, researchers followed the hypothesis of Corder (1967) and Selinker (1972) which shifted from the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis to the Interlanguage Hypothesis (IL). The assumption of this hypothesis is that L2 learners, at any time in their learning sequence, will be using a language system which is different from that of their mother tongue as well as of the target language. According to this hypothesis, transfer was reconceptualised within a cognitive framework and was still regarded as one of the factors that affects second language acquisition by playing an important role in the development of an individual’s interlanguage (Ellis, 1997). Moreover, this hypothesis led researchers to recognise that the mother tongue definitely plays a part in second language acquisition, but that its influence may take forms other than positive and negative transfer, e.g. overuse and under-representation (Gass and Selinker, 1992 and Odlin, 1989).

Consequently, Sharwood Smith (1994) differentiates between these hypotheses (Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis “CAH”, Creative Construction Hypothesis “CCH”, and Interlanguage Hypothesis “ILH”) using two different approaches. One way of comparing them is in terms of how these hypotheses regard the role of L1 in second language acquisition (major for the CAH, partial for the ILH, and minimal for the CCH). The other is how these hypotheses treat the differences or similarities of L1 and L2 learning (the ILH regards them as different whereas the other two regard them as parallel). (See table 1 below)

TABLE 1:  
CAH, ILH, AND CCH COMPARED ( FROM SHARWOOD, 1994, P 86)

	CAH	ILH	CCH
Role of environment in learning?	Major	Partial	Partial
L1/L2: same developmental processes?	Yes	No	Yes
L1 influence in development?	Major	Partial	Minimal

#### G. Kellerman’s Framework

As a reaction to the previous research into SLA studies which ignores the role of the mother tongue in second SLA, Kellerman (1979, 1983 cited in Gass 1996) argues that transfer is definitely an active mental activity. Kellerman’s framework is very important because it places the study of transfer within a cognitive sphere. He has proposed that learners have perceptions regarding the linguistic features of their own language. They can make decisions about which features are potentially transferable and which are potentially nontransferable. Kellerman suggests two factors relating to language transfer. The first is the learner’s perception of L1-L2 distance, which he refers to as psychotypology. The second factor is the degree of markedness of an L1 structure. By this he means that learners categorize the linguistics features into language-neutral features and language-specific features. Language-neutral features are those items that learners think are very common in all languages. These features might include certain aspects of semantics, writing conventions, stylistics and certain grammatical structures. On the other hand, language-specific features are those elements that learners consider as being unique to his/her language. These features might include idioms, inflectional morphology, and slang expressions (Gass and Selinker, 2001). Gass (1996) considers transferability in Kellerman’s framework a relative notion which depends on the perceived distance between the L1 and the L2 and the structural organization of the learner’s mother tongue. She also notes that the idea of perceived distance constantly changes for

learners as they acquire more of the target language. Kellerman's work was very important because it attempted to put the notion of L1 transfer in a cognitive area and liberated it from the behaviourism (Gass, 2001).

#### *H. L1 Transfer and Universal Grammar (UG) in SLA*

The emergence of Universal Grammar, especially parameter settings, encourages many L2 researchers to investigate how UG and L1 transfer work together in second language acquisition (Siegel, 2003). Universal Grammar has paid considerable attention to certain areas where L1 transfer may operate. Within the UG framework, many researchers have not concentrated primarily on transfer, but have recognised its importance in second language acquisition (Odlin, 2003).

White (1992) differentiates between the current UG-based theories of the phenomenon of transfer and the earlier theories, particularly those based on the Contrastive Analysis framework. Accordingly, he notes four ways in which UG relates to the phenomenon of transfer:

(i) Level of representation- generative grammar crucially assumes that representations involve a number of different syntactic levels; transfer may affect some or all of these, with direct or indirect consequences. The CAH, in contrast, concentrate on "visible" surface similarities and differences between languages.

(ii) Clustering – parameters link clusters of properties, which superficially might seem to be unconnected. Thus the claim that the L1 value of a parameter will be adopted, or will colour the L2 learner's perception of the L2 input, is a claim about a whole range of structures in the interlanguage.

(iii) Interacting parameters- since UG contains many parameters, it is likely that a number of these will have to be reset in L2 acquisition. This leads to the possibility that they will not all be reset at the same time. In that case, interlanguages will result that are neither exactly like the L1 nor the L2. Similarly effect will be achieved if learners adopt parameter settings which are present in neither the L1 nor the L2.

(iv) Learnability –certain parameter settings may be unmarked or marked, their status determined by learnability considerations, in particular by the assumption that L1 acquisition proceeds largely on the basis of positive evidence. When applied to L2 acquisition, this perspective gives a different twist to transfer issues from traditional claims about markedness and transfer.

(pp 220 – 1)

Among the current theoretical models of second language acquisition, there is some disagreement over the role of the mother tongue in L2 acquisition. Nevertheless, most of these and other models have something in common as they define transfer in term of the initial state (Whong-Barr, 2006). According to the L2 initial state, Gass (1996) mentions two main possibilities found in the literature related to the issue of the accessibility of the UG of second language learners and the L1 transfer. First, learners have access to UG which, in turn, is divided into two versions: strong access and weak access. The strong version claims that UG is the starting point of second language grammar formation. Consequently, this version downplays the influence of the target language. On the other hand, the weak version of UG access claims that the starting point of second language acquisition not only depends on UG, but also that the mother tongue plays an important role in this stage. Second, learners do not have access to UG, hence the mother tongue is the starting point for the second language learners' development.

In terms of the L2 initial state, literature assigns three positions for L1 transfer, namely no transfer, full transfer and partial transfer.

#### **No Transfer**

This position is based on the notion of the absence of L1 properties in L2 acquisition. "On this view, the L1 final state does not constitute the L2 learner's grammar or mental representation at any stage." (White, 2000, p. 135). The L2 initial state is similar to the L1 initial state. White (2000) claims that although the proponents of this approach such as Epstein, Flynn and Martohardjono (1996, 1998), Flynn and Martohardjono (1994) and Flynn (1996) exclude the properties of L1 grammar from the interlanguage representation, they nevertheless assume some role for the L1 without specifying what this role is. White describes this position as inconsistent. With regard to grammatical development after the initial state, the advocates of this position claim that L2 acquisition is constrained by UG and that the final state of L2 grammar is similar to the final state of the grammar of native speakers of the target language.

#### **Full transfer**

This position was first introduced by White's (1989) work in which she investigated the pro-drop parameter. She concluded that L2 learners begin with L1 parameter values and then reset them to L2 values. Later, this notion was refined by Schwartz's (1998) and Schwartz and Sprouse's (1994, 1996) hypotheses (Full transfer/full access), which claim that the starting point of L1 acquisition is different from the starting point of L2 acquisition. Also, L1 grammar constitutes the initial L2 grammar. In other words, the properties of L1 are taken as the starting point of L2 acquisition. According to this hypothesis, all lexical projections, functional structures, parameter settings and feature values transfer from L1 to the L2 (White, 2000). With regard to the relationship between the mother tongue and UG, this hypothesis considers "...that UG and L1 are a complementary sources of knowledge that guide interlanguage development." (Montrul, 2000, p. 232). The properties of L1 grammar act as a filter and prevent the learners from noticing certain properties of L2, leading them to fossilization at a point short of native-like competence. Thus, the convergence on L2 grammar is not necessarily expected (White, 2000).

#### **Partial Transfer**



This position claims that "only parts of L1 grammar is represented in the L2 initial state (either lexical categories alone or lexical and functional categories)" (White, 2000, p. 138). So, when L1 grammar cannot accommodate the L2 input, learners have to resort to options made available by UG. In other words, the L2 initial state draws on properties of both the L1 and UG concurrently.

In the literature, advocates of partial transfer are not in agreement over which parts of L1 are transferred and what are not (Sabourin et al., 2006). White (2000) gives an overview of this disagreement by giving examples of some researchers and, according to them, what parts of L1 are transferred.

- Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994, 1996): this is called the "minimal tree hypothesis". According to this hypothesis, there is partial transfer in SLA. In other words, the authors claim that only L1 lexical categories (NP, VP) are found and functional categories (DP, IP, CP) are not transferred. Functional categories are projected gradually in response to L2 input just as L1 acquirers are assumed to do.

- Eubank (1994): he claims that both L1 lexical and functional categories are found. However, features do not take on L1 values and are initially unspecified or inert. Functional categories eventually become specified for L2 feature values.

- White (1996): she claims that L1 lexical and functional categories as well as feature values are found where possible. But there will be cases where the L1 grammar simply could not constitute an initial theory related to L2, e.g. the acquisition of French clitics by English speakers.

However, Schwartz and Sprouse (1996) argue against the 'minimal trees' of Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994, 1996) and the 'weak transfer hypothesis' of Eubank (1994). They claim that their data shows the inadequacy of the minimal trees hypothesis with regard to stages of interlanguage, subsequent to the L2 initial state. They state that the 'minimal trees hypothesis' fails to give an explanation for the 'S V Adv O' data for native-French speakers acquiring English. With regard to the 'weak transfer hypothesis', they show that the morphosyntactic empirical foundations which drive the whole approach are defective.

### *1. Transfer and the Processability Theory*

Processability Theory (PT), introduced by Pienemann (1998), is considered one of the leading theories in the field of the second language acquisition. According to this theory, L2 learners can only produce forms they are able to process. Therefore, L1 transfer is developmentally moderated (Hakansson et al., 2002). In other words, regardless of linguistics typology, L2 learners can only transfer the linguistic forms that they can process. The 'Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis' implies

... that first language (L1) transfer is constrained by the processability of the given structure; and 2) that the initial state of the second language (L2) does not necessarily equal the final state of the L1 (contrary to the assumption made by Schwartz and Sprouse, 1996), because there is no guarantee that the given L1 structure is processable by the under-developed L2 parser.

(Hakansson et al., 2002, pp 250 – 1)

The findings of these researchers support the 'Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis' by introducing the results of their study of 20 Swedish learners of German. Swedish and German are typologically very close. They found that, in spite of the fact that the verb-second structure is identical in both languages, Swedish learners of German do not transfer this structure from their mother tongue (Swedish) to the target language (German). Instead, they produce a canonical word order and an intermediate structure (adv NP subj V X), which is regarded as an ungrammatical structure in both languages. This study, according to Pienemann et al. (2005b), falsified the "Full Transfer/Full Access" hypothesis of Schwartz and Sprouse by reporting non-transfer cases, since the authors assume that the L1 final state is the L2 initial state. Additionally, Pienemann et al. also mention that the observation by Kawaguchi that Australian learners of Japanese began with an initial SOV hypothesis falsified the "Minimal Tree" hypothesis which predicts that L1 word order is transferred to L2.

According to the 'Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis', Pienemann et al. (2005b) demonstrate that, in the context of typological proximity and typological distance, transfer may or may not occur. With regard to the initial state, Pienemann and Hakansson (2007) argue that different types of word order may be found at the initial state in different languages. This notion was demonstrated by Pienemann et al. (2005b) in studies of L2 acquisition in several non-SVO languages.

The assumption that L1 transfer is developmentally constrained is not new in second language research. However, "Processability Theory" supplies an explicit framework for this notion (Pienemann et al., 2005b).

Pienemann et al. (2005b) sum up the discussion into the two fundamental trends with regard to L1 transfer:

1. Structures higher up the processability hierarchy are never transferred at the initial state, regardless of typological constellation.
2. Initial word order may vary as long as the flow of grammatical information is restricted to the initial stage of processability. (p. 111)

## V. DISCUSSION

We have identified a number of errors categorized according to their sources. It must be noted however that these errors are not necessarily exclusive for Arab learners but rather commonplace among them. In every case however, we believe that these errors are committed as a direct result of L1 transfer, partially or completely, which therefore gives support to points of discussion already seen in the previous literature review.

#### A. Errors Caused by Non-phonetic English Spelling

The main reason of these errors is the inconsistency of English spelling. A good example that demonstrates this is the spelling of the weak vowels. Arab ESL learners find it difficult to decide whether to use <e>, <a> or <i> to write the phonetic value schwa /ə/. This fact actually account for a large group of errors such as *beginner*, *mannar*, *devide*, *dicide* and *grammer* (Cook, 1999). Moreover, some sounds are represented in more than one way. For instance, the sound /ɔ/ can be seen in *fought* and *caught*. Thus learners may write *tought* by analogy with words like *fought* and *bought*. In the same respect, many spelling errors can be seen as in *origional* (c.f. regional), *languidge* (c.f. knowledge) *fation* (c.f. nation). (Ibrahim, 1978)

Another example of the inconsistency of English spelling is the silent letters. Arab ESL learners are used to reading or writing each word according to what they see or hear. Thus they may write *lisen* instead of *listen* or they may pronounce it as /li-stʰn/.

#### B. Transfer and English Spelling

Arabic language is an alphabetic system. It consists of 28 letters: 25 consonants and 3 long vowels. In addition, there are diacritical marks that contribute phonology to the Arabic alphabet. These diacritical marks are short vowels signs posted above and/or below the letters for letter-sound pronunciation. Adult Arab readers are expected to read Arabic texts without short vowels because they rely on context and other knowledge to do that (Abu-Rabia and Taha, 2006).

Many spelling researches indicate that L1 influences the ESL spelling skills. This influence can be seen in two ways. The first is the transfer of phonological knowledge or the transfer of grapheme-phoneme correspondence skills. The second involves the manner in which orthographic word forms are processed and subsequently acquired (Fender, 2008). According to Arabic language, these ways will be discussed as follows.

- *The transfer of L1 (Arabic) grapheme-phoneme correspondence.*

Arabic language spelling depends on reliable and consistent grapheme-phoneme mappings. In contrast, Cook (1999) says that English language has complex correspondences between sounds and letters which cause some difficulties for many students to master English spelling system. In other words, English has some variable grapheme-phoneme spelling such as the phoneme /k/ can be spelled as <c> as in *picnic*, <k> as in *kitchen*, <ck> as in *stuck*, <ch> as in *school*, and the grapheme <gh> can be spelled in various ways as /g/ in *ghost*, /f/ as in *laugh*, or as part of a complex vowel digraph as in *through* or *caught*. Arab ESL learners may not initially discover the inconsistency in English language spelling. Therefore, they may transfer their L1 spelling knowledge to deal with English spelling. Such transfer accounts for many misspelling among Arab ESL learners such as *piknik* for *picnic* and *fone* for *phone* and others (Fender, 2008).

- *The transfer of L1 (Arabic) phonological knowledge.*

Transfer of phonological knowledge account for some problems that Arab ESL learners may encounter when they acquire ESL phonemic segments and patterns that are not found in Arabic language (Fender, 2008). For instance, English language has two distinctive bilabial plosives, <p> and <b>, whereas Arabic language has only the latter (Ibrahim, 1978). This fact sometimes causes problems to Arab learners. They may misspell words such as *blay*, *bicture*, *Jaban* and others. In addition, Arab ESL learners sometimes face some difficulties in distinguishing between <q> and <c> in writing when the <c> corresponds to the phoneme /k/ such as *quickly* (Cook, 1999). Moreover, Arabic language has only /o/ sound, while English language has /oo/ and /o/. This fact usually makes it difficult for Arab ESL learners to distinguish between the pronunciation of *whole* and *hall*, and to write *coast* when they mean *cost* (Ibrahim, 1978). Consequently, most Arab ESL learners show more spelling difficulties with multisyllabic words that contained of spelling patterns across syllables such as *customer*, *bottle* and *success* (Fender, 2008).

Another example of this type of error is that Arab ESL learners appear to have difficulty with consonant clusters in English. They tend to insert a vowel to these clusters when they want to write or pronounce them such as *communisem*, *childiren*, *bilastic* and *tiransilate*. (Ibrahim, 1978)

#### C. L1 Transfer and English Grammar Rules

These kinds of errors are not only particularly related to Arab ESL learners as non-Arab learners may still make the same errors. Ibrahim (1978) says that teachers sometimes give their students a rule without its exceptions. In this situation the rule is considered incomplete. For example, when learners want to add suffix to a word with a final *e*, they must be taught that in this case if the suffix begins with a vowel letter, the final *e* must be dropped unless that it must be retained such as *complete: completely*, but *compare: comparing*. However, teachers may not teach this rule in its complete form. Therefore, errors such as *completely* or *comparing* will occur.

Ibrahim also mentions that overgeneralization is one of the obvious factors that influence the spelling of Arab ESL learners. He illustrates this fact by giving some examples that demonstrate his notion. He argues that some Arab ESL learners may make error such as *savety* because they know that *brave* becomes *bravery* and *slave* becomes *slavery*.

Moreover, according to derivation in English, learners are taught that this can be done by adding a suffix to the stem without changing the spelling of the stem such as *equal* becomes *equality*, *appreciate* becomes *appreciation* and *quick* becomes *quickly*. Therefore, learners overgeneralise this idea to some cases where some changes to this idea must be take place. When this happens, some spelling errors occur such as *day* becomes *daily*, *pronounce* becomes *pronounciation*, *argue* becomes *arguement*, *four* becomes *fourty* and *enter* becomes *enterance*.

#### D. L1 Transfer and English Collocations/Lexical Phrases

From our analysis of the written texts, we have identified two incorrect usages of the preposition 'from' which were found in texts written by Arabs and we can relate this phenomenon to L1 interference. Another example of L1 interference is the incapacity to differentiate between verbs such as 'record' and 'register' and how to use them in their proper contexts. Again, this mistake has occurred in texts written by Arabs which further supports the hypothesis that L1 interference is widespread indeed. The only case we came across was using a relatively common expression in Arabic by a group of Arab students in the UK to promote their conference but we also accept that it is not uncommon to see more of the same.

### VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

We certainly believe that once teachers are equipped with proper knowledge about L1 transfer, that in turn should help them make informed decisions when faced with real-life problems later on. In other words, a language teacher can now address this problem by directly asking students not to constantly translate meanings from their mother tongue and revert instead to their L2 competencies.

A direct application of knowledge gained from L1 interference research in the classroom could be achieved by assigning special sessions for recurring interference errors at the right time of the course. Doing so should help students realise the problem whenever it occurs which in turn can help students avoid them.

Building 'students' awareness' repertoire sounds ideal and straightforward but it does not come without challenges as is the case with most newly introduced techniques. However, as we earlier tried to establish how widespread interference issues are among Arab ESL learners, a careful application of this alternative approach is quite worthy of researching.

### VII. CONCLUSION

Interference errors among Arab ESL students are quite possibly one of the biggest problems they face in their endeavour to achieve a satisfactory proficiency level in English. However, as the literature well documents real-life examples of Arabic interference in the fields of grammar, syntax, phonology, grapheme-phoneme and idiomatic use of language, it is just becomes logical to expect teachers to become more aware of these errors and explain them to students in the hope they also become aware of this issue and take necessary steps to avoid commenting such mistakes later on.

However, knowing and recognising errors also require teachers to understand the deeper foundations of the problem which is why they also need to be informed about the different explanations provided in the literature and how different schools of thought attempted to tackle it.

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# The Syntax and Semantics of Inherent Complement Verbs in Igbo\*

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**Abstract**—This paper examines in some more detail the syntax and semantics of inherent complement verbs in Igbo. This is in addition to Emenanjo (1984, 1986) and Nwachukwu (1987). Here, we have followed Nwachukwu (1987) to assume that inherent complements in Igbo are not the same as the direct objects of transitive verbs. However, contrary to Nwachukwu (1987), it has been observed that there is only a semantic bond between inherent complements and their inherent complement verbs. The bond is not necessarily syntactic. The pronominalization test distinguishes between the objects of transitive verb and inherent complements. Whereas the object complement of transitive verbs can be pronominalized, inherent complements cannot. Contrary to Nwachukwu's (1987) view, it has also observed that there is no movement operation affecting inherent complements when inherent complement verbs license internal arguments. Rather, it is the internally licensed arguments that get raised for feature checking purposes. Also, contrary to the view about Igbo dialects in literature, all Ngwa-Igbo adjectival inherent complement verbs can license internal arguments. The data used in this paper are drawn from the Ngwa dialect<sup>1</sup> of Igbo which the author speaks with native speaker's competence.

**Index Terms**—inherent complement, inherent complement verb, internal argument, feature checking, licensing, pronominalization

## I. INTRODUCTION

The terms, 'complementation' and 'transitivity' have been a subject of controversy in Igbo syntax. However, most Igbo scholars (e.g. Emenanjo, 1975 a & b, 1984, 1986, Ubahakwe, 1976, Uwalaka, 1981, Nwachukwu, 1983, 1984, 1987, Anoka 1983, etc) believe that both terms are relevant in the discussion of Igbo verbs. Emenanjo (1975 a & b) observes that underlying the semantic import of all verbs is a description of some action or state which involves the presence of certain nominal elements. In fact, in Emenanjo's opinion, all Igbo verbs co-occur with objects of their verbal complex hence they are all transitive. Uwalaka (1981) also notes that the nature of the Igbo verbs in selecting specific nominals has made the definition of Igbo verbs difficult unlike in other languages. Nwachukwu (1987) also recognizes the relevance of transitivity and divides verb in Igbo into transitive and intransitive. He further divides the intransitive verbs into two groups: unaccusatives which introduce a theme argument in object position and unergatives which introduce agent argument in subject position. Nwachukwu also recognizes the sets of intransitives that take inherent complement. Such verbs must co-occur with the complements as are inherent to them. In Nwachukwu's view, the ability or inability of a verb to take an inherent complement is not a yardstick to measure transitivity.

Although transitivity features prominently in the syntax of Igbo, its relevance has become a subject of controversy (Nwachukwu, 1987). For instance, Emenanjo (1984, 1986) argues that transitivity is not necessary in the syntax of Igbo verbs since all Igbo verbs obligatorily occur with some complement in both underlying and surface structures. For Emenanjo, transitivity should be likened to a lexical redundancy rule (Radford, 1988); hence it should not be used as a parameter for the classification of Igbo verbs. Emenanjo therefore abandons transitivity as a classificatory criterion and opts for a classification based on complement type. Thus he classifies Igbo verbs into general complement verbs, inherent complement verbs, prepositional complement verbs, ergative complement verbs and bound complement verbs.

Nwachukwu (1987) does not agree with Emenanjo's (1984, 1986) classification of verbs based on the kinds of complement they take. Nwachukwu argues that there is no justification for categorization of verbs into general complement verbs, inherent complement verbs, prepositional complement verbs, ergative complement verbs and bound complement verbs. He adds that none of these classificatory parameters is a diagnostic characterization of any semantic class of Igbo verbs; hence they lead to unnecessary cross-classifications. He further adds that every Igbo lexical verb can be made emphatic through the use of a bound complement verb, and as such, this should not be used as a criterion for classification. Just like Uwalaka (1983), Nwachukwu (1987) emphasizes the indispensability of transitivity in Igbo,

\* Ngwa Igbo is the variety of Igbo spoken by an estimated population of about two million people (Nwigwe 1996, Ogbonna 1999) who are located in the southern part of Abia State, Nigeria. The area consists of seven Local Government Areas which are Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South, Obingwa, Aba North, Aba South, Osisioma and Ugwunagbo.

classifying all Igbo verbs into inherent complement verbs and non-inherent complement verbs. The later he sub-divides into intransitive and transitive.

From the arguments so far presented, it is quite obvious that Emenanjo views transitivity as a purely syntactic phenomenon, while Nwachukwu sees transitivity from a semantic view point. While Nwachukwu's classification is based on transitivity, Emenanjo's is based on complementation. However, none of these two approaches is wrong. Each has something to say about the description of noun phrase and its relationship to the lexical verb, though Nwachukwu's approach is much broader, accommodating both transitivity and complementation. But one fact stands clear despite the divergence in opinion. Transitivity exists in Igbo and it is necessary in the syntax of Igbo verbs. This paper however, is restricted to examining the syntax of inherent complement verbs (ICVs). We shall follow Nwachukwu (1987) to assume that inherent complements are not the same as affected objects of transitive verbs. However, contrary to Nwachukwu's view, we shall argue that there is no movement operation affecting an inherent when the inherent complement verb licenses an internal argument. Also, we shall show contrary to Nwachukwu's view about Igbo dialects that all Ngwa-Igbo adjectival inherent complement verbs can license internal arguments. The framework adopted here is the principles and parameters (P&P) approach with special focus on the minimalist program (MP)<sup>2</sup>. This article is organized as follows. In section 2, I discuss inherent complements in Igbo while Section 3 is the summary and conclusion<sup>1</sup>.

## II. INHERENT COMPLEMENT VERBS IN IGBO

Nwachukwu (1987) recognizes two types of verb in Igbo. These are inherent complement verbs and non-inherent complement verbs. Inherent complement verbs are subdivided into transitive and intransitive, while non-inherent complement verbs are divided into transitives, unaccusatives and unergatives. He defines an inherent complement verb as a morphological subset of verbs which in its citation form consists of a consonant-vowel (CV) root followed by a free noun (or in very few cases a prepositional phrase). The root and its normal complement form a semantic unit and any dictionary entry which excludes the complement lacks meaning because the complement is the meaning specifying constituent of its verb. He observes that the presence of inherent complements in Igbo has had the effect of complicating the phenomenon of transitivity, since it has led some scholars (e.g. Awobuluyi, 1972, Emenanjo, 1984) to conclude that transitivity is not relevant in the syntax of Igbo and related languages. Nwachukwu argues further that inherent complement is not synonymous with the direct object of transitive verb, since both co-occur. This is not different from our position here. Also, we add that there is only a semantic bond between inherent complement verbs and their inherent complements, since as we shall see later, the inherent complement verbs can license internal NP complements which occur between them and the inherent complements.

### A. *The Need for Inherent Complements*

The need to expand the functional load of lexically distinct words justifies the existence of inherent complements in Igbo. Hence the inclusion of inherent complements in the Igbo lexicon ensures that there is no increase in the formal lexical units. An inherent complement added to an already existing verb root creates a new lexical item with a new functional semantic load. Just as in other Igbo dialects, the inherent complement in Ngwa, together with its root constitutes a single semantic unit in the lexicon (Anyanwu, 2011). It is important to point out that the functional semantic load of an inherent complement verb rests solely on its inherent complement. This is evident from the fact that the verb root which co-occurs with the inherent complement assumes a different meaning if dissociated from its inherent complement. Examples of inherent complement verbs in Ngwa Igbo include the following:

- (1) **vu-cluster**
  - (a) vù-ónṹ  
carry-mouth.IC<sup>3</sup>  
'fast'
  - (b) vù-ívù  
get.fat-fat.IC  
'be fat'
- (2) **tụ-cluster**
  - (a) tṹ-l'ányá  
hit-at.eye.IC  
'be surprised'
  - (b) tṹ-òṹmṹ  
hit-palmfrond.IC  
'summon'
- (3) **kṹ-cluster**

<sup>1</sup> The minimalist program (MP) is in the current model of Transformational Generative grammar developed by Chomsky (1993, 1995). The MP proposes three major economy principles: Shortest Move, Procrastinate and Greed. The major goal of the MP is to describe the nature of Universal Grammar and as well account for the parametric variations which are manifested by individual grammars.

- (a) kú-ílú  
be bitter-bitter.IC  
'be bitter'
- (b) kú-égō  
make-money.IC  
'make money'
- (4) **ma-cluster**
- (a) má-mīmā  
be beautiful.IC  
be beautiful
- (b) má-mkpūrú  
tie cloth (on body).IC  
'tie cloth'

As can be seen from the above examples, some inherent complements are cognate with their verb root (examples, **ma-mīmā** 'be beautiful', **vū-í<sup>2</sup>vū** 'be fat') while others are not.

#### B. The Pronominalization Test

Pronominalization is a term used in Classical Transformational Grammar to refer to a rule which replaces a lexical NP with a pronoun (Crystal, 1997). Using the pronominalization test, we shall prove that the inherent complement position is never occupied by an object complement of a transitive verb. While the affected object complement of a transitive verb can be pronominalized, an inherent complement cannot. Thus, in Ngwa Igbo, the lexical NP of an affected object can be replaced by the pro-NP constituent, **yá** 'him/her/it', while the inherent complement cannot. Consider the examples below.

- 5(a) Ézè òtùrù mǎí  
Eze pr.libate.past drink.IC  
'Eze poured a libation'
- (b) \*Ézè òtùrù ya  
Eze pr.libate.past it  
'Eze libated it'
- 6(a) Òbí òvùrù ọ́nụ́  
Obi pr.fast.past mouth.IC  
'Obi fasted'
- (b) \*Òbí òvùrù yá  
Obi pr.fast.past it  
'Obi fasted'
- 7(a) Ọ́jǐ nà òkú ílú  
Kolanut this pr.be.bitter bitter.IC  
'This kolanut is bitter'
- (b) \*Ọ́jǐ nà òkú yá  
kolanut this Pr-be-bitter IC  
'This kolanut is bitter it.'

Notice that the (b) sentences in (5-7) above are not grammatical sentences because the inherent complements have been pronominalized. This is unlike the situation in the following sentences (8-10) where the (b) examples are parallel grammatical structures to those in (5b), (6b) and (7b) respectively.

- 8(a) Ézè òtùrù bọ́ọ́lu  
Eze pr.throw.past ball.IC  
'Eze threw a ball'
- (b) Ézè òtùrù ya  
Eze pr.throw.past it  
'Eze threw it'
- 9(a) Àdhá òvùrù èkèté  
Adha pr.carry.past basket.IC

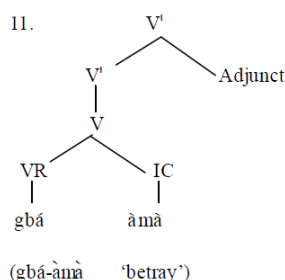
<sup>2</sup> 3sg = 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun; 2sg = 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun; AGR = Agreement; AGRo = Agreement of object; AGRop = Agreement of object projection; AGRs = Agreement of subject; AGRsP = Agreement of subject projection; AS = Aspectual (Head); ASP = Aspectual Projection; CV = Consonant-Vowel; IC = Inherent Complement; ICV = Inherent Complement Verb; N = Noun; NP = Noun Phrase; pr = Prefix; Spec = Specifier; T = Tense (Head); t = Trace; TP = Tense Projection; V = Verb; VP = Verb Phrase; VR = Verb root.

- ‘Adha carried a basket’  
 (b) Àdhá òvùrù yá  
 Adha pr.carry.past it  
 ‘Adha carried it’  
 10(a) Chíkē òkhùrù úkhòórū  
 Chike pr.plant.past maize.IC  
 ‘Chike planted maize’  
 (b) Chíkē òkhùrù yá  
 Chike pr.plant.past it  
 ‘Chike planted it’

The pronominalization of the object NP complements in (8a-10a) does not result in ungrammaticality while the pronominalization of the inherent complements results in ungrammaticality. This confirms the fact that there is a difference between an inherent complement and the direct object of a transitive verb. It further confirms strongly that the inherent complement with its verb root forms a single lexeme.

### C. Inherent Complements: A Minimalist Insight

Nwachukwu (1987) observes correctly that the inherent complement as a zero level category appears in a non-argument position hence; it is invisible to both case and theta role assignment. Also according to him, the inherent complement and its inherent complement verb constitute an  $X^0$  category as shown in the following tree structure (11) where both are under the V node.

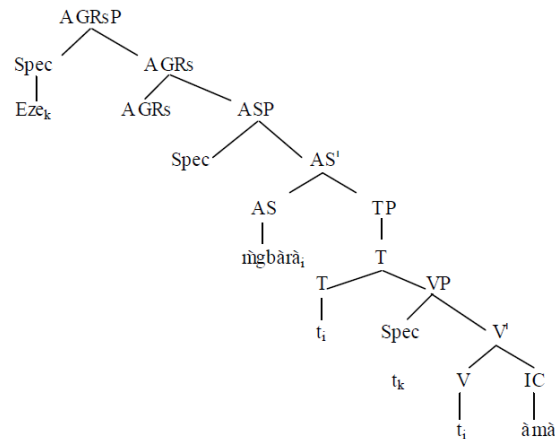


Contrary to Nwachukwu's (1987) view, we want to state here that an inherent complement and its inherent complement verb do not form an  $X^0$  category. The inherent complement and its inherent complement verb constitute a single semantic unit, not a syntactic one. Thus, an inherent complement is not licensed as a constituent under a V-node, but as a constituent within a VP. As a constituent within a VP, its obligatoriness is not of syntactic relevance but of semantic relevance to the inherent complement verb which functions as its head within a VP. More evidence that the inherent complement is only of semantic relevance to the inherent complement verb comes from the fact that the inherent complement cannot be case checked; neither can it be theta-marked. That the inherent complement and its inherent complement verb do not form a syntactic unit will be shown later when we shall show that an internal argument can be licensed between an inherent complement verb and its inherent complement. For now, let us look at how a sentence like (12) with an inherent complement verb is derived as shown in (13).

- 12 Ézè mgbàrà àmà  
 Eze pr.betray.past betrayal.IC  
 ‘Eze betrayed (somebody)’

We can observe from the tree structure in (13) that the inherent complement verb ‘gbá’ merges with the inherent complement ‘àmà’ forming a  $V^1$  (V-bar) under the VP node. The agent NP **Ézè** merges with the V (erb) **gbá-àmà** in order to form the VP **Ézè gbá-àmà**. The agent NP **Ézè**, which originates internally in a theta marked specifier position within the VP moves via AGRs into the Spec AGRsP for the purpose of checking its nominative case features. Similarly, the head of the VP, the V moves up into the ASP head slot suffixing the non-perfect marker **m** (aspectual marker) yielding the complex verbal form which stays at the ASP head slot. As can be noticed in (13), the inherent complement, **àmà**, though nominal in morphology has no features to check, hence it does not move.





#### D. Transitive and Intransitive Inherent Complement Verbs

Nwachukwu (1987) divides inherent complement verbs in Igbo into transitive and intransitive. A transitive inherent complement verb can license an internal argument complement. It can also case-govern and theta-mark the internally licensed argument. Nwachukwu believes that an intransitive inherent complement verb cannot license an internal argument. Examples of transitive inherent complement verbs are given in (14).

- 14(a) *Ézè mgbàrà Obí àmà*  
 Eze pr.betray.past Obi betrayal.IC  
 'Eze betrayed Obi'
- (b) *Chíkè òtùrù Àdhá ọmụ*  
 Chike pr.summon.past Adha palmfrond.IC  
 'Chike summoned Adha'

Note in (14a-b) that the internally licensed arguments are **Obí** and **Àdhá**.

On the other hand, Nwachukwu (1987) believes that the inherent complement verbs in (15) can only be used intransitively.

- 15(i) *chá-ùchá* as in (a) *Ọkúkọ (n)à òchá ùchá*  
 fowl this pr.be.white white.IC  
 This fowl is white
- (ii) *vù-úvú* as in (b) *Ézè òvùrù ívu*  
 Eze pr.be.fat fat.IC  
 Eze is fat
- (c) *gó-égó* as in *Ísì yā òdī ígō égó*  
 head 3sg. pr.progressiv.aux. pr.be.black black.IC  
 He/her hair is growing black.

The inherent complement verbs in (15) translate into English as **be+adjective**, hence they can conveniently be labeled as adjectival inherent complement verbs. The nominal complement of such adjectival inherent complement verbs have been described as "qualificative nouns" (Emenanjo 1978) and "qualificative verbs" (Uwalaka 1981), since they form a neat semantic class of stative adjectival verbs each describing an attribute or quality associated with individuals or entities. Nwachukwu (1987) argues further that adjectival inherent complement verbs like the ones in (15) cannot license, govern or theta-mark an internal argument except there is an applicative suffix as in (16).

- 16 *Ọkúkọ (n)à òcháárá anyì ùchá*  
 fowl this Pr.be.white.applicative.suff.past 2pl. white.IC  
 'This fowl is white for us.'

It is, however, possible in Ngwa Igbo for all the adjectival inherent complement verbs to license, govern and theta-mark internal arguments without the applicative suffix as the following examples in (17) show where *Ézè* and *Àdhá* have been licensed.

- 17(a) *Ūwéi (n)à òchá Ézè ùcha*  
 cloth this pr.be.white Eze white.IC  
 'This cloth makes Eze (look) bright'
- (b) *Ūwéi (n)à òvùrù Àdhá ívu*  
 cloth this pr.be.fat Adha fat.IC  
 'This cloth made Adha (look) fat'

It is however, observed from (17) that when an adjectival inherent complement verb licenses an internal argument, the sentence has a causative reading. Nevertheless, the adjectival inherent complement verb governs and theta-marks the licensed argument. The implication here is that the sharp contrast between transitive and intransitive or division of verbs into transitive and intransitive is misleading. In fact, it has been stressed in the literature that transitivity should be regarded more or less as a scalar notion (Osam, 2000), so that verbs can be put on a scale or graded in terms of transitivity.

#### E. The Inherent Complement and Internally Licensed Argument

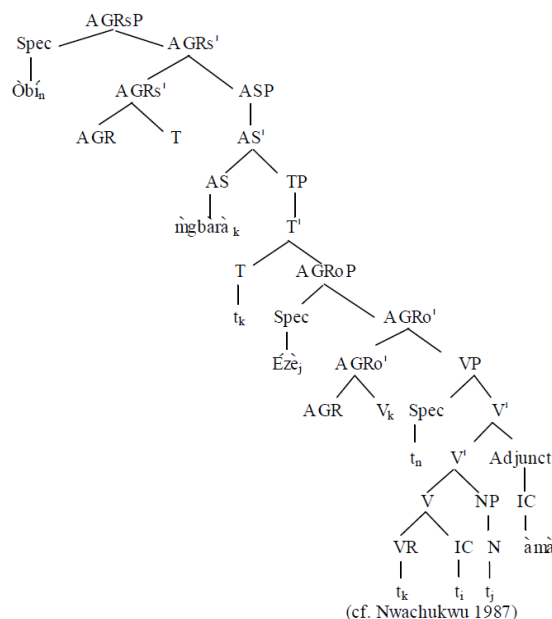
Nwachukwu (1987) is of the view that there is a move- $\alpha$  (movement) operation which applies obligatorily when a transitive inherent complement verb licenses an internal argument. This move- $\alpha$  operation he refers to Move-IC, since accordingly to him, the inherent complement in such constructions moves, being displaced by the internal argument. Consider the following examples that follow.

- 18(a) Òbí m̀gbàrà àmà  
Obi pr.betray.past betray.IC  
Obi betrayed somebody.
- (b) Òbí m̀gbàrà **Ézè** àmà  
Obi pr.betray.past Eze betrayal.IC  
Obi betrayed Eze
- 19(a) Ùwéí (n)à ñjọ́ ñjọ́  
cloth this pr.be.ugly ugly.IC  
'This cloth is ugly'
- (b) Ùwéí (n)à ñjọ́ **Chíkè** ñjọ́  
cloth this pr.be.ugly Chike ugly.IC  
This cloth makes Chike (look) ugly'

In examples (18a) and (19a), the inherent complement verbs **m̀gbàrà**, **ñjọ́** and their respective inherent complements **àmà**, **ñjọ́** occur strictly adjacent to each other, while in (18b) or (19b), there is an internal argument (**Ézè** or **Chíkè**), licensed by the inherent complement verb which according to Nwachukwu intrudes into the position between the inherent complement verb and the inherent complement moving the inherent complement rightwards in order to allow strict adjacency between the inherent complement verb and the internally licensed argument. This movement of the inherent complement, as conceived by Nwachukwu, is diagrammatically shown in (20) below using the construction in (18b).

However, the movement of the inherent complement, **àmà**, as shown in the structure (20) is not well motivated for a number of reasons. First, movement of constituents in Igbo (SVO) is always not rightwards, but leftwards, closer to functional heads for the purpose of feature checking. Secondly, the inherent complement **àmà**, which appears in a non-argument position has no case features to check; hence, by economy principle (movement can only take place when necessary) cannot be raised to any point in the derivation.

20

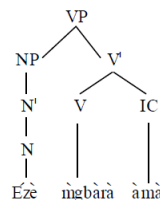


Based on the reasons given above, I have presented an alternative derivational analysis. I have also used the construction in (18b) repeated here as (21).

- 21    Òbí m̀gbàrà            Èzè àma  
       Obi Pr-witness-FACT Eze    IC  
       Obi betrayed **Eze**

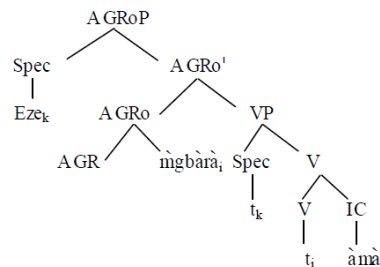
Let us assume that the verb, **m̀gbàrà** is merged with the inherent complement, **àma** to form the V **m̀gbàrà- àma**, while the resulting V then merges with the NP **Èzè** to form the VP in (22).

22



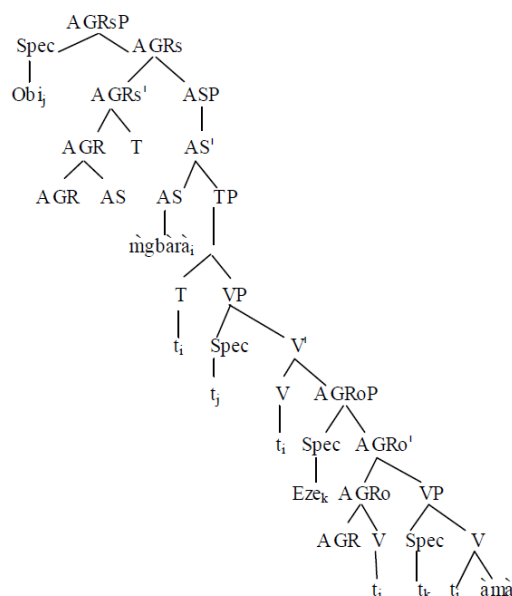
The VP in (22) further merges with AGRo forming the related AGRo' projection. Subsequently, the verb **m̀gbàrà** raises to AGRo, while the NP **Èzè** raises to the Spec of AGRoP yielding the derived structure (23).

23



The NP **Èzè** and AGRo (at this stage of the derivation, AGRo houses the verb) are in a Spec-head relationship, hence the objective case feature of **Èzè** is checked against that of the AGRoP constituent of (23) and then merged with an abstract performative light verb (cf. Radford, 1997) whose Spec position contains the agent NP **Òbí**. The verb **m̀gbàrà** further raises from AGRo into the head position of the abstract performative light verb. From here, the verb raises into the head of TP and to the head of ASP checking and activating its tense and aspectual features respectively. Finally, the agent, **Òbí** in the Spec position of the abstract performative light verb raises into Spec AGRsP, checking its nominative case features as shown in (24).

24



Note again that the inherent complement *àma* does not raise to any position. This is in fulfillment of the economy principle since it has no feature to check. Also, contrary to Nwachukwu's view, the landing site for the inherent complement is not an adjunct position. Adjunct positions house optional elements of clause structure whose omisibility does not result in ungrammaticality. The inherent complement is within the VP, and not in an adjunct position since its omisibility does result in ungrammaticality as examples (25) show. The inherent complement maintains an obligatory semantic link with its inherent complement verb which functions as the head of the VP projection.

- 25(a) \*Eze mgbàrà ----  
 (b) \*Eze mgbàrà Òbí ---

### III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the course of this paper, we have come to the conclusion that the bond between the inherent complement verb and its inherent complement is essentially semantic. Thus, the inherent complement verb with its inherent complement constitutes a semantic unit and not a syntactic one. Contrary to Nwachukwu's (1987) view, the inherent complement verb and its inherent complement do not constitute an  $X^0$  category. This claim is supported by the fact that, the syntactic link between the inherent complement verb and its inherent complement can be broken by an internally licensed argument. Thus the obligatoriness of the inherent complement in a VP is semantically relevant to the inherent complement verb, which functions as the head of the VP. Following Nwachukwu (1987), we assume that the inherent complement as zero level category appears in a non-argument position. However, contrary to his claim, there is no movement operation affecting the inherent complement. Rather, an internally licensed argument in an inherent complement verb construction raises for the purposes of checking its objective case features. Our argument against positing an inherent complement movement being that there is no motivation for such movement since it is not feature driven. If the inherent complement must move, it must be for reasons of feature checking. We however, observed that the inherent complement is visible to both case and theta-role assignment.

Finally, contrary to the view in the literature about Igbo dialects, all Ngwa adjectival inherent complement verbs can license an internal argument.

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# Investigating Controversies in Teaching Grammar: A Case for the Iranian High School Students

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**Abstract**—The fact that L2 learners need to learn grammar is now a well-established fact (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Foto, 1994; Sheen, 2003; Davies, 2006; Ellis, 2006; Borg and Burns, 2008; Cullen, 2008). What has remained controversial is 'how to teach grammar to help L2 learners acquire it. The present study was designed on a qualitative-quantitative survey basis using a semi-structured interview and questionnaire on the effectiveness of different approaches in teaching grammar which was administered to 128 students and 5 EFL instructors in four high schools in Isfahan province, the city of Falavarjan. The results of the study revealed that the students and instructors preferred 'focus on form (FonF)' instructional method. The results also demonstrated that some of the participants favored a teacher fronted classroom with an emphasis on explicit grammar instruction. The results of the study are in line with the related literature in grammar teaching approaches that 'focus on form' (FonF) acts as a middle-way between the two extremes of (FonFs) and 'focus on meaning (FonM)'. Moreover, the role of L1 in the grammar instruction cannot be stigmatized as unworthy of consideration without providing enough empirical evidence. The overall results suggest that the treatment of grammar with a 'one-size-fits-all' methodology instead of utilizing a balanced perspective based on the needs and context of the learners is not expected to yield sufficient result in any language teaching contexts.

**Index Terms**—grammar teaching, context, FonFs, FonM, FonF

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the centuries, second language educators have alternated between two types of approaches to language teaching i.e., those that focus on analyzing the language and those that focus on using the language. As approaches in language teaching have changed, modifications in methodologies and consequently changes in grammar have emerged but, among different elements in language teaching, grammar teaching has held and continues to hold a central place (Campbell, 1970; Long, 1991; Foto, 1994; Sheen, 2003; Davies, 2006; Ellis, 2006; Borg and Burns, 2008; Cullen, 2008).

According to Sheen (2003) in the last forty years the role of grammar has gone through three main stages: absolute prominence, exclusion, and re-introduction with caution. These three stages have been associated respectively to three different approaches to instruction namely, 'focus on forms (FonFs)', 'focus on meaning (FonM)', and 'focus on form (FonF)'. As the focus of classroom instruction has shifted over the past few decades from an emphasis on language forms to attention to functional language within communicative contexts, the place of grammar instruction i.e., how to teach grammar and what to teach as grammar to help L2 learners acquire it, has become more important. By giving practical examples and types of grammar tasks which exhibit these features, Cullen (2008) reintroduces teaching grammar as a liberating force. These tasks all derive from traditional ELT practice, but have been revitalized to support an approach to emphasize its liberating potential. He identifies three key design features which need to be present in any grammar production tasks, i.e., learner choice over the use of grammatical structures, a process of applying grammar to lexis, and opportunities to make comparisons and notice gaps in their use of grammar. Borg and Burns (2008) identified range of ways in which teachers understood and integrated grammar in the classes. They classified them into two broad orientations labeled as temporal and contextual.

The range of approaches to form can be placed in a long continuum. On one side, are planned, deductive, explicit, intensive, and discrete-point metalinguistic explanations, and on the other end of the continuum are implicit, inductive, unplanned, incidental references to form through noticing and grammar consciousness rising. In this article, different approaches to grammar teaching during the last four decades are reviewed and their application in an EFL context in general, and in the Iranian context in particular has been examined to see what kind of grammar teaching can effectively facilitate language learning.

### A. Focus on Forms (FonFs)

According to Laufer and Girsai (2008) focus on forms (FonFs) is an approach equated with traditional method which entails teaching discrete linguistics structures in separate lessons in a sequence determined by syllabus writers. Ellis,

et.al (2001), also believe that in a (FonFs) approach, students view themselves as learners of a language and the language as the object study. The underlying assumption behind traditional-grammar-teaching is that having learners produce the structures correctly and repeatedly helps them learn it. During the past 40 years, the methodological approaches which have given a central importance to grammar teaching are: Audio-lingual Approach and Cognitive Code Approach.

During 1950s and 1960s Audiolingualism as a reaction to the Grammar Translation Approach and its lack of emphasis on oral-aural skills emerged. Those following the Grammar Translation Method hoped that through explicit and deductive grammar teaching students would become familiar with the grammar of their native language and learn about the target language.

Audio-lingual Approach represented the first attempt by U.S Structural Linguists such as Fries and Lado to influence the teaching of modern foreign languages. For them grammar was viewed as the starting point of language learning. Therefore grammatical structures were very carefully sequenced from basic to more complex. Adopting a behaviorist psychology, they believed that learning is a matter of habit formation. Thus mimicry of forms and memorization of certain sentence patterns were used extensively. A variety of manipulative drill types was practiced with the aim of minimizing learner's errors.

The Cognitive Code Approach, largely a reaction to the behaviorist features of audiolingualism, was influenced by the work of linguists like Chomsky and psychologist like Miller.

Language learning was viewed as hypothesis formation and rule acquisition, rather than habit formation. In this approach, grammar was considered important, and rules were presented either deductively or inductively. Errors were viewed as inevitable by products of language learning. Campbell (1970) also argues for acquiring a native like competence which enables a learner to produce and interpret infinite number of sentences by utilizing a finite number of rules. Martine (1978) puts forward the concept of spiraling, a systematic revisiting of the same material with increasingly broader and deeper explanations and practice. Grammar-based methodologies based on presentation-practice-production (P-P-P) format favored a teacher- fronted language lesson. In general in this methodology the grammar of a new language is considered as fundamental to the development of competence in that language.

Sheen (2003) believes that a 'focus on forms' is being stigmatized as unworthy of consideration unfairly. He thinks that (FonFs) is perceived as being incompatible with currently-accepted theories by a number of applied linguists who do not provide reliable and supportive empirical evidence for their claim. Sheen (2006) maintains that countless numbers of successful learners owe their success in part to TGT and criticizes Ellis's proscription of traditional grammar teaching.

#### *B. Meaning-focused Instruction (FonM)*

Meaning-Focused Instruction according to Ellis et al. (2001) had two essential elements. First, it required the classroom participants to treat language as a tool for achieving some nonlinguistic goal rather than as an object to be studied for the purpose of learning the language. Second, it demanded the participants to function as users rather than as learners of language. This instructional approach could be manifested in comprehension and communicative approaches.

The comprehension approach represented attempts by many language methodologists like Krashen and Terrel during the 1970s and 1980s to recreate the first language acquisition experience for the second/foreign language learners. The prominent notion was that comprehension is primary and should precede any production. It was proposed that a semantically based syllabus be followed and all grammar instruction be excluded from the classroom as the attention was placed solely on meaning. Proponent of this philosophy also believed that error correction was unnecessary or even counterproductive.

The communicative approach originated in the work of anthropological linguists such as Hymes in the U.S and functional linguists like Halliday in Britain all of whom viewed language as an instrument of communication. The syllabus of a language course based on this approach was not organized around grammar but subject matters, tasks, projects, and pragmatic functions. In other words, language instruction was considered content-based, meaningful, contextualized, and discourse-based (rather than sentence-based). Among the proponents of this approach some debate regarding the nature, extent and type of grammar instruction existed.

#### *C. Focus on Form (FonF)*

'Focus on form' was the result of attempts to find a middle-way between form-focused and meaning-focused instruction, both of which had been deemed by many to be insufficient at promoting acceptable language acquisition (Fotos, 1994; Ellis, 2003, 2006; Davies, 2006; Saraceni, 2007).

As a reaction to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which refused to give a systematic role to grammar instruction, Long created Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Focus on Form is described by Long (1991) as the incidental attention that teachers and L2 learners pay to form in the context of meaning focused instruction. Ellis et al, (2001) mention that focus on form occurs in discourse that is predominantly 'meaning centered, observable (i.e., occurs intentionally), extensive (i.e., several different forms may be attended to in the context of a single lesson), and transitory (i.e., occasional so as not to interfere too much with meaning)' (pp. 411-412). Attention to form according to Ellis(2006) can be proactive (i.e., planned) and intensive or reactive (i.e. incidental) and extensive. (FonF) can also be preemptive (i.e. addressing an actual or perceived gap in the students' knowledge).

(FonF) is often contrasted with (FonM) exemplified by Krashen. However, Long's and Krashen's approaches have some similarities. They are both types of implicit language instruction in which the main focus is on meaning, with no rules given and no overt directions to attend to any given form. A major difference is that Long's TBLT diverts students' attention to specific forms that arise incidentally when a communication breakdown occurs for a student. While the term form is often taken to refer exclusively to grammar, Laufer (2005) maintains that (FonF) can be directed at phonology, vocabulary, grammar, or discourse. Nassaji and Fotos (2004) believe that it was Krashen who represented the debate theoretically by suggesting the distinction between conscious learning and unconscious acquisition of language. It was claimed that language should be acquired through natural exposure, not learned through formal instruction. It was therefore believed that formal grammar lessons would develop only declarative knowledge of grammar structures, not the procedural ability to use forms correctly, and that there was no interface between these two types of knowledge since they existed as different systems in the brain.

#### *D. The Role of L1 in Grammar Instruction*

Based on the Tasked-Based Language Teaching/learning methodology, the assumption that the learner's first language (the L1) is a deterrent in foreign language learning is challenged and modified. According to Canagarajah (1999) the belief that use of the learner's native language interferes with the learning of English and hampers the process of second language development has now passed into the realms of pedagogical common sense. The inclusion of the L1 is thus described as a resource in foreign language teaching in general and in teaching the grammar in particular. As Tollefson (2000) points out it is a process which aims to 'empower learners by putting their experiences and knowledge at the center of the pedagogical process' (p. 146). In the same vein, by reporting learners' positive perceptions of first language (L1) incorporation in foreign language teaching and learning contexts, Swain and Lapkin (2001) do not support the theory and practice of the inclusion of L1 in EFL classrooms.

However, the debate on the inclusion of the L1 in EFL classes is still continued. For many researchers and instructors who are hesitant to the use of the native language in the foreign language classes, the L1 can ultimately be seen as teaching tool especially in realm of the grammar instruction than a learning tool.

## II. METHOD

### *A. Participants*

A total of 128 students in four high schools in Isfahan province, the city of Falavarjan as well as 5 instructors who taught EFL at these high schools took part in this study. The age range of the students was 15-18. There was no sample selection and all the students were included in the study.

### *B. Instruments*

Instrumentation included a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire (designed for the students and the instructors). At the beginning of the study, interviews were conducted with the students and the instructors. A list of questions regarding such issues as different approaches to grammar teaching and their application in an EFL context in general and in the grammar instruction in particular emerged to see what kind of grammar teaching can effectively facilitate language learning.

Then a closed-response yes-no questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed. The interview data also provided input for adding extra items mainly with regard to learners' preferences for the best instructional method they can receive in Iranian context.

### *C. Procedures*

For the ease of students and instructors, the three instructional methods, i.e., (FonFs), (FonF), and (FonM) were thoroughly explained. The questionnaire was also administered and responded to in Persian. The questionnaire aimed to explore the opinions of the students on their expressed views toward learning grammar. It also aimed to seek the instructors' attitudes concerning the evaluation of different grammar instruction methods.

The filled in questionnaires were then analyzed. The frequency and the percentage of positive and negative views towards each question was computed and compared.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 128 respondents, 116 (90%) reported having preferred FonF instructional method and only 12 (9%) were disagree with this method. The results also revealed that more than 95% of the participants believed that the contextual considerations such as, the requirements of the class syllabus and final exams, shortage of time allotted to language classes and their inability to communicate in English and the need to incorporate L1 into instruction were responsible for their choice. The results of the questionnaires are presented in table 1. Only 16 (12%) favored a FonFs approach, and almost no student 2.3% thought they could benefit from a merely FonM instructional method. The opinions of teachers mentioned with regards to the question were mainly the same as the students.



TABLE I.  
LEARNERS' OPINION ABOUT DIFFERENT GRAMMAR INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

	questions	Agree (Yes)	percent	Disagree (No)	percent
(FonFs) Focus on Forms	Focus on forms lead to the acquisition of a significantly larger number of grammatical points.	16	12.2	114	89
	Planned, explicit, and discrete- point metalinguistic explanations is more effective.	18	14	110	85
(FonF) Focus on Form	Focus on form lead to the acquisition of a significantly larger number of grammatical points.	116	90.6	12	9.3
	Incorporating grammatical explanation into a communicative lesson make a significant difference in acquiring new grammatical points.	118	92.1	10	7.8
(FonM) Focus on Meaning	Focus on meaning lead to the acquisition of a significantly larger number of grammatical points.	3	2.3	125	97.6
	Implicit, unplanned, and incidental references to form is effective.	5	3.9	123	96
Others	Incorporating translation activities make a significant difference in acquiring new grammatical points.	120	93	8	6.2
	The limitation of the class time is responsible for the choice of the preferred instructional grammar method.	122	95	6	4.6
	Problems in speaking and listening are responsible for the choice of the preferred grammar instructional method?	117	91	11	8.5
	The requirements of the syllabus and final exam are responsible for the choice of grammar instructional method.	125	97.6	2	1.5

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that a type of grammar instructional method in which attention to grammatical forms happens in the context of communication is favored. The (FonF) instruction along with the incorporation of a limited amount of L1 was favored by more than two thirds of the students. They liked the fact that this approach is completely student centered and they can somehow control the forms to be taught.

However, in line with Ellis (1995), the inconclusive natures of L2 acquisition studies of the best way to teach grammar suggest that it is premature to reach any firm conclusion regarding what type of formal instruction work best. The results of the study cannot be generalized due to its own limitations. The fact that EFL/ESL methodologists have not yet offered consistent advice to teachers about the role of grammar in language teaching has frustrated teachers who cannot decide between many conflicting positions in the methodological literature. On the one hand, it is now believed that a grammarless approach— whether comprehension-based or communicative-based can lead to the development of a broken, ungrammatical, pidginized form of the target language. On the other hand, the debate regarding how to teach grammar presents a dilemma for many teachers.

Similarly, in the Iranian context the concern over finding the most valid, reliable and trustworthy grammar teaching method has still remained a controversial issue. The findings of this study can shed light in this issue by showing that, in the Iranian EFL context, (FonF) instructional approach which emphasizes focus on meaning with attention to form is favored over a (FonF) approach which is equated with the traditional teaching of discrete points of grammar in separate lesson and (FonM) approach which emphasizes comprehensible input and meaning oriented tasks as necessary and sufficient for language acquisition. This kind of language learning and teaching perspective, i.e., (FonF) is not however fully implemented because of the Iranian contextual considerations such as, the requirements of the class syllabus and final exams, shortage of time allotted to language classes, the failure to have meaningful communication outside the language classes, and the kind of teacher training programmes in Iran. Moreover, in the Iranian context, English language classes have long been teacher-fronted ones with teachers playing active roles and serving as one of the major sources of input. They provide explicit instruction of grammar to somehow manifest their power and knowledge.

In summary, grammar cannot be discarded from foreign language pedagogy since form and meaning cannot be excluded. While the efficacy of the (FonF) instruction for the Iranian EFL context needs empirical evidence, adopting a (FonF) approach as a modification of communicative language teaching which is in line with the learners' needs to communicate meaningfully and effectively can be a preferred option. The results suggest that the treatment of grammar with a 'one-size-fits-all' methodology instead of utilizing a balanced perspective based on the needs and context of the learners can yield insufficient result in any language teaching contexts.

#### *Implication of the Study*

The results of the study can provide implications for the choice of the most effective instructional approaches in teaching grammar in different contexts and in particular in the Iranian high school EFL context. Because of problems presented by traditional structure-based grammar teaching which involves presenting discrete grammatical forms in an isolated manner, the result of this study is in line with applying Long's (1991) focus on form approach which involves the teacher's attempts to draw the student's attention to grammatical forms in the context of communication. Since the use of (FonFs) instruction means that the communicative classroom is abandoned, a return to the grammar translation method at the expense of the ability to function in a foreign language is not recommended. By considering the present social, educational, and cultural context of the Iranian students and raising both students' and instructions' awareness

towards them, a middle way, i.e., (FonF) approach between the two extremes of (FonFs) and (FonM) instructions can be effectively utilized in high school EFL classes in Iran.

#### APPENDIX A STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participants,

The following questionnaire is part of a research project that aims to explore the students and instructors expressed views and attitude towards grammar instruction methods.

##### Background Information

1. Name and family name: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age \_\_\_\_\_ years

Please tick (Y) for Yes and (N) for No for each question.

1. Does focus on forms lead to the acquisition of a significantly larger number of grammatical points?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

2. Are planned, explicit, and discrete- point metalinguistic explanations effective?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

3. Does a focus on form lead to the acquisition of a significantly larger number of grammatical points?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

4. Does incorporating grammatical explanation into a communicative lesson make a significant difference in acquiring new grammatical points?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

5. Does a focus on meaning lead to the acquisition of a significantly larger number of grammatical points?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

6. Are implicit, unplanned, and incidental references to form effective?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

7. Do incorporating translation activities make a significant difference in acquiring new grammatical points?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

8. Does the limitation of the class time affect instructors' choice of instructional grammar method?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

9. Does the instructors' deficiency in speaking and listening affect the choice of grammar instructional method?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

10. Do the requirements of the syllabus and final exam affect the choice of grammar instructional method?

(Y) ☐ (N) ☐

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# Participant Relationship and Code Choice in Communication: A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

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**Abstract**—The current study focused on the effect of interpersonal relationship on code choice in discourse situations in the university community of Cape Coast. The study also looked at the nature of the linguistic situation and the kinds of code choice in the university. It revealed that the university community of Cape Coast is multilingual and the kinds of code choice are: unmixed codes, code mixing and code switching. The research target population comprised: students, lecturers and the non-academic staff. The present study employed a sociolinguistic approach and it was conducted within the framework of ethnography of speaking and sociology of language. The study also adopted the ethnographic research design and the instruments used for data collection were: observation, questionnaire and interview. The findings of the research revealed that the interpersonal relationship between participants in discourse defined by age, sex, rank, level of education and ethnicity affected code choice.

**Index Terms**—participant relationship, code choice, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, communication

## I. INTRODUCTION

Communication theory that emphasizes message content to the neglect of relational factors is simply not practical. Real-life interpersonal communication is often unpredictable and it always involves more than just the speaker's action. This realization has led some observers to propose an interactive model for interpersonal communication (Griffin, 2000). Like the game of charades, interpersonal communication is a mutual, ongoing process using verbal and nonverbal messages with another person to create and alter the images in both of our minds. According to Blumer (1969) meaning is negotiated through the use of language and out of the social interaction that people have with each other. It is only by talking with others that we come to ascribe that meaning and develop a universe of discourse. Mead (1934) claims that the most human and humanizing activity that people can engage in is talking to each other. A group of people living and working together in close proximity enforced by an institution like the university have to interact. Language is the means of communicating information and it is also the channel of establishing and maintaining relationship with other people (Trudgil, 1983). Communication in a social context patterns according to particular roles within a society defined by sex, age, social status, occupation, level of education, rural or urban residence and other features of social organisation. The University of Cape Coast where the current research was conducted is a multilingual community. Students and workers are drawn from the heterogeneous ethnic regions of Ghana. Due to the multilingual nature of the community, the subjects are normally faced with the problem of code choice. Wardhaugh (1986) defines "code" as a language or a variety of a language employed for communication in discourse situations. Crystal (1985) views the term code as any system of communication involving language. This means that when two or more individuals communicate with each other in speaking, for example, we can name the system of communication that they employ a code. In the present study, the researcher concerned himself with whole languages that are spoken in the university of Cape Coast. The concept of code in the current work means a language.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, the researcher places the current study in the context of work done by other investigators with the view of showing how the present study is both similar and different from previous ones. The review covers both studies conducted in non-Ghanaian and Ghanaian contexts.

Parasher (1980) is a study on language choice among three-hundred-and-fifty educated people in two cities in the southern part of India. Parasher attempted to determine people's language use in domains in the sense of Fishman (1965, 1968). According to Fishman, there are certain institutional contexts called domains, in which a particular language variety is more likely to be appropriate than another. In the field of domains, certain situations are more formal than others. The language used in the family domain is the low one, whereas the language employed in more formal domains like education is high. Parasher (1980) found out about language use in seven domains: family, friendship, neighbourhood, transactions, education, government and employment. The respondents were instructed to state on the

questionnaire administered which language among five languages (English, Mother tongue, the regional language, Hindi and other languages) they would use in each situation. From Parasher's study mother tongue dominated the family domain. English scored high in the education, government and employment domains. It also appeared strong in the friendship and neighbourhood domains and this was due to the fact that the educated Indians in the Southern part of India, where the research was conducted and where English tends to be favoured, do not share a common mother tongue with their colleagues.

Rubin (1968) presents a description of the bilingual situation that exists in Paraguay. According to him, two languages are employed for communication in this country; Spanish and Guarani. The former is the official language of government, business transactions, and the medium of education. It is used on formal occasions and conversations with strangers who are properly dressed. On the other hand, Guarani is used in informal discourse with friends, servants and strangers who are poorly dressed, and on most casual occasions. It is spoken more in the countryside than in the cities and towns. Guarani is employed by males in the upper classes as a sign of friendship. However, upper-class females prefer Spanish in informal interactions. Male Paraguayans may converse in Guarani at the initial part of a drinking session but switch to Spanish as they feel the influence of alcohol, the reason being that Spanish is the language of power. Paraguayans choose to converse in Guarani outside Paraguay among South-American Spanish-speaking people. This is an indication that Guarani is the language of solidarity. In Paraguay, Spanish is socially preferred. It is the language people choose when addressing superiors. The choice between Spanish and Guarani therefore depends on setting (City or Country), formality, sex, status, intimacy, seriousness, type of activity and situation. Fishman (1971) describes the language situation in Paraguay as diglossic; with Spanish as the 'high' variety and Guarani as the 'low'.

Forson (1968) is a description of the sociolinguistic situation in Ghana, with a focus on Akan- English bilingualism. According to Forson, Akan- English bilinguals can normally be said to have at least three languages to choose from: Akan, English and Akan mixed with English words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Forson points out that the situations where even the most highly educated Akans use or find themselves forced to employ 'unmixed' Akan include: when talking to illiterate Akan relations and acquaintances, when participating in a traditional ritualistic performance like libation, dirges and worship, when addressing an Akan community, when presenting folktales or riddles at a gathering which is predominantly Akan, when participating in radio or TV programmes in Akan and when bargaining with uneducated Akan traders. Some of the instances Forson cites when the Akan- English bilinguals use English are when in the company of educated non-Akans, when speaking to a gathering of educated people, when teaching in a classroom setting and for official or formal interactions. He reports that the Akan-English bilinguals mix the two languages when communicating in the environment of other Akan- English bilinguals. In the instances of mixing Forson reveals that it is Akan, which is mixed with various items of English and not the other way. It is also Forson's view that the quantity of English elements in the speech of the Akan- English bilingual depends on his knowledge of English and that in an informal discourse, mixing Akan with English depends on the educational backgrounds of the participants. He establishes that mixing occurs in all free discussions and other informal discourses, irrespective of the difference in social status of the interlocutors. Forson concludes that mixing is part of the linguistic life of most Ghanaians.

Forson (1979) reports that code-switching is the product of bilingualism or multilingualism and in it the participants share the same language in contact. Forson's work establishes that the Akan-English bilingual is equipped with three tongues; Akan, English and Akan-English code-switching. According to him these tongues complement one another in offering the bilingual three distinct language choices for separate categories of language use. Forson's idea of a third tongue is also the view of Wardhaugh (1986) and Owusu-Ansah (1992). Wardhaugh refers to Forson's third tongue as third code and Owusu-Ansah describes it as 'a contact variety'. Forson points out that the sociolinguistic factors which characterise normal code-switching are that there should be at least two tongues of which the non-native should be socially more prestigious than the local variety, the participants should be bilingual in the languages involved in the code-switching, the subject matter should not be typically indigenous and the discourse should be informal, unprepared and spoken. Forson (1979) also reveals that the participants in normal Akan-English code-switching consider themselves to be communicating in Akan. The discourse usually starts in Akan and as it progresses the interlocutors freely employ English items of varying lengths. However, if a subject matter is not easily communicated in English, it does not attract code-switching. Discourses involving topics that come under politics, academic subjects, international sports are usually in English because they are difficult to discuss or describe in monolingual Akan. Therefore, any discussion of these in Akan turns into code-switching.

Owusu-Ansah (1992) is an attempt at finding out how English is employed by speech communities that have other indigenous languages as their predominant means of communication. In his work, Owusu-Ansah investigates the differences between Ghanaian English and native varieties of English. He focuses on interpersonal relationships as one of the prominent areas of contextual differences in the Ghanaian university students' English. Owusu-Ansah (1992) also looks at language choice. It shows that depending on the level of formality, three possible code choices exist in Ghana. These comprise unmixed Ghanaian languages, mixed English-Ghanaian languages and unmixed English. The two unmixed languages are used in highly formal situations while mixed varieties are chosen as the level of formality falls.

It is worth noting that the investigations conducted by other researchers are similar to the present study in the domain of code choice. Another area of similarity is that the current research and the literature reviewed adopt a sociolinguistic approach. Aspects of Owusu-Ansah (1992) for instance, are based on interpersonal relationship and a framework of

ethnography of speaking which the present work also deals with. The current study is different from other related works in the sense that it is a research into interpersonal relationship and code choice in discourse situations. The sample frame for the present work comprises: students, lecturers and non-academic workers of the University of Cape Coast. The other studies on code choice have different sources of data and informants. For example Parasher (1980) is conducted among educated Indians in the southern part of India; Greenfield's (1972) is carried out among Puerto Ricans in New York City, Blom and Gumperz (1972) in the Norwegian village of Hemnesberget and Rubin (1968) in Paraguay. Owusu-Ansah's (1992) data for example were gathered from university students in Ghana. His study is based on both the spoken and written mediums of communication but the present research is confined to the spoken. The significance of this approach is that the current study concerns itself with code choice and this linguistic concept applies more to the spoken medium of communication than the written. Forson (1968, 1979) are to some extent limited in their attempt at depicting the linguistic situation in the sense that Ghana is multilingual but his works have been given a bilingual approach. The present study is looking at code choice between English and the other Ghanaian languages and not just Akan.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Research Design*

The research design employed in the present study is an integrated method involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research design offers the researcher the chance to study naturally occurring linguistic phenomena. With this design, descriptions of observations are expressed largely in non-numerical terms. Nonetheless, quantitative research uses specific measurement of variables. This provides the connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. The quantitative method adopted in the current research involves simple frequency and means and this helped to identify responses to the variables of interpersonal relationship under study.

#### B. *Population*

The research population comprised: students, lecturers and non-academic staff of the University of Cape Coast. The university community of Cape Coast consists of people from the diverse ethnic regions in Ghana. As a result, many different languages co-exist and individuals speak more than one language. The research population is heterogeneous and multilingual.

#### C. *Sampling*

The present study employed the cluster and stratification sampling designs. The total sample frame for the research was two hundred and thirty (230). Two hundred (200) responded to questionnaire and thirty (30) were interviewed. Out of the total number of two hundred (200) respondents to questionnaire, one hundred and twenty five (125) were students and seventy-five (75) were workers. These classifications in the sampling were influenced by the available statistics of the university, which show that students population is more than the workers. The thirty informants in the 230 sampling frame who were interviewed comprised: ten students, ten lecturers and ten non-academic staff.

#### D. *Research Instruments*

The instruments used for data collection were observation, questionnaire and interview.

Observation was the main research instrument used in the present study. It provided an empirical basis for capturing language used in its social context. The methods of observation used were participant and non-participant. The investigator interacted with the research target population and observed closely the use of language in various contexts of situation. The questionnaire helped the investigator solicit information for both demographic and sociolinguistic data of the research. In all, about two hundred and thirty (230) questionnaire handouts were administered directly to the informants. The researcher had a checklist in place to ensure that respondents provided accurate information. A number of follow-ups were also done in order to retrieve all the questionnaire handouts administered. The interview was conducted with the aid of a schedule. The researcher established rapport with the interviewees. Appointments were booked with some of the informants while others agreed to be interviewed immediately. The interview was carried out on one - on - one basis. It was conducted at a time and place convenient for the informants. The interview proceeded smoothly without personal contributions from the interviewer.

### IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the study deals with the analysis of data and discussion of the research findings. A preliminary analysis was conducted to obtain quantitative information on the responses of informants. The discussion was done with reference to the objectives of the study.

TABLE 1:  
LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY RESPONDENTS

Languages	Number of respondents
English	200
Ghanaian languages	200
Pidgin	54
Foreign languages	8

From Table 1 it can be observed that all the respondents spoke a Ghanaian language and English. The Ghanaian languages spoken in the university were: Akan, (Nzema, Guan, Ahanta, Efutu) Ga, Ewe, Dagbani, Dagaare. There were 8 foreign languages (German, Spanish, Amharic, Italian and French) spoken by lecturers who might have travelled for further studies to the countries in which these languages were spoken. Pidgin was spoken by 54 respondents. The investigator found out who spoke Pidgin, to whom and when and to what end. Pidgin was employed for communication in informal discourse situations. The use of English, Ghanaian language and Pidgin makes the university a multilingual community. There were individuals who could speak English and their mother tongues only. Others could speak about three to four languages.

TABLE 2:  
ETHNIC DIFFERENCES AND CODE CHOICE

ETHNIC BACKGROUND	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Akan	133	66.5
Ga	14	7
Ewe	28	14
Nzema	3	1.5
Dagbani	4	2
Frafra	-	-
Kasem	-	-
Konkonba	-	-
Gonja	1	0.5
Dagaare	10	5
Wala	-	-
Others	7	3.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the ethnic background of respondents. From the Table 133 (66.5%) respondents out of the total number of 200 informants were Akans. The Ewes were 28 (14%) followed by the Ga ethnic group with 14 (7%) respondents. In addition to Nzema, Dagbani, Gonja and Dagaare, other ethnic groups that were represented in the research sample frame were 7 (3.5%). These were Nankani, Guan, Ikposo, Bissa, Dangme, Efutu and Krobo. From the above table, Frafra, Kasem and Konkonba were not represented in the present research though they are also ethnic groups in Ghana. The ethnicity of respondents depicts the multilingual nature of the research target population. The university community is made up of people from different ethnic backgrounds. As a result many different indigenous languages are spoken in the university. Most of the informants could speak two or more of the Ghanaian Languages. On the other hand, in monolingual situations, a Ga and an Ewe could not communicate in view of the fact that the two languages are mutually unintelligible. The English Language, however, cuts across ethnic barriers; it functions as lingua franca. English facilitated communication between interlocutors of different ethnic backgrounds. Among the Ghanaian languages, Akan had the highest number of speakers. In fact, virtually everybody in the university community can speak some form of Akan. Speakers of other Ghanaian languages can speak it in addition to their mother tongues. The position of Akan vis-a-vis the other Ghanaian languages makes the former a potential national language. Almost all the informants spoke English and their mother tongues. There were therefore Akan-English, Ewe-English, Dagbani-English, Dagaare-English bilinguals and so on. There were also individuals who could speak two or three Ghanaian languages in addition to the English Language. There were Akan-Ga-English, Ga-Ewe-English, Akan-Dagaare-English, Akan-Ga-Ewe-English, Dagbani-Frafra-Dagaare-English multilinguals and so on.

Mixing the Ghanaian languages with English was very common in the university. Most of the informants explained that mixing the local language with English occurred because certain registers in English did not exist in the Ghanaian language and this made code mixing somehow unavoidable. Furthermore, many respondents were not very proficient in the local languages and this also brought about mixing. The research revealed that in mixing it was the Ghanaian language that was mixed with English words, phrases and other expressions but not the other way round. Switching from English to the Ghanaian language or vice-versa occurred in most situations in the university. For instance, the presence of a third person in a dialogue in English triggered off a situation of code switching when this new person who joined the conversation switched to a Ghana language common to one of the interlocutors.

TABLE 3:  
SEX AND CODE CHOICE

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	112	56
Female	88	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 describes the distribution of responses according to sex. Out of a total of 200 informants, 56% (112) were males while 44% (88) were females. The dominance of male in terms of number represents a reflection of the available statistics of the university which depicts the male population out numbering the female. The way that sex affected code choice was that in the university community majority of females spoke English or the Ghanaian languages but not Pidgin. The majority of the males on the other hand spoke Pidgin in almost all informal discourses. Male student Pidgin Speakers spoke Pidgin to their male colleague students but not to lecturers. The majority of the male students did not speak pidgin to female students. Female pidgin speakers spoke it with males but not females. The bulk of the latter did not employ pidgin in their speeches because they had attached some stigma to it. The females regarded pidgin as an inferior language that was associated with rouges and illiterates. Variation according to the sex of participants in discourse has been the subject of many recent researches. The general inference from dialect surveys is that female speakers tend to use more prestigious forms than male speakers with the same general social background (Yule, 1996).

TABLE 4:  
AGE AND CODE CHOICE

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
14-19	3	1.5
20-24	46	23
25-29	25	12.5
30-34	26	13
35-39	32	16
40-44	23	11.5
45-49	22	11
50-54	10	5
55-59	5	2.5
60-plus	8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 presents the age distribution of respondents. From the table, 46 (23%) respondents were in the range of 20 to 24 years. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents were students and majority of them are younger than lecturers and the non-academic workers. The age range 14 to 19 had the least number of respondents and these were also students. 8 (4%) respondents- 7 lecturers and 1 non-academic staff- fell within the age range 60 years and above. The age distribution of the University of Cape Coast ranges between 19 and 60 years and above. The age differences between respondents affected their choice of code. It was discovered that the choice of Pidgin was associated mostly with respondents between the age range 19 and 34 years. Respondents between the ages of 35 and 60 did not speak Pidgin.

Student pidgin speakers did not speak it with mature students or with lecturers. Student pidgin-speakers employed pidgin in discourses involving those of their age group. Students who spoke pidgin perceived mature students as elderly people who would not be enthused to speak pidgin. Students would not speak pidgin with lecturers, since the former regarded the latter as elderly and with higher academic qualifications and status. The relationship between students and lecturers could be described as formal. Most lecturers on their part did not speak pidgin to students because according to them, pidgin is a sub-standard language and it did not befit their status. The few lecturers who spoke pidgin said they were not too proficient in it and they spoke it to some labourers but not to other lecturers or to students.

TABLE 5:  
ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION AND CODE CHOICE

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Middle School Leaving Certificate	10	5
General Certificate of Education (Ordinary level)	12	6
General Certificate of Education (Advance level)	32	16
Senior Secondary School Certificate	21	10.5
Teacher Training College Certificate	-	-
Specialist or Diploma	45	22.5
First Degree	49	24.5
Masters Degree	18	9
Doctorate Degree	12	6
Others	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 5, 49 (24.5%) respondents possessed the first degree while 45 (22.5%) were diplomates. There were 32 (16%) who had the General Certificate of Education (Advanced level). Senior Secondary School Certificate holders were 21 (10.5%). There were 12 (6%) with the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary level). Middle School Leaving Certificate holders were 10 (5%). Respondents with Masters Degree were 18 (9%) and these were lecturers and non-academic workers. The students selected for the current investigation were undergraduates and post graduate masters students. 12 (6%) respondents have their Doctorate Degrees; this group was made up of lecturers. There was no respondent with the Teacher Training College Certificate. However, there was 1 (0.5%) respondent with the City and Guilds London Certificate. This was a member of the non-academic staff. The above analysis shows that the sample



frame of the current research is made up of people who have received formal education and for that matter were literates. Every subject could therefore speak English since it is an integral part of formal education in Ghana.

TABLE 6:  
RANK AND CODE CHOICE

Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Senior members	30	15
Senior staff	16	8
Post graduate students	40	20
Undergraduate students	85	42.5
Junior staff	29	14.5
Others	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 presents the rank of respondents. There were 85 (42.5%) undergraduates and 40 (20%) post graduate masters students. Senior members are workers of the university with higher degrees and these were 30(15%). While 16 (8%) of the respondents were senior staff 29 (14.5%) were junior staff. The ranks of informants were connected to their academic qualifications. Rank to a large extent brought about social differentiation in the university. According to the findings of the present study, senior members of the university did not speak Pidgin.

The rank of respondents were determined by their levels of education. The rank of informants showed their positions on the social hierarchy of the university. Academic qualification and rank brought about social differentiation and this established distinction in relationships. The ranking system of the workers of the university is hierarchical. It comprises senior members, senior staff and junior staff. The senior members comprise lecturers and the non-academic staff who have higher degrees like Masters, Doctorates and other qualifications from Professional bodies. The senior staff have first degrees or their equivalents as their basic qualification. This group may have additional qualifications in their various fields of specializations. The minimum academic qualification of the junior staff is the General certificate of Education Ordinary or Advanced Level or the Senior Secondary School Certificate. It is worth nothing that the illiterate labourers who do menial jobs have no rank because they do not possess any academic qualification.

Lecturers employed either Ghanaian language or English in most informal discourses like conversations and discussions. In discourse situations in which the local language was chosen, a lot of code-mixing occurred. The Ghanaian languages were mixed with English elements. In many instances, if the subject of the discourse was academic, lecturers spoke English in the communication process. However, a change in the discourse subject to a social issue brought about a switch to the Ghanaian language. The cordial relationship between lecturers shrouded the existing distinctions between them.

Among the non-academic workers of the university, English was the official language used for communication. The Ghanaian languages were chosen for communication during informal interactions. One would expect that an assistant registrar would speak English when discussing an issue with the deputy registrar or the registrar but in the informal discourses the Ghanaian languages were employed except in a formal discourse like a meeting that English was strictly used. In the offices of the various departments of the university administration, the Ghanaian languages, especially Akan was spoken. Mixing the Ghanaian languages with English was characteristic of many a respondent. A switch from the local language to English or vice versa was also realized. In situations where there was no common Ghanaian language, English was chosen. Workers at the subordinate level like messengers or labourers were not proficient in English. It was observed that they always spoke Akan to their superiors. The senior members and senior staff used the indigenous languages in communicating with the junior staff when they share similar ethnic background or when a superior is on familiar terms with the subordinates.

## V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, the investigator concerned himself with participant relationship in discourse and its effect on code choice. In this section, the main findings and implications of the research are presented.

The study revealed that the relationship between participants in communication defined by age, sex, rank, level of education and ethnicity affected code choice. The research also showed that the University of Cape Coast is a multilingual community and the kinds of code choice that exist are: unmixed codes, code mixing and code switching. The current study has three significant implications. The first implication is that the present research depicts the social differentiation in the University of Cape Coast; It establishes the social stratification of the subjects. The secondly, the findings of this study may be useful to researches in the area of sociology or anthropology. The study contributes to the sociolinguistic study of the University community by establishing the kinds of code choice that occur in communication. Finally, the findings of the research shows that the University of Cape Coast is a microcosm of the multilingual situation in Ghana.

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# Error Analysis: Sources of L2 Learners' Errors

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**Abstract**—Many scholars in the field of EA have stressed the significance of second language learners' errors. Corder (1967), for instance, in his influential article, remarks that "they are significant in three different ways. First, to the teacher, in that they show how far towards the goal the learner has progressed. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner is employing in his learning of a language. Thirdly, they are indisputable to the learner himself because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn" (p. 161). The present paper mostly illustrates fundamental background studies done in the field of Error Analysis. There is the hope that the paper helps EFL teachers and educators to become familiar with the most frequent errors committed by EFL learners leading them to make more objective decisions about how to go about adopting appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better.

**Index Terms**—error analysis, error taxonomies, interlingual errors, intralingual errors

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing research interest in the analysis of errors adults make while learning a second language. The study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners (i.e. Error Analysis or EA), either in their speech or writing or both has been brought under consideration by many educators, EFL teachers, linguists, and researchers throughout the world. In fact, learners' errors have been the subject of controversy for a long time.

Generally, as Keshavarz (1999, p. 11) stated, "there have been two major approaches to the study of learners' errors, namely Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis." He further discussed that, "Error Analysis emerged on account of the shortcomings of Contrastive Analysis which was the favored way of describing learners' language in the 1950s and 1960s" (p. 42).

The process involved in CA is the comparison of learners' mother tongue and the target language. Based on the similarities or differences between two languages, predictions were made on errors that learners would be likely or disposed to make as a result (Kim, 2001). CA arose from a critical view of the audio-lingual method, pointing out that only with scientific and detailed description of L2 can language teaching be successful (Fries, 1949). However, as Kim (2001) explained, by early 1970s, CA lost its favor because of the inaccurate or uninformative predictions of learner errors; errors did not occur where predicted, but instead errors showed up where CA had not predicted. More serious criticism was raised on account of its adopted views from structuralism in linguistics and behaviorism in psychology. Being questioned about the reliability of the CA research, it yielded to Error Analysis in 1970.

Unlike CA which tries to describe differences and similarities of L1 and L2, James (1998 cited in Kim, 2001) stated that, EA attempts to describe learners' interlanguage (i.e. learners' version of the target language) independently and objectively. He believed that the most distinct feature of EA is that the mother tongue is not supposed to be mentioned for comparison. Hence, the studies in EA have for the most part dealt with linguistic aspects of learners' errors. In fact, identifying and describing the origin of the learners' errors is now an activity that has received much attention during the last three decades. Such an analysis may lead one to understand the types of significant cohesive errors associated and the origin of such errors.

## II. ERROR ANALYSIS

Writing is a complex process even in the first language. Undoubtedly, it is more complicated to write in a foreign language. Consequently, lots of researchers have intended to identify the common errors EFL students make in writing the second language. Of course, a better understanding of the errors and the origin of such errors in the process of EFL writing will help teachers know students' difficulties in learning that language. Moreover, it will aid in the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better.

Therefore, EA can be considered as a fundamental tool in language teaching in order to reorganize teacher's point of view and readdress his/her methodology for fixing and fulfilling the students' gaps (Londono Vasquez, 2007). In other words, as Corder (1967) defined, EA is a procedure used by both researchers and teachers which involves collecting

samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating their seriousness. The purpose of Error Analysis is, in fact, to find "what the learner knows and does not know" and to "ultimately enable the teacher to supply him not just with the information that his hypothesis is wrong, but also, importantly, with the right sort of information or data for him to form a more adequate concept of a rule in the target language" (Corder, 1974, p. 170).

Consequently, the review of the literature that follows addresses itself to the sources of errors rather than the most frequent EFL learners' errors reported in various studies *per se*. At first, for this review of the literature, it is necessary to study known and popular error taxonomies and classifications.

### III. ERROR TAXONOMIES

Perhaps, one of the first and most important studies conducted in the field of Error Analysis was the one done by Richards (1971). His study involved learners from different language background (Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagalog, Maori, Maltese, and Indian and West African Languages) and showed the different types of errors relating to production and distribution of verb groups, prepositions, articles, and the use of questions. Based on this, he distinguished three sources of errors:

1. Interference errors: errors resulting from the use of elements from one language while speaking/writing another,
2. Intralingual errors: errors reflecting general characteristics of the rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply, and
3. Developmental errors: errors occurring when learners attempt to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experiences.

According to Richards (1971), intralingual errors are also subdivided to the following categories:

1. Overgeneralization errors: the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language (e.g. "He can sings" where English allows "He can sing" and "He sings").
2. Ignorance of rule restrictions: the learner applies rules to context where they are not applicable (e.g. He made me to go rest" through extension of the pattern "He asked/wanted me to go").
3. Incomplete application of rules: the learner fails to use a fully developed structure (e.g. "You like to sing?" in place of "Do you like to sing?")
4. False hypothesis: the learners do not fully understand a distinction in the target language (e.g. the use of "was" as a marker of past tense in "One day it was happened").

However, as Schacheter and Celce-Murcia (1977) pointed out, the distinction between intralingual and developmental errors is rather fuzzy in their term. As a result, Richards (1974) classified errors, according to their causes, into two categories later on. The two categories are as follows:

1. Interlingual errors: these errors are caused by mother tongue interference.
2. Intralingual and developmental errors: this kind of errors occurs during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge. In addition, errors are also caused by the difficulty or the problem of language itself.

Elsewhere, some experts believed that the distinction between intralingual and interlingual errors is not always clear-cut as it may sound. They also claimed that it is obviously more difficult to identify different types of intralingual errors that Richards (1971) described. In order to deal with this problem, Dulay and Burt (1974) classified learners' errors into three broad categories:

1. Developmental errors: errors that are similar to L1 acquisition
2. Interference errors: errors that reflect the structure of the L1
3. Unique errors: errors that are neither developmental nor interference

Stenson (1974 cited in Karra, 2006) proposed another category, that of induced errors, which resulted from incorrect instruction of the language.

Brown (1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002) further classified sources of errors into the following categories:

1. Interference transfer: that is the negative influence of the mother tongue of learner,
2. Intralingual transfer: that is the negative transfer of items within the target language. In other words, the incorrect generalization of the rules within the target language,
3. Context of learning: this overlaps both types of transfer. For example, the classroom with the teacher and its materials in the case of school learning or the social situation in the case of untutored second language learning. In a classroom context, the teacher or the textbook can lead the learner to make wrong generalization about the language, and
4. Communication strategies: it is obvious that communication strategy is the conscious employment of verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when linguistic forms are not available to the learner for some reasons.

There are five main communication strategies, namely:

1. Avoidance,
2. Prefabricated patterns,
3. Cognitive and personality style,
4. Appeal to authority, and

##### 5. Language switch (Brown, 1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002).

Later, James (1998), in his study, showed the different types of learners' errors relating to omission, overinclusion, misselection (use wrong words not wrong forms), misordering, blends (blending arises when two alternative grammatical forms are combined to produce an ungrammatical blend.) Based on this, he stated that there are four causes of errors.

1. Interlingual errors (Mother-tongue influence): these kinds of errors are influenced by the native languages which interfere with target language learning,

2. Intralingual errors: these types of errors are caused by the target language itself like: false analogy, misanalysis (learners form a wrong hypothesis), incomplete rule application (this is the converse of overgeneralization or one might call it undergeneralization as the learners do not use all the rules), Exploiting redundancy (this error occurs by carrying considerable redundancy. This is shown throughout the system in the form of unnecessary morphology and double signaling), Overlooking co-occurrence restrictions (this error is caused by overlooking the exceptional rules), Hypercorrection or monitor overuse (this results from the learners' over cautious and strict observance of the rules), Overgeneralization or system-simplification (this error is caused by the misuse of words or grammatical rules),

3. Communication strategy-based errors which are subdivided into the holistic strategies or approximation and analytic strategies or circumlocution, and

4. Induced Errors: these errors are the result of being misled by the way in which the teachers give definitions, examples, explanations and arrange practice opportunities. In other words, the errors are caused mostly by the teaching and learning process as follows: Materials-induced errors, Teacher-talk induced errors, Exercise-based induced errors, Errors induced by pedagogical priorities, Look-up errors.

In fact, most researchers have been contented with a general distinction between transfer errors [Richards' (1971) category 1] and intralingual errors [combination of Richards' (1971) 2 and 3]. Besides, sub-categorization of intralingual errors is not unproblematic but should be credited for providing operational procedures for establishing which errors are intralingual (Ellis, 1994).

Finally, by using Richards' distinction of learners' errors — interlingual and intralingual — as a basis of analysis, different researches done in this respect will be reviewed in the following two sections.

#### IV. STUDIES DONE ON INTERLINGUAL CAUSES

Indeed, efforts have been made to identify and describe learners' errors. Among them, various researchers have concentrated on those errors which demonstrate the influence of one's native language to second language acquisition.

To investigate the relationship between students' L1 and EFL writing, Ying (1987) examined 120 Taiwanese EFL students' compositions and sorted errors on the basis of three criteria of overgeneralization, simplification, and language transfer. A total of 1250 errors were detected in the 120 compositions, among which 78.9% of the errors were a result of language transfer, 13.6% of the errors were overgeneralization of the target language, and 7.5% were forms of simplification.

In addition, Kim (1989 cited in Lee, 2001) conducted Error Analysis with two-hundred 10<sup>th</sup> grade Korean EFL learners using their English translation of Korean sentences. She identified 1122 errors in which transfer errors resulting from L1 structure were higher (24%) than overgeneralization errors (23%). Furthermore, she identified the 1122 detected errors in terms of six domains and subdivided them into 22 linguistic categories. Her findings revealed that errors in articles were most common (354) and that there were only 8 errors in word order and 2 in voice.

Likewise, Jiang (1995) analyzed Taiwanese EFL learners' errors in English prepositions and found that a great number of errors derived from language transfer. The researcher stated that compared to English speakers, Mandarin speakers use fewer prepositions for more concepts, therefore increasing difficulties in learning English prepositions.

In addition, some researchers employed Error Analysis to examine the error types in Taiwanese EFL students' English writings. For example, Horney (1998 cited in Chen, 2006) investigated compositions written by 80 Taiwanese EFL students. The results revealed that errors in the use of articles had the highest error percentage (11%). Both errors in the use of prepositions and errors in the use of verbs had the same error rate of 9% and were considered the second highest error percentage. By contrasting Mandarin and English, the researcher confirmed that L1 related errors were the largest proportion of the total errors.

Along the same lines, Liu, Sung, and Chien (1998) also concluded that the less English proficiency learners possess, the more L1 interference was found in their English writings. In the study of Liu *et al.* (1998), the authors applied a think-aloud method to detect how Taiwanese EFL students generated notes in the process of writing in English. The findings showed that beginning EFL learners relied on their L1 to retrieve words more than advanced EFL learners did.

In another study analyzing the errors made by Taiwanese EFL college students, Chen (1998) reported that most Taiwanese students have difficulties in the use of English tenses due to the absence of verb conjugation in Mandarin. Since Mandarin is not an inflected language, Fang (1999) highlighted the teaching of English verb tenses to prevent Taiwanese EFL students from misusing English tenses due to linguistic difference.

Another grammatical error that is frequently found in Taiwanese EFL students' compositions is the misuse of English articles. Chen (2000) considered that English articles could be one of the most difficult grammatical parts for Taiwanese EFL students as there is not an equivalent syntactical device to the English article system. Master (1988) further

indicated that beginning level EFL learners tend to be more interfered by such a linguistic difference between Mandarin and English.

Likewise, Hsin (2003 cited in Chen, 2006) scrutinized the run-on sentences in Taiwanese EFL students' writings and identified the possible causes using Error Analysis. He observed that English is a subject-prominent language, in which a subject in a sentence is always required. In contrast to subject-oriented structure, Mandarin tends to be a topic-comment language. Of course, such a linguistic difference between Mandarin and English creates learning difficulties for Taiwanese EFL learners and results in errors in their EFL writings.

In addition to the previous studies conducted in this respect, Lee's (2001) research also revealed that learners' errors are mostly resulted from L1 transfer. His study was to identify and classify errors by analyzing medical students' writing, especially their formal and informal letters. Twenty-five sophomore medical students in a class of 35 were the participants of his study. They were given six topics to write about throughout the semester. Finally, the study revealed that approximately one forth of errors (26%) of these subjects resulted from L1 transfer. Other major errors involved in wrong words (16%), prepositions (15%), and articles (14%).

Finally, Zhang (2007) shared the same concern expressed so far when stated, "it is not surprising at all that EFL learners including Chinese university students make errors in spoken and written English because language transfer or the incorporation of patterns from the native language into the target language is a common source of errors among learners of a second or foreign language" (p. 4). He also deemed it necessary to point out that English and Chinese belong to different language families. English is classified as an indo-European language; whereas, Chinese is of the Sino-Tibetan family (Fromkin& Rodman, 1998 cited in Zhang, 2007). Therefore, the two languages have much more differences than similarities.

Among the abundance of studies done on interlingual causes, some studies have concentrated on Iranian EFL learners' errors which demonstrate the influence of Farsi as the learners' native language. For example, Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) tried to determine the extent to which Iranian EFL learners' knowledge of collocation of prepositions is affected by their L1. To this end, 200 senior English majors studying at three universities in Shahrekord served as the participants of this study. Finally, the analysis of errors of collocations indicated that Iranian EFL learners tended to carry over their L1 collocational patterns to their L2 production.

In another study, Khodabande (2007) identified and classified Iranian EFL students' chief difficulties. In doing so, 58 male and female graduate students of English were asked to take part in her research. They were given a test which included thirty Persian and thirty English headlines and were asked to translate them. All the students' translations were analyzed in order to investigate possible cross-linguistic problems in translating headlines. The results of the research indicated that the graduate students had grammatical and lexical errors in their headlines. Most local errors were caused by misuse and omission of prepositions, articles, auxiliaries, lack of subject-verb agreement, and faulty lexical choice. As a whole, the findings from the participants' translations analysis were in line with the idea that native language interference is surely the most immediately noticeable source of error (Brown, 1994) from the translation of native language to the target one.

## V. STUDIES DONE ON INTRALINGUAL CAUSES

At the outset, it was believed that most language errors were caused by the transformation from one language to another. Thus, in making decisions regarding the focus for foreign language teaching, instructors and teachers had taken into consideration errors that appear to result from the influence of their students' first language. Later, they observed evidence from language acquisition research suggesting that for some language features, "learners of different L1 backgrounds may face similar types of challenges" (Collins, 2007, p. 295). Furthermore, it was found that the influence of native language on the second language is quite minimal; that is, it affects only 3-25% of such errors (Sattayatham&Honsa, 2007).

Richards (1971) first challenged the belief that learners' errors were the result of L1 transference. He, in his aforementioned research argued:

Many of the learners' errors came from the strategies that they use in language acquisition and the reciprocal interference of the target language items. Error Analysis would allow teachers to figure out what areas should be focused on and what kind of attention is need in an L2 classroom. So, the language teachers can be better able to develop curriculum and select materials that can facilitate L2 learning processes (p. 208).

Elsewhere, Kim (1987) identified a total of 2455 errors in the English compositions of 12<sup>th</sup> grade Korean EFL learners. The findings showed that errors in BE and auxiliaries were the most common (419), followed by errors in prepositions (287) and that intralingual errors arose more than transfer errors.

Kim (1988) investigated errors in English verbs with reference to tense, mood, and voice. The 120 subjects were the 11<sup>th</sup> grade Korean EFL learners who were asked to translate 42 Korean sentences into English. The results revealed that errors in mood were most frequent (903) followed by errors in voice (885) and tense (720), among the total of 2508. With regard to the sources of errors, overgeneralization (65%) occurred the most while L1 transfer (22%) and simplification (13%) occurred the least.

Kim (2001) conducted another study in this respect. Indeed, the purpose of his study was to analyze errors in college students' writing samples to examine L1 interference phenomenon. He pointed out that, "it is widely believed that

Korean learners of English often show incorrect use of English expressions due to their L1 interference" (p. 159). He continued that, "despite such a prevalent belief, the sources of learners' errors and L1 interference were not clearly identified" (p. 160). In order to examine the sources and the nature of learners' errors, he collected 30 writing samples from college freshman students who were registered for TOEIC class. Most of the learners' errors were in the areas of verbs (be + V for V, be omission, -s omission, incorrect use of present perfect), prepositions (incorrect use of prepositions, redundant prepositions), articles (omission of *a*, incorrect use of *a*, omission of *the*, *the* instead of zero), plural/singular agreement, adjectives, conjunctions (incorrect use of conjunctions, stranded/redundant conjunctions). Then, errors were classified into two categories of intralingual and interlingual. Finally, the results showed that most of learners' errors were intralingual and only a few cases can be attributed to L1 interference, which lends support the assumption that L2 learners follow similar developmental patterns to those found in children's L1 acquisition. Thus, it may follow from what he found that learners' errors are not just deviant forms that should be corrected but they reflect creative process of seeking systematic rules of target language.

Moreover, Bataineh (2005) claimed, "unlike earlier Error Analyses, native language transfer is found to play a role which is at best minimal" (p. 56). Of course, his study exclusively aimed at identifying the kinds of errors Jordanian first, second, third, and fourth year university EFL students made in the use of the indefinite article. The nine types of errors were as follows:

- (1) deletion of the indefinite article,
- (2) writing *a* as part of the noun/adjective following it,
- (3) substitution of the indefinite for the definite article,
- (4) substitution of the definite for the indefinite article,
- (5) substitution of *a* for *an*,
- (6) use of the indefinite article with unmarked plurals,
- (7) use of the indefinite article with marked plurals,
- (8) use of the indefinite article with uncountable nouns, and
- (9) use of the indefinite article with adjectives.

Finally, the analysis revealed that all errors, except one, were independent of the learner's native language and the only type of error which could be traced back to the influence of Arabic, among other sources, was the deletion of the indefinite article.

Sattayatham and Honsa (2007), in their study, focused on Error Analysis of first year medical students from the four medical schools at Mahidol University. A total of 44% of enrolled students participated in their study (about 237). They were asked to translate sentences from Thai into English. The data collected from the sentence-level translation were analyzed to find the most frequent errors of these medical students by using the distribution of frequency. The top-ten errors of the participants were as follows:

- (1) order of adjectives,
- (2) there is/are,
- (3) subject-verb agreement,
- (4) direct/indirect object,
- (5) verbs of feeling,
- (6) past tense,
- (7) present perfect,
- (8) reported speech,
- (9) passive voice, and
- (10) question tag.

Finally, the researchers concluded that the errors made by the students were both from the intralanguage and interlanguage interference. This is while the errors caused by mother tongue interference were in a small proportion.

In this respect, the next few studies deals mostly with the research done on intralingual causes of errors committed by Iranian EFL learners. Ghadessy (1980) conducted one of such studies. He also shared the same concern expressed in the overseas studies when he discussed the results of Error Analysis of 100 English compositions written by Iranian university students. The results showed that mistakes were not primarily due to inference from the native language, but to developmental errors, similar to errors made in first language acquisition.

Furthermore, Javidan (1980), in his study, tried to investigate the sources of errors made and the difficulty order followed by adult Iranian students in their learning of certain grammatical structures of English. The general difficulty order found in his study was in many ways similar to the orders reported in other L2 studies for adult ESL learners indicating that adults follow a natural and similar sequence in learning the grammatical structures of English and also that the structural difficulty order might be universal for all adults learning a second or foreign language. Three proficiency levels of students participated in his study and the results of the error analysis showed that in each proficiency group (elementary, intermediate, and advanced) the subjects' reliance on developmental strategy was greater than on the strategy of native language transfer. Furthermore, the findings of this study, while providing strong support for the claim that interference from the mother tongue is not the only source of errors adult L2 learners make, but rather a large number of errors made by these learners can be explained due to interference from the target language, indicate

that in addition to these two major sources of errors, other factors such as teaching and testing materials and techniques, type of language exposures available to the learner, transfer from a third or more languages known by the learner, and so on, should also be evaluated as the causes of errors in L2 learning.

In another study, Tabatabai (1985) proposed that the 891 errors detected in his study were dispersed among 10 major categories such as mistakes with articles, prepositions, incorrect and confusing tenses, number, conjunctions, adjectives, subjects and predicates, verb phrases, and pronouns. The data for his research were drawn from 32 compositions written by 20 Iranian students who were in various fields of science and engineering at the States University of New York at Buffalo. He finally reported that complexity of the English language, students' incomplete knowledge or ignorance of certain structures, the interference of conversational English into written English, the transfer of training, lapses of memory, lack of sufficient practice informed writing, unfamiliarity with the requirements of written English, and pressure of communication were among the major causes of errors. As it is obvious, the causes of errors that he reported were mostly intralingual.

Likewise, Ahmadvand (2008) aimed at analyzing Iranian EFL learners' errors in their written productions. He collected the required data from different productions of some 40 learners at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. As he reported, omissions, additions, and regularizations were among the most frequent types of errors. Moreover, based upon data, it was shown that negative transfer accounted for only 30% of all errors and most of the errors were the result of misinformation. Consequently, it was shown that negative transfer from Persian to English in written productions is neither the only source of errors, nor the major one. Indeed, Ahmadvand's (2008) results sharply decreased the role of L1 in the acquisition of English as a target language.

Hence, it follows from the reported studies in the previous part that some researchers and authorities of the field have considered intralingual causes as the common source of EFL learners' errors. Of course, quite a number of researchers have found that L2 learners at the beginning level produce a large number of interlingual errors. They also observed that as these learners progress in acquiring the norms of the target language, more and more intralingual errors are manifested (Brown, 1994 & Littlewood, 1995 cited in Lee, 2001).

## VI. CONCLUSION

Considering reported studies makes the growing research interest in the analysis of errors more obvious. In recent years, there have been a growing number of studies in the area of Error Analysis. The underlying objections of most of these studies were to identify and classify errors and thus help teachers know the problematic areas of EFL learners at different levels of instruction in order to help students learn better. Based on the studies reviewed on EA, it is obvious that there are two opposite views toward the sources of errors committed by EFL learners. Both of these two views have been advocated by different researchers and there is enough empirical evidence for each to be true. However, Brown (1994) and Littlewood (1995) cited in Lee (2001) seem to be more comprehensive in that they believed that as learners progress in acquiring the norms of the target language, more and more intralingual errors are manifested.

In connection to the significance of second language learners' errors both in learning and teaching, TEFL educators and researchers interested in seeking the truth should re-conduct research in order to adopt appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better.

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# Construction of Seamless English Language Learning Cyberspace via Interactive Text Messaging Tool

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**Abstract**—The widespread network information technology represented by Blog, QQ software, mobile devices provides opportunities for the innovation of technology-enhanced learning. On the basis of the theories of seamless English language learning, immediacy behaviours, and online learning community, the author constructs an English QQ Group with the name Growing-up among her students and other learning assistants in order to create a seamless online learning community featured by the combination of knowledge and entertainment via English medium. The paper depicts the process of its creation and operation, inclusive of the preparatory questionnaire, the establishment and adjustment of group regulations, and its routine activities. Along the way, the paper stresses the organization of this community, the main tasks of the QQ group leader, and the appropriate evaluation system as well. To the end, the author puts forward the positive effects, the existing problems, and future plan of the Growing-up, proposing some recommendations for its further improvement.

**Index Terms**—seamless English language learning, immediacy behavior, online learning community, Growing-up QQ Group

## I. INTRODUCTION

The students of the late 1990s have been growing up in a world interveined with physical and digital space. As with the application of network into our daily lives, such as Blog, social network, and digital information, our campus life has become multidimensional and multicultural. However, these technological media and social activities cannot be integrated into our formal teaching activity completely. Under the current educational system, there still exists discrepancy between formal and informal learning, though the confines become blurred (Cook, 2008). The widespread network information technology represented by network diary, Blog, QQ software, mobile devices, provides opportunities for the innovation of technology-enhanced learning. These potentialities can be summarized as seamless learning space (Chan, 2006) which is characteristic of constant cross-text and cross-scenario learning experiences.

QQ software, thanks to its simple grasp, convenient operation, friendly interface, and zero fee, has become the new favour of the youth. At present, it grows to the most frequently used tool to realize online communication, online interaction, and online learning. On the basis of the QQ principle, QQ Group, as the newly-invented communicative system for a group of people with the similar educational backgrounds, the common learning goals, or similar academic concentration, rises into our views. It converges various communication means on the network together to construct an advanced and speedy communication platform consisting of communication tool, such as e-mails, group chat and personal chat tools, video conversation tool, and group forum; collaborative tools, such as: role-play tool, virtual whiteboard, file-sharing and file-transfer tool; trace evaluation tools, such as QQ log file, and personal home page zone.

Palloff and Pratt hold that when teachers and learners are working in collaboration with each other and constructing new knowledge, they are knitting a net of interactive learning and mutual progress (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Through creation and widespread use of Blog and QQ software after class, teachers can build a seamless learning cyberspace for the whole students. When entering the cyberspace of Blog or QQ Group, they are equal partners, being required to use English as a lingua franca so long as they are participating in the communication or learning activities in group. This typical feature will contribute to constructing a net for English language learning with perfect embodiment of seamless interaction, equal communication, and joyful learning.

## II. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING OF SEAMLESS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING VIA TEXT MESSAGING SYSTEM

### A. Grounds and Necessities to Launch Seamless English Language Learning Cyberspace

The main problems of the traditional English language learning consist in excessive non-circumstance information, direct and abstract knowledge transmission, and second-hand experience confined to the classroom environment (Jiang, 2000). In view of these practical problems, the theorists in language learning commenced to advocate the integration of formal and informal language learning (Titone, 1969). This kind of integration is conducive to enhancing learners'

autonomy in learning, which represents the mega trend of the current language research. To put it in a nutshell, autonomy learning refers to the learners' mastery of their own learning (Holec, 1981). As to language learning, Little summarized three principles to serve as the classroom teaching purpose: learner's involvement, learner's reflection, and target language use (Little, 1999). Text messaging systems, such as Blog, Mobile telecom equipment, and QQ software can evolve to learning center encouraging, supervising and assisting learners' involvement in different learning space. The learner's reflection and the target language use are not restricted to classroom environment as Little supposed, on the contrary, they can extend to every corner of their living space. The Seamless English language learning cyberspace aims at establishing a constant English language learning platform which centers on the learners' fluid learning demands through appropriate learning program, advanced network technology and active online supervision.

#### *B. Theory of Immediacy Behaviour under Network Space and Its Functions*

Immediacy has been defined by social psychologist Albert Mehrabian as the degree of perceived and/or psychological friendliness among people (Mehrabian, A, 1967). He stated that people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluating highly, and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluating negatively. Ten years later, Andersen (Andersen, 1979) introduced this psychological concept into educational circle through conducting several studies to analyze the use of instructional immediacy behavior. His early investigations concluded that immediacy relates to approach and avoidance behaviors which can be thought of as the perceived distance among people; the immediate teachers were viewed by students as more positive and effective ones, which led to enhanced trust on the instructor, and dense interest in the course itself. As a result, the instructional immediacy has been taken as a potentially effective factor in improving teaching quality and learning effect. Gorham brought the instructor's language and behaviors conducing to improvement of relationship into immediacy behaviors (Gorham, 1988). According to the presentation given by Kelly Rolla of St. John's University in the 2007 Workshop Student Motivation and Attitudes: The Role of the Affective Domain in Geoscience Learning in Carleton College, instructional immediacy is the behavior that brings the instructor and the students closer in terms of perceived distance. The results from these studies indicate that the teacher immediacy behaviors have the significant influences on student learning outcomes.

Although the advanced communication media is the powerful support of the modern education, it cannot solve the problem of psychological barrier, for instance, the students' sense of strangeness toward the instructor leading to inactive cooperation with teaching activity; the instructor's inadequate supervision toward the students leading to lack of learning motivation and low-efficiency of teaching (Gould, 2000).

In view of the negative effects deriving from modern technology, it's of necessity for instructors to figure out some effective and practical strategy intended to construct friendly relationship beneficial to both sides. The previous studies indicate that the instructor's immediacy behaviors under the network environment can make the students repossess the sense of belonging through being focused on and highly expected by their instructors, and therefore, arouse them to have more active leaning motivation and enthusiasm. The immediacy behaviors can be fully applied and reflected in Blog and QQ Group, the instant and constant communication systems. Through common concentration on and timely comments about the digital information, language learning, cultural immersion, and humanitarian solicitude will be fulfilled in better ways. The teachers' cordial greetings, immediate encouragement, timely instruction for the students' materials in Blog and Qzone will completely alter inhuman relationship, producing positive effects on students' learning process and results.

#### *C. On-line Learning Community and Its Functions*

As to on-line learning community, there has been no commonly recognized definition in the world up to now. According to Chinese scholar Jianwei Zhang, on-line learning community refers to the learning community with definite learning goals constituted by learners and learner's assistants including classroom teachers, experts and tutors under the virtual environment of network (Zhang, 2011). The author holds the view that the essence of learning community is that the community members regularly communicate and collaborate with each other under network environment in order to fulfill common learning tasks, sharing individual learning resources, experiences and results through which community members can build up the positive social relationship that influences and helps each other.

The main functions of on-line learning community are reflected by the following three aspects: (1) cognitive information support. The community members can obtain a large amount of knowledge information contributing to solving learner's confusion from other members and on-line resources. Besides, members can enhance their capability of reflection and recombine their train of thought. (2) interpersonal support. In the interpersonal relationship formed through learning activity among learning community, the learner can be aware of his responsibility for and importance to the community. Meanwhile, when the learner is frustrated by the difficulty, he can obtain the direction and assistance from other members instantly. The existence of this learning community can meet the learners' demands for the sense of belonging and recognition, making for the enhancement of learning interest and degrees of participation of the learners (Shanyun Kuang, 2005). (3) common development. The topic for the learning community members to discuss centers around the learning subjects and tasks, the ways to collaborate, communicate and interact together in order to solve the confronted problems, which undoubtedly promote mutual understanding, cooperative study and common development.

### III. CREATION AND OPERATION OF GROWING-UP ON-LINE LEARNING COMMUNITY

### A. Preparatory Work for Creating Growing-up: A Questionnaire

The author sent questionnaire to her students before the creation of Growing-up English QQ group. Nine questions are to be answered anonymously and most of them are open-ended. Through collecting and analyzing the students' real and open responses the author obtained the valuable first-hand materials involving demands, expectations of the masters in Growing-up. Undoubtedly, learning assistants only act as the assistants, guides, and administrators in this group, while the mastership belongs to every student who join this group. As a result, the author must conduct a thorough and cautious survey by means of approaching the students' inner hearts to understand their practical learning demands and progressive desires. The main content and results of this survey are as follows.

TABLE 1:  
THE SURVEY OF LEARNING INTENTIONS OF GROWING-UP ENGLISH QQ GROUP

Questions	Answers
1. Why don't you join this English Group? (The students who would like to join it can omit this question.)	1)anxiety for poor English level and difficulty in expression in English (33%); 2)operational problems (4%); 3)equipment problems (3%) (the rest of students omit it)
2. What do you want to be, observer or participant? And why?	1)observers (vocabulary and grammar problem47%, inadequate online time9.8%, topic problems 3%,doing other activities 16.2); 2)participants (25%)
3. In what condition will you join the group actively?	1)Improvement of English level(43%); 2)easy and friendly learning environment with suitable topics and cheerful friends (24%); 3)Chinese addition(8%); 4)without preconditions(6%); other conditions(19%)
4. What measures should the teacher adopt to increase the students' involvement?	1)Regular and colourful activities with interesting topics, articles and easy manner(47%); 2)offering of English materials and band 4 information (16%); 3)making award bonus(10%);④no response (27%)
5. What time do you think is appropriate to have Group discussion?	1)8:00—10:00p.m.(77%); 2)6:30—8:00 p.m.(10%); 3)weekend and vacation (13%)
6. Do you need more English teachers or foreign experts to join the group?	1)Yes(65%); 2)No(35%)
7. Do you like to communicate with students or learning assistants? To give the general percentage.	1)50% and 50%(24%); 2)70% with assistants and 30% with students (18%); 3)40% with assistants and 60% with students (18%); 4)90% with assistants and 10% with students (14%).
8. What kind of materials do you want the teacher and other members to upload?	1)English learning materials and test directions(90%); 2)cultural materials, music,movie and video(72%); 3)inspirational and success story(48%); current affairs and hot issues(66%); 4)excellent compositions(42%)
9. Open suggestions for English Group.	1)To creat an English communication platform of knowledge and interest (45%); 2)to make new friends (21%); 3)to contribute to the improvement of English practical application and higher scores (15%); 4)others (19%).

After the statistical research the author collected the most practical and reliable data and suggestions from the potential community members, forming the basic concept about how to design and construct the appropriate and effective English learning community via cyber-interaction. The ultimate goal of this English QQ Group is to create an extracurricular English interactive platform realizing the true sense of the combination between knowledge and interest. This is an easy and cheerful English learning environment absolutely different from the formal classroom. In this multi-dimensional interaction space, the students' anxiety and pressure can be narrowed down to the lowest degree, while their learning desire and zest can be lighted and aroused to the maximum. English teaching and learning, once lent the wings of network technology, can make its historic breakthrough.

### B. Creation of On-line Learning Community on the Basis of QQ Group: Organization and Requirements

On the basis of the platform of QQ Group, the author created this English QQ Group entitled with Growing-Up (This unique group name selected by the author has very rich connotations. The author hopes that all the group members can grow up mentally through constant and positive communication with their partners and learning assistants). The students can apply the QQ number to take part in the interactions of Growing-Up. The author also invites some foreigners (teachers and experts) and her colleagues to join this Group acting as the learning assistants. In the process of on-line learning activity, the assistants upload well-designed learning tasks to the group sharing of the Group, and the students will fulfill learning tasks through self-study, cooperative study, individual assistance, and common discussion with the direction of learning assistants. Figure 1 displays the inter-connective circle of Growing-up English learning platform.

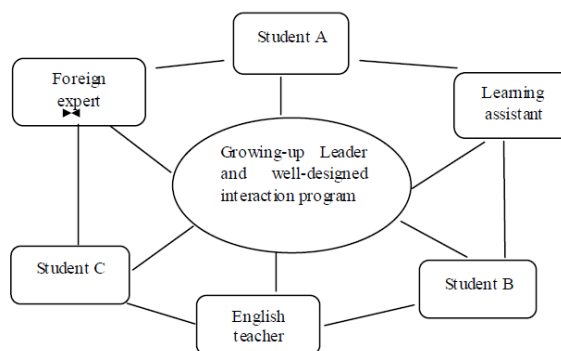




Figure1: The inter-connective circle of Growing-up learning and interaction platform

Organization of on-line learning community: the author selected 50 students from Investigation Department and Public Security Administration Department in Grade 2011 as the subjects of this research. Along the way, she invited five colleagues (English teachers) and one foreign scholar to join the group as learning assistants. Before starting the activities of this English QQ group the author put forward three requirements for the community members: they should use English names to join Growing-up; they should upload their homework (including excellent compositions, book reviews, term papers), comment on other students' performance, discuss with other members in English; they should fulfill learning tasks and collaborate with others in English. In view of these definite demands, Growing-up is a limitless cyberspace to extend the classroom learning to a seamless learning with the students speaking their minds freely and fully, and the classroom teacher conveying their ideas and comments breezily and carefully. The following excerpts are author's prologue at the start of group's operation. Although she didn't receive any response from her group members (at the beginning, there are only six members besides the author, so it is understandable for her not to receive any reply), she still declared her ebullient opening remark to welcome each member to join this English on-line community actively and passionately.


Vicky(the author's QQ name): 13:31:33

Hi! My old and new friends.  First of all, let's celebrate the creation of this English QQ Group named as Growing-up. I suddenly had a brainstorm this morning. With all my heart I hope everyone of you can grow up mentally through beneficial communication and friendly collaboration in this English Group. As your English teacher and close companion, I'll go to great lengths to provide you a colorful and interactive English learning environment. 

Vicky: 13:36:36

But I have a requirement that you should use English as your QQ name, Ok? Here only our creator Lost meets this requirement. Please change your QQ name and select a suitable one for you as quickly as possible.

Vicky: 13:41:04

I declare that Growing-up is a cyberspace of learning and sharing. So everyone of you can express your viewpoints confidently. Don't be afraid of making any mistakes and don't worry about being criticized or jeered at by teachers or other members. It is really a friendly and gay space integrating amusement and communication into English learning. I am waiting for your comments on my teaching style and this innovative idea! Be volunteer! 

The author adopted easy tone and simple rhetoric to express her congratulations on the smooth creation of the English QQ group. She also pointed out three requirements cordially in order to remind those students who didn't obey the rules of this particular group. At last, she sincerely welcomed the group members to make comments about her teaching styles freely. All these opening remarks will push a driving force to activate the group activities promptly. One point worthy of note is that the author took good advantage of lovely icons representing warmth and affection to get closer to group members, which is the typical reflection of immediacy behavior in the cyberspace.

### C. Operation of Growing-up English QQ Group: Tasks of Group Leader and Their Application

The author, as the Group leader, takes charge of dealing with the routine work of the whole group, uploading learning tasks and resources, collecting and checking excellent compositions, reports, papers uploaded by the student representatives, releasing previewing questions before learning the new unit, daily topics to discuss in English Hour (from 8:00 to 9:00 every other evening), news report and current affairs downloaded from Yahoo English website in a selective way (the news which are related to the students' major and the news which can arouse their interest), uploading the English educational videos including students' videos and pictures taken from their virtual performance, and other excellent teaching videos. Apart from these tasks, the Group leader is also responsible for conducting regular English communication every other evening by written words on the screen. The leader initiated the English chat at the beginning, but as the group members got used to this particular style of "chatting", the leader would recruit volunteered members who are qualified to be the leader guiding the direction of the conversation. There was one deputy leader for one English Hour. Three deputy leaders came up with quite different topics before performing their duty and they had to

search for adequate references to prepare for it. On weekends, the members could choose free topic to discuss. Furthermore, the Group leader had to listen to the voices from the members through interviews, questionnaires, and net feedbacks to tune various strategies unsuitable for its further progress. Figure 2 clearly displays the Group leader's main tasks.

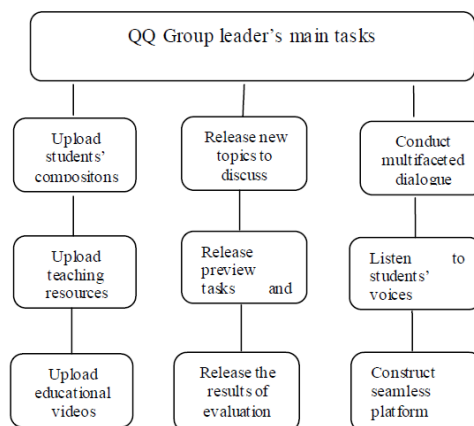


Figure 2: The detail analysis of Growing-up QQ Group leader's tasks

To be frank, the author created this English QQ Group after taking the initiative in writing this article. When she read the article written by the Singapore scholar pointing out the theory of seamless language learning and then creating Chinese language seamless learning via mobile communication equipment such as mobile phone, she conceived the idea of creating English language seamless learning platform via QQ group. She started to construct this English QQ Group with great support from her students. Mr. Lost (the creator of this group) helped her to create the group and did lots of routine work, such as uploading photos of English virtual performance and admitting the enrollment. The study monitors helped collecting and uploading the excellent compositions each week. Many volunteers contributed a lot to searching for interesting and meaningful topics to discuss and supervising the progress of English Hour. Consequently, Growing-up is a fruit of common labours representing collaborative spirits and sharing attitudes. Under the illumination of the modern theories, Growing-up is progressing on its way to the promising goal.

Figure 3, as the recording of early Growing-up, presents the main learning resources (on the right) uploaded by Group leader including CET 4 instruction lectures (audio component) given by the author and her colleague, a manuscript for training police cross-cultural communication capabilities written by the author, and two instructional papers about how to write a good English academic paper and police paper. A real English communication script between the author and the Group member Fly is presented on the left. The writing pace of the article was keeping up with the progress of Growing-up. The author participated in the group activities, updating the notice and bulletin board, uploading the latest English news every day, the successful story of celebrities, engaging in English Hour guiding and explaining the students' conversation and questions. In this extracurricular cyber-interaction learning space, the students are just like ducks to water, while the teacher gives free play to her talents in English. With great efforts of the author and other community members, Growing-up is bound to become the indispensable assistant and partner of the English fans, witnessing every progress of their growing-up.

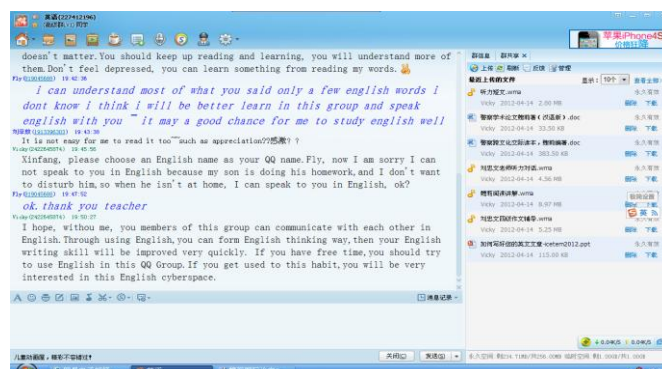


Figure3: The uploaded learning materials and written communication recording between author and community member

In the process of performing network community activity through English QQ Group, the teacher should fully employ the encouragement mechanism of evaluation to tap latent power of students, to stimulate and mobilize their enthusiasm and go-aheadism in order to promote their English learning and exploring. The evaluation system includes recording and evaluating the students' performance in Group chat, Group forum, Group sharing, and Group discussion. Their performance is evaluated by their participation coefficient and contribution percentage. The teacher can also

employ the growing-up files in Qzone to record and collect their information. These information involve the students' homework, their individual diaries of reflection, self-evaluation, evaluations from other students and learning assistants, and the feedback information as well. The teacher can evaluate the students' performance according to comprehensive information. Apart from the teacher's evaluation, other experts and students can also complement the task of evaluation. The whole process of evaluation is on-line, open and dynamic process which greets others' supervision and recommendation in and out of this group. The community members can learn from others' strong points, exchange learning experience, share learning resources and results, which contribute to establishing an interactive and inter-promoting social relationship.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

The creation and application of this Growing-up QQ Group is author's innovative experiment. After four months of practice, this initiative effectively realizes the goal of constructing the seamless English language learning in cyberspace. For the students, most of them improve their English level in different aspects, especially in writing, reading, discussing and thinking. They naturally form English thinking in some degrees, getting used to communicate in English when entering Growing-up. Furthermore, they learn to solve their learning problems through collaboration and cooperation among students and learning assistants, which is conducive to build a friendly and harmonious English communication space. This English Group produces great influence on other students who are eager to join Growing-up. The students share the common ideas: English QQ Group is a fresh style of network learning community; this sharing and discussing platform is so easy to operate but greatly beneficial to every member; the teacher's assistance is direct, instant and dynamic, which arouses their potent curiosity and enthusiasm to explore and appreciate the mystery and charm of English kingdom.

But in the process of practice, we also run across some problems embodied in the following points. Some students who are poor in self-study ability and collaborative awareness will affect the learning effects and pace. So we have to provide them with directions in learning ways and develop their collaborative spirits. Some students who are ill-prepared for this particular learning style with less ability of self-restraint are easy to chew the fat or play QQ farm games which result in less concentration on on-line learning and failure in learning tasks. The teacher and learning assistants should intensify the supervision and give correct guidance to these students. At last, due to many reasons, the English teacher and learning assistants cannot always participate in QQ Group activities, especially the QQ English Hour and forum. This will weaken the power of the instructional functions of English QQ Group. To mobilize more experts and teachers home and abroad to take part in various activities in QQ Group is the premise to build a high-end English QQ Group, and hence, the QQ Group leader should go for broke to invite and encourage more English scholars to perform the duty of learning assistants offering constant and significant recommendations and timely feedbacks to the group members.

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# Good Language Learner: A Case Study of Writing Strategies

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**Abstract**—The search for the common features of “good language learners” has obsessed scholars such as Naiman et al. (1978), Rubin (1975), and Stevick (1989). Regarding those with good writing skill in particular, some (Angelova, 1999; Beare, 2000; Victori, 1995) list some features such as language proficiency, L1 writing competence, use of cohesive devices, meta cognitive knowledge about the writing task. The purpose of this study was to find the cognitive and metacognitive strategies of a successful learner in writing skill (considering those suggested by Arndt, 1987; Wenden, 1991). Tina, a 27 year old language learner with a BS degree in architecture, was found the most suitable case based on the teacher’s observation of her good writing and the analysis of Oxford’s (1990) strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) administered. The data collected from the observation of her writing, the think-aloud protocol and the interview showed that Tina made use of most of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies listed but there was no evidence of L1 reliance in her L2 writing. The data also revealed that she was highly good at using prefabricated phrases and sentences in her writing.

**Index Terms**—good language learner, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, L1 reliance, pre-fabricated sentences

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main questions in the second language acquisition area posed frequently is why some people are better at learning languages compared to others. Early studies on good language learners (GLLs), such as Naiman et al. (1978), Rubin (1975), and Stevick (1989) show that GLLs tend to share some strategies for learning and thus indicate that research on their strategies might help facilitate our understanding of the learning process of a second/foreign language. Learning strategies are the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal. Strategic learners have metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths (Chamot, 2004). Since then, a large number of empirical studies have been conducted to ascertain the strategies favored by GLLs and the factors affecting their use.

A wide variety of factors related to LLS have been investigated by researchers such as Oxford (1990), O’Malley and Chamot (1990), and Cohen (1998), along with many others. Among such factors, the language, level of proficiency, gender and motivation were definitely shown to be strongly related to learners’ strategy choice. Language teachers consider the learners’ strategies and motivation as integral elements in the design and implementation of effective language instruction. According to Cohen (2005), LLS are important in language learning and teaching for two major reasons: (a) researchers can identify the metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective processes involved in language learning by investigating the strategy use of second language learners, (b) less successful language learners can be assisted to be better language learners through effective strategy instruction. The second reason is more important for classroom pedagogy and O’Malley and Chamot (1990) claim that language learners can improve their language performance by using instructed learning strategies. To find the features of good language learners, Carroll (1967) investigates the learning biographies of persons who had been successful in learning more than one language, and Stern (1975) and Rubin (1975) all speculate about distinctive learning strategies of good language learners.

There have been a number of attempts, Naiman et al. (1978), Stern (1983), Lightbown and Spada (1993), and Ellis (1994), Rubin (1975), for instance, to identify the qualities of the good language learners. Naiman et al. (1978) propose “Good language learner” model. The model consists of five classes of variables in language learning. The teaching, the learner and the context are three independent causative variables. The learning and the outcome are the caused variables. The independent variables, i.e. teaching, the learner and the context are then subdivided into various aspects. Naiman et al. (1978) identify five major strategies for language learning:

1. active task approach (Good language learners actively involve themselves in the language learning task).

2. realization of language as a system (Good language learners develop or exploit an awareness of language as a system).

3. realization of language as a means of communication and interaction.

4. management of affective demands (good language learners realize initially or with time that they must cope with the affective demands made upon them by language learning and succeed in doing so).

5. monitoring of performance in the target language.

The most frequently used techniques (Naiman et al., 1978) by good language learners include having contact with native speakers; listening to radio, T.V., records, movies, commercials etc.; reading anything: magazines, newspapers, professional articles, comics, etc.; repeating aloud after teacher and/or native speaker; making up bilingual vocabulary charts and memorizing them; following the rules as given in grammar books or text books and having pen-pals.

Active planning strategy, academic learning strategy, social learning strategy and affective learning strategy, according to Stern (1983), are four basic strategies which good language learners use. Stern (1983) goes on to say that good language learners are prepared to study and practice. As they are aware that language is a formal system with rules and regular relationships between language forms and meaning, they will pay more attention to these features. They also develop the second language as a consciously perceived system which they constantly revise until the learning process is completed. In addition, they analyze the language and use appropriate techniques of practice and memorization.

To Lightbown and Spada (1993), the good language learner:

- is a willing and accurate guesser.
- tries to get a message across even if specific language knowledge is lacking.
- is willing to make mistakes.
- constantly looks for patterns in the language.
- practices as often as possible.
- analyzes his/her own speech and the speech of others.
- attends to whether his or her performance meets the standards he or she has learned.
- enjoys grammar exercises.
- begins learning in childhood.
- has an above-average IQ.
- has good academic skills.
- has a good self-image and lots of confidence.

Successful language learning, according to Ellis (1994), is characterized by a concern for language form; a concern for communicative/functional practice; an active approach to learning tasks; an awareness of the learning process and the ability to use strategies flexibly in the light of different task requirements.

The factors influencing good writing has been mentioned in different studies as well. For instance, Angelova (1999) lists some features such as language proficiency, L1 writing competence, use of cohesive devices, metacognitive knowledge about the writing task, writing strategies and writers' personal characteristics. Among these factors, writing strategies seem particularly remarkable because many researchers (Beare, 2000; Victori, 1995) claim that it is the writing strategies that primarily separate successful from less successful writers. Furthermore, according to Hsiao and Oxford (2002), strategies can "pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy, and self-regulation" (p. 372). Therefore, it is necessary to explore explicit classification of ESL writing strategies from theoretic stance so that ESL learners can easily access to and acquire to facilitate their writing.

Arndt's (1987) adopts eight categories to code the strategies the students used in their writing as the following table shows.

TABLE 1.  
ARNDT'S CATEGORIES OF ESL WRITING STRATEGIES

<i>Category of strategies</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Planning	Finding a focus, deciding what to write about
Global planning	Deciding how to organize the text as a whole
Rehearsing	Trying out ideas and the language in which to express them
Repeating	Of key words and phrases - an activity which often seemed to provide impetus to continue composing;
Re-reading	Of what had already been written down
Questioning	As a means of classifying ideas, or evaluating what had been written
Revising	Making changes to the written text in order to clarify meaning
Editing	Making changes to the written text in order to correct the syntax or spelling

Wenden (1991) studies how the students used metacognitive strategies in their writing and discusses what task knowledge they searched for before and while writing. The cognitive and meta cognitive strategies she mentions are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2.  
COGNITIVE AND METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN WRITING PROPOSED BY WENDEN (1991)

COGNITIVE AND METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN WRITING PROPOSED BY WENDEN (1991)		
Metacognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies	
Planning	Clarification	Self-question Hypothesizing Defining terms Comparing
	Retrieval	Rereading aloud or silently what had been written
	Resourcing	Writing in a lead-in word or expression
		Rereading the assigned question
Evaluation	Deferral	Self-questioning
Monitoring		Writing till the idea would come
		Summarizing what had just been written (in terms of content or of rhetoric)
	Avoidance	Thinking in one's native language
	Verification	Ask researcher
		Refer to dictionary

Wenden (1991) goes on to explain that metacognitive strategies are mental operations or procedures that learners use to regulate their learning. They are directly responsible for the execution of a writing task and include three main kinds: planning, evaluating and monitoring. Cognitive strategies are mental operations or steps used by learners to learn new information and apply it to specific learning tasks. They are used to deal with the obstacles encountered along the way. They are auxiliary strategies that aid in the implementation of the metacognitive strategies. Unlike the metacognitive strategies, the function of cognitive strategies is narrower in scope.

Victori (1995) has identified seven types of writing strategies based on the interviews and think-aloud protocol analysis. According to Victori (1995), planning strategies are strategies by which the writer plans and talks out what ideas will come next, and explicitly states his or her objectives for organization and procedures. Monitoring strategies are strategies the writers use when checking and verifying their process in the composing process and when identifying oncoming problems. Evaluating strategies are strategies undertaken when reconsidering the written text, previous goals, planned thoughts, as well as changes undertaken to the text. Resourcing strategies are strategies using available external reference sources of information about the target language, such as consulting the dictionary to look up or confirm doubts (lexicon, grammatical, semantic or spelling doubts), or to look for alternatives (synonyms). Repeating strategies are strategies repeating chunks of language in the course of composing, either when reviewing the text or when transcribing new ideas. Reduction strategies are strategies to do away with a problem, either by removing it from the text, giving up any attempts to solve it, or paraphrasing with the aim of avoiding a problem. Use of L1 strategies are strategies using the mother tongue with different purposes: to generate new ideas, to evaluate and make sense of the ideas written in the L2 or to transcribe the right idea and word in L1.

## II. THE CASE STUDY

In order to come up with a suitable case for the study, the researcher administered Oxford's (1990) strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) among 31 of his students in writing classes in Giti language institute (Gorgan, Iran) who attended IELTS preparation courses. After analyzing all the students' responses to the strategy inventory and also considering the writing samples by the students, Tina, a 27 year old language learner with a BS degree in architecture, was found conspicuously one of the best students with highly noticeable writing skill.

Concerning the characteristics of good language learners cited above, the following research questions were raised to see:

- 1) What are the cognitive strategies employed by Tina as a case of good language learner with highly good writing skill in writing?
- 2) What are the metacognitive strategies employed by Tina as a case of good language learner with highly good writing skill in writing?
- 3) Does Tina's reliance on her L1 writing influence her L2 writing?

### A. Instruments

1. Oxford's (1990) strategy inventory for language learning (SILL). This questionnaire includes 50 items. It was used to find the good language learners.
2. The think-aloud protocol: to examine Tina's L1 reliance in L2 writing.
3. An interview: to ask her to discuss her learning backgrounds, writing experiences in L1 and L2, writing strategies, and handling of writing assignments.

### B. Procedure

In the first place, Oxford's (1990) strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) was administered among 31 of his students in IELTS writing courses in Giti language institute (Gorgan, Iran). In the IELTS writing course that lasted about three months, the researcher who was the teacher himself asked the language learners to send the writing sample to different topics of the two tasks via email. The learners' writing samples showed Tina, a 27 year-old language learner

with a BS degree in architecture, markedly best in applying very good writing strategies. Analyzing the questionnaires' responses also supported the abovementioned selection.

After that, the think-aloud protocol was administered. She was given a topic and then asked to write a text for an hour. She was asked to bring her own resources such as dictionaries, reference books, and a computer that she usually used while writing. While writing, she was asked to think aloud any thoughts running through their heads. Finally, an interview was conducted to ask her to describe the strategies she used in writing. The interview was audio-taped. In sum, the data were collected from multiple sources: the questionnaire, observations, the think-aloud protocol and the interview.

### C. Data Analysis

The teacher's observation of Tina's writing samples along with her responses to Oxford's (1990) inventory showed that she was a good language learner with noticeable writing skills. The think-aloud protocol revealed that she made use of most of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in writing (suggested by Wenden, 1991) as she thought aloud saying:

Metacognitive strategies:

- *Planning:*

*"I should now think of the idea and how to write it."*

Tina focused on the topic for a while to decide what to write about. During planning, she made an outline of the main points on a piece of paper. Thinking for a while, she thought she added other parts and deleted some others. During planning, she also made decisions about the kinds of examples, reasons and other devices to support her idea. Then, she started to write. While writing, she also referred to the early outline she designed and thought whether what she wrote was compatible with what she designed previously. She also made some changes in the ideas and the kinds of organizations while writing. All in all, she had pre-writing as well as while writing planning as explained above.

- *Evaluation and monitoring:*

*"Now I should check the grammar, punctuation....spelling and the coherence."*

Tina also monitored and evaluated her writing both during and after the writing. She checked whether what she wrote was compatible with the main idea and whether the paragraphs had been developed well. Using monitoring strategies, she also identified some problems creeping in the writing process. For instance, she could not support the idea with the reasons so she planned to do it through examples. When her writing finished, she used some evaluative strategies while reconsidering the written text, previous goals, planned thoughts, as well as changes undertaken to the text. For example, she crossed out some parts because they were not based on the previous goals. She also corrected some grammatical, punctuation and lexical errors.

Tina's use of some of cognitive strategies was also conspicuous in her think-aloud protocol. They are discussed as follows:

- *Retrieval:*

She reread aloud or silently what had been written. She also reread the assigned question. During writing, she self-questioned. Besides, she summarized what had just been written (in terms of content or of rhetoric).

- *Resourcing:*

While writing, Tina referred to different types of dictionaries: monolingual, bilingual, and collocation. She looked up words in a monolingual dictionary for different purposes: checking spelling, parts of speech and correct usage. She made use of a bilingual (Farsi to English) dictionary to find the English equivalents for the words she did not know. Furthermore, she consulted sometimes a dictionary of collocations for the correct collocations.

- *Avoidance:*

*"I am not sure about it....I should use another structure."*

Avoidance strategy was another good strategy applied by Tina in writing. The Think-aloud protocol revealed that whenever she was not sure about a particular structure, she avoided using it. Instead, she used a structure she was sure to compose her ideas.

- *Verification:*

*"Ok. It shows what I mean."*

Tina also verified what she wrote while reviewing. She verified all she composed in line with the main idea and the coherence.

Interview data, as Tina described the strategies she used while composing, not only supported the finding by the think-aloud protocol but also revealed other cognitive and metacognitive strategies not identified in the think-aloud protocol as she said,

- *Planning:*

*"I have a plan before writing. I think in advance what I should write so I design an outline first."*

- *Evaluation and monitoring:*

*"I check grammar, cohesion ties....."*

Regarding cognitive strategies, in addition to those revealed by the think-aloud protocol (retrieval, resourcing, avoidance and verification), the interview showed Tina employed the following strategies as well:

*Clarification:*

The interview revealed that Tina made use of the following strategies to clarify her ideas and communicate them clearly.

- *Hypothesizing:*

*"I try to make an idea and follow to make it clear".*

In the prewriting planning, Tina made a thesis statement about the topic by hypothesizing and during writing she tried to prove it using different devices available to her.

- *Defining terms:*

*"Sometimes, I define the terms that I think hard and better to be defined for understanding".*

In order to communicate her ideas clearly and smoothly, she also stated that she defined some words that she predicted the reader(s) would find sophisticated or ambiguous. She said she defined such terms to avoid ambiguity and help clear understanding.

Concerning the last question "Does Tina's reliance on her L1 writing influence her L2 writing?", neither the think-aloud protocol nor the interview showed Tina's L1 reliance in L2 writing. She herself said,

*"I am not used to writing in Farsi and I think the process of writing in Farsi and English is different".*

So it can be concluded that she was little affected by writing in Farsi as she did not write in Farsi and the two languages are of two different frameworks in writing.

The observation of her writing showed that she was very good at employing the prefabricated sentences and phrases learned from reading in her writing as she herself said,

*"Whenever I read, I try to record the prefabricated as well as useful phrases to use in my writing."*

It is, in fact, one of the characteristics of a good writer who uses reading as an input for the writing as an output. Her last statement revealed that she used reading as a framework and the source for learning phrases and prefabricated statements for her writing.

### III. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In order to find the features common in good language learners and to help the poor language learners applying those strategies and features, studies such as Naiman et al. (1978), Rubin (1975), and Stevick (1989) list some strategies and characteristics. Regarding those with good writing skill, some (Angelova, 1999; Beare, 2000; Victori, 1995) list some features such as language proficiency, L1 writing competence, use of cohesive devices, meta cognitive knowledge about the writing task as the common characteristics in good language learners in writing skill.

The purpose of this study was two-fold: first, it tries to identify the cognitive and metacognitive strategies of a successful learner in writing skill based on the list provided by (Arndt, 1987; Wenden, 1991). It was also aimed at finding whether Tina's reliance on her L1 writing influenced her L2 writing. The data collected from the think-aloud protocol and the interview showed that Tina made use of most of the cognitive and meta cognitive strategies listed by Wenden (1991) but she did not rely on her L1 writing for L2 writing. She was found to be very good at employing the prefabricated sentences and phrases learned from reading in her writing.

It can be concluded that in addition to language proficiency, the application of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and activation of prefabricated sentences and phrases characterize Tina's good writing. As the purpose of writing is to communicate one's ideas clearly and logically, writers should implement both cognitive strategies (clarification, retrieval, resourcing and verification) and metacognitive strategies (planning, evaluation, monitoring). It also accentuates the importance of teaching these strategies in writing courses to help the students to write more clearly and effectively. In Oxford's (2003) words, L2 learning strategies are specific behaviors or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning, so it is incumbent up on the teachers to acquaint the students with these strategies.

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# Deep Approaches to Learning in Improving Reading Skills: A Case Study from Yunnan Agricultural University\*

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**Abstract**—Reading is an essential method of gaining knowledge and information for a variety of purposes including social, educational, cultural and vocational/professional. For many people, reading also involves translating information into their own language and thus adds a further dimension to the complexities of understanding the information that they read. This is the case for many university students who need to develop proficiency in reading in English for their degree qualifications. This paper reports on a case study at Yunnan Agricultural University (YAU) that explored ways to change students' approach to learning by encouraging them to adopt a deep approach to learning in developing their reading skills in English. After a four-month training programme, a comparison of student test scores, showed that the 3P model of teaching and learning is suitable for developing the reading skills of students who are non-English majors, helping them to adopt a deep approach to learning in their reading. Through taking a deep approach to learning and changing attitudes and methods in teaching reading lecturers can effectively foster the students' reading skills and improve their achievement.

**Index Terms**—deep approaches to learning, the 3P model, reading skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential skill for English as foreign language (EFL) students; and for many, reading is the most important skill to master. With strengthened reading skills, EFL readers will make greater progress and attain greater development in all academic areas (Anderson, 2009). The main purpose for reading is to comprehend the ideas in material. Reading involves at least three types of skills—decoding comprehension, and reading strategies (Deng Yumei, 2009). At Yunnan Agricultural University (YAU), as in other colleges and universities, there are cases where students can read the words, sentences and passages but face much difficulty in their comprehension of the main ideas. This is because of the students' lack of ability of comprehension of reading material. The issue of how to enhance teaching efficiency and develop students' reading comprehension ability is thus a fundamental question for English language teaching.

At YAU almost all students who are non-English majors are required to learn English for four semesters. In each semester, students use one set of textbooks and much of the time of a semester's classes should be spent on reading. In each set of the textbooks offered, there are 'Integrated Course', 'Reading Course', 'Fasting Reading', and 'Listening and Speaking Course'. At YAU the new edition of textbooks in the series, *New Century College English*, which are meant to develop the students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing are used.

But because of various reasons, students' ability in English reading comprehension is not very satisfactory. Students' reading level does not measure up to the reading ability which is essentially needed in the reading process. How to help students improve their reading ability has thus become a prevalent problem for college English teachers.

According to Clark (1987), reading skills, include scanning, skimming, reading for thorough comprehension and critical reading while language skills refer to vocabulary, structure and discourse. Bias towards or against either reading will not only enable students to gain access to information, but also to proficient skills, which are the two sets of skills that determine the very goals of the teaching of reading in Chinese higher education.

There are various factors that affect students' reading comprehension.

"The method used is mainly structure-based, the focus of teaching is on language form and the class is teacher-centered. The common teaching pattern is reading, questioning, explanation and grammar exercises. Students depend too much on the teacher and lack a sense of responsibility for their own learning." (Shu Baimei, 1996)

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Non-English majors' reading teachers pay little attention to cultivating students' ability to comprehend the whole text at discourse level. Instead, much attention is given to linguistic knowledge. Frequent interference from teacher's overemphasis on linguistic competence in class actually prevents students' improvement in reading comprehension. In this way, any unfamiliar words or complicated structures would be the barrier to the success in understanding the passage. Moreover, sometimes even if they understand the words and grammar very well, still they have much difficulty in understanding the text deeply. Therefore, all these problems call for developing students' discourse competence in the college English reading classroom. This study concentrates on the function of deep and surface approaches to learning and how they affect students' reading comprehension. It used the following research questions as a framework for the investigation:

1. What approaches to learning do the students take in their language learning?
2. How can the teachers encourage the students to adopt deep approaches to learning in reading?
3. How effective are deep approaches to learning in improving reading comprehension?

This paper reports the findings of an experiment where teachers introduced strategies to encourage the students to adopt deep approaches to learning in reading at YAU.

## II. DEEP APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND THE 3P MODEL OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Deep and surface approaches to learning are the ways of learning a particular task; it is not the characteristics of students. Biggs (2003) states "the surface approach arises from an intention to get the task out of the way with minimum trouble while appearing to meet the course requirements". (p.14). Surface approaches to learning describe an intention to complete the learning task with little personal engagement, seeing the work as an unwelcome external imposition. This intention is often associated with routine and unreflective memorization and procedural problem solving, with restricted conceptual understanding being an inevitable outcome (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991; Marton and Salio, 1997; Entwistle, McCune, & Walker, 2001).

"The deep approach arises from a felt need to engage the task appropriately and meaningfully, so the student tries to use the most appropriate cognitive activities for handling it." (Biggs, 2003, p.16). Deep approaches to learning, in contrast to surface approaches, lead from an intention to understand, to active conceptual analysis and, if carried out thoroughly, generally result in a deep level of understanding. This approach is related to high quality learning outcomes (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991).

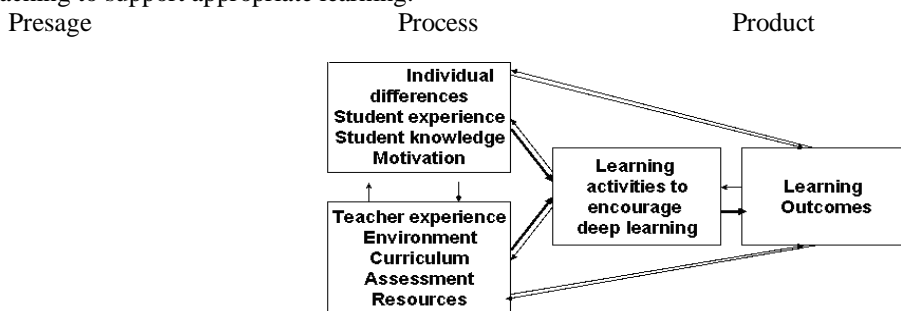
So good teaching should try to encourage the students to take a deep approach and discourage the surface. Ramsden (2003) says "the way in which anyone goes about learning is a relation between the person and the material being learned" (p.14). The approach can be thought of as a qualitative aspect of learning and this is excellently described by Ramsden (2003) "it is about how people experience and organize the subject matter...it is about 'what' and 'how' they learn, rather than 'how much' they remember." (p.14). Lizzo et al. (2002) suggest that perceptions of heavy workload and inappropriate assessment influence students towards surface approaches to study, but a good teaching environment influences students towards deep approaches to studying. Kember and Leung (2006) suggest that careful attention to the teaching and learning environment can spur students to work hard without feeling overly stressed. Cano (2007) states students who use a surface learning are trying to avoid failure with the minimum amount of effort and involvement. Deep and surface learning are motivated by different factors and would be expected to move in a consistent pattern in relationship to each other. Draper (2009) develops more of the idea by concluding that shadow learners understand the material correctly, but simply do not have the connections between concepts that deep learner do.

Students who use a deep approach to learning can transfer the learned concepts to a variety of situations by that means creating a denser matrix of connections within their knowledge and understanding. Research has shown that shifting from traditional instructor-dominated pedagogy to a learner-cantered approach leads to deeper levels of understanding and meaning for students (Lave & Wegner, 1991; Tagg, 2003; Sim 2006).

But how to encourage the readers to use deep learning in their reading is the main problem for the teachers; the 3p model of learning and teaching may be a good way to solve the problem.

### The 3P model of learning and teaching

Biggs' model of constructive alignment, reproduced below, posits that a good teaching system aligns all aspects of teaching to support appropriate learning.



(Biggs, 2003, p19)



presage: before learning takes place

process: during learning, learning focused activities; students' approach to learning

product: learning outcomes, which depend on the focus of the teaching

The 3P model describes teaching as a balanced system; all components need to be aligned to each other, except for the students-based factor and teachers factors, the most important components include:

1. The curriculum that we teach.
2. The teaching methods that we use.
3. The assessment procedures that we use.
4. The climate that we create in our teaching.
5. The institutional climates, the rules and procedures we have to follow.

This study used Biggs' ideas and assumed that when teachers plan a programme of appropriate learning activities, they should consider these theories in order to teach effectively.

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### A. Methodologies

A strategy from qualitative approaches that is pertinent to this research is the case study which involves an in-depth exploration of an event, program, an activity or process (Creswell ,2003; Dencombe ,2007; Walliman ,2001; Cohen et al ,2000).

This study involved investigation of students applying deep approaches to learning to improve their reading ability at YAU. Two tests, questionnaires, observations, interviews with the participants and students reflective dairies were used to gather the data to provide an in-depth knowledge of the case (Politt et al, 1999)

This case study is also comparative in nature involving some form of comparison between the students who were adopting deep approaches to learning in reading and the students who read in traditional ways. So in the interviews students were asked questions like "how do you feel about adopting the deep approaches to learning in reading? How does it enhance your reading ability?"

From the research, a general picture of encouraging the students in other universities in China may be drawn out as Nisbet and Watt (1984) note that case study, as a specific instance, "is frequently designed to illustrate a more, general principle." (p.72). Tellis (1997) highlights that case studies have been used to develop critical thinking. This is also central component of the topic being researched.

#### B. Research Process

##### 1. Objectives

Throughout the training, observations are focused on the effects of the training on the subjects: whether the deep approaches to learning in reading is beneficial to improving students' English reading ability.

##### 2. Subjects of experiment

The subjects participating in the experiment in this study all come from non-English major classes in YAU. Subjects are sophomore from two parallel classes. The first class consists of 64 students (36 boys and 28 girls), while the other contains 64 students (30 boys and 34 girls). Since they are non-English majors on their fourth term, few of them have received systematic training on English reading. Both Class 4 and Class 24 are classes formed by agronomy, biotechnology, plant protection, animal and plant quarantine, horticulture majors. Through pre-test of English reading level we found students almost at the same reading level.

##### 3. Procedures

The experiment extends from March of 2011 to June of 2011 .During these four months; both classes receive two-periods of teaching on reading every week.

##### Stages of the Experiment

The experiment can be divided into four stages as follows:

- 1) Before training, the first questionnaire is used to find out the students' learning approaches. The second questionnaire is made up of twenty questions. Another questionnaire is five ways to become a deeper learner.
- 2) Found out the major problems at text level in students' reading that are influenced by traditional teaching method.
- 3) The purpose of the pre-test was to testify whether the English proficiency of the two classes at the beginning of the academic year was about at the same level.
- 4) According to these major problems and learning style, experimental class is given courses focusing on the deep approaches to learning with theory of 3P model in reading of the text. While at the same time, control class is still taught according to the traditional way of reading teaching from the course book.
- 5) After training, a post-test is used to check whether there are differences between these two groups of students, when adopting deep approaches to learning in reading can understand the meaning of the text better.

### IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The data will be organised under the heading of each research question, and draw together all relevant data for the

exact issue of concern and preserve the coherence of material (Cohen et al ,2007; Wellington ,2000). The quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed from the aspect of various attributes of students learning approaches, ways to deep approaches to learning, and the reading skills in teaching reading, the results of pre-test and post-test.

### **What approaches to learning do the students take in their language learning?**

#### *A. Analysis of the Questionnaire*

##### **1. Analysis of Approaches to Studying Questionnaires**

Before experiment training, the first questionnaire was used to find out the students learning approaches in their English learning. Data from the Approaches to Studying Questionnaires revealed that students' approach in their learning in different ways.

SCALE SCORE		
scale	Experiment Class	Control Class
(A) Achieving	12.85	12.71
(B)Reproduction	15.65	15.55
(C) Meaning	12.73	12.51

This is out of 24 on achieving orientation, the number of A indicates competitiveness, well organised study methods and hope for success. Students who score high on this scale are orientated towards doing well, whatever this involves.

This is out of 24 on reproducing orientation; the number of B indicates a surface approach to learning. Students who score high on this scale to memorise and reproduce subject matter and have desire to accumulate knowledge. They tend to keep narrowly to syllabus as laid down in course descriptions and not to follow up interest of their own.

This is a score out of 24 on meaning orientation; the number of C indicates a deep approach to learning; an intention to make sense of the subject, an interest in the subject itself, and a desire to learn. Students who score high on this scale follow up their interest even if these are outside those parts of the course which are assessed.

The students, who score a little higher in B, show that many students adopt a surface approach to studying. This is common phenomena in YAU, especially in west part of China. Most students like to be told precisely what to do in their work; only few of them definitely agree that they usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what they are asked to read. When the students got their total number I explained the meaning of the letter A, B, C, and introduce the surface and deep approaches to learning. They are asked not to pay attention to the learning approach used at that time, but from then on, try to change the way they study, adopting a deep approach to learning in their language study, especially in text reading.

##### **2. Analysis of the questionnaires on students' reading skills**

##### **Results of the questionnaire**

In order to obtain respondents' accurate replies to the same questions; a questionnaire, which was modified from Chen Jin (2005), consisted of 20 questions. Each of them was followed by 4 choices marked A, B, C and D. The respondents were required to choose only one answer for each question within the same frame-work. 64 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the second-year students, and 64 valid ones were collected. The subjects were asked to express their opinions openly and honestly. The results of the experiment were computed with the help of the students.

##### **Findings**

After the analysis of the questionnaire, a series of practical problems arising in carrying out the teaching programs to the students couldn't be ignored.

- 1) Effects of Linguistic-level Problems on Reading
- 2) Deeply-rooted language ideology
- 3) Effects of meta-cognitive problems on reading
- 4) Text linguistic-problems in the Teaching of Reading from the 3p model of learning and teaching
- 5) Pragmatic-level Problems in Reading Instruction
- 6) Lack of Cultural Knowledge and Affective Problems in Reading

##### **How can the teachers encourage the students to adopt deep approaches to learning in reading?**

##### **3. Analysis of questionnaires on ways to become a deeper learner**

The result of the third questionnaire is as follow.

You can become a deeper learner by	Already do	Can do	Will do
1. Asking yourself questions	15	18	31
2.Making comparisons	18	20	26
3.representing new ideas as many ways as possible	10	18	36
4.Creating your own summaries	11	19	34
5. Creating mind maps	5	15	44

The table reveals that most students want to become a deep learner. Through the questionnaire the students will try to use the ways in their language learning, especially in reading. This demonstrates that most students want to change their learning habit, improve learning outcome. The students who have the belief in their study can get ready to receive the

experiment.

### B. Practice of Teaching

Experimental class is given courses as following by focusing on the 3p model on meaning construction in reading. Take Unit 5 Text A: *Fame* from *New Century College English, Book IV* (Qing xiuBai & Chui Lin, 2008) as an example. Our purpose is to see how the Presage, process, product of the 3p model interact with each other in the constructing learning.

#### Pre-reading Activities

Student-student interaction in the large –class setting, students like learning from peers, according to Biggs(2003), peer interaction leads to valuable outcome of its own: elaboration of knowledge, awareness of standards of knowing, reflection leading to meta-cognitive awareness and various word knowledge, syntactic knowledge, background knowledge, cognitive schema, , context, structure, affective factors---interests and motivation, prediction, scanning, pair work, group work.

The pre-reading activities are planned for two purposes. On one hand, it is to interest and motivate learners. According to Goodman (1967), reading is a complex process by which a reader reconstructs, to some degree, a message encoded by a writer in a graphic language. Widdowson (1983) stated the psycholinguistic view of reading assumes reading to be an active process, in which the reader is an active information processor.

During the preparation for the text, I asked the students to activate their previous knowledge to construct their personal understanding to the text. For example; when they will read new words and the text by themselves, they may think about qualities of successful people. They will predict what the author will say according the title, words, and notes.

For background knowledge, they can surf on line and find some famous persons in the world. The students can put all these together, and construct their own meaning of the discourse by the recognition of the text type, the text division, the text outline, etc. The teacher should set some tasks which can activate their previous knowledge and make students actively involved in the task.

#### While-reading Activities

As Widdowson (1979) states it, reading is a problem-solving process. In our understanding of the text, we are more concerned with the discourse analysis. In doing so we generally ask our students to bear in mind such questions as “What is the text actually about?” “Is the author for or against...”etc. and to seek for such specific information of the text.

Discourse analysis is carried out on two aspects: how an idea is developed and how one idea leads to another (introduction, development and conclusion). No matter what method we use we use it “to help students develop an awareness of conceptual presuppositions that native-speaker writers and readers apply to the organization of a text” (Clark et al, 1987, p.242).

It is the right time for the teacher to push the students a step further. The teacher should encourage them to form their own evaluative judgment about what they have read. We find it very helpful for cultivating in the students a habit of evaluating in reading as well as for training students’ ability for oral practice. We generally carry out this process by asking students to read the text a third time and then answer questions.

Usually, group discussions are held before the students answer the questions.

Question 1 (asked by the teacher): what ironic phenomenon does the author point out? (Two minutes later)

Question 2: what type the text is? Give your reasons.

Student H: this text is descriptive.

Student I: this text is argumentative.

Student J: this text is expositive.

Students can give answers, but they can’t give reasons. The teacher then should make these differences clear.

Question 3: since we have learned the text type, can you analyze this text?

Step 1: We ask students to do this work in group and each group can present their ideas in discussion.

Student K: the first paragraph is the first part, which is the argument for the whole passage: Chasing fame often leads to self-destruction.

Student L: from Para. 2 to Para 5 is the main body of the text...

Student M: the last paragraph is the conclusion of the text. It is better to take a critical attitude towards fame.

Step 2: After students have finished their work, we emphasize the cognitive schema of the text- the introduction, the body and the conclusion and how to find them.

Step 3: the teacher asks students to outline the text in their own words.

#### Post-reading Activities

The last dimension of activities of this approach is so developed as to check comprehension, to consolidate language skills and to enable further reading. The textbooks we use generally contain comprehension check-up exercises. Besides these we also assign students outline and summary writing and outside reading tasks.

We believe that the amount of reading will eventually help improve reading proficiency and skills. The amount of outside reading is usually double that in the reading class. For each reading task we give students three types of questions (pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading) to guide their reading and check their comprehension.

### How effective are deep approaches to learning in improving reading comprehension?

#### C. *The Qualitative Result of Interview*

For the purpose of interview in this study is to further understand the effectiveness of training in the experimental class, all the interviewees are the students involved in training. 6 students who are randomly chosen in the experimental class attend the face-to-face interview. The face-to-face interviews are done to the 6 participants in the experimental class to have further understanding of the influence of the training program. The 6 participants are chosen at random. The participants are informed that the interview is just to collect some information about the training. It is emphasized that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions and what the interviewer wants to know is “what do you do” and “what do you think”.

Questions of interview with participants:

- 1). In your opinion, what is the deep approaches to learning?
- 2). In the training, what impressed you the most in the training program?
- 3). Do you think, the deep approaches to learning is helpful to in improving reading comprehension?

Six participants which are chosen at random attended the interview and answered the above three questions. The interview is in Chinese so that participants have no difficulty in expressing themselves clearly. We translated them into English. The main contents of interview are as follows:

#### Answers of question 1:

A. The deep approaches to learning, according to teacher’s explanation, are a kind of approach to learning but not forced by teachers or some other people. For me, the deep approach to learning is to try to learn something by reading widely with previous relevant knowledge.

B. The deep approaches to learning, I think, we can have chance to take responsibility for our own learning.

C. When we try to become deeper learners, we try to become interested in reading as much as possible.

D. The deep approaches to learning? I don’t know it very well. Perhaps, learn something deeply? Sorry, I am not sure.

E. We may consider the deep approaches to learning as a higher-level learning, the process as the machine is working. It is driven by our zeal and my teacher’s encouragement. It is my understanding.

F. My English teacher mentioned “The deep approaches to learning” from time to time in class. Err... I think it is a trial to learn by ourselves wonderfully.

#### Answer for question 2:

A. In training, the teacher encouraged us to do something by ourselves, changing the learning attitude and method. For example, to evaluate what we have done by ourselves or partner. It is really new experience for me. Before, we always waited for the answer or marks from teacher and took it as evaluation and result for granted. We believe it and we rarely try to value ourselves. This makes me more confident and successful.

B. The teacher gave us the chance to read English text differently which involve the group work. But I am not used to this. I am not sure whether I can do it well or not.

C. In the training, the teacher always asked us to read text and explain or reflect. But I am still not so familiar with how to reflect. I am not sure I will do it well or not.

D. In the training, I can have the opportunity to set a goal for me and form my own ideas. I am so happy to actively relate new information to previous knowledge. I like to study with others, But, frankly, I don’t know whether my way and result of evaluation are proper or not.

E. I feel exciting when I read English. The classroom climate we create is excellent. I had planned my language learning many times before, but I failed to follow it. This time, it is a group work.

F. The teacher often suggested us to read using several reading skills. It is not the same as before. We can only sit in classroom and listen to teacher’s talking before. Now we are busy in class. In fact, I prefer the way the teacher used before, since I can understand her talking without doing any thing by myself.

#### Answer for question 3:

A. Maybe. I am not sure. But it is really a new experience for me.

B. I think so. Now when I read an article, I will try to summarize the readings and visualizing the key ideas, but not memorize words or phrases for a day or two. I can understand the text better than before.

C. Err ... language learning is still a headache for me, especially reading.

D. It makes me clear that what I want to get from language reading class. But I am not sure it will be helpful to my language learning. It may be a long process. I hope it will be helpful. We have learned English for a long time, but not effectively.

E. I think it is effective in some respect. Now we are exciting when we are learning English. But we are not certain whether this excitement will last long or not.

F. I don’t think there is much difference.

From the answers of question 1 in the interview, we see that most of participants involved in interview have basic understanding of the deep approaches to learning even if they do not understand the connotation of the deep approaches to learning quite deeply. But we also find that one of these participants are not so clear with the concept of the deep approaches to learning and take it as learn deeply.

For most of the participants, the most impressive elements in the training program are group work, cooperative study,

self assessment and peer assessment. They intend to accept new way of learning and try to adopt the deep approaches to learning with the assistance of teachers' encouragement and instruction. We also find that they do not mention the strategies of the deep approaches to learning directly in the interview. Participants consider activities of planning and self-evaluation as new experience to them. They dare not use new ways frequently since they are not sure whether they are practical or not. A sense of insecurity stemmed from unfamiliarity may decrease the use of the deep approaches to learning being taught. In learning and using new learn style, learners may feel unfamiliar and their security in learning is challenged. They will be not sure about their comprehension of reading by using new learn style or to be skeptical about the efficiency of their efforts. To remove their hesitation, the teacher's encouragement will be helpful to promote them to attempt to use new strategies more frequently during the process of the deep approaches to learning. To most of participants, the deep approaches to learning, in their opinions, is helpful to their language reading in some respects. But there is still an obstacle for them to adopt the new learning style smoothly. They are not sure this way of learning will be helpful for learning for a long time or not, since they are wondering whether they will continue to learn by this way when it is not fresh to them. At the same time, few participants do not think there are obvious differences between the influences made by learning methods they used before and the deep approaches to learning.

From the interview, we find that on one hand, most of the learners have basic understanding of the deep approaches to learning and are apt to adopt the deep approaches to learning after training. On the other hand, they are not sure whether the deep approaches to learning will be helpful and effective to their learning constantly or not. It is the usual action and feedback when one is facing new way or unfamiliar things. They need more encouragement and successful cases which may raise their confidence.

#### D. Data Obtained from Pre-test and Post-test

Both of the classes are given 2 English reading proficiency tests, which are pre-test and the post-test. The purpose of the pre-test was to testify whether the English proficiency of the two classes at the beginning of the academic year was about at the same level. After the pre-test, the first class is chosen to be the experimental class (EC) and the second class the controlled class (CC). By the end of training, the subjects had taken the same post-test of reading. The teacher, the syllabus; the book and the teaching schedule are the same for both classes during the whole process.

A pre-test and a post-test of reading comprehension are conducted to the 128 participants in this research. Each test paper contains two articles with 10 reading comprehension multiple choices. All the articles are all adapted from the test paper of College English CET-4 randomly. The full mark of a test paper is 100. We use these tests to acquire the participants' marks and levels of reading comprehension performance.

The raw data of pre-test and post-test are keyed into computer and analyzed by SPSS V.10.0. The descriptive statistics of the reading performance for the experimental class and controlled class are reported in following table.

TABLE 1  
THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF READING TESTS

EC				CC		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Pre-test	64	46.82	10.64	64	45.56	11.23
Post-test	64	61.5105	11.6295	64	53.8533	16.4049

Note: EC= experimental class, CC= controlled class

In the pre-test, the mean of EC is 46.82 and standard deviation 10.64. In the post-test the mean of EC is 61.5105 and standard deviation 11.629. Then the independent sample t-test shows that  $Z=6.9118 > 2.58 (\alpha=0.01)$ . It is concluded that the reading performance of EC is improved significantly after training compared with their performance in pre-test. As for the CC, in pre-test, its mean is 45.56 and standard deviation 11.23, while in the post-test; the mean is 53.8533 and standard deviation 16.4049. The independent sample t-test shows that  $Z=3.804 > 2.58$ . The result is also significant but not as great as the EC's performance.

This indicates that the difference in reading comprehension ability between the two classes is significant. Table 1 demonstrates that students from Experimental class achieved better results in reading comprehension after being exposed to the teaching with the 3p model than those from Control class who have a little improvement in their reading.

According to the result of comparison of the two classes' test at the end of the training, it can be inferred that it is the different way of teaching that results in the dissimilarity among the students' reading ability. Experimental class benefits from the teaching on the 3p model by encouraging students adopt the deep approach to learning on reading. Therefore, the hypothesis has been testified: teaching and training of 3p model on reading does contribute to the improvement of students' English reading ability.

To sum up, all those studies and experiments indicate the necessity, feasibility and practicality of the instruction on the 3p model on meaning construction in reading. In the surface approach the students may try to memories facts or focus on the meeting the assessments criteria in order to reproduce them in the examinations and pass the course (surface motive). In the deep approach the students will engage with the task in order to understand what the author is saying, thus the aiming to understanding the further meaning (Dickinson, 2002, Biggs, 2003, Marton & Salio, 1997). The students employing a deep approach might integrate the known knowledge and the practical uses with the intention to understand make sense of the text (deep motive). When the students deepen their understanding of the meaning of the

text, they try to establish a new semantic network for those types of passages, reading skills and strategies. They need to change the way they memorize and store these information in their long- term memory. So it is obvious that after a long time they can get higher mark in the test.

#### *E. Sample of Observation*

##### **22nd March 2011**

After two week's training, I found the atmosphere of the class changed a lot, most students like to speak in or out of class, especially the students who seldom answer questions in class, now they can answer questions confidently and successfully. The attitude towards learning for the students also change a lot, those who often late for the class will come on time, they hope to listen to the other students presentation, they want to talk in the class in English. Almost all the students can fulfill the assignment I want them to do.

#### *F. One of Students Reflective Diaries*

##### **29<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

I dislike reading English before, but after a month study I change my attitude. I begin to like English learning by myself or with my partner, finish homework alone without waiting for the answer. I try to analyse the text, summarize the passage; write a short composition according to the structure of the text which I have seldom done before. I like group work, ppt presentation, surfing on the internet for related information. I find English isn't difficult as before, is it the change of me or the language? Of course, it's me; it's the change of learning approach.

#### *G. Discussion*

Both deep and surface approaches to learning are not personality traits or fixed learning styles, students can adopt an approach which is based on their perception of the task. So It is one of key way s in which teachers can influence the students approach is to use the learning intentions and motives of students as a “driver” for change and better engagement.

The learners can move from the different approaches and for some of the students personal life or knowledge, they highlighted their perceptions of deep or surface learning during their reading study.

Marton and Säljö (1997) asked students to recount how they had been handling their learning task and how it appeared to them. Besides the questions about what they remembered of the text its content, students were also asked questions designed to discover how they tackled this reading task. The results show an astonishingly simple picture: the students who did not get 'the point' (i.e. understand the text as a whole) failed to do so, simply because they were not looking for it. The main difference in the process of learning concerned whether the students focused on the text itself or on what the text is about: the author's intention, the main point, the conclusions to be drawn. In the latter case the text is not considered as an aim in itself, but rather as a means of grasping something which is beyond or underlying it. It can be concluded that there was a very close relationship between process and outcome. The depth of processing was related to the quality of outcome in learning (Marton & Säljö 1997).

Inappropriate assessment procedures encourage surface approaches; yet varying the assessment questions may not be enough to evoke fully deep approaches (Ramsden, 1997).

Entwistle (2001) also found that students who reported themselves as adopting surface approaches to learning preferred teaching and assessment procedures which supported that approach, whereas students reporting deep approaches preferred courses which were intellectually challenging and assessment procedures which allowed them to demonstrate their understanding. A direct consequence of this effect is that the ratings which students make of their lecturers will depend on the extent to which the lecturer's style fits what individual students prefer (Entwistle & Tait, 1995).

Therefore, in my further teaching, I'm going to apply more flexible, effective and updating methods of teaching and maximize the chances that students will engage the full understand of the text needed to achieve the desired outcomes, e.g. problem-solving activities in small group, using pictures to make up stories, teacher-directed activities, self-directed activities, student-student interaction, group-discussion, peering-teaching, etc, which motivate my students positively. Change the intention to complete task requirements which are attached to the examination and make students be in intrinsic motivation.

When the students have the intrinsic motivation, they will have a positive attitude and confidence, which can enhance study value.

To encourage deep learning strategies, teachers can consider how to make creative to make our teaching methods and approaches to create opportunities for deep learning. Methods such as using learning lists, and getting our students to read a variety of texts on the theme so that they have greater number of opportunities to experience relevant items perhaps even in different contexts can help encourage deep learning.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

#### *A. Conclusion*

The research has probed into the English reading in YAU non-English majors. Based on the surveys on the current situation of reading in the college as well as problems in students' reading, we can see the necessity of teaching on 3p model on reading encouraging adopting the deep approach to learning; based on the result of the experiment, we also can see the feasibility of such way of teaching in improving students reading ability.

Through experimental teaching, students can become a deeper learner by 3p model. They can be expected to recognize it is important to be conscious of constructing the meaning of the text by themselves when they read in English.

From the above analyses and discussion, a conclusion can be drawn that it is very useful and helpful for the students to adopt deep learning in English reading. They can not only change the attitude to the study in reading but also improve the abilities of their language learning.

It can also be concluded that the teacher use deep learning which leads students to build confidence, most students I am sure they can figure out what they confused and like to read English. Deep learning brings happiness, a sense of satisfaction and great motivation in their English learning.

In deep learning, the students are encouraged to become independent learners, making something their own, to take responsibility and create a personal conceptual framework of knowledge and understanding (Entwistle, 1988).

The deep approach to learning in reading is necessary for college English teaching in China. First of all, most college students are adult language learners and they do not have the same capacity for language learning as pre-critical period learners do. As we all know when advanced proficiency is important for adult learners, something will be needed to compensate for the incapability for language learning. So the deep approaches to learning in reading are the suitable choice to compensate for the incapacity of college students in reading. Secondly, the deep approaches to learning in reading have its rise in popularity in YAU and the other English teachers will prefer this kind of instruction. The present study in this paper also provides a strong evidence that the deep approaches to learning in college English reading class works more efficiently than traditional instruction in improving students' language ability. Therefore the deep approaches to learning are suitable for college English teaching in YAU.

#### *B. Limitations*

The study designs a refined program with the students using the deep approaches to foster learner reading skills based on the previous learning approaches research. The result shows that it is effective in some respects, although the experiment in some aspects is not as successful as we expected. It is concluded that the students who adopt the deep approaches in their intensive or extensive reading in or out of classroom is helpful to foster learner reading ability. This research may raise both educationists and researchers' interest of this field to struggle for an improved research program for both teachers and learners. Due to various reasons, conclusions drawn from the study are tentative in nature, for the study itself has some limitations.

First, the experimental expand is relatively short. As we discussed before, the experiment of deep approaches in reading is a time-consuming process. Four months with 32 periods of 50-minute classes is relatively short for this research. It affects the significance of changing learning approaches to some extent. As the experimental program involves several instruments, the improvement of students' reading ability is broad and complex issue. There is many components interweave with one another. Besides, the study was conducted in one university. A few studies have been done on the application of non-verbal communication in College English reading courses; therefore, there is much room to be studied in this field. Based on the study, we are supposed to be explored in more details in further studies.

Secondly, the validity of questionnaire designed for the study is still to be enhanced. The participants involved in this research are all students majoring in some specialties. Some more participants in other majors should be involved in experiment to make the result more convinced. Absence of more scientific measurement remains an unsolved problem in present researches. Attentions should be paid to this domain in further studies.

Thirdly, only one teacher is involved in the pre-training and no sufficient time is offered for her to think over the knowledge of students other abilities, learner autonomy and metacognitive strategies, and skills of training etc. The instruments adopted in the experiment may not suit to all foreign language learners. New approaches need to be found and used, and investigations on individual differences in the experiment program are also needed in further studies. Many more researches in this field should be done from different perspectives.

Although theories of the deep approaches to foster their reading skills are important they are just one of the many devices and issues in reading and cannot solve all the problems in reading. Due to the limitations of our knowledge, this paper leaves room for more research. In respect of future study, more accurate empirical research should be pursued.

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# Exploring the Gender Effect on EFL Learners' Learning Strategies

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**Abstract**—Various studies have discerned gender differences in language learning strategy (LLS) use. In most of the studies in which gender differences emerged, the results demonstrated that females reported using language learning strategies more often than males. However, some studies demonstrated that there was no statistically significant difference between genders in the use of LLS. Still others showed that male learners use more LLS than female learners do in certain taxonomy (Oxford, 1990). Therefore, the aim of present study was to investigate whether or not differences exist between female and male Iranian learners in the use of language learning strategies. A total of 149 learners at Institute in Tabriz, Iran participated in the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire adapted and modified from SILL (Oxford, 1990). The findings show that there is a significant gender difference in the use of language learning strategies as a whole. Female learners also have tendency to use overall language learning strategies more often than males. There are important differences between genders in the use of social/ affective strategies with females using them more often.

**Index Terms**—language learning strategy, gender

## I. BACKGROUND

When examining the role of gender on the acquisition of language one must consider that there are numerous ways in which it can affect language use and development. Gender is a variable that can affect language use and acquisition as a result of biological, psychological effects, or socio-cultural influences differences between the two.

Bialystok (1979) Language learning strategies are believed to play a vital role in learning a second or foreign language, as they may assist learners in mastering the forms and functions required for reception or production in the second or foreign language and thus affect achievement (cited in Hashemi, 2012).

It involved the mental and communicative procedures learners use in order to learn and use language (Nunan, 1999). Some of these strategies are performed individually; whereas others will be required the participant of other people.

In general, language learning strategy (LLS) is specific behavior or an action taken by the learner to facilitate acquisition, retention, retrieval, and performance (Rigney, 1978 cited in Ghani, 2003) which make the learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990).

Language learning strategies have been found to correlate with language proficiency and performance (Kamarul Shukri et al., 2008; O'Malley et al., 1985; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Therefore, most educators now accept the assumption that the use of learning strategies has become guidepost for determination of high from low skilled learners (Brown et al., 1983). They have also begun to recognize the influence that learning strategy use may have on the acquisition of a second or foreign language (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Chamot, 1987; Cohen & Aphek, 1981; Hosenfeld, 1977; Wenden, 1991). They also acknowledge that learners can be taught to learn the language if they are also taught the strategies that facilitate language acquisition.

For a variety of reasons language, learning strategies are of great importance to language learning. Appropriate of LLSs can lead to higher achievement, more self-confidence on the part of learner, and greater autonomy. The special emphasis is placed on O'Malley and Chamott's (1990), Oxford's (1990), as well as Brown (2000) learning strategies taxonomies. Different researchers have classified language learning strategies into different categories the most general categorize are metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective strategies.

The LLS taxonomy contains three categories: a) Metacognitive strategies b) Cognitive strategies c) Social/affective strategies. Although different classifications of learning strategies have been proposed, the classification of O'Malley would be chosen as the basis of the present study. O'Malley's (1985) Classification of Language Learning Strategies Metacognitive Strategies can be stated that is a term 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 metacognitive strategies, it is possible to include advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation.

Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery,

auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies.

Socioaffective Strategy as to the socio/affective strategies, it can be stated that they are related with social-mediating activity and transacting with others. Cooperation and question for clarification are the main socio/affective strategies (Brown 1987, pp.93-94).

In recent years, researchers have identified key areas of individual differences that can influence the choice and the frequency of LLS use (Chang, 2003; Griffiths, 2003; Kamarul Shukri et al., 2009; Lan, 2005; Macaro, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1975). Considering the fact that language-learning strategies can promote language achievement and that knowledge about these strategies may progress instruction, it is important to study how learners use learning strategies.

Gender differences have been found in many areas of human social and cognitive development. Studies indicated that females show more interest in social activities than males, females are less competitive and more cooperative than males (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Research studies also claim that females are better than males both in second and first language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). In language learning strategy research, many studies across different cultures show more frequent strategy use by females than males, especially the social-based strategies (Oxford, 1995 & Mohamed Amin, 2000).

However, some findings revealed that males employed more strategies than females (Zamri, 2004), and some even suggested that there were no significant differences between males and females on their use of language learning strategies (Chang, 1990; Chou, 2002).

Politzer (1983) studied learning strategies of 90 undergraduate foreign language learners enrolled in French, Spanish and German courses in the U.S. and found that female learners used social learning strategies more often than males. After studying the LLS used by more than 1,200 undergraduate university learners, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) concluded that gender difference had a profound influence which indicates that females used strategies more frequently than males. Punithavalli (2003) with 170 ESL learners in Selangor, Malaysia found that female learners used greater strategies in and outside of classroom compared to the male learners. The results did not show a significant difference between male and female learners in using learning strategies for their examination. The study conducted by Nazali (1999) to find out the use of LLS among the secondary school learners who were learning Malay as a first language showed that females significantly surpassed males in their use of classroom strategies, and out of classroom strategies.

The result of Green and Oxford's (1995) study on 374 ESL/EFL showed that female learners used memory, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies more frequently than male learners. Chang (2003) investigated the use of LLS by a group of high school learners in Taiwan who were learning English. The study found that females significantly surpassed males in the use of LLS as a whole. The results also showed that females significantly used cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social strategies more frequently than males. The results of Lan's (2005) study of 1,191 Taiwanese elementary school learners indicated a significant difference between boys and girls in the frequency of strategy use. Girls in this group reported to use significantly more strategy than boys. In the Malaysian context, Embi (2000) conducted a study to investigate the LLS of secondary school learners learning English. The result of his study indicated that females reported using overall LLS more frequently than male learners. The result also showed that females use more classroom and out of classroom strategies, and exam language strategies than males.

Oxford (1993, p.83) summarizes the gender related LLS research in the following manner: whenever strategy research has considered gender, it has usually demonstrated gender differences in strategy frequency, with females choosing to use particular sets of strategies more often than males. Females especially tended to use general study strategies, social strategies, affective strategies and certain conversational or functional practice strategies more frequently than males across a number of studies, usually showing a greater range of frequently used strategy categories. However, gender differences are not necessarily universal. For instance, Tran's (1988) study discovered that Vietnamese male immigrants to the U.S. used more strategies than did females. He claimed that employment situation may influence the use of strategies as well as gender. Wharton (2000) studied learning strategies of 678 university learners learning Japanese and French as foreign language in Singapore. Unexpectedly, the results showed that LLS were used significantly by males. Wharton (2000) speculated that when the subjects were very experienced second language learners, so gender difference in the use of strategies was not significant. Zamri's (2004) study in Malaysia also reported a similar result, as male learners used strategies more often than females when they were learning Malay language as a first language.

Existing research shows that motivation (Kaylani, 1996), cultural background (Oxford, 1996), attitudes and beliefs (Oxford et al 1990) and gender (Kaylani, 1996) are some of the factors which influence choice of strategies used among students learning a FL.

Bacon (1992) investigated strategies that learners used when listening to authentic second language texts of two levels of difficulty. She reported that women used a significantly higher proportion of metacognitive strategies than men. They were more likely to plan for the listening, monitor their comprehension and evaluate their strategy use than men. On the other hand, men reported more bottom-up strategies than women. Men also reported a significantly greater use of translation strategies than women. They appeared to be in more favor of cognitive strategies than metacognitive strategies. Some studies provided contradictory evidence regarding gender difference in language learning strategies use.

In research on EFL learners in Taiwan, Chou (2002) failed to find significant differences in the frequency of LLS use between male and female learners. The results of al Otaibi's (2004) study of 237 Saudi learners in an intensive English language program demonstrated that there were no statistically significant differences in the use any of the six strategy categories.

The findings thus far provided rich insights into interpreting the gender issues in the studies of LLS. However, since the results are inconclusive, further studies in different setting and learning conditions are deemed necessary. It is important to replicate LLS studies in different context in order to avoid what Wharton (2000) calls "the dangers of an ethnocentric bias regarding the definition of good language learning strategies". Moreover, it is difficult to find studies related to gender and LLS use among Iranian learners. The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the differences between male and female EFL learners in the use of overall language learning strategies?
2. What are the differences between male and female EFL learners in the use of three categories of language learning strategies?

## II. METHODS

### *Participants*

The present study was conducted at Zoha English Language Center. A total of 149 EFL learners, 47 are males and 143 are females, within the age range of 15-32. All participants were from elementary level to TOEFL level. These learners were considered as consistent learners of the center. They studied at Zoha Center during the Fall 2011 semester.

### *Instrument*

A standard placement test of Oxford University and Cambridge University (2001, version 1) was used to divide the participants into elementary, intermediate, and advance proficiency levels. This instrument included 60 multiple-choice question, cloze comprehension passage, vocabulary, and grammar sections. In this study, the questionnaire consisted of 30 items, with the introduction of one construct and some changes to the original SILL version. In addition to the three strategy categories used in SILL (Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social/ Affective), we introduce a new category known as the Metaphysic strategy.

TABLE 1  
INTERNAL CONSISTENCY RELIABILITY OF LLS QUESTIONNAIRE

Construct	Alpha Cronbach	Item
Cognitive Strategies	0.869	14
Metacognitive Strategies	0.859	09
Affective Strategies	0.650	07
Social Strategies	0.769	06

Table 1 summarizes the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of internal consistency for each category of the LLS questionnaires. The Cronbach's alpha for each category and for the entire questionnaire ranges from 0.65 to 0.869. This indicates a good degree of reliability (Sekaran, 1992; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

## III. FINDINGS

In order to answer the research questions, SPSS software was used to analyze any significant differences in the use of language learning strategies between male and female learners. Therefore, first, descriptive statistics which includes mean and standard deviation, were used.

As can be seen in Table 2, there isn't a significant difference in the use of cognitive strategy among EFL language learners with different gender (Sig= .179,  $P > 0.05$ ). Therefore, there is no significant difference in the use of cognitive strategy between male and female Iranian learners.

TABLE 2  
THE EFFECT OF GENDER ON COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE (N= 149)

dependent variable	independent variable	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error mean	Cognitive strategy	t-test for Equality of Means		
							t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Cognitive strategy	Male	46	27.69	5.248	.77389	Equal variances assumed	-1.350	147	.179
	female	103	28.98	5.415	.53365	Equal variances not assumed	-1.367	89.08	.175

As can be seen on Table 3, t-test indicates that there isn't a significant difference in the use of metacognitive strategy among EFL language learners with different gender (Sig= .191;  $P > 0.05$ ).

TABLE 3  
THE EFFECT OF GENDER ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY USE (N= 148)

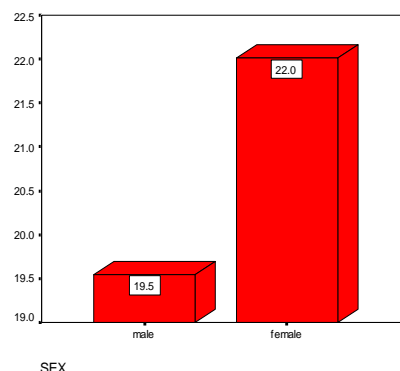
dependent variable	independent variable	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error mean	Meta cognitive strategy	t-test for Equality of Means		
							t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Meta cognitive strategy	Male	45	44.822	11.274	1.680	Equal variances assumed	-1.314	146	.191
	female	103	46.970	8.060	.7942	Equal variances not assumed	-1.156	64.460	.252

The results of T-Test for Table 4, indicates that there is a significant difference in the use of social/affective strategy among EFL learners with different gender. Hence, the data provides strong evidence to reject the third null hypothesis Sig= .010;  $p < 0.05$ ).

TABLE 4  
THE EFFECT OF GENDER ON SOCIAL/AFFECTIVE STRATEGY USE (N= 149)

dependent variable	independent variable	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error mean	Social/ affective strategy	t-test for Equality of Means		
							t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Social/ Affective strategy	Male	46	19.54	6.0468	.89156	Equal variances assumed	-2.613	147	.010
	female	103	22.00	4.969	.48966	Equal variances not assumed	-2.425	73.29	.018

In other words, the examination of the means for the variables reveals that females have significantly higher social/affective scores ( $M = 22.0097$ ) than males ( $M = 19.5435$ ). The findings suggest that although both male and female learners use all three strategy categories, but female learners tend to use social/affective strategies more than male learners. As Oxford (1993) believes, female learners tend to pay more attention to their feelings and this is quite consistent with this study. Oxford and Green (1995) in a study identified fourteen strategies that were used significantly more often by female learners. Out of these, one were social/affective strategies.



#### IV. DISCUSSION

In this paper, we tried to see whether there is any significant difference between male and female learners in their language learning strategies or not. Despite the limited scope of the study (Iranian EFL learners), it seems that male and female learners differ in the language learning strategies.

The findings of the relationship between gender and strategy use in the present study was consistent with former studies such as Green & Oxford, 1995; Mohamed Amin, 2000; Mohd Nazali, 1999; Punithavalli, 2003) in which female learners tended to use social/affective strategy more frequently than male learners.

Green and Oxford (1995) concluded that the effect of the use of LLS that are attributed to gender difference may originate from biological and socialization related causes. A close examination of the results of this study reveals that Iranian EFL learners use social/affective strategy more than other language learning strategies. The high use of social/affective strategies among Iranians is almost similar to that observed among learners from Asian countries like Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan as reported in some of the studies on Asian students (e.g., Sheorey, 1998; Oxford et al., 1990).

As suggested by Oxford (1989), the gender difference may have been associated with women's greater social orientation, stronger verbal skills, and greater conformity to norms, both linguistic and academic. Evidence from this study also supports the conclusion of second language acquisition studies that females are better than males both in second and first language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Slavin, 1988). Female learners also reported a greater use of social/affective strategies than male learners. One explanation for this finding might relate to the theories of psychology which mention that sensitivity, empathy, nurturance and emotion are strong

female traits, whereas aggression, dominance, assertiveness and emotional in expressiveness are male traits (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Therefore, these psychological traits of males and females may influence LLS use.

The present study verified that gender has been a rudimentary predictor in the fields of education, psychology, and linguistics research. The fact that male more than female students used social affective strategies, goes against Politzer's (1983 in Oxford et al. 1995) and Oxford et al.'s (1988 in Sunderland 1992) findings, which revealed that these strategies were used by the girls more than the boys. Politzer linked this with women's "stronger social orientation", and we could link our results with the fact that the girls may have been inhibited by their shyness and fear of speaking to the teacher, or in front of their classmates.

Therefore, teacher should determine the range of factors influencing strategy use among their learners. For instance, this study demonstrated that females might differ from males in their strategy choices and uses. The clarification of LLS based on such factor can provide a useful guidance for learners in order to become closer to successful language learners. The most important implication of this study is the need to provide students with further opportunities to use LLSs more frequently. It is a must for a language teacher today to familiarize the learners with the most common language learning strategies. O'Malley and Chamot introduce the following steps to strategy instruction:

... The teacher first identifies or shows students for their current language strategies, explains the rationale and application for using additional learning strategies, provides opportunities and materials for practice, and evaluate or assist students to evaluate their degree of success with new learning strategies. (1990, pp. 157-59).

The teacher's role in strategy training is an important one. The teacher should learn about the students, their interest, motivations, and learning styles. The teacher can learn what language learning strategies his/her students appear to be using by observing their behavior in class that is whether they cooperate with their peers or seem to have much contact outside of class with proficient foreign language users. Whether, they ask for clarification, verification or correction. Besides observing their behavior in class, the teacher can have adequate knowledge about the students, their goals, motivations, language learning strategies, and their understanding of the course to be taught. It is a fact that each learner within the same classroom may have different learning styles and varied awareness of the use of strategies. The language teacher should provide a wide range of learning strategies in order to fulfill different learning styles that meet the needs and expectations of his students who possessing different learning styles, motivations, strategy preferences, etc.

In addition to the students, the language teacher should also analyze his textbook to find out whether the textbook already includes language learning strategies or language learning strategies training. The language teacher should look for new texts or other teaching materials if language learning strategies are not already included within his materials. The language teacher should also study his own teaching method and overall classroom style. Analyzing his lesson plans, the language teacher can determine whether his lesson plans give learners chance to use a variety of learning styles and strategies or not. The teacher can see whether his teaching allows learners to approach the task at hand in different ways or not. The language teacher can also be aware of whether his strategy training is implicit, explicit, or both. It should be emphasized that questioning himself about what he plans to do before each lesson and evaluating his lesson plan after the lesson in terms of strategy training, the teacher can become better prepared to focus on language learning strategies and strategy training during the process of his teaching. Teacher should familiarize learners' awareness about LLS and their efficiency. Advanced learners' awareness about LLS can help them to become more self-confident and successful language learners. Learners should be informed that a wider range of LLS and higher frequency of their use are both fundamental in learning language efficiently. In another word, teachers should also encourage their learners not only to profit from strategies that they are already using, but also to develop their scope of LLS. In order to lead learners to utilize those strategies, language teachers need to create a sufficiently input environment inside and outside the classroom. For example, they should involve their learners a variety of communicative tasks. Thus, the role of a teacher should be modified as a facilitator, which encourages and motivates learners' active participation in the teaching and learning process.

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# Nonverbal Communication in *Pride and Prejudice*

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**Abstract**—Language has been the focus of traditional studies on communication. However, real communication does not merely include verbal codes. Nonverbal forms, in fact, send an enormous number of messages in communication, or sometimes, even carry a larger flow of information than verbal codes. This paper, through analyzing nonverbal communication in *Pride and Prejudice*, is intended to show the roles played by nonverbal forms in literary works: how they operate with verbal codes, how they reveal the characters' emotions, how they can exhibit social customs, and how they represent the characters' social status, and in the meanwhile to discuss how nonverbal communication helps develop the plot, mold the characters and reveal the theme of the novel.

**Index Terms**—nonverbal, *Pride and Prejudice*, emotion, status, social customs

## I. INTRODUCTION

When we talk about means of communication, language perhaps is the first which occurs to us. Here, language is referred to as a sign of a combination of sound and meaning. The general trend of communication studies has largely been focused on language. But in fact, communicative means does not just involve verbal channel, it also encompasses varieties of nonverbal forms. Nonverbal, as the term suggests, does not involve any use of words or speech. Eisenberg and Smith (1971) note that “nonverbal communication refers to all communication except that which is coded in words” (p. 20). Levine and Adelman (1982) point out that “in some types of communication people express more nonverbally than verbally” (p. 43). Birdwhistell (1961) holds that information carried by verbal forms during an interaction accounts for no more than 30% while the rest is all sent through nonverbal means. The importance of nonverbal communication can also be seen in the division of communicative language ability into language competence and strategic competence in sociological study, among which strategic competence refers to mastery of nonverbal as well as verbal forms.

However, in reality, nonverbal and verbal communications are inseparably interconnected. Basically, almost all the verbal communication will more or less involve some nonverbal cues: illocutors' eye movement, smile or hand gestures all send messages from time to time. Nonverbal cues can act upon the verbal expressions. For example, a person who keeps looking around when giving his explanation for being late may be considered as being lying. However, a single nonverbal form alone may not impart a clear and definite message without the help of verbal remarks. For example, a mother may feel worried and at a loss if her daughter comes back home with tears but refusing to say anything. This paper, with the expectation of raising the awareness of nonverbal means, will first compare verbal and nonverbal communications, then present classifications of nonverbal forms, and at last illustrate the roles of nonverbal forms with examples taken from *Pride and Prejudice*.

## II. VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Language is an object which has been studied thoroughly and is closely related to nonverbal codes. So a comparison between verbal and nonverbal systems can help obtain a deeper understanding of the nature of nonverbal communication. The comparison will be developed in light of arbitrariness, grammaticality, self-reflexivity and sense organs involved.

First, language is arbitrary in the sense that there is no logical connection between meaning and sound. Although nonverbal symbols, like the linguistic forms, are arbitrarily chosen, yet they are usually linked to the intended message. For example, the way of pointing is arbitrary: some cultures point with their entire head, some cultures point with their lips while people in some cultures point with their fingers. Despite the differences in form, the direction designated can always be deduced from the direction in which different nonverbal forms indicate. Thus, the act of pointing is not arbitrary. Language is tightly organized. Individual words can be constructed into a well-formed sentence according to certain grammatical rules. However, no clear demonstration shows that nonverbal codes can be combined in the same way. Self-reflexivity of verbal expressions refers to the fact that language can be used to talk about language itself. That's what this paper is doing now. But nonverbal codes are unlikely to be used to analyze nonverbal communication. The behavior *nodding* is unlikely to explain how nodding is produced or comprehended. Lastly, nonverbal cues are received by different sense organs at the same time for a person can feel, smell, see and hear messages at the same time.

Verbal communication, however, involves far fewer types of sense receptors. One either sees written language or hears oral messages. Consequently one is more likely to receive different messages sent through nonverbal channels than to receive and comprehend two verbal messages simultaneously.

### III. CLASSIFICATIONS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Various classifications of nonverbal behaviors have been proposed. Scollon, R. and Scollon, S. (2000) note that nonverbal communication “would include our posture, our movements, our attire, our use of space, and our use of time” (p. 143). They focus their intercultural studies of nonverbal communication on three aspects: “the movements of our bodies (called kinesics), our use of space (called proxemics), and our use of time” (p. 143) because they believe that these three aspects are directly relevant to intercultural communication. Levine and Adelman (1982) who are also engaged in intercultural communication include gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and space within their discussions of nonverbal communication (p. 44-47).

Knapp and Hall (2002) make a more detailed classification of nonverbal behaviors (p.7-10). They first categorize nonverbal communication into “three primary units: the environment structures and conditions within which communication takes place, the physical characteristics of the communicators themselves, and the various behaviors manifested by the communicators” (Knapp & Hall, 2002, p.7), and then a detailed breakdown of the three features has been provided. The communication environment is broken down into physical environment, including “furniture, architectural style, interior decorating, lighting conditions, colors, temperature, additional noises or music, and the like” (Knapp & Hall, 2002, p.7), and spatial environment which mainly focuses on proxemics. The communicators’ physical characteristics cover such things like physique or body shape, height, hair, and artifacts which may affect their physical appearance, such as jewelry, lipstick, clothes. Body movement and position is further divided into gestures, postures, touching behavior, facial expressions, eye behavior, and vocal behavior. Condon and Yousef (1975) summarize 24 kinds of nonverbal forms; however, they point out that it is impossible and unnecessary to make an exhaustive list of all the nonverbal means. Chinese scholar Bi Jiwan (1996), after sorting out and integrating different scholars’ categorizations, puts forward his classifications of nonverbal communication which are taken as frame of reference in this paper since he incorporates other researchers’ major categorizations within his classificatory system and presents comprehensive classifications of nonverbal communication. Bi classifies nonverbal forms into four categories, each of which includes some sub-categories. A brief description of Bi’s classification system is presented below.

1) **Body language.** Body language includes movement of the whole body or certain parts of the body. Posture, head gesture, facial expression, eye movement, hand gesture and touching behavior fit into this category.

2) **Paralanguage.** Paralanguage embraces silence, turn-taking, and vocal nonverbal sounds such as pitch, volume, intonation of the speech, etc.

3) **Object language.** Object language refers to those material things which have the effect of expressing some features about the displayer. Clothes, furniture, personal artifacts can all be used as objects for expressive display.

4) **Environmental language.** Environment is part of nonverbal communication, too. It includes space (crowdedness, proxemics, territoriality, seating arrangement), time, architectural arrangement and interior decoration, lighting, color, and signs.

### IV. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

Nonverbal codes do not merely occur in daily conversations. Literary writers also make enormous descriptions of nonverbal communication in their works. In this paper, Jane Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice* is taken as an example to illustrate the roles played by nonverbal forms and explain in the meanwhile how they contribute to plot-developing, characters-shaping and theme-revealing.

#### A. Operating with Verbal Expressions

As is mentioned previously, nonverbal cues usually appear together with verbal symbols. The meaning of each communication is to be found and understood by incorporating both nonverbal and verbal forms. Just as Knapp and Hall (2002) have noted, “because verbal and nonverbal systems operate together as part of the larger communication process, efforts to distinguish clearly between the two have not been successful” (p. 11). Ekman (1965) (cited in Knapp & Hall, 2002, p.12) summarizes the following roles that nonverbal forms play in interrelating with verbal behaviors: “repeating, contradicting, complementing, substituting, accenting/moderating, and regulating”. The following part is going to explain some of the functions with examples from *Pride and Prejudice*.

##### 1. Complementing verbal expressions

Nonverbal cues can help clarify verbal messages. At the first ball in Hertfordshire, Darcy said to Mr. Bingley:

(1) “You’re dancing with the only handsome girl in the room,” said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet. (Austen, 1983, p.9)

The direction in which Darcy casts his eye shows who he is referring to as the only handsome girl. Though the referent can be inferred from the later plot development even without the nonverbal cue, the eye movement undoubtedly helps shorten the inferring process and clarify the verbal message.

The supplementary function of nonverbal cues can also be seen in their description of verbal expressions. The scene in the following excerpt happens after Mr. Bingley suggests introducing Elizabeth to his friend Darcy. Darcy's sequence of nonverbal behaviors modify his verbal remarks and display his attitude towards Elizabeth.

(2) "Which do you mean?" and turning around, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me..."

(Austen, 1983, p.9)

This is the first time that Elizabeth and Darcy meet each other face to face. Nonverbal behaviors in this excerpt involve body movement (turning around), eye movement (looked, catching her eye, withdrew his own), time message (for a moment), and the tone (coldly). Usually it's impolite for a person to stare undisguisedly at another person that s/he meets for the first time; however, Darcy does that. Another socially unacceptable behavior is that Darcy keeps staring at Elizabeth and does not stop looking at her until she looks back. Tone falls into the category of paralanguage. "Coldly" describes the tone in which Darcy speaks, and with that, Darcy's arrogance has been pictured. In this excerpt, Darcy's nonverbal behaviors along with his verbal remark "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me..." depict Darcy's haughty image and also plant seeds of prejudice against Darcy in Elizabeth. The above analysis shows that nonverbal forms help reflect the theme of the novel: pride and prejudice.

### 2. Substituting verbal expressions

The supreme power of nonverbal forms is manifested in its substitution for verbal phrases. In most cases, it is the context that requires use of nonverbal codes to replace verbal expressions. For example:

(3) The next variation which their visit afforded was produced by the entrance of servants with cold meat, cake and a variety of all the finest fruits in season, but this did not take place till after many a significant look and smile from Mrs. Annesley to Miss Darcy had been given to remind her of her post.

(Austen, 1983, p.236)

A group of lady visitors, Miss Bingley, her married sister Mrs. Hurst, Elizabeth, her aunt Mrs. Gardiner, have paid their visit to Darcy's place, Pemberley. According to the social custom, Darcy's younger sister, Miss Darcy, is supposed to show hospitality as a hostess. However, because of her being shy, timid, and socially inexperienced, Miss Darcy has forgotten to ask the servant to bring things to entertain the visitors. Mrs. Annesley, the butler, certainly cannot engage her master into actions even with a friendly reminder because servants are not supposed to ask their master to do things. Besides, the immediate local context, in which guests have already been seated and not many conversations are being carried out, does not allow Mrs. Annesley to deliver a verbal reminder. If Mrs. Annesley said something to Miss Darcy, attention would be directed to the talking parties. Hence, it seems that anything in the verbal form may cause embarrassment for Miss Darcy. Under such circumstances, the imperceptible nonverbal forms are just perfect to serve Mrs. Annesley's purpose and keep Miss Darcy's dignity.

### 3. Contradicting verbal expressions

More commonly words and actions are in harmony, but sometimes words do not correspond to behaviors. In such cases, nonverbal behaviors are considered more reliable because most of them are performed subconsciously and less controllable. So they are more likely to reveal one's genuine intentions and feelings. For example:

(4) Miss Bingley moved with alacrity to the piano-forte, and after a polite request that Elizabeth would lead the way, which the other as politely and more earnestly negatived, she seated herself.

(Austen, 1983, p.44)

Miss Bingley has been longing to be Mrs. Darcy. So when Darcy asks for some music, Miss Bingley is too impatient to wait and moves to the piano before Elizabeth has a chance to. Though she still pretends to be polite to ask Elizabeth to come first, her action (moved with alacrity, seated herself) has already exposed her real intention. Thus, her words are incredible. Besides, the contradiction between Bingley's words and her action reveals her character: hypocrisy and contempt.

## B. Revealing Emotional State

Miller (1984) claims that only 7% of feelings and attitudes are conveyed by words while nearly 93% are done through nonverbal means. Eisenberg and Smith (1971) also admit that nonverbal communication is better suited for the projection of emotional states.

(5) He observed to her, at a moment when the others were talking together, and in a tone which had something of real regret, that "it was a very long time since he had had the pleasure of seeing her;" and before she could reply, he added, "It is above eight months. We have not met since the 26th of November when we were all dancing together at Netherfield."

(Austen, 1983, p.231)

The talk occurs between Mr. Bingley and Elizabeth. Bingley has not seen Miss Bennet since he left Hertfordshire, and he is trying to tell Elizabeth how much he misses her sister, Miss Bennet. The occasion (at a moment when the others were talking together) exhibits that the talk is private. The tone in which Bingley speaks (in a tone which had something of real regret) shows that Miss Bennet has occupied a special place in his heart. According to Hall (1973), time and space can talk and they speak more plainly than words. The descriptions of time "a very long time", "above eight months", "26th of November" and place "Netherfield" serve as eloquent evidences that Bingley has remembered clearly every detail related to Miss Bennet and he has cherished deep and enduring love towards her.

Literary writers are good at keeping the message from readers and creating suspense in them. As is known, one's inner state and emotions are not easy to describe. The writer sometimes will choose to describe the characters' nonverbal behaviors and let readers themselves speculate about the characters' inside world. The role of nonverbal communication in disclosing emotional state and in creating suspense in *Pride and Prejudice* can never be illustrated more eloquently than the description of the accidental encounter between Wickham and Darcy.

(6) Elizabeth happened to see the countenance of both as they looked at each other, was all astonishment at the effect of the meeting. Both changed color, one looked white; the other red.

(Austen, 1983, p.64)

Wickman's father used to take care of Darcy's father's property, and they were on very good terms with each other. Darcy's father took Wickman as his godson and supported him all the way through college hoping him to become a clergyman. However, after Darcy's father died, Wickman immediately stopped all the work in church and lived a life of idleness and dissipation. When being refused to get further financial support from Darcy, Wickman devised a scheme to win Darcy's fifteen-year-old sister Georgiana's heart and even lured her into elopement. Fortunately, Georgiana acknowledged the whole to Darcy and avoided the misfortune.

Given subtle relationship between them, Wickham and Darcy are unlikely to talk to each other and must have had mixed feelings towards their unexpected meeting. Austen does not make many descriptions about their meeting; instead she just portrays their facial expressions to let readers themselves make speculations. Knapp and Hall (2002) note: "Most studies of the face are concerned with the configurations that display various emotional states. The six primary effects receiving the most study are anger, sadness, surprise, happiness, fear, and disgust" (p. 10). Readers, at this point, haven't been told what has happened between Wickham and Darcy, so they must be very eager to find out. Right after this excerpt, Austen interacts with her readers by saying: "What could be the meaning of it? — It was impossible to imagine; it was impossible not to long to know" (Austen, 1983, p.64). This scene proves to be one of the crises (the point during the plot when the action reaches its turning point) in *Pride and Prejudice*. Important events ensue from this crisis: Elizabeth's curiosity about what could have happened between Wickham and Darcy has brought herself into contact with Wickham; Wickman's distorted messages about Darcy intensify Elizabeth's prejudice against him; Elizabeth's sister, Lydia elopes with Wickham; Darcy delivers a letter to clarify what has happened between him and Wickham.

### C. Displaying Social Customs

Like language, nonverbal forms are acquired in a particular culture. Therefore, they can reveal social customs as well. But nonverbal cues are more evident and direct than verbal codes in showing social customs in that they can be perceived directly with one's sense receptors.

(7) "... and so I let down the side glass next to him, and took off my glove, and let my hand just rest up the window frame, so that he might see the ring..."

(Austen, 1983, p.279)

It's a custom in western countries that married people usually wear a ring on the ring finger. Lydia on her way home makes use of this custom to show off to Mr. Goulding. The "ring" which belongs to artifacts is speaking in a silent way here, that is, being married.

(8) She then joined them soon enough to see Lydia, with anxious parade, walk up to her mother's right hand, and hear her say to her eldest sister, "Ah! Jane, I take your place now..."

(Austen, 1983, p.280)

In Britain, right-hand place symbolizes higher position. Usually, seating arrangements were made according to age. But once *marriage* intervened, *age* had to yield. Jane is the eldest in her family, so according to age ranking, she certainly has the privilege to sit to her mother's right hand. However, after Lydia has got married, Jane has to go lower and Lydia takes her place to sit to Mrs. Bennet's right hand. That's why Lydia says "Jane, I take your place now..."

### D. Marking Social Identities

Sometimes, even if we don't initiate a conversation with a stranger, we may still obtain some information about him/her through the nonverbal cues, such as clothes, accessories, and mannerism. Britain is known as a hierarchical society in which distinction between different social classes is clearly marked. People of noble origin labeled their status as apparently as possible. Emblems, attire and home decoration are all used to display their power and dignity. Carriage was a major means of transportation in Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries which *Pride and Prejudice* depicts and when Jane Austen lived. The carriage did not only function as a major transport carrier, but could tell the user's social status and identity as well just like today's car. According to Bi's classification (1999), carriages fall into the category of object language. The following examples are going to show how the carriage as a nonverbal code conveys information.

At the ball in Hertfordshire, Darcy's arrogance towards Mrs. Long is assigned as the following by Mrs. Bennet:

(9) "... and I dare say he had heard somehow that Mrs. Long does not keep a carriage and had come to the ball in a hack chaise."

(Austen, 1983, p.15)

As is mentioned above, carriage was considered as kind of status marker; therefore, those without a carriage were generally considered both economically and socially underprivileged. Mrs. Long does not have a carriage herself, so she

has to hire a carriage, which only turns out to be a hack chaise — a carriage pulled by old and tired horses.

(10) ... when the sound of a carriage drew them to the window, and they saw a gentleman and lady in a curricie, driving up the street. Elizabeth immediately recognizing the livery, guessed what it meant....

(Austen, 1983, p.202)

*Curricie* refers to a light two-wheeled carriage usually drawn by two horses abreast. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the livery, a special uniform worn by servants, designated which family the carriage belonged to. That's why Elizabeth can conclude that the visiting gentleman and the lady may be Mr. Darcy and Miss Darcy.

When the carriage of Mrs. Jenkinson, the butler, and Miss De Bourge stops in front of Mr. Collins' house:

(11) Maria ran upstairs to tell Elizabeth that there is a sight to be seen. "It was two ladies stopping in a low phaeton at the garden gate."

(Austen, 1983, p.141)

The phaeton is a light open four-wheeled carriage pulled by two horses. It was mainly used by the upper class but it was not commonly seen in the eighteenth century any more. So it is assumed that the phaeton is possessed by people of noble origin and is handed down from the older generation. The family name "De Bourge" verifies this conjecture because "De" is only used by those of "blue blood."

(12) Their attention was suddenly drawn to the window by the sound of a carriage; and they perceived a chaise and four driving up the lawn.

(Austen, 1983, p.311)

This excerpt describes Lady Catherine's coming to the Bennets. After she has got to know that her nephew Darcy, who was expected to marry her own daughter, is going to marry Elizabeth, she goes to talk to Elizabeth in person with bad grace. A *chaise and four* means that the carriage is drawn by four horses. And the number of horses shows that the coming visitors must be of wealth and high social position.

The foregoing discussion shows that a carriage can represent one's wealth and social status and people of different classes also choose a carriage which conforms to their identity. The examples (9)-(12) have shown that social status is largely proportional to the number of wheels and horses a carriage has, that is, the more horses and wheels there are, the higher one's status is.

Turn-taking, as part of nonverbal communication, is usually clearly marked during conversations. For example, slowing down the speech may suggest that the speaker is going to finish his/her part and ready to yield the turn whereas speeding up the speech may indicate that the speaker intends to hold the turn. Normally conversations consist of two or more participants taking turns. A current speaker usually makes pauses for others to pick up the turn. The basic pattern of talk is "I speak — you speak — I speak — you speak" (Yule, 2000, p.71). If a speaker violates this basic pattern, additional information will be imparted. For example:

(13) When the ladies returned to the drawing room, there was little to be done but to hear Lady Catherine talk, which she did without any intermission till coffee came in.

(Austen, 1983, p.146)

In this example, Lady Catherine does not obey the basic pattern of talk exchange. She speaks "without any intermission"; in other words, she monopolizes the whole talk and deprives others of chances to speak. This shows that Lady Catherine acts in a haughty, pompous, and domineering manner totally relying on her social status.

## V. CONCLUSION

To study communication is to examine all the ways in which human beings send information and integrate their actions and feelings, in other words, is to study both verbal and nonverbal communications. However, the traditional study of communication has been mainly concentrating on verbal aspects. In fact, nonverbal forms play a very important role not only in face-to-face interaction but also in literary works. Taking *Pride and Prejudice* as an example, this paper illustrates how nonverbal communication helps convey verbal messages and makes contributions in revealing characters' feelings, marking their social status, and exhibiting social customs.

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# Designing and Validating a Scale Measuring Cultural Capitals of Iranian University Students Majoring in English

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**Abstract**—This study aimed to design and validate a Persian cultural capital scale (CCS) with Iranian university students majoring in English language, literature and translation as well teaching English as a foreign language. To this end, twenty more cultural capital indicators specified by researchers were added to eleven compiled by Khodadady and Zabihi (2011) and administered to 381 English students of five universities in Mashhad, Iran. When the data were submitted to Principal Axis Factoring and rotated via Varimax with Kaiser Normalization eight rotated factors whose Eigenvalues were one or higher were extracted, i.e., *Cultured Family*, *Cultural Commitment*, *Cultural Investment*, *Religious Commitment*, *Cultural Visits*, *Literary and Art Studies*, *Art Appreciation*, and *Literate Family*, indicating that cultural capital is not a unitary construct. The reliability and correlation analysis of the CCS and its underlying factors showed that they enjoy acceptable levels of reliability and correlate significantly with each other. The results are discussed and suggestions are made for future research.

**Index Terms**—cultural capital, factors, validity, English language

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ever since Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1986) brought up the concept of cultural capital (CC) in sociology, a great number of research projects have been conducted to find out how it relates to education. More important than the concept was the provision of a number of indicators through which the relationship could be explored, e.g., museum visits, reading habits, theater attendance and classical music appreciation.

While some authors such as Farkas et al (1990) interpreted CC in terms of informal academic standards, e.g., as homework completion and good citizenship, rewarded by teachers, others tried to find more culture-based indicators. Dika and Singh (2002) and Lareau and

Weininger (2003), reviewed the literature and provided a relatively comprehensive list of these indicators. Based on their most frequently cited indicators, Khodadady and Zabihi (2011) [henceforth K&Z] developed a 35-item questionnaire which dealt not only with the CC but also with social capital (SC). The CC section of the questionnaire consisted of 11 items whereas the SC section contained 24.

K&Z administered their 35-indicator social and cultural capital questionnaire (SCCQ) to 173 (43%) undergraduate students majoring in Persian language and literature and 230 (57%) undergraduate and graduate students majoring in English language and literature at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and Mashhad Azad University. They hypothesized that all the items would load on two factors representing to the logically established SC and CC factors. Contrary to their expectations, however, 32 indicators loaded on ten factors, i.e., *literacy*, *parental consultation*, *family-school interaction*, *family support*, *extracurricular activities*, *family relationship*, *parent-school encouragement* and *facility*, *cultural activities*, *peer interaction* and *religious activities*.

Among the three indicators which did not load acceptably, i.e., .30 and higher, on any factor, two were cultural, i.e., i.e., *I enjoy listening to classical music*, and *I am a cultured person* and one was social, i.e., *I see my grandparents weekly*, in nature. From among the remaining nine CC indicators, four loaded on the first factor called *Literacy* by K&Z, i.e., *I enjoy reading (in general)*, *I frequently borrow/buy books*, *I know a lot about literature*, and *I enjoy reading literature*. Four other indicators loaded on the eighth factor called *Cultural Activities*, i.e., *I know all famous music composers*, *I frequently visit museums and theaters*, *I used to take art or music classes outside school*, and *I know a lot about literature*.

K&Z's extraction of two factors from eight cultural indicators thus showed that CC is not a unitary concept and could possibly have other underlying factors if it was administered in a different context or more indicators were included in an expanded CC scale. Although the literature on 21-item religious orientation scale (ROS), for example, followed Allport and Ross (1967) and adopted a two dimensional view, i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic, Khodadady and Golparvar

(2011) showed that it embodies four within an Islamic context. Similarly, when Khodadady and Bagheri (2012) added 12 religious indicators to the ROS and administered it to 536 undergraduate students, they extracted seven factors, i.e., *Inspirational, Intrinsic, Social, Concessional, Theo-pacific, Humanitarian* and *Sacrificial*.

The present study was, therefore, designed to expand the CC section of K&Z's SCCQ into a single and comprehensive CCS by including as many CC indicators as possible. It was also decided that the expanded CCS be administered to students of a specific and controlled field, i.e., English language, literature and translation in order to homogenize the sample. This practice is based on the findings of Khodadady, Alaei and Natanzi (2011) [henceforth KA&N] who administered the K&Z's SCCQ to seven hundred and six female high school learners studying at grade 1, 2 and 3 in Mashhad, Iran.

Table 1 presents the factors which were extracted from the CC indicators by K&Z and KA&N. As can be seen, the very educational level of sample to which the CC section was administered has affected not only the number of indicators loading acceptably on the extracted and rotated factors but also the percentage of variances they explain in the SCCQ. While the *Literacy* factor extracted by K&Z consist, for example, of four indicators and explain 6.3 out of 47.7% of variance, only two indicators of this factor load on *Literary and Artistic Appreciation* extracted by KA&N and together with another indicator explain 4.1 out of 40.1%, in the SCCQ. These results inspired the present researchers to develop a single and comprehensive CCS and administer it to a specific sample whose field is controlled.

TABLE 1.  
FACTORS EXTRACTED FROM CC INDICATORS BY K&Z AND KA&N

Study	Factor name	Factor rank	Constituting indicators	Variance explained
K&Z	<i>Literacy</i>	First	I enjoy reading (in general). I frequently borrow/buy books. I know a lot about literature. I enjoy reading literature.	6.3 out of 47.7%,
	<i>Cultural Activities</i>	Eighth	I know all famous music composers. I frequently visit museums and theaters. I used to take art or music classes outside school. I know a lot about literature.	4.1 out of 47.7%,
KA&N	<i>Literary and Artistic Appreciation</i>	Fifth	I know a lot about literature. I enjoy reading literature. I enjoy listening to classical music.	4.1 out of 40.1%,
	<i>Reading Enjoyment</i>	Eighth	I enjoy reading (in general). I frequently borrow/buy books.	3.2 out of 40.1%,

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Participants

Three hundred eighty one, 245 female (64.3%) and 136 male (35.7%), undergraduate university students took part in this study voluntarily. One hundred seventy three (45.4%), 60 (15.7%), 52 (13.6%) and 96 (24.5%) were freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior university students, respectively. They were majoring in English Language and Literature (n = 136, 35.7%), Teaching English as a foreign Language (n = 165, 43.3%), and Translation (n= 80, 21.0%) at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Imam Reza, Khayyam University, Mashhad Azad and Tabaran universities. Their age ranged between 18 and 41 (Mean = 22.56, SD = 3.56) and spoke Persian as their mother language.

### B. Instruments

Two instruments were developed and used in this study, i.e., a bio questionnaire and cultural capital scale.

#### *Bio Questionnaire*

Six open-ended questions dealing with the participants' age, mother language, sex, field, year and place of study comprised the bio questionnaire. The marital status and the educational background of the participants' fathers and mothers were also raised in the questionnaire. However, due to their irrelevance to the present study they were not reported. (The relationship of these variables with the CCS and its factors will be explored in a separate paper.)

#### *Cultural Capital Scale*

The Persian cultural capital scale (CCS) designed in this study consists of 31 indicators presented as statements dealing with certain cultural tendencies and behaviors of participants. Statement one, i.e., *I like to listen to music*, for example, is considered as a cultural indicator by scholars such as Borocz (1986), Noble and Davies (2009), Robinson and Garnier (1985) and Sullivan (2001). The participants were required to indicate whether they always, usually, often, seldom or never exhibited the 31 indicators in their everyday life. The values of 5, 3, 2, and 1 were then assigned to these five points to quantify the elicited responses, respectively.

In addition to music, the CCS deals with interest in theatre and television (e.g., Davies, Ganzeboom, DeGraaf & Robert, 1990; Katsillis & Robinson, 1990), going to museum (e.g., Dimaggio, 1982; Fyfe, 2004), going to art galleries and taking art courses (e.g., DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004), cultural trips (e.g., Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999), self-image (e.g., DiMaggio, 1982), general information (e.g., Reay, 1998), sports (e.g., Stempel, 2005), parents (e.g.,



Kalmijn & Kraaykamp 2009), higher education (e.g., DeGraf & **Kraaykamp, 2000**; Brook, 2008; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Williams & Dawson, 2011), religion (e.g., Gamoran & Boxer, 2005), books (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997), self-expression (e.g., Blackledg, 2001, Carter, 2003, Heritage, 1993) and literary studies (e.g., Robinson & Garnier, 1985).

### C. Procedures

Upon developing and having the questionnaires printed and copied, the instructors offering various fields related to the English language were contacted in five private and state universities and their cooperation was sought. Some instructors allowed the researchers to distribute the questionnaires in a single session in their presence after they secured the verbal agreement of their students to fill them out voluntarily. The researchers thus administered the two instruments in person in 2011 and encouraged the participants to raise whatever questions they had. Since both the bio questionnaire and CCS were in Persian and the indicators of the CCS had been revised several times, no particular questions were brought up by the participants.

### D. Data Analysis

For estimating the reliability of the CCS, Cronbach's Alpha was employed. Along with reliability analysis, Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was employed to extract the latent variables underlying the CCS. The factors were then rotated via Varimax with Kaiser Normalization so that a clear picture of their loadings could be obtained. The highest loading of any indicator which loaded acceptably on more than one factor was kept as its main contribution to the construct under investigation and its other acceptable loadings were removed from both reliability and correlation analysis. All the statistical tests were run via IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0 to answer the following three hypotheses.

H1. The CCS will be a reliable measure of cultural capitals.

H2. The factors underlying the CCS will be reliable.

H3. The factors underlying the CCS will correlate significantly with each other.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the CCS. As can be seen, the alpha reliability coefficient obtained for the CCS is 0.87, *confirming* the first hypothesis that *the CCS will be a reliable measure of cultural capital*. If the coefficient of .60 is considered acceptable (e.g., Landau & Everitt, 2004) then the CCS is a highly reliable measure of social capital. It is also noticeably higher than the coefficient obtained on the 11-item CCS subscale developed by KA&N, i.e., .73, indicating that the CCS developed in this study is more comprehensive and reliable than the K&Z's. (The descriptive statistics of indicators comprising the CCS are given in Appendix A).

TABLE 2.  
THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS OF CCS

CCS	N	# of items	Mean	SD	Alpha
Present study	381	31	95.85	17.595	.87
K&Z	403	11	42.24	7.458	.76
KA&N	696	11	40.77	9.456	.73

Upon establishing the reliability of the answers given to the CCS, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of Sampling Adequacy was applied to the data and the KMO statistic of .83 was obtained showing that the sample selected in the study was "meritorious" (DiLalla & Dollinger 2006, p. 250) and the factor analysis employed would probably provide the best common factors. The significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, i.e.,  $X^2 = 4016.835$ ,  $df = 465$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicated that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix.

Table 3 presents the initial and extracted communalities obtained from the 31 CC indicators. As can be seen, the extraction communalities range from .76 (Item 10) to .18 (Items 6 and 26). Although Costello and Osborne (2005) suggested communalities in the order of .40 to .70 in social sciences be considered acceptable, this study suggests *the communalities of whatever items loading acceptably on a factor be accepted*. As will be shown shortly, since they have lowest extraction communalities items 6 and 26 do not load on any factors extracted in this study.

TABLE 3.  
INITIAL AND EXTRACTED COMMUNALITIES OBTAINED VIA PAF

Item	Initial	Extraction	Item	Initial	Extraction	Item	Initial	Extraction
I1	.339	.390	I12	.471	.538	I23	.309	.327
I2	.369	.564	I13	.474	.493	I24	.263	.227
I3	.337	.354	I14	.489	.568	I25	.461	.544
I4	.464	.537	I15	.493	.526	I26	.248	.184
I5	.501	.748	I16	.424	.496	I27	.394	.509
I6	.200	.180	I17	.351	.369	I28	.253	.298
I7	.334	.301	I18	.566	.588	I29	.388	.411
I8	.506	.550	I19	.608	.699	I30	.603	.655
I9	.507	.512	I20	.431	.491	I31	.524	.558
I10	.622	.764	I21	.380	.408			
I11	.370	.451	I22	.315	.291			

Table 4 presents the eight rotated factors extracted via the PAF, Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. As can be seen, eight items loaded acceptably, i.e., .30 and higher, on more than one factor, i.e., 1, 3, 7, 16, 21, 27, 30 and 31. The highest loading of these indicators on a given factor was considered as its main contribution to the construct under investigation and its lower cross loadings on other factors were removed. For example, indicator one, *I like to listen to music*, loaded -.32 on factor 4 but had a higher and positive loading on factor 7, i.e., .51. Based on the arbitrarily adopted rule, the first negative and lower cross loading was, therefore, removed in the reliability and correlational analyses of factor four.

TABLE 4.  
ROTATED FACTORS EXTRACTED FROM THE CCS

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I1	*	*	*	-.32	*	*	.51	*	I17	.54	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
I2	*	*	*	*	*	*	.71	*	I18	.74	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
I3	*	*	*	*	.35	*	.38	*	I19	.78	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
I4	*	*	*	*	.68	*	*	*	I20	.60	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
I5	*	*	*	*	.83	*	*	*	I21	.35	.50	*	*	*	*	*	*
I6	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	I22	*	.46	*	*	*	*	*	*
I7	*	*	.39	*	*	.33	*	*	I23	*	.52	*	*	*	*	*	*
I8	*	*	.68	*	*	*	*	*	I24	.30	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
I9	*	*	.69	*	*	*	*	*	I25	*	*	*	.66	*	*	*	*
I10	*	*	.85	*	*	*	*	*	I26	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
I11	*	.60	*	*	*	*	*	*	I27	.32	*	*	*	*	*	*	.59
I12	*	.63	*	*	*	*	*	*	I28	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	.50
I13	*	.56	*	*	*	*	*	*	I29	*	*	*	*	*	.49	*	*
I14	*	*	*	.70	*	*	*	*	I30	*	*	*	*	.40	.54	*	*
I15	*	*	*	.67	*	*	*	*	I31	*	*	*	*	*	.45	*	.35
I16	.39	*	*	.58	*	*	*	*									

\* Loadings less than .30

As it can also be seen in Table 4, neither indicator 6, *I prefer to eat in traditional eateries than in fast food restaurant*, nor 26, *I solve cross-word puzzles in my free time*, load on any factor. These two items have the lowest extraction communalities and do not bear on latent variables underlying the CC in Mashhad, Iran. Since these two indicators did not load on any factor, the reliability of the CCS was calculated two times. As shown in Table 5, the alpha reliability coefficient (RC) of the CCS decreases very slightly to .86 when indicators 6 and 26 are removed from analysis.

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of the eight rotated factors underlying the CCS. As can be seen, the alpha RCs range from .49 to .76, confirming the second hypothesis that *the factors underlying the CCS will be reliable*. While factors two and three have the highest RC, i.e.,  $\alpha = .76$ , factor one has the lowest,  $\alpha = .49$ . The low RC of this factor can, however, be considered acceptable because Khodadady (2009) obtained .57 on the 34-item Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) when he administered it to 418 university students. Following Khodadady it is argued that the heterogeneous nature of items constituting factor one has contributed to its relatively low RC.

TABLE 5.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS OF FACTORS UNDERLYING THE CCS

Factor	No of items	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	% of Variance explained	Alpha
1	5	17, 18, 19, 20, 24	21.69	4.712	8.208	.490
2	6	11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 23	17.72	5.346	7.422	.759
3	4	7, 8, 9, 10	12.73	4.150	7.197	.762
4	4	14, 15, 16, 25	9.54	3.761	6.967	.626
5	2	4, 5	5.69	2.149	5.692	.768
6	3	29, 30, 31	9.20	3.246	3.989	.756
7	3	1, 2, 3	10.46	2.699	3.880	.583
8	2	27, 28	5.26	2.091	3.517	.605
CCS	29		90.40	16.707	46.873	.86
CCS	31		95.85	17.595	-	.87

Table 6 presents the correlation coefficients (CCs) obtained among the factors comprising the CCS. As can be seen, with the exception of factor 3 which does not correlate significantly with Factor 1 only, the other seven factors do correlate significantly with each other and thus confirm the third hypothesis that *the factors underlying the CCS will correlate significantly with each other*. Factor 7 correlates significantly and positively with the other factors, it does, however, show negative but significant relationship with factor 4. These correlations will be discussed shortly.

TABLE 6.  
CORRELATIONS COEFFICIENTS OBTAINED AMONG THE CCS AND ITS EIGHT FACTORS

No	CCS & Factors	CCS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	CCS	1	.66**	.75**	.58**	.51**	.52**	.73**	.42**	.52**
1	<i>Cultured Family</i>	.66**	1	.43**	.09	.34**	.12*	.35**	.14**	.55**
2	<i>Cultural Commitment</i>	.75**	.43**	1	.30**	.26**	.27**	.40**	.24**	.31**
3	<i>Cultural Investment</i>	.58**	.09	.30**	1	.16**	.30**	.42**	.22**	.19**
4	<i>Religious Commitment</i>	.51**	.34**	.26**	.16**	1	.24**	.26**	-.15**	.19**
5	<i>Cultural Visits</i>	.52**	.12*	.27**	.30**	.24**	1	.45**	.30**	.13*
6	<i>Literary and Art Studies</i>	.73**	.35**	.40**	.42**	.26**	.45**	1	.38**	.36**
7	<i>Art Appreciation</i>	.42**	.14**	.24**	.22**	-.15**	.30**	.38**	1	.12*
8	<i>Literate Family</i>	.52**	.55**	.31**	.19**	.19**	.13*	.36**	.12*	1

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

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

As it can also be seen in Table 6, factors 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are called *Cultured Family*, *Cultural Commitment*, *Cultural Investment*, *Religious Commitment*, *Cultural Visits*, *Literary and Art Studies*, *Art Appreciation*, and *Literate Family* in this study, respectively. The descriptive statements of capitals loading on these factors as well as the two indicators having no acceptable loadings on any factors are given in Appendix B. The number of factors as well as the acceptable loading of each indicator on a single factor are also given in the appendix.)

The first factor, *Cultured Family*, consists of five indicators, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 24, and out of 46.9% of variance in the CCS it explains 8.2%. It represents families who communicate well with the members of their society, attend sports classes and like to continue their education at higher levels. These activities and inclinations provide the basis for Mashhadi English students to consider not only their families but also themselves cultured. *Cultured Family* correlates the highest with the eighth factor, *Literate Family*, i.e.,  $r = .55$ ,  $p < .01$ , and thus explain 30% of variance in each other.

Six capitals, i.e., 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, and 23, load acceptably on the second factor, *Cultural Commitment* and explain 7.4% out of 46.9% of variance in the CCS. It entails reading scientific magazines and buying newspapers regularly every day as the two highest loading activities, i.e., .63 and .60, respectively. Studying magazine articles dealing with culture, visiting news and political websites, watching documentaries and using internet to accomplish official tasks also contribute to *Cultural Commitment*. It correlates the highest with the sixth factor, *Literary and Art Studies* ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and shares 16% of variance with it.

Four capitals, i.e., 7, 8, 9 and 10, load acceptably on the third factor, *Cultural Investment*, explaining 7.2% out of 46.9% of variance in the CCS. Among the four, indicator 10, *I buy lots of books, study and keep them in my library*, has the highest loading (.85) on factor 3. Along with purchasing books, factor four requires having a library at home, enriching it with new books, having extracurricular study in leisure time and becoming a member of libraries. Similar to *Cultural Commitment*, *Cultural Investment* correlates the highest with *Literary and Art Studies* ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, it shares slightly more variance with factor 6, i.e., 17%.

Among the eight factors, *Cultural Investment* is the only factor which does not show any significant relationship with *Cultured Family*, implying that English students who invest in their studies do not necessarily believe that they belong to a cultured family whose main activity is attending sports classes. Nor is *Cultural Investment* necessarily dependent upon the inclination to strive for higher education. In other words, it stems from a more intrinsic motivation than an external or instrumental one.

The fourth factor, *Religious Commitment*, comprises the indicators 14, 15, 16 and 25, explaining 6.97% out of 46.9% variance in the CCS. It involves listening to religious radio stations, attending commentary classes on the *Quran* and hadith, i.e., what is reported from the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and visiting the shrines of Imams and their offsprings. It correlates the highest with the first factor, *Cultured Family* ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and shares 12% of variance with it.

*Religious Commitment* is the only factor which relates negatively to the seventh factor, *Art Appreciation* ( $r = -.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that the more committed English students are to their religion, the less they appreciate art. Although the amount of variance *Religious Commitment* explains in the *Art Appreciation* is really small (2%), it calls for further research exploring whether the factors extracted from CC indicators are influenced by the students' field of study.

The fifth factor, *Cultural Visits*, comprises two indicators, i.e., 4 and 5, having the acceptable loadings of .68 and .83, respectively, and explaining 5.7% out of 46.9% of variance in the CCS. It involves visiting handy-craft galleries as well as museum and historical places. It reveals the same amount of significant relationship with *Cultural Investment* and *Art Appreciation* ( $r = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), explaining nine percent of variance in each other.

The sixth factor, *Art Visits*, which comprises indicator 29, 30 and 31, does however, show the highest correlations with *Cultural Visits* ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It entails not only visiting art exhibitions and attending art courses but also showing interest in literature and poetry along with having literal studies. While it explains 3.99% out of 46.9% of variance in the CCS, it increases to 20 percent of variance in its fifth factor, *Cultural Visits*, showing how closely arts and culture are related to each other.

Indicators 1, 2 and 3 comprise the seventh factor, *Art Appreciation*, upon which they load .51, .71 and .38, respectively. As a latent variable underlying cultural capital, *Art Appreciation* accrues as a result of liking to attend art

courses, liking to listen to music and play a musical instrument and enjoying watching theoretical performances on television. It explains 3.88% of variance in the CCS and correlates the highest with *Art Visits* ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ).

Indicators 27 and 28 loaded acceptably, i.e., .59 and .50, respectively, on the eighth and last factor, *Literate Family*, explaining 3.52% out of 46.9% of variance in the CCS. The undergraduate university students who are brought up by literate families have parents who study in their leisure time and can communicate in English as a foreign language in Iran. It correlates the highest with the first factor, *Cultured Family* ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ) and shares 30% of variance with it.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The 11-item cultural capital section of the composite questionnaire developed on both cultural and social capitals by K&Z was expanded into a single scale in the present study by modifying them and adding 20 more indicators identified by a number of researchers. The single 31-item cultural capital scale (CCS) was then administered to 381 undergraduate university students majoring in English language and literature, teaching English as a foreign language and English translation in five universities in Mashhad, Iran, in 2011. When the Principal Axis Factoring was applied to the answers collected and latest variables having Eigenvalues of one and higher were rotated via Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, eight factors appeared, i.e., *Cultured Family*, *Cultural Commitment*, *Cultural Investment*, *Religious Commitment*, *Cultural Visits*, *Literary and Art Studies*, *Art Appreciation*, and *Literate Family*.

The results of this study show that not only the CCS itself but also its eight factors are reliable. Furthermore, the majority of factors not only correlate significantly with the CCS but also with each other. As the first factor explaining the highest variance in the CCS, *Cultured Family* does not, however, show any significant relationship with *Cultural Investment*, calling for further research to find out why Mashhadi students do not relate their being cultured to cultural investment as materialized by self declaration of having a library at home and buying and studying books at leisure time.

Out of eight factors, six correlated significantly and positively with each other. *Religious Commitment*, however, was the only factor which showed significant but negative correlation with *Art Appreciation*, indicating that the more religiously committed the English students are, the less they listen to music, attend art courses, play musical instruments and enjoy watching theoretical performances on television. Future research must show whether the CCS developed in this study reveal any significant relationships with abilities such as English language achievement and proficiency and whether gender and family education play any significant role in the relationships.

#### APPENDIX A

THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ITEMS COMPRISING THE CCS (N = 381)

Item	Mean	SD	Missing %	Never %	Seldom %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %
I1	4.4	0.804	0	0	3	12	27	58
I2	3.47	1.437	1	12	17	17	18	35
I3	2.59	1.32	1	24	25	26	13	11
I4	2.92	1.166	0	10	29	30	19	12
I5	2.77	1.219	1	15	27	29	19	9
I6	3.08	1.236	1	10	20	28	27	13
I7	3.1	1.352	1	13	23	23	21	20
I8	3.35	1.148	1	5	17	33	26	19
I9	3.31	1.569	1	18	17	10	20	34
I10	2.97	1.329	1	14	26	21	22	16
I11	2.5	1.357	2	28	23	20	17	9
I12	2.84	1.202	3	10	26	32	20	9
I13	2.9	1.271	3	11	21	35	18	13
I14	2.01	1.189	3	40	27	17	9	4
I15	1.9	1.121	2	45	27	15	8	3
I16	3.01	1.213	3	10	17	36	24	11
I17	3.76	1.166	3	2	7	21	39	29
I18	4.11	1.17	4	1	2	10	37	45
I19	4.27	1.113	3	1	2	9	29	55
I20	4.39	1.201	3	2	5	6	13	71
I21	3.78	1.283	3	4	9	17	30	37
I22	3	1.396	3	16	18	22	25	16
I23	2.71	1.395	2	22	21	24	17	14
I24	3.26	1.366	4	7	15	30	20	23
I25	2.63	1.305	2	19	29	23	16	10
I26	2.37	1.354	3	30	26	19	12	10
I27	3.36	1.31	3	7	12	29	26	23
I28	1.9	1.155	2	45	28	14	6	4
I29	3.35	1.411	2	10	16	22	22	28
I30	3.03	1.242	3	9	19	32	24	13
I31	2.82	1.3	2	15	25	26	21	11

## APPENDIX B

INDICATORS COMPRISING THE CCS AND THE FACTOR UPON WHICH THEY LOAD

No	Capital	Factor	Loading
1	I like to listen to music.	7	0.51
2	I like to attend art courses and play an instrument.	7	0.71
3	I enjoy watching theatres on TV.	7	0.38
4	I visit museum and historical places.	5	0.68
5	I visit handy-craft galleries.	5	0.83
6	I prefer to eat in traditional eateries than in fast food restaurant.		
7	I have library membership	3	0.39
8	I have extracurricular study in my leisure time	3	0.68
9	I have personal library in my room and add new books to that.	3	0.69
10	I buy lots of books, study and keep them in my library.	3	0.85
11	I buy newspapers regularly every day.	2	0.60
12	I read scientific magazines.	2	0.63
13	I study cultural part of the magazines	2	0.56
14	I listen to religious radio stations	4	0.70
15	I attend commentary classes on the Quran and Hadith	4	0.67
16	I visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza regularly.	4	0.58
17	I have fluency in my speech and others understand me easily	1	0.54
18	I am a cultured person	1	0.74
19	I have grown up in a cultured family	1	0.78
20	I like to continue my education to higher level	1	0.60
21	I watch documentaries on TV	2	0.50
22	I use internet for doing my different official works.	2	0.46
23	I visit news and political websites	2	0.52
24	I attend sport classes	1	0.30
25	While traveling , I prefer to visit shrines of Imam's offspring	4	0.66
26	I solve cross-word puzzles in my free time		
27	My parents study in their leisure time	8	0.59
28	My parents can communicate in English	8	0.50
29	I am interested in literature and poetry and have literal study	6	0.49
30	I visit art exhibitions	6	0.54
31	I attend art courses.	6	0.45

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# Methods of Teaching EST from the Stylistic Perspective and the Content of EST Reading

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**Abstract**—To meet the requirements of the present job-hunting market, Huaqiao Foreign Languages Institute has set up English for Science and Technology (EST) courses for the senior students majored in English, which consist of Reading of EST and EST Translation. This article, mainly dealing with EST reading, discusses some tentative teaching methods from the perspective of stylistic features and EST reading content in order to cultivate the students with problem-solving capabilities.

**Index Terms**—EST reading, stylistic features, content-based instruction(CBI)

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, many foreign language schools have already opened or are planning to offer the course of English for Science and Technology (EST) but with no much effectiveness, subject to the limitation of teaching materials, faculties and other unfavorable factors. English major students will lose the chances to play their roles if they cannot find the right way to master both the foreign language and scientific knowledge. Therefore, how to cultivate undergraduates with applied competence becomes an upmost topic for every course reformation in Jilin Huaqiao Foreign Languages Institute (HUAWAI).

EST course is a senior optional course for students with interest or higher expectations in their future career, so the teacher is greatly mobilized. EST teaching consists of reading of EST and EST translation, which are closely related. EST course not only focuses on some scientific vocabularies and stylistic knowledge related to EST, but also emphasizes the content of EST. This paper only puts emphasis on the teaching methodology of EST reading. Practical teaching methods can improve the students' self-learning ability, which determines their competitive capacity and developing capacity. The article puts forward some ideas about the teaching method of EST reading from the perspective of stylistic features and content.

## II. STYLISTIC FEATURES OF EST

EST is indeed a large variety, which contains many different aspects such as the English of medicine, the English of biology, the English of mathematics, the English of physics, etc. It is widely applied in the description or explanation of natural phenomena, academic thesis, research papers, scientific works and experimental reports. Above all, EST is a variety of English, dealing with the theories and applications of science and technology. We are trying to adopt the teaching method of EST reading from the perspective of stylistics, which is based on content and aims to help the students have a better understanding of EST, a new kind of domain for most of them.

EST is an applied English style with its own special words, grammatical structures and expressions, which shows its characteristics of accuracy, objectivity and conciseness. Therefore, EST can be well comprehended by analogy from the perspective of stylistic features.

### A. In Vocabulary

There are three kinds of words in EST, namely technical words, semi/sub-technical words and non-technical words. The technical words refer to the words that can exactly explain definite concepts in a specific field of science and technology. They are used to register and express phenomena, processes, characteristics, relationships, conditions and quantities, etc. in the given field, for example laser, spaceship, isotope. Technical words account for 21% of EST vocabulary. One term only has one meaning, so students have no difficulty in reading and comprehending them with the help of specific reference books. Semi-technical words are also called sub-technical words, whose use is not only confined to scientific and technological contexts. Some of them are formed from Latin or Greek roots and they have also been taken from everyday language and given precise definitions for scientific use. Therefore, the meanings of these words in their technical use are likely different from their non-technical meanings, such as power, module, force,

mass, etc. Semi-technical words take up 70% of EST vocabulary, each having a different meaning in a different field, which causes difficulty for language studying students. So it is necessary for teachers to spend more time and efforts on semi-technical words. Non-technical words, on the one hand, are understood to be words and expressions which are seldom found outside scientific English, for example convert (change), prior to (before), simultaneously (at the same time), etc. They seem to avoid the ambiguity or imprecision of more commonly used words with the apparent meanings. According to statistic analysis, the non-technical words only account for 9%.

### B. In Grammar

The EST writing is accurate, clear, rigorous, objective and logical, so it has the following features in grammar.

In EST writings complex sentences are often simplified into simple sentences by changing verbs, adjectives or other parts of speech into nouns that is nominalization structures. Nominalization is more formal than its counterpart, therefore more frequently occurring in EST. In this kind of structure, objective facts are stressed to make the expression of concept more accurate. For example,

- (1) *Sawing of wafers* results in loss of silicon as sawdust.
- (2) Among the improvements were automation and change in the method of *sawing boule into wafers*.
- (3) Television is the transmission and reception of images of *moving objects by radio waves*.

In EST non-finite phrases take the place of attributive clauses or adverbial clauses to make the expressions concise and its structure compact. For example,

(4) Astropower straddles the line between bulk and film material, growing a relatively thick film of polycrystalline silicon on a low cost substrate.

(5) Consisting of a cylindrical cathode surrounded by a tube-shaped anode, this source works in conjunction with an electron beam evaporator, with the plasma assisting the deposition process.

In EST writing, passive voice is used more frequently by the scientists. Though passive voice sentences are frequently used in EST, there are also some active voice sentences to replace passive voice sentences, such as (1) active voice sentence showing passive voice meaning; (2) sentence with intransitive verb as predicative indicating passive voice meaning; (3) active voice form of gerund used as object showing passive voice meaning. For example,

- (1) This article explores the measurement for weak magnetic field present in the human body.
- (2) Aluminum machines faster than other metals.
- (3) These instruments need very careful handling.

Besides these sentences, stative sentences also belong to the active voice sentences. For example,

The system *is composed of an undersea acoustic beacon*.

The sensor *is housed in a support assembly* when the gear is down locked.

Using active voice sentences in EST is becoming a trend. It makes the expression concise and vivid with dynamic sense.

At present, many universities in China have established some professional EST courses, and some others are preparing for setting up similar courses. Though EST courses have been carried out for a rather long time, the result is not quite satisfactory. Students have not mastered the skills required as the universities had expected, although they have attended the EST courses. It becomes crucial for the teachers to carry out the teaching reforms so as to find the appropriate teaching approaches. The traditional EST teaching put too much emphasis on the EST vocabulary, words translation and stylistic explanation, ignoring the content of true technical articles. Thus, it is significant to find an appropriate teaching method to focus on both the content and the language.

## III. EST READING BASED ON CONTENT

The trend of instruction which integrates language and content has been a popular phenomenon in the language field since the early 1980s. According to Crandall and Tucker's definition, content is clearly academic subject matter. While Genesee (1994) suggests that content "...need not be academic; it can include any topic, theme or non-language issue of interest or importance to the learners" (p. 3). Met (1999) has proposed that "... 'content' in content-based programs represents material that is cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner, and is material that extends beyond the target language or target culture" (p. 150). Although content is used with a variety of different meanings in language teaching, it most frequently refers to substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it.

The term CBI is commonly used to describe approaches to integrating language and content instruction, but it is not always used in the same way. For example, Crandall and Tucker (1990) define it as "...an approach to language instruction that integrates the presentation of topics or tasks from subject matter classes within the context of teaching a second or foreign language" (p. 187). Curtain and Pesola (1994) use the term in a more restricted way, limiting it to only those "...curriculum concepts being taught through the foreign language...appropriate to the grade level of the students" (p. 35). Krueger and Ryan (1993) distinguish between content-based and form-based instruction, and note that the term discipline-based more appropriately captures the integration of language learning with different academic disciplines and contents. In general, CBI refers to an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of



syllabus.

#### A. *The Rules of CBI*

In carrying out CBI there are several rules that we must obey. Firstly, the teaching decision is based on the teaching content. From the perspective of curriculum design of teaching writing, the traditional teaching method usually follows the order ranging from the easy to the difficult. For example, the present continuous tense is usually placed at the elementary stage, for it is the very easiest for learners to grasp. Whereas CBI subverts the choice and order employed in traditional teaching method, it completely gives up the language points as the threshold and gives priority to the content in teaching.

Secondly, it is filled with integration of the four basic learning skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Previous teaching method often employs one or two of specific skills in the language learning. But CBI tries to integrate the four basic skills, which includes the grammar and vocabulary items in a teaching program. The order of the four basic skills is not fixed or immutable; on the contrary, it can start from any skills. This rule, the extension of the first one, is the concrete reflection on the choice or sequence of teaching items decided by content.

Thirdly, students are required to actively participate in every level of teaching. Since the communicative approach began to prevail in teaching methods, the center of classroom teaching has been turned to the learners. Learning by doing has become the basic principle of language teaching. Task-based teaching is one branch of communicative approach, which emphasizes that students must gain knowledge through different tasks. CBI is also a branch of communicative approach, which emphasizes studying and participating in any activities actively. In CBI classroom, students and teacher play a variety of roles in teaching.

Fourthly, the selection of content must be relevant to the students' interests and learning style. The choice of content in CBI is usually in parallel with the teaching subjects. Thus, in schools, foreign language teaching content can come from other subjects such as history or science.

Fifthly, the combination of the authentic text and applied task must be followed. The hardcore of CBI is the authenticity, which gives the priority to authentic text and real task. Authenticity is not limited to the content of teaching materials such as a ballad or a story, cartoon pictures can be used as practical teaching assistant in language learning too. Tasks must be connected with certain context and reflect the actual situation of real world.

Lastly, CBI emphasizes the study of language structure. It will expose students to authentic language input to make them gain the ability in language for communication. The sources of information in CBI can be all kinds of media related to content and simple input can not lead to successful language learning. Towards the language structure in authentic texts, we must take a direct approach to raise awareness of learning.

For us CBI means understanding the content of a text rather than remembering some technical terms, which can help the students know better about principles, techniques or some knowledge. Although language learning students and science students vary in some aspects, more attention to the way of thinking of scientific researchers is beneficial for students to foster comprehensive abilities. We tried to do some empirical research on whether CBI can be effectively applied into EST teaching. The research aims at the application of CBI in EST teaching. The final goal of the research is to prove that CBI is an effective teaching approach for EST reading in China.

#### B. *Models of CBI*

The rules of CBI can be applied to the design of courses for learners at any level of language learning. Generally speaking, CBI can be classified into the following models.

##### 1. Theme-based Language Instruction

Theme-based Language Instruction refers to the syllabus which is designed due to different themes or topics such as environment protection, legal rights (Brinton et al, 1989). The language syllabus is organized according to the theme. In the process of a course, the topic must be introduced at the beginning, and then other classroom activities are followed. Such as guided discussion, audio or video materials, listening comprehension and written assignment, during which language analysis and practice can be carried out at the same time. Under this model, the content is not only the basis of the course design, but also the basis of language analysis and practice. The disadvantages of the model lied in that the teachers must concentrate all their attention on the research of the teaching materials, while the learners can review the vocabulary and concept in a circling way so as to improve their expressing ability. This mode is applied in a broad way, because it can be used in different teaching environments. This model put emphasis on learning strategies, concepts, tasks and skills.

##### 2. Sheltered Content Instruction

Sheltered Content Instruction refers to content courses instructed in the second language by a content field expert, to a team of ESL learners who have been gathered to accomplish their desire of learning the course. The experts are believed to explain the content in a comprehensible way using the language and task at a proper level of difficulty. Characteristically, the instructors will select the appropriate content according to ESL learners' capacity. In the process of the course, the instructors will make their course easier if they find the content is difficult for the students to accept.

##### 3. Adjunct Language Instruction

Adjunct Language Instruction means that students are required to participate in two connected courses, that is, a content course and a language course. Both courses are based on the same content and complement each other in terms

of mutually coordinated assignments. This model requires a large amount of coordination to ensure that the two curricula are interlocking and this may require modification to both courses (Shih, 1986).

An adjunct course focusing on the science takes both ESL teachers and science teachers into consideration in the aspect of the course, which focuses on preparing students to make the transition to learning science through the English. The adjunct course focused on the following aspects: a) understanding specialized science terminologies and concepts; b) report writing skills; c) grammar for science; d) note-taking skills.

This model requires students master the professional knowledge through the language. It should be carried out by both content teachers and language teachers. The language teachers take the responsibility to make the students familiar with the professional knowledge by reading some professional books and listening to the professional teachers' classes. The schedule of the course requires the cooperation between professional teachers and language teachers.

There are some advantages and disadvantages for the three models. Theme-based Language Instruction can be applied under the environment of a variety of courses. Therefore, it can be applied to second language learners. The sheltered model is only suitable for the second language learners at a higher level; whereas, the adjunct model is only applied to the second language learners from an ordinary level to a professional level. In short, they are suitable for second language learners at different levels or teaching environments. If necessary, we may combine the features of all three models and establish a new teaching model.

#### IV. CRITICAL THINKING OVER EST READING

Content-based instruction, short for CBI, is the combination of a specific topic or academic content and language teaching, which enables students to get access to information through a second language in the process of developing language skills. Currently, the linguists and scholars from the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries widely employ CBI in language teaching, proving it to be an effective teaching method of subject integration. The emergence of CBI shed a bright light to the EST teaching. Scholars both at home and abroad did some researches on how CBI can be effectively applied in teaching and they drew the conclusion that CBI is an effective way for EST teaching.

In the process of application of CBI in EST reading, we proposed that the EST teaching should be dealt with from three points of integration: the integration of teaching and theme, the integration of theme and task, and the integration of task and goal. As we know, classroom teaching must be closely connected with the theme of the teaching content. Only the theme is centered can we enhance classroom teaching effectiveness and the interaction between teachers and students truly take place. At the first point, we switch students' attention to the real theme content when they are reading EST at school. At the second point, theme and task are combined to cultivate the four basic skills. This requires teachers not only to illustrate the content, but also to arrange some practical task such as reading, writing and translating practice for students to complete. At the third point, the combination of task and goal enables students to apply what they have learned in EST class to objective reality, or their learning skills. In addition, after class activities also play a significant role in implementing CBI. The teachers can provide students with relevant reading materials including books, magazines and video CDs associated with the themes in order to develop students' interests and help students understand reading content in learning EST.

##### A. *Specialized Knowledge Explanation for Accurate Understanding*

Since CBI is a teaching approach which integrates the language and the content, the teacher just concentrated on the teaching of the text itself in the research. The textbook that the students are reading in HUAWAI is called 'Practical EST Reading' which has been newly published based on content. All the texts selected in the book are in close connection with the development of EST. This reading book includes 12 units, covering knowledge of some advanced technology such as automotive night vision, autonomous cow-milking robot, solar energy, laser etc. The textbook was completely written on the basis of technical content by EST teachers in Changchun University of Science and Technology (CUST), and the EST course has been employed by CUST for several years. We also chose the book as our major textbook used in EST class.

A lot of professional knowledge is involved in the reading material. Take the text of 'Solar Cells' for instance, by means of PPT specifically made, students can learn the structure of a solar-cell module, and understand the growth of polycrystalline as a starting material for cells as well as thin-film fabrication for low-cost cells. All key words relating to the technical domain are picked up as the teaching focuses in class. For example,

Part of the motivation for thin-film silicon work is its ability to use layers of silicon only a few microns thick, rather than the freestanding silicon wafers that are hundreds of micron thick. (The freestanding silicon wafers refer to the bulk ones, using thin-film silicon can save a lot of materials for fabrication of solar cells).

The manufacturing plant uses a roll-to-roll continuous deposition process that deposits nine layers of film on a 35cm wide and 762m long substrate. (Film system design is mentioned here, the film consists of nine layers).

In order to create a harmonious atmosphere or to improve the classroom efficiency, the classroom teaching must be strictly connected with the theme of every unit. In this way students can concentrate their energies on key points of teaching content.

##### B. *Arousing Students' Interest from a Real Case*

To promote students' learning motivation, or to reduce students' fear of science, the teacher should introduce some relevant information to EST texts through a series of lectures at the beginning of class. Take the text of 'Solar Cell' for instance, solar energy can be applied in the following four fields: photothermy, solar generated power, photochemical reaction and photo-biologic application. Mr. Huang Ming, the President of Huang Ming Group Company and Vice-chairman of International Solar Energy Society, puts forward G (Green) Energy Alternative Strategy. According to the plan, solar power will take the place of 50% of the traditional energy. Mr. Huang Ming has built up a "solar city" in Dezhou City, Shandong Province in China, where all energy used by the city is from solar energy. Obviously, solar cells have a greater potential market. Students good at English and with a good knowledge of the solar field will play an important role in future career. The introduction to a real case stimulates students' interest and increases their confidence, so students will study the EST vigorously and persistently.

### C. *Teaching on Demand of Market*

The teaching goal of EST is to further improve the students' reading comprehension ability and comprehensive analyzing ability through EST learning. Students are required to read the authentic language materials, expand EST vision, and get familiar with the writing code of EST style. EST has been taught for many years in some colleges and universities without any unified textbook, and it is impossible to have any common textbook in the future. The English departments in some universities of science and technology take their professional edges as the teaching content, while the EST reading textbooks adopted by comprehensive universities are mainly derived from some well-known publishers. In HUAWAI, EST course is offered to cultivate capable graduates in order to meet the need of job-hunting market, or specifically speaking, to train them to perform well in small or medium sized enterprises with foreign language.

As early as in the millennium year of 2000, scientists predicted that one of the most vigorous industries in the new era is in the line of photoelectronics, which will change our lives in ways beyond our imagination. According to statistics, the number of optoelectronic enterprises in China, big or small, has grown from 415 in 2008 to over 7000 with a significant portion of export. Therefore, there is a great need for talents in the field.

Photoelectronic technology ranges widely, and our teaching content focuses on the most prosperous aspects such as robots, solar cells, laser application, optical coating and light-emitting diodes etc. to help students to learn some essential knowledge about science and technology for employment and professional development, or to foster students' ability of science expression.

### D. *Fostering Students' Creative Thinking*

The article 'Solar Energy' analyzes the factors which influence the cost of solar cells, including the raw material, interconnections and encapsulation. The silicon wafers represent about a third of the cost of a module. So it is essential to lower cost from material. Scientists tend to use layers of silicon only a few microns thick, rather than the freestanding silicon wafers that are hundreds on microns thick. Semiconductor-grade silicon offers lower cost and does not degrade. With thin-film silicon, aluminum frame is not necessarily used. As for interconnection, research is underway to develop a cell geometry that would place all the contacts on one side—this would simplify interconnection, which greatly reduces the cost. To prolong the lifetime of a module is the best way to save cost. The introduction to photovoltaic knowledge on how to lower the cost of solar cells helps students train their logical thinking.

Innovation is actually pretty hard but "not difficult", with the analogy of permutations in mathematics. For a crutch, the most conspicuous parts are "handle" and "tip". New products come out after grouping of a set of things. The analogy is too simple, but it can help students understand creativity better. In the process of teaching, elicitation and reflection would produce interaction between the teacher and students, which finally results in satisfactory effects on teaching and learning.

## V. CONCLUSION

Recently the new teaching method of EST has been investigated in China. Being double-duty EST teachers, we would never stop learning advanced sciences and technology in order to follow the trends in the teaching of foreign languages. We would hold more extracurricular activities to solve the problem of less classroom activities. Besides PPT made by our teachers, any other kinds of measures are taken for the EST contents. Such as popular science lectures arranged at intervals of a semester and new tech exhibitions attended are very helpful for the students to deepen their understanding of sciences and cultivate their problem-solving capacities independently. Actually EST teaching innovation is a permanent subject for our teaching staff, which needs time and efforts. We are eager to communicate with teachers who are dealing with the same problems.

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# The Relationship between Self-esteem, Personality Type and Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Students

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**Abstract**— This study aimed at investigating the relationship between self-esteem, personality type and reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students. Data of this study were collected by administering a questionnaire of self-esteem including three sections: global self-esteem, situational self-esteem and task self-esteem, questionnaire of personality type measuring extroversion and TOEFL reading comprehension test that were prepared by the researcher. The instruments were administered to a random sample from English Institutes. The sample consisted of 55 students (13 males and 42 females). Pearson Coefficient-Moment Product Correlation was used to determine the relationship between variables. Results of the study revealed that there was a positive relationship between overall self-esteem and reading comprehension, and overall self-esteem and personality type, in general. Likewise, positive relationships between situational and task self-esteem with reading comprehension were shown but there wasn't a significant relationship between global self-esteem and reading comprehension. Also the relationship between personality type and reading comprehension was insignificant.

**Index Terms**—self-esteem, personality type, reading comprehension, relationship

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, learning English has become a necessity all over the world. English is the most common language in the world. Learning English requires mastering of the four language skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is the most important academic skill. In spite of this crucial role of reading, many students still have problems concerning reading. This seems true even if the learners have a considerable amount of linguistic knowledge. Therefore, it can be suggested that there are some non-linguistic factors in the process of reading comprehension. Anders (2002) claims that language learning is affected by both domains which are the mental and emotional sides of human behavior.

Two important factors that affect the process of reading and consequently the process of comprehension are the reader variable and the text variable. Reader variables are the strategies used by readers, their background knowledge, motivation, personality, self-esteem and sex. In recent years, the importance of these factors has been of interest in the field of language learning because of their high effects on learning a foreign or a second language (Anders, 2002). One of the important reader's variable is personality.

In modern language teaching today, relating individually with the students on academic basis and trying to learn more about the student profile provides further advantages for the language learner and the teacher to meet the program goals and objectives. Here, the personality of the student appears to be in the core of the issue.

Much research regarding reading has been concerned with the attempt to identify individual differences (ID) as source of large variances typically obtained in measures of reading comprehension. The major IDs have tended to be cognitive like intelligence or achievement like GPA. The role of personality has been much less a concern of researchers (Farely, 1970). Schmeck (1988) makes it clear that is important and useful to identify "educationally relevant personal attributes," but researchers seem to be doing less and less in this area. For example, the yearly *IRA Annual Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading* annually includes up to 800 studies, but over the past five years has listed fewer than a dozen studies on the relationship of personal variables and reading comprehension (Weintraub, 1992).

People differ from one another depending on their personalities. Wilz (2000) expresses the need for personality type understanding on the part of the teacher: "An awareness of student personality types allows teachers to have a better understanding of the classroom dynamics and to be better able to determine what kinds of classroom activities and strategies would be most effective with a majority of students in the class" (p, 29). Experts think that an understanding of personality types can help teachers explain why students approach tasks differently. Some of them succeed while

some fail (Oxford&Ehrman, 1990; Wilz 2000). In research, extroversion appears to receive great attention by scholars to study among other traits in personality (Davies, 2004).

Many second language teachers somehow feel that a student with an outgoing personality is more likely to be successful as a second language learner than his less sociable classmate. Coleman (1960) found that student's personality is among variables that is related to achievement.

Self-esteem is an extremely popular construct within the field of psychology and has been related to virtually every other psychological concept or domain, including personality (Asadi, 2010). Success is not measured by how much one gains but of how satisfied one is with one's work (Daniel & King, 1995; Grandin, 2002). Hence, a person should put a high value for his performance and be confident of his achievement because those judgments he makes are the drive for mastering proficiency (Stout, 2001). Moreover, Branden (1985) indicates that the biggest barrier to success is not lack of ability or talent but it is lack of self-esteem. Researchers found self-esteem affects achievement. Brown (2000) maintains that "no successful activity can occur without some degree of self-esteem"(p.145).

Demo and Parker (1987) believe that in real situations both self-esteem and language learning are interacting variables, in the sense that language learning can affect the degree of self-esteem and vice versa; that is to say, by strengthening one, the other factor will be strengthened.

Self-esteem has two aspects: self confidence which is the sense of efficacy and self respect which is the sense of worthiness (Branden,2001). So, self-esteem reflects the student's feelings about one's self. Stevick (1990) states that "learning is affected by how students feel about themselves" (p.25). Traditionally, self-esteem is frequently used in related literature synonymously with the terms "self-concept", "self-competence" and "self-efficacy" although they are different (Pajares & Johnson, 1993; Daniel & King, 1995). To differentiate between the two concepts, McCarthy & Schmeck (n.d.) assume that "self-concept is the most significant cognitive structure organizing an individual's experience, while self-esteem is the most influential affective evaluator of this experience" On the other hand, Branden (2001) views self-efficacy as a part of self-esteem. Rosenberg (1979) believed self-concept was slow forming, with many changes taking place in middle childhood and adolescence, and the self-concept is never static but continues to change throughout one's life.

Most studies (Branden, 1988; Apter, 1998; Murk, 1999; Branden, 1999; Coopersmith, as cited in Timothy et al., 2001) consider self-esteem as the personal judgment, opinion and the internal attitude of one's self. If this judgment is positive, it will lead learners to success. If it is negative, it leads to troubles and low academic achievement. In other words, students who feel good about themselves are the ones who most likely to do better. Likewise, important people in one's life such as parents, friends or teachers form ones' view about the self. A person consciously or unconsciously adopts others' judgments and deals with them as reality (Roberts, 2003). In brief, the internal picture of oneself is drawn by judgments made of the person him/herself or by people around him. Others could build or damage self-esteem by their positive or negative views.

Various aspects of learning language skills are affected by self-esteem. A number of studies (Heyde, 1979; Hassan, 1992; Truitt, 1995; Shumin, 1997; Timothy et al., 2001) concluded that self-esteem is strongly correlated with oral communicative proficiency and low self-esteem students cannot express themselves with confidence. Similar results yielded in the area of writing (Frankburger, 1991; Grodnick, 1996; Cronwell & Mackay, 1999; Hassan, 2001) indicated that self-esteem can affect writing success. In addition, other studies (Hutchison, 1972; Sweet, 1977; Richardson, 2003) indicated that self-esteem can affect reading. Throughout the above mentioned studies, it is found that most of those studies focus on the relationship between self-esteem and reading more than its relationship to personality. Little attention has been paid to the association of self-esteem, personality and reading comprehension. Consequently, the present study tries to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, personality and reading comprehension among Iranian EFL students.

Due to the aforementioned discussion, these null hypotheses are posed:

- 1) There is no significant relationship between overall self-esteem and reading comprehension.
- 2) There is no significant relationship between global self-esteem and reading comprehension.
- 3) There is no significant relationship between situational self-esteem and reading comprehension.
- 4) There is no significant relationship between task self-esteem and reading comprehension.
- 5) There is no significant relationship between extroversion and reading comprehension.
- 6) There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and extroversion.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section studies related to self-esteem, personality and language skills are included. Reza Hajimohammadi (2011) explored the impact of self correction on extrovert and introvert students in EFL writing process.120 pre-intermediate students were chosen through Nelson English Language Test and EPQ. They were categorized in two groups extroverts and introverts and the expository topics were administered to them in a 5 week period. The study revealed that personality type had no significant effect on writing.

Achmat Qomarudin (2010) investigated the relationship between extroversion and English writing skill in Indonesia.30 students studying in 8<sup>th</sup> semester of English were selected randomly. The researcher collected data through

Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) and transcript scores of students. The results showed that there was a positive relation between extroversion and writing skill.

Ismail Erton (2010) investigated the relationship between personality type and success in foreign language achievement. Maudsley's 'Personality' and Barsch's 'Learning Styles' inventories were distributed to freshman students studying at the Faculty of Engineering, Science, Economics, Fine Arts, and Humanities & Letters in Bilkent University, who received the English 101 course in their first year at the university. The findings showed that there is not a statistically strong, but a low relationship between the personality traits of the learners and success in language achievement.

Gheedjz (2010) investigated the relationship between personality type, test anxiety, self-esteem and academic achievement, which was measured by the students GPA. The study was conducted at a university in Indiana using undergraduate students. He administered a scale from the MBTI to determine personality types (introvert or extrovert), also Rosenberg's 10 - item scale for self-esteem, and Spielberger's test anxiety inventory. The hypothesis was that extraverts who have a higher self-esteem, and low test anxiety would have better success with academic achievement than those who are introverts with low self-esteem and high test anxiety. It was found in this study that there was no significant relationship between personality type, test anxiety, self-esteem and academic achievement.

Majid Hayati and Mohsen Ostadian (2008) investigated relationship between listening and self-esteem. 60 intermediate students were selected through proficiency test. Coopersmith test and TOEFL listening comprehension were administered to them. The results showed that their listening comprehension was significantly affected by self-esteem.

Fahimeh Mavedat (2006) explored students' writing and personality type of the students. 86 male and female graduate and undergraduate EFL students were given the Meyers-briggs type indicator. The average of students' scores on writing as well as final and midterm served as an index of writing. Analysis of the data showed that there is no significant relationship between extroversion and writing.

Ameerah Ali Moqbel (2006) investigated the relation between self-esteem and writing. A questionnaire of self-esteem including 3 sections and English writing achievement test were administered to 81 students. Pearson coefficient correlation was used to show correlation. The results indicated that there's a positive relation between self-esteem and writing in general.

Toeko Oya (2004) explored the relation between personality and anxiety characteristic of Japanese students and their oral performance in English. Participants were 73 native speakers of Japanese who were studying English. Maudsley personality inventory, Spielberg state anxiety inventory and story retelling task were administered to the students. Results showed students who were more extraverted produced better performance.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Participants

The participants were randomly selected from male and female students enrolled in English institutes. All students were adults. Participants consisted of 55 students studying in advance levels. Advanced students were selected so that they could answer TOEFL reading comprehension tests.

#### B. Materials

To investigate the relationship between self-esteem and personality on reading comprehension test three instruments are used. The first one is questionnaire of self-esteem (QSE) by Hyde (1979) and the second one is short form revised Eysenck personality questionnaire (EPQ-S) by Eysenck (1985) and the third one is TOEFL reading comprehension test. Reliability and validity of them were checked. Due to the fact that TOEFL is a standard test its reliability and validity are assumed to be satisfactory. Since only reading comprehension of TOEFL was administered to the students, reliability and validity of the test were checked. Cronbach alpha of .890 was obtained. Since it measured one construct, it was a valid test. The reliability and validity of QSE were checked. To determine the reliability of the QSE, the Split-half Method was used. The questionnaire was divided into odd and even numbers, thirty items each. Then the Correlation between the two parts was computed using Spearman-Brown Formula. Results are shown in the table 1.

TABLE 1.  
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE TWO HALVES (ODD & EVEN) OF THE QSE

items	Std.Deviation	mean	Spearman's correlation
Odd	.594	3.97	.900**
Even	.451	3.69	

The correlation between the two halves of the QSE was .900, it was statistically significant at the level of 0.01. Based on these results, the QSE is reliable. Intrinsic validity was obtained by applying the following formula: Intrinsic validity =  $\sqrt{\text{Reliability item}}$  Intrinsic validity of the QSE =  $\sqrt{.900} = .948$

The intrinsic validity was .948. Based on this result, the QSE is a valid tool. The reliability and validity of EPQ-S were checked. In this study Cronbach alpha of .703 was calculated. This result showed that it has internal consistency.

To ensure the content validity of the test, the committee members' advice was sought. Each strongly confirmed the appropriateness of the test.

### C. Procedure

Data collection was done in two sessions at Baran and SILDI Institutes in February 2012. First, TOEFL reading comprehension test was administered to the participants. The students were given 55 minutes to answer TOEFL reading comprehension test. The following session, they were asked to answer QSE in 25 minutes and after a short break EPQ-S was administered to them. They were asked to return them in 5 minutes. The researcher himself administered the questionnaires and the test. He explained to the respondents the purpose and the procedures of the questionnaires and the test.

The participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and would not affect their marks. The researcher also made the students aware of the fact that their participation would help all Iranian learners to learn English more efficiently. In short, all required information was given to the participants before administering the instruments, information like how to answer the questions and the test.

Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). To answer research questions Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to identify the strength and the direction of the relationship between variables.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### A. Hypothesis 1

To investigate the first hypothesis, coefficient of correlation between overall self-esteem and reading comprehension was calculated and they were shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN OVERALL SELF-ESTEEM AND READING

		reading
overall	Pearson Correlation	.337(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012
	N	55

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

The correlation between overall self-esteem and reading comprehension was  $r = .337$ . The correlation between the two variables was significant at the level of 0.01.

This level of Pearson Coefficient Correlation indicated that the correlation was positive. This means that there was an association between the dependent and independent variables. When student's self-esteem increases his/her achievement in TOEFL reading comprehension increases and vice versa. Based on this result, the first null sub-hypothesis was rejected.

### B. Hypothesis 2

To investigate the second hypothesis, coefficient of correlation between global self-esteem and reading comprehension was calculated and they were shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN GLOBAL SELF-ESTEEM AND READING

		reading
global	Pearson Correlation	.204
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.136
	N	55

The correlation between global self-esteem and TOEFL reading comprehension test, as shown in Table 3 was  $r = .204$ . This level of Pearson Coefficient of Correlation indicated that there was no relationship between the two variables. This means that it is not necessary that; when student's global self-esteem increases his/her achievement in English reading comprehension test may increase and vice versa because the correlation between the two variables was insignificant. Based on this result, the second null hypothesis was accepted.

### C. Hypothesis 3

To investigate the second hypothesis, coefficient of correlation between situational self-esteem and reading comprehension was calculated and they were shown in Table 4.



TABLE 4  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SITUATIONAL SELF-ESTEEM AND READING

		reading
situational	Pearson Correlation	.455(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	55

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

The correlation between situational self-esteem and TOEFL reading comprehension test, as shown in Table 4 was  $r = .455$ . This level of Pearson Coefficient of Correlation indicated that the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level. This means that there was a relationship between the two variables. When student's situational self-esteem increases, his/her achievement in reading comprehension test increases and vice versa. In light of this result, the third null hypothesis was rejected.

#### D. Hypothesis 4

To investigate the fourth hypothesis, coefficient of correlation between task self-esteem and reading comprehension was calculated and they were shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN TASK SELF-ESTEEM AND READING

		reading
task	Pearson Correlation	.319(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018
	N	55

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

The correlation between task self-esteem and TOEFL reading comprehension test, as shown in Table 4 was  $r = .319$ . This level of Pearson Coefficient of Correlation indicated that the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level. This means that there was a relationship between the two variables.

#### E. Hypothesis 5

To investigate the fifth hypothesis, coefficient of correlation between personality and reading comprehension was calculated and they were shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND READING

		reading
personality	Pearson Correlation	.214
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.117
	N	55

The correlation between extroversion and TOEFL reading comprehension test, as shown in Table 4.13 was  $r = .214$ . This level of Pearson Coefficient of Correlation indicated that there was no relationship between the two variables. This means that it is not necessary that; when a student is extrovert, his/her achievement in English reading comprehension test may increase and vice versa because the correlation between the two variables was insignificant. Based on this result, the fifth null hypothesis was accepted.

#### F. Hypothesis 6

To investigate the sixth hypothesis, coefficient of correlation between personality and self-esteem was calculated and they were shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND SELF-ESTEEM

		overall
personality	Pearson Correlation	.352(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008
	N	55

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

The correlation between self-esteem and extroversion, as shown in Table 4.14 was  $r = .352$ . This level of Pearson Coefficient of Correlation indicated that the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level. This means that there was a

relationship between the two variables. When a student is extrovert, his self-esteem increases and when he is introvert his self-esteem decreases. In light of this result, the sixth null hypothesis was rejected.

Extroversion had no significant relationship with reading comprehension. It is in agreement with findings like those of Naiman et al (1978), Suter (1976) and Busch (1982) who state that there is no significant relation between extroversion/ introversion measure and performance on listening comprehension, pronunciation, reading and grammar since the introverts tended to have higher scores in these tasks. Others, on the other hand, claim that "extroverts showed to be better in oral communicative speech, and have lower levels of anxiety thanks to their good physiological equipment to resist stress". (see Ellis 2004, pp. 541-42).

The above mentioned results of the present study revealed that self-esteem is positively correlated with reading comprehension and extraversion. This means that when student's self-esteem increases his/her achievement in reading comprehension increases and conversely when student's self-esteem decreases his/her achievement in reading comprehension decreases. Furthermore, when a student is extrovert his self-esteem increases and when he is introvert his self-esteem decreases. This result is consistent with studies reported by Swartz (1972); Gardner (1972); Hutchinson (1972) and Sweet& Burbach (1972) who found that self-esteem strongly impacts reading comprehension. The results are also in agreement with studies reported by Yi Xue Za (2006) who found that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and extroversion. But it is in contradiction with findings of Gheedjz (2010) who found no relationship between self-esteem and extroversion. The finding of the present research about an insignificant relationship between personality and reading comprehension is in agreement with the findings of Hosseini & Kafipour (2011) and Farely & Truog (1971). On the other hand the results are in contradiction with studies by Vivan (2006) and Riding & Cowley (2011) who found a significant relationship between personality and reading.

## V. CONCLUSION

Self-esteem is found to be an important affective factor. It plays a considerable role in reading comprehension. Self-esteem should be taken into consideration as a serious issue when planning English lessons. EFL teachers should take into consideration the individual differences among students and the different environments they come from. EFL students who have low self-esteem should be trained to overcome their negative feelings about themselves and look positively at their EFL learning capabilities. EFL teachers should accept students' mistakes as a natural part of learning and encourage trying and risk-taking in English learning. Using specific instruments that measure specific language learning areas leads to more accurate findings.

## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE OF SELF-ESTEEM

### SECTION (A) GLOBAL SELF-ESTEEM

Item No.	statement	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I give up when I face any difficulty.					
2	It is difficult for me to do what I want without the help of others.					
3	I avoid the leadership role in my life.					
4	I avoid voluntary tasks.					
5	I blame myself a lot when I make a mistake.					
6	When I differ with others, I cannot insist on my opinion even though I believe it is right.					
7	I hesitate to participate in a discussion, even though I know a lot about the discussed topic.					
8	I often comply with others' opinions even though I am not convinced.					
9	I believe others' reactions towards me are criticism.					
10	I avoid any situations where others observe me.					
11	I speak confidently when I am sure of what I am saying.					
12	I feel unsatisfied with my abilities no matter what efforts I exert.					
13	I feel that people often consider what I say as unimportant.					
14	I believe I have not achieved any beneficial thing in my life.					
15	New situations in my life make me feel unsafe.					
16	I give up my rights easily with my friends.					
17	I don't like to be the first to answer even though I know the right answer.					
18	Other's criticism makes me withdraw from meeting them.					
19	When I compare myself to my peers, I feel they are better than me.					
20	I can help my friends when we are assigned a group work.					

### SECTION (B) SITUATIONAL SELF-ESTEEM

Item No.	statement	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I cannot learn English.					
2	I feel my ideas in English are meaningless.					
3	I don't dare to say my thoughts in English.					
4	I feel uneasy in English tasks.					
5	I understand a lot of things during the English lessons.					
6	I don't feel shy of reading aloud during English classes.					
7	I can speak English in front of my classmates.					
8	I dislike competing in English lessons because I fear failure.					
9	I feel embarrassed when I discuss anything in English .					
10	I feel embarrassed when my English teacher asks me to repeat my answer.					
11	I feel I'm ineffective in English tasks.					
12	I like group discussions in English classes					
13	I can speak English with my teacher only in private, but not in front of others in the class.					
14	I don't work hard on my English tasks because I doubt that I will do them successfully.					
15	I feel unconfident that I did the right thing in English takes unless others tell me so.					
16	I make mistakes in English without being shy.					
17	I don't feel nervous on oral tests in English.					
18	My participation in the English class adds nothing to the class.					
19	I believe my abilities in English are the worst in the class.					
20	I don't feel confused when it's my turn to answer in English.					

SECTION (C)  
TASK SELF-ESTEEM

Item No.	statement	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I feel confident when taking reading tests.					
2	I feel worried when the reading tests are out of a book					
3	I don't care where the reading tests are from.					
4	I love to read.					
5	I think reading is a waste of time.					
6	I think reading is boring.					
7	It takes a long time to read.					
8	You like to broaden your interest through reading					
9	I read a lot.					
10	I like to improve vocabulary through reading.					
11	I hate reading.					
12	I think my reading comprehension is not as good as my classmates.					
13	I get poor grades in reading comprehension tests.					
14	I feel worried when reading tests are full of unknown words.					
15	I prefer seen passages rather than unseen passages.					
16	The last part I answer is reading comprehension.					
17	I'd rather someone tell me information so I won't have to read to get it.					
18	I cannot comprehend readings easily.					
19	I'm not satisfied with my reading ability.					
20	If the teacher asks us to summarize a reading, I don't like to be the first one.					

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE OF PERSONALITY

Item No.	statement	Yes	No
1	Are you a talkative person?		
2	Are you rather lively?		
3	Do you enjoy meeting new people?		
4	Can you usually let yourself go and enjoy yourself at a lively party?		
5	Do you usually take the initiative in making new friends?		
6	Can you easily get some life into a rather dull party?		
7	Do you tend to keep in background on social occasions?		
8	Do you like mixing with people?		
9	Do you like plenty of bustle and excitement around you?		
10	Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people?		
11	Do other people think of you as being very lively?		
12	Can you get a party going?		

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# An Analysis of Three Images in Doris Lessing's *To Room Nineteen*

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**Abstract**—Doris Lessing is the famous contemporary British writer and novelist. Her well-known short story *To Room Nineteen* tells Susan, an intelligent woman, is lost in the chaotic housework and tries to search for an authentic self which leads to her madness and ultimate suicide. This paper focuses on the three images described in Lessing's *To Room Nineteen* which foreshadow Susan's suicide.

**Index Terms**—feminine image, water image, room image

## I. INTRODUCTION OF DORIS LESSING

Doris Lessing is a prolific and talented English writer after the World War II. As a female writer, Lessing has produced numerous works during her writing career, which cover a wide range of topics and demonstrate various styles. Readers appreciate her works so much that they praise her as one of the most wide-ranging and comprehensive of contemporary novelists, one of the most gifted of the younger group of English novelists and one of the 20th century writers by whom literary critics of the future will know us. During the past fifty years, she has been awarded a lot of influential prizes such as Somerset Maugham Award (1954), French Prix Medicis Prize (1976), W. H. Smith Literary Award (1986), Premio Internazionale Mondello (1987), Companion of Honor from the Royal Society of Literature (2001). In the year of 2007, she was awarded The Noble Prize in Literature. It was a great affirmation to her achievements in literature. The Swedish Academy praised Lessing as "that epicist of the female experience, who with skepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilization to scrutiny". Lessing, one of the outstanding representatives of English contemporary literature, has drawn wide attention from the whole world with her impressive works. Her works have aroused general interests among critics.

Doris Lessing was born on 22 October 1919 to British parents in Kermanshah. In 1925 Lessing's family moved to a farm in what was then Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) hoping to improve their income. However, her father's farm soon went bankrupt because of his poor management, which threw the whole family into great poverty and desperation. Lessing experienced unfavorable loneliness during this period. When she ended her formal schooling because of her eye sickness at the age of fourteen, Lessing began her extensive reading of literature works at home. In the following years she worked as a young nanny, receptionist, office worker, stenographer and journalist and had several short stories published. She even used to be a member of the British Communist Party and was active in the campaign against nuclear weapons. Lessing's rich experience gives her great inspiration in writing and many of the depictions in her novels can find their trace in life in Africa. "I feel," Mrs. Lessing is quoted as saying in the interview published in *The Queen* in 19627 "the best thing that ever happened to me was that I was brought up out of England. I took for granted kinds of experience that would be impossible to a middle-class girl here". As a female writer, Lessing's special experience enables her to get rid of the traditional localization of the themes for most of English female writers. Full of multifarious topics and thoughts, her works are so unique and impressive that they are popular among readers in the western world.

According to Roberta Rubenstein, a Lessing critic, the whole writing career of Lessing can be divided into three main phases: breaking down and breaking out, breaking through and returning to the center. *The Grass is Singing*, her first novel, which was published in 1950, is the magnum opus in the first phase and soon is widely acclaimed. The ethnic theme and psychoanalysis have aroused intensive interests in the western world. Later Lessing published her *Children of Violence* novel-sequence in succession, which includes *Martha Quest*, *A Proper Marriage*, *A Ripple from the Storm*, *Landlocked* and *The Four-Gated City*. Depicting the life exploration of a white woman who was brought up in Africa, she earns a reputation as a great realist writer. *The Golden Notebook* is regarded as Doris Lessing's masterpiece. The compound structure and themes have resonated among readers and won the approvals of the feminists. In the 1960s, Doris Lessing began to have an intensive interest in psychology and Sufism, which are reflected in her fictions such as *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, *The Summer Before the Dark*, *The memoirs of a Survivor* and so on. Then Lessing's writing style came to a turning point and she came to focus her attention on sci-fiction., *Shikasta*, *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five*, *The Sirian Experiments* and *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* are well-known works in this phase. These sci-fictions are also regarded as a reflection of the author's speculation on human history and destiny. After that, Lessing continued her writing and published her new works such as *The Diaries*

of Jane Somers, *The Good Terrorist*, and *The Fifth Child*. These works are considered to have a style of realism and that is what Roberta Rubenstein calls “come back to center”. All in all, Doris Lessing is cataloged as a realistic writer.

## II. INTRODUCTION OF *TO ROOM NINETEEN*

*To Room Nineteen* was first published in *A Man and Two Women*, a collection of Lessing’s short stories that helped her achieve her reputation as a notable short story writer. *To Room Nineteen* is about a middle-aged English woman, Susan, whose world in a mid-twentieth century London suburb revolved around her husband, her four children and her home. Susan and Matthew Rawlings married in their late twenties and raised four children. Everyone thought they were a perfect match who had made all the right choices in life. When the youngest child went off to school, Susan, who quit her job to mother, did not have the sense of freedom that she hopes. She felt as if she had nothing to do and never had spare moments to herself. Her time was taken up in waiting for the children to come home, consulting with the maid or preparing for dinner. She became anxious and isolated, pulling away from Matthew, and her husband began to have an affair. Finally, in order to get some time alone, she rented a hotel room every afternoon in which she just sat and embarked on a journey of self-discovery. Her husband guessed she was having an affair and tracked her down. She even created a false lover named Michael Plant to meet her husband’s expectancy. Realizing that his rational world would not recognize her “irrational” feelings, she told him that she was not having an affair. The next day, she came back to the room nineteen and committed suicide.

## III. SUSAN

Susan was an intelligent woman who did everything in an intelligent way. Susan fell in love with her present husband, Matthew, and then married him. When she became pregnant, she gave up her well-paid job, and turned herself into a full-time housewife for the sake of the four children. She even forgave her husband’s unfaithfulness in marriage. “They put the thing behind them, and consciously, knowing what they were doing, moved forward into a different phase of their marriage, giving thanks for past good fortune as they did so.” (Lessing, 1980, p.987) Susan was a good wife, devoting herself to the whole family before she realized her present situation. “...because she knew, and so did he, what happened to women of fifty at the height of their energy and ability, with grown-up children who no longer needed their full devotion.” (Lessing, 1980, p.987). She began thinking about herself she lost long before in her marriage life. She discovered that it was housework, children and husband that made her lose her self-identity. She could only be dependent on others, and could not rely on herself any longer. All of a sudden, she hated everything in the house, just wanted to escape from it. She thought if she could find a shelter in another place, she could be an independent person, so she finally found a room----room nineteen-----in Fred’s Hotel. There she found herself again and smiling reappeared on her face. There she had no restraints and forgot everything that bothered her.

At the very beginning of the novel, the female narrator described a happy family. All the things seemed so perfect and normal. The female narrator’s voice and tone sounded matter of fact and understandable. However, from the narrator’s calm description, we can feel an undercurrent of silent protest surging in the text. In people’s eyes, they were a happy couple. Here, the happiness was something treasured by the standards of men’s right society. They saved each other for the real thing. They saved each other just in the chastity. To a greater extent, it meant the need for female chastity. Presuming that Susan has sexual behavior with others before that, it was probable they would not marry. What’s more, for the stable married life, Susan gave up her well-paid job. Her intelligence, for her job in the past, now had been devoted to Matthew, the children, the house and the garden.

With the female narrator’s voice, we feel the confident, humorous and graceful woman, Susan, was being far away from us. She was becoming identity-losing. “The whole thing is absurd----for him to have come home to care, or for that matter not to care, is absurd... and who is Myra Jenins? Why, no one at all.” (Lessing, 1980, p.989)

But Susan gradually realized the point. “It was now, for the first time in this marriage that something happened which neither of them had foreseen.” (Lessing, 1980, p.990) The double-voiced discourse correspondingly changes from the female narrator’s discourse with the men’s right society to the protagonist’s----Susan’s discourse with her husband and herself.

## IV. THREE IMAGES

### A. *Feminine Image*

Lessing implored feminine image throughout the story symbolically which depicted women who were driven to run away from the social structures imposed by the existing patriarchal order. By describing the garden, the river, the demon, and Susan’s reflection in the mirror, Lessing actually foreshadowed Susan’s inevitable suicide.

Lessing revealed Susan’s coming to the “end” of her innocence metaphorically, the end of her “beautiful feminine life”, and then used the “slow-moving brown river” (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2549) to foreshadow Susan’s suicide, as if she was slowly breathing in death. The color white represented death and terror. Susan was terrified because she had realized that her life was “mortgaged”. Lessing described Susan as a mother of four children and her life with Matthew, her husband, as a snake biting its tails. Like the number four, the story defined the ancient snake symbol,



referred to as the representation of the eternal cycle of life, showing Lessing's constant foreshadowing of Susan's death since she felt that her life was meaningless.

Lessing described that Susan felt "as if life had become a desert" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2545). The constant description of this bareness was symbolic of her spiritual aridity, or of death and hopelessness. In the mirror, as she brushed her "thick healthy black hair" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2555), Susan saw "the reflection of a madwoman" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2555) and thought, "much more to the point if what looked back at her was the gingery green-eyed demon with his dry meager smile" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2555). Again, Lessing used symbols of color black representing death and chaos, and green representing death and decay as Susan looked at her inner "reflection" in the mirror. Lessing's use of the "demon" as a symbol of the objectification of the irrational self-Susan wished to banish from awareness. The intensity of Susan's inner struggle had placed her life in danger.

In Lessing's description, the demon represented a force directly opposite to the values conventional society imposed. For Susan, following the demon would be an act of sin, but Lessing proved that for Susan, it was better to sin than to have a lifestyle which was dictated by society. The demon represented a way out of her trapped and restricted life through the mirror. Women and mirrors were intimately linked and Susan Rawlings' voyage through looking the glass would take the traveler to the room nineteen, there to remake interiority by unmaking intelligence.

In order to escape social structures, women were sometimes driven to extremely solutions, such as committing suicide, but these solutions did not provide true freedom. The result of Susan's confining motherhood was that life became a desert for Susan; her soul was not her own. As her resentment grew she rejected the prison of motherhood for the freedom of a room of her own room nineteen in Fred's Hotel. Motherhood became a dead end for Susan Rawlings. It had become a "desert" for her, but the idea that freedom was achieved in having a "room of her own" was not consistent with the point that Lessing formulated. Susan did not achieve freedom until the end of the story when she escaped all of her "prisons" by committing suicide. Both the room and her entire existence were "prisons". Her physical escape to the hotel room was filled with emptiness and further affected her spiritual and mental health which caused her suicide.

#### *B. Water Image*

Lessing used water image in the story to show the course of the Rawlings' marriage, the emotional turmoil, and the gradual disintegration of Susan's ego which caused her lack of energy. At the beginning, Susan was satisfied with her marriage, husband and family, and was happy in the confinements of the "big married bedroom (which had an attractive view of the river)" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2544). Gradually, as husband and wife fell into habit and out of love, drifting apart into such different lives, they "lay side by side, or breast to breast in the big civilized bedroom overlooking the wild sullied river, and they laughed, often, for no particular reason; but they knew it was really because of these two small people, Susan and Matthew, supporting such an edifice on their intelligent love" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2546). The river came to symbolize Susan's reluctance to change, her inability to define herself against and in relation to the collective, rather than letting herself float along with the demoralizing collective experience. Once, to be alone, she "went to the very end of the garden by herself, and looked at the slow-moving brown river, she looked at the river and closed her eyes and breathed slow and deep, taking it into her being, into her veins" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2549).

Her actions here were ironic, because she identified with the social collective, although it was the very force which prevented her from having time to be herself. Gradually, however, the collective experience metaphorically submerged and subsumed Susan and she allowed herself to drown. The last time she visited the hotel she spent her time "delightfully, darkly, sweetly, letting herself slide gently, gently, to the edge of the river" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2564). As she died, "she was quite content lying there, listening to the dark soft hiss of the gas that poured into the room, into her lungs, into her brain, as she drifted off into the dark river" (MacGibbon & Kee, 1963, p.2564). That final image of the mythological river of forgetfulness was significant. It illustrated Susan's complete loss self-identity to the patriarchal collective in spite of her disillusionment with its ideals. The image revealed Susan's submission to the society which was centered by the patriarchal order.

#### *C. Room Image*

Room nineteen was found after Susan's fourth attempt to find her own free-willed garden. She had ever set Mother's Room to escape from pressure, but she failed to get rid of the trivial chores. In Mother's Room, she would be frequently interrupted. Mother's Room soon became a valuable lesson in respect for other people's rights. It had been turned to be another family room. So "she dreamed of having a room or a place, anywhere, where she could go and sit, by herself, no one knowing where she was." (Lessing, 1980, p.970) She rented a room near Victoria. The room was ordinary and anonymous, and was just what she needed. But she was bothered by Miss Town, the owner of the hotel. She left the hotel. Susan's next escape was the wild country in Wales. She saw nothing but her devil there. So she "returned to her home and family, with the Welsh emptiness at the back of her mind like a promise of freedom." (Lessing, 1980, p.975) Finally, she escaped to room nineteen, whose owner was the kind of person who would agree everything if you gave him money. That provided Susan enough freedom in room nineteen. "The room was hideous. It had a single window, with thin green curtains, a three-quarter bed that had a cheap green satin bedspread on it, a fireplace with a gas fire and a shilling meter by it, a chest of drawers, and a green wicker armchair." (Lessing, 1980, p.980) She did nothing in room

nineteen. But it gave her a reassuring presence. In it, she found peace and knew that it was here she belonged. "From the chair, when it had rested her, she went to the window, stretching her arms, smiling treasuring her anonymity, to look out. She was no longer Susan Rawlings, mother of four, wife of Matthew, employer of Mrs. Parkers and of Sophie Traub, with these and those relations with friends, schoolteachers, tradesman. She no longer was mistress of the big white house and garden, owning clothes suitable for this and that activity or occasion. She was Mrs. Jones, and she was alone, and she had no past and no future." (Lessing, 1980, p.981) But when she was found by her husband, and she was forced to create a lover, which drove her mad.

In *To Room Nineteen*, the main female character Susan, before getting married, had a well-paid job, working in an advertising firm. She had a talent for commercial drawing. She was humorous about the advertisements she was responsible for. When getting married, she did not want to base her marriage on her husband's pleasant flat, whereas when they moved to a new flat. All of these were clear proofs that Susan did not want to submit her personality and she wanted to keep her own personality. She should have lived a real happy life. However, after marriage, for the sake of the children, husband, family and intelligence, Susan was compelled to give up her job. That was the beginning of her tragedy. No job meant no money. Without money, she had to depend on her husband for money, which led to her husband's unfaithful behavior. Facing this, she even did not have the right to blame. What a shame for an intelligent woman! After taking care of her family many years and even the youngest twins had gone to school, to Susan, it seemed that it "would be the preparation for her slow emancipation away from the role of hub-of-the-family into woman-with-her-own-life." (Lessing, 1980, p.2546) However, many years of domestic seclusion and isolation from the outside contributed to her falling behind and lack of the knowledge about the real meaning of life. She did not know how to deal with her inner emptiness, which was thought as a devil by her. Especially when she was in the garden, the devil was like a stranger lurking in the garden, intending to get into Susan and taking her over. She thought of doing a part-time job, which could help her get through fast and efficiently, leaving time for her. But what kind of job? Addressing envelopes? Canvassing? She was not sure. Matthew asked her: "Are you thinking of going back to work?" She answered: "No. No, not really." (Lessing, 1980, p.2555) She was puzzled, not knowing what she wanted to do and did not know what kind of job she would like to do. Unable to get rid of the emptiness at all times and not wanting to go away to a place where no one knew her and no one could disturb her. She turned into her own world, hiding from reality.

*To Room Nineteen* was published in 1963 when the feminist movement was in its climax. During this period, women tried hard to find their lost self, to see the world with their own eyes, to contemplate the way they led their life. From inner deep heart, Susan never gave up her longing for independence and freedom. Not very long living as a full-time housewife, she was bored with such house life and she realized she should live for the sake of something that was all the rest, and children could not be a center of life and a reason for being. This was the waking of her consciousness for freedom and independence. But under the control of the male-centered society, women, the subordinate "the other", had inevitably been stuck in an embarrassing situation of "aphasia". As the center of society, men had ruthlessly deprived women of the right to discourse, ignored their person experience. Men just wanted their wives to be typical good wives and caring mothers, who were gentle, decent and docile, and just like angels in the house. In men's eyes, those outrageous modern professional women were just devils. So did Mr. Matthew. Oppressed by the difference between real and ideal living, Susan had to escape. She wanted to keep a separate room in her own house, but she was disturbed frequently. Finally, she found a good place for her freedom-----Room Nineteen. She thought this room had become more her own than the house she lived in. but still, she was detected and disturbed. Susan's struggling for freedom and independence failed. Ultimately, Susan got freedom by committing suicide and that was her way of being released from restraints of home and society. Only by this, her body and spirit can be liberated. Her sacrifice was her most crazy accusing of male-centered society. Suicide was also a kind of warning for women who were dependent on men and was overshadowed by men. Room nineteen was even a place where Susan could find her lost self, think in her own way and be happy again. It was a shelter from housework, children and unfaithful husband that obsessed with her all day and all night. Only in room nineteen could she feel she was a complete, happy and confident individual.

## V. CONCLUSION

*To Room Nineteen* explored the warring impulses of intellect and instinct, mind and heart, against the backdrop of early 1960s London, when women were caught in the social conservatism of the past and unable to see the promise of a future that would encourage choice, fulfillment, and personal freedom. In this story Lessing illuminated the restrictions placed on women of that time and the tragic consequences of those restrictions. Lessing described Susan's searching for an authentic self which led to her madness and ultimate suicide by using the images analyzed in this paper.

*To Room Nineteen* vividly shows us the authentic and common living condition of modern women with its unique artistic charm. Susan, just like other women, suffers a lot from the male-centered society, which deprived their rights to go out to search and to receive intellectual improvement. Thus, limited in view and money, they have no real power in the outside world and no place in decision-making. They are separated from the wonders of the outside world. With the unseen chains, they are bored, restless, confused and depressed. To be angel in the house or to be devil, this is a question. Susan's experience once again shows the revolution for women against the male-centered society is a long course.

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# Modularity of Mind and Second Language Acquisition

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**Abstract**—The concept of modularity has become significant in philosophy and psychology since the early 1980s, following the publication of Fodor's ground-breaking book *The Modularity of Mind* (1983). In the twenty-five years since the term 'module' and its cognates first entered the lexicon of cognitive science, the conceptual and theoretical landscape in this area has changed thoroughly. A critical issue in this regard has been the development of evolutionary psychology, whose proponents argue that the architecture of the mind is more pervasively modular than the Fodorian perspective allows. Where Fodor (2005) draws the line of modularity at the low-level systems underlying perception and language, post-Fodorian theorists such as Carruthers (2008) contend that the mind is modular through and through, that is, up to and including the high-level systems responsible for thought. The concept of modularity has also played a role in recent debates in epistemology, philosophy of language, and other core areas of philosophy.

**Index Terms**—modularity of mind, Chomskyan Modularity, Fodorian Modularity, Massive Modularity

## I. INTRODUCTION

It has been recognized for two thousand years that language faculty can be impaired as the result of damage to different parts of the brain, however, it is only since the middle of the nineteenth century that scientists obtained systematic evidence for the lateralization of language faculty; that is, according to Smith (1999), linguistic ability is largely supported by the left hemisphere. However, it would be ridiculous to expect a single simple relation between mind and brain. In linguistics, as argued by Jenkins (2000), the view of brain as a *tabula rasa* for language has been rejected by the view that brain consists of highly specialized language areas. Different linguistic functions are typically localized differently with the left hemisphere taking the major responsibility for syntax and the right one for semantic and pragmatic processes (Smith, 1999). One issue of controversy in the neurology of human brain and mind, according to Mitchell and Myles (2004) has been the extent to which the mind should be viewed as modular or unitary. That is, should we see the mind as a single, flexible organism with a general set of procedures for learning and storing different kinds of knowledge or is it understood as a set of modules? In this respect, modularity, as defined by Gregg (2003), is "comparatively an autonomous subsystem within a larger system, which acts more or less independently of other subsystems, and has structures and functions that are more or less recognizably different from those of other subsystems" (p. 98).

Modularity—the theory that there is a unique language 'organ' distinct from other cognitive systems and abilities—was central to much of Fromkin's work, and her support for the theory of a genetically determined language faculty placed her within the general scope of Chomskyan generative linguistics. However, her work was often on the bridge between linguistics and other disciplines (aphasia studies, neurobiology, psychology), and so, except for debates over modularity, she was not a core figure in controversies of theoretical linguistics.

Modularity in language according to Ellis (1997) could be defined as "the existence of separate language faculty and different components of language in distinct cognitive modules each differing in the nature of its representations" (p. 71). Many linguists and psycholinguists such as Chomsky, believe that modularity is mostly associated with nativism; however, as claimed by Botterill and Carruthers (1999), nativism is about how cognition develops; whereas, modularity is matter of how cognitive processing is organized.

According to the modularity hypothesis, once a syntactic structure and thematic roles have been assigned, the construction of a full interpretation of a sentence lies in the domain of central, domain general, processes which have access to world knowledge. For this reason, processing architecture ceases to be an issue when these higher-level aspects of comprehension are considered. Early research in this area was concerned with the kind of representations that are formed as the products of the comprehension process, exploring people's memory for sentences or short texts. Theories of processing are less developed than for lower-level aspects of language, and as Gernsbacher and Foertsch (1999) remark, are so similar in spirit that they are difficult to distinguish empirically.

According to Sugayama and Hudson (2005), there is a **strong** and a **weak** version of language modularity. Based on

the strong version of modularity, mind is made up of several different modules and language is just a single module. One alternative to the strong version of modularity is the weak version which offers no modularity at all with the mind is viewed as a single whole.

Gregg (2003) believes that, there are two levels of analysis for the concept of modularity in second language:

- **Anatomical modularity:** which claims that L2 knowledge is localized in a specific well-defined area of brain. Based on anatomical modularity, second language module is different from first language module; that is, there are two separate cognitive modules for the first and second language.

- **Cognitive modularity:** which claims that L2 knowledge is a module within a larger system of knowledge.

Putting aside anatomical modularity, as argued by Trask (1999), we can distinguish between two types of cognitive modularity which since the early 1980s, has become prominent in linguistics and cognitive science in at least two ways. First, the American philosopher Jerry Fodor has been arguing that human mind is itself modular, that is, it consists of a number of specialized subcomponents for handling different tasks, such as speaking and seeing. Second, the American linguist Noam Chomsky has been arguing that the human language faculty is modular, that is, it must consist of a fairly large number of *semi-autonomous units*, each of which responsible for certain particular aspects of our linguistic competence.

- **Chomskyan Modularity**

Chomsky's work over several decades has provided a powerful evidence that language faculty consists of separate modules (McGilvray, 2005). Chomsky claims that there are two different notions of modularity:

- Language faculty is a module of the mind, distinct from moral judgment, music, and mathematics; and
- The language module itself divides up into submodules, relating to sound, structure, and meaning.

According to *Chomskian* or *intentional* modularity, language faculty is modular and thus autonomous from the module of mind in a way that it comprises structures and conforms to principles not found in other modules (Chomsky, 1972). Chomsky believes that even grammar itself can be seen as modular; that is to say, what is grammatical and what is not grammatical in a given language is not determined by a single set of global grammatical principles but rather by a number of modules. The evidence for this modularity, according to Zobl (1989), comes from either brain damage or neurological disorders which affect language differently from other mental functions. Chomsky argues that in human mind, there is a language faculty, or grammar module, which is responsible for grammatical knowledge, and that other modules handle other kinds of knowledge. Chomsky's view is that not only is language too complex to be learnt from environmental exposure (his criticism of Skinner); but also it is also too distinctive in its structure to be learnable by one whole general cognitive means.

Chomsky believes, as mentioned by Van Valin (1991), that the linguistic competence module is divided into two different modules, grammatical module and pragmatic module. Grammatical module encompasses knowledge of grammar; however, the pragmatic module includes logic of conversation which places language in use. Chomsky further, according to Dudai (2002), declared that language acquisition depends on an innate, species-specific module that is distinct from general intelligence. Chomsky believes that language is not only an input system, but also it is an output system responsible for verbal and written expression of thought. The input and output system correlate and share a common cognitive central system. Chomsky, in contrast to Fodor's opinion, believes that the internal workings of the language module are not obvious. The significant characteristics of Chomskian modularity, as claimed by Brook and Akins (2005), is that not only is there a module comprising language principles, but also these principles are innate and are not learned.

- **Fodorian Modularity**

In the 1980s, however, Jerry Fodor revived the idea of the modularity of mind, although without the notion of precise physical localizability. Drawing from Noam Chomsky's idea of the language acquisition device and other work in linguistics as well as from the philosophy of mind and the implications of optical illusions, he became one of its most articulate proponents with the 1983 publication of *Modularity of Mind*. According to Fodor, a module falls somewhere between the behaviorist and cognitivist views of lower-level processes.

Behaviorists tried to replace the mind with reflexes which Fodor describes as encapsulated (cognitively impenetrable or unaffected by other cognitive domains) and non-inferential (straight pathways with no information added). Low level processes are unlike reflexes in that they are inferential. This can be demonstrated by poverty of the stimulus arguments in which the proximate stimulus, that which is initially received by the brain (such as the 2D image received by the retina), cannot account for the resulting output (for example, our 3D perception of the world), thus necessitating some form of computation.

In contrast, cognitivists saw lower level processes as continuous with higher level processes, being inferential and cognitively penetrable (influenced by other cognitive domains, such as beliefs). The latter has been shown to be untrue in some cases, such as with many visual illusions, which can persist despite a person's awareness of their existence. This is taken to indicate that other domains, including one's beliefs, cannot influence such processes.

For Fodor, in line with Chomsky's ideas, innateness is also a notion frequently associated with modularity drawing from his idea of LAD (Ingram, 2007). But whereas Chomsky locates modularity firmly within language ability, Fodor locates it in the mechanisms that support language processing. Fodor believes that the language faculty is modular in that the processing of linguistic input is not affected by higher cognitive domains or by other input systems; that is each

module is autonomous from other modules. The language module, as cited in Carroll (2001), “processes only linguistic representations; in other words, the system encoding language is independent of the system used for encoding thought” (p. 251). Modules may have very limited access to other modules.

Fodor, according to Field (2004), views the mind as composed of a set of central modules which handle general operations such as attention and these central systems are supported by input modules which act autonomously and process sensory information such as language. The input systems are modular and, according to Wodak and Chilton (2005), have the following characteristics:

- **Domain Specific:** that is language perception modules only operate on linguistic structures, not with visual or social information.
- **Informationally encapsulated:** that is modules do not need to refer to other psychological systems in order to operate because modules have an innate basis.
- **Fast:** that is the processes are highly automatic.
- **Shallow outputs:** that is the output of modules is very simple.
- **Limited accessibility:** that is it is almost impossible to have access to the input modules.

Fodor, according to Perkins (2007), argues that various aspects of human cognition may be modules. In contrast to Chomsky's ideas who claim that the central system is itself constructed and is composed of a variety of modules, moreover, in contrast to Chomsky's belief that the central system is structured and tend to investigation, Fodor considers the central system to be unstructured and complicated to investigate. Fodor makes connections between his concept of modularity and that of Darwinian or computational modularity which are determined by genetic factors (Carruthers & Chamberlin, 2000). According to Crystal (2008), the main difference between Chomsky's and Fodor's concept of language modularity is that in Fodor's modularity, mind is modular in a sense that it consists of different systems (modules), each with its own distinctive properties; whereas, in Chomsky's modularity, the language system is itself modular in a sense that it consists of a number of different subsystems which interact in different ways.

#### • **Massive Modularity**

Evolutionary psychologists propose that the mind is made up of genetically influenced and domain-specific, mental algorithms or computational modules, designed to solve specific evolutionary problems of the past. The definition of *module* has caused confusion and dispute. J. A. Fodor initially defined module as ‘functionally specialized cognitive systems’ that have nine features but not necessarily all at the same time. In his views modules can be found in peripheral processing such as low-level visual processing but not in central processing. Later he narrowed the two essential features to *domain-specificity* and *information encapsulation*. Frankenhuys and Ploeger (2007) write that domain-specificity means that “a given cognitive mechanism accepts, or is specialized to operate on, only a specific class of information”. Information encapsulation means that information processing in the module cannot be affected by information in the rest of the brain. One example being awareness that certain optical illusion, caused by low level processing, are false not preventing the illusions from persisting.

Evolutionary psychologists instead usually define modules as functionally specialized cognitive systems that are domain-specific and may also contain innate knowledge about the class of information processed. Modules can be found also for central processing. This theory is sometimes referred to as *Massive Modularity*.

The concept of Massive Modularity has been proposed by evolutionary psychologists such as Tooby (Carruthers, 2008) evolve and are adapted to human evolution continuum. According to the massive modularity thesis, the mind is modular (in some sense) through and through, including the parts responsible for high-level cognition functions like belief fixation, problem-solving, planning, and the like. Originally articulated and advocated by proponents of evolutionary psychology (Sperber, 1994, 2002; Cosmides & Tooby, 1992; Pinker, 1997; Barrett, 2005; Barrett & Kurzban, 2005), the thesis has received its most comprehensive and sophisticated defense at the hands of Carruthers (2006). Before proceeding to the details of that defense, however, we need to consider briefly what concept of modularity is in play.

The main thing to note here is that the operative notion of modularity differs significantly from the traditional Fodorian one. Carruthers is explicit on this point:

If a thesis of massive mental modularity is to be remotely plausible, then by ‘module’ we cannot mean ‘Fodor-module’. In particular, the properties of having proprietary transducers, shallow outputs, fast processing, significant innateness or innate channeling, and encapsulation will very likely have to be struck out. That leaves us with the idea that modules might be isolable function-specific processing systems, all or almost all of which are domain specific, whose operations aren't subject to the will, which are associated with specific neural structures, and whose internal operations may be inaccessible to the remainder of cognition. (Carruthers, 2006, p. 12)

Of the original set of nine features associated with Fodor-modules, then, Carruthers-modules retain at most only five: dissociability, domain specificity, mandatoriness, localizability, and central inaccessibility. Conspicuously absent from the list is informational encapsulation, the feature most central to modularity in Fodor's sense.

A second point, related to the first, is that defenders of massive modularity have chiefly been concerned to defend the modularity of central cognition (in some suitably robust sense, not necessarily Fodor's), taking for granted that the mind is modular around the edges (in Fodor's sense, or something like it). Thus, the thesis at issue for theorists like Carruthers might be best understood as the conjunction of two claims: first, that input systems are modular in a strong sense (that is,

the positive strand of modest modularity), and second, that central systems are modular, but in a considerably weakened sense. In his (suitably massive) defense of massive modularity, Carruthers focuses almost exclusively on the second of these claims, and so will we. The centerpiece of Carruthers (2006) consists of three arguments for massive modularity: the argument from design, the argument from animals, and the argument from computational tractability. Let's briefly consider each of them in turn.

However, Fodor (2005) criticizes this hypothesis and claims that massive modularity of mind does little to explain adaptive psychological traits; moreover, it fails to explain human behavior in the environment. Thus, the assumptions underlying massive modularity are controversial and have been contested by some psychologists, philosophers and neuroscientists.

## II. CRITICAL LOOK AT LANGUAGE MODULARITY

In Piaget's opinion, as cited in Jordan (2004), there is no modularity of mind. He believes that there is no innate language modularity (faculty) or any other specialized mechanism at work. He further added that "the child creates his own concepts through holistic interaction with the environment" (p. 140). Piaget argued that language is simply a manifestation of the more general skill which is acquired during general cognitive development as he goes through the stages of language acquisition; thus constructing his understanding of the world. Therefore, no special mechanism was required to account for first language acquisition. Karmiloff-Smith (2001), as cited in Cohen (1996), criticizes the concept of language modularity and specifically Fodor's assumption of the term. She argues that young children who suffer from brain damage are often capable of learning language just as well as children without problem. She claims that the MRI evidence shows that they just use a different part of the brain to use language. As an example, Christopher who was diagnosed as brain-damaged and has to live in care, is able to translate into and out of 16 languages. She further stresses on the role of holism or connectionism (i.e. the idea against Fodor's modularity which denies that language has specific components) and argues that even if language is identified to some degree with one module of the brain, this finding rejects Chomsky's idea of innate modularity in language. According to Fodor, language is domain specific; however, Jackendoff (2002) criticizes this claim and brings an example that for a second language learner whose language module according to Fodor is domain specific, however, in reality when a learner learns the second language, several different modules including vision and hearing are in interaction. Similar to this criticism and in contrast to Fodor's language module domain specificity, Sharwood-Smith (1994) concerns the role of Metalinguistic knowledge on SLA. Deacon (1999), as cited in Cohen (1996), rejects Chomsky idea of innate language modularity. He adds that there is no genetically installed linguistic black box in our brains whereas according to Darwin, languages, similar to human beings, evolve generation after generation resulting in a continuum from no language to the language we find now. Botterill and Carruthers (1999) believe that Fodor's concept of language modularity is too extreme because it restricts modularity only to the input system; whereas, they believe that a module is an integrated processing system with distinctive kinds of inputs and outputs. According to Carroll (2001), Fodor's concept of what a module is, is too crude. Because modularity, unlike what Fodor claims, does not necessarily entail autonomy. Separate processors might be processing the same representation. In summary, according to Perkins (2007), Fodor's model of modularity has impaired people's ability to imagine other possible areas of language faculty.

## III. IMPLICATIONS IN SLA

According to Mitchell and Myles (2004), the role of an innate, domain specific language module in SLA has been much discussed in recent years and of course the issue hasn't been without controversy. If such innate mechanisms indeed exist, there are three logical possibilities:

- They continue to operate during second language acquisition in the same way that they make first-language learning possible. This implication was popularized in the SLA field by Krashen in the 1970s. Although Krashen's theoretical views have been criticized, this has by no means led to the disappearance of modular approach to account for SLA.
- After the acquisition of the first language in early childhood, these mechanisms stop operation, and second languages must be learnt by other mechanisms.
- The mechanisms that modularity provides for first language could be copied as a model when learning a second language.

Sharwood-Smith (1994) believes that, "SLA is itself modular because numerous learning mechanisms, including vocabulary, grammar ... contribute to the learning of different aspects of language" (p. 171). The idea of modularity, according to Taylor (1996), allows order to be distinguished from chaos; therefore, it helps us to regard the complexity of the L2 system as a set of simple ordered principles. Moreover, the modular study of second language acquisition suggests that the search for a structural approach to SLA should be abandoned in favor of a pragmatic one. On the other hand, according to Smith (1999), the study of modularity on SLA will shed light on the issue that whether linguistic modules develop independently of one another or whether they develop hand in hand. Sharwood-Smith (1994) further adds that "because according to modularity, mind is composed of different subsystems; therefore, when considering the possibility of native-like SLA ability. It may be possible for many learners to achieve native levels of second language

proficiency in some subsystems but not others. As the result, language teachers can attempt to work on a particular linguistic module to help learners reach the native-like proficiency in that particular module they demand” (p. 18).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Interest in modularity is not confined to cognitive science and the philosophy of mind; it extends well into a number of interconnected fields. In philosophy of language, modularity has been remarkable in theorizing about linguistic communication, for example, in relevance theorists’ suggestion that speech interpretation is a modular process (Sperber & Wilson, 2002). It has also been used to demarcate the boundary between semantics and pragmatics. Though the success of these deployments of modularity theory is subject to dispute, their existence testifies to the ongoing relevance of the concept of modularity to philosophical inquiry across a variety of domains. There are many linguists today who support the concept of a distinctive language module in the mind. There are also those who argue that language competence itself is modular, with different aspects of language knowledge being stored and accessed in distinctive ways. However, there is still no general agreement on the number and nature of such modules.

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# A Probe into the EFL Learning Style Preferences of Minority College Students: An Empirical Study of Tujia EFL Learners in Jishou University\*

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this study is to find out the learning style preferences of Tujia EFL learners in Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Xiangxi<sup>1</sup> and provide some suggestions for improving effectiveness of College English teaching in Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Xiangxi based on the findings. The findings of the study have both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, first, the feasibility of the multidimensional questionnaire of learning styles is proved in this empirical study. At the same time, the successful application of the multidimensional learning-styles instrument will help researchers to draw a complete picture of students' learning style preferences. Second, the present study also found "the ethnic culture and socialization are the most important factors that influence the Tujia EFL learning style preferences". Practically, the results help the Tujia EFL learners understand their own learning style preferences and instructors in making decisions about course design and improving the methods of the Tujia EFL classroom teaching. Methodologically, the successful application of both quantitative and qualitative approach and the use of a multidimensional learning-styles instrument expand the methodology of learning styles research.

**Index Terms**—Tujia EFL learners, learning style preferences, ethnic culture, socialization

## I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a prominent shift from teaching to learning in the field of second language acquisition for past few decades in Western countries. A large number of studies have shown individual differences play an important role in second language acquisition. Learning styles is one of the most variables influencing performance in second language acquisition (Oxford, Lavine, Crookall, 1989). In addition, learning styles was found to be related to the choice of learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). The field of learning styles in both complicated and fragmented. Different researchers have investigated the different aspects of learning styles. According to Dunn, Germake, Jalali and Zenhausern (1989), they found at least 21 components have been identified, but probably most individual have only 6 to 14 strongly preferred styles.

The present study has been divided into two parts: The first is for the distribution of typical patterns of learning styles in Tujia EFL learners. The second step is to help the instructors in making decisions about course design and methods of Tujia EFL classroom teaching base on the results of first step

## II. LITERATURE PREVIEW

### A. Definitions of Learning Styles

In reference to the definition of learning styles, many researchers have made endeavors from different perspectives based on the different rationales: 1) Gregorc (1979) defined Learning style as "Teachers's teaching styles and learners' learning styles are virtually their own disposal of matters"(p.236) 2) Keefe (1979) assumed that learning style is "The composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment."(p.2) 3) Schmeck (1983) viewed learning style as a certain kind of method or strategy. Everybody's learning methods come from some particular strategies, which indicate his/her learning styles; 4) Scarcella (1990) defined learning style as "cognitive and interactional patterns which affect the ways students perceive, remember and think;(p.12) 5) the definition of Oxford (1990) is "The general approaches students use to learn a new subject or tackle a new problem or overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior"(p.34).

Some similarities can be inferred from these definitions though they are different in expressions: First, learning style

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<sup>1</sup> "Tujia EFL learners" is a group of students with Tujia nationality which is one of the 55 minority groups in China. "Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Xiangxi" locates in the western region of Hunan Province in China, in where a large number of Tujia and Miao students live and study.

is the general tendency in every individual's learning process and it is the biological characteristics involving cognitive, affective, and psychological traits of an individual. Second, learning style is unique to each individual because the differences in cultural background and learning experience. Third, learning style is relatively stable and it seldom changes with environment.

#### *B. Reid's Classification of Learning Styles*

Reid (2002) divided learning styles into three categories: cognitive learning styles, sensory learning styles and affective/personality learning styles. The present study is in favor of Reid's classification.

##### *1. Cognitive learning styles*

###### *Field-independent/Field-dependent*

This is the most famous pairs of learning styles. Field-independent learners prefer a learning style that relies on the internal frame of reference; they are analytic and perceive a field in terms of its component parts; and they are not so sociable or skilled in interpersonal relationship. Field-dependent learners prefer a learning style that relies on the external frame of reference: they are holistic and perceive a field as a whole, and they are socially sensitive, with good skills in interpersonal relationship. (Ding, 2004)

###### *Reflective/Impulsive*

Reflective learners learn more effectively when they come to consider options before responding (they are accurate language learners). Impulsive learners learn more effectively when they are able to respond immediately and to take risks (they are fluent language learners).

##### *2. Sensory Learning Styles*

###### *Perceptual Learning Styles*

Perceptual learning styles demonstrate the physical, perceptual ways of learning. These can be subdivided into visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, and haptic modality. Visual learners prefer learning through seeing. Auditory learners prefer learning through hearing. Tactile learners prefer learning through touching. Kinesthetic learners prefer learning through whole-body movement. Haptic is consisting of tactile and kinesthetic in some studies, the haptic learners prefer learning through touching and whole-body movement.

##### *3. Affective/Temperament Learning Styles*

###### *Tolerance/Intolerance of Ambiguity*

Ambiguity tolerance learners are "open-minded" in accepting contradictory propositions. They prefer learning through conducting experiments and taking risks. Ambiguity intolerance learners are "close-minded" in rejecting contradictory propositions. Therefore, they prefer learning in less flexible, less risky and more structured situations.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### *A. Subjects*

The study involved 146 Tujia freshmen (75 males and 71 females) from Jishou University\*, with their age ranging from 18 to 22. Another 4 teachers and 60 Tujia students from English Department also participate in the pre-test for instrument remedy.

#### *B. Instruments*

The study employed a self-reported multi-dimensional questionnaire adapted from one that had been designed by researchers for the study of students' learning style preferences in Xi'an Jiaotong University (Liu&Dai, 2003). Their learning styles questionnaire have been developed by incorporating some previously affirmed instruments which have relatively higher reliability and validity.

The interviews invited 10 students to be randomly selected from subjects and 4 teachers teaching the 10 students.

#### *C. Data Collection*

To ensure reliability, one pre-test were carried out before the questionnaire was administrated to the subjects.

The pre-test was conducted first by using the original questionnaire. Sixty Tujia students from English Department of Jishou University. They are encouraged to make some comments on questionnaire.

The modified questionnaire was administered to 165 Tujia students and all the subjects were instructed on how to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaires should be finished in 30 minutes. It took 7 days to conduct the data collection and a total of 165 questionnaires were returned to the researcher. After a careful examination, nineteen questionnaires were excluded because the results having successive similar choices. After the questionnaire survey, the interviews for teachers and students were conducted and the whole process of interviews were recorded and reserved for analysis.

#### *D. Data Analysis*

Based on the results of questionnaire, the mean and frequency distribution of the sample are presented to show the overall tendency of the learning style preferences of Tujia students. The record of the interviews were used as supplementary.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the collected questionnaire data, a detailed discussion related to the distribution of learning styles of Tujia EFL learners raised earlier will be presented:

TABLE 1.  
MEAN AND DEVIATION OF LEARNING STYLE VARIABLES

Variables	Mean	SD
Visual	16.11	3.152
Auditory	14.57	2.789
Hand-on	17.19	2.391
Independent	17.23	2.950
Dependent	15.17	3.452
Group-oriented	15.08	3.922
Individual-oriented	17.82	3.212
Analytical	14.42	3.025
Holist	15.33	2.752
Serialist	16.79	3.468
Random	14.96	2.291
Impulsive	14.24	2.798
Reflective	18.09	3.150

### *Frequency Distribution of Learning Styles*

Table .1 showed the mean and standard deviation of each learning style. It indicated clearly the general distribution of learning styles of Tujia students. Five of them are strongly preferred by Tujia students: Reflective, individual-oriented, independent, hand-on and serialist. Table 3.1 also showed that the least preferred learning styles are impulsive (Mean=14.24) and Analytical (Mean=14.42). The values of standard deviation showed the biggest differences can be found in group-oriented (SD=3.922) and smallest is random style (SD=2.291).

#### 1. Tendency 1: Reflective

According to table 4.1, the mean score (M=18.09) of reflective was the highest among all the other learning styles and higher than the average score of 15, which suggested the No.1 learning style of Tujia students is reflective. The noticeable tendency indicates that most Tujia students preferred a reflective style.

Reid (2002) pointed out that reflective learners learn more effectively when they come to consider options before responding (they are accurate language learners). From Reid's definition, the Tujia EFL learners are accurate language learners. The finding of the current study is consistent with the image of Tujia students. There are two ways to explain the results:

First, owing to some historical and geographical reasons, the English education in Xiangxi is lagging and some of the Tujia EFL learners are in lower English proficiency, so they seldom speak in class or they need longer time to prepare before they answer the teachers' questions. In addition, for most of the Tujia students, English is their third language, compared to Han EFL students, they have to overcome more difficulties in learning English.

Second, according to Reid's explanation: Individuals are most likely not born with a genetic predisposition to learn analytically or relationally, visually or kinesthetically. They "learn how to learn" through the socialization process that occur in families and friendship groups (2002). Self-dignity is highly valued in Tujia culture. In Tujia society, people are afraid of losing face in the public. At the same time, Chinese people have been greatly influenced by the Confucian tradition. Under the influence of Chinese culture and Tujia culture, the Tujia students possess stronger self-esteem than Han students.

#### 2. Tendency 2: Individual-Oriented

Based on the Table.1, the mean score of Individual-oriented indicates that some Tujia students preferred to learn individually.

Liu Ruiqing & Dai Manchun (2003) pointed out that the individual-oriented dimension is in accordance with Oxford and Myers' introvert dimensions. That is to say, Tujia EFL learners are introvert. The result is different from the author's anticipation. On the surface, the Tujia students are straightforward, passionate and outgoing; they tend to gather together for living and learning. The preference for individual-oriented style might be attributed to the following reasons.

First, the ethnic culture plays an important role in shaping their learning styles. Because self-design and self-choice are highly valued in traditional Tujia culture, they like to make decisions by themselves. The second possible reason is Tujia EFL learners' living conditions. Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Xiangxi is a remote area located in Western Hunan province. Tujia students have fewer opportunities to be in touch with the latest information and they also have fewer ways to cultivate themselves than Han students. To most Tujia students, the one and only goal is to take different kinds of examinations and to get higher diploma. Therefore, they do not want to participate in other activities in University and they choose to study by themselves. Although the admission of University for them is comparatively low, they also have to work hard. They are faced with competitions from Han students after they enter the University, which calls for long time of hard works by themselves.

#### 3. Tendency 3: Independent

The independent style (Mean=17.23) is the third preferred learning styles. The independent/dependent dimension

derived from Willing's personality dimension of active/passive (Liu & Dai, 2003). According to the Liu & Dai (2003), the Tujia EFL learners are active learners. The result is different from what can be found in the teachers' interview. In some teachers' eyes, Tujia students are passive English learners. Due to their lower English proficiency, Tujia students are always waiting for the ready answers from teachers and peers instead of thinking independently. But the finding reveals that Tujia students prefer to make decisions by themselves in English learning classroom. They make plans for their own learning actively instead of following the teachers' instructions passively.

Based on the finding, it may be safe to say that learning styles are also determined by social, cultural and environmental factors coming from outside. The underlying reasons of the preference of independent style lie in the environment the Tujia students live in. Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Xiangxi is a mountain area with inconvenient transportation. The tough living environment nurtures a spirit of independence and self-reliance. Another explanation might be the construction of Tujia families. An average Tujia family consists of 4 or 5 persons, including at least 2 children. Some families with agriculture background even have three or four children. Parents have little time to take care of every child in order to make a living. Therefore, the children have to live independently as early as possible, when they grow up, they have got used to be independent.

#### 4. Tendency 4: Hand-on

As demonstrated in Table.1, the hand-on style is the forth preference of Tujia students. (Mean=17.19) The result is closer to the Reid's studies. Reid (1987) studied 1234 ESL learners in the intensive English language program in the U.S. The research showed that the hand-on style is the major learning style of Han students. Rossi-Le's (1989) study strongly demonstrated the hand-on style in both child and adult language learners. They all involve some movement in their language learning. In this sense, it can be concluded that Tujia students and Han students preferred to learn through participating in classroom activities.

As previous findings indicated, the learning styles can be determined by environment. The result is consistent with the author's anticipation. The special living environment of Tujia people in Xiangxi has an impact on the formation of learning style preferences of Tujia students. It is known that Tujia people in Xiangxi live in a relatively small region surrounded by high mountains and rivers. It is very common for one to tramp over hill and dale in order to move from one place to another. Living in such a harsh environment, Tujia students require movement and frequent break in activity. They like physical activities, games and role plays that let them get out of their chairs and move around. Since the hand-on style is also the major learning style of Han students, it is necessary for researchers to conduct researches about hand-on style such as the comparison of hand-on style between Han students and Tujia students or students from other ethnic groups.

#### 5. Tendency 5: Serialist

Serialist is the fifth learning style of Tujia students. (Mean=16.79) Gregorc (1979) defined serialist as "Learners work their way through material sequentially and systematically" (p.236). That is to say, serialist learners will read books sequentially and systematically. Due to the inconvenient transportation and underdevelopment of economy and education in Xiangxi, it is difficult for Tujia English learners to obtain a wider perspective by processing a large number of materials. They just can obtain limited materials from teacher's recommendation. Once they get these materials, they will work their way through these materials sequentially and systematically. Because serialist and random styles are perhaps the least studied in learning styles research, the reason given by the present research may not complete and the future researches of the same kind are needed.

Apart from the five preferred learning styles, Tujia students also preferred a variety of other learning styles with means around 15. This result is the same as the findings of Wang Chuming (1992) on the study of Han students. EFL learning is so complex activity that one can not learn English well by resorting to one or two learning styles.

Another trend in the learning styles of Tujia students is worth our attention. Analytical style was regarded as negligible (Mean=14.42). According to Reid (2002), analytical learners learn more effectively by themselves and prefer setting their own goals, and responding to a sequential, linear, step-by-step presentation of materials. This finding suggested the traditional English teaching method was not welcomed by Tujia students, such as grammar-translation. But some English teachers in Jishou University always spend most of the time on single word and sentence, focus on some details instead of the context and the meaningful whole, and then the customary teaching styles of these teachers would be inefficient.

Generally speaking, the learning styles of reflective, individual-oriented, independent, hand-on and serialist are the five strongest learning style preferences in Tujia students. Teachers should take these styles preferences into consideration in English classroom.

### V. SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

All the information generated about learning styles will be of little use to us as ESL instructors unless we can somehow apply it to the classroom and our way of teaching (Reid, 2002). The followings are to examine some fundamental components of Tujia students' learning styles, then make practical suggestions for improving teaching effectiveness and trying to change the present embarrassing situation of English teaching in Jishou University.

#### A. *Developing Self-awareness of the Learning Styles*

While it is essential that teachers in Tujia region have a practical understanding of learning styles, it is equally important for Tujia students to understand their own learning styles and to become aware of the strategies they avoid or seldom use. A Knowledge of one's own learning style is fundamental in "learning to learn" (Kinsella, 1994, p.25). Tujia students can not be expected to acquire successful language acquisition strategies, study methods, or collaborative learning skills incidentally, yet many come to EFL and other classes without a full realization of what is expected of them. Most of the Tujia students continue to use inappropriate approaches, with no awareness of the limitations of their habitual style of learning or more productive options for completing academic tasks. When teachers help Tujia students discover their own learning preferences, and then provide constructive feedback about the characteristic advantages and drawbacks, it is possible to help Tujia students develop a more versatile approach to learning, not just in the EFL classroom but also in every subject across the curriculum and in many situations beyond school.

#### *B. Linking Learning Styles and Learning Strategies in the EFL Classroom*

Because learning styles and learning strategies seem to be linked, it is important to create EFL courses that incorporate style and strategy training. Often students who become aware of their learning style preferences do not develop a parallel awareness of the strategies that they use naturally to assist them in learning the new language (Laura Rossi-Le, 1989). Therefore, in addition to help students find out their own learning styles, teachers should train students to use a variety of strategies that match their learning styles.

##### *1. Reflective versus Impulsive*

According to the study, reflective learning style is the major style of Tujia students while impulsive style is negligible. The dimensions of impulsive versus reflective becomes important in Tujia EFL classroom. It is very common to see most of the teachers want Tujia students to participate orally in EFL classroom. At times the teacher's goal may be for students to talk; it does not much matter what they say because the value is in the talking. At other times the teacher may be looking for particular responses, but if students come up with partial responses, the teacher is satisfied. But these kinds of discussions are difficult for the reflective Tujia students who need more time to get the right answer. Teachers should notice the Tujia students' learning style and try to improve their class design. They can organize classroom activities to give reflective Tujia students more time to think about the responses. For example, in reading classes, instead of moving from the reading of a text to the discussion of a text, teachers can first ask students to write down answers to questions. Teachers need to give reflective Tujia students enough time to write their answers. If the teacher wants Tujia students to talk about what they have written, it is better, for most Tujia students, to call on by name rather than to issue an open invitation to the class and expect someone to volunteer a response. But for some Tujia students from English Department, under the influence of western culture, they are impulsive learners, so the teachers should organize some activities for students to express themselves, such as public debate or discussions.

##### *2. Analytical (Field-independent) versus Relational (Field-dependent)*

The analytical/relational styles construct can offer teachers valuable implications for curriculum design and methodology in Tujia ESL classroom. The results of present study showed that analytical style is selected as a negligible style by most Tujia students. But some traditional teachers in Tujia ESL classroom are already tailored for the highly verbal and analytical learner. Therefore, some classroom activities should be improved; here are some useful strategies:

Display expressions of warmth and approval as well as confidence in every student's ability to succeed.

Make teachers reasonably available for study group assistance.

In addition to traditional grade rewards, provide social rewards that strengthen teachers' rapport with students.

Clarify the performance objectives of all lessons and tasks, and relate them to prior lessons.

Provide Tujia students with models that can serve as guidelines for successful completion of task demands. For example, distribute students' right answers or well-taken class notes to the whole class, then discuss why they are effective. The examples from their classmates may more elicit positive results from Tujia students than a written list of rules.

Organize more pair works or group works.

Create the opportunities for Tujia students to put their knowledge into practice.

##### *3. Hand-on Style*

Hand-on style is on the fourth place of Tujia students learning style preferences in terms of the present study. But the pen-and-paper teaching method in Tujia EFL classroom refrain Tujia student from their preferences. Therefore, a more communicative method should be employed. Suggested strategies include:

**Real-time Interaction:** Students might be encouraged to interact with classmates in realistic contexts. Teacher can also organize the activity of role-playing, such as the context of job hunting, shopping.

**Contact with Native Speakers:** Teachers can invite some native speakers from English-speaking countries to communicate with students.

**Making use of multimedia systems:** Fingers on the keyboard seem to have a different impact than pen/pencil on paper, and hand-on students respond well to this medium (Reid,2002). The computer use has been advantageous for the "hand-on" students. So the teachings can be moved to the multimedia-room, students are allowed to search relevant information and present what they have found on the screen.

##### *4. Serialist*

It is important for teachers to realize the serialist style of Tujia students. In addition to the textbooks, most Tujia

students have no ideas about relevant materials of their English learning. They will read the materials sequentially and systematically when teachers made recommendations. So teachers should make every effort to introduce some useful books so as to make students' effort worthwhile.

## VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings and weaknesses of this study indicate some suggestions for future research:

First, in order to have a more extensive knowledge of Tujia students' learning style preferences, the future studies should invite the Tujia students from larger range such as Tujia EFL students from other regions in China.

Second, the future studies can make some modifications of instruments to avoid the shortcomings of this study. Moreover, the learning styles preferences in different grades can be studied. Last but not least, relationship between students' learning styles and academic successes can be investigated in the future researches.

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# The Effect of Explicit Morphological Practice on the Reading Comprehension Abilities of Iranian Intermediate Level English Language Learners

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**Abstract**—This study investigated the effect of explicit morphological practice on improving reading comprehension ability of Iranian intermediate level language learners. Participants in this study were sixty Iranian EFL learners in English institutes of Amol, Mazandaran, Iran. Students were administered a TOFL proficiency test adapted from Sharpe (2010) and thirty homogeneous students were selected as the main participants of the study. These students were randomly assigned to one experimental group and one control group. First of all, students in both groups took a reading comprehension test as pretest. This test was designed to measure morphological knowledge of students and its effects on their total reading comprehension of passages. Then, the treatment of the researcher started and all students in both groups received a six-sessions reading comprehension training, but the experimental group also received explicit morphological practice during reading comprehension classes. After finishing the treatment, all the participants took a post test that was designed so as to be the parallel form of the pretest. The changes, if any, in the performance of both groups were calculated by SPSS and mean of the scores and t value and covariance of the scores were reported. The results indicate that students in experimental group showed a progress in their reading comprehension ability from pretest to posttest. This demonstrates that explicit morphological practice is effective in improving reading comprehension skills of Iranian intermediate level EFL students.

**Index Terms**—reading, reading comprehension, morphology, morphological awareness, morphological knowledge

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four language skills (listening, writing, reading, and speaking) that second language learners should acquire in their language learning process if they are to become proficient users of the target language. Reading comprehension is defined as “the ability to understand and retain the details, sequence, and meaning from written material” (Androes, McMahon, Parks, and Rose, 2000, p. 55). Language learners acquire most of their vocabulary through reading, particularly if they do not stay in a country where the language is spoken.

As such, vocabulary learning and teaching is a central activity in the L2 classroom. One way in which vocabulary learning can be enhanced is through the use of learning strategies. One potential language learning strategy is the use of morphological awareness to learn novel vocabulary. Morphological awareness refers to the learner’s knowledge of morphemes and morphemic structure, allowing them to reflect and manipulate morphological structure of words (Carlisle, 1995; Carlisle and Stone, 2003).

Perhaps the most significant contribution of morphological knowledge to reading is in the realm of vocabulary meaning. According to Nagy and Anderson (1984), 60% of the unfamiliar words a reader encounter in a text have meanings that can be predicted on the basis of their component parts. A reader with a better grasp of word formation processes will be better able to infer the meanings of these words and will therefore be able to comprehend the text better (Nagy, Berninger, Abbott, and Vaughan, 2003).

A number of studies have investigated the relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension in general and vocabulary knowledge in particular.

Deacon and Kirby’s (2004) four-year longitudinal study indicates that there is a positive relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension for the second, forth and sixth graders. They compared the effect of inflection awareness and phonological awareness on reading development after controlling variables of verbal and



non-verbal intelligence and prior reading ability. The study indicates that morphological awareness contributes to reading development even after three years of the study and after controlling for phonological awareness.

Ku and Anderson (2003) conducted a study to investigate whether morphological awareness plays a significant role in vocabulary acquisition and reading proficiency among second, fourth and sixth American and Chinese graders of English and Chinese languages. Researchers administered a reading comprehension test along with a set of tests. These tests involve a morpheme recognition test, a morpheme interpretation test and a pseudoword judgment test. The results demonstrate that morphological awareness is developed gradually throughout the students' language experience, and that morphological awareness is indispensable for English and Chinese vocabulary acquisition and reading proficiency.

White, Power and White's (1989) results of experiment 1 of the characteristics of affixed words is in accord with the previous studies. They draw the conclusion that morphological analysis is sufficient to understand affixed words that are semantically transparent (i.e. the meaning of the whole words can be derived from the meaning of its morphological units).

Explicit instruction on morphological units may help the learners to recover the meaning of complex words, and this might be accounted as an important vocabulary learning strategy. The fact that according to studies Iranian EFL students encounter a large number of morphologically complex words in their reading has motivated the researcher to explore further the role of morphological practice in reading comprehension of Iranian students.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Participants

The population from which the subjects of the present study are selected, includes sixty male and female intermediate level English language learners attending English institutes of Amol, Mazandaran. EFL students in these institutes take classes of English in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They are exposed to English 4 hours per week. The subjects of the study were recruited from different classes. The first language of all the students is Persian. In order to make the participants homogenous, all the students take the TOEFL proficiency test. Then, thirty homogeneous students having the lower level of English proficiency are selected as the main participants of the study. The mean age of these participants including 10 male and 20 female students is 17.5 years, with an age range of 15 to 20 and they are classified into two groups including one experimental group and one control group. Fifteen students are randomly assigned to each of these groups.

### B. Materials

To answer the present study's questions of explicit morphological practice and its effects on reading comprehension skills of intermediate level students, three tests are applied to achieve the purposes of the study. The first test is TOEFL Proficiency Test.

#### 1. TOEFL iBT Proficiency Test

The TOEFL proficiency test is adapted from Sharpe (2010), and is used to test students' English proficiency in four skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening. This test is of interest to the researcher as it can be applied to make the students homogeneous. Some items of the test are created by the researcher, and others are taken from Sharpe (2010) TOEFL test. The test is divided into two sections: Reading Comprehension and Morphological Structure.

Reading Comprehension Test measures students' ability to understand the text. It is comprised of a reading passage and 8 related questions. Students are asked to read the passage and select the most appropriate alternatives. The Morphological Structure Test measures students' morphological knowledge. The test consists of 12 four-option items. These items are created by the researcher. All of items are embedded in a sentence frame. Again the students are asked to choose the appropriate alternatives.

#### 2. Reading Comprehension Test "as Pretest"

This test consists of two reading passages. These passages are recruited from Active Reading by Anderson (2007). These passages are selected as to best suit the students' age and level. The test is comprised of 15 two-option questions. Almost all of the questions are designed to measure the participants' morphological knowledge and its effects on their overall comprehension of the texts. The participants are asked to read the passages and select those choices that are appropriate.

#### 3. Reading Comprehension Test "as post test"

This test consists of the same reading passages as the pretest, but it is comprised of somewhat different items as questions; in fact, parallel-forms method is applied. The post tests' items are designed so as to have the same level of difficulty of the pretest items and again they are used to measure the participants' morphological knowledge and its effects on their understanding of the texts.

### C. Procedure

First, the TOEFL proficiency test was administered to the sixty students who participated in the study. The goal of delivering this test was choosing the homogeneous students of the same level of language proficiency for the subsequent stages of the study. The proficiency test was divided into two parts; reading comprehension test and morphological structure test. The students were asked to read the passage, questions, and other test items and choose the

best possible responses. Then, those thirty students whose grades were lower than average and had the lower level of proficiency were selected by the researcher as the main participants of the study.

Then, these resulting thirty students were randomly assigned to two groups of fifteen as one control group and one experimental group. First of all, students in both groups took a reading comprehension test as pretest. This test was designed to measure morphological knowledge of students and its effects on their total reading comprehension of passages. Then, the treatment of the researcher started and all students in both groups received a six-sessions reading comprehension training, but the experimental group also received explicit morphological practice during reading comprehension classes. The reading material that was selected from *Active Reading* by Anderson (2007), included six reading passages. Each session, the researcher taught one passage. In the experimental group, the participants received reading comprehension training and at the same time, morphological features of the passage was explained by the researcher and practiced in the classroom. In other words, the participants received morphological training beside of reading comprehension practice. In the case of the control group, students only received reading comprehension practice in the whole sessions.

After finishing the treatment, all the participants took a post test that was designed so as to be the parallel form of the pretest. The aim of the researcher was to measure the changes, if any, in the performance of both experimental and control groups after receiving their own specific trainings.

#### D. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study is quantitative. In the case of the first hypothesis “explicit morphological practice has no effect on reading comprehension of Iranian students”, the mean of the scores of the participants in pretest and posttest will be calculated. Then, a t-test will be used to determine if the means of two groups in both pretests and posttests are significantly different from one another. For the second and third hypotheses, the ANCOVA will be carried out to investigate any kind of progress in the comprehension ability of experimental group from pretest to post test and reading score of control group from pretest to post test.

### III. RESULT

#### A. Data Analysis and Findings

##### 1. Descriptive Analysis

The following tables provide some information about the number of students in each group (experimental group and control group), the mean, standard deviation, and variance of participants' scores in pretests and posttests in both experimental group and control group

TABLE 4.1  
PRETEST OF CONTROL GROUP

N	Valid	15
Mean		5.8000
Std. Deviation		1.56753
Variance		2.457
Sum		87.00

Table 4.1 reports the number of participants in reading comprehension pretest, mean, standard deviation, and variance of scores of control group students. As the table 4.1 shows, the number of the students participating in the pretest of the control group has been 15. The mean of pretest scores of control group is 5.8000. Standard deviation of pretest scores of control group has been 1.56753 and the variance of scores is reported as 2.457.

TABLE 4.2  
PRETEST OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

N	Valid	15
	Missing	0
Mean		5.3333
Std. Deviation		1.63299
Variance		2.667
Sum		80.00

As it can be seen, the number of participants in reading comprehension pretest, mean, standard deviation, and variance of scores of experimental group are provided in Table 4.2. The number of participant in pretest of experimental group is 15. The mean of pretest scores of experimental group is 5.3333, and the standard deviation is 1.63299. The variance of scores is 2.667.

TABLE 4.3  
POSTTEST OF CONTROL GROUP

N	Valid	15
	Missing	0
Mean		6.3333
Std. Deviation		1.38444
Variance		1.917
Sum		95.00

Table 4.3 shows that the number of students participating in the posttest of control group was 15. The mean of posttest scores of control group is reported as 6.3333 and the standard deviation is 1.38444. The variance of scores will be 1.917.

TABLE 4.4  
POSTTEST OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

N	Valid	15
	Missing	0
Mean		9.8667
Std. Deviation		2.06559
Variance		4.267
Sum		148.00

Table 4.4 reports that the number of participants in reading comprehension posttest of experimental group was 15. The mean of posttest scores of experimental group is 9.8667, and the standard deviation of scores is 2.06559. The variance of scores will be 4.267.

## 2. Inferential Analysis

The data collected in this study is quantitative. In the case of the first hypothesis “explicit morphological practice has no effect on reading comprehension of Iranian students”, posttests’ scores of participants in both experimental and control groups will be compared. Then, a t-test will be used to determine if the means of two groups in posttests are significantly different from one another. For the second and third hypotheses, the ANCOVA will be carried out to investigate any kind of progress in the comprehension ability of experimental group from pretest to post test and reading score of control group from pretest to post test.

A t-test statistics are shown in the table below.

TABLE 4.5  
GROUP STATISTICS

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
reading	morphological practice	15	9.8667	2.06559	.53333
	no morphological practice	15	6.3333	1.38444	.35746

TABLE 4.6  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
3.370	.077	5.503	28	.000	3.53333	.64205	2.21816	4.84850
		5.503	24.466	.000	3.53333	.64205	2.20955	4.85712

As the table 4.5 reports, the number of participants in posttest of both control group and experimental group were 15. The mean of posttest scores of control group is 6.333, and the mean of posttest scores of experimental group is 9.8667. The standard deviation of experimental groups’ scores is 2.06559, and their standard error of mean is .53333. The standard deviation of control groups’ scores is 1.38444, and their standard error of mean is .35746.

TABLE 4.7  
THE COVARIANCE BETWEEN PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES OF CONTROL GROUP

x	x-x	y	y-y	Cov xy
5.8	-3	6.333	-2.5	.25

As the table 4.7 reports, the mean of pretest scores of control group is 5.8, and the mean of posttest scores of control group is 6.333. The resulting covariance between pretest and posttest scores of control group will be .25.

TABLE 4.8  
THE COVARIANCE BETWEEN PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

x	x-x	y	y-y	Cov xy
5.3333	-2.5	9.8667	-2	.17

As the table 4.8 shows, the mean of pretest scores of experimental group is 5.3333, and the mean of posttest scores of experimental group is 9.8667. The resulting covariance between pretest and posttest scores of experimental group will be .17.

#### B. Hypothesis Analysis

This study tested the following null hypotheses:

- H 1: Explicit morphological practice has no effect on reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate level students.
- H 2: There is no progress from pretest to posttest in the reading comprehension ability of experimental group.
- H 3: There is no progress from pretest to posttest in the reading score of control group.

##### 1. Hypothesis 1:

Based on the above- mentioned tables and statistics, the observed value of t is more than the critical value of t ( $5.503 > 2.048$ ). So the first hypothesis is rejected. This rejection of the first hypothesis is expressive of the fact that explicit morphological practice is significantly effective on reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate level English language learners.

##### 2. Hypotheses 2 and 3:

Based on the tables 4.7 and 4.8, the resulting ANCOVA numbers for control group and experimental group are consecutively .25 and .17. Since the ANCOVA number in experimental group is less than control group, it means that the students' marks in experimental group are less nearer to each other. This shows that morphological practice task with experimental group has been much more effective than reading task with control group and the second hypothesis is rejected. The students' marks in control group are nearer to each other than the experimental group and this demonstrates that the control group's task has been less effective in comparison with the experimental groups' task. Thus, the third hypothesis is supported.

## IV. DISCUSSION

The current study concentrated on determining the effectiveness of explicit morphological practice on reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate level English language learners. The control group only received reading comprehension training, but the experimental group was exposed to both reading comprehension and morphological knowledge training.

Using the data collected, it can be determined that the experimental group's students had a significantly better performance in posttest than pretest. Almost all of these students showed significant progress throughout six weeks in their ability to respond to reading comprehension questions. However, the control group's student's performance in posttest was not significantly different from pretest.

The first finding was that explicit morphological practice is really effective in improving reading comprehension of Iranian students. Based on the t-test done between posttests of control and experimental groups, the t value was less than the critical value (2.048) in Fisher and Yates table. So, the first null hypothesis can be rejected and it can be concluded that explicit morphological practice has effect on reading comprehension of Iranian students.

The second finding was that experimental groups' students showed a progress in their reading comprehension ability from pretest to posttest. Based on the ANCOVA done between pretest and posttest of experimental group, the covariance between pretest and posttest scores of experimental group was .17. So, the second null hypothesis can be rejected. This rejection indicates that experimental group's students had a significantly better performance in posttest than pretest as a result of the treatment made.

The third finding was that there has been no progress in reading score of control group from pretest to posttest. Based on the ANCOVA done between pretest and posttest scores of control group, the covariance between pretest and posttest of control groups' scores was .25. As a result, the third null hypothesis is not rejected based on statistical measurement. So, it can be inferred that there is no meaningful progress in reading score of control group from pretest to posttest.

## APPENDIX A TOEFL IBT PROFICIENCY TEST, FROM SHARPE, 2010

### Part A

Attention: You will have 15 minutes to read this passage and answer the relevant questions.

#### "Beowulf"

#### Historical Background

P1: The epic poem Beowulf, written in Old English, is the earliest existing Germanic epic and one of four surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Although Beowulf was written by an anonymous Englishman in Old English, the tale takes place in that part of Scandinavia from which Germanic tribes emigrated to England. Beowulf comes from Geatland, the

southeastern part of what is now Sweden. The Beowulf epic contains three major tales about Beowulf and several minor tales that reflect a rich Germanic oral tradition of myths, legends, and folklore.

P2: The Beowulf warriors have a foot in both the Bronze and Iron Ages. Their mead-halls reflect the wealthy living of the Bronze Age Northmen, and their wooden shields, wood shafted spears, and Bronze-hilted swords are those of the Bronze Age warrior. Beowulf also orders an iron shield for his fight with a dragon. Iron replaced bronze because it produced a blade with a cutting edge that was stronger and sharper. The Northman learned how to forge iron in about 500 B.C. Although they had been superior to the European Celts in the iron work, it was the Celts who taught them how to make and design iron work. Iron was accessible everywhere in Scandinavia, usually in the form of “bog-iron” found in the layers of peat in peat bogs.

P3: The Beowulf epic also reveals interesting aspects of the lives of the Anglo-Saxon who lived in England at the time of the anonymous Beowulf poet. The Germanic tribes, including the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, invaded England from about A.D. 450 TO 600. By the time of the Beowulf poet, Anglo-Saxon society in England was neither primitive nor uncultured.

P4: The identity of Beowulf poet is also uncertain. He apparently was a Christian who loved the pagan heroic tradition of his ancestors and blended the values of the pagan hero with the Christian values of his own country and time. Because he wrote in the Anglian dialect, he probably was either a monk in a monastery or a poet in an Anglo-Saxon court located north of the Thames River.

P5: Beowulf interests contemporary readers for many reasons. First, it is an outstanding adventure story. Grendel, Grendel’s mother, and the dragon are marvelous characters, and each fight is unique, action-packed, and exiting. Second, Beowulf is a very appealing hero. He is the perfect warrior combining extraordinary strength, skill, courage, and loyalty. Like Hercules, he devotes his life to make the world a safer place. He chooses to risk death in order to help other people, and he faces his inevitable death with heroism and dignity. Third, the Beowulf poet is interested in the psychological aspects of human behavior.

P6: Finally, the Beowulf poet exhibits a mature appreciation of the transitory nature of human life and achievement. In Beowulf, as in major epics of other cultures, the hero must create a meaningful life in a world that is often dangerous and uncaring. He must accept the inevitability of death. He chooses to reject despair; instead, he takes pride in himself and in his accomplishments. And he values human relationships.

1. According to paragraph 1, which of the following is true about Beowulf?
  - A. It is the only manuscript from the Anglo-Saxon period.
  - B. The original story was written in a Germanic dialect.
  - C. The author did not sign his name to the poem.
  - D. It is one of the several epics from the first century.
2. The word which in the passage refers to
  - A. Tale
  - B. Scandinavia
  - C. Manuscripts
  - D. Old English
3. Why does the author mention “bog-iron” in paragraph 2?
  - A. To demonstrate the availability of iron in Scandinavia
  - B. To prove that iron was better than Bronze for weapons
  - C. To argue that the Celts provided the materials to make iron
  - D. To suggest that 500 B.C. was the date that the Iron Age began
4. Which of the sentences below best expresses the information in the underlined statement in the paragraph 3 ?
  - A. Society in Anglo-Saxon England was both advanced and cultured.
  - B. The society of the Anglo-Saxons was not primitive or cultured.
  - C. The Anglo-Saxons had a society that was primitive, not cultured.
  - D. England during the Anglo-Saxon society was advanced, not cultured.
5. Why does the author of this passage use the word “apparently” in paragraph 4?
  - A. He is not certain that the author of Beowulf was a Christian.
  - B. He is mentioning facts that are obvious to the readers.
  - C. He is giving an example from a historical reference.
  - D. He is introducing evidence about the author of Beowulf.
6. The author compared the Beowulf character to Hercules because
  - A. They are both examples of the ideal hero
  - B. Their adventure with a dragon are very similar
  - C. The speeches that they make are inspiring
  - D. They lived at about the same time
7. The word exhibits in the passage is closest in meaning to
  - A. Creates
  - B. Demonstrates

- C. Assumes
- D. Terminates

8. The word reject in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. Manage
- B. Evaluate
- C. Refuse
- D. Confront

### Part B

Attention: you will have 5 minutes to read the questions and select the proper alternatives.

1. Did you hear the .....?
  - a) announce      b)announcing      c)announced      d)announcement
2. He listened carefully to the .....?
  - a) directs      b)directions      c)directing      d)directed
3. It was the .....sky of the winter.
  - a) darkful      b)darkles      c)darkest      d)darkly
4. She hoped to make a good .....
  - a)impressive      b)impressionable      c) impression      d)impressively
5. He was blinded by the .....
  - a) bright      b)brighten      c)brightly      d)brightness
6. The census is a count of the .....
  - a)popular      b)population      c)populate      d)popularize
7. I could feel the .....
  - a)froodly      b)froodful      c)frooden      d)froodness
8. He wants to ..... the moon!
  - a) colonist      b)colonization      c)colonial      d)colonize
9. She ignored the feeling of ..... in her feet.
  - a) dead      b)deadly      c)deadness      d)deaden
10. The sunrise was so .....
  - a) gloriousness      b)glorify      c)glorification      d)glorious
11. Please do not be so .....
  - a) critical      b)critically      c)criticism      d)criticize
12. Those two dogs are almost .....
  - a) identical      b)identity      c)identification      d)identity

### APPENDIX B PRETEST, TOEFL iBT, SHARPE 2010.

**Please read the following passages and answer the related questions accordingly.**

Passage 1:

#### Mystery Tours

It's really interesting to take a trip to some mysterious locations that still **baffle** archeologists to this day. The spectacular places like the Easter Island in the South Pacific and Stonehenge in England hold **extraordinary** impressive, ancient structures created by **prehistoric** civilizations. Scientists can only **speculate** as to how they were made.

The Moai of Easter Island

Located in the South Pacific, Easter Island is one of the most **isolated** places on earth and is famous for the large **intriguing** statues, which were carved by ancient people to bear **resemblance** to human heads. Archeological research is **indicative of** the point that Easter Island was first inhabited by Polynesians. Scientist believe these early inhabitants carved the Island's moai-believed to be religious symbols- from volcanic rock, and then pulled them to their different locations.

Stonehenge

This ancient English site is a collection of large stones arranged in two circles-one inside the other. Research suggests that it may have been designed and built by an ancient religious group for one of two purposes: either as a sacred temple or as an **observatory** to study the sky. Scientists believe that the enormous stones were transported from places around the country to their present site. Engineers estimate that approximately 600 people were needed to transport each sarsen stone from its point of origin to Salisby. Scientists consider this a remarkable feat in that time that is not accounted **significant** regarding today's equipments.

A. Read each question or statement and choose the correct answer.

1. A *baffling* custom of a country is ..... to outsiders.
  - a. Easy      b. difficult
2. What civilizations created the mentioned spectacular places?
  - a. Those who lived in the period of time in history before information was written down
  - b. Those who lived in the period of time in history that information was written down

3. Archeological research ....
  - a. Proves that Easter Island was first inhabited by Polynesians
  - b. Rejects that Easter Island was first inhabited by Polynesians
4. What is not meant by the word *observatory*?
  - a. A special building for observation
  - b. A tool for observation
5. What is meant by the word *approximately*?
  - a. almost correct
  - b. completely correct
6. What is meant by the word *intriguing*?
  - a. shocking
  - b. interesting
7. If people *speculate* that the earthquake will occur, they.....
  - a. Think it might happen
  - b. are sure it will happen
8. Travelling to moon has been ..... improvement for human beings.
  - a. a Significant
  - b. an insignificant
9. The ..... between the two structures was remarkable.
  - a. resembling
  - b. resemblance
10. Elderly people easily become socially .....
  - a. isolation
  - b. isolated

Passage 2:

### Endangered Species

Like individual animals, animal species also eventually **die out**. It is estimated that, until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one species disappeared from the earth every four years. By 1975, it was 1000 species per year, and today animals are disappearing at the **appalling** rate of more than 40000 species per year. Most species are threatened by pollution, habitat destruction, and unreasonable **exploitation** caused by humans.

Species that have a high, but not immediate, risk of dying out are simply labeled **endangered**. A **vulnerable** species is in less trouble than an endangered one, but its numbers are still certainly declining. Introducing a non-native species to an environment can also cause species endangerment. A non-native species can be introduced into a new environment by humans, either intentionally or by accident. Organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund try to raise awareness of threatened animals and plants.

B. Choose the correct response.

1. Those species that are labeled as *endangered*, are the ones that
  - a. Threat humans and other animals
  - b. Could be harmed
2. *vulnerable* species are the groups of animals that .....?
  - a. Will live a long time
  - b. will disappear soon
3. The Iranian tigers are exposed to extinction due to excessive .....of them for their meat and leather.
  - a. Elimination
  - b. exploitation
4. Unable to adapt to the new conditions of life, the dinosaurs .....
  - a. Continued living
  - b. died
5. The prisoners were living in ..... conditions.
  - a. appalled
  - b. appalling

APPENDIX C POSTTEST, TOEFL iBT, SHARPE 2010.

Please read the following passages and answer the related questions accordingly.

Passage 1:

### Mystery Tours

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stone from its point of origin to Salisbury. Scientists consider this a remarkable feat in that time that is not accounted **significant** regarding today's equipments.

A. Read each question or statement and choose the correct answers.

1. A *baffling* custom of a country is ..... to outsiders.  
a. Easy                                      b. difficult
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a. Those who lived in the period of time in history before information was written down  
b. Those who lived in the period of time in history that information was written down
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b. A tool for observation
5. What is meant by the word *approximately*?  
a. almost correct                      b. completely correct
6. What is meant by the word *intriguing*?  
a. shocking                              b. interesting
7. If people *speculate* that the earthquake will occur, they.....  
a. Think it might happen      b. are sure it will happen
8. Travelling to moon has been ..... improvement for human beings.  
a. Significant                              b. an insignificant
9. The ..... between the two structures was remarkable.  
a. resembling                              b. resemblance
10. Elderly people easily become socially .....  
a. isolation                              b. isolated

Passage 2:

### Endangered Species

Like individual animals, animal species also eventually **die out**. It is estimated that, until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one species disappeared from the earth every four years. By 1975, it was 1000 species per year, and today animals are disappearing at the **appalling** rate of more than 40000 species per year. Most species are threatened by pollution, habitat destruction, and unreasonable **exploitation** caused by humans.

Species that have a high, but not immediate, risk of dying out are simply labeled **endangered**. A **vulnerable** species is in less trouble than an endangered one, but its numbers are still certainly declining. Introducing a non-native species to an environment can also cause species endangerment. A non-native species can be introduced into a new environment by humans, either intentionally or by accident. Organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund try to raise awareness of threatened animals and plants.

A. Choose the correct responses.

1. Those species that are labeled as *endangered*, are the ones that  
a. Threat humans and other animals  
b. Could be harmed
2. *vulnerable* species are the groups of animals that .....?  
a. Will live a long time                      b. will disappear soon
3. The Iranian tigers are exposed to extinction due to excessive .....of them for their meat and leather.  
a. Elimination                              b. exploitation
4. Unable to adapt to the new conditions of life, the dinosaurs .....  
a. Continued living                              b. died
5. The prisoners were living in ..... conditions.  
a. appalled                              b. appalling

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# A Study on CLL Method in Reading Course

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**Abstract**—This paper, by comparing the effects of cooperative language learning (CLL) with that of individual-oriented traditional teaching method, seeks to explore the effective use and possible problems of cooperative language learning in college foreign language teaching. The academic achievement, retention of academic content and attitudes towards the teaching methods are used as criteria to determine the effectiveness of the two methods in classroom.

**Index Terms**—cooperative language learning, foreign language teaching, college stage

## I. INTRODUCTION

Cooperative learning is an old idea in our country. There was a record of “if one learns alone and without friends’ help, he will be ill-informed” in the classical educational book *Xue Ji* 2000 years ago, which emphasizes cooperation in the learning process. According to Slavin (1995), such educational theorists as Comenius in the seventeenth century, Rousseau in the eighteenth century and Pestalozzi in the nineteenth century held some forms of cooperation among students as essential to learning. Although the term “cooperating learning” is formally put forward in 1970s, there is no consensus on which theory is the recognized basis of cooperative learning. Slavin (1995) found the theories fall into two major categories: motivational and cognitive. According to Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1998, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2000), cooperative learning has its roots in social interdependence, cognitive-developmental, and behavioral learning theories. While there are different views on the attributes of cooperative learning, five essential elements—positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing -- are embedded in many models of cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1991, 2000). These elements are considered central to cooperative learning. Only under the full use of basic factors can efforts be created among members. Practitioners have developed many cooperative learning methods, which are based on the integration of the essential elements into each cooperative activity or assignment.

Deutsh (1949, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1991) conceptualized three types of goal structures that organize interpersonal behavior: cooperative, competitive, and individualistic. In the competitive goal structure, students work against each other to achieve a goal that only one or a few can attain. Students would be given the task with competing to see who completes it faster and more accurately than others in the class. They are wanted to work independently without discussing with other students and to seek only assistance from the teacher. In an individualistic situation, there is no correlation among the goal attainments of the participants. Students would be given the task completing to reach a present criterion of excellence. Education, especially foreign language education in most countries, had been on a competitive and individualistic basis.

In the cooperative learning classroom, students are assigned to small groups and instructed to learn assigned material and to make sure that the other members of the group also master the assignment. An individual can reach his learning goal if and only if the other participants in the learning group also attain their goals. Students help each other and benefit both of them in the cooperating student-student and teacher-student relationship. Even though these three goal structures are effective in helping students learn concepts and skills in some conditions, students can learn to interact more effectively and positively in cooperative learning process. Compared with competitive and individualistic goal structure, therefore, cooperative goal structure should be the best choice in our life, schooling, family, career, etc. Hundreds of studies on the efficiency of cooperative learning associated with competitive or individual performance during the past century have been conducted by researchers with different age subjects, in different subject areas, and in different environments.

Cooperative learning has been found to be effective for promoting learners’ the academic achievement, language acquisition, and communicative skills. Theory and research in the area of second language acquisition suggested that cooperative learning should also help second language learners acquire English. Sharan et al. (1984) has shown positive effects of cooperative learning on learning English as a foreign language. Freed (1994) investigated the effect of cooperative learning on EFL reading and found the experimental groups showed positive attitudes and more enhanced enjoyment and motivation. Szostek (1994, cited in Chafe, 1998) conducted an informal study of cooperative learning in a Spanish honors foreign language classroom and found students and observers were very positive about the cooperative learning experience in this study. Careen (1997, cited in Chafe, 1998) in a study of cooperative learning in French foreign language class found students of all levels in the cooperative learning groups acquired significantly more vocabulary than that of the traditional methods.

In sharp contrast to traditional language learning, cooperative language learning (CLL) reflects the integrative and communicative aspects of language learning, and is in accordance with the advocating of communicative language teaching and student-entered instruction in teaching foreign language (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Nunan, 1989; Zhang, 2010). CLL takes activities to train learner's language and social skills through discussion and communication in the form of small group. It provides much more opportunities for learners to comprehensible input and output and the processes of negotiation. Students are motivated to be engaged in language learning classroom, which leads to greater language proficiency. It provides learners more chances to produce language in a functional manner (Crandall, 1999). More importantly, it greatly fosters learners' responsibility and independence in language learning so that they could improve their cooperative and interactive skills which are indispensable in modern society.

In 1990s, educators in China began to apply group work in classroom, which initiated the exploring research on cooperative learning. In recent years, cooperative learning has received much attention as an alternative to the lecture format by the foreign language educators at college level. The review of a few of relevant studies on cooperative learning suggests that cooperative learning should be beneficial for EFL classrooms at college level in China. For example, Su and Zhang et al. (2000) showed cooperative learning could successfully improve listening comprehension, and enhance the teacher-centered listening classroom. Zhang and Zhao (2004) explored how to put cooperative learning into the practice of promoting the teaching quality of college English reading class and established a new type of fast and effective student-centered teaching model for reading course. Li (2007) acknowledged the advantages of cooperative learning such as increasing students' opportunities to practice the language, enhancing their confidence in English language learning, establishing good relationship and promoting students' active learning and so on and proved that students in the large-class English teaching had a positive attitude towards cooperative learning. Deng and Chen (2010) in a study of cooperative learning in reading class found the impact of the cooperative language learning environment on students' metacognition differed from that of the traditional learning environment, yet the promoting impact on the metacognition and reading ability had not manifested itself to the full extent. Shi and Ji (2010) in a training on students of science and engineering verified that cooperative learning is effective in promoting students' learning performance and their use of autonomous learning strategies and ability.

Although a considerable volume of research in our country have demonstrated the effectiveness of cooperative pedagogical strategies, cooperative learning at the college level are limited in number. Most college-level studies in the field of foreign language learning provide the explanations of theory or some specific procedures of carrying out cooperative learning methods and suggestions on how to adopt it in classroom. Little has been done with the experimental inquiry. The actual effect of CLL has not been deeply exploited. In an attempt to move the process along, the author of the paper conducted an experiment with the selected CLL methods in order to explore the effective use and possible problems of CLL in college foreign language teaching and learning.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. *Aims and Questions*

In spite of great changes in the field of language teaching during the past few decades, TEFL in china remains mainly traditional. Traditional methods here refer to the teacher-centered methods which are principally individual-oriented or competitive-oriented. Thus comparing CLL with non-cooperative traditional methods gives us a clear picture of the effectiveness of the CLL method in language learning and teaching. The philosophy and principles that formed the basis of the experimental course design have been articulated by Slavin (1995) and Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991). The techniques for organizing group work are suggested by Glosser (2012), Felder & Brent (1994), and many other books and articles in the recent education literature. The objective of the study is to determine the teaching effects of cooperative language learning approach for EFL learners in Chinese context on the achievement, retention for text content, and attitude toward the instructional methods of selected English majors. These purposes are turned into following questions:

1. Will there be a significant difference in academic achievement between the students taught by using the CLL method and those by using the traditional method?
2. Will there be a significant difference in retention of academic content between the students taught by using the CLL method and those by using traditional method?
3. What are students' attitudes towards CLL in class?

### B. *Subjects*

A total number of 102 grade-two English majors in Foreign Languages Department of our institute participated in this study. The experimental group (N=52) randomly selected are two natural classes from four natural classes in this grade.

### C. *Procedures*

The study consists of three parts: pretest, lecture, and two posttests. The experimental groups and control groups are four natural classes. It is necessary to give them a proficiency test before the study. Therefore, at first, all the students are given the same English proficiency test. Then the four classes receive the same instructional material. In order to

control the “teacher quality” variable, the control classes are taught by their former teachers. All groups are taught the same content, but students in experimental classes complete the learning tasks by using cooperative learning methods, while the students in the control classes complete learning tasks in a traditional learning way. The experimental classes (N=52) and control classes (N=50) are not differing substantially in composition by gender and age. The lessons are taught to all classes over eight weeks’ session; each week includes four periods (a period is defined as fifty minutes). One important point should be mentioned is that all participants do not know they will be tested after a period of learning so as to avoid the interfering of factitious factors.

At last, the same quiz paper is given to participants to measure their achievement. The question items of quiz are related to the content of instruction. Three weeks later, the test is administrated again to the students to determine their retention of academic content. As a part of the posttest in this study, the experimental classes are asked to evaluate their experience by answering question: “which do you prefer, CLL method or traditional method? Why?” while the control classes are not asked to evaluate their experience.

#### D. Teaching Design

At the beginning of the experiment, students work in groups of their own choice. Since CLL involves a great deal more than simply placing students into groups, the teacher sets aside an entire 50-minute period for assigning the groups and talking to the students the requirements and potential outcomes of using CLL. The group members are mainly chosen by their ability and individual difference so each group will have one top-level, two middle-levels and one struggling student. Students assign roles within group, which includes one reader, one speaker, one recorder and doubling as timer, one or two responders (their roles are rotated every other assignment or fixed according to the learning task). They are encouraged to challenge each other and the teacher. They assess the class performance of their members and themselves after a certain time of learning.

The appropriate CLL methods are employed according to the teaching content. The teacher assesses group performance by circulating among the students to monitor their discussions and by listening to their answers. After each cooperative learning activity, the teacher gives credits to those groups if group members make progress, and marks down those groups if group members fall behind. Students win points by demonstrating knowledge of the academic material that has been practiced in team and earn extra points by correctly challenging the answer of other group. The teacher also explains the difficult and important language points if necessary. Meanwhile, they are required to follow a list of cooperative learning activity rules (referenced on Glosser, 2012):

1. Every member of each group is responsible for himself and his group work.
2. Every member should be constructive and honest to contribute to the group.
3. Be open to other members' ideas and encourage everyone's participation.
4. No Chinese is allowed when doing the group work.

Before the formal start of the experiment, the author consciously began to implement in class the more basic cooperative learning activities such as Roundtable, a Rapid Brainstorming, and then relatively highly structured activities such as Solving Problems with Cooperative Learning, Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition. Several weeks later, positive interdependence was promoted among team members, individual accountability assured for most of group work, and teamwork skills developed. Students had been used to cooperative learning in language learning. In such condition, the author formally carries out the experiment.

The control classes are taught by using the traditional non-cooperative approaches. This approach has been used for a long time in teaching either intensive reading course or other courses. The main pattern is “teacher talks, students listen”. The teacher may occasionally uses team work or other activities to develop the teaching, which depends on the teacher’s own teaching style.

#### E. Measures

The dependent variables in this study are two posttests scores for academic achievement and retention of academic content. Achievement is measured by test score. The independent variable is method of instruction: cooperative language learning and non-cooperative learning.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At first, an independent-samples t-test is conducted on two treatment groups’ proficiency tests. The mean of the pretest scores of the participants in the group that learn cooperatively (M=91.86) is not significantly different from that of the group who learn traditionally (M=90.10). The t-test yields a value ( $t=0.708$ ,  $p=0.481$ ), which is not statistically significant. Hence, it is concluded that the two groups are not significantly different (see table 1).

TABLE 1  
COMPARISON OF TWO GROUPS’ ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Group	n	Mean	SD	t	p
Experimental group	52	91.86	12.00	0.708	0.481
Control group	50	90.10	13.16		

The dependent variables of student academic achievement and retention of academic content are analyzed with a simple test of differences in the mean scores of the two groups, using a t-test for independent samples. In achievement, as measured by total test scores, the cooperative group outperformed the non-cooperative group ( $t=2.60$ ,  $p=0.011$ ). There is a significant difference in student achievement between the students taught by using CLL method and those by using non-cooperative traditional method. In the retention of learned knowledge, the two groups also show significant difference ( $t=2.45$ ,  $p=0.016$ ) (see table 2).

TABLE 2  
ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES, RETENTION FROM USING COOPERATIVE AND INDIVIDUAL-ORIENTED LEARNING METHOD

Group	N	Achievement test				Retention test			
		Mean	SD	t	p	Mean	SD	t	p
Experimental group	52	79.23	9.09	2.60	0.011	68.85	16.87	2.45	0.016
Control group	50	74.48	9.34			60.38	18.04		

According to the statistical analysis on the test scores, the hypothesis that employing CLL strategies in college classrooms for EFL learners can improve students' achievement and retention is supported. The results match the learning theories proposed by proponents of cooperative learning. Slavin (1990) proved that interaction among students around appropriate tasks increases their mastery of academic contents. When students interact with other students, they need to explain and discuss each other's opinions, which will facilitate further understanding and memory of the material to be learned. The debate to resolve potential conflicts during cooperative activities results in the development of higher levels of understanding and long-term memory, so the students who employ CLL methods in experimental group have the higher achievement than those who are in the control group. Likewise, the result shows the different retention level in the second posttest, which corresponds with the findings of many researchers. According to Johnson et al. (1986), cooperative learning activities enhance more frequent giving and receiving of explanations, which has the potential to increase the accuracy of long-term retention. However, it is noted that the mean of the participants in the group that learn cooperatively ( $M=79.23$ ) shows but a little higher than that of the group who learn traditionally ( $M=74.48$ ). Possible reason for this may have been the high learner motivation. The experiment period is coincidentally near to the date when sophomores have their National English-majors Band 4. The high extrinsic motivation has prompted them to duly review what they have learned in class and especially to memorize a large amount of new words and expressions.

At the end of the experiment, the participants in the experimental group are given an open-ended question in which they tell whether the new method is helpful. Among 52 effective questionnaire papers, 40 papers answer positively. Generally speaking, we can probably believe that CLL has produced positive feelings in the students. When asked why, most participants provide two to three reasons. Table 3 and 4 list their most common responses in rank order (concluded by general ideas).

TABLE 3  
MAJOR REASONS FOR COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

It provides me more chances to practice oral English.
I make deeper understanding on the learning materials and remembered the new words more quickly.
I am concentrated more.
I feel relaxed in group work.
I must be self-disciplined to preview and review my learning task for the benefit of my group.
I get to know more about my classmates.
I learn to be responsible for my words and actions.

TABLE 4  
MAJOR REASONS AGAINST COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I can learn faster if the teacher delivers the lecture directly.
It wastes my time.
Someone is not cooperative that effects my performance.
I have to spend more time in doing the extracurricular homework.
We would work better, if we discussed in Chinese.

When the students are asked to list their reasons for supporting CLL method, they display their communicative need. With the expanding communication with western countries and the great emphasis on spoken English in china's educational reform, students as individuals have realized the importance of communicative function of language, and they urge to get more chances to practice their oral English. CLL activities just meet their needs. During the CCL work, students themselves could be the teachers when explaining and arguing with their peer, thereby the process reinforces their memory of newly learned language. Students put top priority on the mastery of knowledge of English as well as the acquiring of social skills such as responsibility and cooperation. Due to cooperative "we-win, I-win" rather than traditional "I-win, you-lose" structure, many students have to commit a large amount of time and effort to the course materials for the benefit of group and themselves than they would have done in a passive, note-taking lecture environment. Students also regard this method as a facilitator to concentrate themselves on learning in class in order to perform well. Inevitably they would improve their performance at school. Students consider CLL can create a positive

and embracing climate in which they can learn more.

In the responses against CLL, some students cannot accustom themselves to learning with others. They are more likely to accept what the teacher arranged for them. Some students mention that they have wasted a lot of time on explaining the materials to other group members. Those students are investigated to be the able ones, partly because they as independent adult with strong thinking ability and self-consciousness are not liable to cooperate with each other to accomplish tasks, partly because some insecure students may choose to be uncooperative or silent. Some students pay excessive attention to memorizing the vocabulary and doing the simulated tests for the preparation of upcoming exam. Some top students who are eager to review for testing even regarded the activities time-wasting. This may influence their attitudes toward CLL and their motivation to participating in the group work. At last, some may overuse their mother tongue in order to communicate easily with group members. They think they would communicate better in group work if they were allowed to speak Chinese instead of English. Low proficiency in English hinders some students from rapid completing of the group work. Actually the activity rule intends to help them practice their oral English as often as possible.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

From the above analysis we can see the result of the experimental study is rather satisfying despite the fact that this experiment is small-scaled one. It suggests the application of CLL in colleges can be beneficial for foreign language learning in academic performance. However the practical application of this method may raise some issues. On the part of teachers, they may feel it hard to control the teaching process due to the influence of the whole teaching program; they may not balance well time distribution of plain instruction and CLL activities. Students are social individuals each with vastly different needs, learning styles, goals and abilities. The teachers must focus attention on the individual needs of the students. Therefore how to integrate skillfully CLL with class presentation and individual learning and how to take full advantage of CLL need to be further investigated and validated. In addition, teachers are required to possess higher organization ability in class activates. They need to find an appropriate way to use cooperative learning that is congruent with their philosophies and practice. They should carefully prepare tasks or questions for students to accomplish together and arranges well for them to do their work together. They should notice that their role changes from being in front of the learners doing most of the talking to being facilitator, negotiator, and monitor to assure the elements of CCL are successfully implemented. Anyway, from simply providing course content in class to meeting psychosocial needs of the individual student while teaching is just what the teaching paradigm shift about.

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# The Relation between Teachers' Self-beliefs of L2 Learning and In-class Practices

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**Abstract**—This study examined the relationship between Teachers' self-belief of L2 learning and in-class practices and decisions. Thirty L2 teachers and 50 L2 learners participated in this study. To assess the learners' general proficiency level, a standard Proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test, 2010) was administered. The participants were given a questionnaire including 22 questions specialized in teacher institutional design. Thirty teachers were observed by the researcher along with two colleagues as raters to achieve interrater reliability. Each teacher was observed two to five sessions continuously, their teaching was recorded by MP3 player to review again if needed. Some questions were specially designed to determine the teachers' justification about what they did, behaved, and decided during language teaching according to teachers' responses to the TBQ (Teacher Belief Questionnaire) and researchers' observation checklist. The results of the study showed that teachers' self-belief of L2 learning exert no particular sort of effect on L2 teachers' decision-making process and in-class instructional practices.

**Index Terms**—teacher cognition, decision-making skill, teachers' self-belief

## I. INTRODUCTION

As Freeman (1991) pointed out, teaching is a decision-making process in terms of knowledge, skill, attitude, and awareness. Teachers are, then, decision-makers who process information, acting upon those decisions within complex teaching environments (Johnson, 1992).

Nunan and Lamb (1996) pointed out that the planning for L2 teaching includes three elements: 1) knowledge of language learners and their needs, 2) a set of goals and objectives, and 3) a personal view of the nature of the L2 and L2 learning. They maintain that there are different decision-making points in L2 teaching. Their comprehensive list entails objective, content including linguistic content (grammar) and other content (tasks for the day), evaluation, classroom talk, instruction methods, error correction and feedback, questions, use of first language (L1), assignments, dealing with behavior problems, L2 teachers' and learners' roles, small group and pair work, large classes, one-to-one instruction, self-directed learning, mixed-level groups, motivation, anxiety, and attitude. Although difficult to closely follow the requirements of this list, it appears necessary for L2 teachers to learn all the strategies to be employed in planning programs and decision-making. Indeed L2 teachers tend to give the greatest prominence to the needs, interests and abilities of their learners, followed by the subject matter, goals, and teaching methods.

It is impossible, however, to make the same decisions in similar situations. L2 teachers sometimes decide to make a decision on the actual time and place of teaching according to the present circumstances (Woods, 1996). This demonstrates the unpredictable nature of this process; one action may lead to another action within L2 teachers' understanding and interpreting, or one action is part of larger events that include unforeseen consequences (Woods, 1996). That is why in L2 learning, L2 teaching behaviors are considered as causes and learners' learning is considered as effect.

A number of researchers focused on discussing L2 teachers' actions in the classroom; the kind of instructional practices during their teaching, and trying to find out the cognition underlying these practices (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992).

Like other components of L2 teaching, the L2 teacher conception of L2 learning can be debatable in the sense to find out whether they employ the same method through which they have learned or acquired an L2. Woods (2000) highlighted that any hand-on practice which makes L2 teachers bring up ideas generated from reflection, self-discovery, self-renewal, and self-development can be efficient. Moreover, it can considerably advance those strategies of teaching through in L2 teachers implement decisions and plans in the classroom. Besides, Tan and Lan (2010) stated that L2 teachers adopted their classroom instructional practices based on what was necessary to be learned and comprehended by L2 learners to help their learners understand the lessons perfectly.



Nevertheless, the problem arises when teachers, learners, and institutes' principals are not completely aware of what to do and how to focus correctly on learners' learning in the classroom. Iranian language teachers in conversation classes are unaware of what really involves in learning a language, only pay attention to one or some specific aspects of language learning, resulting in the negligence of teachers' decision making process.

What teachers know, believe, and think is the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching. In the last 25 years the impacts of teacher cognition on teachers' professional lives have been recognized (Calderhead 1996; Carter 1990; Clark & Peterson 1986; Fenstermacher 1994; Richardson 1996; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer 2001). According to Borg (1997), teachers have cognition about all aspects of their works. Teacher cognitions and practices are on a part informing; contextual factors playing an important role in determining the extent to which teachers are able to implement instruction congruent with their cognitions (e.g., Beach 1994; Tabachnick & Zeichner 1986). Teacher cognition plays a pivotal role in teachers' lives (Freeman, 1966, 2002). In the 1990s a bulk of research on teacher cognition started to appear. Here is the review of the chronology of research on L2 teacher cognition:

There have been 22 studies which have shown the relationship between teacher cognition and grammar teaching. Besides, there are a few other studies which highlighted the teacher cognition and literacy instruction (Borg, 1998; Johnson 1996).

As Fenstermacher (1994) and Orton (1996) assert, teacher cognition is completely a process which has a personal nature where experience has a pivotal role in development of this personal nature of cognition. Both cognition and instructional practices are mutually informing.

According to Almarza (1996), there is a relationship between teachers' knowledge and education with classroom practice. Any change in the origin and content of teacher cognition has an impact on classroom practices.

As Borg (1996) stated, cognition as an inclusive term includes the complexity of teachers' mental lives, and of the relationship between cognition and practice. Cognition is divided into three major parts:

- a) Cognition and prior language learning experience
- b) Cognition and teacher education
- c) Cognition and classroom practice

Borg (1996) highly emphasized the value of observation in the study of L2 teacher cognition. What and how teachers think and what actually takes place in the classroom are correlated with value and ability of observation (Borg, 1996). In teacher cognition research, interview and/or self-report data are taken into account. In order to emphasize the crucial importance of observation, it is necessary to understand various dimensions of observation which are discussed here, Borg (2006) suggests a careful requirement of attention, including the observer's role, the authenticity of the setting, disclosure to teachers, the recording of observations, the coding and analyzing of observations, and the scope of observations.

Primarily, to ensure better quality inside the classroom, the activities are largely defined as observable teacher and learner behavior. An integration of personal attributes (e.g., care, humor, patience) and professional preparation is called the conceptualization of the teaching process.

Roberts (1998) puts forward his suggestion in which teachers' behavior in class depends on their perceptions of the incidents which make up classroom life and as he suggests teaching is a social activity. He adds that perception of teachers of the classroom is not a phenomenon which is able to develop in isolation. Hyde (1995), Kramsch and Sullivan (1996), Roberts (1998), Somekh (1993), and views the classroom setting accommodation not to be like test-tube samples of school and local culture.

Needless to say that teachers' thinking and teachers' behavior in the class is influenced by school climate and occupational culture. Teachers usually do not show prudence or have too little prudence in managing learning in the class and "giving the lesson" is an issue which they feel responsible for that. Obviously, they were not used for reflecting on their own practice, to put it in this way, teachers by no means observed each other, and had rarely been observed.

Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, & O'Brien (1995), Tellez (1992) and Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles (1992) offered the extreme instance of how an unwilling or not a-well-qualified teacher may have had to become a mentor teacher and due to this mentor/ mentee collaboration, the mentoring process has been negatively affected.

All immediate arrangements about possible threats to the order of the classroom were managed by teachers called 'classroom management' in which problems have been foreseen by teachers before they actually accrued.

To go through teachers' behavior, 'discipline' is another subject to be taken into account which refers to an occasion interrupting the course of the lesson in class, where a teacher has to make a change to solve a discipline problem. In the same vein, all cooperating teachers were supposed to have reacted to a problematic situation in class.

Learners' beliefs have the potential to influence both their experiences and actions based on the existing research suggested by Puchta (1999) and Stevick (1980).

Teacher beliefs clarify the ideas that influence the way they conceptualize teaching. As Pajares (1992) argues, what it takes to be an effective teacher and how learners ought to behave are relevant subjects in this domain.

In order to understand teachers' belief, one needs to assess the process of how teachers conceptualize their work. What are the sources of teachers' core beliefs?

For novice teachers, classroom experience and day to day interaction with colleagues has the potential to influence the relationship among beliefs and principals. To consolidate with the principal can promote their beliefs overtime. The more experienced the teachers are, the more reliant on the core principal beliefs and less conscious about doing so they are. The most resilient teachers' beliefs are formed on the basis of teachers' own schooling as young learners. Teacher's conceptualization about learning, teaching and language is more correlated with their belief system concerning such issues as human nature, society, education and culture.

Peacock (2001) and Richards, Tung, and Ng (1992) did larger scale surveys of teachers' beliefs. According to Hofer and Pintrich (1997) and Schommer (1993), to be engaged with teacher beliefs of knowing and learning in the field of epistemological beliefs lead us to provide insights into the improvement of teaching and learning among novice teachers. Epistemological beliefs are scopes for change; change in experience which reflects both education and home-life.

In a same vein, teachers are life-long learners able to critically reflect on their actions and teaching; they are knowledge workers in need of being self-regulated, as Brownlee (2004) argued. In contrast, Schommer (1994) asserts something related to multidimensional and flexible nature of (some) teachers' beliefs.

As mentioned above, teachers' beliefs are the crucial issue needed to be considered and addressed in teacher education courses (Anders, Lloyd, Tidwell, & Richardson, 1991; Fang, 1996). This study is, thus, an attempt to explore different problems for those who are spending time, money and energy in L2 teaching and learning process.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Participants

The main participants in this study were 30 L2 teachers teaching in Jahad Danshgahi Education Centers (Panje-ramazan & Najaf Abad branch), Najaf Abad Azad University, Sadr Language institute, Novin Language Institute, Azad University of Brujerd, Paradise Institute, Shahin-Shahr Payam e Noor, and Isfahan University. They were randomly selected from among 50 teachers in the above centers.

Also, another group of participants, 100 learners, were examined. To assess the learners' general proficiency level, a standard Proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test, 2010) was administered; including 100 grammar items. It took about an hour for the participants to complete it. Fifty male and 50 female learners were selected studying Top Notch series in conversation classes. Learners participated in this study were selected from all the above mentioned universities and levels.

### B. Materials

In this study, four types of materials were employed for data collection: Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire (TBQ), Observation Checklist, Interview, and daily lesson plans.

### C. Procedure

Firstly, the researcher surveyed and observed some other teachers in different English centers mentioned before by TBQ. After surveying the teachers' and learners' notes and adopting some items from Bredekamp and Copple (1997), Dian and Burts (1990), Kim (2005), Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) a questionnaire was designed including 22 questions specialized in teacher institutional design.

Some teachers complained about some questions which were ambiguous to them, and some of them recommended that the number of items in each topic be matched with the research questions. Therefore, the researcher decided to revise the questioner once more. The revised questionnaire included 19 items in 4 sections. Also, 4 items were revised.

Secondly, thirty teachers were observed by the researcher along with two colleagues as raters to achieve interrater reliability. Each teacher was observed two to five sessions continuously, their teaching was recorded by MP3 player to review again if needed. The researcher and raters sat in the corner of the class not to distract learners' and teachers' attention. In order to investigate the main purpose of the study, the researcher kept an eye on L2 teacher carefully. The Observation Checklist (adapted from Dunkin, 1996 and Cumming, 1989) included 20 questions, four sections in which 5 related items were designed; teachers' education, teachers' schooling experience, teacher's self-beliefs and teachers' adaptability. It enjoyed three choices from 1 (yes), 2(no), and 3(other); as the latter was related to any teacher reaction which was not completely positive or completely negative.

Then, some questions were specially designed to determine the teachers' justification about what they did, behaved, and decided during language teaching according to teachers' responses to the TBQ and researchers' observation checklist.

The questions were used to tap teachers' cognition both in their beliefs and decision-making behaviors. Every interview was done just after the class was over. Every teacher in the staff room was asked to respond a few questions designed by the researcher which took 40 minutes. In order to guarantee maximum inter-rater reliability, each interview was recorded by MP3 player to be listened by two raters for its cognitive density and the average density of each interview was finally calculated. For some of the teachers who were not found in the staff room after the class, the researcher corresponded with them via e-mail or talked to them on the telephone.

Finally, in order to have a precise density of teachers' in-class decision-making a daily lesson plan was written by teachers a day before the session which was observed by the researcher. They were supposed to write exactly whatever they were going to do in the classroom. Some teachers filled it out some hours before the class was going to start. These daily lesson plans were used to see whether they behaved as they believed or they might do improvisational teaching. Daily lesson plan was weighted in six sections, lesson content, duration, objective(s), procedure, assessment, and assignment. A sample was designed by the researcher to help teachers to fill it out. L2 teachers were asked to write the two most important parts of their teaching plan.

The present study was conducted in Jihad Education Center and in conversation classes of English Department of Najaf Abad Azad University. As it was illustrated in the participants' section, 50 learners were selected from a total of 100 participants on the basis of their scores OPT (1992) and 30 English teachers of both sexes. Out of 100 learners, 50 learners whose categorized into seven groups of beginner, false beginner, basic, elementary, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, and very advanced, were selected. Of course they were not aware of the fact that they were selected to take part in this research.

In order to observe the teachers' behaviors, decision-making directly, 2-5 sessions of observation of each teacher were attended to by the researcher during one semester. To access inter-observer reliability, another observer also filled out the checklists. The inter-observer reliability was .552. For being minimally intrusive, the observers sat in the back of the class, in order not to make the participants distracted by their note taking.

Since observations could not be considered sufficient for the researcher to have access to all participants' cognition, beliefs and decision-making, in addition to class observations, two sets of questionnaires and a daily lesson plan were administered to the participants.

Prior to launching the main study, the homogeneity of the group was confirmed by a pilot study. A group of Ph.D. English instructors and some students who were teachers too comprised part of the population.

In order to ascertain the validity of the questionnaires, two sets of questionnaires were given to 20 experienced English Professors of Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch, and Esfahan University. The teachers analyzed the content and found one to one correspondence between the content and purpose of the questions. So, the content validity was confirmed. Their comments and suggestions were also gathered.

To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaires, two sets of the learners' questionnaires were piloted with 25 Top notch learners with the same characteristics as those of the participants in Jihad Daneshgahi Education Center. After carrying out the pilot test, necessary revisions were made. L2 teachers' questionnaire (TBQ) was also validated by 20 English university professors, who had experience in teaching conversation in different centers.

After collecting data, the reliability indexes for two sets of the questionnaires were computed. The Cronbach Alpha was used to estimate their reliability indexes and it was acceptable for all questionnaires. The questionnaires reliability were .673 and .64 respectively.

Some learners were provided with the opportunity to complete the questionnaire at home and bring it back the next session. Before administrating the questionnaire, the students were informed of how to fill in; they were asked to write their code number, not their names, so that their identities would remain confidential.

Some teachers filled out the daily lesson plan one day before the session which was supposed to be observed. Others completed the daily lesson plan just one hour before the class was going start. They were asked to write exactly the instruction practice that they were going to perform during teaching.

After collecting the learners' opinions and attitudes in order to determine L2 teachers' decision-making in their classes, the instructors' questionnaire was distributed among 30 English teachers, 24 English educated teachers and 6 Non-English educated teachers, who were selected according to their experience in L2 teaching and their eagerness to take part in this study. Moreover, they were asked to complete the English questionnaire in the staff room.

### III. DATA ANALYSIS

The Teacher Belief Questionnaire (TBQ) composed of 19 questions in 4 sections with the responses which were developed by the English instructors in a likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The results provided an overall account of the teachers' belief in the course of classroom management and decision-making process.

TABLE 1.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Moderately disagree</i>	<i>No idea</i>	<i>Moderately agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Q1	16.7%	13.3%	.0%	16.7%	53.3%
Q2	6.7%	20.0%	13.3%	40.0%	20.0%
Q3	3.3%	13.3%	10.0%	36.7%	36.7%
Q4	.0%	13.3%	3.3%	36.7%	46.7%
Q5	10.0%	26.7%	13.3%	33.3%	16.7%
Q6	23.3%	23.3%	.0%	26.7%	26.7%
Q7	6.7%	23.3%	10.0%	26.7%	33.3%
Q8	23.3%	13.3%	23.3%	26.7%	13.3%
Q9	3.3%	43.3%	10.0%	30.0%	13.3%
Q10	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%	23.3%	10.0%
Q11	36.7%	20.0%	10.0%	26.7%	6.7%
Q12	10.0%	16.7%	13.3%	36.7%	23.3%
Q13	10.0%	26.7%	13.3%	46.7%	3.3%
Q14	6.7%	16.7%	6.7%	56.7%	13.3%
Q15	6.7%	10.0%	16.7%	56.7%	10.0%
Q16	23.3%	23.3%	16.7%	33.3%	3.3%
Q17	6.7%	33.3%	3.3%	56.7%	.0%
Q18	16.7%	30.0%	10.0%	26.7%	16.7%
Q19	16.7%	30.0%	3.3%	30.0%	20.0%

Following the above records, there were no frequent uses of 'no idea' response through the collected data. The instructors mostly tended to avoid explaining about a part in which they were not good enough at teaching (Question 1), employ the same method through which they learned English (Question 4) and be less motivated to do hard work due to the learners' poor attitude (Question 7). In two cases as correlating the instructional practice with their self-awareness (Question 3) and using the shortage of time excuse to change their lesson plan (Question 6) an equal number of teachers were moderately and strongly agree as the most frequent responses.

Regarding the next response alternative as moderately agree, the instructors most often selected this category in relation to the statements as having a particular daily lesson plan and hence, their success (Question 2), increasing the efficiency through concentration on the learners' needs and expectations (Question 5), the negative role of personal problems in making the best teaching decision (Question 8), changing the lesson plan in conversation classes due to the learners' boredom (Question 12), the more important role of stimulating conversation with fun than following the lesson plan (Question 13), making more instant changes to the lesson plan when regarding the learners' motivation (Question 14), pretending not to see the discipline problems rather than stopping the lesson to deal with them (Question 15), preferring to change decisions by another colleagues' advice before the class (Question 16) and answering the vocabulary problems during an activity (Question 17). Interestingly, regarding the idea of changing the already planned schedule due to lots of absentees (Question 19) an equal number of instructors checked moderately agree as well as moderately disagree.

Concerning the priority of error correction to error explanation (Question 9), ignoring extra questions to guarantee better decision-making process (Question 10) and less adaptability of a teacher with Non-English specialty in answering the learners' questions (Question 18) the instructors most often were moderately disagreed. Finally, in relation to ignoring the learners' errors (Question 11), most of the instructors strongly disagreed with the statement.

The observation checklist included 20 statements which in each class were checked by the researcher for the instructors as employed (Yes), not employed (No) or other strategy alternatives (other) which is related to any teacher reaction which is not completely positive or completely negative.

TABLE 2.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE OBSERVATION RESULTS

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Other</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Other</i>
Q1	63.3%	36.7%	0.0%	Q11	60.0%	23.3%	16.7%
Q2	53.3%	43.3%	3.3%	Q12	16.7%	76.7%	6.7%
Q3	50.0%	36.7%	13.3%	Q13	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Q4	73.3%	20.0%	6.7%	Q14	63.3%	16.7%	20.0%
Q5	86.7%	10.0%	3.3%	Q15	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%
Q6	86.7%	3.3%	10.0%	Q16	33.3%	56.7%	10.0%
Q7	70.0%	10.0%	20.0%	Q17	63.3%	20.0%	16.7%
Q8	63.3%	23.3%	13.3%	Q18	33.3%	46.7%	20.0%
Q9	83.3%	10.0%	6.7%	Q19	46.7%	50.0%	3.3%
Q10	3.3%	83.3%	13.3%	Q20	40.0%	53.3%	6.7%

Based on the above recorded judgments, concerning the observation of the planned alternatives, fortunately most of the instructors attended their time management in the class (Question 1), were structured and taught based on their lesson plans (Question 2), actively involve the learners in the class (Question 3), employed the special teaching method suggested by the institute (Question 4), gave prominence to the learners' needs (Question 5), were confident,

comfortable and enthusiastic (Question 6), motivated the learners to attend the class (Question 7), instructed clearly and perfectly enough (Question 8), corrected all the errors (Question 9), answered any asked vocabulary item during an activity (Question 11), had adaptability to answering different questions (Question 14), did pair works or small group activities (Question 15) and had a content specific knowledge of the teaching topic (Question 17). Interestingly, concerning the issue of having fun time in the classroom (Question 13), no fixed pattern was observed in the classes in a way that some teachers kept it, some did not keep and others provided a different pattern which is related to any teacher reaction which is not completely positive or completely negative.

In the rest of cases most of the teachers did not attend to the checked statements in their classrooms. These issues were related to meeting the class with some absentees and changing the lesson plan (Question 10), stopping teaching and dealing with the learners' misbehaviors (Question 12), avoiding more explanation of a part they were not good at teaching (Question 16), having some tired learners who did not actively participate (Question 18), emphasizing on drilling and repetition (Question 19) and finally, developing the learners' creativity and critical thinking (Question 20).

To ensure the lack of any subjectivity in interpreting the responses, the observed records were coded by another rater as well. The rater was assigned to code the responses in 20 percent of the total cases. The latter results were then analyzed in relation to the researcher's decisions in the course of data analysis. The results of this inter-rater reliability account yielded a high consistency among the two raters' codes with the  $r$  value of .55 and a high level of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ) as well.

TABLE 3.  
INTER-RATER RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Rater 1	Rater 2	
	Pearson Correlation	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	600

In the course of classroom decision making, the instructors' own ideas regarding the issue of language learning may affect what they implement in their classes. Hence, concerning this issue, the relation between the teachers' self-beliefs and their in-class instructional practices was examined through a correlation test which did not suggest a significant relation ( $p > 0.05$ ).

TABLE 4.  
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TEACHERS' SELF-BELIEFS AND IN-CLASS PRACTICES

Self-beliefs	Self-beliefs		In-class decision
	Pearson Correlation	1	
In-class decision	Sig. (2-tailed)	.406	1
	Pearson Correlation	.054	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.406	
	Pearson Correlation	.054	

Yet, to have a more detailed analysis of the distribution of ideas the following crosstab is suggested to go through.

TABLE 5.  
CROSSTABULATION OF TEACHERS' SELF-BELIEFS AND IN-CLASS PRACTICES

			In-class decision			Total
			Yes	No	Other	
Self-beliefs	Agree	Count	104	25	11	140
		% within Experience	74.3%	17.9%	7.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	43.3%	10.4%	4.6%	58.3%
	Disagree	Count	51	16	8	75
		% within Experience	68.0%	21.3%	10.7%	100.0%
		% of Total	21.2%	6.7%	3.3%	31.2%
	No idea	Count	18	4	3	25
		% within Experience	72.0%	16.0%	12.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	7.5%	1.7%	1.2%	10.4%

Accordingly, out of 140 agreement responses, 104 cases agreed to employ the experience in the class. Yet, in terms of the disagreement and no idea cases, the teachers preferred to employ them through their class efforts. Probably, this new employment trend caused the insignificant relation in this regard. The extent of difference in the employed trends was further investigated through a Chi-square test.

TABLE 6.  
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEACHERS' SELF-BELIEFS AND IN-CLASS PRACTICES

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.360	4	.851	.857
Likelihood Ratio	1.342	4	.854	.869
Fisher's Exact Test	1.643			.808
Linear-by-Linear Association	.693	1	.405	.418

Based on the results, the difference between the beliefs and in-class practices did not reach significance ( $p>0.05$ ). Therefore, in-class practices were not directly affected by the teachers' own beliefs about language learning.

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the question which is related to teachers' self-belief of L2 learning and decision-making, the finding revealed that there is no significant relationship between teachers' self-belief of L2 learning and decision-making. This result does not support Tan and Lan's (2010) study in which teachers had adapted their classroom linguistic practices based on what they believed to be necessary for content learning and what was most effective in terms of Learner comprehension.

The findings of the study considering Learners' learning outcomes is in direct contrast with Richardson Bruna et al. (2007) study. They concluded that teachers simplify the language and just focus on the key words or terms which are in contrast with their beliefs. Survey comments, classroom observations and learner' comments show that what teachers do in the classroom is directly in contrast with what they have noticed in their daily lesson plan. Another reason might be the lack of teachers' responsibility for learning process during teaching.

The literature in this field shows that teacher beliefs and theories about L2 teaching, learning and their subject matter are important factors in classroom decisions (Sato & Takahashi, 2004; Tsui, 2003). Teacher cognition is influenced by what teachers reflect on the relationship between what they believe in principal and what is feasible in practice (Borg, 2008). That is why role-play games, group works and stimulation were rarely observed, therefore this contradiction is permanently between what L2 teachers say they do in the class and what they actually do.

Studies across both language classrooms and subject matter classrooms demonstrate that teachers' views about these key areas are determinant in the planning of lessons, and the teaching and learning activities that happen in the classroom (Cole, 2009; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999). They influence choices concerning what to teach; how and when to teach it; and how to deal with learners' problems and misunderstandings (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Johnson, 1992; Shulman, 1986; Sullivan & Woods, 2008; Woods, 1996). However, L2 teachers' ability to implement their beliefs may also be subject to some other factors such as the school rules and institutional constraints (Cimbricz, 2002; Zanzali, 2003) and it seems that they are required to respect the norms prevalent in their institutions and also teach according to the requirements of a specific curriculum is dictated to them. It seems it is due to limits of their scope for implementing their own teaching instructional practices which are consistent with their own pedagogical stance. Regardless of teachers' personal opinion on this subject, the observation of the classroom teaching show that teachers are not conducting their lesson in English or not even based on what they noticed in their daily lesson paper. It is quite clear from their comments and classroom practices that they believe some other factors like institute's T.T.C (Teacher Training course), time management, and less-proficient learners which learning takes place in bilingual classroom should be supported rather than their own beliefs on teaching. According to the L2 teachers' observation and interviews, those who are usually in weaker classes, rarely teach in English, not in accordance with what they must do to be a good teacher which is in contrast with their beliefs according to TBQ. The result of this study is in accordance with Borg's (2008) study regarding teachers' beliefs and what they actually do in the classroom. He maintained that there is a contradiction between what teachers say they do in the class and what they believe about teaching.

So, as things stand, the following directional statement comes into view:

There is no significant relationship between teachers' self-beliefs of L2 learning and their in-class (instructional) practices.

#### APPENDIX A SAMPL TEACHER BELIEFS QUESTIONNAIRE (TBQ)

Instructions: Please read each sentence and rate it by filling in a number between 1 and 5. The numbers.

Items	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Moderately Disagree</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Moderately Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1. I have accurate daily lesson plan for teaching, so I am more successful than other teachers.					
2. I often employ the same method through which I learned English.					

#### APPENDIX B SAMPLE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLISTS

items	Tallies		totals
	Yes	No	
1. The way in which he/she organizes how to spend his/her time is appropriate. (Time management)			
2. Teacher is highly structured and has provided the lesson plan.( lesson-plan based teaching)			

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Why do think you....?

Why do think having an accurate lesson plan makes you a successful teacher?

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# A Study of Influence of Different Translation Aids on Chinese EFL Majors' Construal of the Original in C-E Translation\*

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**Abstract**—The student-translator's construal of the original informs his expression in translation, and their construal construction depends partly on various translation aids. Applying the four-dimension construal analysis framework of Cognitive Linguistics to analyzing the relevant experiment results, the study finds that compared with paper dictionaries, internet resources are more helpful in some ways to undergraduate Chinese EFL majors as C-E student-translators in construal of the Chinese original, thus more significant to them. As far as these learner-translators are concerned, the former can be more instrumental for their construal of the original in scope and specificity, reflected particularly in that the former can help them obtain their needed encyclopedic and specialized information to a greater extent. The two different aids do not produce noticeable difference in their prominence choice and their translation of the original expressions which require much creativity. In perspective, though there exists remarkable difference between the two groups of translators, this difference seems to have little to do with the different translation aids. It is also suggested thereby that more pedagogic efforts should be made to develop the learner-translators' ability to apply translation technology in using internet resources as translation aids for better performance in C-E translation.

**Index Terms**—C-E translation, construal, internet resources, paper dictionary, undergraduate EFL majors

## I. INTRODUCTION

The translator's construal of the original text is the major source of information for his expression in the target language. Such construal construction depends partly on various translation aids, and this is true of either student-translators or professional translators. Internet resources and paper dictionaries are both translation aids which are often used by translation learners, including the undergraduate EFL majors in learning and practicing translation. Considering the features of the two types of aids, we have good reason to suppose that Internet resources and paper dictionaries are both tools which can aid the translation learners in construal of the original text and the former is more helpful than the latter. Relevant literature search results show that there have been few attempts to research and find out to what extent and in what aspects they are different in helpfulness to the learners. The present study will attempt to answer such questions on the basis of an empirical research informed by the construal theory of Cognitive Linguistics.

## II. THEORETICAL BASIS

In this study, the author adopts the definition by Langacker (1987) of the term "construal" in Cognitive Linguistics, which refers to different cognitive subjects' power to cognize the same thing or scene in different ways. More specifically, it is a human cognitive ability to observe and interpret scenes, and when observing and explaining the same thing or state, different people adopt different scope, perspective, prominence, background and specificity. The cognitive power of construal is the way by which humans develop their conceptual system, semantic structure, and language, and consequently their ability to express ideas linguistically (Wang Yin, 2008). The cognitive subject's construal of things (including linguistic signs) mainly involves four dimensions: scope, perspective, prominence, and specificity.<sup>1</sup> The scope refers to the speaker (cognitive subject)'s conceptual range configuration he decides on when he wants to express something or that activated by a linguistic expression when a reader reads it. When the cognitive subject tries to understand a linguistic expression, the scope is closely related with his past experiences and encyclopedic knowledge as well as the semantic background provided by the situational context where the expression is.

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\* The authors adopt the four construal dimensions framework put forward by Wang Yin (2008).

After the speaker has decided on the scope, then he will proceed to decide on the perspective by which he expresses it. For a reader, the linguistic expression will activate his cognition of the perspective of the expression. The perspective of a text mainly concerns person and the grammatical subject of the sentences of it. As far as prominence and specificity are concerned, they are closely related. The speaker is impossible to express everything in the scope of a scene or thing. Instead, he can only select part of the information as the object of his attention and express that part according to specific purposes and that part of information will be the prominent. As far as a reader is concerned, the linguistic expression in a text is to the information it is able to activate in the mind of the reader what the tip of an iceberg to the whole iceberg. Prominence concerns mainly two aspects: explicit as prominent/implicit as non-prominent, and prominent to different stages of the process of a movement (Wang Yin, 2009). In specificity, what gets prominent is usually what needs to be observed in a scope more closely and described at greater length.

It can be reasonably assumed that in the process of translation as one of dynamic cognitive operation, the translator re-conceptualizes the linguistic signs of the original text in his mind and then re-verbalizes that result of re-conceptualization incorporating those non-linguistic factors relevant with his translation task on the basis of the same cognitive mechanism, which will be embodied ultimately as a text in the target language (Wang & Zhang, 2009). The process of re-conceptualization and re-verbalization in translation by the translator occurs in the translator's mental world (cognitive world) through a cognitive operation mechanism which can be explained by the conceptual integration theory (see Fauconnier, 1994). In terms of the construal theory, it involves a multiple process of construal of not only the linguistic signs in the original text but also many other relevant factors such as the target readership, the translation purpose, the use of the translated text, etc. The translated text is constructed by the translator mainly on the basis of his construal of the original text and his cognitive analysis (also construal) of the probable construal of his translation on the part of the target reader. Therefore, by analyzing the translated text, which is the realized visible result of invisible construal, we can know partly (actually we can only know partly) the translator's construal of the original text.

In construing a linguistic sign, the four dimensions will be involved almost simultaneously. However, for the convenience of analysis in our case, we treat them as separate aspects and regard them as analyzable elements respectively. In translation from Chinese into English, the relationship in scope between the Chinese original and the English translation is mainly represented by the degree in conceptual similarity between the Chinese expressions and their corresponding English versions. In perspective, we may pay attention to whether the original perspective is retained or changed. Prominence involves mainly different salience given to different stages of the movement or selection of different aspects in the scope activated by the Chinese original expression, and specificity concerns amplification or reduction in information (i.e. in words expressing notional concepts), which is not measured by the number of words actually used, for the Chinese language is a paratactic one, while the English language, a hypotactic one. The construal of the translator, as the cognitive subject in translating, occurs and is completed in his cognitive world and such process will keep renewing his cognitive world through assimilation and adaptation mechanisms.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

#### A. *Description of the Subjects in the Experiments*

The authors selected some Chinese EFL majors from the four classes (135 junior students of the year 2006 grade in total, who entered the first term of their third year) under their instruction in School of Foreign Languages, Ludong University, as the subjects in the experiments of the study. The basic standard of selection is their points they achieved in the TEM4 (a state English test for the second year EFL majors in a four year course of undergraduate study program), and the threshold is 70 points (the full mark is 100 points). There are totally 62 students who meet the standard. And from them, the authors selected further 20 students according to their student numbers at random, who were divided into two groups, i.e. Group One and Group Two, each with 10 students. The average achievements in TEM4 of the two groups are 73.3 and 73.9 respectively, and therefore we can accept that as two groups, they are equivalent in English proficiency. Before the series of experiments began, the subjects had learned four weeks of translation (two teaching hours per week) in a course of translation from English into Chinese, and thus they had acquired some basic knowledge of translation. All the subjects completed their introductory courses in computer technology and application, and they were familiar with the skills required in surveying useful information in internet. The two groups were asked to conduct the experiments in rotation: for example, in the first experiment, if Group One used internet resources, Group Two would use paper dictionaries, and in the second experiment, Group One would use paper dictionaries, and Group Two, internet resources. By such rotation, the possible influence of individual difference between the two sides in translation competence and computer application skills on the experiment results can be diminished to a minimum. In the period of experiments, the subjects were learning their various courses according to their regular teaching program.

Translation in essence is a process of conceptual integration, and there are many factors (sources of information) participating in the conceptual integration, which results in the translated version. Under the conditions of the experiments in the present study, we can regard the translated version as the result of integration of such main sources of information as the Chinese text, the relevant background knowledge accessible to the translator with regard to the translation task, which bears on the original author, the target reader, the use of the translated version, the medium, etc., and the relevant encyclopedic knowledge, both declarative knowledge of bi-lingual language, culture, and translation,

and procedural knowledge concerning application of dictionaries and internet resources in translating practices. The two groups of subjects are quite similar in all the above aspects except the difference in using translation tools (paper dictionaries or internet resources in our case).

The information offered to the translators in the experiments include: the initiator of translation is the teacher; the English readership is supposed as the average native readers from the English culture who do not know or know little Chinese language; the translation form is full translation. The subjects' cognition of the supposed readership of their translations is based on their own experiences and structure of knowledge, and therefore, they have more or less difference in their analysis of their target reader. The authors, by pre-surveying in the internet, made sure that there were not English translations available correspondent to all the textual materials in Chinese for the experiments, which means that the subjects would have to translate completely by themselves and produce their own translations.

### B. Experiments

In the study, the authors organized ten experiments conducted by the two groups of subjects respectively. The experiments were performed in the language lab with internet facilities in School of Foreign Languages, Ludong University. The period was ten weeks in the first term of the school year 2008-2009 of the university, and in every Tuesday afternoon of those weeks, the subjects met in the lab and conducted the experiments from 2:30 PM to 4:10 PM, each experiment lasting for 100 minutes of which 85 minutes were allotted for translating and the remaining 15 minutes for filling out their experiment reports. In every experiment, the subjects of the two groups translated the same Chinese original text (The Chinese originals were offered in complete texts, and the subjects were required to translate only the underlined sentences). According to the authors' understanding, by their experiences in teaching, of the subjects' translation competence, of the difficulty of the originals, and considering the time limit of the experiment, they chose relatively appropriate original texts for them to translate, the Chinese characters ranging from 230 to 325.

On the basis of the typology of texts by Snell-Hornby (1995) in the light of the prototype category theory, and of the authors' analysis of the background knowledge and translation competence of the subjects, the selected Chinese texts, as the original, came from the three major text categories, i.e. special, general, and literary texts, which included one text in science and technology (A), one text in regulation (B), one text in (translation) theory (C), one text in commerce (D), one text in tourism (E), one text in journalism (F), two texts concerning current affairs (G; H), and two texts of literary prose (I; J). Before every experiment, the Chinese text would be loaded into the E-mail shared by the authors and the subjects, and the subjects downloaded it from the E-mail box for the experiment. In experiment, the difference between Group One and Group Two is that when one group used paper dictionaries for reference (PD), the other consulted internet resources in translating (IR), and they would rotate with regard to their reference. The subjects translated independently, who were not allowed to exchange ideas in the experiment. Both groups used MS Word in word operation. After an experiment, subjects of both groups wrote their experiment report, which included their translated texts in English, their personal information (who translated?), text type (what type of text?), translation tools (which tool?), translation process (how was it translated?), and their reflections on the words and sentences they thought difficult to translate and their solutions. After each experiment, subjects in both groups emailed their reports to the designated mailing address. The authors collected the translated texts and after all those experiments, constructed a small corpus of 200 translated texts with 42,786 English words (For the codes of texts and subjects, see Table I).

TABLE I.  
CODES OF TEXTS AND SUBJECTS

	1	2	...	10	1'	2'	...	10'
<b>A</b>	1a	2a	...	10a	1'a	2'a	...	10'a
<b>B</b>	1b	2b	...	10b	1'b	2'b	...	10'b
<b>C</b>	1c	2c	...	10c	1'c	2'c	...	10'c
<b>D</b>	1d	2d	...	10d	1'd	2'd	...	10'd
<b>E</b>	1e	2e	...	10e	1'e	2'e	...	10'e
<b>F</b>	1f	2f	...	10f	1'f	2'f	...	10'f
<b>G</b>	1g	2g	...	10g	1'g	2'g	...	10'g
<b>H</b>	1h	2h	...	10h	1'h	2'h	...	10'h
<b>I</b>	1i	2i	...	10i	1'i	2'i	...	10'i
<b>J</b>	1j	2j	...	10j	1'j	2'j	...	10'j

Note: A, B...: Codes of the Chinese texts; a, b...: Codes of English texts; 1, 2...: Codes of subjects in Group One; 1', 2'...: Codes of subjects in Group Two; 1a, 2a...: IR aided translations; 1'a, 2'a...: PD aided translations.

## IV. DATA ANALYSIS

### A. Analysis of the Four Dimensions of Construal and Findings

The authors analyzed all the translated texts by sampling on the level of words and sentences. The way of sampling is: five words or phrases are selected from every Chinese original text mainly on the basis of the subjects' reports on difficult words or phrases (For example, 8 of PD subjects marked “雨帘” as “most difficult expression” and 6 of this

group marked “你属龙，我也属龙，两条龙一起出动奔考场，就该有大雨相随。” as “most difficult sentence”. In the IR group, there were 4 and 3 subjects respectively.) and the authors’ analysis of the difficulty degree of the words and phrases for analysis in scope, prominence, and specificity, and one sentence in every Chinese original text (mainly Chinese sentences which are those with no explicit subject, with more than one subject, and with a topic-comment structure) for analysis of perspective. Here the author will take the tenth experiment for example and present the result of analysis in Table II, where the data order is the same as that of the subjects in the experiments.

TABLE II.  
ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATIONS IN THE TENTH EXPERIMENT

Dimensions	Examples	PD aided translation	IR aided translation
Scope [The translations with equivalent scope to the original are boldfaced and the figure in the brackets is their number]	(路面) 积水 [Note: 积水 is used in its dynamic and static sense; not dead water or puddles of water.]	ponding; pondings; Too much water was accumulated; <b>accumulated water; filled with water;</b> numerous water; <b>Raindrops accumulated;</b> rain water; rain accumulating; standing water [3]	<b>filled with water;</b> covered by pondings; <b>accumulated water;</b> rainwater; covered by water; the water covering the roadway; covered with water; <b>full of water;</b> ponding; all water [3]
	(前后左右) 雨帘 [Note: metaphor, referring to heavy rain pouring down]	<b>curtain of rain; curtain-like rain; rain curtain; rain curtains;</b> the rain; rain belts; thousand chains; <b>rain curtain; forming the large curtains; pouring down from sky</b> [7]	rain was all round; <b>curtains of rain; rain curtain; rain curtain;</b> rain fell from all sides; <b>curtain of rain; raining curtains; blinding rain; raining curtains;</b> curtain of rain; [8]
	(商店) 廊下 [Note: 廊 usu. the passageway or corridor outside a door]	under the porch; under <b>the eaves</b> of shops; the shop; the roof of a shop; under the shop corridor; <b>shop's corridor;</b> the stores; 0; under the corridor; under the roof [2]	under the corridor; under the store's porch; hallway; under the corridor of shops; in <b>the corridor of shops;</b> under shop roofs; <b>to the shop's corridors;</b> to stores; the store porch; under the shop porch [2]
Perspective	(See analysis below)	4; 2; 3; 3; 3; 3; 2; 2; 1	3; 1; 3; 2; 2; 4; 3; 2; 3; 2
Prominence (The prominent stage in the process of movement is marked by numerals, in which the bracketed mark the second prominent stage.)	下车 [Note: the process is: the bicyclist dismounted 1, pushed it forward 2, stopped 3, took shelter in a corridor 4]	to stop 3; hid themselves 4; got off the bike 1; got off bikes 1; got off their bikes 1; stopped 3; stopped 3; went to the corridor 2, 3, 4; got off 1; fell off down their bikes [four give prominence to 1, three to 3, one to 4, one extended translation, one unacceptable]	stop 3; forced the cyclists to find shelter 1, 2, 3, 4; stopped 3; stopped 3; got off their bikes 1; get off their bikes 1; seek shelter 4; get off 1; got off from the bicycles 1; went 2 [four give prominence to 1, three to 2, one to 3, one extended translation]
	(两条龙一起出动) 奔考场 [Note: the process is: the bicyclist rode at a rapid speed 1, to the test room 1', (then entered into the test room 2, took the test 3)]	forged ahead into the examination room; set off to the examining hall 1; going to the examination hall 1; rushing to the field of examination 1; rushing to take an examination 1, (3); rushing to take an examination 1, (3); marched towards the examination room 1; go for the exam 1, (3); (not translated) [five give prominence to 1; three to 1, (3); two unacceptable translations]	to take the exam (3); on the way; go out to the examination room 1; turned out to the examination hall 1; going to the examination hall 1; rushing to the examination 1, (3); setting out forward to the test 1, (3); set off to the examination room 1; rush toward the examination place 1; setting about to the examination hall 1. [six give prominence to 1; two to 1, (3); one to (3); one that is other type than those marked here]
Specificity	(你) 属龙, (我也) 属龙 [Note: no translation of “属” marked as 1; translation of “属”, 2; addition of other background information, 3]	Our animal sign is dragon 2; we two dragons 1; born in the year of the dragon 2; You were born in the year of dragon 2; we, both dragons 1; You were born in the year of dragon 2; You are under the sign of the dragon 2; My daughter is a dragon, and I am a dragon too 1; you are in the year of dragon 2; you are the dragon 1. [four cases of 1; six of 2]	belong to dragon 1; born in the year of dragon 2; were born in Chinese year of dragon 2; both under the zodiac sign of the dragon 3; us, both under the dragon sign 2; your and my animal sighs are dragon 2; you belonged to the Zodiac dragon 3; born in the year of dragon 2; born on the year of dragon (the Chinese use twelve animals to represent twelve years) 3; born in the year of dragon 2. [one case of 1; six of 2; three of 3]

With regard to the perspective analysis, the authors here take the Chinese sentence “路面上是积水，前后左右都是雨帘，许多骑车的人都下车躲到商店廊下去避雨。” for example. Four types of perspectives can be found in the subjects’ translations: 1. The narrator’s perspective (e.g. “The road was covered by pondings, and the curtains of rain fell everywhere, which forced the cyclists to find shelter against rain under the store’s porch.(2j)”)”; 2. The sentence subject as the perspective (e.g. “With pondings on the road, and surrounded by the curtain-like rain, many bicyclers hid themselves under the eaves of shops.(2’j)”)”; 3. A mixed perspective of the narrator and the sentence subject (e.g. “The road was filled with water and the rain was all around, and many cyclists had to stop to escape from the rain under the shop corridor.(1j)”)”; 4. Confused perspective (e.g. “With ponding on the road and the curtain of rain around us, many passers by preferred to stop under the porch of the store to take shelter from rain. (1’j)”).

It can be found from Table II that in scope, the PD group and the IR group do not show noticeable difference between themselves. In scope, there are too many translations which are not accurate by the two groups of translators compared against the original (for example, the translations of the Chinese “积水” and “廊下”), and there are some unacceptable collocations, for example, “below the corridor”, which proves the inadequacy in English and encyclopedic knowledge on the part of the translators. In perspective, the two sides are different by 70%, yet the difference seems to have little to do with the different translation tools. In terms of prominence, they show much less difference, and in this regard, the unacceptable translations by the PD group are a little more than those by the IR group. In terms of specificity,

the two groups show much difference in that the translations with added words providing background information by the IR group are noticeably more than those by the PD group.

Analysis of the translations in other experiments produces similar results. Therefore, the overall analysis of all the translations in the ten experiments supports the conclusion that on the whole, the two groups are noticeably different in the four dimensions; a global trend is that the translations by the IR group are higher in specificity than those by the PD group. In the translations of other texts than the literary prose, the IR group is more accurate in scope with the Chinese original, which is more explicitly shown in the translations of some proper names or expressions which the subjects seldom touch in their study. For example, “《经济、社会和文化权利国际公约》” and “中国外文局” in G, and “《天演论》, 《法意》和《原富》” in C. In this regard, the IR proves more helpful. In the PD group, seven subjects marked “《天演论》、《法意》和《原富》” as the “most difficult expressions”, and many translations by the group were not correct. In the IR group, however, only two subjects marked it as “most difficult expressions”, and the translations by this group tended relatively to be accurate. As far as Chinese idioms are concerned, if it was easy to find the equivalents or explanations of the idioms in the paper dictionaries or the internet resources, the two groups showed not much difference in their translations of them. However, subjects in both groups tended to copy what they found. For example, for “精诚所至, 金石为开” in H, the same translation accounted for more than a half of all those translations by the two groups respectively. For “封禅泰山” in E, the IR aided translations tend to be more accurate than the PD aided ones, which proves that it is easier for the IR aided subject to obtain relevant background information for his translation. It is also found in research that some information from internet may bring about negative influence on the translator’s translation. For example, for “亲仁善邻, 国之宝也” in F, the PD aided subjects, though they were not able to find any reference in the paper dictionaries available to them, translated according their understanding to produce many acceptable translations, but two subjects of the IR aided group copied “versions” they found in internet and produced “theory of Pro-Hui good neighbor” (3’f) and “good neighbor pro-Hui, a national treasure” (5’f), both of which are unacceptable. Therefore, it is important for the translators to develop adequate ability to judge whether information offered in internet is acceptable. On the whole, there is not noticeable difference in syntax between the two groups in their translations.

### B. Other Findings

Many subjects reported that “It is easier to use internet as an aid in translating (6e)”, “Anyway, it is fast to find information for reference in the internet (7g)”, “The information in my paper dictionary is not sufficient (5’g)”, “It is slower to refer to paper dictionaries, and the explanations in them are basically on the word level, so it is hard for me to find sentences for reference (4h)”. Only one subject concluded that though using paper dictionaries was slower, if it was necessary to distinguish the subtle difference in meaning between synonyms and choose proper words in translation, he preferred to use paper dictionaries (2h).

According to the subjects’ experiment reports, the order of the translation tools available online in terms of their use frequency is Google Search Engine (45%), Kingsoft Powerword and its translation function (32%), You Dao Dict and its translation function (26%), the translation function of China Online Translation Network (13%), Iciba (9%), others (5%). No subject used specialized corpuses as translation aids. The paper dictionaries used by the subjects included various dictionaries, most of them being medium-sized Chinese-English dictionaries and English-English dictionaries.

As far as the procedure of translating is concerned, most subjects followed “first read through the whole text and then on the basis of a thorough understanding of it, translate sentence by sentence, and when meeting difficult words or expressions, consult the dictionaries (5’a).” or “read the whole text in Chinese for a rough idea, and use internet dictionaries or translation functions in translating difficult words, and by virtue of grammar knowledge of English I have learnt, connect English words and phrases into sentences (2a).”

By the archives of the translated texts of the same original text, it is easier to find out the common synchronic difficulty on the part of the translators who translate the same original text, and by the translations produced by the same translator in the archives over the period of study, it is convenient to observe the diachronic progress made by the same translator (Bowker 2007:171). Here the authors only take the Chinese text and its translations in the ninth experiment for example and analyze the synchronic trouble with the translations. According to the 20 reports, with regard to “the most difficult words”, the high frequent words include “保驾” (21 times); “冲剂” (14 times); “精致” (12 times); “提神” (10 times). For the “most difficult sentences”, the reported sentences are “喝了一袋西洋参冲剂, 吞下两粒西洋参胶囊, 临走时嘴里还含上几片西洋参片。” (18 times); “有这么多西洋参保驾, 营养和精力当不成问题了。” (10 times). For “other difficulties”, the reported ones include “sentence structure (9 times); sentence cohesion, coherence and use of conjunctive words (8 times); translation of Chinese sentences without explicit subjects (7 times); text style and mood (6 times), translation of Chinese quantifiers (4 times). The words or expressions which are regarded by the subjects as the most difficult are mainly those which need to be rendered in a creative way in their context. In this regard, the two groups show little difference in their translations.

As regards the more specialized texts with more technical terms, for example, the regulation text in B and the business contract text in D, the IR aided subjects tend to think that “Though I seldom translated business texts, and I felt it was not easy to translate the text, I could find some translated sentences in the internet which were similar with the

sentences I was translating, so I was able to do it (4'd)." "It is more convenient to use internet in finding references (8'd)." "Though the internet resources are easy to use than paper dictionaries, we should not accept them blindly (7'b)". By contrast, the PD aided subjects tend to think that "there are too many technical terms in the text, but I know little of them, so I had a hard time in translating them (7d)", "It is difficult to translate the text because it contains many specialized terms, of which there are many I do not know how to render (5b)". Therefore, under the conditions of the experiments, using internet resources is more helpful to the subjects when they try to understand and render more specialized texts in general and technical terms in particular.

## V. CONCLUSION

The main findings of the study are: as far as the construal of the original text by Chinese EFL majors is concerned, internet resources are more useful, especially in the construal dimensions of scope and specificity, compared with paper dictionaries in helping them to overcome their inadequacy in encyclopedic knowledge and relevant specialized knowledge, thus more significant to them in translation practices; Judging on the basis of the subjects' translations, the two sources of information do not show noticeable difference in terms of prominence, especially when it comes to the words and sentences which should be rendered in a creative way. In perspective, though there is remarkable difference between the two sides, the difference seems to have little to do with the different translation tools. It should be pointed out that the study is limited in that when analysis of construal is conducted, it is impossible to distinguish the influence of different sources of information on the process of understanding the original text and that on the expression process in translating. Pedagogically, it is found by the study that the performance of the subjects in using the internet resources to aid their translation need to be improved, and the translation teachers should make more efforts to teach ways of efficient application of translation technology to translation learners, which involves online information searching skills. It is also worth mentioning that the translator's ability to judge whether what he finds in the internet is dependable and proper for his translation purpose depends mainly on his bilingual proficiency and his adequate analysis of the factors confining his translation task, which constitute a necessary condition for him to take full advantage of the internet to aid his translating.

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# The Effects of Different Task Types on EFL Learners' Acquisition of Two Grammatical Structures (Infinitives and Gerunds): The Case of Iranian High School Students

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**Abstract**—This study was an attempt to investigate the effects of three different task types, that is dictation task, individual reconstruction task, and collaborative reconstruction task on EFL learners' acquisition of two grammatical structures, gerunds and infinitives. These tasks were also accompanied by either explicit or implicit instructions to see whether explicit or implicit instruction was effective and useful in the final achievement of grammatical structures. 40 low-intermediate male High School learners of English in Lordegan, Iran, were selected as the participants of this study. A timed Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) was used for data collection. In order to compare the three groups under the study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. To compare the means, one-way ANOVAs as well as t-test were used. The results of statistical analysis supported this hypothesis that significant differences existed in the performance of three groups of participants when they completed the treatments including dictation, individual reconstruction and collaborative reconstruction. The students who completed the collaborative reconstruction task outperformed the other two groups who completed the dictation task and individual reconstruction task. In addition, dictation group outperformed the individual reconstruction group. Moreover, the difference between explicit and implicit groups was significant. In addition, the explicit group outperformed the implicit group after receiving the special instructions. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group in acquisition of grammatical structures.

**Index Terms**—dictation task, individual reconstruction task, collaborative reconstruction task, explicit learning, and implicit learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, there have been several different approaches to foreign language learning and teaching. Many areas of education are undergoing changes in the way teaching and learning is perceived. "Teacher-centered lecturing and structural-syllabus instructions are giving way to a more student-centered, hands-on, practical, and flexible approaches" (Shank and Cleary, 1994, p. 39). Until the 1970s, the teacher controlled the classroom activities and the learning process. During that time, the presentation-practice-production model was in the focus of attention. In this model, the structures were presented to the learners, and then under a controlled practice, they had to perform the structure accurately and fluently (Foster, 1999). Due to noticeable shortcomings of traditional language teaching approaches, second language researchers and teachers seek to develop an approach to language teaching which would essentially assist learners in developing their target language. As early as the 1970s, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach became popular among Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers and second language teachers (Skehan, 2002).

Howatt (1984; as cited in Ellis, 2003) differentiates between the weak version and strong version of CLT. Lochana and Deb (2006, p. 143) believe that "the weak version stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use English for communicative purposes and therefore attempts to integrate communicative activities into the program of language teaching", that's "learning to use English" (Yuan, 2011, p. 429). In contrast, the strong version of CLT claims that "language is acquired through communication" that's "using English to learn it" (Ellis, 2003, p. 28). She continues that "task-based language teaching constitutes a strong version of CLT. That is, tasks provide the basis for an entire language curriculum" (p. 30). Moreover, among recent manifestations of communicative language teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a major focal point of language teaching which is based on using tasks as the core of language teaching and learning (Brown, 2007).

According to (Zhang, 1999; as cited in Ruixue, 2006, p.53), task based instruction is such a complete method that "it treasures both the learning process and learning results, language forms and meaning, and linguistic competence and communicative function". Researchers have used tasks to understand both the second language learning and teaching processes (Bygate, 2000). Task-based teaching provides learners with opportunities for learner-to-learner interactions that encourage authentic use of language and meaningful communication. The goal of a task is to "exchange meaning rather than to learn the second language" (Ellis, 1999, p. 113).

According to Oxford (2006), many types of tasks exist, particularly in the realm of communicative instruction. She also lists some key task types found in the literature, such as problem solving, decision making, information-gap, ordering, sorting, etc. In this study, three different tasks were designed to test the acquisition of grammatical structures. So, the focus is on three specific tasks: dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction task in teaching grammatical structures.

Dictation has a long history in language teaching and has both different proponents and opponents. In spite of different criticisms mentioned about the usefulness of dictation (Lado, 1961; Harris, 1969 as cited in Rahimi, 2008; Standfield, 1985; as cited in Rahimi, 2008; Jacobs and Small, 2003), some researchers and scholars (Oller, 1983; as cited in Chastain, 1988; Farhady, Jafarpur & Birjandi, 1994; Kit, 2004; Rahimi, 2008) believe that there is no doubt about the instructional appropriateness and effectiveness of dictation (see below).

The other two tasks used in this study are individual reconstruction and collaborative reconstruction. The benefits of peer interaction for learning tasks have been theorized since the time of Piaget (1928; as cited in Gokhale, 1995) and Vygotsky (1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually. Recent years have seen a great increase in interest and research on collaborative learning, group learning, and cooperative induction (Laughlin 1996). Bandura (1997) points out that learners "who will work together in a group on cognitively demanding (i.e., high-complexity tasks) tasks will have more confidence in being able to successfully complete the learning task than learners who will work individually" (p.196). Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986, p. 36), "there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals". The shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991).

The question of whether or not and how grammar should be taught has long been a controversial issue in the field of language teaching. If we have a brief look at the history of language pedagogy, we will find out that teaching grammar has had its ups and downs in recent decades. For instance, in the Grammar Translation Method, form was the central aspect of learning, while in the Direct Method and Natural Approach grammar had a marginalized role (Brown, 2001). At present, the debate is centered on task-based teaching of grammar; and consciousness raising activities, in addition to the role of noticing, play an important part in grammar instruction (Fotos, 1994).

A new line of research in the domain of grammar teaching is concerned with the distinction often made between focus on forms and focus on form. In this respect, Harmer (2007, p. 53) points out that "focus on form occurs when students direct their conscious attention to some feature of the language, such as a verb tense or the organization of paragraph. It will occur naturally when students try to complete communicative task in Task-based learning". Focus-on-forms approach involves the systematic teaching of grammatical features in accordance with a structural syllabus and focus-on-form approach involves attention to linguistic features in the context of communicative activities derived from a task-based syllabus (Ellis, 2005a). According to Oxford (2006), the learners will master the specific, preplanned forms one at a time before they need to use them to negotiate meaning. This is often called focus on forms.

One of the common ways of focusing on form is 'noticing', a concept introduced by Schmidt (1990; as cited in Baleghizadeh & Mozaheb, 2011). Batstone (1996, p. 273) defines noticing as "the intake of grammar as a result of learners paying attention to the input where 'intake' refers to input which becomes part of the learning process". In Schmidt's (1994) model, implicit and explicit learning occurs as a result of absence or presence of awareness respectively. According to Hulstijn (2005) explicit learning includes conscious intention in input processing to find regularities in the input information and, if so, to obtain the concepts and rules within these regularities. Implicit learning is input processing without such an intention, which takes place unconsciously. Explicit knowledge refers to "knowledge about language that speakers are aware of and, if asked, can verbalize" (Ellis, 2003, p. 105). She also defines the implicit knowledge as the "knowledge of language that a speaker manifests in performance but has no awareness of" (p. 105).

## II. THE STUDY

In keeping with the purpose of the study, the following questions were raised:

1. What are the effects of different tasks, that is, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction, on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives?
2. What are the effects of the above mentioned tasks with implicit and explicit instruction on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives?



3. Are there any differences among different task types with regard to retaining grammatical structures after one week?

### III. METHOD

#### A. Participants

The participants were 40 low-intermediate male High School learners of English in Lordegan, Iran. They were in grade three in High school and their age ranged from 14 to 17. The participants in this study had been learning English for at least five years during Guidance school and High school. Some of the participants studied English in some language institutes in Lordegan.

#### B. Instrument

A timed Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) constructed by the researcher. The timed GJT was composed of 40 sentences. The test items of the timed GJT are listed in Appendix A. Twenty out of the 40 test items were the targeted sentences with the targeted feature, and the remaining 20 non-targeted sentences were distractors. Among the 20 targeted test items, 10 were grammatical sentences and the other 10 were ungrammatical ones. Only the results of the 20 targeted test items were computed for further statistical analysis.

#### C. Treatment Materials

In this study, there were three tasks, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction used as treatments. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three treatments, consisting of a dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction with either implicit or explicit instruction.

*Dictation Task:* In dictation task, the participants were asked to listen to a passage of about 75-85 words, during which they were not allowed to take notes. Next, they listened to the passage again but this time chunk by chunk. Next, they were asked to write in what they heard. Then, the students are allowed to review the passage and to correct mistakes. Next, the students read the text on the screen and they were allowed to correct their mistakes and filled in possible gaps in the text. Finally, the teacher tried to get the students to understand what the mistakes were without giving them proper answers.

*Individual Reconstruction Task:* In the individual reconstruction task, the participants were asked to listen to a passage twice and then to reconstruct it. As the students participated in the study were not familiar with this kind of task and also the collaborative task, two practice sessions were held to familiarize the participant with these two tasks.

*Collaborative Reconstruction Task:* The collaborative reconstruction task is similar to the individual reconstruction task. But in this task, two participants were paired and were asked to reconstruct the text together.

*Explicit Instruction vs. Implicit Instruction:* Participants were randomly assigned to receive either implicit or explicit instructions. Implicit instructions were operationalised as only containing instructions on how to perform the task. The explicit instructions focused the participants' attention on the target structure and gave an example of it (in accordance with Dekeyser's operationalisation of explicit (inductive) instructions; 1995; as cited in Reinders, 2005).

#### D. Target Items

*The Selection of Target Items:* Six passages (Appendix B) were chosen from *A First Book in Comprehension Pr ácis and Composition* by Alexander (1965) with little changes by the researcher. Each passage contained four target items (gerund and infinitive). Totally, six passages had 24 target items. The selection of the target items were based on the *Book 2 and Book 3* (Birjandi, P., Nouroozi, M., & Mahmoodi, G., 2009) taught in High Schools. Each text was about a paragraph in length, and could stand alone as a semantic unit. I was careful in choosing each text to ensure that it did not contain overly complex or subject-specific vocabulary, so as not to divert attention to vocabulary considerations, nor overly complex sentences.

*The Gerund and Infinitive Contrast:* Teaching the gerund/infinitive distinction in complement constructions is a problematic area in EFL/ESL instruction (my own problem during teaching English grammar in English classes). In other words, one of the many problems which confront EFL/ESL students knows when to use the infinitive and when to use the gerund in verb complementation. In this study, the researcher tried to choose the gerund and infinitive items used in High School English Book 2 and Book 3.

#### E. Design and Procedure

The participants in this study were 40 students who were chosen from 150 students of High School in Lordegan. All participants were pretested consisting of GJT to determine their existing Knowledge of the target structure (gerund and infinitive). After the pre-test, among the whole participants, 40 participants who scored below the threshold of 66% (Reinders, 2005) on the test were invited to participate in the rest of the study. In this study, there were three tasks, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction used as treatments. One week after the pretest, participants were randomly assigned to one of three treatments, consisting of a dictation (n=13), individual reconstruction (n=13), and collaborative reconstruction (n=14) with either implicit or explicit instruction. The first treatment took place one week after the pretest and treatments two and three in one-week intervals after that. The final

treatment was followed by an immediate posttest and a week later by a delayed posttest. The weekly intervals were chosen for practical reasons and because one week was considered the minimum between test administrations to avoid a practice effect.

Each session lasted about 45 minutes. In each session, two passages were instructed and practiced. The participants were fully instructed how to perform each task. Before the first session in each treatment, participants had a chance to practice a sample passage. All tests and treatments included instructions, examples and practice sentences. Participants were instructed to ask for help if they had any difficulty when completing the practice passages.

After each session, the students received a practice passage in a different form. These texts were something like partial dictation and reconstruction editing tasks. In these practice texts, the missing words were the target structures (gerunds and infinitives). After completing the instructional sessions (three sessions for each task), all participants were asked to take part in the post-test. The post-test was also a timed grammaticality judgment test similar to pre-test, but in a different order. In other words, the same tests were used as posttests and finally, as delayed posttests, but items were presented in a different order and a number of the items were replaced by examples not encountered on the pretest or during the treatments.

#### F. The Pilot Study

A pilot study on the Grammaticality Judgment Test was conducted before the main study, three weeks before the pre-test. The main purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the reliability and the practicality of the instrument. Reliability estimate of 0.6 was calculated using the K-R 20 (Farhady, Jafarpur, & Birjandi, 1994). For this purpose, a total of 15 participants, the same grade (High school students) as those participating in the main study, were invited to take part in the pilot study. Note that the 15 participants did not take part in the main study. The subjects were instructed to read each sentence on the screen to identify and decide whether or not it was grammatical and write their responses on the answer sheets. The duration of time allowed for this test was determined earlier in the pilot study. The subjects were allowed 20 minutes to answer the test.

### IV. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

In order to compare the three groups under study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. To compare the means, one-way ANOVAs as well as t-test were used.

#### A. Investigating the First Question

The results of the students' performance on the immediate posttest were compared to see if different treatments, that is, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction, produced different results. Table I. reveals the descriptive statistics for the posttest, and Fig. 1, illustrates the means in bar form.

TABLE I.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE POSTTEST

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dict.	13	13.77	1.235	12	15
Ind. Rec.	13	12.39	1.044	11	14
Col. Rec.	14	15.93	1.439	13	18

Dict= Dictation  
Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction  
Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

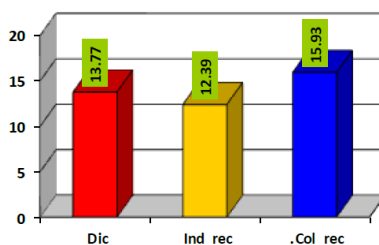


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the means in posttest

By referring to Figure 4.1, one can easily see that the means of the three groups are different. Through applying a one-way ANOVA, these means were compared to find out whether or not their differences are statistically significant. Table II. depicts the results of the ANOVA.

TABLE II.  
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA ON THE POSTTEST

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	86.462	2	43.231	27.430	.000
Within Groups	58.313	37	1.576		
Total	144.775	39			

According to Table II., the value of F-observed (F-observed= 27.430) is significant at the probability level of 0.000 which is indicative of a statistically significant difference. However, this table does not pinpoint the exact area of difference(s). In order to find it out, a Scheffe post hoc test was employed. Table III. shows the results of the post hoc test.

TABLE III.  
THE RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE POST HOC TEST FOR THE POSTTEST

Groups	groups	Mean Difference	Sig.
Dict.	Ind. Rec.	1.39*	.028
	Col. Rec.	-2.16**	.000
Ind. Rec.	Dict.	-1.39*	.028
	Col. Rec.	-3.54**	.000
Col. Rec.	Dict.	2.16**	.000
	Ind. Rec.	3.54**	.000

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Dict= Dictation; Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction; Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

Table III. tells us that the difference between dictation group and individual reconstruction group is significant with the former group outperforming the latter group (mean difference= 1.39,  $p= 0.028$ ). Moreover, the difference between dictation group and collaborative reconstruction group is also significant, but this time the latter group outperformed the former group (mean difference= 2.16,  $p= 0.000$ ). Regarding individual reconstruction group and collaborative reconstruction group, the latter group's performance was better than that of the former group (mean difference= 3.54,  $p= 0.000$ ). All in all, the first null hypothesis stating that "different tasks (dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction) don't influence the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives differently" is rejected, and it can be claimed that different task types produce different effects in students.

#### B. Investigating the Second Question

Considering the second question, the students in treatment groups were instructed either explicitly ( $n=20$ ) or implicitly ( $n= 20$ ). In order to answer the second question, the performance of those who received explicit instruction was compared with that of the students who received implicit instruction. Table IV. shows the descriptive statistics for these two sets of scores, and Fig. 2, depicts the means graphically.

TABLE IV  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	Min	Max
Explicit	20	14.80	1.542	.345	12	18
Implicit	20	13.65	1.725	.386	11	17

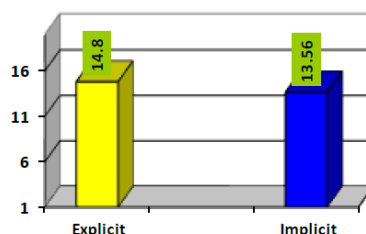


Figure 2. The bar chart for explicit and implicit instructions

It can be seen in Table IV. that the two groups' performances were different. To find out if this difference is significant, a test was applied to scores. Table V. indicates the results of the t-test.

TABLE V.  
THE RESULTS OF THE T-TEST FOR EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS

t-observed	df	Sig.
2.222	38	.032

The amount of  $t$ -observed ( $t$ -observed= 2.222), according to Table V., is significant at the probability level of  $p=0.032$ , which is statistically significant. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group. Therefore, the second null hypothesis which maintains that "teaching the above mentioned tasks with explicit and implicit instruction produces the same effect on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives" is rejected, and one can claim that explicit instruction produces better results than implicit instruction in Iranian High School students.

### C. Investigating the Third Question

In order to find out whether or not the three groups under investigation retained the learned material similarly, the participants took another posttest one week after the treatment. Table VI. presents the descriptive statistics for this delayed posttest, and Figure 4.3 illustrates the means graphically.

TABLE VI.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE DELAYED POSTTEST

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dict.	13	13.08	1.256	11	15
Ind. Rec.	13	11.69	1.032	10	14
Col. Rec.	14	14.86	1.406	13	17

Dict= Dictation  
Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction  
Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

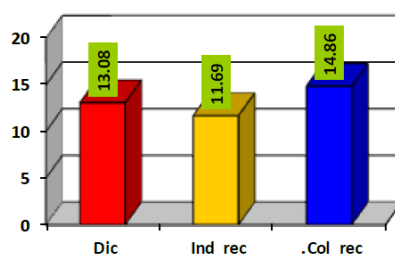


Figure 3. Graphical representation of the means in delayed posttest

In Fig. 3, it can be seen easily that the means of the three groups are different. By employing another one-way ANOVA, the means were compared to understand if their differences are statistically significant. Table VII. indicates the results of the ANOVA.

TABLE VII.  
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA ON THE DELAYED POSTTEST

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	68.093	2	34.047	21.944	.000
Within Groups	57.407	37	1.552		
Total	125.500	39			

By referring to Table VII. the value of  $F$ -observed ( $F$ -observed= 21.944) is significant at the probability level of 0.000 which shows a statistically significant difference. However, this table does not tell us about the exact area of difference(s). In order to find it out, a Scheffe post hoc test was employed. Table VIII. shows the results of the post hoc test.

TABLE VIII.  
THE RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE POST HOC TEST FOR THE POSTTEST

groups	groups	Mean Difference	Sig.
Dict.	Ind. Rec.	1.39*	.026
	Col. Rec.	-1.78*	.003
Ind. Rec.	Dict.	-1.39*	.026
	Col. Rec.	-3.17*	.000
Col. Rec.	Dict.	1.78*	.003
	Ind. Rec.	3.17*	.000

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Dict= Dictation  
Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction  
Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

Table VIII. tells us that the difference between dictation group and individual reconstruction group is significant with the former group outperforming the latter group (mean difference= 1.39,  $p= 0.026$ ). Moreover, the difference between dictation group and collaborative reconstruction group is also significant, but this time the latter group outperformed the former group (mean difference= 1.78,  $p= 0.003$ ). Regarding individual reconstruction group and collaborative reconstruction group, the latter group's performance was better than that of the former group (mean difference= 3.17,  $p= 0.000$ ). As a result, the third null hypothesis stating that "there are no differences among different task types with regard to retaining grammatical structures after one week" is also rejected, and it can be claimed that students who were taught with different task types retained grammatical points differently after one week.

## V. DISCUSSION

The above results of this study are consistent with the previous studies which involve individual reconstruction task and collaborative reconstruction task in teaching grammatical structures. For example, Donato (1994) shows that a specific grammar structure is produced successfully by a group of students but none of them are able to do it individually. In another research, Storch (1999) uses three different types of grammar-focused exercises, a cloze exercise, a text reconstruction task, and a short composition exercise. After completing the tasks both individually and collaboratively (in pairs), he concludes that collaboration has a positive effect on overall grammatical accuracy, but tends to vary with specific grammatical items. After mentioning the research findings by different researchers (Long, 1985; Kowal & Swain, 1994; as cited in Storch 1998; Pica, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 1998), Storch (1999) suggests that collaborative output tasks are beneficial, particularly in developing learners' grammatical competence. Moreover, Nassaji and Tian (2010) examined and compared the effectiveness of two types of output tasks (reconstruction cloze tasks and reconstruction editing tasks) for learning English phrasal verbs. The learners do these tasks both individually and collaboratively. After performing the task, they suggest that completing the tasks collaboratively leads to a greater accuracy of task completion than completing them individually. Similarly, Kowal and Swain (1994; as cited in Storch 1998) propose the use of collaborative writing tasks considering the grammatical accuracy with in a communicative context. This kind of collaborative task is advantageous because of the availability of peer feedback in drawing learner's attention to gaps in language knowledge and providing feedback which consolidates language knowledge.

Considering the dictation task, the descriptive results showed that the dictation treatment performed considerably better than the individual reconstruction treatment but worse than collaborative reconstruction treatment. These descriptive results also showed that dictation task affected the learners' acquisition of these two grammatical structures. The findings of this part are also in line with the findings of some researchers. Rahimi (2008) believes that practice with dictation results in improvement in grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. Morris (1983) points out that dictation as a learning activity helps students develop their accuracy in listening and writing and reinforces structure and vocabulary. Valette (1964; as cited in Rahimi, 2008) adds that practice with dictation can help students learn the language. She believes the teacher's concentration on different component of the language, including sound, sentence structure, etc. encourages the students to correct their papers. Moreover, Richard Kidd (1992) in his article, *Teaching ESL Grammar Through Dictation*, strongly supports the claim that dictation has potential value for grammar teaching. In order to prove his claim, he refers to Oller's (1975; as cited in Kidd, 1992) notion of a "grammar of expectancy" and the acquisition model proposed by Krashen (1982; as cited in Kidd, 1992). In the case of grammar of expectancy, Kidd adds that "dictation obviously provides an excellent means of practicing and improving this general capacity, as it encourages the learner to attend not only to the forms but also to the meanings" (p.50). By referring to Krashen's idea, Kidd also points out that "the second plausible reason for the effectiveness of dictation as a grammar teaching method is that dictation passages may qualify as good comprehensible input, and therefore promote the subconscious acquisition of structures" (p. 51).

The focus of the second research question was to investigate the effects of the above mentioned tasks (dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction) with implicit and explicit instructions on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives. In other words, along with the line of research on the effects of instruction in grammar teaching, this study compared the use of explicit and implicit instructions of grammatical structures on Iranian High School students' acquisition of gerunds and infinitives. In order to answer the second question, the performance of those who received explicit instruction was compared with that of the students who received implicit instruction. According to the descriptive statistics for these two sets of scores shown in table 4.4 and the results of the t-test for explicit and implicit instructions shown in Table V., the difference was significant ( $p=0.032$ ). Accordingly, the explicit group outperformed the implicit group after receiving the special instructions. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group in acquisition of grammatical structures.

This is similar to the findings of the studies done in this area. This findings concur with Robinson (1997b; as cited in Radwan, 2005) and DeGraaff (1997; as cited in Radwan, 2005), both of whom showed that learners receiving explicit instruction performed better than those who did not. Similarly, Rahimpour and Salimi (2010) believe that explicit instruction will lead to language learners' achievement in learning English as a foreign language. They continue that the results of statistical analysis support their hypothesis that there is a significant difference between explicit formal instruction and foreign language learners' performance. Also, a similar argument is presented by Ellis (1993; as cited in Radwan, 2005) who contends "that implicit instruction is often slow and laborious and usually requires longer

time than explicit instruction to become effective" (p. 82). Moreover, Rosa and O'Neill (1999) showed that learners receiving explicit instruction manifested higher levels of intake than learners in the implicit conditions.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The desire to make learning more student-centred is reflected in widespread attempts, in different areas of the curriculum, to introduce approaches which engage students actively in the learning process. Task-based learning can be regarded as one particular approach to implementing the broader communicative approach and, as with the communicative approach in general, one of the features of task-based learning that often attracts teachers is that it seems to have a great place for the teaching of grammar. In addition, some students spend most of their time memorizing rules of grammar in or after class. Correspondingly, grammar class became the dullest class and most students got confused by so many rules. Many students complain that they are eager to learn grammar well since grammar is the fundamental knowledge in English but they are not so successful. Actually, grammar teaching should not just maintain its rule-listing routine. Instead, some new attempts should be involved. Teaching grammar through tasks can pursue the appropriate practical use of grammar.

In order to teach grammar through tasks, this study attempted to demonstrate the effectiveness of three specific task types, that is, dictation task, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction on EFL learners' acquisition of two grammatical structures (infinitives and gerunds). These three tasks were also accompanied by implicit and explicit instructions to compare the use of explicit and implicit instructions of grammatical structures on acquisition of these two grammatical structures. So, forty low- intermediate High School students were pre-tested by the Grammaticality Judgment Test. Then, they were invited to complete the tasks. Finally, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test were administered. After analyzing raw data and using ANOVA and t-test, it was generally revealed that students' acquisition of grammatical structures tended to improve through exposure to task-based input. Specifically, there were significant differences on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives among three groups of students when they were exposed to dictation task, individual reconstruction task, and collaborative tasks. Among them, collaborative reconstruction task had the most effect and the individual reconstruction had the least effect on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives. Also, at the end of the study, it was revealed that the group who received explicit instruction outperformed the implicit group after receiving the special instructions. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group in acquisition of grammatical structures in this study.

Generally speaking, incorporating tasks and task-based activities in EFL classrooms enhance the acquisition of grammatical structures and task-based teaching of grammar is a suitable and effective alternative for traditional methods of teaching grammar.

## APPENDIX A GRAMMATICALITY JUDGMENT TEST

Your name:

Decide if each sentence is **grammatically correct or incorrect**. If it is correct, circle "c". If it is incorrect, circle "T". You will have a little time to answer each question. Therefore you need to respond very quickly.

1. She apologized for borrowing the book without your permission. C I
2. If your sister cut her hand with a knife, what will you do? C I
3. I have been trying to finish this homework all day. C I
4. The president made a very interesting speech in his meeting with teachers. C I
5. I'm afraid that the secretary won't be able to finish them. C I
6. Have they decided where go for their summer holidays? C I
7. I realized that the car was not running properly, so I have to stop it. C I
8. My teacher always says that it is important to read this book. C I
9. The new student whom I talked is living in this apartment. C I
10. They didn't know the meanings of the new vocabulary in their books. C I
11. When you are driving you should avoid to use your mobile phone. C I
12. Can you help me get the dinner ready for children? C I
13. Young boys are climbing up and down the trees and do funny things. C I
14. John wanted to walk to school, but Bob insisted on drive him there. C I
15. The teacher told me draw a picture of a lion in my notebook. C I
16. This morning, I bought nothing because the supermarket was very crowded. C I
17. Do you really expect me to forgive you after what you have done? C I
18. Would you mind not play your radio so loud, please? C I
19. The English language is spoken nearly all over the world nowadays. C I
20. If you can't see without your glasses, why didn't you put them on? C I
21. Don't risk playing your car over here, the police will take it away. C I
22. Do you believe in the existence of life in other planets? C I
23. Was the last problem in the book difficult for them solving? C I

24. I certainly don't know when my father comes back home tonight. C I
25. While I was on holiday, my suitcase was stolen from my hotel room. C I
26. Instead of going to the park, we went to a restaurant near here. C I
27. I've seen many foreign countries, but I haven't been in Japan yet. C I
28. Would you like to come with me to the gym, please? C I
29. Prepare a dictionary is not as easy as it may seem. C I
30. In many cases, researchers couldn't find a cure to certain diseases. C I
31. Would you please tell us more about the accident you see? C I
32. He was awarded a gold watch for his long service to the company. C I
33. My mother disliked to see me with impolite boys. C I
34. It is really the hardest thing for me write a composition. C I
35. The accident happened because the mechanic hadn't fitted the wheel. C I
36. Do you need someone help you with your math problems. C I
37. He took the radio apart but couldn't put it together again. C I
38. If they arrived this afternoon, we might see them again. C I
39. I couldn't help laughing when I saw Sarah wearing that funny hat. C I
40. His mother asked him not to try to borrow money from his friend. C I

#### APPENDIX B TEXTS FOR TREATMENTS

##### Text A

Mr. and Mrs. Smith go to the market on Saturday morning. Mr. Smith **dislikes buying** in the market. Mrs. Smith goes shopping and he sits on a box and **enjoys watching** the children. This morning, it was more crowded than usual. So, Mrs. Smith **avoided buying** unnecessary things. She only bought some meat, fish, and fruit. An hour passed and a man came to Mr. Smith, "Excuse me; your wife has **finished shopping** now. She wants you to carry the bags home".

##### Text B

The children next door often insist on playing football in the garden. Although their parents apologize for breaking the windows, it is not enough. Last Saturday afternoon, I stayed at home. **After reading** a book, I closed my eyes and went to sleep. A sound at the door made me get up quickly. Soon a little boy appeared.

"Not one of my windows again?" I asked. "Oh, no!" answered the boy. "Your window was open this time and **instead of breaking** the window our ball is in your bedroom. May we get it, please?"

##### Text C

Janet is a good student. She is very good in mathematics but **writing** a composition is not as easy as it may seem. **Choosing** a good topic is the most difficult part. The students **dislike listening** to her. When she wants to read it our teacher repeatedly says, "Would you **mind not speaking**?" **Listening** to her composition made student very tired. Last week he decided to write a better one and the students **couldn't help admiring** her.

##### Text D

I'm learning **how to drive** a car. A week ago, I had my first lesson. First, we **decided where to go**. My teacher took me out on a busy road. It was full of cars and people. She **told me to drive** carefully and patiently. She also **asked me not to be** afraid. I **tried to do** my best. At last the lesson finished and I went home. I felt very tired. I have learnt many things, but I have still got a lot to learn.

##### Text E

Every summer students have a long holiday. They should use their free time in a right way. Their parents **expect them to learn** new things. There is a good school near our house. There are different classes like computer, music, sports, etc. Last summer I **wanted to study** English and my parents **encouraged me a lot to take part** in the classes. My teacher was so kind and experienced. He **helped me to finish** the course successfully. After three months, I am able to speak English now.

##### Text F

Mr. Johnson looked at his watch. It was 7:30. **It was really the hardest thing for him to get up** on time. He was late as usual, so he didn't have time for breakfast. He washed and dressed quickly. Being late in the morning was **difficult for him to solve**. He ran all he way to the station. Mr. Johnson never eats anything in the morning. He always says to his friends at the office: "**It is nice to have** breakfast in the morning, but **it is nicer to lie** in the bed!"

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# The Tentative Discussion of Icons' Substituting for Body Language in CMC

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**Abstract**—Icons, as new ways of transmitting information, are used in high frequency in CMC, and to certain extent, they play important roles of substituting for body languages used in reality communication. Firstly this essay illustrates the facts that icons came into being and have been spreading with CMC, brought forth the special nonverbal intercommunicating functions of icons in CMC. Then based on those intercommunicating functions of the body languages in face-to-face communication, the article analyses and discusses the phenomena of icons' taking on some functions of "internet body languages" and their realistic meanings of this cross-subjects net-language culture .

**Index Terms**—computer-mediated communication (CMC), icons, body languages

In this information-based society, computer and internet are changing people's life in every aspect with amazing speed, and have become indispensable to our life. Computer-mediated communication, for example, narrows people's distance, especially using icons in the virtual world makes communicating people far away feeling as if they are face to face, feeling each other's emotion instantly so as to make their communication more vivid. Icons in CMC of the virtual world, to some extent, function as body languages in the real world communication. The article will discuss this specific issue from three aspects: conceptions of important terms mentioned in the article, their interrelationships and final conclusions.

## I. CONCEPTIONS

### A. Definition on CMC

CMC has been in existence since 1969 (Metcalf, 1992). Ever since then, researchers have used it as a tool to examine its effectiveness within organizational, interpersonal, and mass communication contexts (Metz, 1994), so they have approached the definition on CMC from various aspects.

Pixy Ferris (1997) explored the term used in CMC application research: In general, the term computer-mediated communication refers to both task-related and interpersonal communication conducted by computer. This includes communication both to and through a personal or a mainframe computer, and is generally understood to include asynchronous communication via email or through use of an electronic bulletin board; synchronous communication such as "chatting" or through the use of group software; and information manipulation, retrieval and storage through computers and electronic databases.

John December gave the definition on *Internet-based CMC*: Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems (or non-networked computers) that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages. Studies of CMC can view this process from a variety of interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives by focusing on some combination of people, technology, processes, or effects. Some of these perspectives include the social, cognitive/psychological, linguistic, cultural, technical, or political aspects; and/or draw on fields such as human communication, rhetoric and composition, media studies, human-computer interaction, journalism, telecommunications, computer science, technical communication, or information studies.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defines computer-mediated communication (CMC) as any communicative transaction that occurs through the use of two or more networked computers. While the term has traditionally referred to those communications that occur via computer-mediated formats (e.g., instant messages, e-mails, chat rooms), it has also been applied to other forms of text-based interaction such as text messaging.

And personally, we prefer J. Michel Metz's (1994) definition, which seems to us more understandable, comprehensive and objective. According to him, Computer-mediated communication (CMC), for purposes, can be defined as any communication patterns mediated through the computer. These include, but are not limited to, computer conferencing, electronic mail (email), relay chat lines, and Multiple User Dungeons (MUDs). CMC itself is made up of two distinct classes of communication: synchronous and asynchronous. Asynchronous CMC, such as email, ... Internet Relay Chat, a synchronous form of CMC ... the two are both CMC, as well as legitimate forms of communication ...

### B. Definition on Icons

The term “Icons”, many researchers call them “emoticons”, a hybrid name inferred from the words “emotion” and “icons” (Metz, 1994). According to Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, emoticons are defined as a group of keyboard characters (as :-)) that typically represents a facial expression or suggests an attitude or emotion and that is used especially in computerized communications (as e-mail).

Eli Dresner (2010) and his partners think that emoticons refer to graphic signs, such as the smiley face, that often accompany textual computer-mediated communication (CMC). They are most often characterized as iconic indicators of emotion, conveyed through a communication channel that is parallel to the linguistic one. ... Emoticons vary considerably in form and meaning. Some signs, like the originals, use only ASCII symbols, while many newer ones are graphically rendered (e.g., ☺). We find that emoticons don’t always express emotions as the hybrid name “emotion icons” tells on surface, but also convey pragmatic meanings. This function needs to be discussed from linguistic, rather than extralinguistic, points of view.

The addition of graphic signs to printed text made its debut in CMC in 1982, when the rotated smiley face :- ) was first proposed — along with a frowny face :- ( — by a computer scientist at Carnegie Mellon University, Scott Fahlman, as a means to signal that something was a joke (or not) in messages posted to a computer science discussion forum (Krohn, 2004). Since this early stage in the history of CMC, hundreds if not thousands of similar signs have developed, many of which have been catalogued in dictionaries and on Websites (Dresner et al., 2010).

Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire (1984) reflects how the term “emoticons” is typically conceived today: They are construed as indicators of affective states, the purpose of which is to convey nonlinguistic information that in face-to-face communication is conveyed through facial expression and other bodily indicators. In textual computer-mediated interactions, these valuable channels are missing, the argument goes, and therefore a replacement for them was created in the form of emoticons.

### C. *Definition on Body Language*

Body language belongs to the scope of paralinguistic research. The term “paralinguistics” was put forward firstly in 1958 by an American G. L. Trager. Paralinguistics are the aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words. These may add emphasis or shades of meaning to what people say. Some definitions limit this to verbal communication that is not words. For example, body language, gestures, facial expressions, tone and pitch of voice are all examples of paralinguistic features. All the non-verbal elements of communication used to modify meaning and convey emotion are within the study of paralinguistics (Tian, 2007).

James Borg (2010) states that human communication consists of 93 percent body language and paralinguistic cues, while only 7% of communication consists of words themselves; however, Albert Mehrabian, American psychologist, researcher whose 1960s work is the source of these statistics, has stated that this is a misunderstanding of the findings. His “7%-38%-55% rule” tells that the three elements account differently for our liking for the person who puts forward a message concerning their communications of feelings and attitudes: 7% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in the words that are spoken; 38% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is paralinguistic (the way that the words are said); 55% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in facial expression. The formula is “Total Liking = 7% Verbal Liking + 38% Vocal Liking + 55% Facial Liking”. Vadim Kotelnikov (2001) writes on “Your People Skills” that in face-to-face communication, your message is conveyed through 50% body language, 40% tone of voice and 10% words. Anyhow we will think that approaching successfully the communication purpose mainly depends on paralanguage as Mehrabian’s experiment proved.

The term “body language”, an important component in paralanguage, was put forward in 1952 by American professor R. Birdwhistell from Pennsylvania University. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defines that body language is a form of mental and physical ability of human non-verbal communication, which consists of body posture, gestures, facial expressions, and eye movements. Humans send and interpret such signals almost entirely subconsciously.

A Chinese scholar Zhuang Hecheng (1995) defined body language in his article that our facial expression, head movement, sitting posture, gesture and a part of the body movement, body contact, conversation position and distance. And all that glaring, frowning, nodding, smiling, shrugging, keeping silent, are sending out certain information, expressing certain meaning consciously and subconsciously. People call this nonverbal communication as body language.

## II. INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

### A. *CMC and Icons*

CMC became in existence in 1969 (Metcalf, 1992), when computer use meant people could enter punch cards and receive greenbar printouts without the use of monitors, came the discovery of the ability to send one-line messages between college campuses. Thus, to alleviate the boredom, programmers then decided to try to create “chat programs” which would also enable somewhat more reliability in sending and receiving these messages (Kell, 1988). The impact came as such a surprise, even those who helped develop the technology had no idea that communication would be its most important asset (Metcalf, 1992).

From the earliest beginnings of computer message systems, one of the first and most influential discoveries was the complete lack of expressive (nonverbal) behavioral cues (Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). As a result, traditional forms of

communication, such as the nuances of a conversation created with nods, smiles, eye contact, distance, tone of voice and other nonverbal behaviors, become “mystery” variables, causing much misunderstanding as a result of perceived meaning derived from context and the tone automatically attributed by a human’s imagination (Metz, 1994).

Reid (1991) stated that users must and do compensate for the lack of these contextual cues. CMC users have managed to develop ways of sending computerized screams, hugs, and kisses. And Metz (1994) explained that these “emoticons” ... are necessary for the comprehension of the meaning behind the messages. Emoticons have developed into an artistic display of emotion and meaning, without which much of computer communication would be spent verifying the intent of each message.

There are four kinds of emoticons, each with its own specific purpose. First, there is the common practice of simply verbalizing physical cues (Metz, 1994). For example, the genuine laughter is literally typed as “hehehe”. Second, physical actions taken by CMC users are typically described within two asterisks (Reid, 1991). eg. <Lancelot> \*Bowing low in respect to Lady Marion’s presence\* How fair thee, Lady Marion? Third, visual expressive content includes the ability to stress, but with a subtle, yet important, difference. This is the inclusion of terms addressed in all capital letters. Here, the stress of the word is to be perceived as near- yelling, and quite frequently other computer users will comment as such (Metz, 1994). For example:

A: HEY EVERYBODY, WHAT’S UP?!?

B: Why are you yelling?

Fourth, emoticons is a “shorthand” for the description of physical condition (Reid, 1991). Commonly we call them “smileys” (Metz, 1994). For example:

: - ) or : ) a smiling face  
 : - ( or : ( an unsmiley: an unhappy face  
 : -P someone sticking out their tongue  
 8 - ) someone wearing glasses

Examples are described by Reid (1991).

With CMC being used widely and computer technology being developed quickly, a great number of emoticons have broken through the beginning simple characters built up, appeared more creative, artistic, and vivid icon pictures. We can see this internet icon development of two common emotion expressions like smile and sweep:

Smile —— first simple character built-up: : - ) or : ), :D, :P, (H)

Then come sketch icons : black – white sketch smile ☺ ☹

colorized smile 

now are personalized color display

Weep —— first simple character built-up: :( or :-(, :~ , :((

colorized sketch weep

personalized color display

## B. Body Languages and Icons



Body language is an indispensable complement to speech acts. The earliest research about body languages can date back to Greek Aristotle, but the main scientific research started after World War II. “The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals”, a book by Charles Darwin, published in 1872, concerns genetically determined aspects of behaviour (Wikipedia). In the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the research on this field wasn’t systematic, only concerning about voice, appearance, clothing and facial expression certain specific aspects. Until 1952 Professor Birdwhistell at University of Pennsylvania published “Introduction to body language”, the research on this field had got break-through. Birdwhistell originally coined the term “Kinesics” (body languages), and became the research leader in this field in the west. In 1980’s, the research on this field went further and became mature, which represented by Professor Brosnahan from America Illinois State University, and scholars like Loretta A. Malandro, Larry L. Barker and Deborah Ann Barker. In China, the research on this field starts comparatively late, since 1980’s, it has made some achievements under the influence of western high tide of body language research, but there’s still large distance from the west.

Icons are used in CMC, together with typed words, have almost the same function as body languages, which complement verbal information. When body language and voiced language are used together, body language undertakes almost all the pragmatic meaning and emotional meaning expressed of voiced language. After years of research, body languages are considered with the following functions, and the author thinks icons also can function like that:

1. Body languages have the symbolic function.


As a soundless language sign, symbolic body languages contain abstract contents, and nationality, culture, custom and tradition constrain their formation. Many body languages have symbolic character, and the meanings are fixed to tell certain cultural implication. For example: English-speaking people uphold first finger and middle finger to form a

“V”, with palm towards outside, expressing cheers or wishing victory. And icons have this function, too. See the icons:

 means victory, and  means OK.

## 2. Body languages have the complementing function.


According to Birdwhistell, the communicative message conveyed by verbal behaviors in conversation only contains 30%, and the other messages are all conveyed by nonverbal means (basically body language). That is to say, sometimes the voiced languages were powerless and the nonverbal behaviors will embroider on these speech acts by eye contacts, facial movements, gestures, postures, etc. These silent body languages gain a head start by remedy the powerlessness and inadequacies. For example, when we direct the road for people who are asking the direction, we gesture with hands, which has the function of complementing the verbal information. And there're many icons in CMC with this function.

See the icons: :—S expressing fear, :—X expressing saying nothing,  complementing to tell Goodbye. You can add these emoticons to further convey the inside feeling when you write email or chat with people online.

## 3. Body languages have the emphasizing function.



Actually, social communication usually mixed two kinds of tools — verbal and nonverbal. When one is speaking, gesture, eyes movement, posture and facial expression are always accompanying voiced language. All the movements including all the nonverbal behaviors are behaved as one aim—deepen the impression of meaning. For example, we're uttering Shhh this sound, while putting first finger on the lip to tell people “Be quiet”. This gesture has the emphasizing

function more than the voiced language. And the icons in CMC have the same function. See the icons:  means “Be

quiet”, and  means “why”. They have the emphasizing functions.



## 4. Body languages have the function of expressing emotion.

Compared with language communicative functions, nonverbal behaviors are more authentic and accurate to convey information and record the decisive meaning through language environment. Because languages sometimes are insincere in one's words and nonverbal behaviors are the authentic feeling from one's heart. For example, you have received a present from your friend that you do not like. Though you will say, “I like it very much” happily, your facial expression will show that you are unhappy. That is to say, your facial expression tells your true emotion. And icons in CMC even though hide people's real emotion, still convey communicators emotions as its original name (emoticons) means emotion icons. There're a large number of icons expressing various emotions. The typical smiling and crying


icons are: :), :'. And  conveying the happiness,  conveying “very angry”.

## 5. Body languages have the regulating function.

Communication refers not to one or two participants. A period of conversation can be described as a series of listening and speaking, such as start chatting, change topics and give an end to it. Nonverbal behaviors are usually used to regulate such kinds of cooperation. When there is a conversation, one will show another about his emotion response and attitude with the help of nonverbal behaviors. Regulating is usually used to keep talking in a face-to-face conversation. It implies the speaker that he can go on talking, repeating again, give a further explanation, speak faster, speak more lively, and invite others to give a speech, etc. And icons in CMC also have the same function. For example, some chatters are discussing a topic, if one of them will stop talking it to change the topic, but the other one tell the one that I want to speak, preventing the speaker to draw away the topic. He can use not only words but also icons to hint the

one who wants to stop the topic with the icons like  or . Icons used in this way have the function of regulating and controlling the information communication.

## 6. Body languages have the substituting function.

Before languages were produced, people had to use a variety of gestures to explain what they want to say in order to cooperate better or live better. Obviously it became the main tool of communication, and now we see that some individuals use relative body language when they cannot or it is inconvenient to express their feeling to achieve the same results instead of oral language and written language. That is what we said of communicative function. Sign languages that are used by the deaf and dumb, semaphore that were used on ports and wharfs or ocean liners and warships, judging gesture that were used in sports competitions by the judges, gestures that were used by policemen who direct the cars and people on streets all belong to substitutable body languages. What is more, in daily life people shake hands to send their respect to others, waving hands to say goodbye, clapping hands to welcome others. And icons also can be used to substitute typed words to deliver the information. For example, without saying hello when you start talking with people online, you may use  first instead of saying hello. When you want to go offline, you may

upload an icon like  and  instead of saying “bye bye”.

In fact, internet icons are used as internet body languages so often, and one icon sometimes has not only more than one communicative function, but also can be used in various occasions. The sheer quantity of these icons using in CMC goes beyond humble beginnings into a depth of imagination and creativity that defies such a simple explanation (Metz,

1994). However, such creativeness implies that computer users have the ability to adapt to limited communication situations, and even substitute body languages using in the reality to replace conversational shortcomings in CMC.

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. *Icons in CMC Substituting for Body Languages*

CMC is a communicative mode built on internet. With the new technology coming into being, a new trend of culture has been a popular phenomenon. According to the definition of online Wikipedia: Cyberculture is the culture that has emerged, or is emerging, from the use of computer networks for communication, entertainment and business. It is also the study of various social phenomena associated with the Internet and other new forms of network communication, such as online communities, online multi-player gaming, social gaming, social media and texting. The communicative behaviors based on internet are conducted in the virtual environment. But, as same as the interpersonal communication in the real life, people's language communication in the virtual world are also done in certain community, ... online communication has outstanding characteristic of virtualized communicative behaviors. From the standing point of communications research, these features are different from the communicative behaviors in the reality, because they represent a kind of special cyberculture, which is worth further researching and exploring. (Yang, 2004)

Internet icons in CMC play the role of "internet body languages", but since they contain the word "internet", they are characteristic of obvious cyberculture. In Chinese CMC, "English and icons seemingly prevail among internet communicative languages" (Zhang, 2007). A large number of icons make internet communication more vivid because they can quickly and easily express communicators' feelings through long distance. Internet icons are not only with the communicative functions of body languages, but also more varied. This special internet language represents the new characteristic of a new culture in the information age, and its function of expressing, transmitting information is same as body language used in the reality communication. It is very common for icons to be used as "internet body languages" in CMC.

#### B. *The Significance Analysis of Icons Effect*

##### 1. Positive aspects

a. Internet icons have the function of body languages in the reality communication. Conveying emotions fast and vivid, as in face-to-face communication, compensates the time and space gap. For example, a friend in the US can express his happy emotion to the friend in China by using icons even though they can't see each other when chatting. It is easy for two sides of the communicators to crystal understand each other's emotion.

b. Internet icons provide shy and retiring people with the convenience to express personal emotion. The anonymity associated with conversing with a terminal between the participants is a boon for those people who suffer from shyness (Reid, 1991). Furthermore, internet icons offer people the opportunity to open up to a complete stranger, disclose the emotional feelings which people would hesitate to mention *tete-a-tete* to an individual. Therefore, internet icons makes CMC more open and free. That is the reason why a great number of people all over the world like adopting CMC as their communication helper.

c. With more and more people getting familiar with internet and computer, the number of internet icons has skyrocketed, which showers netizens with various icons to choose in order to tell exactly what they want to. Now netizens can design icons by themselves and publish them online so as for the public to use freely. Therefore, internet icons display a variety of outlooks and values on life, at the same time internet provides people having the talents of network arts the opportunity and platform to carry out their abilities.

d. They can easily understand each other, if people speaking different languages from different countries meet online and communicate by internet icons. People of different titles and of different statuses are equally treated online, because they don't need to tell each other about that. if they meet online, they won't consider whether the superior's happy or not, so as not to carefully weigh up a person's words and expressions. These features make CMC diversified and equalized so that it's a good channel to develop international communication and netizens personalities thoroughly.

##### 2. Negative aspects

a. CMC is still different from face-to-face communication, on one hand it offers people so much convenience, on the other hand it also offers some immoral people the chance to cheat by using internet icons to express hypocritical emotion, which is difficult to identify sometimes. Internet icons encourage disinhibition among its users. The lack of social context cues are read as an obscuring of the boundaries which delineates the forms of behavior which are acceptable or unacceptable. With little regulating feedback to govern behavior, users behave in ways that would not generally be acceptable with people who are essentially total strangers (Reid, 1991).

b. One of the advantages of using internet icons in CMC is convenient for people to express their emotions, but it will also give some people who are not skillful at social occasions in the reality more excuse to escape the reality, dependency on the virtual world, and not helpful for all-round personality development. This phenomenon is uncommon, but nonetheless true. Self-disclosure among CMC participants results in attachment and, ultimately, involvement.

c. Cyberculture strongly conflicts with traditional, ethical culture. The tendency of network internationalization is undermining the individual development of ethical culture. Internet icons as one special network language of the

cyberculture phenomena have been affecting the traditional communication mode, communication language, communication method, etc.

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# The Effect of Exercise Types on EFL Learners' Vocabulary Retention

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**Abstract**—This paper is an attempt to investigate whether the Elementary EFL learners' vocabulary retention of the newly learned words significantly differs by using recognition exercises (fill-in-the-blank, and matching) and production exercises (paraphrasing, and glossing) in immediate and delayed vocabulary tests. 46 Iranian Elementary learners who were studying English in a language Institute participated. Four texts were selected from Elementary Total English book. Each text contained ten unknown words followed by one exercise type. Each session the learners read a text, and then did the following exercises. The meaning of the words was provided in a mini dictionary. After doing each exercise, the learners were instructed to provide an English synonym, or an English definition, or translation of the word in L1 for each word. Before the test, mini dictionaries were collected. After a two week interval, the participants' vocabulary learning was tested through the final vocabulary test containing all the words presented in four exercise types. The results of comparing four exercise types revealed that learners recalled more words in fill-in-the-blank exercise than other exercise types both in immediate and delayed tests. Moreover, the results indicated that recognition exercises were more effective than production exercises in EFL vocabulary retention. In addition, learners' scores in immediate tests were better than their scores in delayed tests in four different exercise types. Thus, unknown words should be repeated in different exercises, in order to be stored in long term memory and to be retained easily.

**Index Terms**—incidental vocabulary learning, intentional vocabulary learning, production exercises, recognition exercises, retention, vocabulary knowledge

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge has an important role in almost all areas of language learning. According to Nation (2001), "vocabulary learning is not a goal in itself; it is done to help learners listen, speak, read, or write more effectively" (p. 362). Therefore, learning a language depends on learning its vocabulary. Stoller and Grabe (1993) stated that development of vocabulary knowledge is highly necessary for both native and nonnative speakers. Moreover, Kaivanpanah and Zandi (2009) pointed out the significant role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension in first language (L1) situations, and second language (L2) settings as well. Thus, vocabulary learning is important not only in L1, but also in L2 language learning. Hulstijn et al. (2005) believe that "If one does not know the meaning of the words occurring in a text, understanding is severely hampered" (p. 54). Hence, learners should pay attention to the words as a part of a message and individual words as well (Nation, 2001).

Many studies have examined the effect of different methods and on vocabulary learning (Brown & Perry, 1991; Avila & Sadoski, 1996; Zimmerman, 1997; Mora, 2000; Nation, 2001; Shapiro & Waters 2005; Sagarra & Alba, 2006). Zimmerman (1997) asserted that reading plus interactive vocabulary instruction can lead to great vocabulary learning. In addition, Naiton (2001) noted that incidental vocabulary learning activities such as role play, ranking, retelling are useful means of vocabulary learning. One important means to focus on vocabulary is Exercises. Exercise has a beneficial effect on vocabulary learning. Chastain (1988) believes that new information should be related to old information in order to be retrieved. Thornburg (2002, as cited in Cevik, 2007) states that in order to connect new knowledge (new words in context) to existing knowledge, it should be supported with the exercises. Amiryousefie and Kassaian (2010) assert that exercises direct learners to specific vocabulary items and help them understand the meaning of these words through different tasks. Moreover, Nation (1990, as cited in Cevik, 2007) states that "in order to remember a word, it needs to be encountered 5 to 16 times in activities or texts" (p. 2). Hence, if vocabulary items are repeated in different exercises and activities, learners' vocabulary knowledge will be enhanced to a great degree. Therefore, different exercises and activities will be beneficial in this way. Furthermore, some researchers believe that teaching vocabulary by reading text plus exercises and activities will be more effective (Paribakht & Wesche, 1994; Zimmerman, 1997). Vocabulary learning is one of the major focuses in language studies. Providing different tasks and activities can be effective and beneficial in this regard. Since few studies (Hulstijn, 1992; Folse, 2006; Llach, 2009) have been conducted in this regard; therefore, this study intends to compare exercise types through recognition exercises (fill-in-the-blank exercises and matching exercises) and production exercise (glossing and paraphrasing) on EFL learners' vocabulary retention. In this way, the result of this study can benefit language teachers and material writers to use more effective exercise types in order to improve learners' vocabulary knowledge.



## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### A. Vocabulary Learning

Learning vocabulary plays an important role in language learning because as Gass (1999) believes “learning a second language means learning its vocabulary” (p. 325). Folse (2004) notes that vocabulary is necessary for language learning and both research and experience are well aware of this view. Hunt and Beglar (2005) assert that “the heart of language comprehension and use is the lexicon” (p. 24). “No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way” (McCarthy 1990, as cited in Al-Hadlaq, 2003, p. 60). As Nation (2006) has shown, for comprehending written text, 8000 to 9000 word family vocabulary is necessary and for spoken text, 6000 to 7000 vocabulary is needed. Therefore, learning vocabulary is fundamental for language learning. As Schmitt (2008) mentions there are two types of vocabulary learning including incidental and intentional vocabulary learning. One means of intentional vocabulary learning is exercises.

### B. The Significance of Exercise

In a study, Dunmore (1989) highlighted the need for exercise types in vocabulary learning and emphasized the importance of context in understanding the meaning of unknown words. In another study, Paribakht and Wesche (1994) pointed out the importance of using exercises in vocabulary learning. They reported that text-based vocabulary exercises and activities will be more effective and efficient than the reading only the text on vocabulary learning. However, the result of this study supports Amiryousefi and Kassaian's (2010) findings. Moreover, Llach (2009) emphasizes the effect of vocabulary exercisers in promoting vocabulary knowledge. Min and Hsu (1997) state that reading plus vocabulary enhancement activities is more effective than narrow reading in vocabulary acquisition and retention. These vocabulary enhancement tasks and activities draw learners' attention to a particular word and enable them to understand the meaning and function of the word and result in vocabulary learning (Min & Hsu, 2008). Hence, using different exercises is essential and beneficial for vocabulary learning and retention.

Paribakht and Wesche (1994) developed a hierarchy of vocabulary exercise types: 1. Selective Attention: This type of exercise draw learners' attention to a particular vocabulary item. For example: presenting a list of words before a text, and ask the learners to read the words and pay attention where these words appear in the text. 2. Recognition: As they assert in this type of exercise, the learners have to associate the word form and its meaning. Hence, the learners just need partial knowledge of the words. For example: matching a vocabulary item with synonym or definition of the word, and choosing the correct meaning of a word in a multiple choice test. 3. Manipulation: In manipulation the learners have to rearrange the elements of phrases by referring to their morphological and grammatical knowledge. For example: using stems and affixes to make word. 4. Interpretation: they state that in Interpretation, the learners are asked to make a relationship between vocabulary items with other words appeared in the text. For example: synonyms, antonyms. 5. Production exercises: The learners have to retain and reconstruct the vocabulary items, and then retrieve and make a suitable word in the text. For Example: open cloze exercises. Different exercises can lead to substantial gains of vocabulary knowledge and greater vocabulary learning. But the question is which exercise type is the most effective and beneficial in vocabulary learning and retention?

### C. Factors Affecting the Efficacy of Different Exercise Types in Vocabulary Retention

Two major factors affecting the efficacy of exercises are “Noticing” and “Attention” which are mentioned in L2 acquisition studies (Truscott, 1998; Schmidt, 1990). Noticing is the process of “giving attention to an item” (Nation, 2001, p. 74). Kargozari, and Ghaemi (2011) state that “during noticing, the word is taken out of its message context for a certain period of time to be studied as a single item” (p. 1655). According to Folse (2006), different exercise types can draw learners' attention to specific vocabulary item, and make the learners notice to the particular word. For example, completing a cloze exercise with unknown words or writing original sentences can draw learners' attention to a particular item (Folse, 2006). Craik and Lokhart (1975, as cited in Folse, 2006) assert that depth of processing is another important factor affecting vocabulary learning and retention. Folse (2006) believes that exercises such as writing original sentences needs a deeper level of processing than matching or cloze exercises.

Nation (2001) asserts three important factors affecting L2 vocabulary development: Noticing, Retrieval, and the Generation. According to Nation (2001) noticing can take place when a learner is looking up a word in dictionary. The second important factor is the Retrieval. Nation (2001) states that retrieval is the remembering and recalling of a word with the same meaning in different contexts (Nation, 2001, p. 80). “The more the incidents of retrieval that take place at reasonably long intervals, the better the learning” (Kargozari, & Ghaemi, 2011, p. 1655). The third factor is generation which Nation (2001) defines as meeting a word in different contexts with different meaning of the words.

Moreover, Brown (1993) reports two important factors affecting acquisition of the words: Frequency of occurrence, and Saliency. According to Brown (1993) frequency of occurrence is the number of encountering of a word, and Saliency is the “importance of a word” (p. 265). Kargozari and Ghaemi (2011) report that vocabulary exercises can make a specific item more salient and make learners focus on a particular item. Hence, in this way learners pay more attention to that item. Therefore, it can be concluded that different exercise types can improve learners' vocabulary knowledge to a great degree.

#### *D. Incidental and Intentional Vocabulary Learning*

Incidental vocabulary learning refers to acquisition of a word when there is no conscious intention (Hulstijn, 2011), whereas the intentional vocabulary learning refers to “a deliberate attempt to commit factual information to memory” (Hulstijn, 2011, p.1). Read (2004) believes that in terms of vocabulary learning, both incidental and direct vocabulary learning are necessary. In addition, Hulstijn et al (1996) state that learners cannot learn the words solely by intentional vocabulary activities and words must be “picked up” through listening and reading activities. Furthermore, Hunt and Beglar (2005) believe that combining explicit and implicit vocabulary learning will be beneficial in terms of improving lexical knowledge in EFL contexts. Hence, vocabulary learning programs need to integrate both intentional and incidental vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2008). Nation (2001) supports this point, and he claims that both incidental and intentional vocabulary learning are necessary in order to develop different language skills. Based on Schmitt’s claim, Yali (2010) pointed out that a combination of incidental learning (reading text) and intentional vocabulary learning (specific explicit vocabulary exercises) resulted in better retention, and greater depth of vocabulary knowledge than the incidental vocabulary learning alone.

Schmitt (2008) added that “the more a learner engages with a new word, the more likely they are to learn it” (p. 338). Taken together, more exposure of learners with new words through both intentional and incidental vocabulary learning will enhance vocabulary learning and will result in better vocabulary retention.

#### *E. Vocabulary Learning through Texts plus Exercises*

Reading text has a crucial role in learning vocabulary and leads to substantial gains of vocabulary knowledge. Dunmore (1989) asserted that reading is important means for learners, in order to learn and understand the new items. Pigada and Schmitt (2006) pointed out that more vocabulary acquisition occurs in extensive reading condition. Nagy (1997) asserts that “no single encounter with a word, whether in instruction or in the course of reading or listening, can lead to any great depth of word knowledge” (p. 74). As Stoller and Grabe (1993) report, reading texts following by related vocabulary exercises promotes the effect of incidental learning. Hulstijn et al. (1996) state several reasons that why the learners fail to learn the meaning of the words in the texts: 1. sometimes the learners do not pay attention to the presence of the unknown words, or they think that they know the words. 2. Sometimes they just pay attention to the message of the text, and they ignore to notice to the form of the words. 3. Most of the time, the meaning of the unfamiliar words cannot be inferred from the texts 4. One meeting of a new item does not result in acquisition. As Joe (1998) indicated, the process of reading plus doing a task (retelling a text) enhances incidental vocabulary learning, and results in great gain of vocabulary knowledge. However, Paribakht, and Wesche (2000) support this view, and state that reading plus vocabulary activities leads to a better vocabulary learning, and greater depth of vocabulary knowledge than the reading only condition. They report that these exercises and activities provide multiple exposures to different lexical features, and consequently promote learners’ vocabulary knowledge. In other words, “the reason for better success of reading followed by vocabulary exercises may be that these exercises ensured learners attention to specific vocabulary items and required learners to analyze and understand the meanings and functions of target words through different tasks” (Amiryousefi, & Kassaian, 2010, p. 96 ). To sum up, combining implicit and explicit vocabulary learning through using texts, following by different exercises and activities can be beneficial and result in better vocabulary learning and retention.

#### *F. Previous Studies*

There are studies in which reading only the text and reading text plus different exercises and activities are compared in terms of vocabulary learning. The following studies resulted in the superiority of text plus different exercises and activities to text reading in vocabulary learning and retention.

In a study, Joe (1998) examined the effects of text-based tasks on incidental vocabulary acquisition in three different conditions. To carry out the study, 48 adult ESL learners who were learning English as a second language were assigned to three groups. The first group had to read a text and retell it with explicit generative training but the text was not available during recalling. The second group had to read the text and then retell it without explicit generative training but the text was available during recalling. The third group (control group) did not have to read the text or recall it. Based on the learners’ performance on the post test, it was found that the process of reading and recalling a text improved vocabulary learning incidentally. In addition, generative processing promoted vocabulary knowledge to a great degree.

More recently, Amiryousefi and Kassaian (2010) compared the effectiveness of the “reading only” condition and “reading plus” vocabulary exercises condition influencing learners’ vocabulary knowledge. The participants of the present study were 120 EFL male learners. After administering a proficiency test (Nelson Test), the final number of the participants in this study was 60. They were assigned to two groups. The “reading only” group (n=30) had to read several texts then answer comprehension questions. The “reading plus” group (n=30) had to read passages and then answer different text-based vocabulary exercises. After the treatment, the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (based on Paribakht and Wesch, 1993) was used to test the learners’ vocabulary knowledge. It was revealed that in “reading plus” vocabulary exercises group, the learners gained deep and stable knowledge of vocabulary than the “reading only” group. The researchers believe that “these exercises directed the learners’ attention to specific vocabulary” (p. 96). Moreover,

the learners had a better understanding of the meaning of the words. Therefore, it can be concluded that “vocabulary exercises are an aid to vocabulary learning” (Amiryousefi and Kassaian, 2010, p. 96).

The previous studies pointed out the importance of using different exercises and activities following a text to increase learners’ vocabulary knowledge. These exercises and activities will enhance learners’ vocabulary knowledge to a great degree. But the question is which exercise type is the most effective one to increase learners’ vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, focusing on different exercises deserves much attention. Hence, the following researches aimed at comparing different exercises in terms of vocabulary retention and learning.

In a study conducted by Hulstijn et al. (1996), 78 Dutch advanced learners of French from three Dutch universities were asked to read a French short story in one of the three following text reading conditions: Marginal glosses (containing L1 translation of unknown words), Dictionary use (having opportunity to use a bilingual Dictionary), and control (not given marginal glosses or a dictionary). This study was conducted to reveal which condition will result in better vocabulary retention. After administering the posttests, the papers were collected and corrected by two researchers. The results indicated that combination of the Marginal Glosses and reoccurrence of the words in the text resulted in better vocabulary retention than the other two conditions. The results showed that the marginal glosses were more effective than the dictionary use in vocabulary retention, because learners often do not use a dictionary. Hulstijn et al. (1996) stated that “When readers do use the dictionary, the incidence of incidental vocabulary learning will be as good as, or even better than, when they are provided with marginal glosses” (p. 336).

In another study, Folse (2006) compared the effect of written exercises on L2 vocabulary retention. To this end, 154 ESL learners of four U.S universities practiced 18 unknown words in three following different types of conditions: one fill – in – the blank exercises (recognition exercises), three fill – in – the – blank exercises (recognition exercises), and one original – sentence writing exercises (production exercises). An unexpected post test was administered to see whether vocabulary retention differ by using three different conditions. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that the mean scores of the three fill- in- the- blank condition were the highest and the words under three – fill – in – the – blank condition were retained better than the other conditions. This study showed that doing multiple target word retrievals in an exercise is important in L2 vocabulary learning.

However, Kargozari and Ghaemi (2011) did the most recent research to compare the effect of different exercises on L2 learners’ vocabulary retention. They examined three tasks on L2 vocabulary retention: multiple choice exercise, fill-in-the-blank exercise, and sentence writing. To this end, 54 Iranian EFL learners participated in this study. The learners were randomly assigned to three groups: fill-in-the-blank group, multiple choice group, and the sentence writing group. While doing the exercises, a mini dictionary was distributed among the learners in order to help them understand the meaning of the words, and their usage. Five days after the treatment an unexpected posttest was administered to the learners in order to investigate which exercise type is the most effective in vocabulary retention. To analyze the data, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was run. The results indicated that the mean of the multiple choice exercise was higher than the other two exercise types. The researchers concluded that the multiple choice exercise was more effective than the other two conditions on L2 vocabulary retention. They argued that in multiple choice exercises, retention of the words was longer than the other two types because in Multiple choice exercises the learners had to just focus on the meaning of the words, but in doing fill-in-the-blank exercise, and sentence writing the learners had to focus not only on the meaning of the words but also on the other aspects of language like grammar.

Many researchers (Paribakht & Wesche, 2000; Amiryousefi & Kassaian, 2010; Yali, 2010) reported that reading plus different exercises and activities led to better vocabulary retention than the reading only the text. Paribakht and Wesche 2000 stated that these exercises and activities make the learners pay more attention to a particular item, and result in better vocabulary learning. Yali (2010) supports this point of view, and states that combination of incidental and intentional vocabulary learning (through text plus explicit exercises) resulted in better vocabulary retention and learning.

Although a large number of studies have resulted in the effectiveness of different exercises in vocabulary learning and retention, few studies compared the effect of different exercises and activities on learners’ vocabulary retention. Hulstijn et al. (1996) indicated that marginal gloss is effective and efficient in vocabulary learning. Otherwise, Folse (2006) concluded that three fill-in-the-blank conditions (recognition exercise) resulted in better vocabulary retention. The researcher pointed out that multiple target word retrievals in an exercise is an important factor. Kargozari and Ghaemi (2011) concluded that multiple choice exercises were conducive to vocabulary learning. Since few studies have examined the effect of different exercise types influencing learners’ vocabulary learning and retention, and there is still no consensus among the researchers on this issue; therefore, the present study aims at comparing different exercise types influencing EFL elementary learners’ vocabulary retention. The principal objectives of this study are to investigate the most effective exercise type influencing Elementary EFL learners’ vocabulary retention. In addition, to compare recognition exercises (through fill- in-the-blank and matching) and production exercises (through paraphrasing and glossing) in EFL learners’ vocabulary retention. Furthermore, to investigate whether there is differential gain of knowledge in immediate and delayed vocabulary post tests.

### III. METHOD

#### A. *Research Questions*

The present study addresses the following research questions:

1. Does EFL learners' vocabulary retention significantly differ by using different exercises of matching, fill-in-the-blank, paraphrasing, and glossing in immediate and delayed tests?
2. Are recognition exercises more effective than production exercises in EFL vocabulary retention?
3. Is there differential gain of knowledge in immediate and delayed vocabulary post tests?

### B. Participants

To achieve the objectives of this study, 65 female Elementary EFL learners who were learning English in Ghalam-e-Bartar Institute participated in the study. Since all the learners had taken a placement test before attending the Institute classes, they were regarded homogenous in terms of proficiency level. They were studying Top Notch book1 A and B. Their native language was Persian. The classes were held 3 times a week. Since some of the learners were absent during the instruction and tests sessions, the final number of the participants in this study was 46.

### C. Instruments

#### 1. Pretest

To select the appropriate words for this study, a check list of 92 words was prepared. The words were selected from several texts from Elementary Total English book (Foley, Mark, & Hall, Diane, 2005). In selecting the words two criteria were considered:

1. All the words were unknown to the learners.
2. The words presented in this study had different parts of speech.

In order to ensure that the selected words were unknown to the participants, the checklist was handed to several Elementary learners who were at the same level of the proficiency of the participants in this study. The learners had to write the meaning of the words they knew. The familiar words were excluded. Hence, a list was developed including new words about which the learners did not have any previous knowledge. Four texts containing 40 unknown words were selected. Each text was followed by one type of exercises.

#### 2. Recognition Exercises

In this study two types of recognition exercises were designed.

1) Fill – In- The – Blank Exercises: The first text which was selected from Elementary Total English book contained ten unknown words which was followed by ten fill- in- the- blank exercises including ten unknown words.

Following, an example is presented:

*Fill in the blanks with the following words. There are more words than necessary.*

main fabulous experienced

The food smells ..... It's wonderful.

Jane is a(n) ..... driver. She drives well.

2) Matching Exercises: The second text containing ten unknown words was selected from Elementary Total English book, followed by ten matching exercises containing ten unknown words. The learners had to match each word on the left column to the definition on the right. Following, an example is presented:

*Match each word to the correct meaning.*

- |               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. take place | a. long often difficult journey |
|               | b. happen                       |

#### 3. Production Exercises

Two types of production exercises were developed in this study. In production exercises the learners had to write synonyms of the unknown words (glossing) and paraphrase the sentences containing the unknown word (paraphrasing).

1) Paraphrasing Exercises: The third text was selected from Elementary Total English book. It was followed by ten sentences including ten unknown words from the text. The learners had to paraphrase the sentences including the unknown word.

Following, an example is presented:

*Write the synonyms of the underlined words.*

I got caught in the morning rush hour. There was a heavy traffic.

2) Glossing: In the fourth text was the synonyms of ten unknown words were prepared on the right hand side in the text. The text was followed by ten sentences in which the new words were underlined and the learners had to write synonym for the underlined word. Following, an example is presented:

*Paraphrase the following sentences and use the synonyms of the underlined words.*

You'll get a fine if you park your car here.

#### 4. Mini dictionary

The meaning of the unknown words in texts was provided in a mini dictionary which contained 59 words: 40 unknown words presented in four different exercises, and 19 words in four texts that the learners had to know their meaning in order to understand the meaning of the texts. The vocabularies were arranged in alphabetical order to facilitate finding the new words. Each word was followed by its part of speech, a definition, and an example sentence which were taken from Oxford Elementary Learners' Dictionary (Crawley & Ashby, 2000) which showed the use of the word.

#### 5. Post – Test

Vocabulary tests were developed based on the new words in each exercise. Each session after doing each exercise, the learners' knowledge of the words presented in each exercise type was tested. Each test contained ten unknown words for which the learners had to write an English synonym, or an English definition, or translation of the word in L1. Two weeks after the instruction, the delayed test containing 40 unknown words presented in 4 different exercise types was administered to the learners to see whether the vocabulary retention significantly differed by using different exercises.

### C. Procedure

#### *Main study*

The main concern of this study was to investigate the most effective exercises on EFL learners' vocabulary retention. To this end, 46 Elementary EFL learners participated in this study. The instruction took four sessions in summer, 2011. During the instruction, the learners had to read the text, and then do the exercises in 25 minutes. The teacher helped them understand the meaning of the words in the texts. It is worthy to note that, the text was available during doing the exercises to help learners do the exercises. Mini dictionaries were handed to learners to help them understand the meaning of the new words and they were collected before administering the test. The instruction lasted for four sessions. Each session they practiced one type of exercises, i.e. matching, fill-in-the-blank, glossing, and the paraphrasing exercises. After doing each exercise, a test of vocabulary that was based on the words in each exercise was administered to the participants. The learners were asked to provide an English synonym, or an English definition, or translation of the word in L1 for each word. After two weeks, the delayed post test was administered to the learners to examine the effect of different exercise types on EFL learners' vocabulary retention.

### D. Data Analysis

A repeated- measures ANOVA will be used to see whether vocabulary retention significantly differs by using different exercises. A paired samples t-test will be used to see whether recognition exercises are more effective than the production exercises in EFL vocabulary retention. A paired samples t-test again will be used to see whether there are differential gains of knowledge in immediate and delayed vocabulary post tests.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Reliability of the Exercises

The reliability of the exercises was measured using Kurder \_ Richardson Formula 21.

The reliability of the exercises in both immediate and delayed tests is presented in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1.  
RELIABILITY OF THE EXERCISES

	Immediate	Delayed
Fill-in-the-blanks	0.78	0.68
Matching	0.82	0.75
Paraphrase	0.79	0.70
Gloss	0.81	0.90

As seen in Table 4.1, the reliability of exercises in both immediate and delayed tests was high. The results indicated that the reliability of each exercise type in immediate test was higher than delayed test except glossing.

### B. Investigation of the First Research Question

The first research question attempted to see whether the EFL learners' vocabulary retention significantly differs by using different exercises of matching, fill- in-the-blank, paraphrasing, and glossing. Since each learner was exposed to four different exercise types, a repeated- measures ANOVA procedure was run. The Descriptive Statistics is presented in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4. 2.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR IMMEDIATE AND DELAYED TESTS OF FOUR EXERCISE TYPES.(N=46)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
matching_immediate	2.00	10.00	7.9348	2.52457
matching_delayed	.00	10.00	4.5652	2.77811
Blanks_immediate	2.00	10.00	9.0435	1.72506
BLanks_delayed	.00	10.00	5.8261	2.59319
paraphrase_immediate	1.00	10.00	8.6304	2.03698
paraphrase_delayed	.00	10.00	4.5435	2.59663
gloss_immediate	1.00	10.00	6.8261	2.83082
gloss_delayed	.00	10.00	4.4348	3.61265
Valid N (listwise)				

Based on the results presented in Table 4.2, it can be argued that the fill-in-the-blank exercise has the highest mean in both immediate and delayed tests ( $\bar{x}=9.0$ ,  $\bar{x}=5.8$  respectively), followed by the paraphrasing exercise ( $\bar{x}=8.6$ ,  $\bar{x}=4.5$  respectively), the matching exercise ( $\bar{x}=7.9$ ,  $\bar{x}=4.5$  respectively), and glossing exercise ( $\bar{x}=6.8$ ,  $\bar{x}=4.4$  respectively). Based on the results, it can be claimed that the fill – in the – blank is the most effective exercise among different exercise types influencing EFL learners' vocabulary learning.

TABLE 4.3.  
TESTS OF WITHIN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS IN IMMEDIATE TESTS.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1					
Sphericity Assumed	59.799	3	19.933	6.415	.000
Greenhouse-Geisser	59.799	2.691	22.222	6.415	.001
Huynh-Feldt	59.799	2.879	20.774	6.415	.001
Lower-bound	59.799	1.000	59.799	6.415	.015

Table 4.3 indicates that the differences among different exercises in immediate tests are significant ( $p<0.05$ ). It can be argued that different exercises have significant effect on the learners' vocabulary knowledge in immediate tests. Therefore, learners' vocabulary retention differs by using different exercises in immediate tests.

TABLE 4.4.  
TESTS OF WITHIN-SUBJECT EFFECTS IN DELAYED TESTS.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1					
Sphericity Assumed	59.799	3	19.933	6.415	.000
Greenhouse-Geisser	59.799	2.691	22.222	6.415	.001
Huynh-Feldt	59.799	2.879	20.774	6.415	.001
Lower-bound	59.799	1.000	59.799	6.415	.015

As seen in Table 4.4, the differences among different exercise types in delayed tests are statically significant ( $p<0.05$ ). It can be concluded that different exercises have significant effect on learners' vocabulary retention in delayed tests. Therefore, learners' vocabulary retention differs by using different exercises in delayed tests.

Thus, based on the results presented in Table 4.3 and 4.4 the differences among four different exercises in both immediate and delayed tests are statistically significant ( $p<0.05$ ). It can be argued that different exercises have significant effect on the learners' vocabulary retention. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that the EFL learners' vocabulary retention significantly differs by using different exercise types in both immediate and delayed tests

### C. Investigation of the Second Research Question

The second research question aimed at investigating whether the recognition exercises are more effective than production exercises influencing EFL learners' vocabulary retention. To this end, a paired samples t-test was used to compare recognition and production exercises. Before utilizing the paired samples t-test, the descriptive statistics are presented in table 4.5.

TABLE 4.5.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR IMMEDIATE AND DELAYED TESTS OF RECOGNITION AND PRODUCTION EXERCISES

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
recognition exercises immediate	3.00	10.00	8.4891	1.83027
recognition exercises delayed	1.00	10.00	5.1957	2.42780
production exercises delayed	.50	9.50	4.4891	2.85869
production exercises immediate	3.00	10.00	7.7283	2.10741
Valid N (listwise)				

As seen in Table 4.5, the mean scores of recognition exercises in both immediate and delayed tests ( $\bar{x}=8.4$ ,  $\bar{x}=5.1$ ) are higher than the mean in production exercises ( $\bar{x}=7.7$ ,  $\bar{x}=4.4$ ). To see whether the difference is significant or not a paired samples t-test was run. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6.  
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST FOR BOTH RECOGNITION AND PRODUCTION EXERCISES IN IMMEDIATE TESTS.

PAIRED SAMPLES TEST FOR BOTH RECOGNITION AND PRODUCTION EXERCISES IN IMMEDIATE TESTS.										
			Paired Differences							
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
recognition exercises immediate	8.4891	1.83027								
production exercises immediate	7.7283	2.10741	.76087	1.57670	.23247	.29265	1.22909	3.273	45	.002

In Table 4.6 the mean difference between two immediate exercises, t statistics (t-observed) is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). As seen, the mean of recognition exercises ( $\bar{x}=8.4$ ) is higher than the mean of the production exercises ( $\bar{x}=7.7$ ) in immediate tests ( $8.4 > 7.7$ ). Therefore, it can be claimed that recognition exercises are more effective than production exercises in EFL vocabulary retention in immediate tests.

As seen in table 4.7, the mean difference between two delayed exercises, t statistics (t-observed) is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The mean recognition exercises ( $\bar{x}=5.1$ ) is higher than the mean of the production exercises ( $\bar{x}=4.4$ ) in immediate tests ( $5.1 > 4.4$ ). Therefore, it can be claimed that recognition exercises are more effective than production exercises in EFL vocabulary retention in delayed tests.

TABLE 4.7  
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST FOR BOTH RECOGNITION AND PRODUCTION EXERCISES IN DELAYED TESTS

PAIRED SAMPLES TEST FOR BOTH RECOGNITION AND PRODUCTION EXERCISES IN DELAYED TESTS											
				Paired Differences							
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	Sig. ( 2-tailed)
Pair 1	recognition exercises	5.1957	2.42780								
	delayed production exercises	4.4891	2.85869	.70652	1.79374	.26447	.17385	1.23920	2.671	45	.010
	delayed										

The results in table 4.6 and 4.7 are indicative of significant difference between recognition and production exercises in both immediate and delayed tests. It can be seen that the mean scores of recognition exercises are higher than production exercises in immediate and delayed tests. Thus, it can be claimed that recognition exercises are more effective than production exercises.

#### D. Investigation of the Third Research Question

The third research question sought to investigate if there are differential gains of knowledge in immediate and delayed post tests. A paired samples t-test was run to investigate this research question. The results are shown in Table 4.8.

TABLE 4.8.  
 PAIRED SAMPLES TEST FOR BOTH IMMEDIATE AND DELAYED TESTS IN DIFFERENT EXERCISE TYPES.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Blanks _immediate	9.0435	1.72506	3.21739	2.64922	8.237	45.	.000
Blanks _delayed	5.8261	2.59319					
Paraphrase-Immediate	8.6304	2.03698	4.08696	3.23059	8.580	45	.000
paraphrase _delayed	4.5435	2.59663					
Matching _immediate	7.9348	2.52457	3.36957	3.38204	6.757	45	.000
matching _delayed	4.5652	2.77811					
gloss _immediate –	6.8261	2.83082	2.39130	4.20306	3.859	45	.000
gloss _delayed	4.4348	3.61265					

As seen in Table 4.8, the immediate tests of different exercise types have higher mean scores than the delayed tests. The results show that the differences are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is differential gains of knowledge in immediate and delayed posttests in four different exercise types. Hence, it can be argued that learners' performance on immediate tests was better than their performance on delayed tests.

### E. Discussion

Many researchers (Stoller, & Grabe, 1993; Joe, 1998; Paribakht, & Wesche, 2000; Amiryousefi, & Kassaian, 2010) note that using exercises following a text can lead to better vocabulary learning and retention. The major objective of the present study was to determine which exercise type is the most conducive to the learners' vocabulary retention. Based on the results, it was found that fill-in-the-blank exercise is more effective than the other exercise types in vocabulary learning. It is worthy to note that one important reason in the efficacy of fill-in-the-blank exercise is that, it is the most common and popular exercise type used in the classrooms. Therefore, the learners are more familiar with this exercise type. The results of the present study are similar to Folse (2006) who compared three conditions: three fill-in-the-blank exercises, one fill-in-the-blank exercise, and one original-sentence -writing exercise. The results indicated that three fill-in-the-blank exercises condition had the best vocabulary retention. He concluded that doing multiple retrievals in fill-in-the-blank exercise facilitated vocabulary learning. He noted that multiple encounters of words in fill-in-the-blank activities result in better retention of vocabulary items. In contrast, Kargozari and Ghaemi (2011) examined three tasks on L2 vocabulary retention: multiple choice exercise, fill-in-the-blank exercise, and sentence writing. They concluded that the multiple choice exercise was more effective than the other two conditions on L2 vocabulary retention. They asserted that retention of the words in multiple choice exercises was longer than the other two types because most of the time used in doing the exercise was devoted to processing of the words in this type of task but in fill-in-the-blank exercise, and in sentence writing most of the time used for processing was devoted to other aspects of language like grammar. In contrast with this study, Llach (2009) compared the three exercise types in vocabulary acquisition in a foreign language and found that learners in sentence writing (production) group recalled and recognized more words immediately and after three weeks. Moreover, Hulstijn (1992) compared two conditions: Multiple choice exercises provided after a text, and gloss condition (with Dutch synonyms). The results indicated that multiple choice exercises (recognition exercises) were more effective than gloss condition on vocabulary retention. In addition, Hulstijn (1996) compared the influence of Marginal glosses, Dictionary use, and Reoccurrence of unknown words, and concluded that Marginal glosses were more effective than Dictionary use condition in vocabulary learning.

The second research question investigated whether the recognition exercises are more effective than production exercises on EFL vocabulary retention. To this end, a paired samples t-test was used. It was found that recognition exercises are more effective than production exercises on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. Folse (2006) believes that writing original sentences (as a production exercise) is time-consuming and take more time than doing fill-in-the-blank (as a recognition exercise). Therefore, one advantage of recognition exercises is that they take less time than production exercise. Thus, teachers should use recognition exercises rather than production exercises, in order to improve learners' vocabulary knowledge.

The third research question sought to investigate if there are differential gains of knowledge in immediate and delayed post tests. After utilizing the paired samples t-test, it was found that the immediate tests had considerably higher mean than the delayed tests. With regard to the results, learners' performance in immediate tests was better than their performance in delayed tests. It can be claimed that the learners learned the words during the instruction but after two weeks they forgot some of the words and could not retain them. According to Chastain (1988), the information should be transferred from short term memory to long term memory and it should be stored in long term memory in order to be retained and recalled later. Hence after the first meeting of the newly learned words, they should be repeated in different exercises. As Nation (2001) asserts "there is so much to know about each word that one meeting with it is not sufficient" (P. 74). Consequently, the vocabulary items should be repeated in different exercises in order to be stored in long term memory; so that, they can be retained and recalled easily. Thus, teachers should prepare more exercises and activities and provide more practice opportunities for the learners. The amount and type of practice play an important role contributing to retention and recall (Chastain 1988). Therefore, vocabulary items encountered in



different exercises can be beneficial. Paribakht and Wesche (2000) believe that the repetition of the new items in different exercises and tasks may encourage the learners to pay more attention to the words, because they understand that they may deal with the words again. If the learners practice more, the vocabulary knowledge transfers from short term memory to long term memory and the learners recall the words easily. Thus, the vocabulary items will stick to learners' mind, and this will facilitate the retention of the new words.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

### A. Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to examine the impact of different exercise types influencing Elementary EFL learners' vocabulary retention. This study aimed at comparing recognition exercises (fill-in-the-blank, and matching) and production exercises (paraphrasing, and glossing) immediately after the treatment, and after two weeks. The first research question investigated which exercise type is conducive to the learners' immediate and delayed vocabulary retention. It was found that EFL learners' vocabulary retention significantly differed by using different exercise types. Indeed, different exercises had different results in improving learners' vocabulary retention. The results showed that the fill-in-the-blank exercise was the most effective exercise type influencing EFL learners' vocabulary retention, followed by paraphrasing exercise, the matching exercise, and the glossing exercise which had the lowest scores.

(Fill-in-the-blank exercise > Paraphrasing exercise > Matching exercise > Glossing exercise).

Concerning the impact of recognition exercises and production exercises on EFL learners' vocabulary retention, it was found that recognition exercises (fill-in-the-blank, and matching) were more effective than production exercises (paraphrasing, and glossing). Therefore, teachers are advised to provide more opportunities for the learners to practice vocabulary by using recognition exercises rather than production exercises in their classes.

In addition, the results indicated that learners' scores in immediate tests were better than delayed tests. The learners retained the words better in immediate tests than after two weeks. It can be concluded that the learners forgot some words and could not recall them after two weeks. Webb (2007) noted that in order to learn a new item, ten repetitions are needed. Therefore, repetition of newly learned items is highly necessary, in terms of vocabulary learning. Moreover, Sokman (1997) asserted that in order the words to be stored in long term memory, they should be provided in increasingly longer intervals, e.g. after 24 hours, and then after a week. Therefore, it is the teachers' task to provide repetition opportunities by using different exercises in different intervals and by engaging learners in different activities and tasks to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

### B. Implications

Since vocabulary learning plays an important role in language learning, teachers, and materials designers should find the most effective way to teach unfamiliar vocabulary to the learners. The results of the present study suggest some pedagogical implications and provide guidance for language teachers.

The findings of the present study indicated that using recognition exercises increases learners' vocabulary knowledge better than production exercises. The current study suggests that using fill-in-the-blank exercise produces better vocabulary retention than the other types and can improve learners' vocabulary knowledge. Utilizing effective vocabulary exercises and activities can draw learners' attention to particular vocabulary items (Folse, 2006). Therefore, teachers should spend more time on teaching unknown words by using different exercise types such as fill-in-the-blank exercise which results in better vocabulary retention. In this way, the words would stick to learners' minds, and the learners can remember the words easily after a long time.

In line with some other studies (Nation, 2001; Hunt & Beglar, 2005; Schmitt, 2008; Yali, 2010), the present study asserts that the best way to teach vocabulary is combining incidental vocabulary learning and intentional vocabulary learning which results in better retention and learning vocabulary. As Paribakht and Wesche (2000) reports, multiple encounters of the words through text plus vocabulary exercises promote vocabulary knowledge to a greater degree.

Based on the findings of this study, recognition exercises such as fill-in-the-blank are more effective than production exercises on learners' vocabulary retention. Therefore, teachers are recommended to provide multiple encounters of unknown words through texts following by recognition exercises such as fill-in-the-blank exercise which lead to a better retention and greater depth of vocabulary learning of unknown items.

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# Different Themes Rendered with Similar Approaches —A Comparison between *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby*

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**Abstract**—In order to get a full understanding of the literary history of the Lost Generation and the society of the 1920's as well, the essay tries to illustrate the decadence of the special time and reflect the problems: disillusion, corruption and failure by extracting some similarities in the aspects of the illustration of decadence and solutions, the biographical features, the description of vices and the arrangement of characters between the two novels: Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

**Index Terms**—*The Sun Also Rises*, *The Great Gatsby*, similarities, the Lost Generation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Gertrude Stein, the American author who spent most of her adult life in Paris, told the young Ernest Hemingway: “you are all a lost generation” (Ian Ousby, 1981, p.205). Hemingway was struck by the comment and used it as one of the epigraphs to his early novel, *Fiesta* (called *The Sun Also Rises* in America). With the success of that book, the phrase passed into popular currency as the label for the group of writers, who had been born near the turn of the century and reached maturity during the First World War. It is used for the novelist of the age: Hemingway himself, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe and John Dos Passos. However, among all the works of the lost generation, *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby* best show the two main themes of the special period, namely the anti-war emotion and the corruption of “American dream”.

After the First World War, a number of intellectuals, poets, artists and writers, who had personally took part in the war, only to find the war a catastrophe and the so-called “crusade for purity and democracy” nothing but a political fraud, became disgusted with war, perplexed and confused for the future. They often took the form of exile and expatriation. Disillusioned with society in general and America in particular, the novelists cultivated a romantic self-absorption. They became precocious experts in tragedy, suffering and anguish. As the first major novel of Ernest Hemingway, who spent most of his adult life in Europe, *The Sun Also Rises* encapsulates the angst of the post-war generation, known as the Lost Generation. Describing a couple that share a very strange and distant kind of love for each other, Ernest Hemingway showed the aimless lives of the expatriates, and expressed the anti-war emotion in front of readers.

But the nihilism and the suffering were only half the picture. The years following the Great War were also a time of financial boom and extravagance. People's mental world changed tremendously. Traditional morality, ideal and religious belief began to collapse. A group of young adults acted according to their own will and instinct, seeking for unconventional and unrestrained life. F. Scott Fitzgerald was one of them, but he tried to meditate on his life soberly and therefore wrote his finest work *The Great Gatsby*. Precise and compact in its form, *The Great Gatsby* gives a finely objective portrait of the hedonistic world in which the Fitzgeralds themselves lived. Capturing both the frantic gaiety and the underlying sadness, it also criticizes the destruction of “American Dream” whose ideal of self-made man has been corrupted by the vulgar pursuit of material happiness.

Though both Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald chose their own society as their novels' subjects respectively, *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby* have much in common. Despite being very different stories, they both illustrate the decadence of the 1920's and reflect the same problems: disillusion, corruption and failure. Moreover they also share many similarities in the biographical features, description of vices and the arrangement of characters. Analyzing them by comparison, we can get a full understanding of the literary history of the Lost Generation, and the society of the special time as well.

## II. SIMILARITIES SHARED BY BOTH NOVELS

### A. Similarities in the Illustration of Decadence and Solutions

When the First World War ended in 1918, the generation of young Americans who had fought the war became intensely disillusioned, as the brutal carnage that they had just faced made the Victorian social morality of

early-twentieth-century America seem like stuffy empty hypocrisy. The dizzying rise of the stock market in the aftermath of the war led to sudden, sustained increase in the national wealth and a newfound materialism, as people began to spend and consume at unprecedented levels. Against this background, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby* respectively, which, despite the different themes, illustrate the decadence in the 1920's and show the decline of the moral values. At the same time, by depicting Jake's perseverance in *The Sun Also Rises* and Nick's return to the west in *The Great Gatsby*, Hemingway and Fitzgerald left a glimmer of hope in front of readers.

### 1. Decadence and solution illustrated in *The Sun Also Rises*

In the novel *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway describes a couple that share a very strange and distant kind of love for each other. This story takes place immediately after the First World War, a time of great hardship. This hardship results in a degradation of values both morally and socially. The love that Brett and Jake share is symbolic of the general decline in values in that they tolerate behaviors in one another that would have been previously considered unacceptable. Jake, who is left impotent by an ambiguous accident during the First World War, is forced to keep the relationship strictly platonic and stand watching as different men float in and out of Lady Ashley's life and bed. Hemingway shows war as the destroyer of love. What's more, without the old certainties undercut by the First World War to rely on, Jake, Brett, and their acquaintances fill their time with inconsequential and escapist activities, such as drinking, dancing and debauchery. Very often their merry-making is joyless and driven by alcohol. Although they spend nearly all of their time partying in one place or another, nearly all the characters remain sorrowful or unfulfilled. Hence their drinking and dancing is just a futile distraction, a purposeless activity characteristic of a wondering, aimless life. The proclaimed "crusade war" destroys the generation's world, both mentally and physically.

However, Jake, the narrator and main character of *The Sun Also Rises* is a man of action who spends more time achieving goals than talking them. Though his physical wound ascends into an emotional one by preventing him from ever consummating his love with Lady Ashley, he knows when to control himself, relies solely on himself, utilizes his assets, and enjoys bullfights and other honorable activities. These characteristics reveal his strong character built of courage and grace. At the end of the story, "I settled back, Brett moved close to me. We sat close against each other. I put my arms around her and she rested against me comfortably" (Ernest Hemingway, 2000, p.251). This setting in a cab symbolizes Jake's returning to principle. Jack was once at a loss, but he has never sunk into it. He seems aware of the fruitlessness of the generation's way of living. From the beginning to the end, he is clearly conscious of the embarrassing situation and tries to seek the solutions. Though the story ends without a clear answer, friendship, stoicism and natural grace under pressure are offered as the values that matter in an otherwise amoral often-senseless world.

### 2. Decadence and solution illustrated in *The Great Gatsby*

*The Great Gatsby*, a story of the thwarted love between a man and a woman, is one of the greatest literary documents of 1920's, in which the American economy soared, bringing unprecedented levels of prosperity to the nation. Prohibition, at the same time, made millionaires out of bootleggers, and an underground culture of revelry sprang up. The chaos and violence of the First World War left America in a state of shock, and the generation that fought the war turned to wild and extravagant living to compensate. "The staid conservatism and time-worn values of the previous decade were turned on their ear, as money, opulence, and exuberance became the order of the day" (Weiren Wu, 1990, p.163). Fitzgerald positions the characters of *The Great Gatsby* as emblems of these social trends. He portrays the 1920's as an era of decayed social and moral values, evidenced in its overarching cynicism, greed, and empty pursuit of pleasure. The reckless jubilation that led to decadent parties and wild Jazz music—epitomized in *The Great Gatsby* in the opulent parties that Gatsby throws every Saturday night—resulted ultimately in the corruption of the American Dream, as the unrestrained desire for money and pleasure. The American dream was originally about discovery, individualism, and the pursuit of happiness. In the 1920's, however, easy money and relaxed values have corrupted this dream, especially on the East Coast. In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby instills Daisy with a kind of idealized perfection that she neither deserves nor possesses, and when his dream crumbles, all that is left for Gatsby to do is die. Gatsby's dream is ruined by the unworthiness of its object, just as the American dream in the 1920's is ruined by the unworthiness of its subject—money and pleasure.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald also uses the contrasting image of the East and Midwest to develop his critique; the East denotes the place where the corruption of the American dream has occurred. Finally at the end of the novel, Nick, the narrator and observer of the corruption, decides to move back to Minnesota, where American values have not decayed. Nick learns that this place of dishonesty, lack of morale and lack of values is not the place for him. The dream has been destroyed and polluted by the pursuit of material success. Fitzgerald shows that the secret of truly happiness in life is to fulfill the American dream purely and faithfully.

Portraying the decadence of the 1920's, the authors, two World War I veteran themselves, show keen insight into the lives and minds of Americans who fought in Europe during the conflict and the experience Americans may have had in the years following their return. Through written conversation, the novels deal with many of the social attitudes and ideas, which prevailed during the early 1920's, and offer a solution respectively.

### B. Similarities in the Biographical Features

The writers, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, both include biographical features in their novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby*. Although *The Sun Also Rises* is more closely related to actual events in Hemingway's

life than *The Great Gatsby* is to events in Fitzgerald's life, they both take the same approach. Ernest Hemingway comments on the effects of the First World War on the Lost Generation and the hope for the future in the next generation. Fitzgerald comments on the jaded old-wealth society of the Eastern United States and the corruption of the American dream. By adding biographical features into their novels, both Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald are able to give their novels that extra depth because the plots of the novels are more realistic and accurately reflect the society of the time.

### 1. Biographical features in *The Sun Also Rises*

Hemingway's novel is almost entirely based on actual events that happened to Hemingway and a group of his friends. This enhances the realism of *The Sun Also Rises* which is based on real people and their fiesta in Pamplona. During Ernest's third trip to Pamplona, his company would stay at Juanito Quinata's hotel, Quinatana. Juanito was a veteran aficionado and matadors often stayed there. The similarities in name are unmistakable and the character in the novel is a veteran aficionado as well. More importantly, there they met Ordenez, a matador, like the Pedro from the novel; he fought in the "old manner" and "on several bulls, killed 'Recibiendo'" (Carlos Baker, 1969, p.147) and was hailed as the "messiah who had come to save bullfighting" (Carlos Baker, 1969, p. 147). Pedro Romero is an important symbol of hope in the novel. Ordenez, thinly disguised as Pedro Romero, was beginning to dominate the book. Another important character in the book, Brett, is based on a real life participant in Hemingway's Pamplona, Duff Twysden. She is physically similar to Brett. Like Brett, "she wore a man's felt hat" (Carlos Baker, 1969, p. 146). Brett and Robert Cohn once go on a trip together where they romanced together unknown to anyone else. Similarly, Harold Loeb (Robert Cohn) told Ernest that he wanted to relax by the sea at St. Jean-de-luz before joining the others at Burgette. What he did not reveal was that he had persuaded Duff Twysden to spend a week with him in consummation of their romance. The scene where Brett received the bull's ear from Pedro actually happened. Just not to her parallel Duff Twysden, Ordenez gave the ear to Hemingway's wife Hadley. Similarly as his counterpart Robert Cohn in the novel, Harold Loeb was treated as an outcast due to his relationship with Duff and his constant following her around. In the novel, Mike constantly brandishes Robert with remarks of how he is not wanted and how he cannot see that. In Hemingway's actual trip, Harold Loeb and Duff slipped away for a drink in one of the small cafes and ended up in a Spanish clubroom where she refused to leave and Harold was forced to leave alone. The next day Guithrie (Mike) suddenly told Harold to get out: he was not wanted. Besides being based on real people and their fiesta in Pamplona, *The Sun Also Rises* contains scenes on the Irati River. Perhaps, in his novel Hemingway portrays the vacation on the Irati River as how he wanted to experience it. But in reality, "The dark stream of the Irati was filled with logger's trash" (Carlos Baker, 1969, p. 143), and Hemingway and his friends Bill Smith were unable to catch a single fish after four days of trying.

### 2. Biographical features in *The Great Gatsby*

The story in Fitzgerald's book, however, contains basic ideas from his life, not necessarily actual events. In this novel, Fitzgerald is able to write about his experience from a different perspective and include his self both in the characters of Jay Gatsby and Nick Carraway. As in many of Fitzgerald's works, he writes about a "golden girl", the desire of every man that he couldn't have. In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald creates the character of Daisy to fit his description. In actuality the motivation for Fitzgerald's writing about the golden girl came from real events. Ginevra King was the love of young Fitzgerald. In Ginevra's eyes, however, Fitzgerald was simply one of the many men in her young life and when it came time, she dropped him. In *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy is shown by the end to be a very careless and confused one, who "smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness...and let other people clean up the mass they had made" (F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1992, p.180). This statement from the novel relates to Fitzgerald's own feeling for Ginevra who used him, then dropped him when it came time, leaving Francis devastated. The romance between Fitzgerald and Ginevra King is also given meaning in *The Great Gatsby* as Ginevra King and Fitzgerald himself came from different social worlds just as Daisy and young poor Gatsby did. In both situations, the woman came from the aristocratic "old money" rich and the guys were respectively poor in comparison. On the other hand, like Fitzgerald, Nick Carraway is a thoughtful young man from Minnesota, educated at Yale, who moves to New York after the war. Also similar to Fitzgerald is Jay Gatsby, a sensitive young man who idolizes wealth and luxury and who falls in love with a beautiful young woman while stationed at a military camp. Having become a celebrity, Fitzgerald fell into a wild, reckless lifestyle of parties and decadence, while desperately trying to please his wife Zelda, who delayed their wedding until he could prove a success, by writing to earn money. Similarly, Gatsby amasses a great deal of wealth at a relatively young age, and devotes himself to acquiring possessions and throwing parties that he believes will enable him to win Daisy's love. Like Nick in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald found this new lifestyle seductive and exciting, and like Gatsby, he had always idolized the very rich. Now he found himself in an era in which unrestrained materialism set the tone of society, particularly in the large cities of the East. Even so, like Nick, Fitzgerald saw through the glitter of the Jazz Age to the moral emptiness and hypocrisy beneath, and part of him longed for this absent moral center. In many ways, *The Great Gatsby* represents Fitzgerald's attempt to confront his conflicting feeling about the Jazz Age. Like Gatsby, Fitzgerald was driven by his love for a woman who symbolized everything he wanted, even as she led him toward everything he despised.

By providing biographical information in their novels, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald are able to enhance the meaning of their work and provide extra credibility and realism into their plots. Fitzgerald takes a rejection from his life and uses that idea to write a social commentary on the corruption of the American dream by the old-rich of the

Eastern United States. Hemingway takes actual events from his life and uses that as a basis for the plot of his novel, this enhances the theme by describing the effect of the First World War on Hemingway's generation.

### C. Similarities in the Description of Vices

In the 1920's, America was going through many changes, evolving from the Victorian period to the Jazz Age. The Great War was over in 1918; men who returned from the war had the scars of war imprinted in their minds. Despite the eighteenth amendment, which prohibited the manufacture, sale or transportation of liquor in the United States, most people think of large, lavish parties when thinking about the 1920's. Both Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald examining the evils of the time and the consequences that accompanied the actions of the characters, there are thus parallels between the vices in *The Sun Also Rises* and the vices in *The Great Gatsby*: namely excessive alcohol consumption, sexual promiscuity and the power of money.

#### 1. Excessive alcohol consumption

In *The Sun Also Rises*, nearly all of Jake's friends are alcoholics. Whether it is day or night, wherever they happen to be, they drink, usually to excess. Hemingway clearly portrays the drawbacks to this excessive drinking alcohol frequently, which brings out the worst in characters, particularly Mike. He shows himself to be a nasty, violent man when he is intoxicated. More subtly, Hemingway also implies that drunkenness worsens the mental and emotional turmoil that Jake and his friends live with. In comparison, many of the characters of *The Great Gatsby* drank excessively, despite the prohibition issued in the United States. Jay Gatsby, a bootlegger, throws large lavish parties at his grand estate during the summer evenings, where the alcohol, food and music flows. Characters such as Tom and Daisy Buchanan, Myrtle Wilson, Jordan Baker and Nick Carraway enjoy parties and drank excessively. Another important similarity to point out under the excessive drinking is the fact that both Hemingway and Fitzgerald drank excessively. It is their behaviors that caused their vivid writing of the evil of excessive alcohol consumption.

#### 2. Sexual promiscuity

The second parallel is the vice of sexual promiscuity. Both Hemingway and Fitzgerald portray the destructiveness of sex in their works to show the decline of moral standards. The most promiscuous character in *The Sun Also Rises* is Brett Ashley. Throughout the book, Brett and Barnes flirt a lot and they also kiss several times. Brett not only has affair and sleeps with Cohn at San Sebastian, but also chooses to flirt and lead on Count Mippipopolous. She also has another affair with Pedro the bullfighter. This whole time she is engaged to marry Mike. They are not married, yet they sleep together, this didn't happen a lot before the war. In comparison, *The Great Gatsby* has promiscuous behaviors in the form of adultery. Tom Buchanan has several affairs since he and Daisy have been married. His affair with Myrtle Wilson is highlighted by Fitzgerald. Gatsby and Daisy were lovers before he went to the Great War. When they were reunited, they became inseparable, a lost love found. However, under the superficial pleasure and happiness, love is tarnished and the decline of moral values is showed.

#### 3. Power of money

The third parallel between a vice in *The Sun Also Rises* and a vice in *The Great Gatsby* is that of the power of money. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes has an established bank account. He is able to live in Paris, travel in Europe, and enjoy his dining and drinking experiences. He is able to buy friends as is stated in the text, "No one makes things complicated by becoming your friend for any obscure reason. If you want people to like you, you have to spend a little money." (Ernest Hemingway, 2000, p.237) Perhaps it is Jake's money that attracted Brett to him. In comparison, in *The Great Gatsby*, Tom Buchanan and Jay Gatsby are men of great wealth who has bought power. Tom has great control over Daisy, Myrtle and George. He tries to control Nick and Gatsby, but does not succeed. Gatsby cannot be controlled by Tom's money; rather he is controlled by Daisy. Gatsby tries to buy back a period of time, back to when he and Daisy were first in love. She did not wait for him because he was poor at that time. She told him that rich girls didn't marry poor boys. The real irony for Gatsby is that with all of his money and all the people he knew through business contacts and the many parties he had thrown, only Nick and his father attend his funeral. Money brings nothing but false friendship and love. The more lasting and lofty pursuit should be the richness of morality instead of money

### D. Similarities in the Arrangement of Characters

Sharing the same sort of yielding relationships and unending searches for love and happiness, all of which unfailingly end in tragedy, it is not surprising that the characters in *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby* have very similar traits. Characters that are similar and would be corresponding in both books would be, Jake and Nick, Brett and Daisy, Robert and Gatsby, Mike and Tom.

Both stories are told through the use of non-judgmental narrators to comment on the lost generation. In *The Sun Also Rises*, this man is Jake Barnes, while in *The Great Gatsby* this man is Nick Carraway. Both men are thrown into social situation where they feel awkward and don't want to interfere, and so through the authors' use of these men, the reader is left with a more or less unbiased view of the bizarre social structures and dramas that permeated the society in this era. Though Jake is involved in the love affairs in *The Sun Also Rises*, while Nick doesn't, both men are tolerating, open-minded, quiet and a good listener, and, as a result, others tend to talk to them and tell them their secrets. On the other hand, Nick, like Jake, is lost and has no idea on how to live his life. Their days are spent hanging out with friends all day and night.

It is also reasonably clear that Cohn and Gatsby share many notable characteristics, too. Both spend their days

dreaming of their associated mistresses, and both share a love of professionalism, honor and romance. Each man sees himself as a sort of savior to his darling, to save her from the world and from all those who are unworthy. Yet still in both cases, their dreams are shattered by a less than devotional love which they receive in return. Both men are henceforth removed from the story and quickly both are forgotten.

Further comparison of character includes Brett and Daisy, who use man to get what they want as they search for destined love. However, neither of them seems to know what love is. Brett can only relate to having sex, and Daisy thinks chiefly convenience. Yet at the same time, they are surrounded by men who love them. Brett is a strong, largely independent woman. She exerts great power over the men around her, as her beauty and charisma seem to charm everyone she meets. Yet she refuses to commit to any man. Daisy is in love with money, ease, and material luxury. She is capable of affection (she seems genuinely fond of Nick and occasionally seems to love Gatsby), but not of sustained loyalty or care.

Characters that are also similar would be Mike and Tom. Though they have different social attitudes and positions, both share a mistreatment of their wives (or fiancée in Mike's case), and a dislike for their rivals. Yet in both cases, after all has been done, Brett reluctantly returns to Mike, and Daisy reluctantly returns to Tom.

### III. CONCLUSION

Having compared Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, we are able to see that the themes in *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby* are rendered with similar approaches. *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby* are created to voice the authors' indignation against the First World War and the disappointment in the American Dream respectively, but both the writers try to face their own society and times in their keen insight and observe the life with calmness to reveal the problems of the 1920's. The novels not only include biographical features to increase the credibility and realism, but also describe similar vices and arrange corresponding characters to enhance readers' understanding of the special period. And with these approaches, the writers are able to portray the mental and physical wound caused by the First World War, and the American Dream corrupted by vulgar pursuit of material happiness, with great truthfulness, minuteness, and vividness.

The Lost Generation is only a brief chapter in American literary history. Its characteristic blend of public suffering and private pleasure begins to disappear with the onset of the 1930's, but as the leading works of the Lost Generation, *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Great Gatsby* break the restraints of traditional writing methods, adopt a compact and concise style, and thus establish the position of the Lost Generation in the world literary history.

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# Gender-induced Variation in L2 Production: The Case of Reference Terms

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**Abstract**—Variation in language reception and production is one of the enduring problems of second language acquisition research. There are a number of sources of variation in L2 production. The present study addresses gender-prompted variation in the use of reference terms. Reference deals with the links between words and objects or events in the world. In discourse analysis, reference is used to tackle the links between words (or phrases) and other words (or phrases) in discourse. Reference terms are operationalized by using *lexical noun phrases, common nouns, personal pronouns, indefinite articles, propositional phrases* and the like. For the purpose of data collection forty EFL intermediate students (20 male students and 20 female students) participated in the preset study. Each participant transacted the narrative task in monologic condition with the second researcher. The results of the statistical analyses revealed that there have been significant differences between the mean of male group and female group in the use of *reference terms*.

**Index Terms**—L2 production, language variation, gender, reference terms

## I. INTRODUCTION

Variation is one of the abiding problems of second language acquisition (Young, 1988). By variation, Mitchell & Myles (2003, p.224) refer to the fact that second language learners commonly produce different versions of particular constructions more or less close to the target language forms, within a short time span (even, perhaps, within succeeding utterance). Variability is also an obvious feature of both child language and of learners' second language interlanguage, which has been noted and discussed in many studies (Mitchell & Myles, 2003). Towell and Hawkins (1994) argued that it is one of the basic characteristics of interlanguage which SL learning theorists have to explain. There is a wide range of factors that have been invoked to explain patterns of interlanguage variability (Ellis, 1994; Mitchell & Myles, 2003).

The phenomenon of variability has led to a considerable debate in the second language acquisition literature (Mitchell & Myles, 2003; Romaine 2003). Romaine (2003) believes that second language variability is usually 'conditioned by multiple causes'. She lists a series of possible explanations for second language variability, which she, then, sub-divides into '*internal*' and '*external*' groups. Romaine's typology is summarized under two headings. No doubt, her '*internal*' list is a combination of linguistic and sociolinguistic elements, while the '*external*' list is entirely sociolinguistic in origin.

Preston (1996) believed that in a series of studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s (summarized in Labov, 1966), William Labov established an approach to quantitative studies of language variation. The central claim of this approach is that the alternative forms of linguistic elements do not occur randomly. The frequency of their occurrences is predicted by (1) the shape and identity of the element itself and its linguistic context, (2) stylistic level (defined operationally), (3) social identity, and (4) historical position (assuming that one form is on the way in, the other on the way out).

Sociolinguists have long been interested in the idea that current variation in a given language may reflect ongoing processes of language change (Adamson, 2009). The suggestion is that a new language rule may be implemented initially only in a particular linguistic environment, and can then spread step by step to other environments. Romaine (2003) suggests that first language *transfer* is also a source of linguistic variability in second language interlanguage. She cites a number of studies of the acquisition of the definite article in a range of European languages, by learners from different first language backgrounds (some with article systems, some without). Generally, these studies showed that learners whose first language has an article system make faster progress than those without (e.g. Italian first language vs. Turkish first language learners of second language German) (Romaine, 2003, pp. 419-20).

According to a number of SLA researchers, *style* of learning and *task-based* variation is another dimension of variability in L2 production (Ellis 1994; Rahimpour 1997; Romaine 2003; Tarone, 1988). Tarone (1988) has suggested that second language learners control a number of varieties of second language, ranging from a more pidgin-like style used in informal and unmonitored speech to a more target-like 'careful style' used in tasks with a focus on form. For example, Tarone's own work showed that both Japanese first language and Arabic first language learners of English as a second language supplied the third-person singular verb inflection -s more reliably in formal contexts. Albeit, Romaine (2003) concludes from her survey that stylistic variation is rather weak among second language learners, and also argues that the problems involved in trying to conflate attention or degree of monitoring (both psycholinguistic concepts) and the sociolinguistic concepts of style.

Other sources of variation in L2 production include the different conditions accompanying the *task*, such as attention and time pressure (Hulstijn & Hulstijn, 1984), the amount of prior experience (Brown et al., 1984), the amount of planning time (Foster & Skehan, 1999), task condition (Rahimpour, 1997), and task complexity (Robinson, 2003; Yousefi, 2009).

Systematic differences in the way people talk within a speech community can be seen among speakers with different *demographic characteristics*, who belong to different age groups, social classes, ethnic groups, and genders (Adamson, 2009). For example, words ending in *-ing*, such as *running* and *darling*, have an informal pronunciation (*runnin'*, *darlin'*) as well as a formal pronunciation (Adamson, 2009). Houston (1985) has found that middle-class speakers and women use the formal variant more often than working-class speakers and men. Adamson (2009) contends that perhaps the most studied example of socially patterned variation involves the deletion of the sounds /t/ and /d/ when they occur in a consonant cluster in word final position, so that the words *mist* and *buzzed* are pronounced *mis'* and *buzz'*. A number of studies (Fasold, 1985; Wolfram, 1975) have found that men delete /t,d/ more often than women, that working-class speakers delete /t,d/ more often than middle-class speakers, and that almost all speakers delete /t,d/ more often when they are speaking informally. Wolfram (1975) came to the conclusion that different rates of /t,d/ deletion correlated with the social class of African American English (AAE) speakers living in Detroit (who can delete /t,d/ from non-clusters, so that *did* can be pronounced [di]). It is shown in Wolfram (1975) that /t,d/ deletion rates range from 51 percent for upper-middle-class speakers to 84 percent for lower-working-class speakers.

Adamson (2009), likewise, believes that the frequency at which a speaker uses variable forms depends not only on the speaker's demographic characteristics, but also on the *linguistic environment* in which the form occurs. Many studies have found that the frequency at which a variable feature is used also depends on the circumstances of speaking. Perhaps a good example is Labov's (1966) study of /r/ deletion in New York City. New Yorkers can delete /r/ after a vowel (so that *forth floor* is pronounced [fo:θ flo:]). Labov found that this deletion correlated not only with the linguistic environment and the speaker's social class but also with the speaking task. Labov suggested that the speakers tended to delete /r/ more in the casual style because they paid less attention to how they sounded, concentrating instead on telling the story. However, in formal style the speakers *monitored* their speech, trying to avoid stigmatized forms like deleted /r/.

Romaine (2003) comments that second language variability is usually 'conditioned by multiple causes'. As it was mentioned earlier, she sub-divides possible explanations for second language variability into 'internal', and 'external' groups. Her 'internal' list is a combination of linguistic and sociolinguistic elements, while the 'external' list is totally sociolinguistic in origin. In the same vein, Ellis (1994) discusses the sources of variation in interlanguage under the headings of systematic and non-systematic variation. For Ellis (1994) systematic variations include; 'psycholinguistic context', 'linguistic context', and 'external or situational context'. On the other hand, Ellis has argued that some variation in second language performance is simply free or random. **Tarone (1979)** pointed out that language varies with subtle shifts of the situation, just as a chameleon changes color as its surrounding changes. **Tarone (1979)** then proposes that the interlanguage of L2 learners should be viewed as a variable system, a system that changes when the linguistic environment changes.

### Gender-based Variation

First of all, it seems imperative to make a distinction between *sex* and *gender*. The term 'sex' has often been used to refer to the physiological distinction between females and males, with 'gender' referring to the social and cultural elaboration of the sex difference - a process that restricts our social roles, opportunities and expectations (West & Zimmerman 1987). Since the process begins at birth, it could be argued that 'gender' is the more appropriate term to use for the category than 'sex' (Cheshire, 1999).

There has been considerable scholarly interest in issues related to gender. There is a considerable body of research that suggests that male and female college students experience the online classroom environment differently (Allen, 1994; Barber, Sullivan & Walker, 1997; Selfe, 1999; Sullivan, 1999; **Wojahn**, 1994; Wolfe, 1999). As one of the popular fields in sociolinguistics, explorations on gender difference in English language and other languages as well have experienced a period of gradual development (Ning et al, 2010). In the early 1970s, American linguist Robin Lakoff proposed that American women were constrained to soften and attenuate their expression of opinion through such devices as: tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, the use of various kinds of hedges, boosters or amplifiers, indirection, diminutives (*panties*), euphemism, and conventional politeness, especially forms that mark

respect for the addressee (Lakoff, 1972). Overall then, Lakoff (1972) suggested, a distinctive part of speaking 'as a woman' is speaking tentatively, side stepping firm commitment and the appearance of strong opinions.

Ning et al (2010) asserted that in terms of intonation, men and women also display some difference. It is more frequent that female speakers tend to command a wider range of intonation, making their speech sound somewhat affected. It is also discovered that females tend to use the low-rise intonation with statements more frequently than male speakers do. They also discussed differences in terms of *Vocabulary, Topic-Selection, Difference in Giving Orders, Difference in Request Patterns, Difference in Amount of Talk, and Difference in Attitudes in Face of Unlucky Events or Complaints*.

As far as the causes of the differences between male and female language are concerned, Ning et al (2010) have attributed these differences to: *Early Childhood Socialization, Cultural and Social Expectation, Different Role of Language as for Men and Women, and Physiological and Psychological Factors*. Gender differences can be traced in other areas such as the language of emotion. O'Kearney (2004) says: "there are clear gender differences in emotion display rules with males preferring behavioral and action/expressive modes and women preferring verbal and facial expressive mode" (p. 915). Males focus less on the consequences and resolution of conflict than women and have a higher priority for more immediate, behavioral representations of their emotional responses.

Rong & Yu Hsieh (2007) showed that women may have a greater difference between semantic knowledge and the episodic emotion experience than men do. Women are more emotional than men, so they have better conceptual knowledge in emotional terms; however, with the description of their experiences, women tend to use detailed and specific terms which are not as abundant as the basic emotional terms.

Within the social sciences, an increasing consensus of findings suggests that men, relative to women, tend to use language more for the instrumental purpose of conveying information; women are more likely to use verbal interaction for social purposes with verbal communication serving as an end in itself (e.g., Brownlow, Rosamon, & Parker, 2003; Colley et al., 2004).

Some researchers (e.g., Mulac, Weimann, Widenmann, & Gibson, 1988) found that questions are more common in women's contributions to dyadic interactions (e.g., "Does anyone want to get some food?"), whereas directives that tell the audience to do something (e.g., "Let's go get some food") are more likely to be found in men's conversational contributions.

### **Narratives**

There are a number of reasons for prevalence and universality of narratives both in the language of children and L2 speakers. Berman (2004) advanced three reasons in favor of narrative in child language. First, narrative discourse is appropriate for the investigation of children's language beyond the boundaries of single utterance in naturalistic speech or of isolated sentences in structured elicitations. Second, narratives are a universal type of discourse, familiar to children raised in oral as well as literate cultures (Bavin, 2004). Third, they share variegated range of numerous sub-genres, fictive (romance, mystery, etc.) and veridical (autobiography, history, etc.).

Since the present study takes narrative functions rather than linguistic forms as the departure for analysis, reference to participants in a story, by means of nominal constructions like lexical NPs and pronouns, common nouns, personal pronouns, indefinite articles, and propositional phrase are taken into consideration.

The term 'reference' serves the meaning of relating to entities mentioned in a piece of discourse (Berman, 2009). Linguistically, reference can be realized by lexical noun phrases, proper nouns, common nouns and complex noun phrases with adjectives, propositional phrases and/or relative clauses, and also by personal or lexical substitution (Berman, 2009). Reference deals with the links between words and objects or events in the world. In discourse, reference deals with the links between words (or phrases) and other words (or phrases) in discourse (Berman, 2009). In other words, reference is a semantic relation whereby information needed for the interpretation of one item is found elsewhere in the text. Reference creating in a discourse has also other functions as developing *contextuality* and closer binding of individual utterances in a piece of discourse.

In order for interlocutors to understand who are or what is being talked about as the narrative proceeds, these characters need to be suitably introduced as new participants in the story, re-referenced to by maintaining reference to them, or marked by shifting reference to other participants (Berman, 2009). Referring expressions consist of 'cohesive ties' (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) that serve to link utterances together in a text.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Research Questions**

The present study addresses the following research questions:

1. Is there a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *Lexical noun Phrases*?
2. Is there a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *Common Nouns*?
3. Is there a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *personal pronouns*?

4. Is there a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *indefinite articles*?

5. Is there a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *propositional phrases*?

Following research procedures, the following null hypotheses are presented and then evaluated against the obtained data from research subjects:

HO 1. There is not a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *Lexical noun Phrases*.

HO 2. There is not a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *Common Nouns*.

HO 3. There is not a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *personal pronouns*.

HO 4. There is not a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *indefinite articles*.

HO 5. There is not a significance difference in the mean of male group and female group in the use of reference terms in terms of *propositional phrases*.

### B. Instruments

For the purpose of the data collection, a pedagogical task was used. The task illustrated four different pictures in a chronological order. The students had to tell a story based on the pictures. The task required the participants to refer to people and things in the story. Hence, the Participants had to refer to different objects and people and different roles assigned to the characters in the story. (See, appendix).

### C. Participants

The participants recruited for the purpose of the present study were 40 learners who enrolled in a university undergraduate second semester. They were 20 male and 20 female students aged between 21 and 26 (mean=22.5). They had Turkish and Kurdish as their first language and had already learned Persian as their second language. They had exposure to English language instruction as calls Focus on Forms for seven successive years at school. They only had been at the exposure of English communicative skills for two successive semesters at university.

### D. Procedure

In performing the pedagogic task, participants sat at a table looking at the picture. No other people, apart from each participant and the researcher were present. And the data collection was conducted in a quiet room **in the second office** at university. Having gathered personal information and achieving rapport with the participants, the researcher told them about the demands of the task and the participants performed the specified task in monologic condition. Apart from age and first language background, no personal information was sought. Each participant was given up to five minutes to do the required task. The whole procedure of task performance was audiotaped and the process of transcribing and coding and analyzing the collected data were done through using personal computer.

## III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

As Table 1 shows, as far as the use of the 'lexical noun phrase' is concerned, the mean for the male group is 9.85, whereas, the mean of this category for female group is 7.40. With respect to the use of 'common noun', the mean of the male group is 2.45, while the mean for the female group is 7.15. For 'personal pronouns', the mean of male is 10.40 while the mean of female is 12.70. For 'indefinite articles', the mean of male group is .75 whilst the mean of the female group in this category is 2.00. As far as the use of 'propositional phrase' is considered, the mean for male group is .90, while this is 4.00 for the female group.

TABLE 1.  
GROUP STATISTICS FOR COMPARING MALE AND FEMALE GROUPS IN THE USE OF REFERENCE TERMS

Category	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lexical noun Phrase	male	20	9.85	3.528	.789
	Female	20	7.40	2.683	.600
Common noun	male	20	2.45	1.234	.276
	female	20	7.15	2.368	.530
Personal pronounce	male	20	10.40	2.741	.613
	female	20	12.70	4.194	.938
Indefinite article	male	20	.75	1.164	.260
	female	20	2.00	1.864	.417
Propositional Phrase	male	20	.90	.718	.161
	female	20	4.00	2.428	.543

Using the data in table 2, the following results can be concluded:

1. The null hypothesis stating that the means of male group is not significantly different from the mean of female group in the use of 'lexical noun phrases' is rejected since the amount of  $t$  at the level of ( $p = .05$ ) and ( $df=38$ ) is significant.

2. For the second category ('common nouns'), the amount of  $t$  at the level of ( $p = .05$ ) is also statistically significant, thus the null hypothesis stating that that the means of male group is not significantly different from the mean of female group in the use of common nouns is rejected.

3. For the third category ('personal pronouns'), the amount of  $t$  at the level of ( $p = .05$ ) and ( $df=38$ ) is statistically significant, too. Thus the null hypothesis stating that that the means of male group is not significantly different from the mean of female group in the use of 'personal pronouns' is rejected.

4. For the fourth category ('indefinite articles'), the amount of  $t$  at the level of ( $p = .05$ ) and ( $df=38$ ) is statistically significant, thus the null hypothesis stating that that the means of male group is not significantly different from the mean of female group in the use of 'indefinite articles' is rejected, too.

5. As far as the last category ('propositional phrases') is concerned, the amount of  $t$  at the level of ( $p = .05$ ) and ( $df=38$ ) is statistically significant, thus the null hypothesis stating that that the means of male group is not significantly different from the mean of female group in the use of 'propositional phrases' is also rejected.

TABLE 2.  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR COMPARING REFERENCE TERMS IN MALE AND FEMALE GROUPS

	t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Lexical noun Phrase	2.472	38	.018	2.450	.991	.443	4.457
	2.472	35.468	.018	2.450	.991	.439	4.461
Common noun	-7.871	38	.000	-4.700	.597	-5.909	-3.491
	-7.871	28.615	.000	-4.700	.597	-5.922	-3.478
Personal pronounce	-2.053	38	.047	-2.300	1.120	-4.568	-.032
	-2.053	32.730	.048	-2.300	1.120	-4.580	-.020
Indefinite article	-2.544	38	.015	-1.250	.491	-2.245	-.255
	-2.544	31.867	.016	-1.250	.491	-2.251	-.249
Propositional Phrase	-5.476	38	.000	-3.100	.566	-4.246	-1.954
	-5.476	22.300	.000	-3.100	.566	-4.273	-1.927

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The present study showed that the language second language learners use to refer to things and people in their speech is significantly different for male and female groups. In this study, we operationalized *reference terms* in the forms of employing *lexical noun phrases*, *common nouns*, *personal pronouns*, *indefinite articles*, and *propositional phrases*. The findings of the study are in line with (Brownlow, Rosamon, & Parker, 2003; Colley et al., 2004) in that the language produced by men is different from the language uttered by women.

It is suggested that other studies can employ other ways to operationalize using the reference terms on the part of L2 speakers. The present study employed one type of task to elicit L2 production; other studies are called to investigate different task types with different linguistic or discourse orientation to collect data on gender- prompted variation L2 production. Further studies are also required to investigate different dimensions of discourse-embedded L2 production especially with respect to narratives. Finally, because of the prevalence of narratives in language production, other studies can investigate certain features of narratives and their contribution to interlanguage development.

## APPENDIX



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# The Effects of Film Appreciation on Improving the Students' Intercultural Communication Competence

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**Abstract**—With the global economic integration and the increasing exchanges between the outside world and China, effective communication becomes an important topic in intercultural communication. Foreign language education is not merely the teaching of language, and it should cultivate students' intercultural communication competence in different cultural backgrounds, which becomes the new objective of current foreign language education. Film is the microcosm of a nation's cultural life, so it is an important way to learn a nation's cultural background. Therefore, film appreciation lesson is an important way for culture teaching and at the same time shows the authentic English, which makes it superior in cultivating students' intercultural communication competence.

**Index Terms**—intercultural communication competence, language teaching, culture teaching, film, film appreciation lesson

## I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization creates a world in which people of different cultural backgrounds have more chances to communicate with each other. As English is now the world's most widespread language existing and functioning as a world language, the intellectuals who can conduct intercultural communication with fluent English are badly in need. However, under the current educational system, most students cannot reach the average communication level after their six years' learning of English. The first reason is the currently prevailing grammar-translation pedagogy. The second reason is lacking intercultural communication awareness. They regard passing various kinds of tests as their only goal. However, the final goal of English teaching should be cultivating intercultural communication competence of students. As Brooks proposes, in today's world, to learn a language only for its linguistic sake is not enough nor is it completely possible, for language in nature is a means of communication (Brooks, 1997). So how to improve students' intercultural communication competence becomes very important.

Through the unique form of dynamic pictures, films can show a lot of things vividly to the audiences, and it can effectively give the students intercultural experience without the costs of time to visit the countries and cultures. Applying films in classroom teaching can gradually make them understand target language and the culture of that country and at the same time improve their overall comprehension of English, so as to improve their intercultural communication competence finally. This paper aims to explore the effects of English film appreciation on improving the intercultural communication competence of the English language learners in China.

## II. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

### A. The Definition of Intercultural Communication Competence

Intercultural communication competence has been conceptualized in various ways. It varies according to the researcher's theoretical orientation or specific sample being studied. In the past twenty years, there has been a growing consensus on the conceptualization. As a reflection of this consensus and purpose of this essay, we choose the definition which is proposed by William B. Gudykunst (2007): "intercultural communication competence involves the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures" (p.192). According to him, there are four implications entailed in this conceptualization. They are different cultures, effectively and appropriately, to interact, knowledge, motivation and skills. Competent intercultural communication requires all these three components. These three components can be learned through education, experience and guided practice. So this gives hints to teachers about the specific ways to develop students' intercultural communication competence. They can refer to them as guidelines and objectives when designing a lesson.

It is worth mentioning that the culture here not only include the target culture and learners' native culture, which we

have mentioned in the previous chapter, but also other cultures, because intercultural communication competence is a flexible communication competence which takes the learning, exchanging, reflecting and experiencing between the target language, target culture and learners' native language and native culture as the channel and at the same time takes into account the characteristics of other cultures. It is ability for people from different cultures around the world to conduct effective communication. If foreign language teaching rules out other cultures, it is bound to cause learners to linger between target culture and learners' native culture and ignore the existence of other cultures, which is not good for the cultivation of intercultural communication competence. Although because of time and energy constraints, it is impossible for the learners to learn and experience various cultural systems at the same time, to some extent, learning some characteristics of other cultures is feasible. It can be done through the choosing of teaching materials and designing of teaching methods.

Of course, it is not an easy job to combine language and culture in foreign language teaching. Expansion of teaching content and unfamiliarization with teaching objectives will make it hard for less-experienced teachers. So, it is necessary for the teachers to have discussions before class to find an appropriate way and design it meticulously.

#### *B. The Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence*

The ultimate goal of English teaching is to cultivate intellects with intercultural communication competence. However, for a long time, the scholars, whether in traditional linguistics, structural linguistics, or transformational generative linguistics, all think that language itself is the research object in language study. Thus, traditional foreign language teaching falls into a mistake to cultivate students' pure language competence. Though the students can make grammatically-correct sentences and bear the ability for reading comprehension, they can't conduct effective communication. Communication competence is reflected not only in the correctness of grammar but also in the social appropriateness of speech act, so the improvement of communication competence requires the students to understand the culture system which language reflects, and adjust their cognitive schemata and reference frame through the comparison of target culture and their own culture. Only concerning about language symbols and language form is clearly meaningless. Therefore, to improve intercultural communication competence, the best way is to combine culture teaching and language teaching together.

### III. FILM APPRECIATION AS A TEACHING TOOL TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

#### *A. The Characteristics of Film*

Film is probably the most challenging cultural product for language teaching. It is designed to appeal most directly and fully to students' emotions. The unique characteristics of film create an experience that often goes beyond what we can experience in reality, and it also adds to communication power. Champoux (1999) summarizes the characteristics of film which give it unbeatable power as a teaching tool.

1. Close-up shots: shows a viewer something that might go unnoticed with ordinary vision.

2. Long shots: let a viewer see an image unavailable to ordinary humane vision.

3. Focusing techniques: show a physical reality as seen by humane eye or show it in a different way. It can be divided into deep focus and soft focus.

Deep focus: refers to having all parts of a scene in focus from the nearest object to the farthest. This focusing method duplicates the way a humane would see a scene.

Soft focus: keeps the objects nearest the viewer in focus and puts objects farther away out of focus. This method emphasizes one part of a scene and de-emphasizes another. A director can control the emotional delivery of a scene to get a viewer response.

4. Film editing: puts a series of images together in a unique sequence intended to have specific effects on the viewer. The resulting stream of images creates a viewer experience that transcends simply recording physical reality.

5. Sound: sound includes dialogue and music.

Dialogue: the delivery of dialogue adds to the drama, humor, or satire of a scene.

Music: music can be divided into composed music and music taken from other sources.

Composed music: gives desired effects to the cinematic experience through deliberate control in tempo, loudness, and color. These effects include emotion, emphasis of specific scenes, anticipation of coming events, and hints of an off-screen character.

Music taken from other sources: often has meaning for viewer from earlier exposure to the music; lets a director use borrowed music as a satirical device or emphasize meaning to certain film theme.

6. Special effects: a film making tool that brings enhancement.

These unique characteristics contribute to the power of the film, though we seldom realize that because we often watch a film just for entertainment. The teachers can take advantage of these characteristics to let the students better understand a film when using film as a teaching tool in class.

#### *B. The Advantages of Using Film Appreciation as a Teaching Tool to Improve Students' Intercultural Communication Competence*

Film appreciation is an important means to help improve students' comprehensive ability of vision, hearing, speaking

and writing. It can stimulate students' interest in learning, achieve context-oriented teaching and incorporate language learning and culture learning. It provides a possibility for the students to conduct study to their own interest and characteristics.

Jane Sherman(2003) summarize 6 advantages of using authentic video in language teaching with explanations for each, which is also fit for film appreciation lesson for film is no doubt one kind of authentic video.

For its own sake: people want access to English language world.

For comprehension of the spoken language: video brings us all kinds of voices in all kinds of situations, with full contextual back-up.

As a language model: authentic video provides a vast up-to-date linguistic resource of accents, vocabulary, grammar and syntax, and all kinds of discourse, which shows us language in most of its uses and contexts-something neither course book nor classroom can do.

For culture: video is a window on English-language culture.

As a stimulus or input: video can be used for discussions, for writing assignments, as input for projects or the study of other subjects.

As a moving picture book: video gives access to things, places, people, events and behavior, regardless of the language used, and is worth thousands of picture dictionaries and magazines.

We can see that it is difficult to fulfill this range of functions except by living in an English-speaking country- an opportunity that most learners do not have. Film helps to substitute for this experience; it brings the English-language world to the learners. Jane Sherman's summary also lets us better understand why film appreciation is a good tool to improve intercultural communication competence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the best way to cultivate intercultural communication competence is to incorporate language teaching and culture teaching. Film is this kind of authentic video that can combine these two aspects.

### C. *Possible Problems*

For teachers

On mindset. Due to the characteristics of the profession as a teacher, experience plays an important role in teaching; however, it is experience that often hinders the application of new teaching ideas and education techniques. Because some teachers have engaged in teaching for many years and they are used to traditional teaching methods, they may feel hard to handle the application of multimedia in class. And some teachers may have resistance for they think there is no need to spend a lot of money and energy to learn the same knowledge that traditional teaching method can offer. This will affect their enthusiasm of using multimedia, thereby affecting the range of the application of it, as a result, the advantages of using multimedia in teaching cannot be truly reflected.

On media manipulation. The multimedia class is characterized by various kinds of multimedia, which requires a reasonable and timely combination by the teachers. Some teachers may have no idea about what to do when facing these multimedia, and therefore they cannot use them effectively, which will fail to optimize the effect of multimedia.

On teaching forms and teaching methods. Due to the traditional teaching forms and teaching methods, some teachers regard film appreciation lesson as an adjunct to traditional teaching, and they do not deep study the teaching methods of film appreciation lesson, not to mention to appropriately select multimedia and accurately implement, thus impossible to jump out of the routine of the traditional teaching methods.

For the students

On learning attitude. Students are the core of the classroom, and film appreciation will finally be applied to the students, thus the attitude of the students on film appreciation lesson will directly affect the outcome. The attitudes of the students can be generally divided into two kinds. The first is that the students are interested in film appreciation and benefit from it, thus they will accept it consciously. The second is that the students are interested in the equipment and think it's very fun, but this curiosity will disappear overtime, thus affecting teaching effects.

## IV. EARLY-STAGE PREPARATIONS

As there are many problems existing in the implementation of film appreciation lesson, the teachers must make good preparations before class.

### A. *Clarification of Teaching Purpose*

China's rapid economic development requires more and more talents who can communicate well in English; as a result, the ultimate goal of English teaching turns into cultivating intellects with intercultural communication ability. Film appreciation lesson, as a language practice course, aims at raising students' listening and speaking level and cultivating their communication ability in English through providing a more authentic language environment and language training opportunities. However, in order to adapt to social development, to meet the needs of the times, film appreciation lesson should also develop students' reading and writing skills as well. So the specific teaching purposes of film appreciation lesson are summarized as follows:

1. To enable students to learn some language skills, some slang and some oral expressions, which will benefit their spoken English.

2. To enhance students' listening ability through some listening practices of the film.
3. To develop students' reading and writing ability through after-class reading and writing as well as some exercises.
4. To enable students to realize cultural differences between target culture and their own culture, and by discovering the target culture's differences, deepening the understanding of their own culture, thus grasping characteristics of each culture. During the discovering process of differences, common ground mustn't be neglected.
5. To develop students' intercultural awareness and communication ability dealing with cultural differences by watching and discussing the films and some flexible classroom activities, like role-play and content repeating etc.

#### *B. Analysis of Teaching Objects*

Through six years of English learning in middle and senior school, university students have already had some basic knowledge of English language, which set up the basic premise of film appreciation lesson. But as the students are still in the development stage, their characters are neither stable nor mature, they are less able to focus and have low capacity to judge what is right and what is wrong, they are easy to feel tired and distracted after long-time listening training. It is psychological characteristics, personality characteristics and language skills that determine the teaching methods and choice of the film.

#### *C. Selection of Films*

There is no doubt that film is not perfect and not all the films are fit for classroom. The teachers should take in consideration of many aspects, like the content of the film, difficulty level etc. Because watching a film that students don't understand or they are not interested in is a very negative experience. So the teachers should know what factors will hinder comprehension and try to minimize them by choosing an appropriate film.

Jane Sherman (2003) summarizes some factors which hinder comprehension of a film:

High verbal density, i.e. a lot of speech with very little action, Words which don't match the action, e.g. in smart dinner-table conversation; words which are in conflict with the action or are an ironic commentary on it.

A high degree of naturalism in the speech, e.g. everyone talking at once, mumbled asides, actors with their backs to the camera, in consequential dialogue.

Cartoons-mouths, faces and body language are not as expressive as those of real people.

Dialect and regional accents-local color in the film generally means local confusion in the viewer.

Period language, e.g. Shakespeare remains difficult in spite of some wonderful adaptations; however, in film adaptations of classic novels, clear drama-school enunciation often triumphs over archaic language.

So when choosing a film, teachers should avoid the film that have these disadvantages. In the author's opinion, selecting a film should adhere to the following principles:

##### *1. Pertinence*

Select different film according to different teaching objectives. There are various kinds of English films, but not all the films are suitable for English learning and the improving of intercultural communication competence. Teachers should select the film according to the students' English level. In most English films, the characters are changeable, and people's voice tone, speed and sound quality are quite different, which are difficult to understand. So the films the teachers choose should be relatively simple in language and relatively slow in speech rate. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous chapter, culture teaching in an important way to improve intercultural communication competence, so the film chosen should bear abundant cultural characteristics. Of course, a film can only reflect some aspects of a certain culture, and few films are particularly made to reflect a specific culture. It is very hard or almost impossible for the teachers to find a film that has all useful segments reflecting culture. The teachers should choose the film which highlights the culture that meets pedagogical needs.

##### *2. Ideological content*

Young college students are plastic, and their thoughts are unstable which are receptive to new ideas. Therefore, the material selected should be healthy, praise the good and the beautiful, and praise justice, peace and progress. Evoke emotion and sympathy of the students through life-like images so that they can consciously accept aesthetic edification, ideological and moral education.

##### *3. Scientificity*

In terms of the access to information and the characteristics of teaching progress, teachers should pay particular attention to the language, the amount of information and length of the film. In the film selected, the language should reach basic standards, speech rate moderate and linguistic information abundant, linguistic signals clear and have less dialect and slang. Meanwhile, it is better to do without Chinese subtitles, or the students can understand the film through the screen actions and subtitles, which will fail to train the students' language skills. If the voice signal is weak and background noisy, students will have difficulty in acquiring information and it is hard for film appreciation lesson to achieve good teaching effect. If there are too much dialect and slang which the students don't understand in the film, they will fail to obtain language knowledge. So the film selected must be rich in linguistic information, clear in voice signal and appropriate for learners.

Besides, after each class, teachers should inquire students about the film so that they can get the feedback in time. They can ask the students whether they understand the film, whether they are interested in it and whether they learn something etc. Therefore, they can learn from it and make better choice next time.

## V. CONCLUSION

Though the teaching and learning effects of film appreciation lesson have not been fully tried and tested in the classroom yet, the author explains how film appreciation lesson improves learners' intercultural communication competence theoretically. Film appreciation lesson has rich theoretical basis and obvious superiority, but it cannot reach the intended purpose if there is no scientific design and careful implementation. So the teachers should make a good preparations before class.

The author thinks that the value and potential of film appreciation lesson should be fully exploited for foreign language study. Though it is a challenging job for both teachers and students, the author believes it will have a prosperous future if more efforts are made.

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# EFL Reading Comprehension Textbooks at University Level: A Critical Thinking Perspective

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**Abstract**—In line with the studies in EFL/ESL contexts confirming the positive relationship between critical thinking ability and reading comprehension, this study intended to investigate how frequently critical thinking is used in EFL Reading Comprehension textbooks at university level in Iran. The study investigated the course books used in order to understand to what extent critical thinking is advocated in such books. To this end, all question types in general and Critical Reading Questions (CRQs), Vocabulary In Context (VIC), Literal Comprehension (LC), and Extended Reasoning (ER), in particular were identified. The focus of the study was on ER questions, leading to critical thinking. The reason was that the crucial problem of the students lies in textually implicit information of the texts, that is, ER questions. To classify the questions for CRQs, Peterson's (2008) model was employed, and to specify critical thinking question types, a framework proposed by Academic Skills Unit (2008) was used as reference. To collect the data entirely, the researcher identified the total number of percentages of frequencies of questions related to the passages in the course books of Reading Comprehension I, II and III. The findings seem to indicate high attention to critical thinking within the objectives of the questions of their course books and the authors of the passages.

**Index Terms**—critical thinking, EFL reading comprehension textbooks, Iranian university level, Peterson's 2008 Model and Academic Skills Unit (2008) Framework

## I. INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking seems to be one of the noticeable issues in education during the recent decades. Critical thinking skills figure prominently among the goals for education, whether one asks developers of curricula, educational researchers, parents, or employers (Beyer, 1985). Problem-finding can be a good opportunity to share whatever all of the students and their teachers know not only in math, physics and other sciences but also in language learning.

A number of different strategies have been used for language learning. Critical thinking has been viewed as a useful strategy. Generally speaking, critical thinking in reading turns to an issue which pertains to the present study: an investigation of EFL reading comprehension textbooks at university level from a critical thinking perspective. Given that learning a new language demands flexibility and higher-order thinking skills (Liaw, 2007), critical thinking can contribute to their academic success.

Today, making students more conscious of and responsible for their own knowledge and thought is highly emphasized. The textbook plays an important role in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom where it provides the primary form of linguistic input (Kim and Hall, 2002). Nowadays, EFL/ESL researchers have paid attention to critical thinking as a process in developing reading skill. For the students to make sense out of the written text, their interaction with the text is required. For this interaction, Nist and Mealey (1991) believe that metacognition in reading tasks is the most influential.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The reading skill plays a significant role in language learning classes. Language learners read the texts to understand not only unknown words but also the meaning of the whole sentence. But this is not the only aim of reading the passages. It is expected especially from the higher level students to go beyond the sentences, that is, get the intended meanings of the writers.

However, each passage has certainly hidden ideas and messages which should not be ignored. To consider this matter, Schooten and Gloppe (2003) state that the focus of many studies has changed from the writer of the text to the reader or the interaction between reader and text. To improve the students' ability to reason demands "finding information that is not directly stated in the passage" (Peterson's, 2008, P.124). Clearly, the more emphasis is on learners and learning also "the processes through which learning takes place" (Oxford, 2001). Rubinstein and Firstenberg, Lochhead and Whimby, and Wood (1987) have proposed a solution to deal with this problem. They recommend that better thinking

should be taught explicitly for transfer across academic domains.

In this respect, a number of investigations have been conducted on the relationship between critical thinking and the reading ability of university students. These studies aim at having better language learning or more success in EFL contexts. The main reason for the present research stems from the fact that the notion of critical thinking and reading comprehension as well as their relationship with second language learning is considered to be important and recent matter in Iran. The researcher attempts to the feasibility of helping Iranian academic EFL students to become more critical readers through inferring the intended meaning of the text.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTION

This study investigated the different kinds of Critical Reading Questions, CRQs, in three course books of Reading Comprehension I, II and III.

To meet this objective, the following research question was formulated. \_To what extent do the questions of ELT reading comprehension textbooks at the university in Iran follow the objectives of such texts concerning critical thinking?

### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent trends within the domain of reading comprehension have led to an increasing emphasis on the role of problem-solving techniques that supposedly enable students to identify, clarify, evaluate and solve perplexities that arise in reading (Waters, 2006). In this respect, various definitions of critical thinking and its significance in educational system, language learning especially reading skill which is the focus of this study have been proposed.

#### A. Definitions of Critical Thinking

In the 1980s, there was an outburst of interest in critical thinking (Dam, Vloman, and Wardekker, 2004). Many researchers have attempted to offer satisfactory definitions of critical thinking. Regarding diverse definitions of critical thinking, Beyer (1985) states that nearly all emphasize the ability and tendency together, evaluate and use information effectively. The emergence of these different definitions is due to its cognitive nature in which critical thinking is seen as an "ongoing activity" (Canagarajah, 2002, p. 101).

Critical thinking is defined as a cognitive ability compounded with multiple skills such as identifying, understanding, and analyzing an issue by deploying inferences using top-down and bottom-up strategies to validate the reliability of claims and arguments. (Pithers and Soden, 2000). Gabennesch (2006) puts it in this way: "Critical thinking is the use of rational skills, worldviews, and values to get as close as possible to the truth" (pp. 36-41).

In the same vein, Liaw (2007) defines critical thinking as something which "involves the use of information, experience, and world knowledge in ways which allow [EFL students] to seek alternatives, make inferences, pose questions, and solve problems, thereby signaling understanding in a variety of complex ways" (p. 51).

Finally, Rubenfeld and scheffer (2010) consider critical thinking the metaphorical bridge between information and action. They mention three reasons that "this bridge is invisible from one perception into something visible from a new perspective" (p. 26). These authors think that critical thinking is tangible, very individual, and requires effort today not tomorrow.

#### B. Components of Critical Thinking

To McPeck (1981, as cited in Simpson, 2002) critical thinking involves both a propensity and skill. It would appear that the affective and the cognitive domains of reasoning play significant roles to be a critical thinker. Recognizing McPeck's work, Simpson (2002) has developed the idea that these two components can be shaped as: "(i) the context of discovery and (ii) the context of justification" (p. 7).

The website of ASME PPC Online summarized a range of ideas referring to the components of critical thinking. As its authors argue, the eight components that have been identified as part of the critical thinking process include:

1. Perception: refers to the way we receive and translate our experiences.
2. Assumption: underlie the ideas, beliefs, values, and actions that others and we take.
3. Emotion: separates humans from machines and the lower animals.
4. Language: carries the content and structures the form of the entire thinking process.
5. Argument: is simply a claim, used to persuade others that something is (or is not) true and should (or should not) be done.
6. Fallacy: is an incorrect pattern of reasoning.
7. Logic: Induction and deduction are two different processes of logical reasoning with different levels of conclusiveness.
8. Problem Solving: Solving "logic" problems is like solving any problem that we encounter or identify in life.

#### C. Educational Significance of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking has attracted the attention of educators over the past decades. The significance of critical thinking in education and particularly higher education is now acknowledged by a large number of educators. Schafersman (1991)

asserts that all education must involve not only "what to think", but also "how to think". Students should be assisted in engaging in a type of thinking that is reflective, reasonable and directed on what to believe or do (Ennis, 1962, as cited in Simpson, 2002).

Academically successful learners possess problem-solving, analytical, and critical thinking skills (De Boo, 1999; Gardner and Jewler, 2000). In the same domain, Constructivists, like cognitive psychologist, look at learning as a perception process, resulted from experience, and believe that executives of lesson plans should provide a situation that students, via reasoning debates which facilitate and accelerate interaction and analysis action, do critical thinking (Zahorik, 1995). Hence, critical thinking is a necessary skill in promoting the students' thoughts.

Finally, Moon (2008) asserts that critical thinking and its relationship to the educational process has become a central issue and it is time to explore the term. She adds since critical thinking is a process which is involved in any research activity; it can be considered as a principal concept to education, especially at higher levels. In fact, it is a fundamental goal of learning.

#### *D. Critical Thinking Significance in Language Learning*

Clearly, language and thought are closely related. Language permits thoughts to be represented in our minds, helping us reason, plan, remember, and communicate. It is communication that gets all the press when we talk about language, but there are also questions to be asked about whether the language we use causes us to think in a certain way (Huddleston and Pullum, 2005). It is strongly believed that higher-order thinking skills especially critical thinking should be an integral part of L2 curriculum to foster language proficiency of the EFL/ESL learners (Davidson, 1998; Chamot, 1995 as cited in Liaw, 2007).

The aim for critical language awareness in an educational context is what Van Lier and Corson (1997) state: "to achieve some critical distance on familiar practices in order to better understand the unfamiliar – to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar in ethnographic terms" (p. 245). Learning to think critically can produce enthusiastic language learners. Marshall and Rowland (1998) describe how critical thinking produces "joy, release, relief, and exhilaration as we break through to new ways of looking at our personal, work, and political worlds" (p. 34). Alan and Stoller (2005) stress that, to best facilitate learning of language, content and real-life skills, projects "require a combination of teacher guidance, teacher feedback, students engagements, and elaborated tasks with some degree of challenge" (p. 11).

#### *E. Critical Thinking in Reading*

Rivers (1981) elaborates that "a reading is a most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language" (p. 259). The ability to read is the most stable and durable of the second language modalities (Bernhardt, 1991). In language teaching, reading is recognized as an activity that engages students more actively with materials in the target language and encourages a deeper processing of it, since it is considered to be a communicative process which conveys meaning from writer's to the reader's mind (Nuttall, 1996).

Researchers have reported that college students with lower verbal ability were able to identify individual words and facts but were unable to combine the information in the text with the previously acquired information (Baker, 1985). This inability to integrate ideas was accompanied by an inability to draw logical inferences and the inability to check ideas while reading to see if the ideas contradicted one another (Baker, 1985). Brown and Day (1983) reported that Junior college students and college students were unable to summarize, select the topic sentence, and invent a topic sentence if it was implied, or write a synopsis of a paragraph in the absence of explicitly stated topic sentence.

The primary goal of the reading tasks in many studies is to further develop and clarify interpretation of the text, and to help students remember what they have individually created in their minds from the text (Phan, 2006; Willingham, 2006). "Reading is not merely a receptive process of picking up information from the page in a word-by-word manner" (Grabe, 1991, p. 1). Rather, it is a selective process and characterized as an active process of comprehending. The degree by which a passage or text is understood is called reading comprehension (Pakhare, 2007; Phan, 2006).

In this respect, McNamara (2007) also contends that Reading Thinking "(RT) is a well-validated approach to improving students' comprehension and self-monitoring skills through an apprenticeship model of learning" (p. 425). He asserts that "The teacher and students engage in an instructional dialogue about the text, constructing their understanding of the text as they apply several strategies: predicting, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying" (p. 425).

Further, with active reading tasks, readers encourage to voice their own opinions about the text and discuss those opinions with other students and the teacher. Another advantage of such tasks is that they contextualize reading, that is, they allow the readers to see the text as part of a broader social context that includes the writer and the readers (Tomitch, 2000). In addition, "students who have effective reading strategies can engage in higher thinking skills about texts and their relations to those texts" (National Reading Panel, 2000 cited in Hernández-Laboy, 2009, p. 4).

From Paul and Elder's (2006) viewpoint, to read well requires one to develop one's thinking about reading and, as a result, to learn how to engage in the process of what we call close reading. Their viewpoint deals with the active use of intellectual skills. They recommend that Students not only need to learn how to determine whether a text is worth reading, but also how to take ownership of a text's important ideas (when it contains them).



### F. Role of Materials

Sweet and Snow (2003) consider the process of extracting and constructing meaning from text as reading comprehension on which three interactive elements impact: the reader, the text, and the context. Thus, in helping learners to be better readers one is material or whatever they read. Johnson and Johnson (1998) claim "...interest is not independent of the text, and if the text does not meet readers' expectations (for example, if it is too long) then interest will diminish" (p.132). Tomlinson (2001) explains that the study of materials development was not given any real importance until the 1990s when books on this subject started to be published.

In selecting materials from foreign countries, teachers should be sensitive to decide whatever the use in the classroom. As Bishop, Bishop and Gentile (2009) state: "Students are best motivated to use and practice their skills with material that is interesting and relates to something that really want to learn" (p. 128). "The subject matter must relate to the world, to students' own position and that of others, and to students' opportunities to influence this position" (Dam and Volman, 2004, p. 373). Textbooks play a vital role in many language classrooms and after teachers they are considered to be the next important factor in the second/foreign language classrooms (Riazi, 2003).

In this way, Flippo and Carerly (2008) hold that: "clear distinction has to be made in terms of the shift from reading didactic college textbooks to trade books whose main role is to provoke argumentation at various levels, so that students arrive at personally as well as contextually defined understandings and conclusions regarding the material" (p. 27).

One strategy that can benefit language learning is taking a thoughtful approach to material development. This is especially true for the EFL context, where the classroom is often the only source of English, and materials "play a crucial role in exposing learners to the language" (Dudley-Evans and St. John 1998, p. 171). "Many sources have an ideological bias, especially the "think tanks." You need to read their statements about their philosophy and also check other sources to make sure you are not getting a one-sided point of view." (Burke, 1988, rev. 2003, p. 4).

Huckin (1997) emphasizes the importance of assigning reading material that pertains to a subject and culture with which students are familiar. Such material can often be found in English-language newspapers and magazines that deal with topics of local interests. From Moorman and Ram's (1994) point of view, "stories offer many opportunities for creative reading" (p. 646).

To accomplish certain goals of textbooks on critical reading, Kurland (2000) elaborates that these texts commonly ask students to:

- recognize an author's purpose.
- understand tone and persuasive elements.
- recognize bias.

"One response to the overwhelming amount of material found in modern introductory textbooks is to emphasize process over content by trying to shape critical thinking in students taking their first psychology course" (Benjamin, Brewer and Hebl, 2000, p. 25). By process, they focus "to improve critical thinking skills in students, to send them out of [the] class as a more sophisticated processor of information as a worker, employer, spouse, parent, television viewer, medical patient, newspaper reader, and so forth" (p. 25).

Regarding the critical thinking basis for test use in subject matter, Yeh (2001) believes:

A valid test item might present source material containing data, evidence or examples, perhaps with conflicting views about how to interpret, synthesize, analyze, or evaluate the material, and ask respondents to construct a strong argument or select the strongest argument that also addresses important counterarguments (p.14).

Such a test would aim encouraging behaviors on the part of administrators, teachers, and students that encourage the learning of desirable critical thinking skills (Frederiksen and Collins, 1989). In the same vein, Messick (1989) argues that a systemically valid test leads to good educational practices and worthwhile learning; a systemically invalid test leads to ineffective or corrupt educational practices.

Of a broad critical literacy education for twenty-first century, Wallace (2003) has proposed: "Texts were drawn from a wide range of community sources: letters through the mail, advertisement, poster taken from billboard political manifests, travel brochures and newspaper material of various kinds" (p. 106). He added that in making practical choices relating to syllabus content, cultural and ideological factors are implicated as well as linguistic difficulty and it is teacher's role to decide on the use of these books and put them into text sets.

Willson and Binker (1993) also illuminated the point that:

Everywhere there are systems inherent in subject matter, networks of logically ordered parts functioning in relation to each other for a definite human purpose. Critical thinking, with its *system-unlocking orientation*, is the perfect set of tools to take command of the systems inherent in subject matter (p. 34).

"To become competent language users and learners, students must develop knowledge and understanding of different texts and how these are influenced by context (purpose, audience, channel of communication and content)" (Mawter, 2007, p. 5). Accordingly, this author emphasizes on thinking critically about a wide range of spoken, written, graphic, and performance texts and comes to conclude that "students will learn how language functions and how texts reflect and shape social attitudes and structures" (p. 5).

Choosing material should be taken into account to find, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information. Such information from "a credible and unbiased source is increasingly essential in the modern world, whether it is found in a book, on a CD-ROM, or online. Informational literacy is an important part of critical thinking, which is the ability to

judge the authenticity, accuracy, and worth of information" (Montte, Sullivan, and DeJong, 2010, p. 495). For college students, they have promulgated "reference librarians are useful long after those years to help find and analyze information about social issues or personal problems and to help people keep current in their chosen fields of endeavor" (p. 495).

"Even the addition of a sort "critical thinking exercise" to be completed at the end of each class enhances critical thinking development and allows the students to practice analysis of ideas presented, values and attitudes revealed, and self-reflection" (Masters, 2005, p. 88). In this case, she has paid particular attention to dividing the class into groups and points out small group analysis instead of individualized critical thinking can be developed to increase team consensus with more emphasis on critical thinking.

## V. RESEARCH METHOD

### A. Research Design

In this type of research method, written materials were analyzed for the purpose of identifying Critical Reading Questions. Using a coding scheme, all units from above-mentioned course books were chosen in terms of the objectives of the questions concerning critical thinking.

### B. Materials

The materials of the current study were three textbooks of Reading Comprehension courses I, II, III. The course books named '**Communicative Reading Skills**' by Akbar Mirhassani and Mohammad Alavi (2008) for Reading comprehension I, '**Effective Reading**', for advanced students, by Simon Greenall and Michael Swan (1988) for Reading comprehension II, and '**Active Book 4**' by Neil j. Anderson (2001) for Reading comprehension III. These books were taught in one of the universities in Isfahan. These course books provide some reading passages from authentic sources as well as preceding and following exercises to involve learners in the activities. All the three textbooks do not follow a similar pattern.

### C. Coding Scheme and Analysis Procedures

Carefully studying the definitions of Peterson's 2008 model and the guidelines laid down by Academic Skills Unit (2008), the researcher adopted the above-mentioned expanded definition in counting the frequency of critical reading questions in the present study. In other words, Vocabulary-In-Context (VIC) questions test the learners' ability to define difficult and unfamiliar words and Literal Comprehension (LC), questions usually address information which can be found directly in the passage. In Extended Reasoning (ER) questions, learners have the opportunity to react, for example, by simply making an inference and combining story or context clues with what they already know to find unstated information. Hence, the last type of questions permits students to foster the application of critical thinking.

Following the above-mentioned categorization, the data were subjected to a detailed analysis. In so doing, the researcher adopted a frame work for critical thinking which has been suggested by Academic Skills Unit (2008). In this framework there are a number of guidelines to become better critical thinkers. The following are taken from Academic Skills Unit (2008) as examples of each category:

**.Clarity:** could you elaborate further on that point? Could you express that point in another way? Could you give an illustration?

**. Accuracy:** Is that really true? How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true?

**. Precision:** Could you give more details? Could you be more specific?

**. Relevance:** How is that connected to the question? How does that bear on the issue?

**. Depth:** How does your answer address the complexities in the question? How are you taking into account the problems in the question?

**. Breadth:** Do you need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this question? What would this look like from a conservative standpoint?

**. Logic:** Does this really make sense? Does that follow from what you said?

(ASU, 2008, pp. 112-113).

The rationale behind such selections of model and framework was their comprehensiveness and being recent. The results are presented in the following section. The data for this study which were mainly questions and exercises related to the passages were first codified. This study was a qualitative type of research; however, some quantitative analysis was done for computing the frequency of each type of CRQs in Peterson's 2008 Model.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Initially, descriptive statistics were carried out for reading comprehension questions involved in this study. The results are reported in the following tables. The questions were divided into three types: Vocabulary In Context (VIC), Literal Comprehension (LC) and Extended Reasoning (ER). The following tables present the number of frequencies and percentages of all CRQs which were found in the afore-mentioned books. F and P were used to show frequency and percentage respectively.

TABLE 1:  
TYPES OF CRITICAL READING QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES IN THE COURSE BOOK OF READING COMPREHENSION I

Exercises	VIC		LC		ER	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
Discussion Questions	-	-	-	-	39	22.41%
Reading Questions	-	-	-	-	23	13.21%
How well did you Read?	-	-	25	14.36%	-	-
Understanding Organization	-	-	-	-	2	.14%
Scanning fr Details	-	-	3	1.72%	-	-
Figure It Out	6	3.44%	-	-	-	-
Making Inferences	-	-	-	-	2	1.14%
Making Predictions	-	-	-	-	2	1.14%
Reading the Articles	-	-	1	0.57%	-	-
Understanding the Article	-	-	-	-	2	1.14%
Application of Information	-	-	2	1.14%	3	1.72%
Building Vocabulary Skills	1	0.57%	-	-	-	-
Using Abbreviation	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Just For Fun	1	0.57%	2	1.14	4	2.28%
Oral Reports	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Reader's Journal	-	-	-	-	8	4.59%
Interpreting The Article	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Identifying Main Idea	-	-	2	1.14%	5	2.87%
Examining Effects	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Examining Solutions	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Recalling Information	-	-	2	1.14%	-	-
Understanding the Interview	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Informal Language	1	0.57%	-	-	-	-
Understanding The Structure	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Distinguishing Fact From Opinion	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Distinguishing Main Ideas From Supporting Points	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Comprehension Check	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Locating Information	-	-	1	0.57%	-	-
Synonyms	2	1.14%	-	-	-	-
Writing Titles	-	-	-	-	5	2.87%
Proverbs	-	-	-	-	2	1.14%
Recognizing Main Ideas	-	-	-	-	2	1.14%
Summarizing	-	-	-	-	4	2.29%
Previewing	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Understanding Point of View	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Idioms	1	0.57%	-	-	-	-
Matching	-	-	1	0.57%	-	-
Finding Support For Main Ideas	-	-	-	-	3	1.72%
Expanding Vocabulary	4	2.29%	-	-	-	-
Encyclopedia Article	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Read and React	-	-	-	-	1	0.57%
Total	16	9.1%	39	22.3%	120	68.6%

The overall number of different types of CRQs indicated that in this book there were 120 (69.68 %) ER questions, 39 (22.45%) LC and 16 (9.15%) VIC. ER questions were more frequently than LC and VIC questions in this course book.

Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of CRQs in the course book which have been taught in all Reading Comprehension course II.

TABLE 2:  
TYPES OF CRITICAL READING QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES IN THE COURSE BOOK OF READING COMPREHENSION 2

Types of CRQs Exercises	VIC		LC		ER	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
Extracting Main Ideas	-	-	2	0.98%	27	13.23%
Reading for Specific Information	-	-	9	4.41%	-	-
Understanding Text Organization	-	-	-	-	20	9.80%
Predicting	-	-	-	-	13	6.37%
Checking Comprehension	-	-	6	2.94%	3	1.47%
Infering	-	-	-	-	24	11.76%
Dealing with Unfamiliar Words	27	13.23%	-	-	-	-
Linking Ideas	-	-	-	-	10	4.90%
Understanding Complex Sentences	-	-	4	1.96%	4	1.96%
Understanding Writer's Style	-	-	-	-	15	7.35%
Evaluating the Text	-	-	-	-	9	4.41%
Reacting to the Text	-	-	-	-	4	1.96%
Writing Summaries	-	-	-	-	27	13.23%
Total	27	13.2%	21	10.3%	156	76.5%

The data in Table 2 show that there were 156 (76.44%) ER questions, 21 (10.29%) LC and 27 (13.13%) VIC. The difference of the number of frequencies of CRQs is statistically significant. It means that the highest percentage belongs to ER questions.

Table 3 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of different types of CRQs in the course book of Reading Comprehension III.

TABLE 3:  
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF CRQs IN THE COURSE BOOK OF READING COMPREHENSION III

Types of CRQs Exercises	VIC		LC		ER	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
Discussion Questions	-	-	-	-	12	25%
Skimming for Content	-	-	12	25%	-	-
Checking Understanding	-	-	12	25%	-	-
Critical Thinking	-	-	-	-	12	25%
Total	-	-	24	50%	24	50%

As depicted in Table 3, there were no questions of VIC. 50% LC and ER questions were identified respectively in this course book.

The number of Critical Reading Questions in course books of Reading Comprehension I and II represent a substantial discrepancy in the frequency of CRQs. With regard to the proportion of different types of CRQs in the above-mentioned course books, the frequencies of ER are remarkably higher than that of VIC and LC Questions. Results in Reading comprehension III revealed a statistically equal number of frequencies of LC and ER questions. The format of the questions in all units of these textbooks are to large extent the same. Qualitative findings are presented in the following section to interpret and justify the findings on the frequency of CRQs type based on the question objectives of the textbooks.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

To address the research question all the exercises of the afore-mentioned course books were considered. The objective was to see to what extent these books advocate critical thinking. Tables 1 and 2 show that the numbers of ER questions were very high in contrast to other types of CRQs in the course books. It is in accord with what Peterson's (2008) argues, "most of the critical reading questions involve extended reasoning" (p. 119). Such evidence may prove that the exercises or questions of those course books can be regarded as useful means to promote critical thinking. In the textbook of Reading Comprehension III, since some vocabulary items followed by explanations written after each unit, no VIC questions were included in the book. It also provides the students with proper and fruitful exercises which foster the application of ER questions. According to Table 3, by means of 50 percent LC questions and 50 percent ER questions, the students are able to communicate and interact with their teacher and other students at the higher level. Clearly, literal comprehension influences reading comprehension. In this connection, Adams and Patterson (2007) claim that it is the most basic level of understanding, providing the foundation for the development of the higher level, namely, critical comprehension.

Seemingly, students especially college students as higher level thinkers are very much in need of invoking critical thinking in the ever-changing world. Concerning reading skills, the students should be helped to improve their skills in understanding details and specific information. Critical thinking activities at different levels of language proficiency in English language classrooms can increase learners' current level of thinking and simultaneously grasp the main meaning of the text (Waters, 2006).

Finally, it is hoped that the findings related to critical thinking and language learning will encourage the well-planned instruction of critical thinking and problem solving in EFL contexts. Solving problems, evaluating what has been read, and integrating understanding with knowledge of the world are considered as the various goals of reading (McPeck, 1991).

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# Action Research on Motivation in English Reading

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**Abstract**—The study of motivation has been a long time and has developed into a range of theories in which varieties of factor are involved in. By introducing the definition of motivation, and its classification and analyzing the function of motivation in language learning, this paper is attempt to survey some strategies and methods about how to motivate and train learning motivation in English reading class. The data reveals that Female learners have strong motivation in intrinsic, extrinsic and importance of reading. But in reading efficacy, male learners are stronger than female learners. The result also indicates that students with higher score have strong motivation in learning English reading than students with lower score.

**Index Terms**—reading, motivation theories, questionnaire, motivational strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is almost universally believed that a successfully language learner has usually highly motivated. The study of motivation has been a long time and has developed into a range of theories in which varieties of factor are involved in. However, this study intends to investigate what affects students' learning motivation and attitudes in English reading class. Research on reading motivation has focused upon several attributes of motivation. The dimensions of motivation have been examined in relation to why students choose to engage or not in reading because of competency and efficacy beliefs, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and reasons for achievement which direct their motivation toward reading (Baker & Wigfield, 1999).

Reading has gradually been getting popularity as one of the most effective strategies for motivating second language learners at various proficiency levels. Many experts have emphasized the importance of setting reading in foreign language curricula (Krashen, 1982), and a lot of studies have shown the effectiveness of reading in contexts of English or other languages as a second language and as a foreign language. These experts have asserted that reading plays an important role in developing fluent L2 readers because learners develop the ability to rapidly read large quantities of written material without using dictionaries. According to Smith, learners can learn to read by reading. Some studies also indicate that reading can favorably affect students' motivation and attitudes toward reading in an L2.

## II. MOTIVATION

### A. Definition of Motivation

The term 'motivation' presents a real mystery: people use it widely in a variety of everyday and professional contexts without the slightest hint of there being a problem with its meaning, and most of us would agree that it denotes something of high importance. In general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalised and successfully or unsuccessfully acted out (Dornyei and Otto, 1998). Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior.

Motives are usually construed as relatively general needs or desires that energize people to initiate purposeful action sequences. In contrast, goals and related strategies tend to be more specific and to be used to explain the direction and quality of action sequences in particular situations. In the classroom context, the concept of student motivation is used to explain the degree to which students invest attention and effort in various pursuits, which may or may not be the ones desired by their teachers. Students' motivation is rooted in students' subjective experiences, especially those connected to their willingness to engage in lessons and learning activities and their reasons for doing so.

### B. The Classification of Motivation

Many of the current theories of second language motivation come from the early work of Gardner and Lambert. They are the first to make a distinction between integrative motivation and instrumental motivation and this has a tremendous influence on virtually all second language related research in this area. However, different researchers have different opinions, because they are standing on different angles, they give motivation different classification. Other researchers such as Krashen, Giles and Brynes, Clement, and Allard and Landry have attacked the problem from different

perspectives.

### C. *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation*

Intrinsic motivation is usually defined as motivation which is guided by an interest in the task itself in which one is engaged, it means the motivation to learn the language derives from an inner desire and competence, whereas extrinsic motivation is for the sake of extrinsic rewards, such as parental or teacher's approval, offer of a reward, prizes, threat of punishment, a good grade, etc.

The distinction is more useful for teachers. Intrinsic motivation refers to the urge to engage in the learning activity for its own sake and extrinsic motivation is derived from external incentives. Penny Ur stated that both of the motivations have an important part to play in classroom motivation, and both are at least partially accessible to teacher influence.

Therefore, intrinsic motivation comes from one's inner parts whereas extrinsic motivation results from outer factors such as social situations, cultural influence, as well as families and educational conditions. For instance, compliments from parents and encouragement from teachers are sometimes the vital factors to a student. Crookes and Schmidt's suggestion is especially useful in three ways. 1) Reading materials should be moderately challenging, neither too difficult nor too easy. 2) Group work is more important than teachers' mono-lecture. 3) The teacher should in the first place take learners' need into consideration.

In spite of the fact that different researchers come to different conclusions concerning the definition and the division of motivation, one thing is possibly certain, most researchers agree that motivated learners will achieve more than less motivated ones.

### D. *Reading and Motivation*

Before turning to the "what" of reading, however, I would like to comment briefly on the even more fundamental question—from the teacher's point of view, at least—of why people choose, or don't choose, to read. For any approach to teaching to succeed, no matter how true to the latest "scientific principles," it must take into account the real needs and desires of learners — that rather loosely defined cluster of goals, inclinations, and biases which we call "motivation" — and we must therefore give some thought to what motivates people to read, or not to read, anything. In the real world — as opposed to the academic world — people who read, read for intellectual profit or pleasure. That is, they believe that the content of whatever they have chosen to read will be useful to them, or will help them to understand the world better, or will give them the special kind of pleasure that comes from the experience of reading literature. For students, of course, there are constraints, called "assignments," on this freedom of choice, but even a secondary, academic goal like "passing the course" provides something like a real-world motivation for reading. Very few students read just to practice their reading, or to build up their general knowledge of a language — both objectives worth pursuing but an ongoing reading experiences. Teachers take the role of active participant and model reader, lending prestige, example, and support to the activity. The individual, private nature of reading also makes it easier for teachers to establish a non-competitive, non-judgemental community of readers. Fear of evaluation by teacher and peers is minimized because the emphasis is not on a right answer, but on students' personal reactions to the reading material. The individual variation inherent in any teaching and learning situation can also be provided to, for a reading approach does not deal with students in a lockstep manner in which all learners have to read the same material at approximately the same rate.

## III. QUESTIONNAIRE OF READING MOTIVATION

### A. *Instrument and Subjects*

The questionnaire was adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which included 39 statements on motivation concerning intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, importance of reading and reading efficacy. The questionnaire was designed according to the Likert five-point rating scale assessing participants' attitudes on motivation. Each question has five choices ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" which is represented in the number from 1 to 5. Likert's measurement table is applied in order to give subjects a chance to be in the middle point of the balance. The subjects were told that there is no "right" or "wrong" answer to the questions and were asked to choose the answer which was most appropriate to his or her opinions.

The subjects for the study were 156 non-English major undergraduates who are randomly chosen from grade two in a certain university in Northwest. Among which there are 129 female subjects (occupies 83%) while 27 subjects are male (occupies 17%). They had English reading classes both intensive and extensive and have mostly got rid of the influence of the previous education like junior and senior high school and are accustomed to the college curriculum. They have been studying English for at least 8 years and have formed a set of relatively fixed learning patterns, especially in English reading. For the fact that the subjects use the same version of English reading course-books and have the same teaching hours each week, so, theoretically, the subjects' English reading levels are nearly the same.

### B. *Procedures*

The investigation could be roughly divided into three periods. The first period could be called pre-investigation period, since the writer did a lot of interviews beforehand in order to make the questionnaire suitable to the subjects'



case. In the second period, the questionnaire was done separately concerning L2 learners' general motivation in reading. The last period was mainly on statistical collection and tests results analyses.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

##### A. Introduction

The data analysis was performed with SPSS 11.0 of two parts. First, a factor analysis was conducted to explore motivation types. Second, MANOVA was carried out to examine whether these features had significant effects on various types of motivation in English reading. For better illustration and easier statistical description of the data, the result of the investigation of English learners' general motivation in reading will be shown in the following tables.

In this chapter, the writer is going to study motivation in reading among foreign language learners as non-English majors. First of all, an investigation will be carried out to look into the students' general motivation in reading. That is to see whether they have strong or weak motivation in English reading. Another investigation will be concerned with students' motivation orientation. The purpose is to find out whether students' are more instrumental oriented or more enjoy oriented. This investigation also reveals the subjects' general motivation from a different aspect. The investigation over students' reading proficiency may reveal some connection between students' reading motivation and their performance in reading comprehension tests.

##### B. Data Collection and Analysis

TABLE 4.1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE AVERAGE MEANS OF MOTIVATION QUESTIONS

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Means	3.20	4.50	2.77	2.35	4.03	2.77	2.20	4.15	3.72	2.33
	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Means	3.41	3.92	3.11	3.58	3.67	3.72	2.91	2.00	2.31	2.18
	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
Means	3.10	2.39	2.31	2.70	3.19	3.75	3.72	4.28	4.19	4.10
	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40
Means	4.19	4.24	2.97	2.10	2.89	3.36	3.20	3.03	2.85	2.60

Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the average means of the total 39 questions. The subjects are asked to answer 39 statements concerning four categories related to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic Motivation, and importance of reading and reading efficacy.

TABLE 5.2  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE AVERAGE MEANS OF MOTIVATION QUESTIONS

36Motivation	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
intrinsic	20	2.00	4.50	3.1415	.75726
extrinsic	9	2.31	4.28	3.2922	.73749
importance	5	2.10	4.24	3.5200	.95166
efficacy	6	2.60	3.36	2.9883	.26992

Table 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics of the average means of the total 39 questions. The subjects are asked to answer 39 statements concerning four categories related to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and importance of reading and reading efficacy.

TABLE 4.3  
SHOWS THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF LEARNERS' GENERAL MOTIVATION IN READING

36Motivation	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
intrinsic	20	2.00	4.50	3.1415	.75726
extrinsic	9	2.31	4.28	3.2922	.73749
importance	5	2.10	4.24	3.5200	.95166
efficacy	6	2.60	3.36	2.9883	.26992

It reveals that there are some differences among the four categories of motivation in this study. The mean of importance of reading (mean = 3.5200) is higher than the other three categories (intrinsic mean = 3.1415; extrinsic mean = 3.2922; efficacy mean = 2.9883). And the differences are significant. That is to say, most students think reading is very important in learning a foreign language. This result is likely to represent the importance of learning to read in English as an international language. From this table, it is obvious that the differences of stand deviation among the four categories are also significant. The standard deviation of reading efficacy (.26992) is much lower than intrinsic (.75726), extrinsic (.73749) and importance of reading (.95166). This result shows that most subjects put reading efficacy in a very important position in English learning.

TABLE 4.4  
MOTIVATIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS

Motivation	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	Number
intrinsic	female	3.1616	.24283	129
	male	3.0500	.30224	27
	total	3.1423	.25654	156
extrinsic	female	3.2997	.37925	129
	male	3.2510	.39025	27
	total	3.2913	.38039	156
importance	female	3.5225	.27985	129
	male	3.5158	.37317	27
	total	3.5218	.29671	156
	female	2.9765	.49849	129

Table 4.4 shows the motivational differences between male and female learners. It reveals that there are some significant differences between male students and female students. From table 6, we can see female students' mean is higher than male students in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and importance of reading, while male students' efficacy mean is high than female (male = 3.0617, female = 2.9765). And the standard deviation is the same. That is to say, female learners have strong motivation in intrinsic, extrinsic and importance of reading. But in reading efficacy, male learners are stronger than female learners.

TABLE 4.5  
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	23.965	4	5.991	440446	.000
Intercept	3727.463	1	3727.436	27652.253	.000
Motivation	23.930	3	7.977	59.175	.000
Gender	3.494E-02	1	3.494E-02	.259	.611
Error	83.439	619	.135		
Total	6644.473	624			
Corrected Total	107.404	623			

a R Square = .223 (Adjusted R Squared = .218)

Table 5.4 shows the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects related to gender. From this table, we can see that the degree of freedom (df) of motivation is 3, the value of F is 59.175 ( $p < 0.05$ ). And the degree of freedom (df) of gender is 1, the value of F is .259 ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Besides questionnaire also shows both students in higher score group and lower score group think English reading is very important in learning a foreign language. The influence of extrinsic motivation lies in the second position for both groups, and then comes intrinsic motivation. Both the two groups regard that reading efficacy has little influence on their motivation in English reading. For each of the four factors, students from the higher score group are much stronger than students from the lower score group. This indicates that students with higher score have strong motivation in learning English reading than students with lower score. So it is clear that the results of students' reading tests will be greatly influenced by their leaning motivation.

## V. MAJOR FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

### A. *Major Findings*

As a dynamic process, motivation is one of the most important aspects of affecting foreign language learning, and it is also one of the most initiative factors and a complex area involving many interrelated factors. If one has high motivation, especially integrative and intrinsic motivation, he or she has more chances to succeed in learning. After a series of statistical analyses of the correlation between the reading proficiency and the motivation, conclusions are reached here:

1. The majority of the English students have a strong motivation towards English reading;
2. Female students show a stronger intrinsic and extrinsic motivation than male students, which indicates that gender is a very important variable in English learning;
3. The correlation between general motivation and reading is significant;
4. The correlation between students with higher score and lower score is significant.

Therefore, in foreign language teaching, firstly, language teachers should motivate and train integrative and intrinsic motivation. To those learners who are lacking in motivation, teachers could not hurry too much. Teachers should give them initiative feedback for their endeavor and stimulate their extrinsic motivation in order to let them enjoy learning. And teachers should become familiar with the motivation theories and the valuable contributions of different theorists as well as the implications of these theories in English language teaching. In the process of this stage, their intrinsic motivation can be stimulated and improved. Secondly, it is advisable that teachers know the motivational factors, learners' attitudes towards English learning, their learning motivation and success or failure attributions. Thirdly, it is important for the teachers to search for the teaching strategies to create a supportive and relaxing learning environment, initiate students' motivation to learn, enhance and maintain their motivation, and make positive attribution and evaluation in language learning. Once learners have strong learning motivation, they would put their potentials into practice as possible as they can, the learning efficiency will be naturally improved at high speed.

### B. *Approaches to Train Students' Motivation in Reading*

From most linguists' point of view, the important thing is not how much that learners should be taught, but that learners should be given the motivation to learn. Many successful teaching depends upon learners' learning strategies. There is no point in providing entertaining, lively, well-constructed language lessons if students do not have the motivation to learn. So motivation is regarded as one of the most important factors in influencing learners' learning efficiency and it has been proved to have great educational significance. In China, a real fact is that English is a foreign language and many students lack natural acquisition environment. Teachers' role is quite important for learning activities that mainly happen in the classroom. Experienced English teachers concern themselves with motivation and one of the persistent challenges for them is how to motivate the unmotivated learners and help reduce their negative attitudes toward English learning.

The above mentioned study has proved that students' motivational level is strongly influenced by learners' attitude and many motivational factors. These factors function together to influence learners' motivational behavior. Learners with different features in these attitudes and motivational variables have different motivational behavior. Related to the findings of the study, the key of motivating students to learn lies in enhancing their motivational level through changing their psychological states and cognitive orientations relevant to motivation.

1. Create a harmonious and natural teaching environment

Though students' attitudes to language learning and teaching materials are relatively stable, some of them are prone to be influenced by their teachers and learning environment. Their attitudes towards the learning situations as measured by feelings about the classroom teachers and level of anxiety about the classroom atmosphere contribute to their motivational level. So the factors of teachers and input environment deserve our attention. Some specific proposals are as follows:

2. Improve the comprehensive qualities of teachers

According to the above research result, there are significant motivational differences between those who think highly of their teachers and those who do not. So teachers must:

3. Set themselves as good examples that have not only specialized knowledge and generalized multiple skills but moral integrity as well for students. They should make efforts to establish friendly and harmonious relationship with students.

4. Have professionally appropriate level of knowledge and some awareness soft he appropriate means for carrying out needed analyses related to language, language variations, the students, and the goals and contexts of language instruction. With such awareness and professional skills, teachers are better equipped to make students become aware of significant features and patterns; plan and implement language instruction which promotes a variety of participation opportunities for practicing the language; control the learners' intensity of exposure and instruction in reading; ensure them to receive feedback about their performance and multiple possibilities for success.

5. Effective teaching and classroom management are inseparable. Teachers should be not only perfect in English but also good at managing the class. What they say and do in the instructional setting must aim at creating the conditions conducive for learning to occur. Exemplary teachers seek to arrange learning experiences in a way that each student experiences success for demonstrated progress and receives positive reinforcement for achievement. Teachers should

perform as seriously or sympathetically accordingly so as to let students keep the balance between experiencing success for achievement and encountering challenge for students' mental stimulation.

### C. *Make Efforts to Create a Natural Learning Environment*

Besides the qualities of the teachers, motivation in English learning process has much to do with learning environment. We can't always make a sharp distinction between natural learning and learning in the classroom. Since most Chinese students lack the natural environment, teachers should attempt to provide more communicative opportunities in the classroom for them and make the classroom environment be as similar as possible to the natural environment. Some methods are suggested here:

1. English should be used throughout the class to make students have thorough exposure to English context.
2. Provide as many opportunities as possible for students to practice English in various forms. The multiple forms include activities in whole class, in small groups or in pairs.
3. The combination of skills should be used. The combination of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is the most effective skill activity. The teaching materials are not only in print, but also audio and visual. Multi-media should be applied when the facilities are available.

### D. *Cultivate the Proper Degree Sense of Anxiety*

The overall classroom socio-emotional climate created by effective teachers is one characterized as positive and productive. In other words, a harmonious and co-operative classroom atmosphere may also have a similar supportive effect. But a commonly existent phenomenon is that the LEFL classroom can easily generate situations where learners feel overanxious and constrained, and such over-anxiety is an obstacle to the learning process. Students may have difficulty relating to others and presenting themselves adequately, even the attempts to do so may result in misunderstanding and the feeling that they project silly, boring images and thus become withdrawn. For these students, the techniques that help them deal with and reduce the sense of over-anxiety include:

1. In accordance with individuals' present proficiency in English, set different standards for different students.
2. Provide tasks of immediate difficulty that are within the reach of students but still offer some challenge in case they feel overburdened or over relaxed.
3. Provide easier tasks for students who are discouraged because of low or failing grades to help them regain the sense of achievement. The students' self-efficacy may be enhanced in this way so that they have less anxiety about their ability and show themselves bravely before the class with confidence.
4. Make them realize everyone has his advantages and disadvantages. It's quite common to receive positive or negative evaluation at different times. We should try to stimulate the classroom atmosphere to lighten students' anxiety.

### E. *Stimulate Students' Interest in LEFL*

One of the meanings of motivation for teachers is probably the interest that generates in the students. Motivation can also take the form of intrinsic interest in learning activities and, as such, may be easily influenced by teachers. But interest is dynamic in nature. It is something that varies from one moment to the next depending on the learning context or task. It thus requires teachers to stimulate students' interest in LEFL both in class and after class. The concrete strategies are as follows:

### F. *Strengthen Cultural Instruction in Class*

We have talked about integrative and instrumental motivations which both contribute to success above. Though instrumental motivation is the main kind among Chinese students, a sense of integration does improve students' performance in class. It's meaningful to cultivate their sense of integration through the cultural instruction of target language countries. For example, use teaching aids to make the teaching of English more effective and efficient. Teachers may collect objects and pictures which display foreign arts, customs and then show them to students. Foreign films, slides and TV programs provide cultural insights and a variety of welcome classroom activities, the regular show of which helps students know their dressing, food, housing, transportation and others more vividly.

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# Left or Right Hemisphere? A Novel Answer to the Old Question of Lateralization by Introducing IRL (Individualistic Relativistic Lateralization)

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**Abstract**—Although lateralization for language functions gives the sheer authority of language centers and control to the left hemisphere, there is a strong debate among the specialists regarding which hemisphere has the responsibility for language. There is not a complete meeting ground among the scholars on the roles of each hemisphere in language processes either. The recent studies including the advanced technologies such as neuroimaging, Positron-emission Tomography (PET) and functional MRI come up with contradictory findings that do not support the long time claim of left hemisphere dominance. Generally, this paper aims at finding a novel answer to the old question of lateralization in language acquisition. More particularly, first it attempts to review the latest researches to see the role of left and right hemispheres in language processes. Second, it introduces a novel version of lateralization as IRL (Individualistic Relativistic Lateralization) that rejects the notion of "left-brain only" and "right-brain only" person and functioning and accordingly rejects also the absolute generalizeable perspective to lateralization and localization.

**Index Terms**—left hemisphere, right hemisphere, lateralization, IRL

The history of the role of brain in language learning is as old as ancient times. In Ahlsen's (2006), the first reference to the brain as the center of language dates back to 3500 BC and crystallization of all probing into knowing the brain as such a center in neurolinguistics theories emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when neurolinguistics is introduced by Broca's (1861) theory that language is located in the left hemisphere. Neurolinguistics studies the relation of language and communication to different aspects of brain function. It tries to know how the brain understands and produces language and communication. According to Ahlsen (2006), it is also an interdisciplinary field with the fields of linguistics, neuroanatomy, neurology, philosophy, psychology, speech pathology, and computer science reflecting on it which all make the field rather immense and mighty. Kopke (2004) defines it as the relation of language and communication to different aspects of brain function, that is, it attempts to explore how the brain comprehends and produces language and communication. In fact, neurolinguistics tries to combine theory from neurology/ neurophysiology (how the brain is structured and how it functions) with linguistic theory (how language is structured and how it functions). According to Kopke (2004), neurolinguistics is a branch of Cognitive Neuroscience that, on its turn, together with Systemic, Movement, Sensory and Cellular, is a branch of a larger domain named the Neurosciences.

There have been different attempts by both language specialists and neurologists for over a century to understand how the brain learns, stores, and processes language but it proved to be a demanding onerous task because there are no animals that have symbol systems as rich as language. Therefore, for a long time, information about how the brain processed language could only come from the study of the effects on language of neurological disease in pathologies caused by various forms of brain injury. The high complexity of the brain and its functions on one hand and the complexity of the language itself and its functions on the other hand have led to different views about the relation between brain and language. Ahlsen (2006), for instance, refers to five views that are introduced in brief as follows:

**Localism:** This view tries to locate different centers in the brain which are responsible for different language functions and claims that they are mostly located in the cortex (Ahlsen, 2006) which are either two or more equally important parts for a function or a part is super ordinate to other parts regarding a function. Localists like Broca and Gall define aphasia as trauma to a language function center.

**Associationism:** This view situates language functions in connections of different areas of the brain's cortex. Thus based on this view, Ahlsen (2006) defines aphasia as a broken connection between the centers needed for a language function. Among the supporters of this view are Wernicke and Geschwind.

**Dynamic localization of function:** it assumes that functional systems of localized subfunctions perform language functions. Such systems are dynamic, and thus they can be reorganized during language development or after brain damage.

*Holistic*: it views language functions as handled by differing parts of the brain working together. According to Ahlsen (2006), holism is the opinion that the brain works as a whole, at least to accomplish higher functions. The cortex is said to handle, for example, higher cognitive functions, symbolic thinking, intelligence or abstraction. To advocates of holism, who are also called cognitivists, aphasia is a sign of general cognitive loss, not a specific language loss.

*Evolution-based*: this refers to those theories that deal with language and brain evolution over time and consider the difference between children's and adults' performances on language functions.

"*Unitarism and Equipotentiality*" is another view discussed by Jacyna (1999). According to Jacyna (1999), "unitarism" refers to one unitary function of the brain, the view that the soul is one and cannot be divided, and "equipotentiality", means that all parts of the cortex have the same functional potential and that the size of a brain lesion determines the extent of the aphasia.

As a hot topic in neurolinguistics, lateralization has received a lot of attention in the literature. For example, Richards and Schmidt (2002) define lateralization as "the development of control over different functions in different parts of the brain" (p.68). Pinker (1994) also defines lateralization as the most striking anatomical characteristic of the human brain by which it is divided into two hemispheres, so that it has two of almost every structure: one on the left side and one on the right. He goes on to say that these paired structures are not exactly symmetrical and differ in their size, form, and function. As the brain develops, it is thought that different bodily functions (e.g. speech, hearing, sensations, actions) are gradually brought under the control of different areas of the brain. According to Lust (2006), recent investigations have focused on brain function in normal subjects while they perform tasks that involve language. Language lateralization which is also known as the Cerebral Functional Asymmetry, according to Paradis (1985), refers to the condition wherein one hemisphere rather than the other is relatively more active during performing a specific task. Although some scholars have considered left-hemisphere as the key organ in the process of language acquisition, the observations made during a great deal of studies have resulted in the view that the right hemisphere is necessary for language processing and that trauma to this side of the brain could result in severe linguistic discrepancies. The two most lateralized functions in the human brain are motor control and language. When a function is lateralized, this often means that one side of the brain exerts more control over this function than what the other does. The side that exerts more control is often called the "dominant hemisphere" for this function.

The curious search for the question "What is the "dominant" hemisphere for language?" was first answered by Broca (1861) who considered "left hemisphere" involving in speaking. Broca (1861), a French neurosurgeon, examined the brain of a recently deceased patient who had an unusual disorder. He studied several other patients, all of whom had language deficits along with lesions in their left frontal hemisphere. Accordingly, he concludes that the left hemisphere controls speaking. Ten years later, Wernicke, a German neurologist, discovered another part of the brain, this one involved in understanding language, in the posterior portion of the left temporal lobe.

Unlike Broca's and Wernicke's assertion on the left hemisphere dominance, there are some who believe otherwise. For instance, Paradis (1990) emphasizes the role of right hemisphere in L1 acquisition. Ellis (2008) also cites Albert and Obler's (1978) suggesting that bilinguals show a major right hemisphere contribution as well. Ahlsen (2006) also reports the right hemisphere as more involved in L2 processing than in L1 processing. Zatorre (1989) refers to a number of studies that point out the greater involvement of the right hemisphere in bilinguals than in monolinguals too.

The advent and use of advanced technologies such as neuroimaging, Positron-emission Tomography (PET) and functional MRI in neurolinguistic studies have revealed some other facts that support right hemisphere involvement in language functions. For instance, Dehaene et al. (1997) are among those that Birdsong (2006) cites to report such right hemisphere activation through Positron-emission Tomography (PET) and functional MRI studies. Recently, a lot of research has been done using neuroimaging techniques which have provided a great deal of insight into the neural representation of second languages. Kim, Relkin, and Hirsch (1997, cited in Birdsong, 2006) also conclude that the native and second languages show different patterns of neural activation for subjects who had acquired proficiency in the L2 after 10 years of age, whereas the patterns are comparable in childhood bilinguals. The results of this study are interesting in that they show neural evidence that L2 acquisition in adults differs greatly than that in children. Accordingly, it is understood that a lot of research has been done to shed light on the neural processes involved in the brain in acquiring L1 and L2.

The old belief of "left hemisphere dominance" and localization is also under the question in L2 and bilingual studies (e.g. Ahlsen, 2006; Ellis, 2008; Paradi, 2004; Zatorre, 1989). Many researchers have dealt with this issue interested in finding out whether there is any possible different cerebral organization for each language in the people who know two languages. Grosjean (1989) presents two views about bilingualism-the monolingual or fractional view which holds that the bilingual is two monolinguals in one person, and the bilingual or holistic view which states that the coexistence of two languages in the bilingual has produced a unique and specific speaker-hearer. Grosjean (1985) maintains that the monolingual view of bilingualism has created some negative consequences. The first is that bilinguals (which we define as those people who use two or more languages in their everyday lives) have usually been described and evaluated in terms of the fluency and balance they have in their two languages. A second consequence of the monolingual view is that language skills in bilinguals have almost always been appraised in terms of monolingual standards. The tests used with bilinguals are often quite simply the tests employed with the monolinguals of the two corresponding language groups. As another negative consequence of the monolingual view, we can refer to the point that bilinguals rarely

evaluate their language competencies as adequate. They often consider and encourage the monolingual view and, as a result, criticize their own language competence. They criticize the lateralization discussion into which hemisphere handles which language because they see it as very simplistic. They reject L2-specific areas of activation mentioning that different languages involve different circuits but in the same language areas of the brain. Hull (2003) states that the right hemisphere is responsible for the control of semantic and pragmatic aspects of language. Obler (cited in Henningsen, 2002) shows some evidence for right hemisphere participation in early stages of first and second language acquisition. The right side of brain is more visual and processes intuitively, holistically, and randomly. These investigations have led to interesting and sometimes differing results. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that more caution should be taken before confirming the existence of difference between the neural representation of the L1 and L2 and if so the causes of such differences have to be accounted for through meticulous research.

Herrmann (1990) draws on the work of Sperry and developed the theory of brain dominance where people develop a dominant mode of thinking preference. These can range from an analytical "left brain" approach to "right brain" approaches involving pattern matching and intuitive understanding. These preferences have their roots in our genetic makeup and how it affects our underlying cognitive capabilities. As we develop we tend to respond with our strongest abilities as these lead to quicker short-term rewards. This can create a positive feedback system that will strengthen those abilities. Eventually this can lead to a powerful preference for one style over the other and a dislike and discomfort for other modes of thinking.

There are also reservations regarding the correlation between handedness and language lateralization. It has been reported that such a correlation does exist, but it is not perfect. In the vast majority of right-handed people, language abilities are localized in the left hemisphere. But contrary to what you might expect, the opposite is not true among left-handed people, for whom the picture is less clear. Many left-handed people show a specialization for language in the left hemisphere, but some show one in the right, while for still others, both hemispheres contribute just about equally to language.

The controversy also exists about the correlation between sex and lateralization. It was believed that women were more left hemisphere bounded than men but in a meta-analysis, Voyger (1996), for example, evaluated the results of monolingual and bilingual studies of lateralization in regard to sex differences as an independent variable influencing laterality. He came to the conclusion that sex-dependent laterality was most noticeable in the visual and auditory modalities. He found that men showed generally more left hemisphere lateralization than women.

The literature also reports an ongoing debate among the specialists regarding the relationship between lateralization and the critical period. Lennenberg (1967) believes that brain lateralization is complete at puberty and this is the major reason for the difficulty of post-adolescent language acquisitions. His idea of the coincidence of puberty (the end of the critical age) and the completion of lateralization has been challenged by many including Krashen (1973) who believes the process to be completed well before puberty. Several scholars have suggested "*Multiple Critical Periods*" saying that since the different components of language- phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and pragmatics are acquired relatively independently of each other, their development might follow different timetables, pointing to the possible existence of multiple critical periods for a person. Knudson (2004, cited in Dornyei, 2009) argues that language depends on a wide range of specialized sensory, motor, and cognitive skills that involve many neural networks and structures, and they are shaped differently by experience. It is generally assumed in the linguistic community that children learn second languages more easily and quickly than adults. This difference in ability has been traced back to the existence of "sensitive (or critical) period," which ends at around 8-10 years of age. It is thought that the pre-mature brain has a higher degree of neural plasticity than the post-mature brain and that this directly relates to the neural bases of second language acquisition. However, there is great disagreement about the extent to which adult second language learners are inhibited due to these neural differences.

There has been much interest in the similarity or differences of brain processes in L1 and L2 acquisition. Since the brain is assumed to be modular, there has been debate about whether there are separate modules for the L1 and L2. As Ellis (2008) states if there is a specific faculty for the language, then the neurobiological basis is the same for the acquisition of these two processes. But if not, it must be assumed that they are different.

Another area of debate lies in the differences between lateralization in acquisition of a second language and that of the first language acquisition. Given that the human brain continues to develop until puberty, they propose that a language that is acquired after brain maturation is complete, may show different neural mediation than that characterizing the language acquired while the brain is still developing. They have tried to trace the differences in second language laterality. Albert and Obler's (1978 cited in Ellis, 2008) study suggests that a bilingual brain has a different organization for L2 than L1. Galloway (1980 cited in Ellis, 2008) reports that 98% of aphasia in monolinguals is due to left hemisphere injuries and just 2% to right hemisphere injuries where the same ratio in bilinguals changes to be 85% and 15%. Albert and Obler's (cited in Ellis, 2008, p. 744) early work on hemispheric differentiation indicated that bilinguals were less hemispheric dominant than monolinguals. But this idea has been much criticized by researchers like Paradis (cited in Ellis, 2008) who came to the conclusion that both the L1 and the L2 are served by the same language areas but involve different circuits within these areas.



The complexity of the issue increases when the studies show that a couple of potential moderating factors affect the nature of cerebral lateralization such as Sex, Task Demands and Complexity of Language, Distance/Relationship between First and Second Languages, and Language Environment. These factors will be discussed briefly as follows:

#### *Sex*

In a meta-analysis, Voyger (1996, cited in Paradis, 2000) evaluates the results of monolingual and bilingual studies of lateralization with regard to sex differences as an independent variable affecting laterality. Shanon (1982), on the other hand, reports that bilingual men show more right hemisphere involvement for word processing in comparison with women.

#### *Task Demands and Complexity of Language*

The number and types of tasks used in laterality studies is another source of variation in the reported results from the previous studies. The tasks used in such studies are varied from single word recall to translation. According to Grosjean (1989), it has been suggested that brain involvement during sentence level processing differs depending upon the complexity of sentence structure. When sentences contained semantically rich word clauses, there was an increased right hemisphere (RH) activation, but words in isolation caused increased left hemisphere (LH) involvement (Schumann, et al, 2004).

#### *Distance/Relationship between First and Second Languages*

Linguistic distance/relationship between L1 and L2 as a moderating factor of cerebral lateralization in bilinguals has been investigated by many studies. The findings of such studies reveal that languages that are structurally very dissimilar, tend to show greater differences in language laterality than those languages which are structurally related.

#### *Language Environment*

According to Ulman (2001), current models of language representations for language in bilinguals assume that there are functional differences between the L1 and L2; some theorists have suggested that environmental context in which first and second languages are used may lead to a different pattern of organization.

The abovementioned controversies well show that in spite of the long piles of literature on neurolinguistics and lateralization, there are still a lot of conspicuous debates among the specialists in various questions on lateralization. Ideas greatly differ regarding different patterns of activity traced in different areas of the brain while the issue of lateralization seems to be still under debate. Here are some points why the findings contradict each other to this extent:

A. The techniques of inquiry may not be very illuminating. Paradis (2004, cited in Gabrys-Barker, 2010) criticizes neuroimaging for a lack of linguistic sophistication and provides these reasons for it:

(1) The tasks are often nonlinguistic tasks (i.e. not part of the natural use of language) and hence do not involve the implicit procedural computations that underlie the processing of a verbal message either in comprehension or production.

(2) The selected stimuli often do not target components of language function and hence are not language relevant.

(3) Sometimes linguistic material is used, but in a nonlinguistic context, and thus it does not reveal any kind of language processing.

(4) Researchers do not differentiate between implicit and explicit components of language and often generalize from words (whose form and meaning are supported by declarative memory) to language (whose implicit system- phonology, morphology and syntax- is supported by procedural memory).

B. Different experimental paradigms have been used by different research groups and not the same selection criteria have been applied for the inclusion of the subjects in experiments. That is why the findings on age factor, CPH and localization are inconsistent (Van Den Noorth et al., 2010).

All of the controversies and inconsistencies of the findings discussed above are natural to some extent as both language and brain are too complex to be described and formulated simply. Given everyone enjoys a unique brain and a unique language; we should eschew from any generalizations in neurolinguistic studies including lateralization. Instead, the idea of lateralization should be studied qualitatively for every human being through a relativistic lens. This paper suggests IRL (individualized relativistic lateralization) that avoids any generalizations and accentuates the unique process of lateralization for human learning.

#### *Individualized relativistic lateralization (IRL)*

IRL can be defined as the development of control over different functions in different parts of the everyone's brain that are not necessarily the same parts in the brains for all the people and these parts may be open to adopt different functions for different people. It is individualized as it is unique to everyone and may differ from one to one and it is relativistic as we cannot assign fixed roles for each parts for language processes given the contradictory results in the literature. All the studies validate the lateralization process and its role in language functions but IRL helps us to eschew big claims and generalizations regarding such a complex process (language) in the most sophisticated part of human (brain).

#### **Conclusion**

The absolute looks supported by the past studies regarding the lateralization and language functions that were mostly on the same page for the left hemisphere dominance and localization of language centers were to a large extent subject to doubts and debates by different studies. This controversy stems from two important reasons: the complexity of the brain and the complexity of the language itself. The too much debate on lateralization studies and the role of

hemispheres in language functions are so abundant that we should eschew the absolute generalizeable perspective to the aforementioned areas. In Caplan's (1995) words, "Our dominance is a preference, not an absolute" (p.303). While functions are lateralized, these lateralizations are functional trends, which differ across individuals and specific function. No one is a "left-brain only" or "right-brain only" person. Even within various language functions (e.g., semantics, syntax, prosody), degree (and even hemisphere) of dominance may differ. In the end, due to the uniqueness of human brain and language everyone enjoys, IRL (individualized relativistic lateralization) is suggested that avoids any generalizations and accentuates the unique process of lateralization for human learning.

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