

Sociocultural Theory and Listening Comprehension: Does the Scaffolding of EFL Learners Improve Their Listening Comprehension?

Mahbubeh Yazdanpanah
Hazrat-e Narjes University of Rafsanjan, Iran

Hajar Khanmohammad
Islamic Azad University, Tehran Branch, Iran

Abstract—According to many researches, Vygotsky's concept of "scaffolding"(1978), which is defined by him as helping the learners to process the information, has significantly contributed to improvement of the three language skills of speaking, writing, and reading comprehension and particularly the two latter ones (writing and reading) among the EFL learners. It is while the effect of scaffolding on listening comprehension skill has been studied by very few studies. This study aims to investigate the possible effects of giving the related background such as telling the stories and experiences similar to the ones included in the listening materials on the listening comprehension skill among 60 intermediate level students through an experimental method in an English language institute in Kerman. The participants were chosen through matched cases method and 30 members were assigned to each of the control group and experimental group. The instruments used in this study were two listening comprehension tests. One of these tests was used before the investigation to recognize the listening level of each student. The other test which was different from the first one in content was given to both groups after the treatment to see if this treatment has any impact on the facilitating the participants' processing of listening materials. The results of the t-test for independent samples showed the experimental group who was provided with the related questions, experiences, stories and discussion before listening to the test materials got higher test scores than the control group that wasn't provided with any background.

Index Terms—scaffolding, listening comprehension, background, improvement

I. INTRODUCTION

According to sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), the information processing could be facilitated by helping the learners in this process. The results of many researches have revealed that this phenomenon which is called scaffolding by Vygotsky has significantly contributed to improvement of the three language skills of speaking, writing, and reading comprehension and particularly the two latter ones (writing and reading) among the EFL learners. However, the effect of scaffolding on listening comprehension skill has been studied by very few studies.

For EFL students, listening comprehension is often a so difficult and challenging skill to learn (Huang, 2005, as cited in Qiu, 2012). The new content and the unfamiliar/lack of background can be one of the causes of these difficulties. The other reason could be the lack of appropriate and effective learning strategies or skills. Therefore, seeking the ways which could help EFL students improve their listening comprehension proficiency, is of high importance in this field and could have valuable educational implications.

The assumption of giving related background and information to the learners to help them increase the comprehension of texts or listening materials is also in accordance with what Ausubel (1968) proposed as theory of meaningful learning. According to this theory, if the new information is not related or familiar to the already existing cognitive concepts or proposition in the knowledge structure of the learner, meaningful learning would not happen. Also, among the two conditions that this theory considers as necessary for learning situation to be meaningful is that the learning task must be relatable to the learners' structure of knowledge.

The role of teachers and peers as facilitators and/or mediators in learning all language components and skills is also emphasized in the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is at the heart of the concept of scaffolding (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Giving background to the students and reminding them of the strategies which may help them in a task or activity in the class could be one of the tools that teachers may utilize to help them do the information processing required for a skill.

In regard of the obscurity of the effects of scaffolding for listening comprehension skill, the present study aims to investigate the possible effects on this skill among the intermediate level students in an English language institute in Kerman.

A. *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*

Vygotsky (1978) defined the zone of proximal development as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers”. According to Puntambekar & Hubscher (2005), the ZPD represents the amount of learning possible by a student given the proper instructional conditions. In the ZPD, a teacher and learner (adult/child, tutor/tutee, model/observer, master/apprentice, expert/novice) work together on a task that the learner could not perform independently because of the difficulty level (Schunk, 2012).

Schunk (2012) refers to a profound and remarkable view of cultural development in Vygotsky's ZPD. He stated that the culturally mediated interaction and participating in the cultural world transforms mental functioning rather than simply accelerate processes that would have developed anyway. That is, the influence of the cultural-historical setting is seen clearly in Vygotsky's belief that schooling was important not because it was where children were scaffolded but, rather because it allowed them to develop greater awareness of themselves, their language, and their role in the world order.

B. *Theory of Meaningful Learning*

Ausubel (1968) contended that learning in the human beings happen through a meaningful process of relating new events or items to already existing cognitive concepts or propositions. Meaning is a “clearly articulated and precisely differentiated conscious experience that emerges when potentially meaningful signs, symbols, concepts, or propositions are related to and incorporated within a given individual's cognitive structure on a non-arbitrary and substantive basis” (Anderson & Ausubel, 1965, p. 8).

It is better understood by contrasting rote learning and meaningful learning. Rote learning as described by Ausubel is the process of acquiring material as “discrete and relatively isolated entities that are relatable to cognitive structure only in an arbitrary and verbatim fashion, not permitting the establishment of [meaningful] relationships” (1968, p. 108).

Meaningful learning or subsumption, on the other hand, as proposed by Brown (2007) may be “a process of relating and anchoring new material to relevant established entities in cognitive structure”. He describes, the new material entered the cognitive field, interacts with, and is appropriately subsumed under, a more inclusive conceptual system. What accounts for the meaningfulness of the material is that it is subsumable or in other words relatable to stable elements in cognitive structure.

There are two necessary conditions for a learning situation to be meaningful. The first condition is that the learners have a disposition to relate the new learning task to what they already know, and the second condition is that the learning task is relatable to the learners' structure of knowledge.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned earlier, the effect of sociocultural teaching techniques on the skills of writing and reading comprehension has been clarified by some studies which will be briefly reviewed here.

Ghafar Samar and Dehqan (2013) investigated the possible effects of sociocultural-based teaching techniques on reading comprehension among Iranian EFL university learners. The basic purpose of their study was “to clarify how learners reading comprehension and strategy use could be affected by the types of teaching techniques and how high and low proficiency learners profited from the intervention”. They used intact groups, actual university classes, which then formed two groups of participants, control and experimental. The researchers of this study became sure about the existence of no difference in the level of proficiency of the two groups by conducting an independent sample t-test.

The results of their study indicated that the sociocultural teaching techniques influences positively on reading comprehension and reading strategy use for EFL learners. That is, this study shows a significant statistical difference in reading comprehension of the learners which means that the sociocultural teaching techniques (teacher and peer scaffolding) results in better reading comprehension for EFL learners and leads to higher strategic reading comprehension development in an EFL context.

In a study by Attarzadeh (2011) the effects of scaffolding language on learning reading comprehension of various text modes on Iranian EFL learners with different levels of language proficiency was examined through a quantitative experimental design. In this research, 180 EFL learners were randomly selected and divided into three groups of low, mid and high proficiency through the TOEFL language proficiency test. They were taught different text types such as narrations, argumentations, descriptions and explanations. The scaffolded groups were exposed to a constructivist-interactive model of learning while the non scaffolded groups were subjected to the traditional individual reading. The findings of his study revealed that the scaffolding reading comprehension of various text modes, levels of learners and interaction of them were highly significant. The scaffolded narrative text type with the strongest mean was superior to all other text types and mid-level of learners also had the strongest mean in comparison with the other levels. Significant interaction effects on any of the dependent variables were found.

Baleghizadeh, Timcheh Memar A., and Timcheh Memar H (2011) carried out a research to compare different types of scaffolding and help, i.e., high-structured scaffolding, low-structured scaffolding, and non-structured help on the writing ability of EFL learners. The participants of their study were 114 elementary Iranian EFL learners. Forty-four students in three classes served as the control group, and they were provided with non-structured help including exercises in True

To Life (their course book) plus some free paragraph writing. Thirty-eight students in three classes served as the high-structured group, and they were given high-structured templates providing the whole frame of the writing task intended to help the students complete the task by just filling in words of their choice. Finally, thirty-two students in two classes served as the low-structured group, and they were provided with low-structured templates with at least one complete example of a similar writing task and some key words for writing the task without a definite frame. The participants of the three groups on the pre-test were homogeneous. The conductors of this study found that low-structured scaffolding templates, unlike the high-structured scaffolding templates and the non-structured help, were remarkably effective for the improvement of the students' writing.

As Baleghizadeh, Timcheh Memar A., and Timcheh Memar H (2011) point out, "the outperformance of low-structured scaffolding provides support for the notion of minimum level of guidance in graduated intervention, i.e., one of the three mechanisms of effective help in the ZPD". They mentioned what Van Lier (1988) believed as the reason for this finding of their study: "too much guidance may hinder or slow down the development of self-repair, which he viewed as an important learning activity".

Riazi and Rezaii (2011) also conducted a study within the sociocultural framework. They wanted to find out whether teacher- or peer-scaffolding was more successful in helping students improve their English texts. The participants of this study were only 25 students that all were native speakers of Persian language in the 20-23 year age range studying at the Department of Computer and Industrial Engineering of a northern university in Iran. The students were attending a required general English course and were registered in two groups; the first group included 15 students and the second group included 10 students. English course had been provided with teacher- and peer-scaffolding in the process of revising their writings. Pre- and post-writing tasks had been collected from the students to check their writing improvement.

The results showed that students in teacher-scaffolding group performed better on their post writing test, that is, the students in the teacher-mediated class had benefited more than the students in the peer-mediated class in improving their writing. Also, the teacher's use of the overall components of the mediating behaviors had been higher than those of peers (2270 vs. 974) showing that the teacher had used more scaffolding behaviors than peers. The problem of peer scaffolding which Riazi and Rezaii (2011) also mentioned in their paper is that "for student peers the major issue was to sustain the interactions and solve the immediate problem of student writers rather than promoting their overall learning. That is why fewer attempts were made by peer-mediators to resort to strategies that could bring about significant changes in students' writings". So they suggest that "A pragmatic and certain approach toward peer-scaffolding would be to involve students in this potential learning experience while having the teacher monitor the process. Students can be grouped to help and interact with each other while finally the outcome of the groups will be presented to the whole class for the teacher feedback and comments".

Rahimi and Tahmasebi (2010) put the idea of mediation of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) in a task-based method to examine the contribution of scaffolding and private speech in improving EFL learners' reading skills.

As the researchers reported, this investigation was conducted in the following way: First, in both classes, introductory questions and preliminary discussions were completed. Then, the teacher or VCD read out the text once or twice. After reading the text, in the experimental group, the teacher asked the students to do different tasks such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and discussing the ideas presented in each paragraph. The teacher suggested that students collaboratively and through private speech – for every other paragraph - carry out the suggested tasks. For example, if the students were asked to collaboratively paraphrase the first paragraph, they were asked to paraphrase the second one to themselves, i.e. practice private speech. On the other hand, for the control group, the teacher paraphrased, summarized and discussed the ideas in each paragraph in the whole lesson. Students asked their questions if they had any.

The participants of the two groups called by the teacher or voluntarily, read some of the paragraphs, summarized them or talked about them. During the class hours, students' performances were videotaped to be used for discourse analysis and checking the measures of fluency, accuracy and complexity (Iwashita, Elder, and McNamara (2001)). This method continued for nine ninety-minute sessions. At the end of the course, the pretest was repeated. Moreover, students were asked to orally present some passages, and their performance was videotaped to be scored based on the idea units presented. The selected texts, unseen by the students, had readability below or close to that of the text in the textbook – ranging from 10 to 11. The students' performance on the oral presentation task was counted as twenty percent of their final scores.

The results of the independent samples t-test revealed that the two groups did not perform significantly differently in the final exam. However, in terms of oral paraphrases, they differed significantly. The experimental group outperformed the control group. Although the performances of the two groups were very close in some aspects, e.g., complexity, they diverged in accuracy and fluency. Also, the findings of their study, both qualitative and quantitative analyses, more or less skewed toward the positive impacts of integrating SCT components in language classes.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study seeks to see if giving the related background such as telling the stories and experiences similar to the ones included in the materials the intermediate EFL learners are supposed to listen in the classroom could improve their comprehension of these materials. As such, the following null hypothesis is investigated in this study:

1. The use of related background by the teacher before the listening comprehension activity or task doesn't have any impact on the EFL intermediate students' processing the information in the listening activity.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Design of the Study

This study, through an experimental method, tries to compare the results obtained after asking the learners listen to comprehension materials of the tape recorders with and without giving the related background in two intermediate EFL learners groups.

B. Participants

To test the research hypothesis, 60 intermediate EFL learners in Kish language institute of Kerman participated in the study. They were chosen through matched cases method and 30 members were assigned to each of the control group and experimental group.

C. Instrumentation

Before the investigation, a listening comprehension test which included a story and a conversation between two people and the multiple choice questions followed it was utilized to recognize the listening level of each student.

To see if the research treatment has any impact on the improvement of participants' processing of listening materials, another test of listening (including a story and a conversation between two people and the multiple choice questions followed it) which was different from the first one in content was given to both groups.

D. Data Collection Procedure

To do this research, first, the researchers took a multiple choice test of listening comprehension from three intermediate classes of one English institute in Kerman. Then, they tried to match each student's grade with another one's equal grade. Some grades didn't have the exact matches but the researchers tried to match the grades in each pair in a way that the differences between them not to be more than .25 and for some few grades .50. The owner of one grade in each pair was assigned to the control group and the other one to the experimental group.

The researchers chose a listening comprehension test which was different from the first test in content but it also like the first test didn't have the technical topics and words. The procedures of administering the test to the control group and experimental group were different. In the experimental group, the teacher first asked the participants some questions related to the topics of the story and the conversation of the included in the listening material. Then she shared a related experience to the students and encouraged them to give their opinions about what she told them and have a discussion on this topic. Finally she asked the students listen to the test material and answer the 35 multiple choice questions in the test paper within 20 minutes. However, the participants in control group were given the listening comprehension test providing them with any background information. The grades of each participant of the control and experimental group in the multiple choice test were counted to be used as their listening comprehension level in this test.

E. Analysis Procedure

The obtained data were put in to the statistical software SPSS to examine the research hypothesis posed earlier.

First, a number of Descriptive Statistics were run on the data. Then, the t-test for independent samples was used to see if the two groups performed significantly different after the treatment.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Descriptive Statistics

TABLE 1

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Listening | 60 | 8.25 | 19.50 | 13.7500 | 2.77473 |
| ID | 60 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.5000 | .50422 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 60 | | | | |

By virtue of the above table the minimum, the maximum, the mean, and the standard deviation for the study variables are revealed clearly.

B. Listening Comprehension Performance in Two Groups

To compare the reading comprehension scores of learners in control and experimental groups, an independent sample t-test was run. As table 2 shows, there was a significant difference in scores for the control group ($M = 12.55$, $SD = 2.31$), and the experimental group ($M = 14.33$, $SD = 3.59$). This discrepancy is significantly large because as it has been shown in the Table 3, the signification rate (Sig. (2-tailed)) is .026. In other words, the discrepancy level between the mean scores of these two groups is high and the direction of this discrepancy is such that the experimental group who was provided with the related questions, experiences and discussion before listening to the test materials got higher test

scores than the control group that wasn't provided with any background or experiences. Thus, it could be inferred that the treatment (scaffolding the intermediate EFL learners through providing them with some related background) before the listening comprehension activity or test could help them process the information much more easily and so give correct answers to the questions following the listening materials. Another important advantage of scaffolding for students to learn much more easily and effectively is that the interaction between them and their teacher/ and peers make the learning process interesting and motivating; and thus, remove students' stress and anxiety. So, the debilitating anxiety which is a barrier against learning is decreased. This will also promote their learning. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected by the findings of the investigation.

As such, the results of the data analysis shows that the scaffolding the EFL learners is an effective strategy to improve not only the skills of writing and reading but also the listening comprehension skill little by little.

TABLE 2
GROUP STATISTICS

| ID | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------------------|----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Listening no background | 30 | 12.5500 | 2.31692 | .42301 |
| background | 30 | 14.3333 | 3.59438 | .65624 |

TABLE 3
INDEPENDENT-SAMPLE T-TEST OF THE TWO GROUPS IN TEST OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

| Listening | Levene's Test for Equality of Means | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------------------------------|--------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig.(2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 1.796 | .185 | -2.284 | 58 | .026 | -1.78333 | .78076 | -3.34620 | -.22047 |
| Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.284 | 49.551 | .027 | -1.78333 | .78076 | -3.35189 | -.21478 |

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Although the listening tasks and activities are often worked on with no or little help or assistance of the teacher or peer, the result of this study proved that the EFL learners' listening comprehension could be remarkably improved by the teacher-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding. As such, one of the reasons why the Iranian EFL students' listening skill doesn't improve with an acceptable rate might be the lack of social, cooperative and collaborative techniques of teaching and learning. However, since listening comprehension is the most basic skill for language learning, should be paid much more attention to be learned in the class. The finding of the present study recommends the use of more social and cooperative techniques in the EFL listening activities and tasks. And among many different techniques, asking students the related questions, telling them the related experiences or stories, and letting them have some discussion to their peers and/or also to their teacher are effective scaffolding ones which their interactive characteristics cause the learners to reduce their stress and also become independent students. These scaffolding activities can help the teachers act within the learners' zone of proximal development and provide the learners with comprehensible input. The learning strategies the students get familiar to as they are doing these activities are the best ladders that make the learning process much more facilitated and easier particularly if they are introduced, explained and emphasized by the teacher. As such, these mentioned factors could be other important causes of higher information processing in the EFL listening tasks.

In this study, the researchers didn't separate the teacher-scaffolding and peer-scaffolding to identify and compare the effect of each of them on the EFL learners' listening comprehension. However, the effectiveness of one of them might be more than the other. Riazi and Rezaie (2011) found in their study that the students could benefit from the teacher-scaffolding more than the peer-scaffolding in reading comprehension activities. However, this comparison has been done by no studies on listening comprehension activities. Therefore, if it will be conducted by some researches, the results could have other important implications for the EFL classes.

APPENDIX

The Frequency Table for Participants' Listening Comprehension Performance
Listening

| Valid | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 8.25 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| 8.5 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 3.3 |
| 9 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 5.0 |
| 9.5 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 6.7 |
| 10 | 3 | 4.9 | 5 | 11.7 |
| 10.25 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 13.3 |
| 10.75 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 16.7 |
| 11 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 20.0 |
| 11.25 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 21.7 |
| 11.5 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 25.0 |
| 12 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 28.3 |
| 12.25 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 31.7 |
| 12.5 | 3 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 36.7 |
| 13 | 4 | 6.6 | 6.7 | 43.3 |
| 13.25 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 46.7 |
| 13.5 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 48.3 |
| 13.75 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 51.7 |
| 14 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 55.0 |
| 14.25 | 3 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 60 |
| 14.5 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 61.7 |
| 14.75 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 65 |
| 15 | 3 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 70 |
| 15.25 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 71.7 |
| 15.75 | 3 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 76.7 |
| 16 | 3 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 81.7 |
| 16.25 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 83.3 |
| 16.75 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 86.7 |
| 17 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 90 |
| 17.5 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 91.7 |
| 18 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 93.3 |
| 18.75 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 95 |
| 19 | 1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 96.7 |
| 19.5 | 2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 100 |
| Total | 60 | 98.4 | 100 | |
| Missing System | 1 | 1.6 | | |
| Total | 61 | 100 | | |

REFERENCES

- [1] Anderson, R. C., & Ausubel, D. P. (Eds.) (1965). *Readings in the Psychology of Cognition*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- [2] Attarzadeh, M. (2011). The effect of scaffolding on reading comprehension of various text modes on Iranian EFL learners with different proficiency levels. *Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(4), 1-28.
- [3] Ausubel, D. (1968). *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- [4] Baleghizadeh, S., Timchegh Memar, A., & Timchegh Memar, H. (2011). A Sociocultural perspective on second language acquisition: the effect of high-structured scaffolding versus low-structured scaffolding on the writing ability of EFL learners. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 10(1), 43-54.
- [5] Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- [6] Ghafar Samar, R., & Dehqan, M. (2013). Sociocultural theory and reading comprehension: The scaffolding of readers in an EFL context. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 2(3), 67-80.
- [7] Huang, J. (2005). Challenges of academic listening in English: Reports by Chinese students. *College Student Journal*, 39(3), 553-569.
- [8] Iwashita, N., McNamara, T., & Elder, C. (2001). Can we predict task difficulty in an oral proficiency test? Exploring the potential of an information-processing approach to task design. *Language Learning*, 51, 401-436.
- [9] Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [10] Puntambekar, S., & Hübscher, R. (2005). Tools for scaffolding students in complex learning environment: What have we gained and what have we missed? *Educational Psychologist*, 40(1), 1-12.
- [11] Qiu, A. (2012). The effects of dynamic image schema on ESL students' systematic improvement of listening comprehension: A dynamic system theory perspective. *International Journal of Learning & Development*, 2(1), 241-254.
- [12] Rahimi, A., & Tahmasebi, S. (2010). Mediating Iranian EFL learners: Private speech and scaffolding in reading comprehension. *Linguistic and Literary Broad Research and Innovation*, 1(2), 56-71.

- [13] Riazi, M. & Rezaii, M. (2011). Teacher- and peer-scaffolding behaviors: Effects on EFL students' writing improvement. In A. Feryok (Ed.), *CLESOL 2010: Proceedings of the 12th National Conference for Community Languages and ESOL* (pp. 55-63). Retrieved from <http://www.tesolanz.org.nz/2011/01>.
- [14] Schunk, D. H. (2012). *Learning Theories*. (2006). Boston: Pearson.
- [15] Van Lier, L. (1988). *The classroom and the language learner*. London: Longman.
- [16] Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mahbubeh Yazdanpanah was born in Rafsanjan, Iran, in 1983/02/19. She has a BA in English Literature received from Islamic Azad University (IAU) of Kerman, Iran, in 2005, an MA in TEFL from Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran, in 2007 and now is a PhD student in TEFL in IAU, Queshm branch, Hormozgan, Iran.

She has been teaching undergraduate courses in applied linguistics at Vali-e Asr University and IAU of Rafsanjan from 2007 until now. She started working as a full-time Instructor in Hazrat-e Narjes University of Rafsanjan from 2012 and now also she is working in this position. There are published papers written by this author of the article that some of them are:

1. The Interplay of Locus of Control and Academic Achievement among Iranian EFL Learners published by the Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences, Cyprus, 2010
 2. The Impact of L1 on the Understanding and Motivation of EFL Learners to Learn Poetry presented in the English Translation conference and published in that conference's book, Karaj, 2012
 3. The Relationship between Socio-economic Status and Academic Achievement among Iranian EFL Learners published by the Indian journal of ELT Voices, India, 2014.
- Her areas of interest are teaching language skills and components to speakers of other languages, testing language competence, psycholinguistics and qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

Hajar Khanmohammad was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1953/05/07. She has a BA in English Language received from College of Translation, Tehran, Iran in 1980. Her MA which is in TEFL was received from Allameh Tabatabaie University, Tehran, Iran, in 1989. She has also a Ph.D. in TEFL obtained from Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Unit, Tehran, Iran, in 2004.

She has taught in Center for Foreign Languages, University of Tehran, in 1984-1990. She has been and also now is Teacher Trainer, Supervisor, and Teacher in Iran Language Center. Deputy to the Dean in Research Affairs College of foreign languages in Islamic Azad University is also her other work experience which started from 1994 and continued until 2001. She has taught graduate courses at Tehran and Bandar Abbas Azad University from the year 2004 and her job is continuing. She is now Assistant Professor of English at the Faculty of Foreign Languages in the Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in applied linguistics. She has published scholarly articles in Iran and abroad on testing, teaching, and translation. Some of the books written by this author are:

1. *Translators Handbook*, Tehran, Nilofar publishers, 1982.
 2. *The Effect of Interdependency of Items on Psychometric Characteristics of Cloze and Dictation Type Tests*, Tehran, Islamic Azad University, 1999.
 3. *The Grammar Book for TOEFL*, Tehran, Rahnama Publication, 2006.
- Her research interests include teaching English to speakers of other languages, research on language testing, and assessment, qualitative and quantitative research and translation.

Dr. Khanmohammad has been the Lecturer of faculty of foreign languages, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran from 1989 and now also she is. She has worked as Translator, Editor, and Sample Reader in Nashr-e-Aftab Publishing Company, Tehran, Iran in 1982-1985. She has also worked as the Managing Director of Nashr-e- Danesh Publishing Company, Tehran, Iran in 1984-1987. Now, she is the Editor of Politics faculty's journal in IAU and also the Editor of the journal of Language and Literature in IAU.