

# Journal of Language Teaching and Research

ISSN 1798-4769

Volume 8, Number 2, March 2017

## Contents

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### REGULAR PAPERS

- Lexis, Lexical Competence and Lexical Knowledge: A Review 205  
*Keiby Caro and Nayibe Rosado Mendinueta*
- The Effect of the Teachers' Training Model "Academy- Class" on the Teacher Students' Professional Development from Students' Perspectives 214  
*Nabil Assadi and Tareq Murad*
- Teaching EFL in Saudi Arabian Context: Textbooks and Culture 221  
*Abdullah Saad Aldera*
- Critical Thinking, Writing Performance and Topic Familiarity of Indonesian EFL Learners 229  
*Rohmani N. Indah*
- Application of Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) for Students' Focused Teaching (SFT) in EFL Class: An Experimental Study in the Summer Remedial Course for Adult Learners 237  
*Muhammad Sabboor Hussain Raja, Abdus Salam A. Rehman Qureshi, and Khaled Beshar Albeshar*
- Politeness in Using Banjarese and American English Personal Subject Pronouns by English Department Students of Lambung Mangkurat University 253  
*Elvina Arapah and Fatchul Mu'in*
- "My Excellent College Entrance Examination Achievement" — Noun Phrase Use of Chinese EFL Students' Writing 271  
*Sue Wang and Gulbahar H. Beckett*
- Teaching Materials Development for Basic General Course of Indonesian Language Class Based on Culture Values Elompungi (Elong) Bugis Literature 278  
*Hamsiah, Muhammad Rafi Tang, Achmad Tolla, and Jufri*
- An Analysis of Phonics Teaching in Mainland China 286  
*Min Cao*
- The Effectiveness of Meaningful Approach in Enhancing Students' Speaking Skill at German Language Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar 291  
*Misnawaty Usman, Alimuddin Mahmud, Muhammad Asfah Rahman, Darman Manda*
- On the Translation of English Hard News under Inter-cultural Background 297  
*Yurong Hao*
- The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning Strategy through English Village for Teaching Speaking Skill 306  
*Hengki, Baso Jabu, and Kisman Salija*
-

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Metaphors for Educators: A Cultural Cognitive Approach <i>Mei Tao</i>	313
Persistence of Baroque Trauerspiel in Tom Stoppard's <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i> as a Postmodern Literature: Rejection of Metanarrative <i>Abouzar Mostafalou and Hossein Moradi</i>	322
Investigating Chinese EFL Learners' Comprehension of English Idioms <i>Hua Xie</i>	329
Effect of Elaborative Text Modification on Pre-intermediate Male and Female EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension <i>Shahram Esfandiari Asl and Asgar Mahmoudi</i>	337
Bloomfield's Concept of Meaning <i>Suping Duan</i>	343
The Effect of Structured Academic Controversy on English Proficiency Level within Communicative Language Teaching Context <i>Reza Tavakoli, Seyed Hesamuddin Aliasin, and Fariba Mobini</i>	349
The Effectiveness of Application of Writing Strategies in Writing Instruction <i>Chenrong Han</i>	355
Action Research as a Bottom-up Approach to Foster Teacher Involvement in Language Curriculum Change <i>Mina Saghaieh Bolghari and Arezoo Hajimaghsodi</i>	362
Cultural Background on Reading Comprehension in Junior High School <i>Xiaoling Yang</i>	370
Critical Thinking and Willingness to Communicate among EFL Students <i>Ahmad Yaghoubi</i>	375
A New Model and Its Practice in Language Learning Strategy Training <i>Li Gao, Yun He, and Jie Zeng</i>	382
The Effect of Using SMS as a Post Task Activity on Iranian EFL Learners' Grammar Knowledge <i>Mohamad Reza Farangi, Jamileh Kamyab, Majid Izanlu, and Nazanin Ghodrat</i>	392
A Study on Chinese EFL Learners' Phonetic Obstacles to Listening Comprehension <i>Fanghui Hu</i>	404
Effect of Elementary EFL Learners' Negotiation on Their Classroom Participation and Grammatical Achievement <i>Fatemeh Saboonchi and Asgar Mahmoudi</i>	411
Views and Attitudes of Intercultural Awareness in Chinese Teaching and Learning in Shanxi Provincial Universities Context <i>Junqing Wang</i>	418
EFL Teachers' Reflective Teaching, Use of Motivational Strategies, and Their Sense of Efficacy <i>Mania Nosratinia and Zahra Moradi</i>	431

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# Lexis, Lexical Competence and Lexical Knowledge: A Review

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**Abstract**—Lexis is one essential component of language and language development. Limited lexical knowledge can lead EFL learners to frustration and demotivation. To reach a higher level of development in the four basic communication skills, learners should have a basis of lexis that allows them to do so. One of the factors affecting the ongoing development of communicative competence is neglecting the systematic teaching of lexis. Teachers' lack of knowledge of the lexical field has contributed negatively to this current situation. To meet these needs, this article reviews concepts such as lexis/vocabulary, lexical competence and knowledge and size and depth of lexical knowledge. It discusses new perspectives that could help language teachers develop conceptual knowledge to handle lexical instructional practice.

**Index Terms**—vocabulary, lexis, lexical knowledge, competence, breadth and depth

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning lexis has gained relevance in ELT in the last 30 years. Before, this aspect of the language was not a priority for researchers and curriculum developers; it was underestimated for many years (Carter and McCarthy, 1988; Nation, 1990; Zimmerman, 1997; O'dell, 1997; DeCarrico, 2001; Alemi and Tayebi, 2011). This situation changed favorably when researchers realized the predominant role it plays in language learning and teaching (Coady and Huckin, 1997; Griffiths, 2003, 2006; Shen, 2008). Scholarly discussions have produced a “substantial amount of theoretical and empirical studies in the area” (Bee Choo, Tan Ai Lin and Pandian, 2012, p. 853) and, as a consequence, a wide range of concepts and terminologies have emerged.

It is now acknowledged that lexis is an essential component in language acquisition. Limited knowledge of it could lead to learners' frustration since they cannot convey what they want to express when speaking or writing. To this regard, Folse (2004) points out that “however, with poor vocabulary communication is constraint considerably. You can get by without grammar; you cannot get by without vocabulary” (p. 2). This might be overcome by working it systematically to increase lexical competence and overall communicative competence. Nation (1994) agrees that “a rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform” (p. viii) contributing to effective and successful communication (Alqahtani, 2015). In the EFL context, this requires lexical instruction, which translates theoretical knowledge acquired in the field to the teaching contexts (Thornbury, 2002).

Given the richness and contributions in concepts and terminologies aforementioned, this article attempts to review the ensuing topics:

a) discuss vocabulary and lexis and the favorability of espousing the second one, b) explore the diverse concepts of lexical competence and present a systemic definition, c) put forward definitions of vocabulary or lexical knowledge and frameworks that explain how lexical/vocabulary acquisition occur, as well as d) define size and organization of vocabulary/lexis knowledge and present an alternative model to show the networked interactions between them.

The goal is to shed light on these issues and make suggestions for bridging some conceptual gaps so that teachers may use them as guidelines in EFL lexical instruction and contribute to more systematic and successful learning experiences.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Difference between Vocabulary and Lexis*

The first concept to be considered for this theoretical review is that of vocabulary or lexis. Some online dictionaries such as the Merriam-Webster (2015) define vocabulary as “The words that make up a language; all of the words known and used by a person: words that are related to a particular subject.” Similarly, Cambridge (2016) describes it as “The words that are known or used by a particular person, or that are used in a language or subject.” Finally, Macmillan (2009-2016) also presents it as “All the words that a person knows; all the words in a particular language.”

The above definitions are similar to the ones provided by some of the scholars in the field of linguistics and applied-linguistics. For instance, Linse and Nunan (2005) stress that “Vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows.” (p. 121). Richards and Schmidt (2010) concur that “Vocabulary is a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words, and idioms” (p. 629). For their part, Kamil and Hiebert (2005) express that “Generically, vocabulary is the knowledge of meanings of words” (p. 3).

Recently, the term *lexis* has been introduced and used interchangeably to mean vocabulary. Barcroft, Sunderman, and Schmitt (2011) explain it as follows:

The term *lexis*, from the ancient Greek for ‘word’, refers to all the words in a language, the entire vocabulary of a language. Plato and Aristotle spoke of *lexis* in terms of how the words of a language can be used effectively. (p. 571)

Likewise, Jackson and Amvela (2000) suggest that vocabulary, *lexis*, and *lexicon* are synonymous. The idea is supported by Larsen-Freeman and Decarrico (2010) when they write that vocabulary/*lexis* includes “...not only syntax and morphology but also phonetics, phonology, semantics and *lexis* (that is, vocabulary)” (p.18). Nonetheless, some others make a distinction between vocabulary and *lexis*. When people think of vocabulary, they usually relate it to words and meanings. *Lexis*, on the contrary, is not only associated with words, but expands to include other layers of lexical knowledge. Stephen Van Vlack (2013, July), whose view is shared in this article, illustrates in the figure below the growing levels of complexity from word to *lexis*.

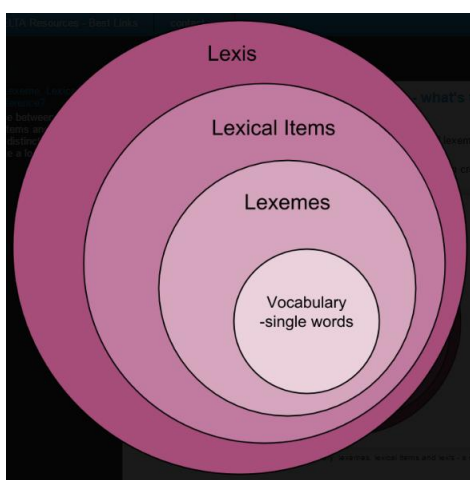


Figure 1. Difference between vocabulary and *lexis* taken from van Vlack (2013, July)

Discussions on the term *lexis* explain that it comprises a system of word units, which relates to other units creating a network of meanings ranging from polysemy, collocation, ambiguity, synonymy and frequency (Schmitt & Meara, 1997; Miller, 1999; Nation, 2001). In contrast, the common and restricted belief in ELT that vocabulary is an “all-or-nothing relationship” (Shen, 2008) has favored the teaching of isolated or decontextualized vocabulary lists hampering learners’ lexical development. To support the above statement, Al-Batel cited by Wahba, Taha and England (2006) assert that “decontextualized paired vocabulary lists are of limited value to learners if they are not accompanied by context-building activities” (p. 332). For this reason, a broader systemic view deriving from this redefinition of *lexis* may bring about substantial changes in the way instructed lexical practices are developed.

In the framework of a systemic definition of lexical competence put forward in this review, a matching systemic definition of *lexis* is required moving beyond the conventional idea of vocabulary (words and meanings), and helping to consolidate the size and depth of lexical knowledge in growing levels of complexity. Such an approach will help teachers gain awareness of the multilayered nature of *lexis* taking advantage of it to equip learners with the elements required to develop this competence.

### B. The Concept of Lexical Competence

Prior to tackling the concept of lexical competence, it is worth defining what competence is and how it has been viewed so far. The term competence has generated substantial controversy in the field of general and applied linguistics (Chomsky, 1965; Hymes, 1972). The former regarded it as a sheer grammatical competence, that is, “the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language” (p.6) and the latter observed that this competence was more related to communication:

...a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others (Hymes, 1972, p. 277).

In Colombia, the Ministry of Education has defined competence as “the set of knowledge, skills, abilities and individual characteristics that allows a person to perform actions in a given context ...” (MEN, 2006, p. 11, author’s translations). This suggests an interrelation of the underlying aspects of competence for people to be able to succeed in

their daily performance. In coherence with it, lexical competence deals with these components in relation to lexis, which has been embedded within the communicative competence and specifically in the linguistic one, where grammar is listed first and lexis second (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983; Council of Europe, 2001).

It is believed that the order mentioned above has given prominence to grammar over lexis in English classrooms. In fact, some teachers teach grammar first then lexis. Lee (2004) stresses that “recently, several linguists have proposed the importance of putting lexis, not grammar, at the center of the classroom in order to help learners develop their ability to use English for real communication” (Prioritizing lexis over grammar, paragraph 2). Contrary to this, Lewis (1997, p. vi) points out that “language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar”; lexis is essential in the creation of meaning and grammar should be subjected to it and not vice versa. This is also supported by Widdowson (1990) when he expresses it is necessary to move away from this narrow view of language teaching:

Teaching which gives primacy to form and uses words simply as a means of exemplification actually denies the nature of grammar as a construct for the mediation of meaning. I would suggest that the more natural and more effective approach would be to reverse this traditional pedagogic dependency, begin with lexical items and show how they need to be grammatically modified to be communicatively effective (p. 95).

Lexis should then be restored its primacy in language teaching and learning because lexical competence is at the core of communicative competence development.

A simple definition of lexical competence is not easy to pinpoint because of the multifaceted nature of words. Jiménez (2002) highlights this difficulty and groups discussion around this issue as follows:

a) Authors who define, limit or list the dimensions of this competence (Carter, 1987; Nation, 1990; Taylor, 1990; Laufer, 1991; Lahuerta & Pujol, 1996; Marconi, 1997; Council of Europe, 2001).

b) Those who criticize its definition as a list of dimensions and propose more comprehensive ones (Meara, 1996a, 1996b; Henriksen, 1999).

c) And those whose main goal is to demonstrate the applicability of the lexical competence framework to the teaching of vocabulary (Robinson, 1989; Lennon, 1990; Schmitt, 1995).

One of the definitions is the very general one provided by Marconi (1997) who views it “...as part of overall linguistic competence; more particularly, it is regarded as part of semantic competence, the knowledge and abilities that underlie a speaker's understanding of a language.” (p. 77). A simpler one is provided by The Council of Europe (2001) that defines it as “the knowledge of and ability to use the vocabulary of a language” (p.110).

Meara (1996a) acknowledges that the difficulty in having a thorough definition lies in the lack of a lexical competence framework which implies having “a complete model of semantics, and a complete specification of the syntactic and associational behavior of all the words in a speaker's lexicon. So far, this level of description seems far from being realised” (p. 14).

Existing definitions of lexical competence do not reflect the complexity of it in terms of its components- form, meaning, use- nor the relationships among them. Therefore, a more comprehensive definition is required. One that understands lexical competence as a cluster of knowledge (form, meaning and use of a lexical item), abilities and skills that a person develops and deploys in different contexts of communication. Learners can resort to their mental lexicons and construct varied relationships, which contribute to lexical size and depth by activating knowledge appropriate to the communicative purpose, the interlocutor and the social context.

As this comprehensive definition suggests, lexis is a competence in its own right. Consequently, it should be given salience as a core one, due to its transversality in linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic dimensions of language. We would like to suggest that lexical competence should be addressed as a pivotal language aspect in EFL teaching and learning.

### *C. The Definition of Vocabulary/Lexical Knowledge and Frameworks*

Within the framework of lexical competence, vocabulary knowledge also labeled as lexical knowledge is defined by Laufer and Goldstein (2004) as “the sum of interrelated subknowledges” or “...construed as a continuum consisting of several levels of knowledge, starting with superficial familiarity with the word and ending with the ability to use the word correctly in free production” (p. 400).

This definition transcends traditional views, in which learning a word or lexical item is approached as learning the forms and meanings overlooking the cognitive effort and the need of using the word in varied and multiple communicative contexts. Approaching lexical competence from this definition may aid the teacher to be aware of and help students to develop the necessary interrelated subknowledges that constitute it. A traditional approach to tackling vocabulary knowledge teaching and learning has resulted in limited vocabulary learning leading to frustration, disappointment and demotivation, and hampering communication. In Alqahtani's words (2015) “vocabulary knowledge is often viewed as a critical tool for second language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language impedes successful communication” (p. 2). If learners are not exposed to systematic vocabulary knowledge learning opportunities, their vocabulary or lexical size does not expand. So, learners can have difficulty in comprehending the target language even if they are equipped with grammatical competence. To this regard, Wilkins (1972) states the following: “There is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say ... While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (pp.110-111).

In a more complex oriented perspective of word/lexical knowledge, Moghadam, Zainal and Ghaderpour (2012) mention some aspects that characterize this view of vocabulary/ lexical knowledge:

Researchers have taken notice of the multidimensionality and complication of word knowledge, suggesting that knowing a word completely should include various kinds of linguistic knowledge ranging from pronunciation, spelling, and morphology ... and ... to knowledge of the word's syntactic and semantic relationships with other words in the language, involving knowledge of antonym, synonymy, hyponym and collocational meanings... (pp. 556-557).

As highlighted above, vocabulary or lexical knowledge is multilayered. Richards (1976) outlines a framework for knowing a lexical item: breadth of vocabulary, depth of vocabulary, context, syntactic behavior, underlying form, associations, semantic value and different meanings. Following Richards', some other authors have proposed various frameworks that summarized the identified layers:

TABLE I  
LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORKS

	Dimensions
1) Chapelle (1998)	a) vocabulary size b) knowledge of word characteristics c) lexicon organization, and d) processes of lexical access (p. 37).
2) Henriksen (1999)	a) "partial-precise knowledge b) depth of knowledge, and c) a "receptive to productive use ability" (p.303).
3) Nation (2001)	a) form: spoken form, written form, and word parts b) meaning: form and meaning, concept and reference, and associations; and c) use: grammar, collocations, and constraints on use (pp. 124-125).
4) Qian (2002)	a) vocabulary size b) depth of vocabulary knowledge c) lexical organization, and d) automaticity of receptive-productive knowledge (p. 515).

As depicted by the authors in their frameworks, lexical knowledge is not just a simple relationship between form and meaning or "an all-or-nothing phenomenon, but involves degrees of knowledge. They suggest it should be constructed as a continuum, or continua, consisting of several levels and dimensions of knowledge" (Shen, 2008, p.136). These models seem to suggest that the progression from one level or dimension to the other is linear in the continuum.

Meara (1996b) criticizes this view because it does not represent the open nature of lexical knowledge development, which is far from being linear. Due to this, he proposes an alternative, in which the progression from layer to layer of lexical knowledge is multistate (see Figure 2). In this model, there are five states ranging from 1 to 5 and state 0 represents an unknown lexical item. Each state is independent and learners can go from one state to another without following a specific order. It recognizes the open nature of lexical knowledge development and the fact that learners might forget or learn lexical items at any state.

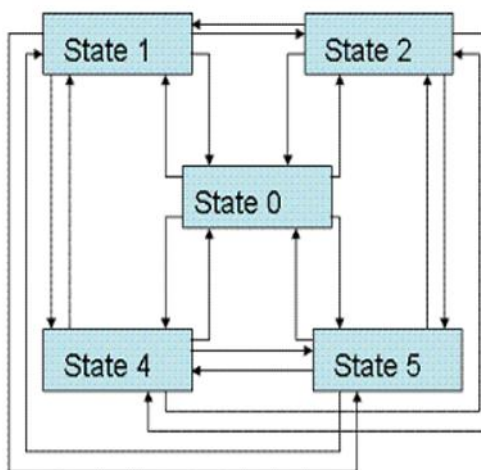


Figure 2. A multistate model of lexical acquisition taken from Meara (1996b)

In our view, Meara's position seems to depict better EFL learners' processes of learning lexical items. For instructional purposes, though, whatever the framework is, lexical knowledge instruction should provide opportunities to develop lexical growth and depth since they are vital tools to access the other skills (Qian, 1999).

#### D. Breadth and Depth of Lexical Knowledge

##### 1. Breadth of lexical knowledge

It is estimated that the number of word families in the English language is approximately between 88.500 (Nagy & Anderson, 1984) and 114.000 (Goulden, Nation, & Read, 1990). According to Nation (2001, 2006), a well-educated native speaker can have 20.000 word families and they increase at a rate of about 1000 of them a year. Some other authors have calculated that EFL students require a number of 5,000 word families for reading (Hirsh and Nation, 1992), between 6,000 and 7,000 for listening and between 8,000 and 9,000 for reading (Nation, 2006). Hazenberg and Hulstun, (1996) acknowledge that around 10,000 word families are needed for a student to deal with academic English at a university level. However, most foreign language learners can hardly add 250 of these word families in the same period of time of a native speaker (Nation, 2001).

As highlighted from the examples above, lexical breadth is what a learner knows and can do at a particular level of competence (Nation, 2001a; Qian, 2002), Daller, Milton, and Treffers-Daller (2007) consider it as "...the number of words a learner knows regardless of how well he or she knows them" (p.7) and Wang (2009) states that "...breadth of vocabulary knowledge (or vocabulary size), means the estimated number of words that a learner knows" (p.202).

Breadth of lexical knowledge is mostly associated with the number of words (size) a person knows; however, not much has been said about the quality of the lexical items learned. EFL teachers should plan for lexis to be continuously expanded through lessons, courses, and the curriculum giving learners opportunities to explore the connections between lexical choices and the purpose of communicative events, making evident the need to expand the lexis to match those purposes.

In order to measure the lexical breadth knowledge in ELT, there are tests such as the Vocabulary Size Test (VST) known as Lex 30 (Meara and Fitzpatrick, 2000). The VST is subdivided into receptive and productive (Nation and Beglar, 2007).

2. *Depth of lexical knowledge*

Knowing a lexical item goes beyond the boundaries of mastering its spelling and pronunciation. This knowledge is not restricted to a single dimension, but refers to a multidimensional construct. Below there is a series of definitions and analyses in light of the current literature:

TABLE 2  
DEFINITIONS AND ANALYSIS

Author	Definition
Read (1993)	"...the quality of the learner's vocabulary knowledge (how well are particular words known?)" (p.357).
Qian (1998)	Pronunciation and spelling; morphological properties; syntactic properties; meaning; register, or discourse features and frequency of the word in the language (pp. 24-25)
Shen (2008)	"Depth of knowledge focuses on the idea that for useful higher-frequency words learners need to have more than just a superficial understanding of the meaning" (p. 136).
Moghadam et al. (2012)	"Depth of knowledge is a network of links between words. It is about how they associate and interact with each other, and may be restricted in use according to register and context" (p. 558).

The above definitions seem limited, linear and center on the quality of knowledge of the learned lexical items, and tend to lack the context where the items can be used. The authors make a list of the most relevant aspects of knowing a lexical item reflecting a somewhat shallow understanding of the systemic linked network process activated when the lexical items are interacting with others. Moghadam et al's (2012) is much more comprehensive and encompasses most of the elements regarding the way the lexical items interact when users retrieve them from their lexicon.

According to Rashidi and Khosravi (2010), the depth of lexical knowledge is considered as one of the main dimensions because it strengthens reading comprehension. Breadth and depth of lexical knowledge are determinant in moving learners further in their general competence development, therefore instructional planning should address lexical knowledge instruction explicitly offering ample opportunities for lexical growth and depth to guarantee language development and learning (Qian, 1999).

In order to measure the lexical depth knowledge, the Word Associates Test (WAT) (Read, 1998) has been widely utilized.

3. *An alternative model to lexical breadth and depth knowledge*

Meara and Wolter (2004) suggest renaming the terms breadth and depth for "size and structure or size and organization" (p.89) respectively. This change of terminologies is based on the understanding of the interaction produced when lexical items are learned and used. He highlights that L2 lexicons act differently from L1 lexicons in the sense that the former are less structured, developed and complex than the latter ones. In order to illustrate this, he proposes a model where the interactions are represented in a network connected with nodes (breadth or size). These nodes are increased as a learner adds new lexical items to his or her lexicon forming new links to the already existing ones. This model is shown in figure 3:

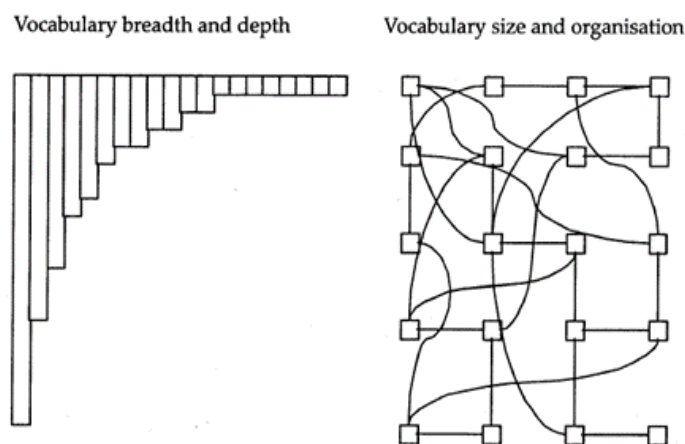


Figure 3. An alternative model to lexical breadth and depth from Meara and Wolter (2004, p.89)

In Meara and Wolter's words (2004), this model is an innovative alternative to the traditional conception of how lexis is learned. They contrast the diagram on the left with the one on the right. The first depicts the current position of many theorists favoring the linear model where there are no interactions, links or associations among lexical items. They just limit to two axes: one is breadth and the other depth, whose length of the bars show the lexical depth knowledge. The second one stands for a more interactive approach where the boundaries of breadth (size) and depth (organization) are not completely closed and are interconnected through nodes. These nodes represent learners' lexical size. The lexical items form connections in a network, linking the existing knowledge with previous knowledge strengthening depth and affecting the rest of the network in the process.

In agreement with the model devised by Meara and Wolter (2004), this review adopts the idea that the learning of lexical items is not static. The brain stores them in semantic fields and learners retrieve them according to their needs depending on the communicative contexts. When using the items, they make connections with others expanding (size) and deepening (organization) the existing ones through networks. Consequently, the traditional and linear conception of lexical breadth and depth, where the lexical items do not make connections with some other ones and where the relationship between breadth and depth lack interconnection, should be revisited in light of this alternative approach.

### III. SOME PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

To help learners develop their lexical competence, lexical instruction in the classroom settings should be informed by current theoretical understandings.

Coady (1997) cited in Duppenhaler (2007) numbers four aspects for teachers to have an impact when teaching lexis: "(1) the teacher's own learning experiences, (2) the teacher's metacognitive attitude toward learning vocabulary, (3) the teacher's knowledge of the research in the field, and (4) the effect of experiences gained through teaching" (p.4). Once teachers have gained experience and knowledge in this field, they can put into practice an affective framework to teach it.

To this regard, Hunt and Beglar (2002) propose a systematic framework to lexis teaching and learning. It ranges from incidental learning, explicit instruction to independent strategy development. They state that incidental learning is when learners acquire lexis through reading and listening. They add that teachers should focus on it with proficient intermediate and advanced learners. Explicit instruction refers to actually teach strategies and lexis directly. Hunt and Beglar suggest teachers should carry it out to beginners and intermediate learners with limited lexis. Finally, independent strategy development so that learners can become autonomous.

Teachers should become aware of their current understanding of lexis, lexical competence, lexical knowledge and components and support curricular and instructional decisions on a profound understanding of principles of communicative language teaching and learning. To this regard, we suggest:

*Always consider the communicative situation or need:* Lexis is learned as a response to communicative needs, so teachers should think of meaningful communicative contexts and delineate networks or clusters of lexis that could respond to the needs or contextual situations. It is also important to leave room for students' contributions to the network.

*Lexical competence:* when considering lexical instruction, it is worth contemplating both the knowledge and the skills embedded in the concept. Teachers should include ample opportunities for lexical knowledge and skills development allowing learners to be exposed, to store, to use and retrieve lexis from the learned clusters and networks, making sure to activate different ways to store and retrieve the lexical subknowleges and offering them opportunities to adapt to varied communicate contexts, so they are able to develop pragmatic and sociocultural lexical awareness and skills conducing to effective communication.



*Size and organization:* lexical instruction should be systematically and intentionally planned within the curriculum and outside of it. A spiral networked approach to the teaching and learning of lexis in a communicative competence informed curriculum should establish the basis for autonomous and independent lexical development regarding size and organization.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In the article, it was argued that the concepts of lexis, lexical competence, lexical knowledge, and breadth and depth of lexical knowledge should be revisited to include current discussions in the field. Lexis differs from the traditional term vocabulary, which in our view restricts its meaning. Lexis is broader and engulfs vocabulary, lexemes and lexical items. Lexical competence was also reviewed and a new definition was presented in this article, which encompasses lexical knowledge and its use in diverse contexts. We also suggest that knowing a word implies more than mastering a form and a meaning. A range of lexical knowledge frameworks with their dimensions were outlined and commented. However, they do not seem to reflect the way lexical competence is developed in EFL learners. In this regard, Meara's multistate model of lexical acquisition (1996b) seems to be more effective to explain the complexity of the process. Other aspects discussed were breadth and depth of lexical knowledge. These were tackled from an alternative approach suggested by Meara and Wolter (2004), where lexical items are interconnected and form networks or associations unlike the linear view. Some considerations are put forward at the end with the aim of helping teachers in their decision making regarding lexical instruction.

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# The Effect of the Teachers' Training Model "Academy- Class" on the Teacher Students' Professional Development from Students' Perspectives

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**Abstract**—this study attempts to examine the effect of a new model in teacher education or training, Academy-Class, on teacher students' professional development according to their point of view. The research examines the influence of the new training model on the pre-service teachers' relations with their, training teachers, pedagogical instructors and the students of the school. The participants of the study were 32 third year students who study at Sakhnin College and do their training at nearby schools for three days. The instrument of the study was a questionnaire and an interview. The validity and reliability of the study instrument was obtained. The findings of the study were: 1. The student teachers' level of knowledge, skills and qualifications of teaching and learning is higher after the program than before. 2. The teacher students experienced the training more effectively and efficiently after the program. 3. The student teachers are more convinced that they made more professional and correct choice of career after the program than before 4. The student teachers' attitude towards the pedagogical instructor, the training teacher, the school students and the contribution of the training by the program towards strengthening the relationship with the school and its students was higher after the program than before.

**Index Terms**—academy-class, teacher's education, training teacher, pedagogical instructor, PDS

## I. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The colleges for teacher education in Israel consider the internship in teachers' education as the basis of their theoretical studies that take place inside them, and attribute a great importance to the preservice teachers' training (Khalil & Asadi, 2005). According to Khalil and Asadi, one objective of the training programs is to give the student teachers the opportunity to practice their teaching at schools under the supervision of professional and veteran training teachers from schools, and expert pedagogical instructors from the academy.

Inside the schools, the student teachers are exposed to various factors that are involved in the teaching and school management. They also observe activities that occur training schools and try to discuss and analyze them. In addition, student teachers observe lessons, prepare lesson plans, teach and evaluate their lessons (Khalil & Asadi, 2005).

During the practical work at schools, these students will know the education system- teaching facilities, curricula and different populations of school students. They also know textbooks and didactic aids used in teaching different subjects and disciplines, and will experience different teaching methods. Following practical training, student teachers will acquire work habits, learn to prepare balanced and efficient lesson plans and equip themselves with tools to prepare a teaching unit and develop it.

Academic colleges for teacher education combine between different models of training: traditional training, PDS and academy-class, the last one is experimental. According to the first model, which is frequently used in teachers' education in Israel, the student teachers are sent to training schools and are accompanied by training teachers from the school for observation and experiencing lessons in the subject matters that the students study at the academy. One drawback of this model is that the students from the college feel lonely because of the disconnection between the theories they study at the college and practice they experience at schools

Since eighties, reforms in teacher education took place in England and the United States. These reforms affected other countries of the world in general and Israel in specific. The essence of these reforms is the partnership between the field-the training schools- and the academy where these students study, thus the academy institutes serve as a source of theoretical, disciplinary, and didactic knowledge for the schools, on the other hand, schools serve as a practical field for the student teachers from the academy. Based on these concepts, experts from Israeli ministry of education began to

develop different models for teacher training, including the American model: "Professional Development Schools (PDS).

While school-university partnerships are a relatively new concept, the community schools ideology dates back over 100 years. It reemerged in the early 1980s in response to concerns about the serious challenges, such as violence, drugs and poverty, facing inner-city school students (Hunzicker, J., Schifeling, J., Sattler, L. & Lathan, J, 2012).

Goodlad (1990) states that in PDS model, the academy sends a group of students to a training school together with a pedagogical supervisor from the academy. The school provides a field for practical work and the academy provides the theory, and both the school and the academy work in partnership. Within this PDS framework, the academy members conduct professional development activities for mentor teachers and provide supervision of student teachers. The collaborative nature of the PDS environment allows for continuous evaluation and the growth of pre-service teachers. In this model, the student teachers do not only learn from the individual training teacher, but also from the system, that has organizational and pedagogical restrictions.

The experts develop this Model in teachers' training institutes to "expand" the training process of the student teachers (Ariav, 2001; Zelberstein, 1995). In addition to the support and guidance from a training teacher, the preservice students are exposed to authentic situations of teaching and learning or other tasks from the life of the school. A group of students takes part in the various activities that held at the school, these activities related to the school system during the study day, or activities after the school day. The experience that the student teachers tackle during the day at the training schools is of mutual benefit, both for the students and the educating schools.

PDS models appeared in Holmes Group Report, Tomorrow teachers, in 1986 for the first time. Although this model combines, elements such as development center (Clark, 1990) and collaborative school (Goodlad, 1990), this model is more than a school lab or a place for clinical development of novice teachers, but it is considered to be new institution (Holmes Group, 1986). Unlike the traditional model, PDS creates partnership between the training school and the Academy where the preservice teachers study (Ariav, 2001; Zelberstein, 1995). This training program gives students the opportunity to experience teaching during the real life at school (Kizel, 2010). In addition, it could help failing schools improve themselves and make positive changes through partnership with the academy (Hill, L., Mellon, L., Goddard, J. & Laker, B., 2016).

Ariav (2001) and Cochran-Smith (1990) define the partnership as an opportunity for simultaneous development of preservice teachers, their teachers in the academy and teacher staff of the training school. Cochran-Smith (1990) draws three models for the potential partnership: agreement model, mismatch and cooperative coordination model.

Although many research on PDS model were conducted in the recent years, no fully developed instructions for the project appeared. The creators of the program emphasize that their efforts requires not only time to have its merits in teacher training, but also hard work in order to arrive the required level to function according to the plans. PDS model is similar to that of training doctors of medicine in the hospitals (Goodlad, 1990; Holmes Group, 1986; Kenndy, 1990).

In PDS model, not only training teachers are involved in training student teachers but also the entire school takes part in educating these teachers (Goodlad, 1990; Clark, 1990). The student's diversity: ethnic, financial and geographical should be taken into account while training in PDS program (Pasch, pugash & Marleen, 1990).

On the other hand, PDS model in teachers' training has some drawbacks such as consuming many resources (Zimpher, 1990), and they lack suitable programs that regulate partnership between teachers' education institutes and the training schools which receive the pre service teachers. Another weakness for PDS model is that it is very difficult to find a training school that can receive student teachers; therefore, the students should prepare themselves for competition on a place to practice (Zimpher, 1990). Therefore, there is a need for another attractive training program for schools and training teachers.

The most current model in teacher education in Israel is 'academy-class'; it was carried out during the year of 2015/16 in teachers' education in Israeli universities and colleges. It is a pilot and experimental program. This program is based on the principles of PDS that consider partnership between training schools and the academy as essential step in teachers' education (Greany & Brown, 2015). There is a growing perception of the need for partnerships to promote learning at all levels, whether they are formally constituted as looser affiliations like those identified by Lieberman (2000). Such a perception derives from the recognition that the collaboration between stakeholders potentially optimizes learning. The recommendations in the Ramsey review (2000) further promoted discussion of the desirability of partnerships.

Brady (2002) stated that there is a strong support for a great variety of partnership initiatives between schools and universities in the promotion of student teacher learning, school student learning, and the professional development of lecturers and teachers.

Academy class relies on the partnership between university and schools. The literature on school-university partnerships highlights the challenges involved in making such partnerships successful. Differences in language, culture and organizational priorities can be compound by logistical difficulties, meaning that it can be hard to demonstrate impact (Greany & Brown, 2015).

Greany and Brown (2015) claimed that learning from successful partnerships voice with practitioner priorities and knowledge explicitly valued. The creation of a 'third space' allows more creative ways of working; strategic leaders who recognize and prioritize external working of this nature as well as distributed and shared leadership across the

boundaries between the partners; and shared aims and approaches, for example through a focus on solving locally defined problems utilizing an enquiry approach.

Ingersoll, May and Merrill (2014) found that pedagogical content in teachers' education has an effect on teachers' endurance in teaching; teachers who studied pedagogy, teaching instructions and did observations and reflections in their training, were less likely to leave teaching at schools.

Academy- Class is a new program in teachers' education suggested by the Ministry of Education in Israel. Its ultimate objective is to change teachers' training based on partnerships and collaborations between academy institutes and leading schools. This is to improve the qualities of training processes, teaching and professional development of, developing meaningful learning in education institute and expanding partnership between universities and schools (Ministry of Education, 2014), this instruction proposes a broad collaboration between schools and universities and colleges for teacher training based on PDS model which has been implemented in Israel for decades.

The essence of the program is that the teachers' education institutes send the third year student teachers to leading schools for three days during the week, 12-15 hours per week. The pre-service teachers co-teach with experienced teacher from the school, the responsibility to promote the training of the pre-service teachers' education lies on all factors that are involved in teacher' education such as: schools, training teachers and pedagogical supervisors.

In the school student teachers practice co-teaching together with experienced and qualified training teachers from the school. The training or coaching teachers receive adequate financial compensation for supervision and mentoring students. A pedagogical supervisor who has the theories from the academy institute will accompany the students. In addition, the academy provides courses for the school teachers' professional development (Ministry of Education, 2014).

In this research, the researchers investigate the effect of the new and experimental program in teacher education, Academy-Class, on the preservice student's professional development from the students' perspective.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### Subjects

The participants of the current study are 32 students from The College of Sakhnin for Teacher Education in the Northern District of Israel. The Students are third year students that study English and Mathematics. The college chooses these students to participate in a pilot model for teacher training called academy-class. The teacher students went to practice their teaching in three junior and four elementary school in the area; the students went to the training schools three times a week.

### Instrument

The researchers used the following instruments to achieve the purpose of the study:

The researchers developed a questionnaire and interview. A group of experts in teachers' education, in the college, validated these tools. They researchers also made reliability for the instruments after being tested on a pilot group. The participants filled the questionnaire and were interviewed before and after participating in the program.

## III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The aim of this research is to examine the contribution of the program 'Academy-Class' from the perspective of the students with regard to their professional development, as demonstrated in terms of the following factors:

knowledge, skills of learning and teaching instructions, the contribution of the training teachers and the pedagogical supervisors, the relationship with training schools, and the intention of the students to continue in teaching.

To answer the research question, t-tests for designs that depend on the knowledge variable, skills and the capability of learning and teaching of the students, students' attitudes towards the efficiency of the program, and feelings about the choice of the teaching profession (decision). In addition, descriptive statistics examined the attitude of the students about the contribution of the training teacher and the pedagogical supervisors to the practicum of the students. The research also examines the contribution of the program to the student teachers' relationship with the school and its students. Table One shows.

TABLE 1  
THE RESULTS OF T-TEST

Variable	Before (N=32) M (SD)	After (N=32) M (SD)	t(31)
Capability	3.81 (0.75)	4.18 (0.54)	2.68**
Efficiency of the program	4.01(0.85)	4.42 (0.63)	2.11*
Decision	4.13(1.13)	4.67(0.55)	2.28*

\*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01

The findings of the table show that the student teachers' level of knowledge, skills and qualifications of teaching and learning of the students a higher after the program (M= 4.18 sd= 0.54) than before it (M= 3.81, sd = 0.75). This shows that the academy- Kitta program has a significant effect on the students level of knowledge, skills and qualifications [t<sub>(31)</sub> =2.68, p<0.01].

In addition, the students experienced the training more effectively and efficiently after the program (M=4.42, sd=0.63) than before (M=4.01, sd=0.85). This shows that the program has a significant effect on the students' experience of

teaching ( $t_{(31)} = 2.11, p < 0.05$ ). Finally the student teachers are more convinced that they made more professional and correct choice after the program ( $M = 4.67, sd = 0.55$ ) than before it ( $M = 4.13, sd = 1.13$ ) significantly ( $t_{(31)} = 2.28, p < 0.05$ ).

The following table shows descriptive statistics of the student teachers' attitude towards the pedagogical supervisor, the training teacher and the contribution of the practicum by the program towards strengthening the relationship with the school and its students.

TABLE 2  
THE STUDENT TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL SUPERVISORS,  
TRAINING TEACHER, THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL AND ITS STUDENTS

Variable	M (SD)
The contribution of the pedagogical counselor	4.38(0.73)
The contribution of the teacher trainer	4.19 (0.91)
Relationship with School	4.54(0.58)
Relationship with students	4.66(0.60)

This Table shows that variables range between 1-5, therefore, the findings indicate that the students indicate that the contribution of pedagogical supervisor is high ( $M = 4.38, sd = 0.73$ ). So is the contribution of the training teacher ( $M = 4.19, sd = 0.91$ ). The participants also felt that the program contribution towards their relationship with school is high ( $M = 4.54, sd = 0.58$ ), so is the relationship with the school students ( $M = 4.66, sd = 0.60$ ).

**Qualitative Analysis for the Student Teachers' Reactions**

In addition to the quantitative questions, the researchers asked the participants open questions before and after the program. These questions undergo qualitative analysis, the researchers found a number of central themes at each step.

*The objectives of the program*

Before the implementing the program, the student teachers were asked what are the main objectives of the program, academy-class, for preservice teachers?

The researchers divided the participants' answers into three central themes:

*1. Increasing self confidence*

This is the main theme and the most common among student teachers, one participant reported that before the program, the students were busy in increasing the self- confidence. Another said that one objective of the program is reducing the feelings of fear of the classroom.

*2. Experience and Tools*

The student teachers were also engaged in acquiring teaching skills, and hope that the program could provide them with these tools. One student talked about experience and instruments that improve the ability of teaching, another hoped to receive practical tools.

*3. Strengthening the feeling of belonging to the school*

This theme was also common. It was about the relationship between the student teachers and the training school and its students. One of participants stated that the objective is to strengthen the relation with the school system. Another talked about the feeling of being a part to the training school.

After participating in the program, the researchers ask the subjects, what is, in your opinion, the objective of the program, academy-class for preservice teachers?

After the program, the main themes were different from those before it

*1. Experience and Tools*

This was main and the central theme after the program. The students were more engaged in the tools and the experience that they acquire during the program. One participant said that the program strengthen the pedagogical knowledge, another, said that after the program, she learnt new teaching methods, and she knew more about teaching after participating in the program.

*2. Increasing self confidence*

After the program, this theme relatively was not the main. This was the main theme before the program, few participants relate to this topic. One subject said that she got a self- confidence to face the classroom... Another claimed that it provided confidence against the school students...

Before the program, the student teachers lacked the confidence, and focussed on their ability to stand against the school students. After the program, their confidence improved, and they were engaged in improving their teaching methods.

*Other Factors that Affect Teachers' Training and Education*

Another question that the researchers asked the participants before and after implementing the program was: apart from the pedagogical supervisors and the training teacher, what other factors could affect their training in the field and their qualification for teaching?

There were differences in the subjects' answer before and after the program. Before the program, the main and the central theme of the students was, colleagues and teachers from the school in different variations for example, one participant said: "the school teachers could help and contribute in different solving problems". Another claimed that training teachers can contribute to their training. On the contrary, after the program, the student teachers spoke about the school students that they taught, as a main theme in the successes of their training. One student teacher said: "the

interaction with the school students has a great influence on their training". Another talked about the influence of relationship that the pre-service teachers make with the school students.

It is known that before the program, the participants hoped for a help from other teachers in the teachers' room, however, after the programs the student teachers understood that the teachers are engaged with their students and classes and they have a little time to sit the trainee.

Another theme that was not significant, and without difference before and after the program was the relationship with the school principal. It seems that in some schools, the principal felt obliged for the process and was more involved in the program. One participant stated: "the principal had a main function in the program, "Academy-class, because he gave us support". Another said: "the principal was very involved in the program".

#### *The success of the program*

Finally, the researchers asked the participants what, in their opinions, could be considered a success for the program?

The researchers classified the subject's answers before the program for the following themes:

##### *1. Self Confidence*

This theme emerged before the program, because the participants seemed that they had a need for increasing their confidence. One said: "a support from any factor could help strengthening our confidence". Other hopes for a support from the system.

##### *2. Improving the school students' skills*

Some participants considered the success of the program as a success in improving the school students' behavior, performance and achievement, for example, one participant said that the program developed the students' performance and improved their achievements. Other said: "I can improve the school students".

After the program, the participants' answers were classified to the following themes:

##### *1. The implementation of the theory from the academy to the field*

Many participants commented that the success of the program depends on the implementation of what the students study in the academy in the schools against the school students during their practical training. One student said: "the student teacher should apply the theories from the college in the school". Another talked about the possibility to use the strategies, methods and tools they acquired in the college in their practicum.

##### *2. Improving the school students' performance*

After the program, the participants considered improving the school students' performance as a criterion for the success of the program, for example, one subject said that the program should develop the students' achievements. Another noted that it should improve the school students' thinking and knowledge.

The impression is that the participants changed their opinions after the criteria of success after the program. Before the program the student teachers were engaged in their confidence as teachers in the future, after the program they were engaged in implementing the teaching methods and instruction in their practicum at schools, they were also busy in improving their image as teachers. TH criterion of improving the school students' achievement was a central theme before and after the program.

#### *Questions that asked before*

The researchers asked the participants about the contribution of the presence of the pedagogical supervisor during the training. This question consists of four subcategories: contribution to the students, contribution to the training teacher, contribution to the school and its students.

##### *The contribution of the supervisor from the college to the student teachers*

In this "sub-category, the participants wrote about the availability of the supervisors, for example one student wrote: "the presence of the pedagogical guides at school is essential, so I can meet them immediately when needed. Another said that she did not need to wait for the guide, because he is available at school all the training day. Another talked about the guide as a source of information. The participants considered the guides availability during the practicum day as a possibility for professional development. In addition, the participants commented about the confidence that they got from the guides for example, one said: "the presence of the pedagogical guide increases the feeling of confidence".

##### *The contribution of the pedagogical guide to the training teacher*

The participants also highlighted the importance of the presence of the guides, and claimed that the guides contribute to the training teachers. They can help the trainers by providing theories from the academic literature, and then the trainee can benefit from these theories. One participant stated: "the training teacher together with the supervisor are partners for reflection, evaluation and feedback". Another said that the students could benefit from the guide's experience either in teaching methods or classroom management.

##### *The pedagogical guide' contribution to the school students*

The researchers divided the participants' answers to two themes. One related to an indirect contribution of the pedagogical supervisor. They help the trainees and the trainers to help the school students. One student said that the comments and the reflections that they got from the supervisors help them deal with the school students more efficiently. The second theme is the availability of other factors in the school, so the school students got more attention especially when there are two teachers, veteran and novice that do co teaching in the same class.

##### *The contribution of the pedagogical supervisor to the school.*



The participants believed that the attendance of the supervisors to the school had a significant effect by making order and reducing the students' and the school staff pressure. He also intermediates between the school and the student teachers. In addition, the researchers asked the students about the effect and the contribution of the training teacher in the class where they experience their teaching. The researchers divide the question into four sub items: the contribution for the students, the contribution to the pedagogical supervisor, the contribution to the school and its students.

*The contribution of the training teacher to the student teachers*

The participants indicated that the training teacher helped them in their study and professional development. Some student wrote, "She taught us new teaching methods and instructions. Other claimed that the training teacher taught her new strategies in teaching.

*The contribution of the training teacher to the pedagogical supervisor*

The students indicated the importance of the teamwork between the training teacher and the pedagogical supervisor. Some said "one staff, one completes the other", another wrote: "full cooperation in guidance and activities". The students considered the partnership and cooperation between the trainer and the supervisor as a main contributor to their training and professional development.

*The contribution of the training teacher to the school students*

The student teachers highlighted the contribution of the experienced teacher to the school students' improvement. They indicated that their presence at the school with the students enhanced their skill of improving the school students' performance, for example, "to improve them individually and socially", another said that the training teacher knew what and how to teach the school students.

*The contribution of the training teacher to the school*

The students considered the training teacher as an essential staff member, who has the ability to contribute and improve the school system. One participant said: "she could contribute to improving school system by increasing the educational level, another said: "she improves the school students' level".

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of the academy- class (a teacher education model) on the preservice students' professional development. Concerning the following factors: knowledge, skills and teaching methods of the students, the contribution of the pedagogical supervisor from the academy and the training teacher from the school, the relationship with the school and its students and the student teachers plans for their work in teaching.

Data analysis shows that the participants benefited a lot from their training with the new model academy-class. The answers to the questionnaire, which examined the student teachers' feeling toward the level of their knowledge, skills and qualifications showed a significant effect of the new training model at the end of the training process.

The participants also reported that academy-class, the new training model, contributed to their teaching experience, skills and methods. The model succeeded to improve their abilities to teach students inside the classrooms. In addition, the students reported that the pedagogical supervisor had a significant effect on their success after the training; the preservice teachers also indicated the contribution of the training teacher on their training and their professional development.

Additional contribution for this new model is strengthening the relationship between the trainee and the students of the school. Moreover, the participants reported that Academy-Class, a new model for teacher training in Israel, helped them in their decision to choose their field of study, and their decision to either continue or stop teaching, in other words, after the training the trainees felt more confident, so they have more time to deal with teaching methods and instructions than before.

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# Teaching EFL in Saudi Arabian Context: Textbooks and Culture

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**Abstract**—This article analysed the impact of foreign (L2) cultures on EFL students in Saudi universities. The investigation has been carried out on the basis of theoretical background study, an analysis of the prescribed textbooks and a survey of the L2 learners' attitudes. The research samples include two course books, *Access and Interaction1* published by McGraw-Hill Education, and students of English Department, Najran University, KSA. A thorough analysis of the contents of the series showed that the textbooks largely ignore local culture (L1) and include mainly foreign cultures and cultures of other nationalities. The overall results of the survey demonstrated that L2 learners disagree with the dominance of foreign culture in their course books. However, they simultaneously showed a very positive attitude towards foreign cultures that do not contradict with Saudi social values. This article, therefore, sought to address the cultural bias in the course books and consequent grassroots discontent among L2 learners. The findings of the study are expected to help both ELT specialists and the concerned authority in KSA to select and design textbooks which are suitable for effective pedagogy and tolerably compatible with L1 values and culture.

**Index Terms**—textbooks, content analysis, L2 culture, teaching and pedagogy

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Definition of Culture

Culture may be defined as a manifestation of "the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group" (Hornby, p. 370). Culture emphasizes mutual interdependence of a people or different peoples bound by a moral, ethical, or religious system in order to continue their mutual co-existence. From this point of view, culture envisions a comprehensive mutual co-existence based on a sound and solid basis of cooperation and co-habitation in society at large.

As Kaikkonen (1994) has put it, "culture is a mutual agreement between the members of certain society about the values, rules, role expectations, and meanings, which direct the behavior of the members". Nieto (2010) adds that culture includes "a shared world-view, common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion." Based on these definitions of culture, it can be concluded that everyone has a culture, because everyone has to be a part of it through social and political relationships. The culture of a group can, therefore, be defined as the relationship between its beliefs, values, behavior, and communication.

The Arabic word used for culture is *al-thiqafa* which means a collective achievement of the arts and manifestations of the human intellect. It focuses on such insight that guides people to acceptable and appropriate behavior in society. However, the domain of culture in Islam is entirely based on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him). The Quran enjoins, "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah" (The Quran 33:21). Thus Islamic culture means a way of life and society defined, dictated, and guided by The Quran and Sunnah in local as well as international arena.

### B. Culture in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by King Abdul Aziz bin Abdulrahman bin Al-Saud in the central part of Arabian Peninsula. The population of Saudi Arabia is about 30 million. Among them, around 18 million are Saudi citizens, who share Arabic language as their mother tongue and Islam as their only religion. Saudi Arabia is seen as the center of Islam as Islam was revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad (peace be Upon Him) in this land.

Although there are some small regional variations of cultural practices among Saudis in different areas, the overall scenario is homogenous and uniform. Despite the large number of expatriate workers with diverse cultural settings, a strict control is imposed on practices other than Islamic and Saudi culture. Thus Saudi Arabia tries hard to maintain the status quo where sociocultural norms are concerned. The over-all cultural patterns and behavior are defined and controlled by Islamic rules and regulations, along with the Saudi local traditions.

Saudi Arabia is a deeply religious country with a solid tradition of familial and tribal bond based on centuries-old Arab culture gradually fed by and merged into the spirit of Islam. As Ayubi (1994) has put it: "Islam is indeed very much a social region, seeking to organize the practice of social life, and above all the minute details of family life". As such, the law and customs of Saudi Arabia are based on Islamic values and the Sharia Law taught by Prophet

Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) more than 1400 years ago. Islamic rules and regulations are believed to be universally applicable, irrespective of time and place.

The religious people of this country try their best to follow the examples and commands of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him). Some of these commands include prohibition of non-essential photography and segregation of sex. On Saturday, March 14, 2015, a piece of news was published in *The Arab News* in this context. According to the source, experts debated the issue of using animal images in school textbooks. According to Monotheism, which is taught to 12th grade students, photography is prohibited, while science books have plenty of images of humans and animals to explain anatomy. Students can see this stark contradiction when they read the Monotheism textbook, since in its pages, scholars strongly condemn the use of photography.

Another piece of news on violation of sex segregation published by the *Arab News* (March 18, 2015) is noteworthy in this connection. According to state law and tradition, men and women in the Kingdom have to be segregated in education and most fields of social activities in the country. Any violation of this practice is dealt with tough and severe punitive measures. However, a number of people attempted to violate this rule which was strictly handled by the concerned authority. Citizens have been quoted as saying: "It is mandatory that all festivals in the Kingdom should have separate sections for men and women".

These incidents and social reactions reiterate the Kingdom's commitment to its tradition, culture, and values in the all arena of social and academic life.

### *C. Textbooks and Culture*

A textbook is a standard work used for the study of a particular subject. Coursebooks usually function as a guide map for the ELT programs. According to Nunan (1988), textbooks form an important part of the teaching tools and function as standard models for classroom practice. They guide the L2 instructors through different phases of pedagogy to the culmination of their linguistic goal.

A textbook may include three types of cultural contexts. First of all, it may include the learner's own culture, which is also called the source culture. Secondly, it may solely include the foreign culture. And finally, it may include diverse cultural phenomena from both the local and native sources. However, most EFL/ESL textbooks usually include foreign culture, and local culture is rarely represented.

ELT textbooks are usually considered valid and labour-saving tools. However, in all types of set materials, learners have very little to do as they always swallow one-way flow of knowledge from the receivers' end. Throughout their learning process, students work out different tasks on selected materials that contain elements of foreign culture which are slowly, but gradually assimilated into their everyday life and consciousness. They hardly challenge the information they receive from the point of view of their own culture. Prospects for reciprocity are few and far between when text books are imposed on the learners and there is no possibility of change or modification. This may lead to a planned penetration of L2 culture into L1 domain in the name of L2 teaching worldwide.

EFL or ESL textbooks designed and produced in England or America mostly use events, incidents or actions which often carry target cultural view points on life and society and they profoundly affect the L2 learners' psychological and intellectual growth. Brumfit (1980) is a critic of such ELT coursebooks and calls them 'masses of rubbish... skilfully marketed'. Phillipson (1992) has contended that the main objectives behind the Britain-based the ELT materials are commerce and cultural domination. Abuelma'atti (2005) also argues that globalization may be seen from an economic angle as something promoted by western governments concerned with profits, leading to the spread and promotion of certain cultural and political agendas to best serve their economic objectives and interests.

According to Prodromou (1988), such enterprises dislocate the learners from their root culture and create a kind of alienation. Hyde (1994) has referred to Moroccan ELT instructors who are concerned with the effect of the declining faith among learners who are hardly able to meet the challenge of foreign cultures in academic arena.

There are now examples of countries around the world which are trying to preserve and maintain their own culture in ELT materials by changing their foreign language policies. Names of China, Venezuela, Morocco, Cameroon and Kuwait may be mentioned in this context. Scots (1980) has mentioned that Chinese EFL experts have reinforced Chinese norms and values in textbooks. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), the settings in Venezuelan textbooks refer to their own cities and events, with minor attention to places outside Venezuela. Hajjaji (1981) informs that ELT textbooks in Kuwait are being prepared with Kuwaiti situation in mind.

Thus Hayes and Schrier (2000) have put huge responsibility on concerned authority and experts who determine and implement language policy in any non-native contexts. Selectors in this case may consider the L2 learners' familiar cultural background. Teaching materials may include events, incidents and actions that correspond to the actual experiences or the potential experiences of the learners which will help them constructively utilize their previously acquired linguistic skills towards the achievement of the new and higher levels of acquisition.

Cultural bias or 'other' cultural dominance may potentially undermine the moral, ethical or religious values and traditions of the non-native nations concerned. The author of this article strongly believes that an intercultural approach in ELT may be more appropriate and appreciable for better understanding and mutual communications between different peoples of the world. But the burning questions are what categories of culture or what amount of culture or which country's culture---native or non-native---should in the classroom. This article seeks to answer all these questions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of research regarding language teaching in recent years shows that L2 pedagogy is heavily loaded with foreign cultural elements. Much of this has focused on debates about textbook selection in connection with language policy and principles. Such literature emphasizes awareness of the neo-imperialist agendas associated with the growth and spread of English as a global medium of communication (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson 1992; Block and Cameron 2002).

The purpose of textbooks evaluation is to study the effects of the teaching materials on the particular learners concerned (Tomlinson, et al. 2001). The concerned authority thereby can measure the suitability of the coursebooks in use, so that maximum benefit may be reaped through substituting materials from other books (Cunningsworth, 1995).

Nault (2006) has opined that for useful and updated teaching tools, ELT specialists must take care in the selections of linguistic and cultural aspects in their texts. They should particularly think of the sensitivity of such selections as these materials have tremendous effects in shaping the academic as well as the intellectual growth of the learners out of the native context.

In his investigation of the effects of cultural aspects of British ELT textbooks, Gray (2006) interviewed a group of Barcelona-based teachers to know the content, range and role of target culture in ELT. The results show that they consider English as a lingua franca and the purpose is linguistic achievement, not any long-term cultural ambition. They all agreed on maximum exclusion of all irrelevant contents from the textbooks. They reached the consensus that the amount of cultural content to be included in coursebooks should be decided by the locals, not by the British ELT publishers.

Al Houssawi (2010) conducted an investigation into the perceptions of English language teachers of a western textbook called North Star in use in their Institution. The sample consisted of 35 male teachers who were already familiar with the textbook. The results showed that the subjects of the study had a negative perception of the cultural models and traditions provided by North Star coursebook. The data showed that the book lacked sufficient local culture and tradition. Moreover, the participants indicated that the course book failed to embody international cultures of English speakers. The study recommends adopting new cultural strategies to include both local and target cultures to enrich the content of the book.

Prodromou (1992) advocates cross-cultural approach in ELT course materials. In such an environment, he believes, learners can make a comparison and contrast between their own culture and 'other' cultures in the textbooks.

Therefore, on the basis of the results of different studies undertaken by different authors and specialists shown above, it may be concluded that neither the Middle East in general nor Saudi Arabia in particular has adopted any significant policy toward a culturally neutral or balanced approach to teaching English as a foreign language. As a result, the Saudi EFL learners show a negative attitude toward learning English as a foreign language.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research procedure has two parts: content analysis and survey. **Access and Interaction1**, Middle East: Gold Edition series published by McGraw-Hill Education, UK, have been selected for content analysis. Both male and female students from levels 3, 4 and 5 in English Department, Najran University, KSA have been selected for eliciting their opinions on the role and impact of cultural elements in selected EFL coursebooks. The groups consisted of a total of 130 students. All the questionnaires were designed and distributed by the researcher and the number of valid questionnaires found was 128. The opinions of male and female students at different levels helped the researcher to reach a general but comprehensive conclusion. The questionnaires were translated into Arabic for the sake of clarity and easy grasp.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS: TEXTBOOK CONTENTS

1. Cultural Contents in INTERACTION 1:

A) Reading: [Elaine Kirn & Pamela Hartmann, Middle East: Gold Edition, McGraw-Hill Education, UK, 2009]

UNIT	Target Culture	Middle East Culture	Saudi Culture	International Culture	Culture Free
Chapter 1				Education	
Chapter 2					
Chapter 3				Lifestyle	
Chapter 4				Social norms	
Chapter 5				Lifestyle, Value	
Chapter 6				Lifestyle, Value	
Chapter 7		Lifestyle		Lifestyle	
Chapter 8	Lifestyle				
Chapter 9	Lifestyle, Value				
Chapter 10				Lifestyle, Value	

In the chart above we notice that the course book is totally devoid of Saudi culture. It contains one chapter that focuses on some aspects of Middle East lifestyle only. For example, this chapter begins with an Arabian proverb: "He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything".

B) **Writing:** [Elaine Kirn & Pamela Hartmann, Middle East: Gold Edition, McGraw-Hill Education, UK, 2009]

UNIT	Target Culture	Middle East Culture	Saudi Culture	International Culture	Culture Free
Chapter 1	Education, Lifestyle	Education, Lifestyle		Education, Lifestyle	
Chapter 2	Art & culture			Art & culture	
Chapter 3				Muslim Lifestyle	
Chapter 4				Social norms	
Chapter 5				Lifestyle	
Chapter 6				Folktales, Value	
Chapter 7				Lifestyle, habit	
Chapter 8	Art & Movie				
Chapter 9				Lifestyle & Education	
Chapter 10				Sports & Lifestyle	

The chart above, same scenario is indicated once again. The course book is totally devoid of Saudi culture. It contains one chapter that focuses on some aspects of Middle East lifestyle only.

C) **Listening and Speaking:**[Elaine Kirn & Pamela Hartmann, Middle East: Gold Edition, McGraw-Hill Education, UK, 2009]

UNIT	Target Culture	Middle East Culture	Saudi culture	International Culture	Culture free
Chapter 1	Education, Lifestyle				
Chapter 2	Social norms and style				
Chapter 3				Food & Lifestyle	
Chapter 4				Life rural and urban	
Chapter 5	Single life and culture				
Chapter 6				Culture, Lifestyle	
Chapter 7					Health
Chapter 8	Media and culture				
Chapter 9				Socializing and culture	
Chapter 10				Sports & Lifestyle	

The chart above shows that the course book is totally devoid of Saudi or Middle East Culture. The lifestyle, sociocultural norms, and the idea of single life discussed in this course book clearly contradict the L1 culture and tradition.

D) **Grammar:** [Elaine Kirn & Pamela Hartmann, Middle East: Gold Edition, McGraw-Hill Education, UK, 2009]

UNIT	Target Culture	Middle East Culture	Saudi Culture	International Culture	Culture free
Chapter 1	Education, Lifestyle				
Chapter 2				Family life, adventure	
Chapter 3				Food & Lifestyle	
Chapter 4				Social life, norms	
Chapter 5	Lifestyle and culture				
Chapter 6				Culture, Lifestyle	
Chapter 7					Health
Chapter 8	Media and culture				
Chapter 9				Socializing and culture	
Chapter 10				Customs & Lifestyle	

The above chart shows again that the course book is totally devoid of Saudi or Middle East Culture. The same discussion of lifestyle, sociocultural norms, and the idea of single life contradicts the L1 culture and tradition.

**2. Cultural Contents in ACCESS:**

A) **Reading and Writing:** [Pamela Hartmann, James Mentel & Ahmed Motala, Middle East: Gold Edition, McGraw-Hill Education, UK, 2009]

UNIT	Target Culture	Middle East Culture	Saudi culture	International Culture	Culture free
Chapter 1	Lifestyle				
Chapter 2	Economy				
Chapter 3	Lifestyle				
Chapter 4					Health
Chapter 5	Lifestyle, Value				
Chapter 6					Dream
Chapter 7				Value	
Chapter 8				Habit	
Chapter 9					Travel
Chapter 10					Environment

The same scenario. The chart above indicates that the course book is totally devoid of Saudi or Middle East culture. It discusses same lifestyle, sociocultural norms, and the idea of single life that contradict the L1 culture and tradition.

B) **Grammar:** [Milada Broukal, Middle East: Gold Edition, McGraw-Hill Education, UK, 2009]

UNIT	Target Culture	Middle East Culture	Saudi culture	International Culture	Culture free
Chapter 1		Lifestyle		Lifestyle	
Chapter 2				Lifestyle	
Chapter 3	Lifestyle				
Chapter 4	Lifestyle, Value				
Chapter 5	Lifestyle, Value				
Chapter 6	Lifestyle				
Chapter 7	Lifestyle				
Chapter 8	Lifestyle	Travel			
Chapter 9	Lifestyle				
Chapter 10	Lifestyle				
Chapter 11				Lifestyle, norms	
Chapter 12	Lifestyle				
Chapter 13				Lifestyle	
Chapter 14				Lifestyle, Value	

Almost the same scenario. The chart shows that the course book is devoid of Saudi culture except two Middle East documents. The lifestyle, sociocultural norms, and the idea of single life also contradict the L1 culture and tradition.

**C) Listening and Speaking:**[Emily Thrush, Robert Baldwin & Laurie Blass Middle East: Gold Edition, McGraw-Hill Education, UK, 2009]

UNIT	Target Culture	Middle East Culture	Saudi culture	International Culture	Culture free
Chapter 1				Lifestyle	
Chapter 2	Lifestyle				
Chapter 3	Lifestyle				
Chapter 4					Health
Chapter 5	Lifestyle				
Chapter 6					Dream
Chapter 7				Value	
Chapter 8				Habit	
Chapter 9					Travel
Chapter 10					Environment

The same scenario. The chart above indicates that the course book is devoid of Saudi or Middle East culture. The lifestyle, sociocultural norms, and the idea of single life contradict the L1 culture and tradition.

**Data Analysis: Questionnaire**

A total of 130 questionnaires were distributed among the participants and the number of valid questionnaires found was 128. Each questionnaire includes 14 items in the form of general statements and questions.

**Frequency Tables:**

No	Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Decided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
1	Cultural discussions/illustrations are important in language course books.	55	43.0	43	33.6	19	14.8	9	7.0	2	1.6
2	Only foreign cultural discussions/ illustrations are offensive to L1 cultures.	22	17.2	37	28.9	43	33.6	21	16.4	5	3.9
3	I recommend only Saudi cultural discussion/ illustrations in course books.	30	23.4	56	43.8	14	10.9	20	15.6	8	6.3
4	I recommend only foreign cultural discussions/ illustrations in course books.	12	9.4	16	12.5	18	14.1	56	43.8	26	20.3
5	I recommend distributions of both L1 & L2 cultures.	55	43.0	52	40.6	15	11.7	6	4.7	00	00
6	I recommend equal distributions of both L1 & L2 cultures.	20	15.6	20	15.6	17	13.3	47	36.7	24	18.8
7	I recommend more L1 and less L2/foreign cultures in course books	37	28.9	66	51.6	14	10.9	8	6.3	3	2.3
8	Most cultural discussions/illustrations are incompatible with Saudi culture and religion.	39	30.5	66	51.6	17	13.3	5	3.9	1	0.8
9	Some cultural discussions/illustrations directly violate Saudi Government laws.	37	28.9	69	53.9	16	12.5	5	3.9	1	0.8
10	Some cultural discussions/illustrations help us know world cultures	46	35.9	64	50.0	15	11.7	2	1.6	1	0.8
11	Learners are morally affected by inappropriate L2/foreign cultures.	42	32.8	70	54.7	10	7.8	3	2.3	3	2.3
12	I recommend inclusion of L1 cultures and exclusion of inappropriate L2/foreign cultures	48	37.5	67	52.3	5	3.9	6	4.7	2	1.6

		Appropriate		Inappropriate			
		F	P	F	P		
13	Look at the attached illustrations from the above course books. What is your opinion regarding these pictures in accordance with Saudi tradition, culture and religion?	21	16.4	107	83.6		
		Yes		No			
14	Do you think these textbooks are unsuitable for Saudi EFL learners on moral grounds?	112	87.5	16	12.5		

The table above shows 14 items of the questionnaire distributed to the participants and the percentages of their frequencies and opinions. For the sake of precision, the analysis of the data has been shown in three steps instead of five, i.e. Strongly Agree+ Agree as one unit, Undecided as one unit, and Strongly Disagree + Disagree as one unit with the their frequencies and percentages respectively.

In their opinion on the necessity of cultural discussions in EFL textbooks, 76.6% of the respondents believe that such discussions are beneficial to the learners, while 8.1% disagree with the view (Statement 1). However, their opinion varies on the amount and percentage of cultural items (L1 vs. L2). About 46.1% (Statement 2) participants consider the dominance of foreign culture unfair in EFL textbooks and about 67.2% prefer L1 culture instead of L2 (Statement 3). Students' opinion on Statement 5 in the Questionnaire indicates that they welcome a combination of both L1 and L2 cultures (83.6%). Even, they believe that such initiatives may help them learn world culture (Statement 10; 85.9%). However, they disagree that the distribution should be equal (Statement 6; 55.5%). They, on the other hand, prefer that more L1 and less L2 cultures should be included in all EFL textbooks (Statement 7; 80.5%).

In Section 2 of the questionnaire, students were asked about the nature and impact of the cultural contents of the selected course books on Saudi EFL learners and society. About 82.1% of the students think that the cultural discussions that they encounter in their texts contradict Saudi cultural and religious values (Statement 8). Even, 82.8% students believe that some cultural discussions directly violate Saudi state rules (Statement 9). A huge majority (87.5%) consider some foreign cultures as morally inappropriate and harmful to Saudi learners (Statement 11).

In Section 3, there were two attached pages. In one page, there was a picture of two young ladies in jeans and tea-shirts exposing the sensitive areas of their body. In the other page, there was the picture of a young lady driving a car (Question 13). The participants were asked whether those pictures were appropriate in accordance with Saudi tradition, culture and religion. Of the total respondents, 83.6% found the content of the illustrations inappropriate while 16.4% found no problem with the items. When the students were specifically asked whether they think the series prescribed for them and under our investigation is suitable for them, about 87.5% disagreed while 12.5% nodded positively.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The content analysis of **ACCESS** and **INTERACTION 1** series clearly showed that these textbooks hardly represent the Middle East cultural norms and values, let alone those of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results of the questionnaire indicated that learners' attitudes are more negative than positive to the treatment of culture. Learners believe that cultural discussions/illustrations are helpful in EFL learning, but they strongly disagree that the texts should include only foreign culture. Most of the respondents have agreed with the idea that EFL textbooks should contain both L1 and L2 cultures. They also believe that such an approach help them better understand world culture and heritage.

The analysis also shows that foreign cultural contents gained significantly higher frequency than local culture. The high percentage of foreign culture is supposed to enhance the learners' knowledge of the culture of the target language. But the irony is that a low percentage of local cultural contents may pose a threat to intercultural communicative competence. As the commercial textbooks are usually written for global markets, and often do not reflect the interests and needs of students, prospects for local cultural contents are few and far between (Richards, 2001).

As for the textbook assessment, it is fundamentally subjective and it rarely provides any definite yardstick. However, such evaluative parameters may help select and design appropriate course books that best serve both principles and pedagogy. To bring about more diversity in cultural aspects, textbooks may be enriched with local features representing different classes of people, their age, work and interest. For example, a unit on food and drinks may include Khubz (big-sized baked bread), Khabsa (made of rice and chicken), Shoaiya (soft-baked chicken), and Qahwa (a traditional casual drink) instead of beef, pork, and fish served with potatoes and vegetables or dishes such as Buffalo Burger, Bull Roast, Pork and Bean or even Bubble & Squeak and Toad-in-the-Hole accompanied by different kinds of hard drinks. Such texts may widely represent Saudi culture and tradition.

On the basis of the findings above, it may be concluded that learners have demonstrated a balanced view on the selections of cultural contents in their EFL textbooks. While about 84% students applaud an intercultural approach, almost the same overwhelming majority (84%) demand an appropriate foreign culture that does not interfere with their local values and traditions. Moreover, while a great majority of the participants stressed the need to make sure that local values are not ignored or threatened by an upsurge of international culture, they do not invalidate the possible role of



other cultures. The participants, however, believed local realities and scenarios should be given more priority in shaping their views than global perspectives.

This study has categorically focused on the views of the learners only. Therefore, further studies may focus on teachers' views to get a better and more comprehensive evaluation of the issue under investigation. Other issues such as local and commercial aspects of textbook may be explored. The results could be beneficial to the area of textbook editing on cultural teaching and learning. What cultural content to be included in EFL textbooks only partially focuses on the problem under discussion; the more important issue is how to select, organize and use this content in the context of a particular country, its norms, traditions and value systems. Such issues invite further investigations. The findings of this study were based on traditional printed textbooks, other types of formats like supporting electronic materials delivered by different modes of learning like Blackboard system (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014) or multimedia-delivered instruction (Mohsen, 2015, 2016a, 2016b) need to be treated with from the instructors' and learners perspectives. Future studies are recommended to consider such issues to provide comprehensive results.

APPENDIX. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

**Department of English  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Najran University**

**Programme: BA in English**

**Levels : 3 /4 /5**

**Session: 1435-36**

**Time: 20 minutes**

**Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID-----**

[Students' attitude towards **ACCESS** and **INTERACTION 1** gold series published for the Middle East countries, and their opinions on the illustrations/ academic discourse]

Read each item and mark  $\surd$  in the column that best expresses the level of your agreement.

L1 culture= Saudi culture

L2 culture= British/American/Australian cultures

Foreign culture= Other countries of the world excluding the above countries

**Part: A**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My Opinion on Culture in Course books						
1	Cultural discussions/illustrations are important in language course books.					
2	Only foreign cultural discussions/ illustrations are offensive to L1 cultures.					
3	I recommend only Saudi cultural discussion/ illustrations in course books.					
4	I recommend only foreign cultural discussions/ illustrations in course books.					
5	I recommend distributions of both L1 & L2 cultures.					
6	I recommend equal distributions of both L1 & L2 cultures.					
7	I recommend more L1 and less L2/foreign cultures in course books					

**Part: B**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My Opinion on INTERACTIONS 1 and ACCESS Middle East gold edition series in Saudi Cultural and Religious context.						
1	Most cultural discussions/illustrations are incompatible with Saudi culture and religion.					
2	Some cultural discussions/illustrations directly violate Saudi Government laws.					
3	Some cultural discussions/illustrations help us know world cultures					
4	Learners are morally affected by inappropriate L2/foreign cultures.					
5	I recommend inclusion of L1 cultures and exclusion of inappropriate L2/foreign cultures					

**Part C**

1. Look at the attached illustrations from the above course books. What is your opinion regarding these pictures in accordance with Saudi tradition, culture and religion?



a) Appropriate

b) Inappropriate

2. Do you think these textbooks are unsuitable for Saudi EFL learners on moral grounds?

Yes

No

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# Critical Thinking, Writing Performance and Topic Familiarity of Indonesian EFL Learners

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**Abstract**—This study seeks the evidence for the best pattern of relationship among critical thinking, writing performance and topic familiarity of EFL students at an Islamic university in Indonesia. Understanding the patterns of relationship is important to develop teaching syllabus, materials and evaluation method for teaching critical writing class. It employs ex-post-facto design to English department students. The instruments used were writing prompts and rubrics for assessing the observed skills namely critical thinking, writing performance and topic familiarity. Path analysis was used to figure out the pattern of relationship. The verified patterns of relationship show that on student initiated topic, critical thinking skills are triggered by topic familiarity and can be mediated by writing performance. Topic familiarity also has direct contribution toward critical thinking skills on student initiated topic. Similarly, on teacher initiated topic, critical thinking skills are supported by topic familiarity and can be mediated by writing performance as well. However, topic familiarity of teacher initiated topic does not have direct contribution toward critical thinking skills. The finding also indicates that the verified path model serves as the best pattern and can be used as a framework to predict the success of the student's critical thinking skills.

**Index Terms**—critical thinking, writing performance, topic familiarity, EFL, path analysis

## I. INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking has become a very important educational goal over the last two decades. Students need to have 'good thinking' skills by using reasoning and logic focusing on what to believe or do based on the mechanism such as conducting conceptual and argument analyses for problem solving and decision making (Pithers & Soden, 2001). Therefore, educators believe that this competence constitutes an important cognitive skill to be acquired.

Critical thinking in Indonesian context becomes buzzword especially after Reform Era in 1998 which was characterized by massive demonstration in which the freedom to express one's thought has become a crucial start to build critical thinkers (Emilia, 2010). Indonesia needs more figures of critical thinkers like Sukarno (the first president), Abdurrahman Wahid (the third president), and others. Therefore today developing critical thinking has also emerged in Indonesian education. Referring to the international benchmark of education, the 3R basic literacy (reading, writing, arithmetic) seems to be insufficient today. It needs to be completed into 4R basic competences (reading, writing, arithmetic, and reasoning), so that learners are equipped with skills needed to support their current and future life economically, socially and culturally (Hayat & Yusuf, 2010). This issue has become more significant particularly in facing the more challenging world.

Critical thinking skills do not stand alone as these skills tail another skill namely language skills. Becoming critical thinker is characterized by effective communication (Paul & Elder, 2008). This means that language clarity or more generally linguistic component is a crucial part of critical thinking which can be reflected through both speaking and writing. In other words, measuring critical thinking can be done through several ways involving speaking and writing competencies. This study concerns the critical thinking measured through writing in particular.

Among other types of writing, argumentative writing is considered the writing mode that best reflects student's critical thinking. In expository writing for instance, idea development can be done through classification, cause and effect, procedural or analytic exposition involving logic as the basic of critical thinking. However, in this type of writing there is no refutation as what required in argumentative writing to defend the claim. Recognizing opposing argument and making counter argument belong to elements of argumentative writing. Because arguments deal with probabilities, they must be qualified to convince readers (Hillocks, 2011). Therefore, in this study argumentative writing is chosen to assess student's critical thinking skills.

Student's argumentative writing can be used to measure not only the writing performance but also critical thinking skills. Student's writing performance is mostly indicated by the quality of the writing product, which focuses on its clarity, originality and correctness (Rahim et al., 2008). The critical thinking skills can be assessed on the elements which are reflected from the main aspects namely argument, evidence, recognition of opposition, refutation, conclusion, references, and fallacies (Stapleton, 2001). Argument or writer's view point on a topic is presented in the form of claims supported by a reason. Evidence constitutes statements or assertions which serve to strengthen the argument. Recognition of opposition refers to the identification of statements that run counter or offering alternative interpretations to those expressed in the claim. Refutation deals with the statement that the opposing viewpoints are

inadequate in some ways. A conclusion is a statement or series of statements in which a writer sets out what s/he wants the reader to believe. References are related to the use of citation to support the claim. Fallacies are errors in reasoning which do not support the claim. The last element is not always reflected in the writing.

The concern on critical thinking in the Indonesian context still needs exploration. A case study analyzing student's essays show that the problem is not on critical thinking itself but the related factors especially language and subject matter mastery (Samanhudi & Sampurna, 2010). Teachers, accordingly, need to provide suitable materials to enhance critical thinking (Sepriani, 2010) as well as to apply various uses of teacher's questions which can encourage the development of critical thinking (Yumarnanto & Widiyanto, 2005). Meanwhile, teaching critical thinking in Indonesia may involve some cultural constraints (Kameo, 2007). Hence, there is still inadequate empirical data on the critical thinking and critical pedagogy in Indonesian context. Accordingly, this study concerns with critical thinking in relation with other variables namely topic familiarity and writing performance.

Writing course is a part of the teaching of critical thinking skill. In the writing process, learners develop their critical thinking skills involved in generating ideas by using problem-solving process employing a range of cognitive and linguistic skills. These will lead learners to identify a purpose, to produce and shape ideas and to refine expression (White, 1995). A successful writing class should end with the development of critical thinking which is initiated by finding the learner's interest or expertise (Indah, 2009) and is geared from collaborative writing activities (Indah, 2010).

In this study, writing performance is assessed based on the fulfillment of the descriptors referring to the criteria of proficient writers. The competence to express ideas on written form requires effective writing skills in developing a topic to be knowledgeable, sequencing ideas logically, expressing meaning in correct diction, constructing sentences and using writing conventions. These writing skills refer to the criteria in evaluating composition namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics (Jacobs et al., 1981). The effective writing skills contribute to the better critical thinking skills.

In writing class, critical thinking is an inseparable aspect as identified by the writer during her eight year experience in teaching writing. She found that although the students had low writing performance, they tried to communicate their critical thinking skills through some ways such as writing in their first language or presenting their ideas in the teacher-student conference in pre-writing stage by using code-switch. Therefore, the writer believes that these skills need to be taught implicitly as shown by two preliminary studies done in English department at Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University. The first study intended to raise the critical thinking awareness through interest based writing publication. The students were involved in the collaborative writing activities which require the skills of evaluating claims of other writers both in class discussion and student-teacher conference. The students performed better claim as the result of the development of critical thinking skills as they are responsible for publishing their argumentative writing in the form of mini magazine. Meanwhile, the second study was carried out to see the ability of the students in analyzing their own essay and constructing a reflective writing in English and Indonesian. The results show that the students were able to reflect their critical thinking in both languages although there were some constraints in stating knowledge, making inference and giving evidence. Further, she assumed that it is the topic familiarity affecting the quality of student's writing and critical thinking. However, it needs more exploration on which one between student or teacher initiated topic affecting more on the quality of student's writing and critical thinking.

In this study, the knowledge of certain topic to be developed in the form of argumentative essay is categorized into two kinds namely student initiated topic and teacher initiated topic. The former is regarded to be more familiar than the latter as the topic to write is chosen by the students based on their interest and conceptual knowledge. In writing classes, teacher initiated topic derives from general topic which is usually obtained through brainstorming as pre-writing activity. In this study, the topic provided by the teacher has been proven to be unfamiliar which has been experimented in the pilot study. Accordingly, for the sake of the research, teacher initiated topic is regarded as unfamiliar topic and that does not mean that all of the topics initiated by writing teachers are unfamiliar to students.

The starting point of this study is to portray the patterns of relationship among the hypothesized variables contributing to student's critical thinking skills. The objectives of the research are to examine (1) whether student's topic familiarity on different topics is related to their writing performance and critical thinking skills, (2) whether the better topic familiarity on student initiated topic the better their writing performance and critical thinking skills will be, and (3) whether the better topic familiarity on teacher initiated topic the better their writing performance and critical thinking skills will be.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The word 'critical' originates from *kriticos* or discerning judgment and *kriterion* meaning standards which etymologically implies the development of discerning judgment based on standards (Pithers & Soden, 2001). In Webster's World University Dictionary (Taylor, 1965), critical thinking equals to careful analysis and judgment which imply an attempt at objective judgment so as to determine both merits and faults. The competence in developing judgment based on standard becomes the point to measure that one is called a critical thinker.

This study explores the critical thinking and writing. Regarding the relationship between both, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (1956 in Errihani, 2012) is suggestive in the context of English as Foreign Language as it contends that cognitive activity is determined by language. The cognitive activity can be reflected in written text and later be

understood well by the audience determined by the strength of the language (Vallis, 2010). As the consequence, the main concern of second language (L2) writers is primarily on linguistics as noted by Errihani (2012). Therefore, the reflection of critical thinking follows their linguistic skill represented by their writing and topic familiarity reflecting the background knowledge.

Background knowledge supporting reading skill is crucial for effective writing performance. There are five knowledge should be acquired by L2 writers. They are content knowledge, system knowledge, process knowledge, genre knowledge, and context knowledge. Content knowledge consists of the ideas and concepts in the topic area the text will address. System knowledge is related to syntax, lexis, appropriate formal conventions needed in creating the texts. Process knowledge deals with the ways to prepare and carry out a writing task. Genre knowledge is about the communicative purposes of the genre and its value in particular context. And context knowledge is linked to the readers' expectations, cultural preferences, and related texts (Hyland, 2003). By acquiring the knowledge, L2 writers can express their ideas in an appropriate and convincing way.

The issue on the relation between reading, writing and critical thinking becomes the concern of Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008). Based on the topics which are familiar to students, on the choice to live at home or alone and to travel with a group or alone, students were asked to write in Japanese and English. The results show that topic familiarity supports the student's ease in writing. In other words, it reinforces the student's tendency to apply the meta-knowledge they had acquired to their L1 and L2 essay writing although they tend to write differently in both languages. The students tend to write expository in Japanese and argumentation in English, but their essays show better idea organization in English.

Topic familiarity that influences reading skill also plays a role to enable writers shaping their rhetoric. Because of their background knowledge, the writer's critical thinking is expressed differently based on their problematization strategy in writing argumentative essays. As investigated by Mei (2006), high rated and low rated essays perform differently in discussing problematization of issues. Writers of high rated essay or students with high writing performance indicate a more strategic and appropriate use of evaluative resources to create clear lines of contrast positions. Whereas, low rated essays are characterized by a weaker sense of contrast in stance partly because the problematization strategy is lacking. In this case, the sources of dispute are not clarified resulting in a sense of a lack of authenticity to the potential debate resulting in a 'simplistic approach to an argumentative topic they raise.

### III. METHOD

This study employs a correlational design involving path analysis. As the study investigates the critical thinking skills as reflected in student's argumentative writing and there is no effort made by the researcher to manipulate the characteristics of any variables involved, this study is also called an ex-post-facto research. Based on the dimension of time, the design of this study is a cross-sectional one. The assessments of writing, topic familiarity and critical thinking skills are done only at the certain point of time of the data collection when the present study is conducted.

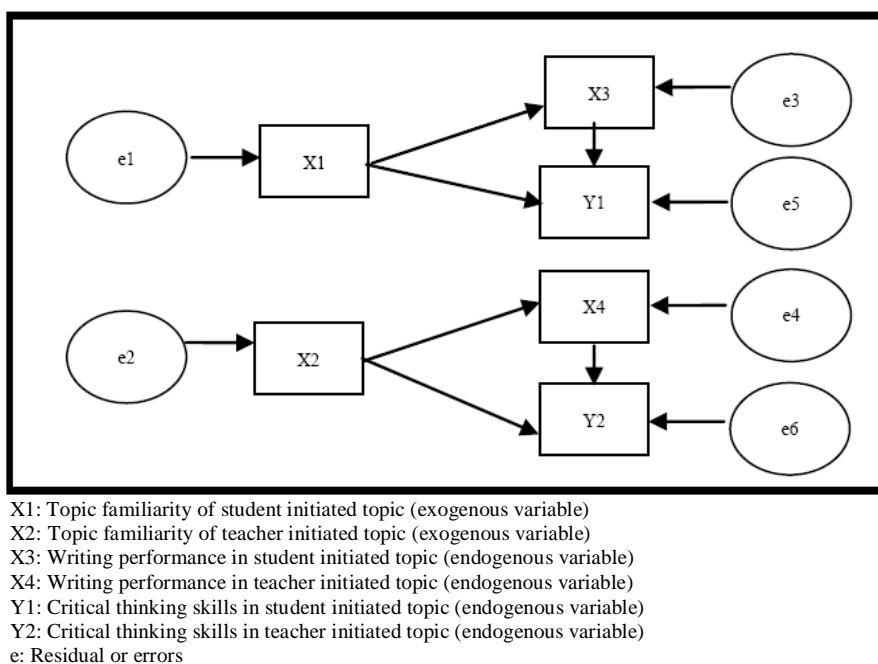


Figure 1 Estimated Path Model

The target population of this study is English department students of Maulana Malik Ibrahim University who had passed courses on paragraph writing and academic writing. This means that administratively they have reached

approximately post-intermediate to pre-advanced level of writing. Those taking critical writing course were taken as the sample with the total number 121 students, aged 20-22 consisting of 48 males and 73 females.

Some research instruments were employed to collect the data. They are: (1) writing prompts used to elicit data on student's argumentative writing on student initiated topic (or on free topic) and on teacher initiated topic (that is on "critical thinking"), (2) rubric for assessing topic familiarity through mind map which is adapted from Franker (2011) to identify the student's familiarity on certain topic seen from the arrangement of concepts, links and linking lines, content, and text, (3) rubric for assessing writing performance using ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al., 1981), and (4) rubric for assessing critical thinking skills adapted from Stapleton (2001).

The data were collected by administering the tests to gain the scores on writing, reading and critical thinking skills. However, the prompts were informed earlier to the students as students need to have the opportunity to prepare the content in advance of the writing because of the difficulties to manage the linguistic demands as second language writers and to allow students to demonstrate their best writing.

#### IV. RESULTS

In writing essays, students perform differently based on the topics given. Students at the first test write an essay based on their preference or which is called student initiated topic. Then, they write another essay based on teacher initiated topic. The different performance is summarized in Table 1 on the three observed aspects namely critical thinking skills, writing performance and topic familiarity.

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF STUDENT'S CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS, WRITING PERFORMANCE AND TOPIC FAMILIARITY

Measures	Critical Thinking Student Topic	Critical Thinking Teacher Topic	Writing Student Topic	Writing Teacher Topic	Topic Familiarity Student Topic	Topic Familiarity Teacher Topic
N	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean	17.485	18.570	78.940	83.290	40.675	37.925
Median	17.500	18.750	80.000	84.000	40.000	40.000
Mode	16.5	25.0	81.0	90.0	40.0	40.0
SD	3.8524	4.3583	8.7031	8.0004	10.6414	11.6453
Range	15.0	15.0	43.0	38.5	40.0	40.0
Max	25.0	25.0	94.0	98.0	60.0	60.0
Min	10.0	10.0	51.0	59.5	20.0	20.0

The ability to show critical thinking skills is higher in teacher initiated topic. However, the range of score is low, which means that the dispersion of score is not too far in both topics. On student initiated topic, the writing performance is lower than the teacher initiated topic. The range of the writing score is lower than the possible range which means that the dispersion is not too far in both topics. Meanwhile, on student initiated topic the students can elaborate more ideas compared to their topic familiarity on teacher initiated topic shown by the higher mean. The variation of the topic familiarity is larger in teacher initiated topic.

Based on scores showing the students skills on critical thinking, writing and reading, the path model is then examined. Using AMOS application, the regression weight obtained is as the following.

TABLE 2  
REGRESSION WEIGHT

Paths	Association	Estimate	P	Label
X1 → X3	Topic familiarity on Student Topic → Writing on Student Topic	.388	***	Significant
X1 → Y1	Topic familiarity on Student Topic → CT skills of Student Topic	.272	.003	Significant
X3 → Y1	Writing on Student Topic → CT skills of Student Topic	.397	***	Significant
X2 → X4	Topic familiarity on Teacher Topic → Writing on Teacher Topic	.212	.008	Significant
X2 → Y2	Topic familiarity on Teacher Topic → CT skills of Teacher Topic	.078	.326	Not significant
X4 → Y2	Writing on Teacher Topic → CT skills of Teacher Topic	.447	***	Significant

Table 2 shows the association between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The percentage of the contribution of the independent variables toward the dependent variables is represented by the determining coefficient as shown in Table 3 below:

TABLE 3  
SQUARED MULTIPLE CORRELATION

Paths	Associations	Determining Coefficient (R <sup>2</sup> )	Error
X1 → X3	Topic familiarity on Student Topic → Writing on Student Topic	0.150	.841
X2 → X4	Topic familiarity on Teacher Topic → Writing on Teacher Topic	0.377	.591
X1 X3 → Y1	Topic familiarity & Writing on Student Topic → CT skills of Student Topic	0.315	.678
X2 X4 → Y2	Topic familiarity & Writing on Teacher Topic → CT skills of Teacher Topic	0.430	.538

Among the six possible paths as illustrated in the estimated path model, the result of the computation using path analysis shows five significant relationships. As mentioned by the regression weight in Table 2, there is one path which is insignificant that is on the association between topic familiarity of teacher initiated topic and critical thinking skills in teacher initiated topic. The summary of the above analysis is shown in the empirical path model in Figure 2. In the model the insignificant path is shown by the omitted arrow linking the topic familiarity of teacher initiated topic and the critical thinking skills in teacher initiated topic.

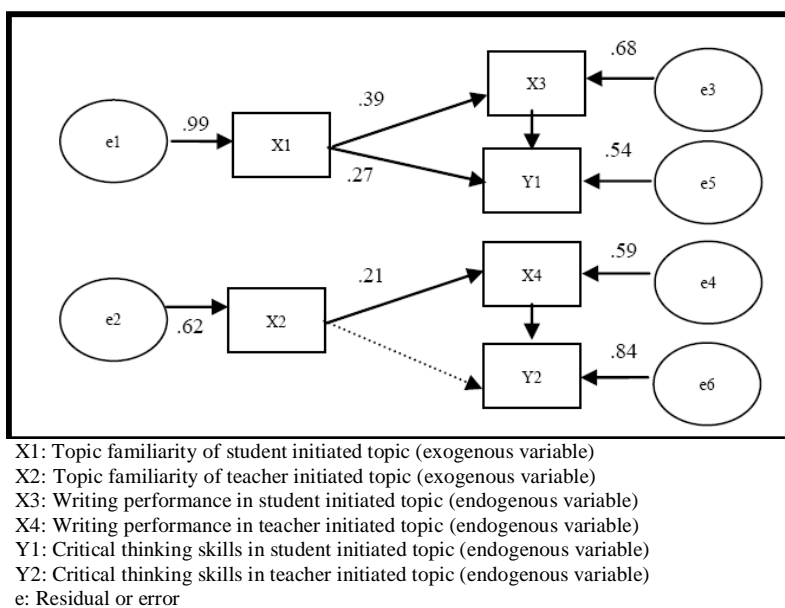


Figure 2. The Empirical Path Model

Based on the computation of coefficient of tolerance, the total determining coefficient of the path model is 0.7900 which means that the path diagram explains 79% information contained in the data. The rest 21 % are not explainable by the path or in other words are affected by other variables not mentioned in this study. It may further indicate that this path can be a good model to predict the critical thinking skills. The correlation of the path model is very strong. Finally, it is clear that the alternative hypothesis is retained as there is significant, positive and very strong correlation between the empirical path model and the variables of critical thinking, writing performance and topic familiarity.

V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the relationship among the three variables in this study covers two sections, on student initiated topic and on teacher initiated topic. On the path between the topic familiarity and writing performance in the student-initiated topic, the correlation is significant and positive. The strength of the correlation is moderate at the value 0.388. It can be inferred that the better topic familiarity the students in student initiated topic, the higher their writing performance will be.

On the path between the writing and critical thinking skills in student initiated topic, the positive and statistically significant correlation is found. The strength of the correlation is moderate at the value 0.397. It can be inferred that the higher the student’s writing performance in student initiated topic, the better reflection of their critical thinking skills will be.

The contribution of writing performance toward critical thinking skills seems to indicate that the result of the writing namely the learner’s essay is connected with cognitive domain (Overbaugh & Schultz, 2008) shown by the reflection of critical thinking elements. This means that the quality of the essay writing involves the development of the cognitive domain reflected in the critical thinking skills.

That writing performance undeniably associated with critical thinking seems to support Wade (1995). She postulates that the writing skill developed through a set of short writing assignment can tap the essential stages of critical thinking and creative thought. It may further denote that improving writing could guide students to shape the way they construct thought and to become more critical thinkers.

The path between writing performance and critical thinking skills which is significant is also reported in an experimental foods course at University of Hawaii as studied by Iwaoka and Crosseti (2008). The increase of the student’s skills in writing journal was followed by a better competence in reflecting their learning, developing critical reasoning and analyzing personal values. These activities required the practice of multiple cognitive skills which may yield in the development of critical thinking skills.

On teachers initiated topic, different result is found. The finding shows significant path on the association between the writing performance and topic familiarity in the teacher-initiated topic. It indicates that the better topic familiarity

on teacher initiated topic, the higher writing performance will be. This finding seems to support what Delaney (2008) found that there is positive yet weak correlation between student's performance or critical thinking in writing with teacher initiated topic and their writing performance. Similarly, in this study the strength of the correlation is also weak at the value 0.212. Delaney's study was done in the context of EFL and ESL learning which shows similar correlation to the EFL context in this study.

The significant and positive relationship between topic familiarity and writing performance in teacher initiated topic is also proven by Bacha (2010) who found that topic familiarity of teacher initiated topic supports building the context for better performance in writing argumentative essays done by L1 Arabic students in EFL environment at Lebanese American University, Lebanon. Furthermore, the better reading comprehension is helpful to improve writing performance. This is also asserted by Cahyono (1992) who found that in EFL writing context the comprehension drawn in the brain pattern happened to be significant to help students write better in their content-based summary writing. Therefore, these studies share the same context as well as finding with the current research on the postulate that the more familiar the students with a topic the better writing produced will be.

The significant and positive correlation also exists in the path between the writing and critical thinking skills in teacher initiated topic. The strength of the correlation is strong at the value 0.447. It indicates that the higher the student's writing performance in teacher initiated topic, the better reflection of their critical thinking skills will be.

The better writing performance is significant to promote the critical thinking as proven in this study which is in line with the finding of Oliver-Hoyo (2003). In her study, the improvement in student's writing is shaped by feedback given during the introductory college chemistry course. She monitors and assesses the implementation of critical thinking skills through the rubrics set to see whether certain standard has been achieved. Her research shares similar point of view with this study on the importance of using rubric as a valuable measuring tool of critical thinking.

The dominance of writing to improve critical thinking skill seems to support the theoretical framework postulated by Quitadamo and Kurtz (2007). Their study in a general education biology course in a state university at Pacific Northwest shows the improvement of critical thinking performance of students who experienced a laboratory writing treatment compared with those who experienced traditional quiz-based laboratory. In addition, analysis and inference skills increased significantly in the writing group but not in the non-writing group. Thus, writing skill significantly affects critical thinking performance as the building the ideas through writing also include some aspects of critical thinking skills.

On the association between topic familiarity and critical thinking skills in teacher initiated topic, there is no significant correlation found. The relationship occurs due to chance or only because of sampling error. Therefore, this path is considered noncontributing in the estimated model. This finding shares similar viewpoint with the theoretical framework postulated by Delaney (2008). She found that by using teacher initiated topic, the ESL and EFL students in Venezuela perform different critical thinking skills. The analytic writing or response essays were found to engage learners in more critical thinking than the summary writing which requires identifying important information in the source text given by the teacher. In addition, the student's performance or critical thinking in writing with teacher initiated topic is weakly correlated with their writing performance. It signifies that the student's performance in teacher initiated topic is not as predictable as in student initiated topic. This may further indicate that using student initiated topic students can prepare or plan better to improve their performance in writing to reflect critical thinking skills. However as the finding does not confirm with more evidence from previous research, there is a need for more studies that explore the relationship between reading and critical thinking skills in teacher initiated topic.

The finding in this study stating that there is no significant correlation between topic familiarity and critical thinking skills in teacher topic is relevant to the specific conception of critical thinking. Critical thinking is context specific involving background knowledge on certain subject matter only and in another (Emilia, 2010). It means that when the student's specialized knowledge of the topic to write is insufficient then the critical thinking cannot be identified well.

The teacher initiated topic in this study is on the issue relevant with how to improve reasoning ability. It deals with the teacher expectation. The students might fail to reach the teacher's expectation both in describing knowledge and reflecting reasoning ability. The failure to meet the teacher's expectation is because of some factors not identified in this study. However, one of the possible factors identified is the weakness of the writing prompt.

Regarding the empirical evidence on teacher initiated topic showing weak correlation, it signifies the limitation of this study that deal with the assessment instruments, especially those testing critical thinking. While the instrument selected was carefully chosen from among all available published inventories and seemed most appropriate for the study, there is still much work to be done to refine and to improve existing instrument. In addition, developing additional instruments that adequately measure student's gains in critical thinking skills and dispositions is needed.

Another limitation of the analysis in this study deals with the measurement of student's writing product in the form of argumentative essay. Yet, it did not address the flow of mental activities underlying student's critical thinking during writing process. Thinking aloud protocols are not used to measure the stream of thought contents students engaged in while composing.

## VI. CONCLUSION



The verified patterns of relationship show that on student initiated topic, critical thinking skills are initiated by topic familiarity and can be mediated by writing performance. Topic familiarity also has direct contribution toward critical thinking skills on student initiated topic. Whereas, on teacher initiated topic, critical thinking skills are initiated by topic familiarity and can be mediated by writing performance as well. The path model serves as the best pattern and can be used as a framework to predict the success of the student's critical thinking skills. The writing performances in both student and teacher initiated topic record the highest contribution toward critical thinking skills. It means that regardless the type of topic chosen the higher the student's writing performance the better reflection of their critical thinking skills will be. Because the student's writing performance is followed by the betterment of their critical thinking skills, writing performance is proven to be a good predictor of student's critical thinking skills.

On student initiated topic, the better reading on their topic, the higher their writing performance will be. It implies that the specialized knowledge obtained in the reading process may influence the quality of the essay as the product of writing stage. The finding also signifies that the higher the student's writing performance, the better reflection of their critical thinking skills will be. Furthermore, the better student's reading skill on their topic also entails better reflection of their critical thinking skills. It shows that the recalling of information through reading for understanding ways of thinking and writing stimulate the reproduction of knowledge.

On teacher initiated topic, the better skill in reading with the given topic, the higher student's writing performance will be. This finding shows that the student's ease in writing and their better writing performance are affected by the comprehension of the topic to write. The finding also indicates that the higher the student's writing skill, the better reflection of their critical thinking skills will be.

As this study examined the patterns of relationship among critical thinking, writing performance and topic familiarity, more empirical finding is needed to explore with the goal of a broad, unified concept of critical thinking skills. The relationship between the reflection of critical thinking in everyday reasoning and that in various fields of expertise also needs further research. In addition, training Indonesian students especially those studying in Islamic universities to think critically can be done implicitly through critical writing course. Once the student's linguistic aptitude is shaped, the reflection of critical thinking skills will follow. The skills such as analyzing complex issues and generating solutions through arguments, making connections and transferring insights to new contexts, and developing standards for decision making, are necessary to succeed in academic and in society.

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# Application of Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) for Students' Focused Teaching (SFT) in EFL Class: An Experimental Study in the Summer Remedial Course for Adult Learners

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**Abstract**—Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) for Students Focused Teaching (SFT), known as '*students-centered learning*' (SCL), is the acknowledged pedagogical strategy. This research article is based on an experiment in an EFL class and analyses various fundamental aspects of CLS concentrating on the classroom barriers, diagnosis of students' linguistic problems and the results of the adopted strategies. During eight weeks of teaching instructions, three tests of integrated Reading and Writing skills were conducted in Level-3/4 classes in Preparatory Years Program with intervals. The students were given treatment through two different methodologies viz., Cooperative Learning Strategy and Traditional Learning Strategy (TLS) in two different groups. It was hypothesized that CLS would motivate them to participate in the classroom activities. Major research findings are that to achieve teaching objectives successfully, motivated and trained teachers are required to handle the students who do not cooperate in the CLS implementation process. The study also found out other pedagogical problems in the process of implementation by comparing CLS and TLS. The comparative analysis of the experimental and the controlled groups revealed that there was no significant impact of CLS on adult EFL learners. The study discusses the factors for the lack of CLS impact on the EFL learners and gives recommendations.

**Index Terms**—pedagogy, cooperative learning strategies, traditional learning strategies, diagnosis, motivated teachers, linguistic needs

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Teaching methodology as a medium that imparts knowledge to learners has gone through various phases of changes and improvements over the years. Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was considered to be the best about a hundred years ago when Latin was taught in European schools. Ever since English, Italian and French started gaining significance in the post 16<sup>th</sup> century era, and Latin started to diminish from the scene. However, GTM had remained a dominant method of teaching a foreign language in Europe from 1840 to 1940. Gradually it was realized that GTM was not able to address the comprehensive linguistic needs of a learner because it mainly focused on reading and writing skills within the framework of strict grammatical rules, so the researchers started their efforts to find a better method to fulfil the genuine requirements of the learners.

In 1900, a new method of language teaching was introduced in Germany and France i.e., the Direct Method, also called the Natural Method because foreign language was taught naturally to the learners without the influence of the mother tongue. In this method, the element of translation from one language to another was completely banished. During the World War II, Audio-Lingual Method which is based on Behaviourist Theory was introduced. According to the proponents of this method, language was believed to be a habit formation that could be taught by the system of reinforcement, so the focus was made mainly on teaching new structures consolidating them by doing language drills.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century when a large population of people migrated to Europe and United States from various parts of the world mainly for jobs or permanent settlement. This huge influx of foreign workers put pressure on the educators to design a new teaching method that could help to familiarize them with the target language so that they could comfortably communicate with the people in their social or professional circles. CLT was welcomed as a useful teaching approach that could be employed in ELT because it could

target all the four skills i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing of a foreign language through meaningful interaction with the emphasis on communication and meaning. In fact, CLT was seen as an effective vehicle of transmission of knowledge through flexible communication.

The concept of Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) was introduced in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was referred to by Johnson and David, the members of the *Association for the Study of Higher Education* (ASHE) in George Washington University (Washington D. C.) in the United States in 1991. The notion of CLS is highly socialized, interactive, modern, and communicative that involves almost all the individual students to participate actively in small groups or pairs to exchange their understanding, knowledge and expertise during the classroom activities assigned to them. In fact, it is the application of multiple minds to undertake a single or multiple but similar tasks in collaboration with their peers to achieve a common goal. This kind of learning takes place in a socialized and collaborative environment and every student plays an important role in the group to accomplish the given task. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator, an organizer, a helper and a manager of the classroom activities employing the students as the tools of teaching and communication to maximize the process of learning to achieve the desired objectives. The students cooperate with one another usually in groups or pairs in the supervision of the teacher to fulfil the activity with the help of their peers. The pedagogical support and guidance is also provided to them by the teacher whenever required so that the students may not develop any feelings of boredom, mental stress or failure.

This pedagogy focuses on the fulfilment of the linguistic needs of the students, rather than those of teachers and administrators who are directly or indirectly involved in the educational process. A teacher facilitates the learners by paying greater attention to their language deficiencies, needs, interests, previous knowledge of the subject and so on. Instead of building an entirely new edifice of knowledge, in CLS an ESL teacher polishes, renovates and expands the old building of students' knowledge on the basis of their backgrounds. To accomplish his targets, a teacher sometimes overlooks the needs of the curriculum, predetermined time for the course completion and the formal standards of teaching in Cooperative Learning Strategies.

According to ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report-4 by Johnson and David, W. (1991), Cooperative Learning has the following basic elements that distinguish it from other teaching strategies:

- 1) positive interdependence
- 2) face to face promotional interaction
- 3) individuals' accountability and personal responsibility
- 4) frequent use of interpersonal and small groups' social skills and
- 5) regular group processing of current functioning

For the successful implementation of CLS, it is essential to focus on the above mentioned principles so that the maximum benefits may be achieved through the delivery of the lesson. In fact, CLT is the latest version of SFT that ensures maximum flexibility in the process of language learning. The learner enjoys maximum freedom to choose the subject matter of his own interest, develop his own learning strategies and learn according to his mental capacity by utilizing the flexible time frame. Thus it develops a sense of motivation and responsibility in the learner to achieve success.

### *B. Scope of the Study*

Although CLS has been a very useful pedagogical method in ELT, it cannot be confined to language teaching only. In fact, the use of CLS is equally useful in teaching almost all the subjects where students can cooperate with each other in small groups in particular and with their classmates in general by exchanging and sharing their prior knowledge and experience. Likewise, CLS has been found very effective and useful method for both young as well as adult learners as they can accelerate the pace of their learning through this strategy.

Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) have been found very successful in primary schools where young students face problems in learning in isolation. They feel more confident in small groups with their peers and usually perform much better with enthusiasm and excitement to excel over other groups. In fact, CLS provide a platform to the students where they can display their talent explicitly in a socialized atmosphere to accomplish their academic targets. It also creates a sense of healthy competition within the group or class by playing an effective role in achieving the academic targets. However, it does not mean that the use of CLS may not be useful in an adult learners' class. In fact, adult learners can exploit this method in a much better way than young learners because they are more experienced learners and can take advantage of each other's knowledge and expertise to achieve their common academic objectives.

The place of CLS is of a great significance to anyone who is involved in the field of teaching English as a second/foreign language. Generally, the students get motivated when their individual needs are focused. They start taking interest in their lesson, work enthusiastically, and develop a positive attitude towards their studies. When they see themselves successfully accomplishing the classroom tasks along with their peers, they feel triumphant and become effective learners and willing workers in various social situations as a result. They also develop their critical thinking skills evaluating their academic position among their peers and try to improve themselves.

On the other hand, if the students find themselves neglected or less focused by the teacher, they may behave disruptively in the class. They sometimes tend to start misbehaving with the teacher and develop a negative attitude towards language learning activities. Thus the teacher fails to achieve the targets set for the successful delivery of his/her lesson. However, through the application of CLS, a teacher attaches great importance to individual students

addressing their linguistic problems, so it is less likely for the teacher to face an embarrassing situation in the class. Consequently, the teacher succeeds in the implementation of CLS, and leads the students towards the achievements of their academic success.

Non-compliance to Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) forces an instructor to teach the same kind of material to all students in the class with little variations to their mental levels or learning capacity. To avoid knowledge gaps, this approach of teaching brings language inputs to all the students to the similar content in the equal span of time regardless of their previous educational background. This kind of teaching mainly focuses on the curriculum not the learner which is mostly followed in our traditional institutions. Unlike Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS), in Traditional Learning Strategies (TLS), the students usually learn in isolation and cannot benefit from their peers' knowledge and expertise.

To achieve magnificent results in a challenging ESL class or elsewhere, a teacher has no choice but to opt for flexible learning techniques mostly found in CLS. This method strengthens students' motivation, promotes active peer communication, reduces disruptive behaviour, builds student-teacher relationships and promotes productive learning in the class. Both the students as well as teachers can reap the maximum academic benefits through the implementation of this pedagogical approach.

### C. Statement of the Problem

Usually the techniques of various teaching methods are confused by the teachers and no line of demarcation has ever been drawn by the researchers to differentiate between them. Therefore, a need has been felt to clarify the differences between CLS and TLS so that maximum classroom benefits may be exploited by effective implementation of one of the methods. Similarly, the study also tends to indicate the possible barriers and challenges that may surface during the implementation process of CLS suggesting solutions to the practitioners to cope with them successfully. Finally, the study focuses on the results of CLS in an EFL class and compares them with the results produced from other traditional methods so that a solid conclusion may be drawn to set a priority for choosing the best possible option in an ELT class. Thus the research questions for the present study are as following:

1. What are the barriers and challenges in the implementation process of Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) in a language class in EFL context?
2. What are the results of the application of CLS in an EFL class and how these results are better or worse than Traditional Learning Strategies (TLS)?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The application of Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS) is a novel thought that aims at further improvement in the previous methods of teaching. Most recently, the idea of CLS has been floated by language researchers emphasizing the need for a change in the traditional teaching environment where an average student has been found passive, apathetic and bored. According to them, it generates a sense of responsibility and ownership among the students giving them greater autonomy and control over the choice of subject matter, learning styles and pace of study as they work in groups.

Johnson, R. and David, W. (1991) state that CLS is the instructional use of small groups to make the students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. In fact, this methodology links the process of development with the readiness of the learners to achieve better and positive results through teacher-learners' and peers' mutual interaction. Mostly the classroom activities are done in small groups with active and responsible participation of each and every member of the group. With very few limitations like slow pace of teaching, students' choice of learning method and flexible time span for course completion, the CLS has been found one of the ideal methods for teaching L2.

In connection with CLS, a phrase *students focused teaching* (SFT) has widely been used in research literature with different terms like *students-centred learning* (SCL), *flexible learning*, *experimental learning*, and *self-directed learning*. The idea of SFT has been credited to Hayward (1905) who used the term '*students-centred learning*' for the first time in early 20th century. The term SCL is also associated with the work of Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and more recently with Malcolm Knowles (1913- 1997) (O'Sullivan 2003). In fact, SFT/SCL is a pedagogical approach that is integrated in cooperative learning strategies (CLS) where students are involved with their peers to learn and enjoy the lessons under the vigilant supervision of their teachers. Van Dat Tran (2014) strengthens these views by stating that studies involving cooperative learning (CL), one kind of student-centered approach have emerged as an internationally important area of social science research among researchers.

According to Thomas S. C. Farrell and George M. Jacobs, (2016) application of CLS demands skilful perseverance from the teacher to monitor and improvise the peers' interaction to achieve the common goals. Focus on the learners' interaction with their peers in the class is a key factor that is inevitable for successful language teaching. Marianne Celce-Murcia (2001) believes that the teachers' methodologies should be compatible with the students' learning styles. Lack of harmony between them can lead to an ultimate failure of the lesson. A language teacher should be capable enough to understand the students' individual needs making his lessons fairly attractive, communicative and fruitful. Therefore, an unskillful or untrained teacher may not be able to handle CLS successfully in an EFL class.

Jessica Townsend, Alex Dillon and Simone Sequiera (2006) opine that students-centered learning is a non-traditional process of learning that gives more freedom, flexibility and responsibility to the students to absorb information. It allows the students to choose their own style and pace of learning which suits their mental capacity. According to Min

Han, CLS can create more interesting and relaxed atmosphere in the class that reduces the students' anxiety and promotes students-students and teacher's-students' relationships stimulating the learners' motivation and increasing their self-confidence.

Referring to the SFT, a group of teachers of the Royal Institute of Technology Stockholm, Sweden, states that teaching normally takes place during delivering the lessons, whereas learning is a synchronous or asynchronous process that is likely to be an outcome of facilitation provided by the teacher. Students can also take their own initiative to learn through peers. According to their viewpoint, classroom performance of a teacher, students' group work strategies and students' informal social interaction are some of the basic elements of conducive learning.

Referring to SFT, Jessica Townsend and others in their article on "*Student-Centered Learning and Meta-cognitive Strategies*" conclude: "Student centered learning is an evolving concept which promises to impart students with a thorough understanding of course materials by giving them more responsibility in the learning process. Though it could be argued that students are ultimately responsible for their leaning in any pedagogical method, traditional teaching practices frequently demand that students adapt to a specific teaching style before they can begin to truly absorb information. A central goal in student centered learning is to overcome this impasse by freeing the students to learn in the way that best suits them individually."

Identifying some of the benefits of CLS in his PhD research thesis, Dr. Khaled Al-Basher, one of the co-authors of this article (August 2012), says that it helps the weak students to learn from their strong counterparts as being in the same group. He further opines that it also enables the members of the group to polish some of their skills such as leadership and thinking skills encouraging the less motivated students to accomplish the task (p.18).

In fact, learning a new language is diversely complex phenomenon where students' response is rarely similar. Many factors affect the pupils' response such as their personal or family attitudes towards L2 learning, their previous learning experiences, the students-teachers' rapport, the level of enthusiasm and professionalism of the teacher etc. The proposition of CLS fulfills all these basic requirements to a great extent that are essential for productive results.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Creswell (2009) points out, "quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables" (p-22). Accordingly, to compare and contrast the results of Cooperative Learning Strategy (CLS) with Traditional Learning Strategy (TLS) and to find out their implementation barriers, two groups consisting of ten students in each one of them have been chosen randomly who have been taught integrated Reading and Writing Skills for eight weeks i.e., 12 hours a week. In the Experimental Group A, CLS has been employed throughout the course with slight deviation, whereas in Controlled Group B, TLM has been used to teach the students.

The variables in the quantitative research can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009). In order to judge the improvement of the students, a quantitative tool has been used in which three written tests have been served at different times during the course. In the first week of the Course, a pre-test was given to the students of both the groups to judge their initial level. The remaining two tests were served in the fifth and then in the eighth week at the conclusion of the course. The questions of the pre- test were designed on MCQs based on grammar such as punctuations, correct use of articles, prepositions and pronouns along with a reading comprehension passage (refer to appendix-A). Almost the same question pattern was repeated in the second test but their level was a bit difficult with some additional questions based on vocabulary, grammar and paragraph writing (refer to appendix-B). In the final test, a topic was given for writing a short essay of 12 sentences along with intermediate level comprehension passages with vocabulary and grammar (refer to appendix-C). During the final exam a questionnaire comprising ten variables was also served to record the students' feedback on both the methodologies employed during the course (refer to appendix-D) using a survey. The objective was to provide a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of the population (Creswell, 2009).

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Apart from administering pre-test, and two post-tests viz., the mid-term and the final, a ten-item feedback survey on the Likert-scale (another quantitative research tool) was distributed to both the experimental and the controlled group. We will first discuss the responses of all the items in the feedback survey making a comparison between the experimental group and the controlled group with the help of bar charts. After this, both the groups will be analysed based on their performance in all the tests to find out the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the EFL Saudi students.

#### A. Analysis of the Students' Feedback

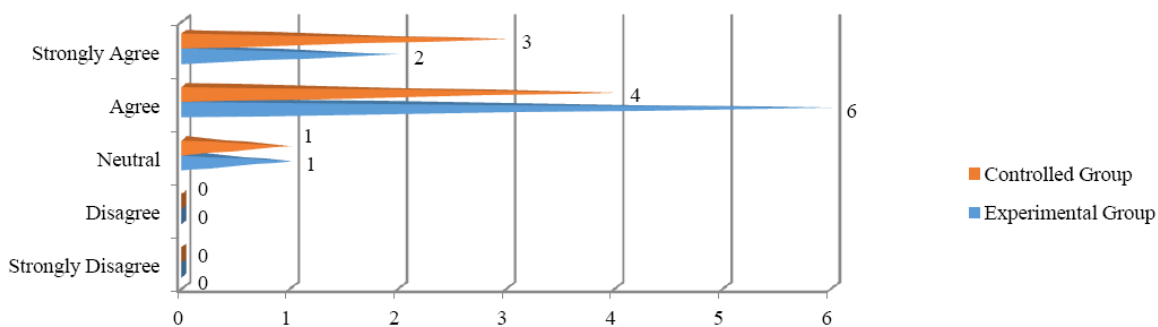


Figure 1: Item-1. I feel comfortable in cooperative learning (in groups) in Reading/Writing class because I can learn and understand in a friendly way without any stress.

In response to item number one of the survey questionnaire, majority of the students (75%-85%) of both the groups have expressed their positive feedback that they feel quite comfortable in Reading/Writing class while learning through CLS. Not a single student from both the groups has given a negative opinion which means that CLS is quite convenient for the students and they learn from one another’s knowledge and experience. However, about 15% to 25% of the students have expressed their ignorance about the experiment mostly due to their lack of interest in their studies. Thus, it becomes quite evident that CLS is one of the most favorite and popular methods of language teaching and a majority of the EFL adult learners prefer to learn L2 through this strategy.

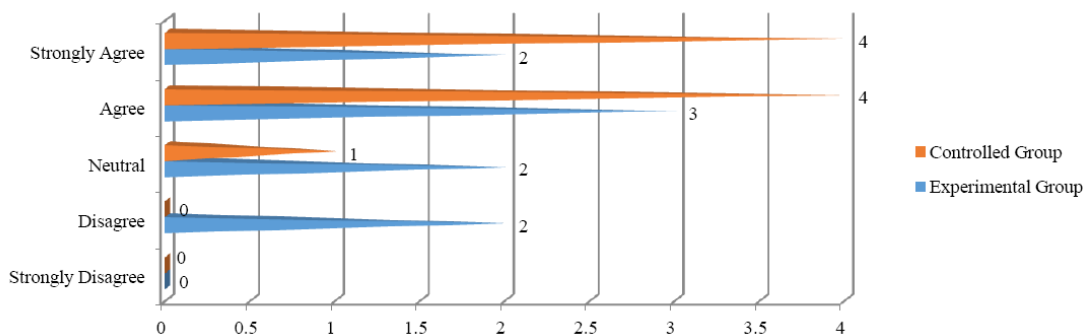


Figure 2: Item-2. In groups/cooperative learning, I enjoyed participation in the classroom activities and benefited from the knowledge and skills of my class fellows.

A difference of opinion is clearly visible in both the groups in response to survey item number two. The Controlled Group that practiced TLS believe that they can enjoy the classroom participation and benefit from the knowledge of their peers without a single disagreement. However, about 10% of the students in Controlled Group believe that they may not be able to enjoy or learn from their peers while practicing CLS. This disagreement on part of these students is perhaps due to their lack of exposure to CLS because they were taught through TLS throughout the course.

Strangely enough, about 20% of the students from Experimental Group (EG) express their negative opinion about the CLS which means that they were unable to get much benefit from the experience. Similarly, another 20% reserve their opinion about the question. Only 50% students from EG believe that they enjoyed and benefited from their peers while practicing CLS in an EFL adult learners’ class. Safely we can conclude that generally EFL students enjoy in groups and learn from the experiences of their classmates with a few exceptions.

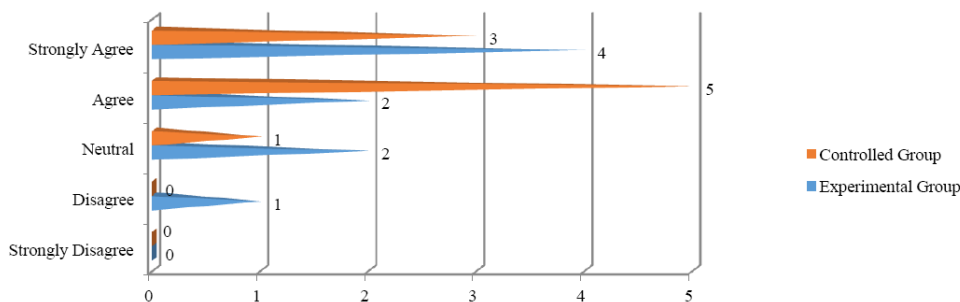


Figure 3: Item-3. Cooperative learning provided me an opportunity to make my valuable contribution to enhance my fellow students’ knowledge and vice versa.

A majority of the students in both the groups believe that CLS provides them an opportunity to share their knowledge with their peers. Through this method, the students can learn from one another’s knowledge and can also make their own valuable contribution. However, approximately 10% students surprisingly expressed their disagreement from the EG which indicates that a teaching method is not always equally beneficial for all the students. Some of the exceptions are almost always found and CLS is not an exception. Therefore, the practitioners should employ all those methods which are likely to produce better results for majority of the students. Consistent application of a single method will not be the appropriate way of language teaching.

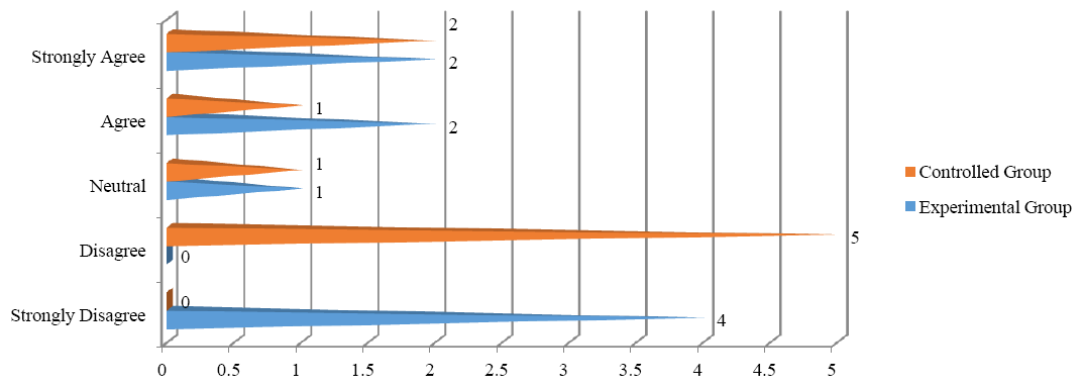


Figure 4: Item-4. In cooperative learning, students get too excited making noise in the class, so the class gets out of control for the teacher spoiling the learning process.

In response to this question, a visible majority of the students from both the groups have registered their disagreement that CLS spoils the classroom environment because of the students’ excitement. In fact, a trained and an experienced teacher can handle the situation perfectly well. A noticeable point in the bar chart is the strong disagreement on the part of the EG that actually practiced CLS during the case study. It means that they have practically observed that CLS does not let the students go out of control. Rather their performance becomes more productive and useful in groups. Even the students of CG have also opted for disagreement which strengthens the idea that CLS never allows the students to get out of control spoiling the learning process. In fact, it is an effective method of teaching that enables the students to work in a conducive and friendly environment for better results. However, the teacher’s personality and students’ motivational level can ultimately decide the success or the failure of CLS in an EFL adult learners’ class.

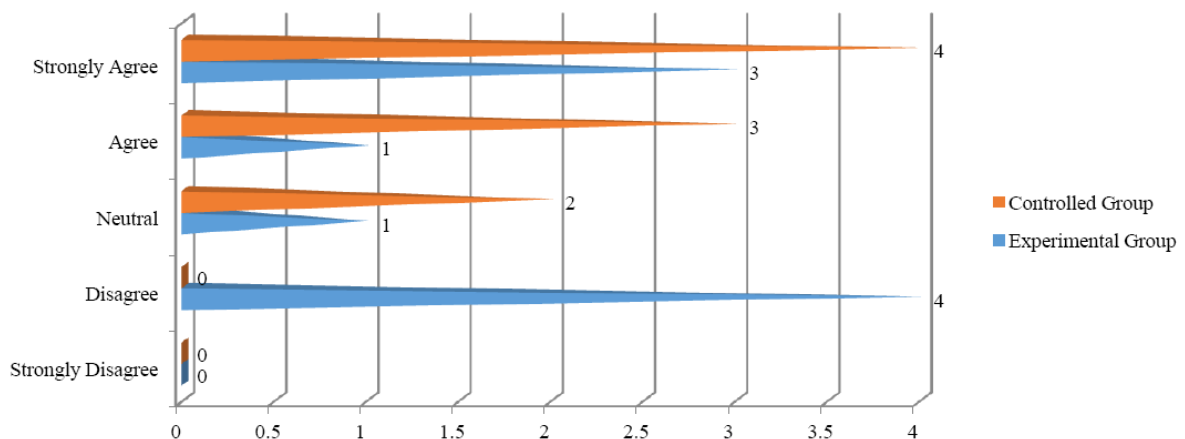


Figure 5: Item-5. Sometimes, cooperative learning strategy becomes boring; therefore, the teacher should not stick to this method only. He should employ a variety of methods to avoid repetition and boredom.

Change is the spice of life and teaching is not an exception. Due to this reason, about 80% students in the CG have opted for agreement or strong agreement in response to item number 5. They believe that various methods of teaching should be employed in an EFL adult learners’ classroom to engage them meaningfully. However, the feedback of the EG is quite different. About 50% of the students show their disagreement and record their opinion in the favor of CLS. However, 42% students’ opinion goes with the opinion of CG learners’ who give their verdict in favor of the variety of methods. This scattered response indicates that the role of the teacher is vital while practicing CLS. If the teacher fails to motivate the students, they will develop their dislike for CLS. On the contrary, if the teacher is able to maintain their motivational level, CLS will prove quite effective and productive for EFL adult learners.



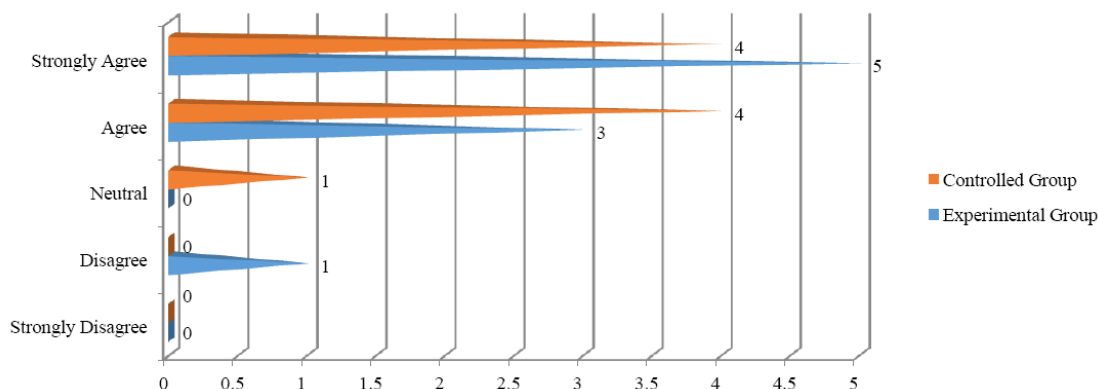


Figure 6: Item-6. The use of variety of methods including cooperative learning strategy by an English teacher helps the students to learn more effectively than by using a single method.

In response to item number six, about 90% students of both the groups have acknowledged the fact that the use of variety of teaching methods including CLS are more productive in an EFL class than a single teaching method. However, CLS should also be included among these methods. In fact, learning experience is highly laborious for the students and the use of a single teaching method sometimes loses its effectiveness. Therefore, it is very significant for the teacher to be vigilant to change his teaching method when he feels that students are losing interest in the lesson. If the teacher fails to do so, most probably his delivery of the lesson may not produce the desired results.

Responses of both the groups are quite natural and reflect human nature that always longs for a change. It has been observed that the employment of various teaching methods in an EFL/ESL class maintains the interest level of the students throughout the class which otherwise may not be possible.

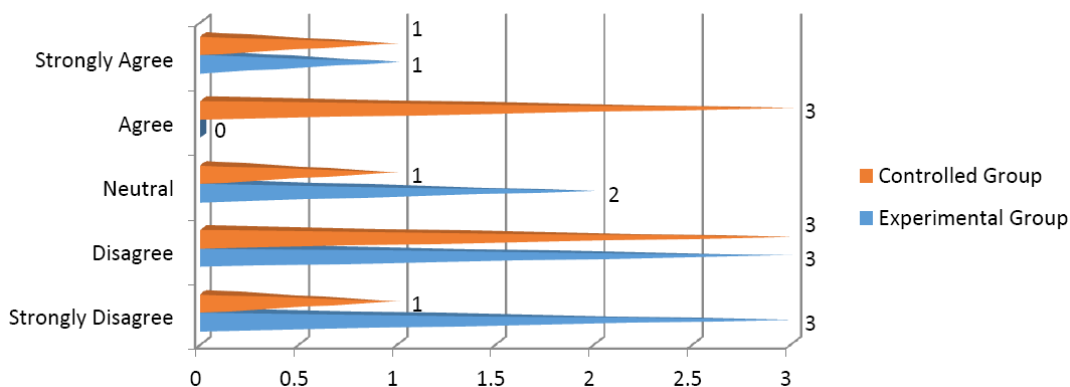


Figure 7: Item-7. I prefer to work individually in the class rather than in groups; I feel uncomfortable in group because it slows down my pace of studies.

This response on part of the CG is quite strange because it contradicts their previous opinion in item number one where 80% of them have opted for group learning. Here, about 50% students of CG have expressed their opinion in disagreement that they feel uncomfortable in group learning because it slows down their pace of learning. Perhaps the main reason of their disagreement emphasizes the pace of learning which usually slows down in group learning. However, in group learning intelligent students have to sacrifice their learning speed for the sake of other students' understanding.

Nevertheless, the students of EG have categorically disagreed and rejected the notion that they feel uncomfortable in group learning which proves that the Experimental Group students benefited from the CLS during the eight weeks of studies. Only 10% of them have got the opposite opinion which is quite logical.

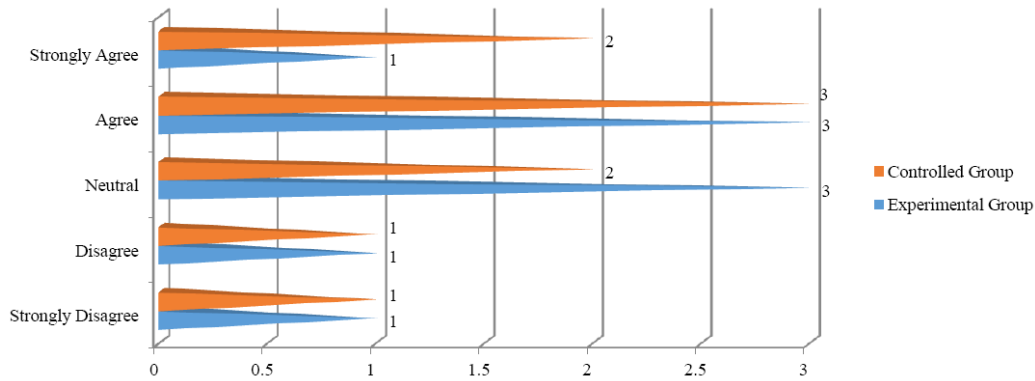


Figure 8: Item-8. Traditional learning where teacher explains everything in the class moving quickly from one exercise to another is better than cooperative learning where students are at liberty to finish their activities in flexible time.

This response of the students is another contradiction that prefers TLS over CLS. In fact, EFL students love spoon feeding; they want the teacher to do everything for them in the class which is technically wrong in an EFL/ESL class. However, about 25%-30% students of both the groups got confused, so they failed to opt for any option. Only 12% of them have expressed their disagreement about the statement. The responses of both the groups are almost the same that indicates that students usually try to avoid hard work and want to prefer ready made things in the class which is not recommendable. The response in item number eight, in fact, reflects one of the bitterest truths that most of the EFL adult Arab learners are mostly interested in their results instead of the acquisition of L2.

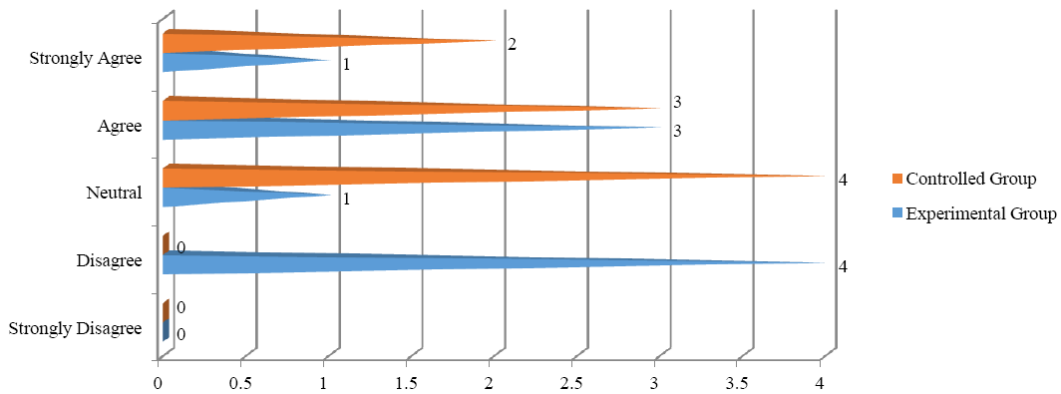


Figure 9: Item-9. I enjoyed cooperative learning more during reading comprehension activities rather than writing activities.

Students' response to item number nine is quite a new revelation which indicates that CLS is not very successful and interesting in Reading skill as compared to Writing skill. About 55% of the students of EG believe that CLS in reading comprehension activities has not been very successful. The answer is quite logical because reading demands complete silence and concentration which students often lose in group learning. Therefore, they tend to fail in comprehending the passage. However, 27% students feel no problem in doing reading comprehension activities while being in groups.

However, the response of the CG is quite different. Because they did not practice CLS, they have no idea to comment, so 45% of the students have expressed their neutral opinion, whereas 55% believe that they enjoy reading comprehension more in groups than writing tasks which tends to be their perception because they contradict their own perception in response to item number 10.

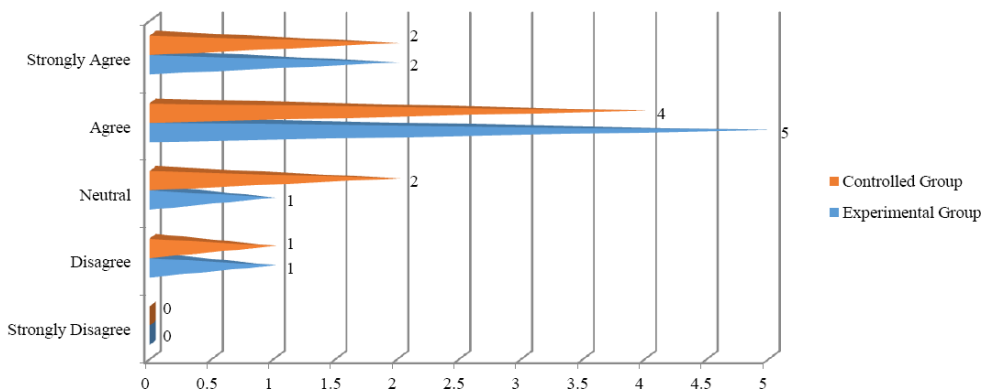


Figure 10: Item: 10. I enjoyed cooperative learning more during writing activities rather than reading comprehension activities.

The feedback of the EG in response to item number 10 is based on their first-hand experience because they have practiced CLS both in Reading and Writing skills. About 75% of the students opine that they enjoyed CLS more in Writing activities rather than Reading activities. Their answer is quite compatible with the previous response in item number 9. It is quite natural to enjoy writing activities in groups because students share their ideas and help one another in the formation of sentences. However, reading activities are more focused and involve individual attention for successful comprehension; therefore, some students feel uncomfortable doing them in groups. The response of the CG is almost the same but it contradicts their own views expressed earlier in item number 9 where their feedback is quite different. Apparently, it seems that this is their genuine opinion, whereas their previous opinion was perhaps a misconception.

**B. Statistical Analysis of the Experiment**

**T-test has been conducted at three levels:**

**1. Between the students’ results on pre-test and post-test in the experimental group**

TABLE-1:  
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

<u>Test for Reading</u>		
<p><b>Hypothesis:</b>  <math>H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2</math>  <math>H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2</math></p>	<p><b>Here:</b>  <math>n = 9, \bar{dr} = 1.14</math>  <math display="block">s_{dr}^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \left[ \sum dr^2 - \frac{(\sum dr)^2}{n} \right]</math> <math display="block">= \frac{1}{9-1} \left[ 386.94 - \frac{(10.25)^2}{9} \right]</math> <math display="block">= \frac{1}{8} [386.94 - 11.67]</math> <math display="block">= \frac{1}{8} [375.27] = 46.91</math> <math display="block">s_{dr} = \sqrt{46.91} = 6.85</math></p>	<p><b>Conclusion:</b>                      Since the calculated value of <math> t  = 0.499</math> is less than the critical value <math>t_{0.025} = 2.306</math>. So, we will accept <math>H_0</math>. We, therefore, conclude that the means are equal.</p>
<p><b>Level of Significance:</b>  <math>\alpha = 0.05</math> (5%)</p>	<p><math display="block">t = \frac{\bar{dr} - d0}{\frac{s_{dr}}{\sqrt{n}}} = \frac{1.14 - 0}{\frac{6.85}{\sqrt{9}}} = \frac{1.14 \times \sqrt{9}}{6.85}</math> <math display="block">= \frac{1.14 \times 3}{6.85} = \frac{3.42}{6.85} = 0.499</math></p>	
<p><b>Critical Region:</b>  <math>t &gt; 2.306</math></p>		
<u>Test for Writing</u>		
<p><b>Hypothesis:</b>  <math>H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2</math>  <math>H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2</math></p>	<p><b>Here:</b>  <math>n = 9, \bar{dw} = -0.056</math>  <math display="block">s_{dw}^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \left[ \sum dw^2 - \frac{(\sum dw)^2}{n} \right]</math> <math display="block">= \frac{1}{9-1} \left[ 238.75 - \frac{(-0.056)^2}{9} \right]</math> <math display="block">= \frac{1}{8} [238.75 - 0.028] = \frac{1}{8} [238.722] = 29.84</math> <math display="block">s_{dw} = \sqrt{29.84} = 5.46</math></p>	<p><b>Conclusion:</b>                      Since the calculated value of <math> t  = 0.031</math> is less than the critical value <math>t_{0.025} = 2.306</math>. So, we will accept <math>H_0</math>. We, therefore, conclude that the means are equal.</p>
<p><b>Level of Significance:</b>  <math>\alpha = 0.05</math> (5%)</p>	<p><math display="block">t = \frac{\bar{dw} - d0}{\frac{s_{dw}}{\sqrt{n}}} = \frac{-0.056 - 0}{\frac{5.46}{\sqrt{9}}} = \frac{-0.056 \times \sqrt{9}}{5.46}</math> <math display="block">= \frac{-0.056 \times 3}{5.46} = \frac{-0.168}{5.46} = -0.031</math></p>	
<p><b>Critical Region:</b>  <math>t &gt; 2.306</math></p>		

The hypothesis for this was that the students’ score on post-test in both reading and writing would improve due to the cooperative learning techniques applied in teaching sessions in comparison to their scores on pre-test carried out before the teaching sessions.

The results for Reading show that the calculated value of  $|t|$  is 0.499 that is less than the critical value  $t_{0.025} = 2.306$ . In other words, the mean scores on both tests are equal. Therefore, the hypothesis stated above is proved null.

The results for Writing show that the calculated value of  $|t|$  is 0.031 that is less than the critical value  $t_{0.025} = 2.306$ . Here, too the mean scores on both tests are equal. The hypothesis is null and void. This implies that cooperative learning strategies are ineffective in teaching English to Saudi adult learners in the small classes.

**2. Between the students’ results on pre-test and post-test in the controlled group**

TABLE-2:  
CONTROLLED GROUP

<u>Test for Reading</u>		
<p><b>Hypothesis:</b>  <math>H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2</math>  <math>H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2</math></p>	<p><b>Here:</b>  <math>n = 9, \bar{dr} = -0.33</math>  <math>s_{dr}^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} [\sum dr^2 - \frac{(\sum dr)^2}{n}]</math>  <math>= \frac{1}{9-1} [227.63 - \frac{(-3)^2}{9}] = \frac{1}{8} [227.63 - 1]</math>  <math>= \frac{1}{8} [226.63] = 28.32</math>  <math>s_{dr} = \sqrt{28.32} = 5.32</math>  <math>t = \frac{\bar{dr} - d_0}{\frac{s_{dr}}{\sqrt{n}}} = \frac{-0.33 - 0}{\frac{5.32}{\sqrt{9}}} = \frac{-0.33 \times \sqrt{9}}{5.32} = \frac{-0.33 \times 3}{5.32}</math>  <math>= \frac{-0.99}{5.32} = -0.186</math></p>	<p><b>Conclusion:</b>                  Since the calculated value of <math> t  = 0.186</math> is less than the critical value <math>t_{0.025} = 2.306</math>. So, we will accept <math>H_0</math>. We, therefore, conclude that the means are equal.</p>
<p><b>Level of Significance:</b>  <math>\alpha = 0.05</math> (5%)</p>		
<p><b>Critical Region:</b>  <math>t &gt; 2.306</math></p>		
<u>Test for Writing</u>		
<p><b>Hypothesis:</b>  <math>H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2</math>  <math>H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2</math></p>	<p><b>Here:</b>  <math>n = 9, \bar{dw} = 0.44</math>  <math>s_{dw}^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} [\sum dw^2 - \frac{(\sum dw)^2}{n}] = \frac{1}{9-1} [210 - \frac{(4)^2}{9}]</math>  <math>= \frac{1}{8} [210 - 1.78] = \frac{1}{8} [208.22] = 26.0275</math>  <math>s_{dw} = \sqrt{26.0275} = 5.102</math>  <math>t = \frac{\bar{dw} - d_0}{\frac{s_{dw}}{\sqrt{n}}} = \frac{0.44 - 0}{\frac{5.102}{\sqrt{9}}} = \frac{0.44 \times \sqrt{9}}{5.102} = \frac{0.44 \times 3}{5.102}</math>  <math>= \frac{1.32}{5.102} = 0.2587</math></p>	<p><b>Conclusion:</b>                  Since the calculated value of <math> t  = 0.2587</math> is less than the critical value <math>t_{0.025} = 2.306</math>. So, we will accept <math>H_0</math>. We, therefore, conclude that the means are equal.</p>
<p><b>Level of Significance:</b>  <math>\alpha = 0.05</math> (5%)</p>		
<p><b>Critical Region:</b>  <math>t &gt; 2.306</math></p>		

The hypothesis for this was that the students’ score on post-test in both reading and writing would not improve much in comparison to their scores on pre-test carried out before the teaching sessions since the controlled group was not exposed to the cooperative teaching techniques.

The results for Reading show that the calculated value of  $|t|$  is 0.186 that is less than the critical value  $t_{0.025} = 2.306$ . In other words, the mean scores on both tests are equal. Therefore, the hypothesis stated above is accepted. The results for Writing show that the calculated value of  $|t|$  is 0.2587 that is less than the critical value  $t_{0.025} = 2.306$ . Here, too the mean scores on both tests are equal. The hypothesis is accepted i.e. students in controlled group have not shown much improvement even after the teaching sessions. This means that the improvement in students’ performance, if sought, is possible with some intervention like introduction of advanced teaching strategies. Cooperative teaching techniques may also be of some help in this regard.

**3. Results of students in controlled group and the results of students in experimental groups in pre-test and post-test**

TABLE-3:  
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP VS. CONTROLLED GROUP

<b>Test for Reading</b>		
<p><b>Hypothesis:</b>  <math>H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2</math>  <math>H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2</math></p>	<p><b>Here:</b>  <math>n_1 = 9, \sum R_1 = 185.75 \sum R_1^2 = 3935.94 \bar{R}_1 = 20.64</math>  <math>n_2 = 9 \sum R_2 = 192 \sum R_2^2 = 4224.63 \bar{R}_2 = 21.33</math></p> $s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \left[ \left\{ \sum R_1^2 - \frac{(\sum R_1)^2}{n_1} \right\} + \left\{ \sum R_2^2 - \frac{(\sum R_2)^2}{n_2} \right\} \right]$ $s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{9 + 9 - 2} \left[ \left\{ 3935.94 - \frac{(185.75)^2}{9} \right\} + \left\{ 4224.63 - \frac{(192)^2}{9} \right\} \right]$	<p><b>Conclusion:</b>                  Since the calculated value of <math> t  = 0.386</math> is less than the critical value <math>t_{0.025} = 2.120</math>. So, we will accept <math>H_0</math>. We, therefore, conclude that the means are equal.</p>
<p><b>Level of Significance:</b>  <math>\alpha = 0.05</math> (5%)</p>	$s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{16} [\{3935.94 - 3833.67\} + \{4224.63 - 4096\}]$ $s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{16} [102.27 + 128.63]$	
<p><b>Critical Region:</b>  <math>t &gt; 2.120</math>  <math>v = n_1 + n_2 - 2 = 9 + 9 - 2 = 16</math></p>	$s_{p^2} = \frac{230.9}{16}$ $s_{p^2} = 14.43$ $s_p = \sqrt{14.43}$ $s_p = 3.799$ $t = \frac{\bar{R}_1 - \bar{R}_2}{sp \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$ $t = \frac{20.64 - 21.33}{3.799 \sqrt{\frac{1}{9} + \frac{1}{9}}}$ $t = \frac{-0.69}{3.799 \sqrt{\frac{2}{9}}}$ $t = \frac{-0.69}{3.799 \times 0.471}$ $t = \frac{-0.69}{1.789}$ $t = -0.386$	
<b>Test for Writing</b>		
<p><b>Hypothesis:</b>  <math>H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2</math>  <math>H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2</math></p>	<p><b>Here:</b>  <math>n_1 = 9, \sum W_1 = 210.50 \sum W_1^2 = 5082.75 \bar{W}_1 = 23.39</math>  <math>n_2 = 9 \sum W_2 = 234 \sum W_2^2 = 6286 \bar{W}_2 = 26</math></p> $s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \left[ \left\{ \sum W_1^2 - \frac{(\sum W_1)^2}{n_1} \right\} + \left\{ \sum W_2^2 - \frac{(\sum W_2)^2}{n_2} \right\} \right]$ $s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{9 + 9 - 2} \left[ \left\{ 5082.75 - \frac{(210.50)^2}{9} \right\} + \left\{ 6286 - \frac{(234)^2}{9} \right\} \right]$	<p><b>Conclusion:</b>                  Since the calculated value of <math> t  = 1.167</math> is less than the critical value <math>t_{0.025} = 2.120</math>. So, we will accept <math>H_0</math>. We, therefore, conclude that the means are equal.</p>
<p><b>Level of Significance:</b>  <math>\alpha = 0.05</math> (5%)</p>	$s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{16} [\{5082.75 - 4923.36\} + \{6286 - 6084\}]$ $s_{p^2} = \frac{1}{16} [159.39 + 202]$	
<p><b>Critical Region:</b>  <math>t &gt; 2.120</math>  <math>v = n_1 + n_2 - 2 = 9 + 9 - 2 = 16</math></p>	$s_{p^2} = \frac{361.39}{16}$ $s_{p^2} = 22.59$ $s_p = \sqrt{22.59}$ $s_p = 4.75$ $t = \frac{\bar{W}_1 - \bar{W}_2}{sp \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$ $t = \frac{23.39 - 26}{4.75 \sqrt{\frac{1}{9} + \frac{1}{9}}}$ $t = \frac{-2.61}{4.75 \sqrt{\frac{2}{9}}}$ $t = \frac{-2.61}{4.75 \times 0.471}$ $t = \frac{-2.61}{2.237}$ $t = -1.167$	

The hypothesis for this was that in experimental group, the students' score on post-test in both reading and writing would improve due to the cooperative learning techniques applied in teaching sessions in comparison to the performance of the students in the controlled group on post-test.

The results for Reading show that the calculated value of  $|t|$  is 0.386 that is less than the critical value  $t_{0.025} = 2.120$ . In other words, the mean scores on both tests are equal. Therefore, the hypothesis stated above is proved null. The results for Writing show that the calculated value of  $|t|$  is 1.167 that is less than the critical value  $t_{0.025} = 2.120$ . Here, too the mean scores on both tests are equal. The hypothesis is null and void. This shows that the intervention of cooperative learning techniques do not have a positive influence on the learning of Saudi adult English language learners in a short remedial course with small strength in the classes.

Following bar charts further elaborate the results of the experiment:

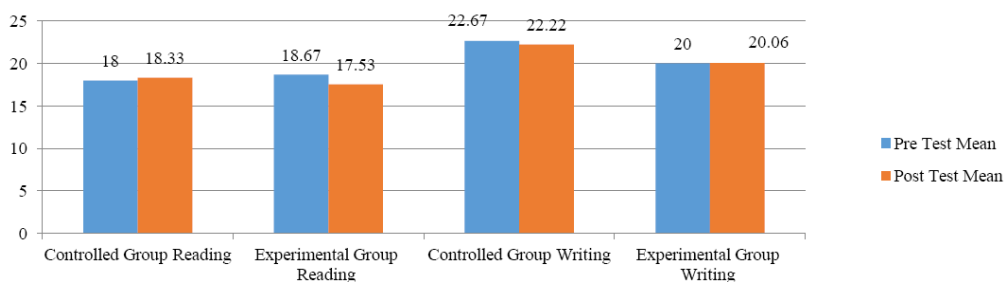


Figure 11: Comparative Analysis of Controlled and Experimental Groups' Reading Performance: Pre and Post Test Mean Scores

The bar chart above reflects a comparison of the pre-test and post-test mean scores for controlled group and experimental group. It is obvious that the controlled group shows almost the same mean score for reading on pre-test and post-test. It means that there is not any improvement in the students' performance in reading. We see almost the same results in writing. This shows that the teaching session have not been found effective in improving students' performance in reading as well as writing in controlled group. One may assume that one factor may be lack of use of cooperative learning techniques. But the assumptions is found faulty when we look at the comparison of mean scores of the students on pre-test and post-test in the experimental group who are exposed to the cooperative teaching techniques in the teaching sessions. The bar chart shows that the experimental group shows a slight improvement in writing after the teaching intervention; however, in reading, we find a rather decline in the score. This shows that Saudi adult English language learners are not interested in cooperative learning techniques.

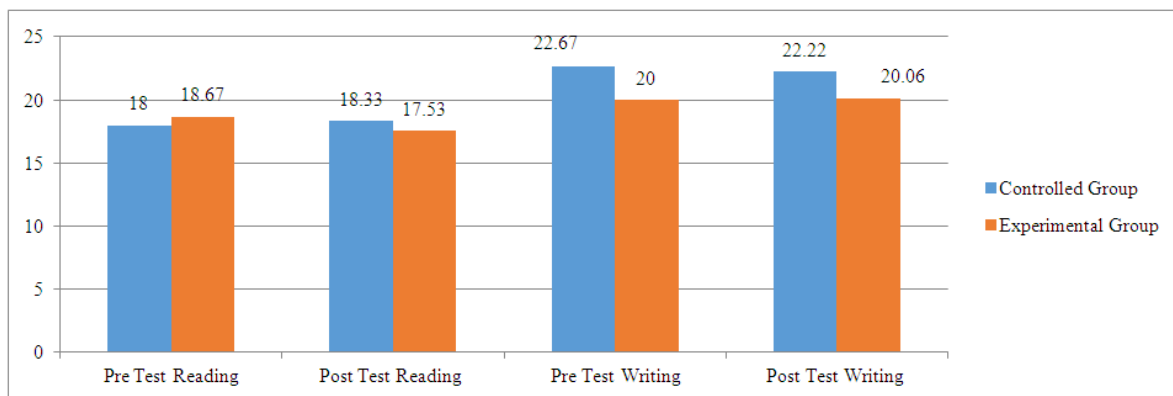


Figure 12: Comparative Analysis of Controlled and Experimental Groups' Writing Performance: Pre and Post Test Mean Scores

This bar chart shows a comparison between controlled group and experimental group in terms of their performance on pre-test and post-test separately. We can see that in the pre-test for reading, the controlled group and experimental group have almost the same mean score; however, on writing pre-test, controlled group shows a higher mean score than the experimental group. That means that the students in the controlled group seem to be better in writing as compared to the experimental group.

The post test results for reading further show that there is a slight improvement in the mean score in case of controlled group. On the other hand, there is a slight deterioration in the mean score in the case of experimental group. In writing, the post-test 'mean scores' indicate that the controlled group shows a slight decline whereas the experimental group shows a slight improvement. However, the change is not so great that it could be said that the improvement has been mainly due to the intervention of cooperative teaching techniques.

## V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The experiment of implementation of CLS on the small group of adult EFL learners in the summer session remedial course apparently failed as shown in the statistical data analysis. However, the results are quite revealing and thought provoking for not only the practitioners in the teaching field but also for the future researches and researchers. Among the prime factors responsible for the failure of CLS strategies in EFL classroom, the low motivational level of the learners stands apart in importance. As a matter of fact, remedial course like summer term is usually designed to accommodate or facilitate all those students fail in the regular term or cannot appear in the exam due to some reason(s) such as shortage of class attendance, cancelation of the results due to low marks or some health issues etc. Therefore, it is quite logical to believe that most of the students who opt for summer term are not motivated; otherwise they would have passed the exam in the regular term.

Their level of motivation can also be measured from the following research findings:

a. At the outset of the course, majority of the students showed lack of punctuality by coming late to the classes. In spite of the repeated reminders of the teacher that they might be deprived of the right to appear in the exam, they did not pay any heed to the warning. Due to this reason, many planned activities had to be either cancelled or disrupted in the class due to shortage of time which could be one of the obvious factors that affected the results.

b. Since the administration's attitude towards students especially in the summer is quite lenient, they do not bother to attend the classes regularly. According to the rules, the students who fail to attend 80% lectures are usually not allowed to appear in the exam. However, this rule was not followed in letter and spirit and almost all the students were allowed to sit in the exam without evaluating their percentage of attendance specified in the rules.

c. During the classroom activities, many students seemed tired and did not show the expected enthusiasm towards the formation of groups or pairs. Some of them were not active at all in their groups to make any contribution which showed their lack of interest in the lesson. Through the inquiry, it was revealed that most of them used internet till late at night; therefore, they could not fulfill their minimum requirement of sleep that obviously affected their performance in the class as well as in the exams.

d. Throughout the course, some of the students were quite habitual in forgetting their course books at home or in their cars. Therefore, they had to share their books or teaching material with other students during the lesson. Similarly, others used to forget their pens, pencils or papers that were required for conducting writing activities. Therefore, the teacher had to supply them with the necessary material to make the lesson successful but all this was not enough to enhance their level of motivation.

e. There were ten students in each group and 80% of them in both the groups (EG & CG) were repeaters who had failed in their regular term. Their target was neither to excel in the class nor to learn the foreign language; it was just to pass the exam by hook or by crook to continue their further studies. This negative approach on the part of the students was a great barrier in the way of their motivation that also played a role in the failure of Cooperative Learning Strategies.

f. Another important factor that could be a cause of the failure of the experiment was the strength of the students. Out of ten students in each group, 30%-40% were almost always found absent in the class on daily basis. Consequently, the teacher did not have much choice to put the right kind of student in the appropriate group or pair. As a result, the students lacked the necessary enthusiasm to participate properly their group or pair to accomplish the tasks that had been assigned to them. In addition, the absentees also missed some of the important lessons.

g. A tendency towards plagiarism has also been found in some of the students who tried to use the application of "Google Translation" on their cell phones by translating Arabic sentences into English ones while doing their paragraph writing activities in the class. When asked not to use their cell phones in the class, most of them were not able to complete their activities at all or had to submit them incomplete.

h. It has also been observed that sometimes the students expressed their boredom against the application of CLS in the class because of monotony, so the teacher had to deviate from the basic principles of the method to keep the lesson interesting. To avoid monotonous teaching/learning, it is recommendable that the teacher should be ready to change his teaching strategy during the lesson if he feels that the students are getting bored.

i. During the application of CLS, it was observed that the students felt more comfortable in writing activities as compared to reading activities. This is proved through the students' feedback received in the survey conducted during the experiment. In writing, they exchanged ideas and discussed the formation of sentences with their peers. Even sometimes they were able to produce fairly good paragraphs on the topics. However, in reading skill, they pretended to be actively involved in the activity but the results showed otherwise because most of them failed to summarize or comprehend the passage when asked. This proves that the use of CLS is not very effective in reading skill as compared to writing skill.

j. The experiment also reveals that the students' performance in pairs was much better than in groups in the CLS experimental group. When an activity was given to them in pairs, their response was quite positive and most of them were able to accomplish it in flexible span of time. However, in groups they tried to avoid the responsibility which produced negative results.

k. Perhaps eight weeks' time in summer term as compared to the regular term where students usually attend for at least fourteen weeks is another factor that has negatively affected the results. The application of Cooperative Learning

Strategies for such a short period of time has not been as effective as it ought to be; therefore, CLS is not an appropriate choice for summer term which is usually shorter than the regular term.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the research findings, it is obvious that summer term is usually conducted to facilitate the weak students of Preparatory Year Program (PYP) who, due to some reasons, fail to qualify or appear in the regular term. Therefore, it is quite natural to expect the induction of demotivated and below average students in this specially designed program. Almost all the students had either been repeaters or had been dropped in the regular term because of their deficiency in attendance. Even during this facilitated program of eight weeks, their attendance has not been ideal; most of them were at the bottom to be accepted for the exam. Moreover, being demotivated learners, their main objective was mostly confined to get through the exam so that they could further continue their studies, which was not possible without qualifying PYP course. In addition, their lack of interest could also be seen through their lethargic class participation, frequently being late or absent from the classes, going to the classes without books and stationery, using their cell phones during the lesson and so on. Even sometimes during the reading activities, some of the students did not read the passages at all neither did they participate in the group discussion. As a result, they were unable to utter a single word about the passage at the conclusion of the activity. Thus, these are some of the most valid reasons due to which the application of Cooperative Learning Strategies in EFL classes have failed to produce the desired results.

In the light of this experiment, it is highly recommended that following measures should be taken before introducing CLS in an adult EFL class:

### A. Selection of Students

Perhaps the most important key to success in the application of CLS lies in the selection of the students. It is highly advisable that students should be chosen with utmost care so that they cooperate with the teacher in the class to make the learning-teaching process successful. Motivation, punctuality, tendency towards hard work and genuine desire for knowledge are the essential hallmarks that should be found in the students who are chosen for the experiment. Without having these qualities in the students, the teacher will not be able to produce the desired results through CLS.

### B. Reasonable Class Size

A reasonable class size comprising 20-25 students is also necessary for the success of CLS because it promotes healthy competition among the students. The decrease or increase in the number of students in the class is likely to spoil the results. For the effective application of CLS, a teacher usually divides the students in four to five groups, which is not possible if the class size is too big or small. Therefore, it is important to maintain a reasonable class size to reap the fruits of CLS in an EFL class.

### C. Course Duration

Generally a regular term continues for 12-14 weeks, whereas a summer term is usually 4-6 weeks shorter than the regular term. During the experiment, it has been observed that the application of CLS may not be successful for any course which is shorter than the usual time because students need more time to adjust themselves with the new and non-traditional method of teaching. Therefore, practitioners and researchers are advised not to apply CLS for an EFL course until it fulfills the minimum requirement of time i.e., 12-14 weeks.

### D. Implementation of Administrative Rules

Academic achievements are directly linked with the strict implementation of administrative rules. No institution can achieve high standards until it is not supported by strict administrative checks. Therefore, it is essential that the rule of 80% students' attendance in the class should be strictly followed from day one. Likewise, the use of cell phones in the class and delay in class attendance or submitting assignments should be dealt with administrative checks. With the implementation of rules, the use of CLS is likely to produce much better results.

### E. Permissible Deviation

The consistent application of CLS in an EFL/ESL class sometimes proves monotonous for the students who start losing interest in the lesson. Therefore, it is very important for the practitioners of the method to be vigilant and ready to deviate from the CLS and bring innovations and changes to cater for students' taste. However, the teacher should not exceed the limit; otherwise the essence of CLS will be lost which will surely affect the results. To avoid boredom and monotony in the class, about 10-25 percent deviation from CLS per week is permissible which means that a teacher can add some of the interesting flavours of other methods.

### F. Application of CLS in Writing

The results of the experiment indicate that students prefer to practice CLS in a writing class rather than a reading class. Therefore, it is recommended that the method of CLS should be applied in writing classes where students can produce better results by working in small groups. However, the application of CLS in a reading class has not produced

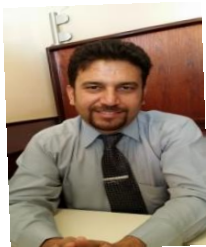


favourable results; therefore, it is recommended not to practice it in a reading class. Researchers can further explore its efficacy in reading and writing skills.

As a matter of fact, it is essential for an EFL/ESL teacher to employ a variety of methods in teaching process to achieve the target. During the experiment, it was also felt that some of the students showed their lack of interest in CLS at certain stages because of the repetitive way of teaching. To involve such students in the activities, sometimes the teacher is required to deviate slightly from his teaching method so that the delivery of the lesson may not become a complete failure. In a nutshell, for achieving positive results through CLS, special groups of students should be formed where motivated students are chosen with utmost care with flexible lesson plans. If the students are chosen randomly as it has been done in this experiment, the application of CLS will not produce desired results.

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# Politeness in Using Banjarese and American English Personal Subject Pronouns by English Department Students of Lambung Mangkurat University

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**Abstract**—This research is aimed at describing the use of personal pronouns of Banjarese and American English. The research uses the Convergent Parallel Design. Data are collected by using two kinds of questionnaires. The first is for 37 students belonging to Banjar Kuala Dialect (BKD), and the second is for 24 students belonging to Banjar Hulu Dialect (BHD). Research result shows that Banjarese and American English' pronouns are based on singular and plural distinction although Banjarese does not have a gender distinction as in the American English. The personal pronouns are the first, second and third persons. English personal pronouns depend mostly on the grammatical role while Banjarese personal pronouns can indicate the social status or the relation of the speaker and other persons in the discourse. Personal pronouns can reveal the social status, and they can the politeness or impoliteness of the speakers.

**Index Terms**—politeness, personal subject pronoun, Banjarese, and American English

## I. INTRODUCTION

Banjarese-speaking people can be identified from their geographical dialects. There are two dialects of Banjarese. The first one is Banjar Kuala Dialect (BKD) spoken by people who live in areas of Banjarmasin, Banjarbaru, Marabahan, Pelaihari until Kotabaru. The other dialect is Banjar Hulu Dialect (BHD) used by people from Martapura, Tapin, Hulu Sungai Selatan, Hulu Sungai Tengah, Hulu Sungai Utara, Balangan and Tabalong.

Similarly, as one of the languages in the world, English also has variations known as American, British, Australian, Indian, and the others. American English is particularly not spoken in its continent of the fifty states only, but also is generally adapted and studied by people around the world. English Department students of Lambung Mangkurat University also learn and acquire American English.

Most of the students come from different background of Banjarese both dialects and they try to master English with their own 'unique' mother tongue, in which in the process of learning it might have influence on the acquisition of the English. The difficulties or the advantages that might occur are because Banjarese (Banjar Language) and American English have distinguished system of language. English does not have level of pronoun politeness like Banjarese *unda*, *aku*, and *ulun* (I) to express the first singular pronoun. However, this might hamper or benefit the students when they are learning English as a foreign language.

This research tries to reveal the use of personal subject pronoun in Banjarese and English among students of English Department Lambung Mangkurat University Batch 2012. The research questions of the study are limited to these areas: (1) How do students of English Department, Lambung Mangkurat University Batch 2012 use the Banjarese personal subject pronouns?, Does the geographical place of origin influence their uses in terms of official and unofficial situations, degree of intimacy, social status, age, sex distinction, and marital status?, (2) How is the use of American English personal pronouns by the students of English Department, Lambung Mangkurat University Batch 2012?, and (3) How is the use of Banjarese and American English personal pronoun compared?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part reviews some theoretical backgrounds related to the personal subject pronoun in Banjarese and American English. Furthermore, the politeness of the pronouns are also presented briefly.

### A. Politeness

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), politeness has two definitions: (a) how languages express the social distance between speakers and their different role relationships; (b) how facework that is the attempt to establish,

maintain, and save face during conversation, is carried out in a speech community (p.405). Referring to the work of Brown and Levinson, Wardhaugh (2006) wrote that:

*Positive politeness* leads to moves to achieve solidarity through offers of friendship, the use of compliments, and informal language use: we treat others as friends and allies, do not impose on them, and never threaten their face. On the other hand, *negative politeness* leads to deference, apologizing, indirectness, and formality in language use: we adopt a variety of strategies so as to avoid any threats to the face others are presenting to us.

Based on the definitions and the classifications, it can be defined that politeness is the way a particular expression used between speakers, it marks the relationship of the first person and the interlocutors in which the connection might bring positive or negative politeness.

### B. Personal Subject Pronouns

The geographical distribution of politeness distinctions in personal pronouns all over the world is different as it is found in dialect atlas. Indonesia belongs to the category of avoiding direct pronoun for the second person as in *anda* or *you* (Wales, 2004). Also, he stated that in addressing another, the choice of name which you use for the other depend both on your knowledge of exactly who that other is (e.g. his or her age and lineage) and on the circumstances of the meeting. Moreover, he mentioned that a variety of social factor usually governs the choice or terms: the particular occasion; the social status or rank of the other; sex; age; family relationship, occupational hierarchy; transactional status; race; or degree of intimacy. The choice is sometimes quite clear; when racial or caste origin is important in society that is likely to take preference; and so on.

According to Kartomiharjo (1979, p.186), in Indonesia the choice of personal pronoun (PP) reflect the identity and the relationship of the interlocutors Further, in his study (1979, p.128-171) about communicative codes in East Java, he listed that that choice of Personal Pronoun (PP) might be used in official and unofficial situation, depends on the degrees of intimacy, social status, age, sex distinction and marital status.

### C. The Banjarese Personal Subject Pronouns

Banjarese has the politeness distinction like Javanese' *unggah-ungguh*, but it is specifically a matter of distinction in personal pronoun politeness. As a matter of fact, the Banjarese level of politeness is specifically seen on the use of personal pronouns – first, second and third. There are different variants of the politeness level for first and second pronouns as it is shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1  
THE LEVEL OF POLITENESS OF BANJARESE 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2<sup>ND</sup>, AND 3<sup>RD</sup> PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUNS

Level of Politeness	1st Person Pronoun		2nd Person Pronoun		3rd Person Pronoun	
	Singular (I)	Plural (we)	Singular (you)	Plural (you)	Singular (he, she, it)	Plural (they)
I (polite)	ulun	kami	pian	buhan pian	sidin	buhan sidin
					nang ini / nang itu	nang ini / nang itu.
II (neutral)	aku	kami	ikam / sampiyan	buhan ikam / buhan sampiyan	inya	buhan inya
					nang ini / nang itu	nang ini / nang itu.
III (considered rude)	unda	kami	nyawa	buhan nyawa	inya	buhan inya
					nang ini / nang itu	nang ini / nang itu.

From the table, it can be seen that singular first and second person pronouns have three variants –*ulun*, *aku*, *unda* (I) and *aku*, *ikam*, *nyawa* (you). In terms of singular third person pronoun, only two alternates exist. Those are *sidin* and *inya*. There is quite more or less the same terms used for the plural ones. The pronoun used shows the level of closeness of the speakers.

Beside those variants of personal subject pronoun, there also other pronouns which might be still in use. *Saurang ini* and *Kita ini* are used by speakers who does not have a long-standing relationship with one another or on the contrary. For example between two people who meet at the airport waiting room or two close friends who are involved in a conversation as in the sample sentence:

*Mun saurang ni asa kada yakin nang itu jukungnya.*

(I don't think that it is the boat)

*Kita ini sudah rancak banar tarabang bapasawat ka mana-mana.*

(I have often fled anywhere)

*Yayang ini / ni* is also possibly used when someone refer to himself or herself talking to an intimate person. for example:

*Maksud yayang ni biar kita gawi haja dulu.*

(What I mean is let us just do it, first)

*Beliau* is used to refer to someone in intention to give honor or respect the person

*Beliau tu sudah cangkal haja bausaha, tapi pina kada kalihatan hasilnya.*

(He has tried enough; however, it doesn't seem to be successful)

Using name is in replacing the personal pronoun. It is especially to show closeness or just being spoiled, for examples:

*Ari dimana sekarang?*

(Where are you now, Ari?)

*Dita kada bermaksud kaitu pang, Bu.*

(Dita doesn't mean it, Ma'am)

Terms of address *kaka* and *ading* can also be pronouns when the speakers and the interlocutors have a very strong relationship. The lexical meanings of *kaka* and *ading* are 'brother' and 'sister' in a family terms. In this relation, both are used as the polite terms in a male-female love relationship, as in: *Kaka ini sudah lawas handak wan ading* (I have been in love with you for quite some time). The speaker addresses himself as *kaka*, and the second person (listener) as *ading*, indicating the subject and the object of sentence respectively.

#### D. The American English Personal Subject Pronouns

Richards and Schmidt (2002) in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defined that personal pronouns is the set of pronouns which represent the grammatical category of PERSON, and which in English is made up of I, you, he, she, it, we, they, and their derived forms (e.g. me, mine, yours, him, his, hers, etc.).

English does not have politeness distinction in Personal Pronoun. Whatever the situation or context and whoever the interlocutor is, the pronouns used are the same. There is no change in terms of distinguishing the speakers. It is surely poles apart with the Banjarese personal subject pronouns which are categorized into three levels of politeness.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Research Design

This research combines the quantitative and qualitative design in order to come into a conclusion. Both types of data are meant to support each other. This plan of mixed method is so-called Convergent Parallel Design. The quantitative data collection and the qualitative one are simultaneously collected, merged and used to make a conclusion of a research problem. The interpretation of the findings brings the conclusion of a comparison study strengthening the quantitative and qualitative result.

#### B. Sources of Data and Sampling Technique

The subjects of the research are English Department students of Lambung Mangkurat University Banjarmasin. The random sampling technique is applied by asking 100 respondents to fill out the questionnaire A and B. The respondents are taken randomly due to their willingness to participate and limited to the English Department students of Lambung Mangkurat University Batch 2012. From 100 pieces of questionnaire distributed, the respondents are categorized into those students who use Banjar Kuala Dialect and Banjar Hulua Dialect in their formal or informal conversation. The categorization is based on the students' origin and place of birth.

To support the decision whether one is a dominant Banjar Kuala Dialect or Banjar Hulu Dialect speaker, some words in both dialects are asked to him / her to choose. Knowing or ever using certain word(s) might show that he or she is influenced or a speaker of a particular dialect. As a result, it is found out that 37 samples of respondent are Banjar Kuala Dialect and 24 samples are Banjar Hulu Dialect. It means that, out of 100 questionnaires, the rest 29 respondents do not qualify as a dominant native speaker of particular dialect.

For questionnaire C, only 40 students from Batch 2012, taken randomly, are asked to fill it out. They know how to speak English even though they have different levels of ability. In addition, their length of time in learning English is more or less the same, around 7 – 9 years since elementary school or junior high school to university. In terms of gender, the respondents are male and females. All in all, those samples are analyzed differently between the speakers of Banjar Kuala Dialect or Banjar Hulu Dialect and the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speakers.

#### C. Data Collection

The technique of data collection is questionnaire and the instrument used is questionnaire as well. There are three questionnaires used and the content validity is investigated by the researchers by extracting the ideas into indicators as it can be seen in the Table 3.1. The first two questionnaires are used to gather data about the use of Banjarese personal subject pronoun and the last questionnaire is to investigate the American English one.

TABLE 3.1  
THE TABLE OF SPECIFICATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES USED IN THE RESEARCH

INSTRUMENT	IDEAS	SUB-IDEAS	QUESTION NUMBER	
Questionnaire A	sex	male, female	1	
	origin	South Borneo & others	2	
	place of birth	South Borneo & others	3	
	Banjarese dominantly used	BKD & BHD	4	
	official situation		pronoun used in a forum	5
			inside the classroom	6
			respected person	7
	unofficial situation		outside the classroom	8
	degree of intimacy		boyfriend (girlfriend) / spouses	9, 13
			close friend	10, 14
			parents	11, 15
			siblings	12, 16
	social status		unknown marital status	17, 21
			known marital status	18
			unknown job	19, 22
			known job	20
	age		friend with similar age	23
			friend who is older	24
			friend who is younger	25
			sibling with similar age	26
			sibling who is older	27
			sibling who is younger	28
			new acquaintance who is older	29
			new acquaintance is younger	30
			someone older	31
			someone younger	32
			sex distinction	
	female	34		
	Questionnaire B	official & unofficial situation	-	1
		degree of intimacy	-	2
		marital status	-	3
		age	-	4
		sex	-	5
		other possible situations	-	6
other possible pronouns used		-	7	
Questionnaire C	the English 1 <sup>st</sup> personal subject pronoun	-	1	
	the English 2 <sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun	-	2	
	the English 3 <sup>rd</sup> personal subject pronoun	-	3	
	the English singular personal subject pronoun	-	4	
	the English plural personal subject pronoun	-	5	
	official & unofficial situation	-	6	
	degree of intimacy	-	7	
	social status	-	8	
	age	-	9	
	sex	-	10	

The first one (A) is the questionnaires which asked about the use of Banjarese personal subject pronoun among the BKD and BHD speakers. It is in form of open-ended questionnaire. The rest two questionnaires (B and C) are ones which asked respondents to state their knowledge related to the use of Banjarese and American personal subject pronoun.

The data collection was conducted in September and November 2013 during the Odd Semester of 2013 / 2014 Academic Year. The individuals involved in collecting the data are the researchers themselves in order to ascertain that the data needed are feasibly obtained.

#### D. Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaire is analyzed by using simple descriptive statistics that is measures of central tendency (sum). Statistical analyses that include the thematic counts are conducted and the calculation is manually carried out. The data will be analyzed quantitatively, by counting the number of most chosen option, and qualitatively, by interpreting the numbers into words and concluding the responses on some open question items in the questionnaire. The presentation of the data is in form of tables and chart with the help of Microsoft Excel 2013.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the results from the data collection and the interpretation of the findings. All the data gathered are tabulated and simplified in some tables and analyzed simultaneously. It starts from the presentation of both languages' use of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> personal subject pronoun. The analysis based on the findings follows afterward.

*A. The Use of American English Personal Subject Pronoun and Its Politeness*

Pronoun is used quite often whether in oral or written form of communication in English. The use of various pronouns needs a concern because there might be a condition which some people are unable to use the pronouns appropriately. The findings on the use of the American English personal subject pronouns are presented in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2  
THE CORRECTLY-AND-INCORRECTLY-ANSWERED RESPONSES RELATED TO THE USE OF AMERICAN ENGLISH PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN

The Personal Subject Pronouns			The Number of Correct Responses	The Number of Incorrect Responses
The 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Personal Subject Pronoun	1 <sup>st</sup>	I	40	0
		We	9	31
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	You	30	10
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	He	35	5
		She	35	5
		It	30	10
They		12	28	
The Singular and Plural Personal Subject Pronoun	Singular	I	40	0
		You	21	19
		He	39	1
		She	37	3
		It	35	5
	Plural	We	34	6
		They	36	4
		You	16	24

Based on the data presented in Table 2, it can be seen that only the 1<sup>st</sup> personal pronoun which is correctly mentioned by all respondents. Other pronouns might still bring confusion to the students / respondents. Based on the result of the questionnaire (A), some students did not have a clear knowledge on distinguishing between the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Personal Subject Pronouns. It can be seen that out of 40 respondents, only 9 persons answered the questions related to determining the English 1<sup>st</sup> plural personal subject pronoun *we* correctly. Similarly, pronoun *they* only gets 12 respondents who answered the question about it correctly. On the contrary, plural pronoun *you* is not quite recognized by the students because more respondents incorrectly determined it as a plural form. It is a similar case with pronouns *we* and *they*.

In relation with the politeness, the situation, the degree of intimacy, the marital status, the occupation, the age and the sex are predicted to be the factors that might differentiate the use of the personal subject pronoun. However, in American English, and probably other varieties of English like British and Singaporean, does not distinguish the use of its pronoun in terms of politeness. The data on the use of American English personal subject pronoun related to the respondents' knowledge does not show a satisfying results seeing from a few point of view as the number is precisely shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3.  
THE USE OF AMERICAN ENGLISH PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN IN TERMS OF POLITENESS

Points to Ponder	Yes	No
English Personal Subject Pronoun and Official / Unofficial Situation	11	29
English Personal Subject Pronoun and the Degree of Intimacy	9	31
English Personal Subject Pronoun and Marital Status	7	33
English Personal Subject Pronoun and Occupation	7	33
English Personal Subject Pronoun and the Age	9	31
English Personal Subject Pronoun and the Sex	24	16

There are 11 students who think that the American English personal subject pronouns are used differently in official and unofficial situations. In terms of degree of intimacy, marital status, occupation and age, the understanding is better because less than 25% of the respondents believe that there are different pronouns used when those points are involved. Therefore, such belief –or guess– is not correct because the use of the American English personal subject pronouns does not differentiate those aspects or points. There is a slight relief that more than half of the respondents understand that the American English personal subject pronoun stress on the importance of sex consideration or gender oriented. Although not all pronouns are reflecting the specific description of a gender, students' correct understanding on the different use of *he*, *she* and *it* might already help them in using English. Unfortunately, there are 16 students who are not conscious that sex categorization exists in English pronoun use.

*B. The Use of Banjarese Personal Subject Pronoun with Both Dialects and Its Politeness*

The discussion about the Banjarese Personal Subject Pronoun use is a little bit on whether both speakers of BKD and BHD differ in utilizing the pronouns. Moreover, the use of pronouns are then related to the politeness issue in terms of choice or preference. The reason or background of choosing or preferring certain terms becomes the analysis of each finding.

#### 1. Official Situation

In official situations (forum/ discussion and classroom), a few speakers of BKD and BHD differentiate the use of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun. They occasionally use *ulun* (I) and *pian* (you), and at other times they use *aku* (I) and *ikam* (you). As for the 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun, *bapak* (Mr./Sir) and *ibu* (Mrs./Madam) are also used. The 3<sup>rd</sup> personal subject pronoun used by both speakers for a respected person in official situation is *sidin* (s/he). The most 1<sup>st</sup> personal subject pronoun used is *ulun* (I). It means that speakers of both dialects have similar sense of appropriateness in choosing the pronoun whether it is in a formal forum and discussion or in the contexts of classroom. The same findings also appear in terms of Banjarese 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> personal subject pronoun (Table 4).

Referring to the findings in Table 4, *Pian* and *sidin* have been chosen the most by the respondents. The use *ulun*, *pian* and *sidin* in an official situation reflects that although the participants or the speakers are of various age and gender, they prefer to choose the most polite form of Banjarese personal subject pronoun. The context or the situation determine the choice of pronoun by the Banjarese speakers with BKD and BHD. In other words, the politeness use of the pronouns has been regulated more by the official situation regardless other considerations like the age and the gender.

TABLE 4.  
THE SUMMARY OF BANJARESE PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE IN OFFICIAL SITUATION

OFFICIAL SITUATION		BKD (37)		BHD (24)	
		PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL	PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL
1st and 2nd Personal Subject Pronoun	In a forum / discussion	ulun, pian	27	ulun, pian	20
		aku, ikam	7	aku, ikam	3
		ane, agan	1	No answer	1
		No answer	2		
2nd Personal Subject Pronoun	In the classroom	pian	34	pian	22
		bapak, ibu	2	bapak, ibu	2
		No answer	1		
3rd Personal Subject Pronoun	Respected person in official context	sidin	37	sidin	23
				nama	1

#### b. Unofficial Situation

Outside the classroom, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun which is mostly used is *ulun* and *pian*. In unofficial situation like this, the respondents consider that it is still important to maintain the politeness when talking to the lectures as the respected person although it is outside the classroom. BKD and BHD speakers agree that using *Ulu* (I) and *pian* (you) as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun is applicable in a conversation with an informal situation and respectable interlocutor. The pronoun *saya* (I), which belongs to Indonesian language, and the terms of address *ibu* (Mrs./Mam) and *bapak* (Mr./Sir) are used by two respondents. This might be because they wanted to stress on the importance of showing respect to the interlocutor like in a formal or official context (Table 5). There is one respondent stated that she or he uses *saya* when speaking to the lecturer outside the classroom. Perhaps, she or he does it for the sake of maintaining the formality relationship between a student and a lecturer since *saya* is not a Banjarese 1<sup>st</sup> personal subject pronoun.

TABLE 5.  
THE SUMMARY OF BANJARESE PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE IN UNOFFICIAL SITUATION

UNOFFICIAL SITUATION		BKD (37)		BHD (24)	
		PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL	PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL
1st and 2nd Personal Subject Pronoun	Outside the classroom	ulun, pian	33	ulun, pian	24
		saya	1		
		ibu, bapak	1		
		No answer	2		

#### c. Degree of Intimacy

When talking to a special or intimate person, both Banjarese speakers of BKD and BHD used the polite choice of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun –*ulun* (I) and *pian* (you)– the most. The tendency is that the speakers used the pronouns because they want to show the feeling of being close to each other. In addition, the need of showing respect and love feeling is expressed by the use of the pronouns. *Aku* (I) and *ikam* (you) are used by 14 persons out of 61 total 61 respondents. These pronouns are probably is use because the couples are of the same age that they speak the language at the same level of politeness. Interestingly, the rudest form of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronouns *unda* (I)



and *nyawa* (you) are in use between lovebirds or spouses. In this context, *unda* (I) and *nyawa* (you) are not considered rude anymore, but it is more to a habit in the couples' daily interaction.

The finding on love-mate is a lot different with the one for personal subject pronoun used between close friends. *Aku* (I) and *ikam* (you) are pronouns which are mostly used by both speakers of BKD and BHD. The usage of this second level pronoun might be due to the equal position or condition of the users. They are probably about the same age, origin, background or interest. *Unda* and *nyawa* are in the second place for BKD speakers while *Ulun (I) and pian (you)* are by BHD speakers for the same rank in use. Slang terms like *imak* and *auk* are also found among close friends.

*Ulun (I) and pian (you)* are conventionally used by almost all speakers of BKD and BHD. Strangely though, there is a respondent from BKD admitted using *aku* (I) and *ikam* (you) when interacting with their parents just like *unda* (I) and *nyawa* (you) used between close friends. Once again, this usage is not intended of being rude, but it more of a habit between the speakers. Terms of address *abah* (father) and *mama* (mother) are also functioned as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun. Among siblings, the most frequents pronouns used are *aku* (I) and *ikam* (you). However, the total number is not dominant, only 54% for BKD speakers and 50% for BHD ones. *Ulun (I) and pian (you)* are also used by the speakers covering 40% and 37.5% of the total respondents from BKD and BHD speakers. This finding is might be due to the consideration of age difference between siblings. The data are presented in Table 4.5a below.

TABLE 6.  
THE SUMMARY OF BANJARESE 1ST AND 2ND PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE IN CONSIDERING THE DEGREE OF INTIMACY

DEGREE OF INTIMACY		BKD (37)		BHD (24)	
		PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL	PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL
1st and 2nd Personal Subject Pronoun	Boyfriend (Girlfriend) / Spouses	ulun, pian	18	ulun, pian	18
		aku, ikam	10	aku, ikam	4
		unda, nyawa	2	No answer	2
		aku, kamu	1		
		nama	1		
		saying	1		
		No answer	4		
	Close Friend	aku, ikam	31	aku, ikam	18
		unda, nyawa	4	ulun, pian	4
		ulun, pian	1	imak, auk	1
		tergantung temannya	1	eke, nama sahabat	1
	Parents	ulun, pian	33	ulun, pian	23
		abah, mama	1	abah, mama	1
		aku, ikam	1		
		No answer	2		
	Siblings	aku, ikam	20	aku, ikam	12
		ulun, pian	15	ulun, pian	9
		abang / nama saudara	1	kaka / nama saudara	2
No answer		1	unda, nyawa	1	

The findings on the use of 3<sup>rd</sup> personal subjective pronouns of Banjarese speakers of BKD and BHD show that *inya* is very common among boyfriend/girlfriends, spouses, close friends, and siblings. For parents, the pronoun *sidin* (s/he) is used dominantly although there is terms of address used like *mama* (mother) and *abah* (father) or *mamaku* (my mother) and *abahku* (my father). This reflects that the use of *inya* and *sidin* (both refer to 's/he') really depends on whom the person being talked about is (Table 7).

TABLE 7.  
THE SUMMARY OF BANJARESE 3RD PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE IN CONSIDERING THE DEGREE OF INTIMACY

DEGREE OF INTIMACY		BKD (37)		BHD (24)	
		PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL	PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL
3rd Personal Subject Pronoun	Boyfriend (Girlfriend) / Spouses	inya	23	inya	19
		sidin	9	sidin	3
		beliau	1	No answer	2
		nama	1		
		No answer	3		
	Close Friend	inya	33	inya	22
		sidin	1	by name	2
		beliau	1		
		No answer	2		
	Parents	sidin	32	sidin	21
		mamaku, abahku	2	mamaku, abahku	2
		mama, abah	1	mama, abah	1
		ibu	1		
		No answer	1		
	Siblings	inya	30	inya	17
		sidin	3	sidin	3
		kakaku	2	sidin, inya	1
beliau		1	kaka, adding	1	
No answer		1	by name	2	

#### d. Social Status

*Ulun (I) and pian (you)* are the most personal subject pronoun used either by considering marital status or occupation of the interlocutors. It seems that BKD and BHD speakers prioritize the use of this most polite form of Banjarese pronoun when speaking to a person whom they know or do not have the knowledge of the marital status and occupation (Table 8). In the case of marital status, there usually is an assumption that someone who has married is already mature and get more respect although sometimes she or he is still very young. As for the job, talking to a person who has worked might also be different in politeness because someone who has had a job is considered more experienced.

The use of *aku* and *ikam* is in the second place by the BKD and BHD speakers. This might be possible in the situation where the speakers are in the same level, for example having similar prestigious job or having more or less similar length of marriage years. Related to marital status and occupation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person being talked about, the use of *sidin* and *inya* (he, she) is very common among the speakers of BKD and BHD. Even when the speakers do not know the marital status, they use *sidin* and *inya* interchangeably.

TABLE 8.  
THE SUMMARY OF BANJARESE PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE IN CONSIDERING THE SOCIAL STATUS

SOCIAL STATUS		BKD (37)		BHD (24)	
		PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL	PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL
1st and 2nd Personal Subject Pronoun	Unknown Marital Status	ulun,	28	ulun, pian	17
		aku, ikam	5	aku, ikam	6
		aku, kamu	1	depends on age	1
		mas, mbak	1		
		No answer	2		
	Known Marital Status	ulun, pian	31	ulun, pian	20
		aku, ikam	3	aku, ikam	3
		bapak, ibu	1	depends on age	1
		No answer	2		
	Unknown Job	ulun, pian	26	ulun, pian	17
		aku, ikam	7	aku, ikam	6
		kamu	1	depends on age	1
		bapak, ibu, mas, mbak	1		
		No answer	2		
Known Job	ulun, pian	30	ulun, pian	20	
	aku, ikam	4	aku, ikam	3	
	bapak, ibu	1	depends on age	1	
	No answer	2			
3rd Personal Subject Pronoun	Unknown Marital Status	sidin	20	sidin	13
		inya	14	inya	11
		inya, sidin	1		
		No answer	2		
	Unknown Job	sidin	19	sidin	13
		inya	15	inya	11
		sidin, inya	1		
		No answer	2		

e. Age

Almost all of the respondents admitted that they use *aku* and *ikam* frequently when talking to friends, siblings and new acquaintances who are similar age and younger. *Ulun (I) and pian (you)* are used when communicating with older friends, siblings and new acquaintances. *Unda (I) and nyawa (you)* are also used by a few respondents. It seems that these last two pronouns are very common among people who are more or less the same age or younger. However, there is a finding that someone still uses *unda* and *nyawa* although s/he is talking to friends, siblings and new acquaintances who are older. This might be due to the habit of using this 3<sup>rd</sup> level of pronoun. As a result, regardless the age of the interlocutors, that person still uses *unda* and *nyawa*. Therefore, *aku (I) and ikam (you)* are the most favorable ones because they bring neutrality among friends, siblings and new acquaintances.

There is an interesting point from BHD speaker. A respondent admitted that even though s/he talks with friend with similar age, s/he uses the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronouns *ulun (I), pian (you)*. The reason maybe that person wants to sound polite and respect the interlocutors. When talking about someone who is older, most of the respondents agreed that they use *sidin*. However, there are some person stated that they could use *inya* to someone who older. This might be due to their habit. Furthermore, it is because that someone older is not quite respectable. As a matter of fact, the colleagues just refer him / her by the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of 3<sup>rd</sup> personal subject pronoun in Banjarese –*inya*. On the contrary, the result shows that someone who is younger might be referred by *sidin* by some people. It may happens because that someone younger probably has a good position in the community. For example, he is the new leader of a party or the young director of a company.

Someone older is usually referred as *sidin*, and someone younger is denoted with *inya* (Table 9). This data supports that age has a role in determining whether a speaker of BKD or BHD speak with the first or the second level of pronoun politeness in Banjarese. The case of *sidin* being used for someone younger is an exception which the speaker only wants to sound polite and respectful to the third person being talked about or because the person is of higher position.

TABLE 9.  
THE SUMMARY OF BANJARESE PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE IN CONSIDERING THE AGE

AGE		BKD (37)		BHD (24)	
		PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL	PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL
1st and 2nd Personal Subject Pronoun	Friend with Similar Age	aku, ikam	32	aku, ikam	21
		unda, nyawa	3	unda, nyawa	1
		menyebut nama	1	ulun, pian	1
		tergantung temannya	1	No answer	1
	Friend who is older	ulun, pian	23	ulun, pian	20
		aku, ikam	14	aku, ikam	3
				unda, nyawa	1
	Friend who is younger	aku, ikam	35	aku, ikam	15
		ulun, pian	1	ulun, pian	8
		nama, kamu	1	unda, nyawa	1
	Sibling with Similar Age	aku, ikam	33	aku, ikam	19
		unda, nyawa	2	ulun, pian	4
		nama	2	unda, nyawa	1
	Sibling who is older	ulun, pian	30	ulun, pian	18
		aku, ikam	6	aku, ikam	5
		nama	1	unda, nyawa	1
	Sibling who is younger	aku, ikam	27	aku, ikam	15
		ulun, pian	5	ulun, pian	8
		nama	3	unda, nyawa	1
		abang	1		
unda, nyawa		1			
New acquaintance who is older	ulun, pian	35	ulun, pian	23	
	unda, nyawa	1	unda, nyawa	1	
	tergantung umur, menyebut nama	1			
New acquaintance who is younger	aku, ikam	21	ulun, pian	18	
	ulun, pian	15	aku, ikam	5	
	No answer	1			
3rd Personal Subject Pronoun	Someone older	sidin	31	sidin	21
		inya	6	inya	3
	Someone younger	inya	31	inya	22
		sidin	2	sidin	2

f. Sex Distinction

Interestingly, more respondents used *aku, ikam* rather than other pronouns. In terms of sex or gender, both male and female of the BHD and BKD speakers use the pronouns *aku* and *ikam* the most. This might be because *aku* and *ikam* sounds more neutral when talking across genders. When it comes to similar sex conversation, the male and female speakers tend to use *unda* and *nyawa*. This is probably triggered by the condition that the speakers belong to the same gender and they feel more comfortable using the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of Banjarese 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun. A

respondent said that he used the terms like *bro, man, coy, dude* in their daily conversation. It is probably caused by the same gender that he and the interlocutor belong to. In other words, it is because they are men.

TABLE 10.  
THE SUMMARY OF BANJARESE PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE IN CONSIDERING THE SEX DISTINCTION

SEX DISTINCTION		BKD (37)		BHD (24)	
		PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL	PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN	TOTAL
1st and 2nd Personal Subject Pronoun	Male	aku, ikam	30	aku, ikam	17
		unda, nyawa	1	ulun, pian	4
		aku, ikam and unda, nyawa	2	ulun, pian and aku, ikam	1
		ulun, pian	1	depends on the age	1
		depends on the age	1	unda, nyawa	1
		bro, coy, man, dude	1		
		by name	1		
	Female	aku, ikam	29	aku, ikam	15
		ulun, pian	2	ulun, pian	5
		unda, nyawa	2	depends on the age	2
		aku, ikam and unda, nyawa	2	ulun, pian and aku, ikam	2
		depends on the age	1		
		by name	1		

#### g. Others

The terms *kita ini, saurang ini, and yayang ini*, as it can be seen in Table 4.9, are also used by the Banjarese speakers of BKD and BHD. *Kita ini* and *Saurang ini* is applied in the context of casual conversations. *Kita ini* refer to the speaker oneself when it sounds inappropriate to use the term *ulun, aku* or *unda*. For example when that person is talking to a stranger whom s/he meets at a public place. It is more often heard used by men than by women. *Saurang ini* is often used when a person talks about himself or herself. The slang terms like *auk* and *imak* is still surprisingly used among the youth. These expressions are quite similar with *Bahasa Walikan* used by Malangese people (those who are from Malang, East Java). Another interesting finding is that the people also use *ana* and *ente* which are adopted from Arabic. Although the terms are not Banjarese, but they are used among young people who are originally the native speakers of Banjarese.

TABLE 11  
THE SUMMARY OF OTHER BANJARESE PERSONAL SUBJECT PRONOUN USE

OTHERS	MEANING	
1 <sup>st</sup> Personal Subject Pronoun	kita ini	I
	saurang ini	I
	yayang ini	I
	imak	I
	ana	I
2 <sup>nd</sup> Personal Subject Pronoun	auk	You (singular)
	ente	You (singular)
	buhan pian	You (plural)
	buhan ikam	You (plural)
	buhan nyawa	You (plural)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Personal Subject Pronoun	nang ini	It
	nang itu	It

Indirectness also happens in Banjarese use of its personal subject pronoun. Instead of using the direct 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun, the speaker change it into a term of address *Bapak* as it in this example:

Mun *pian* hakun, kita kawa ay mulai langsung.

(If you agree, we can start right away)

The speaker might switch the sentence into:

Mun *Bapak* hakun, kita kawa ay langsung mulai.

(If you agree, we can start right away)

The reason of switching the personal pronoun into term of address like this is probably due to the intention of showing more deference. As a result, the most polite Banjarese personal pronoun *pian* is not enough to show the respect.

## V. CONCLUSION

The choice on the use of the pronouns is sometimes not rigidly strict to the existing patterns. It is more determined by the relationship of the speakers in a given context. Although *unda* and *nyawa* is the most rude form of pronoun in Banjarese, in some familiar contexts they might be used without any feeling of rudeness anymore. It becomes usual between friends, the terms used is considered as not rude. When people used the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of politeness of Banjarese, it does not mean that they are impolite. It happens when they feel that they are close enough to the interlocutors.

The politeness that happens in Banjarese when its speakers use personal subject pronoun is the switch of its use as in the case of *ulun, pian* which is customarily used when speaking with someone older, respectable and more superior. *Uluu, pian*, in particular occasions, can be used when talking with someone younger and inferior due to certain reasons, for example to accustom children in order that they speak using the most polite form of Banjarese personal subject pronoun.

The languages' pronouns –Banjarese and American English– are based on singular and plural distinction. However, Banjarese does not have a gender distinction as in the American English. Both Banjarese and American English personal pronouns are categorised into three persons: first person, second person and third person. However, English personal pronouns are depend mostly on the grammatical role while banjarese personal pronouns can indicate the social status or the relation of the speaker and other persons in the discourse. Personal pronouns play an important play in communication, especially in Banjarese. They can reveal the social status or the relationship between the speaker and the listener, in some cases, they can also show the politeness or impoliteness of the speakers.

Despite the limitation of this study, there are some other points to ponder which might be useful to conduct in the next study. First, there might be other Banjarese pronouns which have not been discovered in this research. Second, in the future research, it is suggested that the male and female respondents are separated in order that a convincing conclusion about the influence of gender can be more stressed out. Last, there should be another investigation on the respondents who are not dominant to only a particular dialect, either BKD or BBDK. They might have a mix of both dialects because they experience living in particular areas where the community at certain times is BKD prevailing and at other times is BKD dominant.

#### APPENDIX A

It is a questionnaire on the use of language in which it aims to determine the pronoun used when communicating in Bahasa Banjar differentiated by the subjects dialects of Banjar Hulu and Banjar Kuala.

**ANGKET PEMAKAIAN BAHASA (A)**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui **kata ganti yang dipakai ketika berkomunikasi dalam Bahasa Banjar**. Tolong isikan angket berikut sesuai dengan data yang sebenarnya. Terima kasih atas kerjasamanya

1. Jenis Kelamin : Laki-laki/Perempuan \*)
2. Daerah asal : .....
3. Tempat Lahir : .....
4. Bahasa Banjar apa yang dominan anda gunakan dalam percakapan sehari-hari:
  - a. Bahasa Banjar Dialek Hulu (BBDH)
  - b. Bahasa Banjar Dialek Kuala (BBDK)

Bila anda tidak yakin, untuk mengetahui apakah anda dominan BBDH atau BBDK silahkan lingkari salah satu kata yang sering anda gunakan dalam berbahasa Banjar dari dua pilihan yang diberikan berikut:

kawa	hingkat	kawan	kawal	cocok	cucuk
lelongkang	lalungkang	gasan	hagan	bajauh	baugah
catuk	tutui	dapur	padu	kayi	nini laki
ampih	tajua	amang/paman	acil laki	hanyar	puga

5. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika harus berbicara di forum / diskusi dalam bahasa Banjar?
  - a. ulun, pian
  - b. aku, ikam
  - c. unda, nyawa
  - d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Bagaimana anda menyebut guru / dosen dalam Bahasa Banjar ketika berbicara di dalam kelas?
  - a. pian
  - b. ikam
  - c. nyawa
  - d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Apa yang anda gunakan untuk menyebut dosen ketika anda sedang membicarakan tentang dosen dengan orang lain dalam Bahasa Banjar?
  - a. sidin
  - b. inya
  - c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Kata ganti apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan dosen di luar kelas?
  - a. ulun, pian
  - b. aku, ikam
  - c. unda, nyawa
  - d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan pacar/ istri/suami dalam Bahasa Banjar?
  - a. ulun, pian
  - b. aku, ikam
  - c. unda, nyawa
  - d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan sahabat dekat anda dalam Bahasa Banjar?
  - a. ulun, pian
  - b. aku, ikam
  - c. unda, nyawa
  - d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan orang tua dalam Bahasa Banjar?
  - a. ulun, pian
  - b. aku, ikam
  - c. unda, nyawa
  - d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_

12. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan saudara dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
13. Apa yang anda gunakan untuk menyebut pacar/ istri/suami anda ketika anda sedang membicarakannya dengan orang lain dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sidin    b. inya    c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
14. Apa yang anda gunakan untuk menyebut sahabat dekat anda ketika anda sedang membicarakannya dengan orang lain dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sidin    b. inya    c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
15. Apa yang anda gunakan untuk menyebut orang tua anda ketika anda sedang membicarakannya dengan orang lain dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sidin    b. inya    c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
16. Apa yang anda gunakan untuk menyebut saudara anda ketika anda sedang membicarakannya dengan orang lain dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sidin    b. inya    c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
17. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika anda berbicara dengan orang yang anda tidak tahu status perkawinannya.  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
18. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika anda berbicara dengan orang yang anda tahu status perkawinannya.  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
19. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika anda berbicara dengan orang yang anda tidak tahu pekerjaannya?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
20. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika anda berbicara dengan orang yang anda tahu status pekerjaannya?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
21. Apa yang anda gunakan untuk menyebut orang lain yang anda tidak tahu status perkawinannya dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sidin    b. inya    c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
22. Apa yang anda gunakan untuk menyebut orang lain yang anda tidak tahu pekerjaannya dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sidin    b. inya    c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
23. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan teman yang seumuran anda?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_

24. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan teman yang lebih tua dari anda?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
25. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan teman yang lebih muda dari anda?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
26. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan saudara yang seumuran anda?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
27. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan saudara yang lebih tua dari anda?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
28. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan saudara yang lebih muda dari anda?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
29. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan seseorang yang lebih tua, tapi baru anda kenal / tidak begitu anda kenal?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
30. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara dengan seseorang yang lebih tua, baru anda kenal / tidak begitu anda kenal  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
31. Bagaimana anda menyebut orang yang lebih tua ketika sedang membicarakannya dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sdin            b. inya            c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
32. Bagaimana anda menyebut orang yang lebih muda ketika sedang membicarakannya dalam Bahasa Banjar?  
a. sdin            b. inya            c. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
33. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara lawan bicara laki-laki?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_
34. Apa yang anda gunakan ketika berbicara lawan bicara perempuan?  
a. ulun, pian    b. aku, ikam    c. unda, nyawa    d. lainnya (sebutkan) \_\_\_\_\_

#### TERIMA KASIH ATAS BANTUANNYA

#### APPENDIX B

It is a questionnaire on the use of language in which it aims to determine the pronoun used when communicating in Bahasa Banjar by considering the formal and informal situation, intimacy level, marital status, age, sex, and context.



**ANGKET PEMAKAIAN BAHASA**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui **kata ganti yang dipakai ketika berkomunikasi dalam Bahasa Banjar**. Tolong isikan angket berikut sesuai dengan data yang sebenarnya. Terima kasih atas kerjasamanya.

1. Apakah situasi formal dan informal memberikan pengaruh dalam anda berbicara menggunakan Bahasa Banjar? Tolong jelaskan:

---

---

2. Apakah tingkat kedekatan anda dengan seseorang mempengaruhi cara anda memanggilnya? Tolong jelaskan:

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---

3. Apakah status perkawinan dan pekerjaan menentukan tingkatan kesopanan cara berbicara anda? Tolong jelaskan:

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4. Apakah umur lawan bicara menentukan cara anda memanggilnya? Tolong jelaskan:

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---

5. Apakah jenis kelamin lawan bicara menentukan kata ganti yang anda gunakan? Tolong jelaskan:

---

---

6. Dalam situasi apa anda menggunakan kata ganti *ulun* dan *pian* saat berbicara Bahasa Banjar? Tolong jelaskan:

---

---

7. Dalam situasi apa anda menggunakan kata ganti *aku* dan *ikam* saat berbicara Bahasa Banjar?  
Tolong jelaskan:
- 
- 
8. Dalam situasi apa anda menggunakan kata ganti *unda* dan *nyawa* saat berbicara Bahasa Banjar?  
Tolong jelaskan:
- 
- 
9. Dalam situasi apa anda menggunakan kata ganti *buhan pian/ buhan sampiyan/buhan ikam/buhan nyawa* saat berbicara Bahasa Banjar? Tolong jelaskan:
- 
- 
10. Dalam situasi apa anda menggunakan kata ganti *sidin* dan *inya* saat berbicara Bahasa Banjar?  
Tolong jelaskan:
- 
- 
11. Dalam situasi apa anda menggunakan kata ganti *nang ini* dan *nang itu* saat berbicara Bahasa Banjar? Tolong jelaskan:
- 
- 
12. Pernahkah anda menyebut diri sendiri menggunakan kata *saurang ini, kita ini, yayang ini dll* untuk menyebut diri sendiri? Tolong jelaskan:
- 
- 
13. Apa saja kata ganti yang pernah anda gunakan selain yang disebutkan di atas? Dalam situasi seperti apa biasanya? Tolong jelaskan:
- 
- 

**TERIMA KASIH**

#### APPENDIX C

It is a questionnaire on the use of American English Personal Subject Pronoun among the English Department Students of Unlam Batch 2012 based on their knowledge and daily use of the English pronouns.

**QUESTIONNAIRE C**

This research is aimed at gathering data on the use of American English Personal Subject Pronoun among the English Department Students of Unlam Batch 2012. Please answer the questions based on your knowledge and your daily use of the pronouns. Thank you.

1. What are the 1<sup>st</sup> personal subject pronoun that you know and use when you speak English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are the 2<sup>nd</sup> personal subject pronoun that you know and use when you speak English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are the 3<sup>rd</sup> personal subject pronoun that you know and use when you speak English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are the singular personal subject pronoun that you know and use when you speak English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are the plural personal subject pronoun that you know and use when you speak English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you think in using the personal subject pronoun you need to consider the situations (official/unofficial)? Why? Why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you think in using the personal subject pronoun you need to consider the degree of intimacy? Are they different when you speak to your boyfriend/girlfriend, close friend, parents, siblings, etc. Why? Why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you think in using the personal subject pronoun you need to consider the social status in terms of marriage and occupation? Are they different when you speak to someone whom you know that he/she is married or unmarried? Are they different when you speak to someone whom you know or don't know what the job is? Why? Why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you think in using the personal subject pronoun you need to consider the age of the person? Why? Why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you think in using the personal subject pronoun you need to consider the sex of the person? Why? Why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

It is the data tabulation on the use of personal subject pronoun by native speakers of Banjarese with Banjar Kuala Dialect (BKD)

APPENDIX E

It is the data tabulation on the use of personal subject pronoun by native speakers of Banjarese with Banjar Hulu Dialect (BHD)

APPENDIX F, G AND H

It is the data tabulation on the raw qualitative data for Appendix A, B and C.

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# “My Excellent College Entrance Examination Achievement” — Noun Phrase Use of Chinese EFL Students’ Writing

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**Abstract**—Previous studies have shown that phrasal structure, particularly complex noun phrases with phrasal modifiers, is a feature of advanced academic writing. Therefore, it would be important for those who plan to pursue further studies to learn to write in the way that is appropriate for academic writing. Using the manual annotation function of UAM corpus tool, this study compared the noun phrase use of Chinese EFL students’ writing with that of proficient language users. This study also discussed the significant differences found between these two groups in terms of noun phrase use and their implications for EFL/ ESL writing instruction.

**Index Terms**—EFL Chinese students, writing, noun phrase

## I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE

Researchers in second language writing put forward the idea of complexity, fluency and accuracy. As one aspect of proficiency evaluation, writing complexity in L2 research has been measuring indices of verbal subordination such as T units. Many scholars accept T-unit based measures as indicators of writing proficiency (Ortega, 2003; Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998). However, some studies have found that higher proficiency learners do not produce longer T-units (Rimmer, 2006, Taguchi et al. 2013). T-based measurement might fall short of its purpose in evaluating L2 writing proficiency, including academic writing. Such measures therefore have been challenged by a number of researchers. Lambert & Kormos (2014) pointed out the problems of using such measures in evaluating the syntactic complexity of L2 development by arguing that this approach failed to “differentiate types of subordination; no controlling for item-based use of subordinate structures and not considering potential interactions between subordination, discourse genre, and mode of production” (p. 2). Wang & Slater (2016) found that the use of complex nominals is one important difference between Chinese EFL writers and the more proficient writers. Biber & Gray (2010) argued that academic writing as a register of advanced writing, is found to rely heavily on phrases rather than dependent clauses and they argued “academic writing is characterized by an extremely dense use of non-clausal phrases and extremely complex noun phrase structures” (Biber & Gray 2011, p. 226). Their corpus investigation seems to show that phrasal level complexity, particularly noun phrase complexity, may be a more effective grammar indicator both for L1 and L2 learners. Taguchi et al. (2013) also found that “noun phrase modification (by attributive adjectives and post-noun-modifying prepositional phrases) had a tendency to contribute to essay quality” (p. 428-429). Besides, Biber & Gray (2011) found that the frequency of noun phrases related structures such as attributive adjectives, premodifying nouns, postmodifying prepositional phrases, appositive noun phrases and nominalisations have greatly increased in academic prose in the last 200 years, thus, making it even more important to examine the noun phrases because of its relevance to the students writers to acquire such structures (Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014).

Following Biber & Gray (2011), Parkinson & Musgrave (2014) investigated the noun phrase use of two groups of L2 students and found that the less proficient language learners relied more heavily on pre-modifiers than the more advanced language learners whose use of noun modifiers were found to be much closer to the published academic articles compared with less proficient language learners. Musgrave & Parkinson (2014) reported the task design that would increase learners’ understanding and use of noun-noun phrases.

The Parkinson & Musgrave (2014) study furthered our understanding on the issue of noun phrase use in academic writing. Yet there is still some gap as the data for the study came from two student groups and different tasks. Noun phrase use is a very specific part of language use in writing and different kinds of genre might lead to the different use of noun phrases even by the same author. Literature also suggests that tasks can be one important factor in writing. For instance, Lu (2011) found that task type might influence the complexity of writing in addition to other factors such as timing. The current study explored the use of noun phrase by having two different groups of participants performing the same task to make the two dataset more comparable.

The number of Chinese students who further their studies in English-speaking countries has increased sharply in the past ten years. For example, the number of Chinese students studying in U.S during 2012-2013 was 235,597, an increase of 21.4 % from 194,029, the number of Chinese students studied in U.S during the previous Academic Year (2011-2012) (see Beckett & and Zhao, 2016). Academic readiness of these students in general (see Wang & Beckett, 2014) and writing level in particular is of tremendous importance to their academic success English-medium instruction environment. The current investigation focused on the use of noun phrase by Chinese EFL students to help address some of these concerns. More specifically, this study compared the noun phrase complexity in less proficient Chinese EFL students' writing to more proficient English users. A definition of the proficient English users as used in this study is explained in the data collection section. A study in the phrase level of EFL writing could serve as a guide for pedagogical purposes in writing instruction.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Data Collection

Data source for this study is a particular writing genre called "personal statement", a type of document required as part of the admission requirement for further learning by many universities. This document provides supplementary information about the applicants that other application documents are not able to show. It is also an important document that shows potential candidates' writing ability. The successful candidates are expected to write for the intended audience, the admission committee, who are generally professors in the relevant fields.

Participants in this study consists of two groups students: the proficient language users group and Chinese EFL student group, mainly for comparison purposes. The proficient language users in this study are defined as those who can the English language proficiently in their writing. These users could be native speakers or the other language speakers. However, based on the fact that their writings are chosen as samples on the official websites of colleges and universities, it should be assumed that these are good examples of personal statements. Fifteen personal statements were collected for the study from the official websites of nine relevant universities. There are several principles that guided the data collection including the representativeness of different types of universities such as top universities and local community and colleges. Different disciplines are also considered including social sciences, medicine, and natural science.

The Chinese EFL students group took a writing course with one of the authors. As part of the course design, the students were required to write their personal statements after two hours of instruction of how to write a personal statement. The instruction discussed the purpose of the document and analyzed some sample personal statements. The instructor also offered the students some more samples as a reference. The students then were given two weeks' time to finish the writing after class. These students were second-year college students majored in international finance at a top financial institution in China. Altogether, 38 personal statements were collected for the study. For the proficient user group, 15 personal statements were collected. It would be more statistically balanced to find an equal number of personal statements from the proficient users. But due to the availability and also representative considerations, only 15 were selected.

TABLE 1  
DATASET SUMMARY

Participants	English proficient users	Chinese EFL students
Number of pieces of writing	15	38
Average length of each	788	669
Total number of words	11822	25414
Source	US/Canada university websites	Course assignment writing
Disciplines	Social science, medicine, engineering	Finance

### B. Data Coding

The study used UAM Corpus Tool 2013 version, developed by Micky O'Donnell, for coding. The tool affords automatic annotation as well as manual annotation of the corpus material. For instance, the automatic annotation of grammatical units produces information about tokens (all the words included in each data set) and parts of speech (POS) in the data sets. The following section would introduce the tool including some preliminary analysis as relevant to the current study and the coding scheme.

TABLE 2  
PARTS OF SPEECH BY PROFICIENT USERS AND EFL CHINESE STUDENTS

Token-type	English proficient Users		Chinese EFL Students		Chi-square Significance	
	N=12603		N=25161			
POS	Feature Number	Percentage	Feature Number	Percentage		
Noun	3178	25.22%	5628	22.37%	38.10	+++
Verb	1899	15.07%	4097	16.28%	9.29	+++
Adjective	1066	8.46%	2025	8.05%	1.88	
Pronoun	1016	8.06%	2477	9.84%	31.80	+++
determiner	1078	8.55%	2075	8.25%	1.03	
Adverb	451	3.58%	1129	4.49%	17.29	+++
Conj	516	4.09%	957	3.80%	1.89	
Prep	1485	11.78%	2856	11.35%	1.54	

Chi-square Significance: “+” indicates weak significance (90%),  
“++” indicates medium significance (95%), “+++” indicate strong significance (98%).

As can be seen from the above table, POSs used by the EFL Chinese students and the proficient users provide evidence that there is a difference between these two groups in their language choice for a very similar task. More specifically, the English proficient users and the EFL Chinese students’ use of nouns, verbs, pronouns and adverbs showed statistically significant difference. While the English proficient users use more nouns in their writing, the EFL Chinese students use more verbs. The authors speculated that there might also be a correlation that adverbs go along with verbs and that is why the use of adverbs is also significantly different between these two groups. But this hypothesis needs to be further studied. This study would only focus on the noun phrase use; therefore, the other differences are beyond the scope of this study.

Besides the automatic annotation system, the UAM tool also enables the researchers in designing their own annotation scheme and set it up in the system. The following is the scheme designed by the authors for this study based on literature focusing on noun phrase (Biber et al. 2011, Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The following table summarized the noun phrase components as they are classified into pre-modifiers and qualifiers. The authors manually annotated the texts using the following scheme.

TABLE 3  
ANNOTATION SCHEME FOR NOUN PHRASE

	Modifier type	Examples from the texts
Pre-modifier	determinative	my patients, their profession, these traits, that goal,
	numerative	two years, first year, some companies,
	Epithet	young leaders, smaller journals, strong curiosity,
	classifier--adj	financial analyst, high school, personal time
	classifier-noun	Career goal, gang violence, labor law, concert halls
qualifier	prepositional phrase	An emphasis on serving; contribution to the field, conflicts among members
	clause	The knowledge I’ve learned; children whose parents were; theories that you choose to believe
	infinitive	my ability to communicate; the years to follow,
	appositive	middleway house, the local battered women’s shelter
	present participle	my plans following completion,
	past participle	award given, time spent,
	adj as post modifier	opportunities available,

The study did not include the use of “a” “an” or “the” as determiners because the preliminary statistics showed that there is no significant difference between the use of determiners such as “a”, “the”, “this” “that” in the EFL students’ writing and the proficient users’ writing. The current determiners does include the use of other determiners including possessives like “my, their, his etc.” In the following, the study would focus only on the noun phrase.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. A General Picture of Noun Phrase Modifiers: The Quantitative Differences

It is found that the two groups under study did show a statistical difference in terms of their use of noun modifiers. The Chinese EFL students using more pre-modifiers while the English proficient using more qualifiers. The Chinese EFL students used 2267 raw counts of pre-modifiers which is about 81.75% of the overall modifiers of their noun phrases. In comparison, the English proficient users generated 1443 raw counts of the pre-modifiers which equals to a 73.77% of the overall modifiers. In terms of qualifiers, the Chinese EFL students generated 497 cases of qualifiers, a 17.92% while the English proficient users generated 501 cases, 25.61% of the total count. A Chi-square measurement showed there is strong significance between these differences.

Biber, et al (2011) hypothesized that nominal complexity is an indicator of academic writing complexity. In their hypothesis, Biber, et al (2011) proposed both first language and second language learners would go through a development progression process in terms of noun phrase complexity development and both L1 learners and L2 learners would first learn pre-modifiers and then develop qualifiers. Parkinson & Musgrave (2014) examined the academic writing of two groups of L2 learners and confirmed the hypothesis of the noun phrase development progression hypothesis. The data results from this study also support this hypothesis in that the Chinese EFL students use more pre-modifiers than qualifiers.

TABLE 4  
NOUN MODIFIER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROFICIENT USERS AND EFL STUDENTS

	English proficient users		Chinese EFL students		Chi-square Significance	
	Feature Number	Percentage	Feature Number	Percentage		
Pre-modifier	1443	73.77%	2267	81.75%	43.20	+++
qualifier	501	25.61%	497	17.92%	40.74	+++

Chi-square Significance: “+” indicates weak significance (90%),  
“++” indicates medium significance (95%), “+++” indicate strong significance (98%).

### B. Pre-modifiers: The Quantitative Differences

A more detailed subdivision analysis of the pre-modifiers indicates that the Chinese EFL students used a slightly higher percentage of determinatives compared with the English proficient user group. It is also noted that the Chinese EFL students used a higher percentage of numeratives when compared with the English proficient group. Since all the Chinese students majored in international finance, it could be assumed that this particular group of students was quite sensitive to numbers and this, reflected in their writing is a much higher percentage of numeratives in their writing. In terms of adjective or noun use, it seems that there is not much difference in this table, at least not shown in terms of numbers.

TABLE 5  
PRE-MODIFIER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROFICIENT USERS AND EFL STUDENTS

	English proficient users		Chinese EFL students		Chi-square Significance	
	Feature Number	Percentage	Feature Number	Percentage		
	N=2154		N=3207			
determinative	492	22.84%	829	25.85%	6.28	+++
numerative	76	3.53%	206	6.42%	21.67	+++
epithet	322	14.95%	576	17.96%	8.38	+++
classifier	624	28.97%	930	29.00%	0.00	

### C. Qualifiers: The Quantitative Differences

As for the qualifiers, it can be seen that preposition as post-modifier works as the most significant differences. The more proficient group used more prepositional phrases after the noun as part of the noun phrase. 395 prepositional phrases are identified and it counts about 18.34% of the overall noun modifiers. In comparison, the Chinese EFL students produced about 432 prepositional phrases which accounts for a 13.47% of the overall noun modifiers. The Chi-square showed there was a high statistical difference between these two groups.

Besides prepositions, one other modifier that showed statistical difference is appositive. While the proficient users generated 16 cases of appositive phrases to modify the noun, a 0.74% of the modifiers, the Chinese students only produced 6 cases, a 0.19% of the total modifiers. Still it should be noted that the overall number of appositives are relatively small and therefore these numbers should be interpreted with caution. Adjective as a post modifier and clause as modifier also showed statistically significant differences. The other types of qualifiers such as infinitive-as-modifier, pre-p-as-modifier and past-p-as-modifier failed to show statistically significant differences as indicated by the Chi-square significance in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
QUALIFIER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROFICIENT USERS AND EFL STUDENTS

Qualifier	English proficient users		Chinese EFL students		Chi-square Significance	
	Feature Number	Percentage	Feature Number	Percentage		
	N=2154		N=3207			
pp-as-modifier	395	18.34%	432	13.47%	23.40	+++
clause-as-modifier	91	4.22%	99	3.09%	4.88	++
infinitive-as-modifier	21	0.97%	39	1.22%	0.68	
appositive	16	0.74%	6	0.19%	9.74	+++
pre-p-as-modifier	10	0.46%	13	0.41%	0.10	
past-p-as-modifier	14	0.65%	19	0.59%	0.07	
adj_post_modifier	8	0.37%	2	0.06%	6.61	+++



Parkinson & Musgrave (2014) compared students’ use of noun modifiers with that of expert writers in published sources and found a number of differences. Using the data of noun modifiers in published sources reported by these authors, the following table is a comparison between the three groups in their use of noun modifiers.

TABLE 7  
STUDENTS’ NOUN PHRASE USE (PER THOUSAND) COMPARED WITH THE PUBLISHED SOURCES

Noun modifier	Proficient users/1000 words	Chinese EFL students/1000 words	Published sources/1000 words
Adjective	62	50	62
Nouns	15	11	40
prepositions	33	18	60
appositives	1	0.1	6

When the use of adjectives, nouns, prepositions and appositives were compared with published sources, it was found that both the proficient users and the EFL students’ writing in this study are lower in terms of numbers, with the EFL students lowest in all the numbers. This showed that both the proficient users’ and Chinese EFL students’ writing are still not very close to the features showed in the academic published sources. On the one hand, these results were directly influenced by the nature of the data collected for this study. Its personal side of the writing might mean that it is not so vigorously academic per se. On the other hand, it might indicate that since the Chinese students used fewer nouns in general when compared with the proficient writers, they also used less noun modifiers in their writing, thus making their writing not as elaborated or condensed as the proficient writers or the published sources.

*D. Other Differences*

The previous sections discussed the quantitative differences in terms of the noun phrase modifiers of the more proficient users of English and Chinese EFL students. The following section will discuss the qualitative differences that are found in the more proficient writers and the student writers. Chinese EFL students differ with the more proficient users of English in their noun phrase use such as the use of prepositional phrases as postmodifiers, as discussed in the above. Besides those quantitative differences, there are also differences which did not show in terms of numbers but nonetheless showed if examined from a qualitative perspective. A closer examination could reveal that. In this section, one such difference will be discussed as an example: when noun is used as a classifier to modify nouns.

The data set identified 199 cases of nouns that used as noun modifiers in the more proficient user group, a 9.26% of a general noun phrases and 276 cases of nouns used as noun modifiers for the student users, which is a 8.62% out of the total number of noun phrases. It seems that there is not much difference between the use of nouns as noun modifiers between the proficient users and the student users. As could be expected, that the nouns used as the modifier of the head noun is quite diverse in both groups, yet, for the student group, it seems there are more similarities across different individual students.

When nouns are used as modifiers, it is found that in the proficient users’ writing as sampled in Table 8, the noun modifiers are often related with the field that the author has been working in or would like work in the future. A variety of nouns used as modifiers could be found in the following examples from the proficient users the data collected for the study.

TABLE 8  
EXAMPLES OF PROFICIENT WRITERS’ USE OF NOUNS AS CLASSIFIERS

PFU/PFU-5.txt	teacher at a local	<u>ballet</u> school
PFU/PFU-1.txt	meaningful	<u>patient</u> education
PFU/PFU-2.txt	ing and refining my	<u>soldier</u> skills
PFU/PFU-6.txt	my announcement the	<u>excavation</u> team
PFU/PFU-8.txt	tive aspects of the	<u>justice</u> system
PFU/PFU-9.txt	est in the field of	<u>laser</u> technology
PFU/PFU-11.txt	labour agreement	<u>royalty</u> agreements,
PFU/PFU-12.txt	ntal tradition as a	<u>philosophy</u> research assistant
PFU/PFU-13.txt	e community through	<u>vision</u> screenings
PFU/PFU-1.txt	is my number one	<u>career</u> choice
PFU/PFU-10.txt	lace. Not all of my	<u>work</u> experience

TABLE 9  
EXAMPLES OF CHINESE EFL STUDENTS' USE OF NOUNS AS CLASSIFIERS

SL/SL-10.txt	of my grade in the	<u>university entrance</u> exam
SL/SL-12.txt	he first year of my	<u>college</u> life, I have
SL/SL-14.txt	his or her work in	the <u>school</u> union and
SL/SL-19.txt	to prepare for the	<u>college entrance</u> examination
SL/SL-20.txt	m provided with the	<u>university</u> life I am
SL/SL-21.txt	tudy. Besides the	<u>school</u> curriculum, I
SL/SL-25.txt	caution. During my	<u>university</u> days, I j
SL/SL-26.txt	0 in Tianjin in the	<u>university entrance</u> examination
SL/SL-29.txt	enced a meaningful	<u>university</u> life. My
SL/SL-30.txt	I got familiar with	<u>school</u> works and lea
SL/SL-31.txt	r-archaeology after	<u>college entrance</u> examination
SL/SL-32.txt	arkable mark in the	<u>college entrance</u> examination
SL/SL-33.txt	handong Province in	the <u>university entrance</u> examination
SL/SL-35.txt	life. My excellent	<u>college entrance</u> examination achievement
SL/SL-36.txt	hejiang Province in	the <u>college entrance</u> examination,
SL/SL-36.txt	tive character, and	<u>college</u> life has als

From the samples, we could see that the proficient users employ a variety of nouns as classifiers in their noun phrase use. These differences could not be measured by statistics but they are obvious when these specific samples are provided. In comparison, Table 9 represents the use of nouns as classifiers in the noun phrases of Chinese student learners. It is strikingly similar that many such cases focus on a few key terms such as “university,” “college,” or “school” which are closely related to school life. The high frequency of such words also reflects the life experience of most Chinese students—whose life are more centered around exam and school. This homogeneity is reflected in their language use as specific as the noun use in their writing.

Previous literature in studying the phrase use found that attributive adjectives as noun modifiers are more frequently used by lower-level students' writing. In addition, these student writers use much less premodifying nouns and less post-modifying prepositional phrases compared to more proficient users (Parkinson and Musgrave, 2014). This study of the comparison between Chinese EFL students' writing with the more proficient language users supported the findings of Parkinson and Musgrave (2014).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study explored the noun phrase use by Chinese EFL students by analyzing a similar task conducted by them and the more proficient users of English utilizing a coding tool UAM Corpus Tool. Findings of the study suggest that Chinese EFL students tend to use more pre-modifiers in general, including determiners, numerative and epithet and fewer post-modifiers compared to the more proficient writers. The use of prepositional modifiers is the most significant difference indicator for these two groups. The classifier use of these two groups is similar in numbers but qualitative differences are found. The study supports the hypothesis that language learners first learn to use pre-modifiers and then qualifiers/post-modifiers.

It is possible that classifiers are acquired later compared with other pre-modifiers as hypothesized in previous studies (Biber, Gray & Poonpon, 2011). EFL students can be encouraged to use more phrasal structures/qualifiers as a way to elaborate their writing, particularly prepositional phrases, which is a feature of advanced academic writing. The different use of noun modifiers in writings might be related with the life experiences of those writers, for instance, numeratives, classifiers. The language use is a reflection of the students' life experiences and even in the use of microlevel such as phrase level it is still found relevant.

Findings of this study contributed to the existing literature by showing that Chinese EFL learners tend to use more pre-modifiers than post-modifiers and therefore still need to improve their writing in their post modifier use. The study therefore could inform EFL writing, particularly academic writing in which the noun phrase is one of the characteristics. Another contribution of the study is the illustration of the UAM Corpus Tool, a new linguistics data analysis tool, which other scholars can now make use of in their scholarly endeavor.

Nevertheless, this study only discussed the noun phrase use differences between Chinese EFL learners and proficient writers; however, it should be also acknowledged that there are also inter-group differences within the Chinese EFL group. Future studies could further explore the inter-group differences and figure out the implications of those differences for EFL teaching and learning.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is supported by National University Foreign Language Teaching and Research Project (#2015BJ0059B) and School of Foreign Studies, Central University of Finance and Economics. I would also like to thank my supervisor Dr. Tammy Slater, associate professor in English Department, Iowa State University for her generous support during my stay as a visiting scholar at ISU.

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# Teaching Materials Development for Basic General Course of Indonesian Language Class Based on Culture Values Elompungi (Elong) Bugis Literature

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**Abstract**—This research aims to design basic course learning materials (MKDU) Indonesian Language for University students Bosowa Makassar, by integrating the values of local culture in the form of classical poetry (Elompugi) as an alternative, in efforts to preserve the local culture, a way to appreciate literary works become teaching material based on character education. The main problems of this research are: (1) how to identify and develop Elompugi values as course materials for the basic course like Indonesian language course? Model development for teaching materials and learning tools that will be used in this study refers to the design of Jerold E. Kemp in Yamin (2012) divides the nine components: (1) The results are to be achieved, (2) analysis of test subjects, (3) special purpose of learning, (4) learning activities, (5) learning resources, (6) the supporting facilities, (7) the study evaluation, (8) the initial tests, (9) the learning characteristics. This is demonstrated by a mean response of each respondent is 4.00 (respondents 1) and 4.40 (respondent 2) with a mean total of 4.20. This is proved by a mean response of each respondent is 4.00 (respondents 1) and 4.40 (respondent 2) with a total average of 4.30.

**Index Terms**—development of teaching materials, the values of the local culture, character education

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

Education aims to make human beings continued to grow as human beings with intelligence and kind hearted. In the National Education System Act, number 20 of 2003, Article 3 declared "national Education serves to develop and form the character and civilization of the nation's dignity in the context of the intellectual life of the nation, is aimed at developing students' potentials, in order to become a man of faith and fear of God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become citizens of a democratic and responsible ". Thus, the implicit meaning of the national education the purpose of education is expected to be realized through the intellectual, spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, social intelligence and kinaesthetic wit.

Some thought that outlines the importance of cultural preservation in the constellation and the development of globalization that national identity is not forgotten, can be seen in the opinion described by Tang (2004, p. 130), namely, to build the Indonesian culture dig written sources that contain many values ancestors' culture, local wisdom that can be used as learning materials and resources exemplary in many aspects of life that are now experiencing moral erosion. Education not only aims to produce smart educated man, but more important is the well-educated and cultured man.

In general, *elong* has five functions, Muhsyanur (2011) describes the functions of *elong* namely: (1) *elong* as a medium of education; (2) *elong* as a medium of entertainment; (3) *elong* as a generator of the fighting spirit; (4) *elong*

as a communication medium; and (5) *elong* as product and preservation of culture. However, when examined current conditions, there is a tendency to lack of appreciation of old literary works including *elong*.

The main function of local wisdom is to support national culture or national wisdom expressed by Ratna (2011, p. 94-95). Local wisdom serves to anticipate and even transform the various forms of cultural influences from outside to make it in accordance with the characteristics of local communities. The stronger the durability of their local wisdom, then the public is considered more stable. Research on Bugis cultural values done by Rahim (1992), and Ambo Enre (1999), explains that the language and culture of the Bugis-Makassar value outlook on life, values to behave in social interaction which are based on mutual respect (*sipakatau*), mutual respect (*sipakalebbi*), and reminding each other (*sipakainge*).

#### B. Problem Formulation

The concept contained in *Elong* transformed into Indonesian teaching materials that required special assessment. This study focused on a goal or object of study deemed necessary in-depth study, so that a major problem in this research are:

1. How to identify and develop the values *Elompugi* as teaching materials common basic subjects Indonesian?

#### C. Research Objective

Identifying and developing the values of *Elompugi* as teaching materials for general basic course, the Indonesian language course.

#### D. Benefits Research

Research that carried out is expected to be helpful to the reader, whether the benefits are theoretical and practical benefits.

##### 1. Theoretical Benefits

This research is expected to be beneficial to add depth of knowledge, for the development of teaching materials Indonesian that matter primarily sourced from the local literature works *Elompugi*.

##### 2. Practical Benefits

This research is expected to be useful to open up research horizons in appreciating the values of the local culture into teaching materials in formal educational environment.

## II. THEORETICAL BASIS

#### A. Teori Language Teaching

Teaching language or language teaching and learning process is based on the idea Chomsky in Iskandarwasid (2009, p. 41) that humans are the only ones who can learn the language and living language is a language that can be used in thinking and communicating.

#### B. Language Learning Theory

Gazali (2009, p. 9) The purpose of language learning is the skills in communicating for various communication contexts, while the capacities that developed were grouped based on the language, understanding, and usage.

#### C. Design of Teaching Material

Material or materials may be written or unwritten. Teaching materials or learning materials (instructional materials) generally consists of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that must be learned by the students, in order to achieve competency standards have been determined. Material knowledge in form of facts, concepts, principles and procedures.

Instructional design offered by Kemp in (Yamin, 2012) is a design used in this study, however, this design will be adapted and modified based on the situation and conditions on the field. Instructional design modifications can be seen in the following order: 1) Analysis of needs. 2) Characteristics of learners. 3) The learning objectives. 4) The learning materials content. 5) Learning resources (values *Elompugi*. 6) the process of becoming better teaching and supporting facilities. &) Aim.

#### D. Relevant Research

Research on Bugis cultural values done by Rahim (1992), Ambo Enre (1999), describes the classification of Bugis literature includes *Elompugi* in literature is in poetry, which an asset of South Sulawesi regional literature, which can enrich the national cultural treasure for the local culture presented various moral message and the message that such noble values in human life.

## III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

*Elompugi* is one kind of Bugis literature works, including the category of poetry rich with noble values. As traditional literary works that are threatened with extinction, crushed by the progress of time, then *Elong Ugi (Elompugi)* should remain preserved because it serves as a local identity.

Based on the analysis, or the study of meaning and cultural values that lead to educational character in between the value of persistence, ethical, religious, contained in *Elompugi*, by applying the theory Rifattere and Tzvetan Todorov in (Tang, 2008) 1. Projection, 2. Comments, and 3. Poetics. In the projection, the reader activities are trying to understand the elements apart from the text, which together support the presence of the text, in the comments, readers trying to understand the content of the exposure in the text itself. and poetic; the reader attempts to understand the abstract rules that are intrinsically present in the literature text itself.

Indonesian language teaching materials by implementing instructional system design in accordance with the steps offered by Jerold E. Kemp, as the basic concept of the introduction of value as an application of character building which traditionally has been applied by the Buginese ancestors. The framework flow in this study as follows. The Literature work → Poem → cultural values in *Elompugi* → Developing Instructional Materials Based on Cultural Values → Teaching Material Products.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODS

##### A. Types of Research

Type this research is development research since this study lead to a product which is the design and teaching materials design based on local culture, namely literature. This research is oriented towards the product of a process; hence this research is descriptive quantitative research. This research has implications for a development of teaching materials through a process of either the learning process or in the form of a product. The resulting product is the design or the design of Indonesian language teaching materials, in which the core of the instructional materials sourced from cultural values contained in *Elompugi (local literature)*. Research development. according Sugiyono (2011, p. 298) is the research that produces a particular product based on the analysis of needs, both in the social and educational sphere, when harnessed will have an added value.

Quantitative methods assume that behaviour can be observed as the characteristics of quantitative research by Purwanto (2012, p. 45) describes, quantitative research is behaviouristic, mechanistic and empirical. The study also focuses on the outcome or product. The focus in this research is the development of teaching materials MKDU Indonesian Language course based on Bugis society culture values which is *elompugi* that have been validated by experts, practitioners, peers, and the Observer are selected with specific eligibility criteria. Teaching materials that have been declared fit then tested in a class numbered 13 students were then called limited trial. After teaching materials is eligible based on the trial results, further tests on comprehensive groups three classes then called a field test. Design and test subjects are described as follows:

##### 1. Trial Design

Product trials using experimental design one-shot-case study. This design requires giving treatment without measuring or checking the initial state. The results will be measured at the end of treatment. Conditions were drawn at the end of the treatment is the data findings of researchers to draw a conclusion of the study.

##### 2. Subject Test

Subject trials in development research is divided into three classes, namely Makassar Bosowa University students, two of the classes are first semester students as limited test subjects. 1 of the executive class numbering 13 people as the subject of field trials 1, and a regular class that berjumlah 13 person as subject field trials 2, and one regular classes totalling 31 people as the subject of field trials 3.

##### B. Research Design

The study design was designed through a development model of teaching by Thiagarajan known as the Four-D models that define, design, develop, and disseminate. The study design can be seen in the chart below;

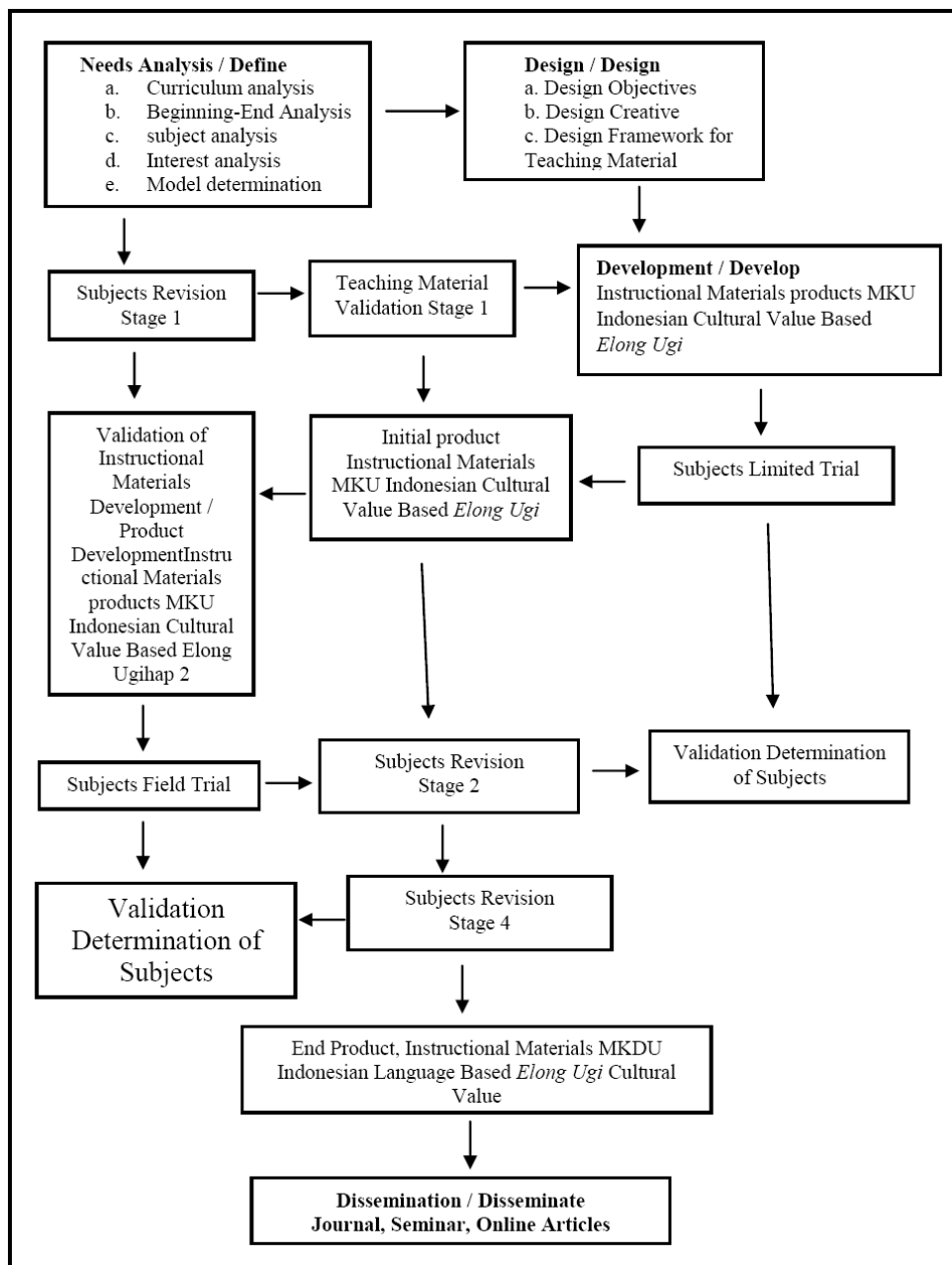


Chart 3.1: Study Design

Steps of research development of teaching materials MKDU

C. Data and Data Sources

Teaching materials data in the form *Elompugi* sourced from several library reference and potpourri research results from the South Sulawesi Central Bureau of Language. Quantitative data from the feasibility test teaching materials are grouped into two categories, namely quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data in the form of teaching materials feasibility test assessment scores of by a team of experts, practitioners, colleagues, and students. The assessment results from team of experts, practitioners, colleagues, and students were analysed based on the type of data collected. Data is a measurement scale in the form of an assessment scale of the teaching materials product development, the data described and analysed based on the quantitative results. Comments, criticisms, and suggestions in the form of teaching material interpretation of the products described and analysed quantitatively.

D. Instrument Research

The research instrument is a questionnaire and a notebook to classify literature data, collecting data, analysing the data, assess the quality of the data, interpret the data and make conclusions on the findings.

E. Data Collection Techniques

This study uses data collection techniques are (1) Technical Questionnaire, (2) Observation / field notes, (3) Mechanical tests, (4) Technical documents such as *Elompugi* manuscripts.

(1) Mechanical questionnaire, questionnaire technique used in this study to capture data in the form of (a) the need for teaching materials by faculty and students, (b) the response of faculty and students, and (c) the enforceability of teaching materials.

(2). Observation techniques, observation techniques used to observe (a) the delivery of learning objectives, (b) the motivation of students, (c) the presentation of the material, (d) the utilization of instructional materials, (e) the provision of training, (f) management classes. This observation sheet used on a limited trial and field trial.

(3) Mechanical Tests. Mechanical tests are used to determine student results. The test is given in the form of a multiple choice test of 20 items. Problem was developed based on the material on teaching materials as much as five items in Chapter taught to students.

(4) Technical Documentation. Documentation techniques used in this research is divided into image documentation and written data documentation.

#### F. Data Analysis Techniques

##### 1. Validity Data Analysis Techniques Instructional Materials

Once data has been acquired, the next step is to analyse the data to assess the validity, practicality and effectiveness of this teaching material. This analysis using descriptive statistics by calculating the average of each score obtained from the instrument. The results of the average are then interpreted based on level of validity, practicability and effectiveness that have been set. Data analysis techniques in the study of validity of teaching materials was measured by using a test construct validity (construct validity). According Sugiyono (2013, p. 177) construct validity test (construct validity) is one way to measure the validity of teaching materials by using the opinions of experts (experts' judgment).

The experts' response to the teaching materials can be classified into five answer choices are: Very Valid (5), Valid (4), Enough Valid (3), Less Valid (2), and Invalid (1). Sheets validity price calculated using the formula mean the following:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x_i}{n}$$

where:

$\bar{X}$  = mean or average

$\sum x_i$  = every data value

$n$  = amount of data (Sugiyono, 2011, p. 20, Siregar, 2011, p. 20)

##### 2. Description of Instructional Materials Developed (Develop)

After going through the stages of design, teaching materials was developed as a prototype instructional materials should be tested for feasibility. Feasibility test (test of validity) of teaching materials is a key condition that must be passed every teaching material before they are implemented. Test the feasibility of teaching material is divided into two, namely the feasibility test materials and test the feasibility of the media. Feasibility material is divided into two content or appropriateness of teaching materials and proper presentation of teaching materials. While aspects of the media are also divided into graphic layout feasibility and appropriateness of language. Validator or people to test the feasibility of teaching materials selected from experts, practitioners, and colleagues. For experts in subject matter, three validators were selected each based on their own expertise, practitioners, and colleagues. Selection media validator experts exactly like the procedure on selecting subject matter experts.

Data analysis techniques in this study using document analysis or analysis of content, methods of research conducted on the information which is documented in written form. Data analysis by describing the content of *Elompugi* manuscript through a qualitative approach in the following manner:

1. Identify the text;
2. Classify the text;
3. Understand the interpretation of the text with a semiotic approach;
4. formulate text that has been interpreted into teaching materials to see the principle of teaching materials (relevance, consistency and adequacy).

#### V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development of teaching materials MKDU Indonesian Language course based on cultural values *elong Ugi*, the needs analysis covered several aspects such as (a) an analysis of the curriculum, (b) analysis of the beginning-end, (c) analysis of the lecturer and student's needs, (d) learning objectives specification analysis. To enrich the above competencies and indicators, developer created Indonesian language teaching materials with the wisdom of the Bugis people of South Sulawesi, namely *Elompugi*. *Elompugi* is one of the Bugis community cultural categorized in the form literature works of poetry, which combines aesthetic value in speaking, compose, music, and the values of human life. *Elompugi* contains teachings relating to all aspects of human life. By studying these materials, in addition to developing



the Indonesian language skills of students, as well as media in planting cultural values and character formation to the students refers to the value and character of the nation.

Once the competency standards and indicators are known, the next step is to determine the subject matter and referral sources. Discussion and referral sources instructional materials MKDU Indonesian Language materials based on *elong ugi* cultural values, curriculum analysis were conducted, analysis of the beginning-end determines the existing problems, and analysis of the lecturer and student's needs to learn the material needs for students and lecturer.

In this case, after the teaching materials developed into a draft, the experts asked to comment on the instructional materials by filling the validity sheet that has been provided. Researchers developed a formula based on the average of the above characteristics of the instruments used by dividing it into three formulas, namely the average formula based on the criteria, aspects, and the mean total. Formula average criterion ( $\overline{Ki}$ ) formula is used to calculate the average of each of the criteria assessed by several people developed from one item aspect. Formula average aspect ( $\overline{Ai}$ ) is the formula used to calculate the average of the results of the average number of criteria. The formula of total mean ( $\overline{X}$ ) is average formula used to determine the median of all aspects. Calculate the average total ( $\overline{X}$ ) with the formula:

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \overline{Ai}}{n}$$

$\overline{X}$  = total Mean

$\overline{Ai}$  = I average Aspect

n = number of aspect

Assigning categories to each criterion validity or aspect or aspects to compare the mean overall criteria ( $\overline{Ki}$ ) or mean aspect ( $\overline{Ai}$ ) or mean total ( $\overline{X}$ ) of the following categories:

4,5 ≤ M ≤ 5	Very valid
3,5 ≤ M ≤ 4,5	valid
2,5 ≤ M ≤ 3,5	Enough valid
1,5 ≤ M ≤ 2,5	Less valid
M < 0,5	Not valid

Information:

M =  $\overline{Ki}$  to seek validity of each criterion

M =  $\overline{Ai}$  to seek validity of every aspect

M =  $\overline{X}$  to seek validity of all of the aspects

To determine the validity of the teaching materials used adequate criteria if:

- a.  $\overline{X}$  Values for all aspects of the minimum are in the category of "valid", and
- b.  $\overline{Ai}$  Value and  $\overline{Ki}$  for every aspect of at least falls under the category "valid". If there are aspects that are not valid criteria, it will be revised and re-tested until it reaches the level valid.

The implementation of teaching materials at field class trials 1 have met the test of practicality requisite teaching materials. This is evidenced by the average of each respondent is 4.60 (respondents 1) and 4.40 (respondent 2) with a total average of 4.30. That is, teaching materials for MKDU Indonesian Language course based on cultural values *elong ugi* considered practical. The implementation of teaching material at field class trials 2 have met the test of practicality requisite teaching materials. This is evidenced by a mean response of each respondent is 4.00 (respondents 1) and 4.40 (respondent 2) with a mean total of 4.20. That is, teaching materials MKDU Indonesian Language course based on cultural values *Elompugi* considered practical. The implementation of teaching material at field class trials 3 have met the test of practicality requisite teaching materials. This is evidenced by a mean response of each respondent is 4.00 (respondents 1) and 4.40 (respondent 2) with a total average of 4.30. That is, teaching materials MKDU Indonesian Language course based on cultural values *Elompugi* considered practical.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Conclusions

The design of teaching materials MKDU Indonesian Language course based on values of *elong ugi* qualify as teaching materials worth taking. MKDU Indonesian Language course based on values of *elong ugi* developed by Four-D model that includes a preliminary study to analyse the needs (define), design (design), development (develop), and dissemination (disseminate). After going through the validation test of the experts, practitioners, and colleagues twice, has been declared valid teaching materials both in terms of material (content and presentation) as well as from media

perspective (graphic procedure and language). Furthermore, the test results good teaching material in limited testing and field trials showed that the Indonesian teaching materials MKDU feasible to use.

### B. Suggestions

One way to preserve the cultural heritage that contains many values of education, is expanding it in learning process. *Elongmpugi* an oral literature in the form of poetry is the cultural heritage of South Sulawesi that need to be preserved.

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2010 (chair-person)	Seminar regional Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia
2011 (chair-person)	Seminar Internasional The American Justice System
2011 (chair-person)	Seminar DPD dan Pusat Kajian Pendidikan dan Pelatihan Aparatur Negara
2011 (chair-person)	Seminar regional Bahsa dan Sastra Sulawesi Selatan
2013 (chair-person)	Seminar Internasional Awareness through Strengthening the National Pillars towards a smart and civilized Nation di UMI
2014 (chair-person)	Seminar internasional Symposium on Indonesian language, literature, and Culture in The development of professionalism

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Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Pendidikan, Teknologi dan Seni.	ISSN : 085-3571, Vol. 13, No. 3, Tahun 2010.
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A doctoral degree (Dr.) 63rd from Stanford University PPs in 2006 (completed two years, 11 months), the title of the dissertation Structure Discourse Lontara La Galigo has to be tested in front of the examiners Board of graduating with praise (Honors). Since 1985, he as an educational effort in the Department of foreign languages FPBS, IKIP Ujung Pandang (Makassar UNM now). The functional position since 2002 is Associate Professor (IV/c), with full authority and lecturing and examining one of the courses, namely: language learning Research (Sprachlehr-Und Lernforschung) in the Department of Foreign Language Education (Germany), the Faculty of languages and the arts, State University of Makassar. He has attended Germany language education (Sprachkurz) in Iserlohn Jermah 1987 and had been the Trainer (ToT) on HUMAN RIGHTS of members of the NATIONAL POLICE (POLRI Headquarters cooperation, UNHCR and the Department of Justice and HUMAN RIGHTS) in South Sulawesi, 2001/2002. In addition, he was the Secretary of the Department of Education language of Germany, head of the laboratory of language Germany, Secretary of the IGBJI of South Sulawesi. He was also active as a publisher of papers/participants on various national and international seminars and has written a book entitled principles of language learning Strategies.

# An Analysis of Phonics Teaching in Mainland China

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**Abstract**—This article tries to analyze the present status of phonics teaching in Mainland China by using documentary research method through sorting out all the essays about phonics teaching in CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) according to their research contents and research methods. The data collected shows that Phonics, Pinyin and IPA are mainly discussed topics, especially different roles of them in English teaching. Unfortunately, misconceptions about phonics do appear in some of those essays collected, while localization of phonics is emerging. This paper seems to shed light on a general overview of English phonics teaching in Mainland China for English teachers and researchers and cope up with the difficult points and conflicts to provide improvement for phonics teaching.

**Index Terms**—phonics teaching, international phonetic alphabet, Chinese Pinyin

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is widely believed that English is a global language in a world of modern communications. As Chinese people are hungry for learning English, the Ministry of Education (2001) claimed English as a required course at grade three in primary school ever since the autumn of 2001, and suggested some well-equipped primary schools could start English class as early as grade one. Because of the national movement of English learning, the number of Chinese people who are learning English have reached more than 300 million, according to the Ministry of Education (2006). But compare with the heated hunger for learning English, nearly all of the schools teach English by using IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), phonetic notation system that uses a set of symbols to represent each distinct sound that exists in human spoken language, because of its popularity in teaching English in China, it even grows up into a classroom instructed method. The 2011 National English Curriculum Standard (NECS) specified six objectives for reading instruction at elementary schools, two of them stated about spelling rules go like that students who complete elementary school should be able to (1) recognize words and phrases that they have learned (能认读所学词语); (2) read easy words based on spelling rules (能根据拼读的规律, 读出简单的单词). The 2011 promoted the idea of developing students' 'general understanding of spelling rules' in the level two objectives of reading, which is shown that the spelling rules must be taught in primary school. Only the spelling rules taught in primary school can the students develop the knowledge into spelling skills, and so can they reach the target of recognizing words according to its spelling rules and IPA, which is the target set for level five junior middle school phonetic knowledge.

Meanwhile at the beginning of the 21 century, the National Reading Panel in US (2000) indicated systematic instruction in phonics makes significantly greater contributions to children's development in reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. The Australian government (2005) advocated '[the children] must first master the alphabetic code via systematic, explicit, and intensive instruction in: phonemic awareness, phonics……' (p.25). The Rose Review by Sir Jim Rose attracted government attention, and UK government proclaimed the adoption of phonics teaching and even qualified teacher status trainees should '…… demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics.' (DfE, 2011, para.3) While the English-speaking countries implement effective teaching of phonics in their early reading class, Chinese teachers are struggling with IPA teaching in their class, which is partially the main cause of great burden to Chinese students. For reading instruction in primary school, IPA plays an important role in introducing words' sounds. The instruction of IPA into English teaching causes the serious phenomenon of separating sounds from their correspondent spelling, which set a man-made obstacle in learning English (Cheng & Fan, 2011). The competitive role of IPA and Phonics in English teaching is an inevitable issue when Phonics teaching emerge. Furthermore, the previous learning experience of Chinese Pinyin (a Chinese phonetic spelling system, the means by which a character can be read/pronounced), cannot be denied in the learners' English learning life, the correlation between the two learning experience should be considered. This article tends to analyze the present status of phonics teaching in China through sorting out the data collected on CNKI ever since the publication of the first introduction about phonics in China.

## II. PHONICS TEACHING IN MAINLAND CHINA

### A. Data Collection

The data about Phonics used in this article is collected through the browse for phonics or 自然拼读 (natural phonics, the Chinese corresponding translation of phonics) in CNKI. Nearly two hundred essays are accumulated, and after reading through each paper only ninety-four papers are seen to be closely relative with phonics or phonics teaching in China. In the following part of the paper their content and researches will be analyzed. From Figure.1, it is likely to be seen that the first introduction of phonics in China appeared in 2005, and the numbers of paper are growing increasingly in recent years, especially in 2016 there are twenty-seven papers published before October the data was collected, which shows the increase number of English teachers and researchers who pay their interest to Phonics teaching.

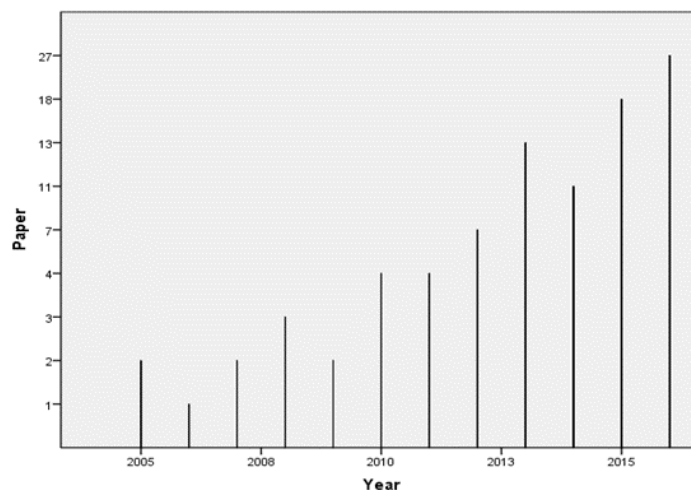


Figure 1. The Number of the Papers Published Each Year in CNKI About Phonics

### B. The Topic Issues in the Qualitative Researches

While sorting out these ninety-four papers collected on CNKI, they could be generally divided into qualitative researches and quantitative researches according to the research method adopted in the paper. As for the content of the qualitative research papers, it could be lined up to discuss the different role of Phonics and IPA, the transference from Chinese Pinyin, and misconceptions about phonics. While in the quantitative researches, the research mostly done about the phonics in elementary schools, colleges and universities.

#### (1).Phonics and Pinyin

While learning the correspondence between letters and their represented sounds, the role of the Chinese students' first letter-sound pair, Pinyin, must be considered. Chen (2012) stated that English teachers in elementary schools should take the advantage of the Chinese Pinyin they have mastered, and make use of its positive transfer into English phonetic teaching, and apply the similarity between them in pronunciation into teaching the spelling rules about the consonant and consonant groups in English to lay a foundation for vocabulary memorization. Similar findings have been made in

Chen (2016) and Qi & Cui (2016). Chen (2016) further suggested that English teachers should try to compare the Chinese Pinyin initials with English consonants and turn students' Pinyin knowledge into their ability of recognizing English words. Qi & Cui (2016) further proposed that when start to teach the sounds of 26 English letters the sound of consonants such as, b, p, m, f, d, t, n, l, g, k, h, j, q, x ..... should be taught first by following the same order of the Chinese Pinyin initials. However, most of these studies were based on the assumption that Chinese Pinyin might have positive effect on English learning experience, no researches have discussed the negative effect of Chinese Pinyin in English Phonics learning, which could cause great difficulty for their English learning. Furthermore, since the Chinese students have mastered the blending and segmenting of sounds in Chinese Pinyin practice, they have built a solid foundation of phonemic awareness for English learning. It might be claimed that it is students' phonemic awareness should be transferred into their English learning.

#### (2). Phonics and IPA

After the introduction of Phonics in mainland China in 2005, the role of Phonics teaching and IPA teaching in English instruction has been disputed. Gao (2005) stated that IPA bases on another written symbol to represent phonemes in English, which is undoubtedly a burden for the students in the primary school if they are taught in English. She further proposed that once students learn about Phonics, the defects of mismatching sounds and spelling brought by IPA teaching could be made up. Similar findings have been made by Wu (2011) and Lei (2006). Other studies have shown that Phonics and IPA teaching are not contradictory, they are complementary with each other, and should be combined with each other to reach an ideal efficiency in English teaching (Hu, 2012; Leng, 2012; Xu, 2011; Chen & Zhang, 2011; Liang & Meng, 2010; Yu, 2013; Zhang, 2015). Some researchers (Chen & Zhang, 2011; Wang, 2013) further proposed that Phonics is the prelude to IPA learning, for the children at lower grade, learning an independent phonetic system along with the English letter systems is not only a great burden, but also the main cause of reducing

interest and activity in English learning, while phonics could help young children remember vocabulary easily. on the contrary, for the children at higher grade, since they start to contact words with more syllables and irregular words that do not follow the spelling rules, it could be more helpful if they could learning IPA. However, most of these studies were based on the assumptions that Phonics cannot deal with the words with more syllables and irregular tricky parts, Phonics is only helpful in being an assistant tool to memorize vocabulary. In fact, recent studies indicate that Phonics deals with speaking, listening, writing and grammar, and it has taken tricky words into consideration by emphasizing the tricky bits in a word (Waugh, D & Harrison-Palmer, R, 2013; Jolliffe, W. & Waugh, D. with Carss, A., 2012).

### (3). Misconceptions about Phonics

From the introduction of the papers about phonics and phonics teaching in Mainland China, misconceptions about phonics could be widely seen in the previous essays which support combination with IPA. Uppermost the misconception goes that phonics is just letter-sound correspondence. This view is supported by Zang (2014) who discussed the shortages of phonics and stated that there are a great number of words whose spelling do not meet with the spelling rules in phonics (irregular words or tricky words). She further claimed that phonics is not applicable for English learners at all range of ages in China, because of the fact that for the children at young age their knowledge of phonics will influence their later Chinese Pinyin learning, and phonics could reduce the learning efficiency of those students at higher grade who have learned IPA. Moreover, Wang (2015) stated that English teachers should be aware that phonics is a method for teaching children in English-speaking countries for improving their reading efficiency, while IPA is invented for learners in non-English-speaking countries. It might be claimed that some English teachers and researchers in Mainland China have not been well informed about Phonics.

### (4). Quantitative research

Among all the ninety-four papers on phonics, most of them are qualitative researches, only ten papers are concerned about quantitative research. In the quantitative researches collected, three papers published on the quantitative researches done in elementary school, the rest seven researches are done about the phonics teaching in colleges and university.

For the quantitative researches carried about in elementary school Yang (2011) conducted a research by collecting empirical data from the control group given lessons through traditional letter teaching method and the experimental group in phonics class. After ten weeks of teaching, the results conveyed that the students in phonics class made obvious progress in post-tests, which indicated the feasibility of phonics teaching in primary school. Conversely, in Yang's research no significant different is found between IPA teaching and phonics teaching, both of the two groups make great progress after systematic teaching. The difference lies in that phonics teaching is much easier than IPA who uses two phonetic systems. In contrast to Yang (2011), Ding (2015) carried out a research to test the efficiency of phonics teaching in a primary school, it finds that the students taught by phonics performed significantly better in recognition of extending new words in listening and reading than the counterparts in look-and-say class. While there is no significant difference shown on recognition of known words.

The students' comparatively low proficiency in recognizing words, reading and listening arouse some English teachers in colleges and universities conduct research about phonics teaching. Liu (2009) applied phonics teaching method into the English teaching of Art College students, it is found that phonics teaching could help the college students improve a lot in recognition, writing words and even their reading ability. Coincidentally, similar researches have been done by Su (2012), Zhu (2013), Yuan (2013), Ren & He (2014), and Feng (2015). Su (2012) conducted a research among 46 freshmen non-English majors who are found lack the awareness of letter-sound correspondence. The results showed that the students in the phonics teaching class improve efficiently in recognizing words, whereas their improvement in listening cannot be seen easily. Zhu (2014) found phonics teaching could help the college students accumulate English vocabulary by establishing the correspondence between sounds and letter. Ren & He (2014) proved that implicit language knowledge (Phonics) learning improves in vocabulary autonomous learning ability in the audio visual context and examines the effectiveness and necessity of learning Phonics in English pronunciation and intonation courses.

### (5) Localization of Phonics

In Mainland China, the idea of localization of phonics is supported by Wang (2015) who proposed a simplified empirical solution of phonics by corresponding the 26 alphabets with 38 IPA written symbols reduced from the previous 48 symbols. She further stated that when present a sound all the letters or letter groups share the same sound should be presented at the same time. As such, the solution probably suggest that IPA should be taught to students with their representative letter or letter groups, it might claim that IPA and Phonics should both be taught, which inevitably increase the burden to students. Another method is proposed in Zhang (2015) to help students improve their pronunciation and memorize vocabulary, students are trained through reading consonants, vowels and the vowel and consonant pair such as, *ber, bar, bor, bing, mer, mar, mor, ming; ner, nar, nor, ning; ble, ple; mal, fal; ab, eb, ib, ob, ub*, which are described like Chinese radicals, could be used to form words. For example, 'morning', as she stated, could be formed by putting 'mor' and 'ning' together. This method probably suggest that students' phonemic awareness, ability of segmenting and blending sounds are not part of the English teaching. However, grammar, spelling, listening and writing, components of Phonics teaching, are not included in the previous localized teaching methods.

### III. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Previously, this paper tends to analyze the qualitative and quantitative researches of Phonics teaching in Mainland China, after sorting out the introduction of phonics in Mainland China, it could be shown that English teachers and researchers are not fully informed of Phonics which affects every aspect of English learning - pronunciation, spelling, reading and grammar, let alone the benefits of teaching Phonics to children. It is impossible to teach IPA system to young children, especially English as a foreign language. Since they are still confused about the basic twenty-six letters and introducing the IPA symbols will bring more confusion. It is a shortcut or direct way to reading by paying attention to the letters and their sounds rather than consulting another complicated system. It is likely to read with Phonics by firstly trying to analyze the sounds made by individual letter or letter groups. If the word is an irregular one, after making an educated guess the dictionary could be looked for confirmation.

The first important thing should be done is to introduce objectively the theories and practices of Phonics teaching into Mainland China by publishing essays or training, especially to English teachers in the countryside or remote areas. Once they learn the systematic phonics teaching encourage more English teachers try to implement Phonics teaching to their classroom teaching and share their successes and failures with other colleagues or English teachers in their area. Phonics learning is based on wide ranges of phonics reading and practice. Level reading textbooks and extracurricular readings should be developed with the arrangements of Phonics teaching. Great number of level readings such as, *Oxford Reading Tree*, *Ladybird Reading* have been brought into China, it seems better to produce level reading for Chinese English learners. It could be found that the spelling rules, phonemic awareness should be mastered by the students in elementary school are still discussed in high school or college. English teachers in the universities still make up the lessons for English pronunciation which should be well mastered before middle school. English learners in Mainland China could understand texts well but not speak in English. All of these are worth being reflected by English teachers, researchers and English education policy makers. One of the issues attracts attention is the smooth transition from English teaching in elementary school to English teaching in middle school and then to college and university. The English curriculum standard must be clearly described and well designed for each grade, even be specific to each teaching term, week and hour. And correspondingly, scientific assessments should be applied into each unit.

Since the author is not an English teacher in elementary schools, the present status of Phonics teaching in Mainland China could only be accessed through collecting and analyzing all the essays published on CNKI, it seems that limitations can not be avoided. Certain limitations arise from methodology, that is, data collection and analysis. Considering the information about Phonics teaching in Mainland China could be gained through synchronic and diachronic study, documentary research method is the only way appropriate. The data collected is not enough to describe the picture of the Phonics teaching in Mainland China wholly. Limitations of this study promise some follow-up researches. The topics discussed in the Phonics teaching in Mainland China are hopefully the topics for future study. For example, it is a good topic to discuss the bi-directional transfer between Phonics teaching and Chinese Pinyin, for Phonics teaching when it will be proper? If the children start to learn Phonics when they have learned Chinese Pinyin, will Chinese Pinyin influence their Phonics learning and how does it happen? On the contrary, if the children start learning Phonics and Chinese Pinyin at the same time, what will happen? Actually there are numerous experimental studies to be conducted. In this way, the Phonics teaching in Mainland China will be more effective and efficient.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was supported by the China Scholarship Council; Soft Science Project of Henan Province 'Research on the integration and development of the folk cultural resources in Central Plains (122400450577).' The 12th Five-year Plan of Henan Science of Education (2015-JKGYH-0063); The College Teaching Reform Project in Henan Polytechnic University (2015JG007; 2015JG086).

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# The Effectiveness of Meaningful Approach in Enhancing Students' Speaking Skill at German Language Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar

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**Abstract**—This study aims at determining the effectiveness of meaningfulness approach in enhancing students' speaking skill at German Language Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar. This study used a Pre - Experimental Design, and applied one group pre-test - post-test design. The population was the fifth semester student years 2011-2012 at the German language education study program with the total sample was 64 students by using total sampling method. Inferential statistics analysis in form of t-test was used to test research hypothesis. The result of this study showed that  $t = 4,09$  is higher than t- table ( $t_{table} = 1,999$ ) at the significance level 0.05 or 4 , 09  $\geq$  1,999 . The result showed that the meaningfulness approach was effective in enhancing students' speaking skill at German Language Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar.

**Index Terms**—effectiveness, meaningfulness approach, speaking skill, German language

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of language teaching there are four skills which are required for the students to be mastered. These four language skills are aimed to make students skilled in reading, listening, speaking, and writing in a foreign language/German and one of the expectation is the positive application of the German language, both written and oral in order to be used in communication .

To actualize it, the teaching on German language are expected to have capability of providing learning facilities and provide adequate learning conditions which is allowing the students to be more enthusiastic to learn German language. The atmosphere and facilities in the classroom are influenced by various factors, among others, lecturers, students, learning objectives, lesson materials, teaching methods, and also teaching media. These factors constitute a chain that cannot be separated and have a reciprocal relationship.

Meaningfulness approach as a part of the communicative approach was stemmed from a change in the tradition of language teaching in the UK in the 1960s. In 1971 a group of experts began to explore the possibility of the development on language lessons based on unit credit system , a system that elaborate learning tasks into portions or related units and appropriate with the learner and systematically associated with all portions or other units. (Van EK & Alexander: 1980).

This group employed studies on the needs of language learners in Europe, and in particular employed a preliminary document which had provided by the British linguist, David A. Wilkins in 1972 (Abdullah, 2000:80). This linguist proposed a functional or communicative definition of language that can be used as a basis for the development of communicative syllabuses for language teaching, as practiced by Keith Johnson (2001) and Janice Yalden (2003).

The Concept of Wilkins is an analysis of the communicative meanings which is required by language learners to be understood and expressed. In addition to examine the core material language through the concept of grammar and traditional vocabulary, Wilkins sought to demonstrate the difference of the meaning systems behind the use of communicative language. He proposes two types of meaning category, namely national categories (concepts such as

time, order, quality, location, frequency) and communicative function categories (request, rejection, offer, and complaint).

The works of Wilkins, Candlin, Christopher Brumfit, Keith Johnson and the other applied linguistics expert on the basics theoretical of communicative and functional approach to the language teaching, the rapid and repetitive application of these ideas by the authors of the textbook; and also rapid acceptance toward the recent principles by specialist experts of English language teaching, curriculum development centres and even the government; to participate on the national and international admission of *communicative approach* or *communicative language teaching*, or in other words the *notional functional approach* or *functional approach* (Tarigan, 2008, p. 51-52).

Some studies, such as conducted by Sabo (2004) concluded that the learning achievement of German language on public and private high school students in Makassar was in the low level category (54.65 %). The linguists and foreign language teaching experts in Indonesia are in quest of the failure causes of the foreign language teaching. Burhan (2011:11) stated that the failure was derived from teachers and teaching methodology. Another assumption to say that it was caused by foreign language teaching is more emphasize on the knowledge theory of foreign language, but less in practicing.

From the phenomenon in the field, the mastery of German language, especially speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) in the real situation is still far from the expectations. As Hawis (2005) found that the students in general (72.45 %) still have difficulty in expressing their ideas by using the German language. The same thing also expressed by Usman (2008) who stated that the mastery of the German language speaking skill especially using the communicative method is more effective than the grammatical method. Supporting research also proposed by Usman (2007) who found that the learning of speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) through a questioning model toward the students of The Department of Foreign/German language education showed a significant progress. The Students were more courage to use the German language in the form of a conversation such as daily activities (*Tagesablauf*).

Based on several studies that have been mentioned above and the phenomena in the field, particularly for the students of German language education at the Faculty of Language and Literature University of Makassar, it is necessary to conduct research on the effectiveness of the approach significance (communicative) in teaching speaking skills (*sprechfertigkeit*) in the study program on the basis of the steps or procedures meaningfulness approach.

Based on the background of study mentioned above, the formulation of the problem of this research was: "Does the application of meaningfulness approach effectives in improving the speaking skills (*sprechfertigkeit*) of the students of the German language education FBS – UNM?".

## II. METHODS

### A. Variables and Research Design

#### 1. Variables

This study consisted of two variables, namely: the independent variables and the dependent variable. The Meaningfulness approach as the independent variable (X), while the speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) as the dependent variable (Y).

#### 2. Research Design

This study was a Pre-Experimental Design, in form of *one group Pretest-Posttest Design* (Sugiyono,2008:109), which aims to determine the effectiveness of the meaningfulness approach in improving the speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) on German Language of the students of German Language education FBS UNM.

### B. Definition of Operational Variables

#### 1. Meaningfulness Approach

Meaningfulness approach as a part of the communicative approach in this research is an approach that emphasizes the ability to communicate and focuses on the meaningfulness of language and communicative functions. Thus, language teaching should be based on the meaning of language that is to use language in communicating.

Teaching and presentation of language forms are always connected with the intention of meaning and message which is appropriated with the actual context and situation. In particular, the meaningfulness approach is meant on how the teachers implement this approach in the German language teaching, especially teaching speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) which includes; preparation and implementation, and the way teachers enclose an understanding of meaningfulness approach concept which includes; definition, characteristics, and procedures adopted in teaching German Language in German language Education study program of FBS UNM.

#### 2. Speaking Skill (*Sprechfertigkeit*)

The Speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) which is referred in this research was the ability of a person to tell, express, say and convey their thoughts, feelings, and ideas to others which include: (1) Understanding of the meaning , namely the ability to understand the contents, meaning and also understanding of each topic or the talking theme, (2) reaction , which is a person's ability to react quickly in responding the conversation, (3) speaking skill creatively by applying language and general knowledge in communication, (4) the mastery of the expression is the ability which associated with the ability to understand or use the vocabulary, syntax and the right expression, (5) Pronunciation with

emphasizing on the speaker's ability to pronounce sounds correctly, including speech and tempo (speed) of speaking, (6) Morphological/syntax, criteria is assessed in this aspect is the ability of using elements of morphology and syntax.

*C. Population and Sample*

The population in this study were the students of fifth semester of 2012 class of the German language education study program with total sample was 64 students, and the sample used in this study was the total sample.

*D. Data Collection Technique*

The technique of data collection in this study was splitting each sample into two parts. Some were placed into the control class and some were placed into experimental class which determined randomly. The sample on the experimental class was taught by meaningfulness approach, while the control class was taught by grammatical approach. After that, each sample was given a written test in the form of essay tests, both the control and the experimental class.

The written test was used to measure the student's speaking ability. The steps taken were:

1. Conducting a pre-test, the test was given before the teaching begins that is aimed to determine the level of student's mastery of the lesson material that will be taught .
2. The treatment was in the form of content delivery or teaching materials that had been designed previously which is carried out during four meetings.
3. Providing a Post-test, a test that was given at the end of the teaching. The purpose of this test is to determine the extent of student achievement (learning outcomes) after experiencing a learning activity (receiving a treatment).

*E. The Techniques of Data Analysis*

The test results of speaking skill were analyzed by using:

1. Inferential Statistic Analysis

Inferential Statistics analysis was used to test the hypothesis of the research by using t-test. However, before testing the hypothesis, it was previously conducted the homogeneity and normality test using z -score table and chi squared, before the decisive test for normality and homogeneity the data, as well as hypothesis testing it was determined the mean (average), standard deviation and variant.

The formula respectively as follows:

- ♣ The formula (average):

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum f_i \cdot x_i}{\sum f_i}$$

- ♣ Standard deviation formula: (Sudjana, 2005, p. 67)

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum f_i \cdot (x_i - \bar{X})^2}{n-1}}$$

- ♣ variant of formula: (Sugiyono, 2011, p. 58)

2. Normality test aims to determine whether the data on the sample used normal distribution or not. Before the post-test data was analyzed using t-test, at first it was tested the normality. To test the normality of the data it was used chi-square formula as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=0}^n \frac{(f_o - f_h)^2}{f_h}$$

Where:

X2 = Chi Square

fo = Frequency observed

fh = Frequency expected

(Sugiyono, 2011, p. 107)

3. Test of Homogeneity

Homogeneity test was used to determine whether the sample is a homogeneous variant or not. Pre-test data is needed to determine whether the data obtained is homogeneous or not . To determine the homogeneity, it was conducting a homogeneity of variant testing using the F (Fischer) test with the formula as follows:

$$F_{count} = \frac{\text{Largest variant}}{\text{Smallest variant}}$$

F count = (largest variant) / (smallest variant)

With the testing criteria, namely:

Accept H0 if F count < F table; and

Reject H0 if F count > F table

(Supardi, 2013, p. 143)

4. T-test was conducted to test the hypothesis and then compared with the t-distribution table to determine whether  $H_0$  rejected or accepted and  $H_1$  accepted or rejected, the criteria of the formula as follows:

- Reject  $H_0$  if  $t_{count} \geq t_{table}$  and
- Accept  $H_0$  if  $t_{count} \leq t_{table}$

t- test formula:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_A - \bar{X}_B}{S_{com} \sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{n_A} + \frac{1}{n_B}\right)}}$$

Where:

$$S_{com} = \sqrt{\frac{(n_A-1)S_A^2 + (n_B-1)S_B^2}{n_A + n_B - 2}}$$

Specification :

$\bar{X}_A$  = the mean score of the experimental group

$\bar{X}_B$  = the mean score of the control group

$S_A^2$  = variant of the experimental group

$S_B^2$  = variant of the control group

$n_A$  = number of samples of the experimental group

$n_B$  = number of samples of the control group

$S_{com}$  = the combined of standard deviation

(Supardi, 2013, p. 329)

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, the learnings were done during four meetings. In the learning, both classes were taught by using different methods . In the experimental class the students were taught through meaningfulness approach to improve speaking skill of the students, while in the control class, the students were taught by grammatical approach. In the learning process, the students are always given speaking task. Pre-test results showed that the average value (mean) of the students' speaking ability are relatively equal, the highest value for the experimental class was 60 and the lowest value was 20, the highest value of the control class was 55 and the lowest value was 25. The lowest test value for normality on the pre-test data of both classes indicated that the experimental and control class had their chi- squared count were smaller than the chi squared table ,  $\chi_{count} < \chi_{table}$ . Pre-test of experimental class was  $(3.29 < 11.070)$  and Pre-test of control class was  $(1.59 < 11.070)$ , so that the distribution of pre-test data was stated normal.

The results showed that through the application of the meaningfulness approach, the students are more active and courage to express their opinions orally in comparison with the learning through the grammatical approach. In addition, students' enthusiasm and motivation between the class whom taught the meaningfulness approach was very different than the class whom taught grammatical approach, the experimental class students more enthusiastic and interested in learning German language as compared with the control class, students in the experimental class were able to see and hear the correct pronunciation and intonation of the native speakers dialect of German language and can add new vocabulary for students.

Based on the post-test results, the application of the meaningfulness approach on the learning process had a positive impact on improving students' speaking skill. From 32 samples in the experimental class, there were two students were obtained 80, four students were obtained 75, five students were obtained 70, three students were obtained 65, seven students were obtained 60. Two students were obtained 55. Seven students were obtained 50. One student was obtained 45 and one student was obtained 35. The post-test data showed that the average value (mean) of the experimental class was 60.4, from the lowest value was 35 and the highest value was 80. The mean of the control class was 50.47, from the lowest value was 35 and the highest value was 70. Based on the post-test result, the value of both classes has increased, but the results of post-test experimental class is higher than the value of the control class.

In the post-test data of normality test for each class were not showing the same result, were the class chi squared count of the experimental was smaller than its chi squared table,  $\chi_{count} < \chi_{table}$ ,  $(2.53 < 11.070)$  so that the distribution data is stated normal. While the chi squared count of the control class was higher than its chi squared table,  $\chi_{count} > \chi_{table}$ ,  $(20.85 > 11.070)$  so that the data distribution is stated normal. The results of analysis above were followed by a t-test to find out the final results of this research, the test for each class has the same formula. The result of  $t_{count}$  for the experimental class was 4.09 while its  $t_{table}$  1.999, so  $t_{count} \geq t_{table}$   $(4.09 \geq 1.999)$ .

As the result, **accept**  $H_1$  statement: *Meaningfulness approach is effective in improving speaking skill (sprechfertigkeit) on German Language of the students of German language education FBS UNM*, and **reject**  $H_0$  statement: *Meaningfulness approach is not effective in improving the speaking skill on German Language of the students of the German language education FBS UNM*. So it can be concluded that the meaningfulness approach is

effective in improving the speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) on German language of the students of German language education FBS-UNM.

Based on the research that had been conducted it showed that teaching with the application of meaningfulness approach is an alternative to solve the difficult problems of enhancing the speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*) on German language of the students. Meaningfulness Approach is helped the students in learning, because it can enhance knowledge, vocabulary, the term, the power of imagination, creativity, and critical thinking of students, they also can see and hear the correct pronunciation and intonation in speaking German language by its native speakers, and it also fosters the spirit and motivation of students to gain further knowledge. So, it can be said that the use of learning methods which appropriate with the character of the students can enhance the interest and the learning outcomes of the students toward German language, particularly speaking skill (*sprechfertigkeit*).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis described in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the meaningfulness approach in German language teaching is effective in enhancing speaking skill on German language of the students of German language education FBS-UNM. It is evidenced by the results of the data analysis which found that the value of post-test after the t-test in each group where  $t_{th} = 4.09 > t_{tt} = 1.999$  at a significance level of 0.05, which means that the application of meaningfulness approach on the German language teaching is effective and enhance the speaking skill of the students of German language education FBS-UNM.

#### SUGGESTION

In order that in the learning of German language, particularly speaking skill more attractive and the students learning outcomes enhance, it is suggested:

1. The educators should be more innovative in selecting and applying the approaches, methods, and techniques in the teaching of speaking to attract the student's interest in learning, designing a wide variety of learning to make the students motivated to learn German and avoid saturation of learning for the student.
2. The educators should be more creative in managing the various learning process in teaching so that the atmosphere in the teaching process does not tend to be rigid and monotonous.
3. For students, to be more utilize technology in obtaining information or material that will be taught/presented, so that the students can more practice independently or in groups.
4. To the relevant agencies, both government and private sectors, especially in the field of foreign language teaching should pay particular attention to infrastructure of German language teaching, because German language is a new foreign language in language learning and teaching resources are still lacking.

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# On the Translation of English Hard News under Inter-cultural Background

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**Abstract**—The author firstly introduced the characteristics of hard news from the perspectives of the structure, linguistic features and language style. Secondly, numerous cultural background factors are classified into six types including geographical environment, life style, traditional customs, religious beliefs, historical allusion and literature connotations which are the underlying causes of cultural barriers occurred in the hard news translation. To remove the cultural barriers, based on the Lawrence Venuti's (1995) foreignization and domestication translation theory, the paper presents principles for hard news translation. By giving a large number of instances of hard news translations, this paper mainly focuses on such issues as the characteristics of hard news, the influence of the inter-culture on the hard news translation, and relevant translation strategies, and last but not least, attaches significance to the inter-culture awareness of the translator during the process of hard news translation.

**Index Terms**—hard news, translation strategies, inter-cultural awareness

## I. INTRODUCTION

News refers to the timeliest report of events that have just happened, are happening, or are going to happen and it is born to meet the need of propagation and communication of information in human society. A piece of good news is considered as a combination of the loyalty to truth and the high quality of language.

News is rich in its content and variety ranging from serious political and economic topics to relaxing travel information demonstrating the important events that people instinctively want to know from numerous dimensions. Both hard news and soft news are both originated from western journalism. The former one refers to serious and timely stories about important topics and it emphasizes on timeliness and objectivity and often applies to the on-the-spot report of news such as the befalling of some disasters, celebration of festivals and talks of national leaders. Whereas the latter one, the soft news, usually refers to feature and human-interests stories in which subjectivity is stressed and personal emotion and judgment are welcomed.

With the deepening of globalization, the exchanges and associations between different nations have become ever closer. Thus, as an essential communication tool in human society, hard news plays a vitally important role in international communication. In the hope of enhancing the mutual understanding between countries, translation--a seemingly irrelevant field to news--acts as a bridge between cultures. Meanwhile, hard news translation offers new perspectives and platform for people from different cultural backgrounds to view the world. As a result, the translation of hard news, especially the inter-cultural factors in hard news, has become significant and the inter-cultural awareness should be highly valued by the translator. And this paper aims at providing feasible translation tactics and procedure for the translation of English hard news under the background of inter-culture by analyzing cultural factors in English hard news and the inter-cultural awareness of the translator.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Previous Studies on Translation of English Hard News under Inter-cultural Background

A great number of books on news English and its translation have been published by Chinese scholars, and a great portion of books focus on hard news. For example, in Liu Qizhong's book *English-Chinese News Translation*, there is a chapter about the characteristic features of hard news (Liu Qizhong, 2002). In Xia Yande's book *Practice Journalistic English Translation*, the third chapter is mainly about the functions and features of hard news (Xia Yande, 1999). In accordance with these books, English hard news has particular style--- midget words, neologism, borrowed words, initialisms and acronym, and vivid word and common saying; they also have special grammatical features--- extended simple sentences, flexible use of tense, direct and indirect quotations, complex sentence pattern, and excessive use of passive voice. He Qishen's book *Translation and Intercultural Communication* explores deeper than books mentioned above in terms of news translation under the background of inter-culture in the fifth chapter (He Qishen, 2012). The book not only analyzes the functions and characteristic features of news, but also probes into the cultural factors in news English. It analyzes the correlation between news English, communication and the culture. However, there is no book focusing on English hard news from inter-cultural perspective exclusively, not to mention the translation of English hard news under inter-cultural background.

As to papers published on journals, there are many about the news English, but not many about hard news English specifically, let alone the English hard news translation. Those about the translation of hard news offers translation strategies in accordance with the author's personal translation experience. However, all these translation strategies or tactics seem without being systematical studied. Only a few papers have applied translation theories to cultural factors in hard news. For instance, Deng Yuyang adopts Venuti's domestication and foreignization as the theoretical framework for his paper *On the Translation of Journalistic English in Intercultural Communication* (Deng Yuyang, 2011). He combines the cultural factors in hard news and Venuti's translation theory to prove his translation tactics reasonable. But the present author thinks that Deng's paper is not systematically organized. For instance, Deng's paper only probes the cultural factors in news English and the corresponding translation tactics, while the present author thinks further studies as the underlying causes of cultures differences in English hard news, the cultural barriers in hard news translation, the essence of translation of hard news as well as the inter-cultural awareness of the translator should be done and be attached great importance

#### *B. Theoretical Framework: Venuti's Domestication and Foreignization*

Domestication and foreignization are two translation strategies in terms of cultural factors translation. Domestication is the type of strategy with which we make translated text closely in line with the target culture. Foreignization is the strategy with which we try to retain the source information. These strategies have been debated for hundreds of years, but the first person who to studied them as translation strategies systematically was Lawrence Venuti.

According to Lawrence Venuti (1995), every translator is supposed to regard the translation process as an inter-cultural activity, and it is the translator's task to convey the message from the source culture to the target culture as much as possible. During translation each step is mediated by the different cultural values reflected in the target texts.

Thus instead of making target culture assimilate the differences in the source culture, an excellent translator would try to emphasize the foreignness in the source texts.

### III. FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGLISH NEWS

News is a very commonplace literature style in people's daily life. However, to make a scientific definition of news is quite difficult. Although the uniform definition of "news" dose not exists, the widely-accepted definition in China's journal field is "news refers to the timeliest report of events that have just happened, are happening, or are going to happen." And the following are the news values which are helpful for deeper understanding of news.

#### A) Timeliness

The latest report of a current event is called the timeliness. From the definition of news, it can be seen that timeliness is of great importance.

#### B) Significance

Significance means that the event is of great significance or has profound influences on common people. The more influential the event is, the more newsworthy it becomes.

#### C) Prominence

People are interested in public figures and often pay great attention to their activities. The more important the figure is, the more newsworthy their activities are. Prominence is one of the news worthiness that determines the value of news.

#### D) Proximity

Proximity refers to the geographical or psychological closeness of the news being covered. Local news is usually much more valuable than international news that happened far away from the reader. In a nutshell, the event gets increasingly newsworthy, when it is increasingly close to readers geographically or psychologically.

#### E) Uniqueness

Uniqueness means that the report of those unusual, uncommon, or unexpected events could increase newsworthiness.

Those news reports of events that raise people's curiosity more often than not bring uniqueness to readers. And the uniqueness also increases newsworthiness of a piece of news, be it local or international.

#### F) Human interest

Those news stories involve human interest such as love, friendship, moral, often receives great attention from ordinary people, sine events of this kind can touch on their heartstrings. Therefore, those events of human interest are often of great values.

Ordinary people tend to pay attention to news reports that involve human interest such as love and friendship, because events of this type can touch on their heartstrings. As a result, human interest is one of the most important news values.

In a nutshell, the definition of news is "the timeliest report of events that have just happened, are happening, or are going to happen." Meanwhile, Timeliness, significance, prominence, proximity, uniqueness, and human interest are six



values that determine the newsworthiness of news.

A. *Categorization of News*

According to different standards, news can be classified into different categories. For instance, based on the content involved in it, it can be classified into political news, military news and entertainment news, etc. But, there is one categorization method which can sufficiently reflect the essence of the news, that is, news can be classified into hard news and soft news according to its nature of occurrence.

1. **Hard News**

Hard news, also called “spot news” or “straight news”, usually refers to “serious and timely stories about important topics.” It emphasizes on timeliness and objectivity and often applies to the on-the-spot report of news such as the befalling of some disasters, celebration of festivals and talks of national leaders. The basic requirements of hard news are accuracy, objectivity and neutrality, which “concerns occurrences potentially available to analysis or interpretation and consists of factual representation’ of occurrence deemed newsworthy.” It transmits the latest news with no delay. The subjects like disaster, economics, diplomacy, and politics are often considered as material of hard news.

2. **Soft News**

Soft news refers to pieces of news with strong emotional factors and vivid style, and it is characterized as news telling stories aiming at entertaining readers instead of merely informing them.

B. *Linguistic Features of English Hard News*

1. **Lexical Features**

**Midget Words.** The frequent use of midget words is one of the most distinguishing lexical features of English news. For example, the following midget words are usually used instead of complicated words in English hard news.

TABLE 1-1  
MIDGET WORDS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING COMPLICATED WORDS

Midget words	Complicated words
boost	increase
move	action, decision
ban	prohibit, interdict, restraint, refuse
cut	abridge, abbreviate, shorten, curtail, reduce
aim	design, intention, purpose, objective
try	endeavor, experiment, attempt, effort, striving

**Frequent Use of Neologism.** Neologism, also known as new words, is very common in English hard news. The reason for the frequent use of neologism is very obvious. Hard news should keep abreast with the times, which is ever-changing in modern life. As a famous saying goes, “Nothing endures but change.” And hard news should keep track with those changes. For instance, such new words as transion, greentech, ecotourism, which effectively reflect the lifestyle of modern people, have become very popular in hard news.

**Borrowed words.** A large number of borrowed words being used in newspapers is a striking feature of news writing. The major purposes of using borrowed words are to express the meaning more appropriately on the one hand and to attract readers on the other hand. The words sauna, sashimi, oolong, ad hoc and encore are often used in English news, but they originate from Finnish, Japanese, Chinese, Latin and French respectively.

**Initialisms and Acronym.** Initialisms and acronym, is usually the short form of a proper name, technical term, or a phrase. Proper use of initialisms and acronyms can greatly save the space of English news and reader’s reading time. For instance, following initialisms and acronym often used in English new, especially in hard news.

TABLE 1-2  
INITIALISMS OR ACRONYM AND THEIR ORIGINAL WORDS

Initialims or acronym	Original words
API	Air Pollution Index
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

**Vivid Word and Common Saying.** The value of hard news cannot be realized without readers’ attention. So how to attract readers and arouse their reading interests should be the priority of hard news writing. In order to strike the audience or readers, news language must be vivid and distinctive. In general, vivid words and common sayings can arouse readers’ associations, which just like vivid and lively pictures in their minds. The following examples can best illustrate this point.

These migrant people flooded the cities, exacerbating already strained urban resources.

To roars of jubilation, Bill Clinton moved into the White House, ushering in a new party, a new generation and an altogether crowd of people, exulting in their diversity. “This is our time,” declared the third youngest US president.

They could include widespread hunger and joblessness, accompanied by environmental devastation and cancerous

urban growth.

In the above three examples, verbs are adopted very vividly thus making readers form a motion picture in their mind. By employing words of this kind, the whole news report would be filled with vividness as well as liveness.

## 2. Grammatical Features

**Extended Simple Sentences.** In order to make readers have the sense of objectiveness and timeliness of news English, hard news prefers to focus on the current event or something happened before, in this case, there is a good way called the extended simple sentence.

**Flexible Use of Tense.** In English news writing, tense is often flexibly adopted. For example, past tense is usually used to report the events happened previously, and the future tense is mainly employed to tell readers the influence that the mentioned event could probably have. The following example can illustrate the point.

**Direct and Indirect Quotations.** To a great extent, hard news is to record what people say. That is to say, quotations are significant parts in English hard news. Quotations can make the news more vivid and authentic on one hand, and can also demonstrate the objective stance of news English, as a result, hard news more often than not quotes people's words frequently. In general, there two types of quotations, which are respectively the direct quotation and the indirect quotation. The direct quotation is adopted when what one says are so well-stated, vivid and significant that readers should be informed of the precise words.

**Complex Sentence Pattern.** In order to better fulfill the impartation and communication function of English hard news, the sentence pattern of hard news should be concise and simple as much as possible. As a result, most sentences in news text are simple sentences. In fact, in hard news, there are also some long and complex sentences in English hard news. However, it is important to know that simple sentences do not mean easy sentences, while complex sentences are not always so complicated to understand.

**Excessive Use of Passive Voice.** Compared to other styles, passive voice is used excessively in English hard news. What's more, English hard news also tries to show people the valuable information. Passive voice is often employed to show the results in a news as to attach great attention to the six factors, which includes who, what, when, where, why and how. This can be well illustrated by the following English hard news report.

In this news report, a large portion of verbs are adopted as passive voice. This not only brings conciseness to the whole text, but also can give readers a sense of authority. As a result, the use of passive voice in English hard news is excessive.

## IV. CULTURAL FACTORS AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

Every country possesses its unique social background, cultural features and mindset. When the historical and cultural factors in source language cannot be found in target language, words in a language will not have their equivalents in another language.

With profound cultural background and a long history, many cultural allusions have their deeper meanings. They are short and brief, but rich in meaning. For instance, in some English speaking countries, Christianity enjoys great popularity, thus many allusions and idioms have their origin from the Bible, such as the salt of the earth(社会精英 she hui jing ying), separate the sheep from the goats (分清良莠 fen qing liang you) etc. As an integral part of culture, religion is a sensitive area and should be attached great importance to.

Every culture has its unique value system and mindset, so different mindset may hold different views upon same news fact. Chinese reports often focus on the bright side of things, people always expect good things happen, while Western reports pay more attention to the objectivity of things. For example, when the massive earthquake struck China's Wenchuan, Chinese media's focus is the heroic deeds in the disaster relief, whereas western reporters show the public more details in the spot and inform people of the damage and mortality caused by the quake. In addition, in Western culture, individualism is highly valued, and people do not like to be told how to do things. But in China, news reports, especially reports on politics, frequently adopted phrases such as "we should". Moreover, hard news usually refers to serious and timely stories about important topics, and such subjects as disaster, economics, diplomacy, and politics are often considered as material of hard news. On the other hand, China and Western countries belong to different political systems, thus having their different, sometimes even contrary, national interest. For instance, Western media may hype the truth when that reports the Chinese corrupt officials' crime and the corruption problem in China's political system in an attempt to destroy China's international reputation. And translators need to be cautious about the words they translated into target language and protect China's positive image.

In a nutshell, due to the untranslatability of cultural perspectives, numerous cultural barriers in the translation of English hard news come into being.

### A. Cultural Factors in English Hard News

The cultural factors that a translator will encounter when translating the English hard news are numerous, but they can basically be classified into six types which are respectively geographical environment, lifestyle, tradition and customs, religious belief, historical and cultural allusions, and literary knowledge.

#### 1. Geographical Environment

Since every ethnic group's living conditions vary from one to another, the different ethnic groups hold widely

differing views on the same subject. Geographical culture attaches particular meaning to words. Taking some Chinese idiom for example, “有眼不识泰山”, “重于泰山”, and “稳如泰山” are all related to Mount Tai (one of the five most famous mountain in China), which is often used to symbolize respect, solemn, and greatness in Chinese culture. Likewise, the English idiom “all roads lead to Rome” means there are multiple ways to get to the same goal. It is originated in Ancient Rome, as whenever the Roman army successfully conquered a nation, they built a concrete road starting from that nation to Rome.

## 2. Lifestyles

Language is closely related to language environment, culture, and society and cannot be apart from them. Different material conditions and historical experience shape distinctive characteristic features of different ethnic group, thus resulting in various lifestyles. Therefore, language---the product of culture---is painted with strong ethnic color. This point can be best illustrated by the following example.

Had he come face to face with exiled Iraqis in west London, however, it's likely the reception he faced would have been more passionate.

要是他在伦敦富庶区与那些背井离乡的伊拉克难民当面接触的话, 那么, 他会受到更热情的欢迎的。

“West London” in this sentence has particular political meaning. Geographically, London is divided into west part and east part, and the west part is called “West End” which is also the region where rich people reside in. Whereas, the “East End” refers to the slum area where poor people live. If readers have a clear sense of the British culture, they should know that a ordinary Iraqi cannot afford the expense of immigration to U.K.

## 3. Tradition and Customs

Language comes from life, and the lifestyle led by certain group of people has strong influence on their language and communication system. For example, the number “eight” is Chinese favorite number, because it is a homophone for “make a fortune” in Chinese. While English word “eight” does not have this meaning. Similarly, English word “pear” sounds like “pair” thus forming alliteration. But the word “pear” in Chinese does not symbolize “pairs” or “couples”, since it is a homophone for “separation” which means to leave or to separate.

## 4. Religious Belief

Religious belief is so influential to people's life that it even gives some new meanings to their daily language. Differences between Western and Eastern religions have important impact on the translation between English and Chinese. In Western world, Christianity is the dominant religious culture which has a profound influence on people's language performance. The European continent was falling apart when Christianity was born, and nothing could bring peace to world. Even the secular power--- the kingship was in desperation. So people began to believe that only the almighty God could conquer the people's insatiable ambition for power, then Christianity emerged at this historic moment. English idioms such as “Man proposes, God disposes” and “God helps those who help themselves” are all related to Christian culture. And “老天爷” in Chinese is a reflection in upon the Buddhism culture which is also the dominant religious culture in China.

## 5. Historical and Cultural Allusions

Every ethnic group has its own path of development, thus resulting in different allusions to represent particular meaning. For example, “to meet one's Waterloo” is originated from Napoleon Bonaparte and his battle with the duke of Wellington leading the British, the German and the Dutch. It means to meet someone crushing defeat. Likewise, “败走麦城” is the Chinese idiom to describe a disastrous defeat, and the origin of this phrase comes from Guan Yu, a famous general of Shu during Three Kingdoms Period, and his crushing failure in Mai city which was also a vitally important military area. Therefore, a good command of ethnic history and culture is required when this kind of allusions is translated.

## 6. Literary Knowledge

Mythologies, legends, and literary classics created a wide range of idioms, which are the reflection of both ethnic features and social characteristics. Also, they add vividness and liveliness to language thus making the language with strong expressiveness. For example, the Greek proverb “swan song” is often used to describe the final work of a poet or musician with its origin in a Western mythology that a swan sang the saddest and the most beautiful before it died. Another Greek proverb is “sour grapes” from Aesop's Fables, and it is often referred to something that is within one's sight but beyond one's reach. Likewise, Chinese idioms such as “往事具备只欠东风” and “逼上梁山” are originated from Chinese literature classics Romance of Three Kingdoms and Water Margin respectively, and also add distinctiveness and vividness to Chinese. When translating the idiom of this kind, the translator should have respect for the culture-loaded words, and provide the target readers with equivalent enjoyment that source language readers may have.

The cultural factors in translation of English hard news are extremely commonplace, and translators should have a macroscopic grasp of the cultural factors in translating English hard news.

### B. Cultural Barriers to the Translation of English Hard News

People who do not know about translation tend to propose that one language can be translated into another accurately with a good bilingual dictionary. And this is a very common mistake. Unfortunately, language translation is difficult since there are so many misinterpretations. All languages are closely bound to its own culture, and word-for-word

translation is difficult if not impossible. Even when the adequate interpretations of the original text are provided by the translation, the full equivalence cannot be achieved. Given such circumstances, the values of English hard news would not be reached.

There are some examples showing that how hard the foreign translation is and sometimes the improper using of words would result in the totally opposite meaning. We can also draw a conclusion that the translators are supposed to link the different languages and even the different cultures together. Some researches related to language show that the language can reflect the culture ideas to some extent, and the translator can use the different meaning of words to break the culture obstacle and deliver the emotions.

Most English speakers in China tend to agree that there is a link between propaganda and “宣传” and they can be translated to each other. For example, “The Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China” can be translated to “中共中央宣传部”, but there would be misunderstanding while communicating because of the different cultures. What’s more, the “The Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China”, which is translated from “中共中央宣传部”, is resulted from the changing of the cultural view. However, there must be some troubles if the two words of different languages can’t find a way to equally translated to each other. In a conclusion, considering the cultural difference while translating in English hard news is of great importance.

In the above examples, due to the cultural barriers between Chinese and English, the Chinese word 宣传 is translated into propaganda and publicity respectively. And it can be seen that the former translation fails to convey the original meaning of the source text and the significance, prominence, and human interest of it are lost, which not only makes the loss of hard news values but also the misunderstanding between cultures.

Conveying the meaning and style of the source language is one of the goals of translation. However, dictionary translations do very little help to achieve such goals since they seldom reflect the common language usage in a culture. Meanwhile, people from monolingual culture tend to assume that words in a language should have their equivalents on another language. As a result, a language learner may search for the equivalents of his or her native language in a bilingual dictionary in order to speak a new language. This kind of mindset towards the vocabulary of two language is harmful to language learning process since words are “symbols for dynamic and explicit features of the culture” (Nida, 1975, p.147). This can be a serious problem if a bilingual dictionary becomes the sources of equivalents.

To sum up, when dealing with the difficulties of English hard news translation, the six values are of great importance and cannot be neglected, because as mentioned above, they are often used to determine the newsworthiness of news. What’s more, timeliness, significance, prominence, proximity, uniqueness, and human interest are not only the features of English hard news, but also make a good Chinese version of hard news.

## V. TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH HARD NEWS

### A. *The Essence of the Translation of English Hard News*

The translation of English hard news is aimed to inform Chinese people of the current events of politics, economy, and science and technology etc. of the world and to enable Chinese people to have a better understanding of the target language culture. Meanwhile, the translation of English hard news, in its essence, is an inter-cultural activity. And different cultures lead to different value system and mindset.

As mentioned above, hard news refers to ideological, instructive and informative reports on politics, economy and science and technology. Also, hard news has influence on people’s vital interest and their survival in society, thus being the reference for daily activity. A country’s political, economic, and scientific and technological events of great importance are closely bound to the culture of its own, therefore, the translation of English hard news interprets the target language culture and the essence of English hard news translation is to translate cultures. In a word the translation of English hard news is an inter-cultural activity.

Culture is collective by nature in that it is shared with those who live or lived in the same social context, in which culture was learned. British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor postulates in his book *Primitive Culture*, “Culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and many other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (Brook Tylor, 1871, p.69) Geert Hofstede from Netherlands defines culture in his book *Culture’s Consequences* as “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another.” Since translation of English hard news is an inter-cultural activity, it requires comprehensive capacities from translators. In addition, the translators tend to meet with various topics, and they have to be very knowledgeable and informative. In order to reflect different range of topic of English hard news, the first thing translators must do is that they need to have a good understanding of different topic represented by both source language and target language to eliminate intercultural misunderstanding. To translate English hard news, translators should understand how target language readers see things and how they express themselves. translators of English hard news should understand clearly the real meanings in source language’s cultural features, and should choose correct expressions of target language.

In a nutshell, the essence of English hard news is an inter-cultural communication in which culture of source language is transformed into culture of target language.

### B. *Translation Problems and Translation Strategies of English Hard News*

As is known to all, language is a complicated phenomenon. Although most of the differences between two languages can be translated, still some are too difficult to find proper explanations due to the untranslatability of cultural perspectives. Therefore, translators should raise inter-cultural awareness of “the other culture” to bridge the gap between different cultures. And with Venuti’s translation theory of domestication and foreignization, translators can find out the purpose of the literal translation, free translation, and combination of literal or free translation with explanations.

### 1. Literal Translation

There is a way of translating called direct or literal translation which demands the two languages are the same with each other in form, structure and so on. The aim of direct translation is that the readers after reading the version after translated will have the same thought as what they think after they read the original one. However, it does not refer to the “word-for-word” translation, mainly because there would be some changes in literal translation in order to make it acceptable. The literal translation should be based on that the two languages should have similar linguistic parts which include vocabulary, grammar, rhetorical devices and so on, and the biggest advantage of the literal translation is that the meaning and the style after translated are kept the same as the original one. It can be best illustrated by the following example.

(1) a. Mother Nature turned freakishly fickle this week, unleashing her ferocity upon Australia’s southeast coast and delivering one of the most bizarre summer weather patterns on record.

b. 大自然母亲的情绪在这星期极为变幻无常。澳大利亚南部海岸遭受了她狂暴的洗礼，经历了历史上最不寻常的夏季天气。

The source text is a report on weather, the nature is personified as Mother Nature, adding liveliness to a relatively dull weather report. And the personification is remained in the target language.

### 2. Free Translation

There is a special style called free translation which focuses on the ideas and content rather than the linguistic aspects such as forms or words which do not refer to reconstruction actually. The free translation is useful instead of the literal translation if the two languages are expressed in different ways.

(1) a. English cannot be fed with the east wind of a narrow rationality.

b. 英国的特点和精神不能靠寒风般肃杀的狭隘理性来维持。

The phrase has its origin from the Britain’s locality. In Britain, westerly ocean wind usually keeps the weather mild and warm, while ocean wind from the east always brings the temperature down. And the opposite goes to China’s climate where west wind means cold weather and east wind means warm weather. Therefore, it is reasonable in the source text to compare “narrow rationality” to “east wind”.

(2) a. The Present’s speech reminds the public of a British Sunday.

b. 总统的演讲给人刻板、乏味的感觉。

Bound by strict religious belief, the devout British Christians go to church every Sunday instead of other recreation places. So from others’ perspective, the British’s Sunday is rather boring and dull.

(3) a. The injection of public funds may plug the hole in Japan’s economic Titanic.

b. 公共资金的注入或许会堵上将要下沉的日本经济巨轮的漏洞。

The ship -- Titanic struck an iceberg on her maiden voyage when she left from England heading for New York City, and she sank at last on 15 April 1912. And it is used as a metonymy to describe the critic situation of Japan’s economy.

(4) a. He and his allies are David, taking on the gambling Goliath.

b. 他和他的同盟们是弱小的，而他要挑战的对手确实孤注一掷而强大的。

“David” and “Goliath” are figures from the Bible. And according to the Bible, Goliath and his giant soldiers were challenging the King (Saul). Everyone was terrified of Goliath and didn’t want to fight him. David, a young teenager, volunteered to fight Goliath and confronted him with only the weapons: a slingshot and a few rocks. It is a story about the weak overcoming the strong.

### 3. Literal Translation plus Explanation

This strategy is an extension to literal translation and shares the same advantages with it but it is easier for readers to understand.

(1) a. Drug dealers have a strong preference for the restricted cocaine probably on the theory of forbidden fruit.

b. 毒贩们对那些被禁的可卡因情有独钟，这或许是“禁果定律”（越被禁止的东西，人们越想得到）在起作用吧。

Forbidden fruit is a phrase from *Bible*. It is a metaphor, indicating the indulgence or pleasure considered illegal or immoral. The “forbidden fruit” is translated literally, but the explanation shows the connotative meaning.

### 4. Transliteration

Transliteration is a way of picturing the writing of original one into another. In order to make the translation without any losses, the reader should have the ability to reconstruct the spelling of words. The transliteration sometimes needs to find some complicated ways to make the words in accordance with the original one after translated. When talking about hard news, it always goes with different current events including many names, such as people’s names, name of workplace, name of city, and name of country etc., and many new words. In this way, the transliteration becomes the

most popular way to do with these names and words, and greatly used in hard news translation.

TABLE 5-1  
EXAMPLES OF NAMES ARE AS FOLLOWS.

Name of person	Chamberlain	张伯伦
	Barack Obama	巴拉克 奥巴马
Name of company	Asics	爱世克斯
	Adidas	阿迪达斯
Name of place	Kathmandu	加德满都
	Barcelona	巴塞罗那
Name of country	Ecuador	厄瓜多尔
	Italy	意大利

TABLE 5-2  
EXAMPLES OF NEWS WORDS AND BORROWED WORDS ARE AS FOLLOWS.

English Name	Chinese Name
cool	酷
disco	迪斯科
OPEC	欧佩克
IELTS	雅思
TOEFL	托福
Teflon	特氟龙
Yuppies	雅皮士
EURECA	尤里卡
Beatles	披头士
punk	朋克
hacker	黑客
clone	克隆

### 5. Transliteration plus Explanation

This translation strategy is an extension to transliteration. The latter can raise the reading interest of Chinese readers, but to those whose mother tongue is English, it is less acceptable. Therefore, the strategy of translation plus explanation can best solve the problem.

From the discussion above, we can see that literal translation and free translation are two main methods used in translating the hard news. An excellent translator should use them properly and proficiently at the same time. When it comes to the selection of methods, the inter-cultural awareness of the translator plays the key role, thus the translator could apply either of the two or the combination of the two with some explanations in accordance with the specific contexts.

Each method has its own strength. In the mind of the author, literal translation deserves primary attention in order to keep the original flavor because more similarities exist than disparities between the two languages regarding hard news translation. When the original meaning cannot be conveyed in its original form, we can translate the meaning to the readers first. In some special occasions, some explanations are needed to add into the free translation for the purpose of conveying the correct information.

#### C. Translator's Inter-cultural Awareness

As mentioned above, the translation of English hard news is aimed to inform target language readers with the message from the source language reporters, but, more importantly, provide them with equivalent education, enlightenment, and the enjoyment of literature reading to those of source language readers. To achieve this goal, news translators not only need to have a good command of both target and source language but also need to have an inter-cultural awareness. There are many challenges in the process of translation in that translation itself is not simple conversion between two languages, but a process of intercultural communication. The task of the translator is not only to translate the texts, but to interpret the cultural connotations in the source texts.

The meaning of intercultural awareness has long been explored by experts and scholars from different perspectives. It is regarded as a process of attitudinally internalizing "insights about those common understandings hold by groups that dictate the predominant values, attitudes, beliefs and outlooks of the individual" (Adler, 1987, p.67). Such a process includes three levels, i.e. the awareness of superficial cultural traits, the awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with ours, and the awareness of how another perspective (Hanvey, 1987).

According to Chen Guoming (2010), inter-cultural awareness refers to the inter-cultural communication competence in cognitive aspect; it is the understanding how cultural conventions can influence our thinking and behavior.

Despite these definitions given by scholars and experts, there are some common features shared by inter-cultural communication awareness. The first feature is that the effect of culture on human behaviors is strongly obvious in the definitions. Second, the recognition of the differences between various cultures is of great importance. In conclusion, we can define inter-cultural communication awareness as the cognizance of different cultures when we communicate with

others.

From the above discussion, it is understood that translators should have strong the inter-cultural awareness when he or she participates in the process of the inter-cultural communication. It is a particular way of thinking, a criterion for judgment or an clear sensitivity born by the interpreter. Thus, a successful translation is the result of accurately understanding and reconstructing and applying various skills and techniques professionally, and meeting the professional standards.

## VI. CONCLUSION

With its own linguistic features, hard news has a special style features of great accessibility conciseness and vividness. Due to its timeliness and brevity, new words, acronym, and vivid words are very commonplace in hard news. Also, since Chinese and English belong to different language families, Chinese and English hard news differ significantly in grammar and syntactic structure with English hard news rich in complex sentences and Chinese hard news full of polished rhetorical sentences. Moreover, differences in value system and mindset of Chinese culture and the culture of English-speaking countries cause a wide range of cultural barriers in the translation of English hard news. Therefore, the hard news translation is also an inter-cultural activity.

Translating English hard news does not only mean having practical skills; it is also an art which requires a strong inter-cultural awareness from translators. The translators should overcome the barriers of language and culture. Translators should try to expand their inter-cultural knowledge and enhance their inter-cultural communication competence. In doing so, they need to focus on the linguistic and cultural differences and avoid misunderstanding and mistranslation, so that the purpose of inter-cultural communication can be fulfilled.

By analyzing features of English hard news, cultural factors in English hard news, and the relation between the two, this paper postulates five translation strategies to deal with the cultural barriers and stressed the importance of translators' cultural awareness. Of course, there is still plenty of room to improve in this paper. And it is the author's hope that more researches can be done in the field of English hard news translation, and it is believed that the effort and research in this area, if it is sufficiently funded and supported, will contribute to a better mutual understanding between China and the world.

## NOTES

This paper is supported by National Social Science Foundation of China (Grant No.: 12BYY016) and "12th Five-Year" planning project of Gansu Provincial Education Department (Grant No.: GS[2015]GHB0171).

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# The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning Strategy through English Village for Teaching Speaking Skill

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**Abstract**—This study has five main purposes (1) to investigate the effectiveness of Cooperative Learning (CL) strategy through English Village (EV) for teaching speaking in communicative language function (2) to investigate the effectiveness of teaching speaking in transactional language function (3) to know the significance change on self confidence after being taught through English Village EV using CL strategy. (4) to know the significance change on self interest (5) to know the significance change on self regulation. The study was experimental by using one-group pretest-posttest design. The target population of this study was, in fact, is all students of English education department of private university or colleges in Indonesia. However, while the accessible population was only students of English department at the Islamic university of Kalimantan. The result of dependent t-test turned out to confirm that CL strategy through EV is effective to teach speaking skill for both, communicative and academic language function. The result of Wilcoxon test turn out to confirm that CL strategy through English is in significance change of the students' internal factors.

**Index Terms**—cooperative learning strategy, English village, communicative and academic language function of speaking

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Language Functions

According to Chamot and O'Malley (1994: 60), Language functions are identified for both social/communicative and academic purposes. In language functions, As we know that language is a tool for communication. Some opinions that said by linguists related to language functions. The first language functions refer to how individuals use language to accomplish specific tasks. The second, most commonly used language functions are those used to describe or give information or to express feelings (Bachman 1990). Cummins in O'malley and Pierce (1996:61) stats communicative language functions are those used to express meaning in a routine social context that is not cognitively demanding. Communicative language function includes greetings and leave-takings, requesting and giving information, requesting and giving assistance. Besides communicative language functions, Cummins in O'malley and Pierce (1996) also said that still any functions of language namely academic language functions that are critical for success in grade-level classroom. Academic language functions may be global in that they can be used across various contents areas or they may be content-specific particular to a single content area

This research attempts to show how important it is to teach learners to share knowledge and take advantage of their diverse abilities to improve their learning process, increase the students' speaking skill of the foreign language, and promote their social skills. This study illustrates an experience of English lecturer with Cooperative Learning (CL) strategy. It contains reflections on how this methodology could improve students' communicative and academic language function of speaking skill, and how the students taught with the CL strategy through English Village (EV) have better achievement in academic and communicative language function of speaking skill. The practical reason is that CL strategy is one of the effective strategies for the students in exchanging information between the learners. Kessler (1992: 8) states CL strategy is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. The idea is to make of the English classroom a



place where, in addition to learning a foreign language, learners have the opportunity to share values and solve real problems of learning communicative and academic language function of speaking skill. The general problem statement posed by this experimental study is to know whether the students taught with CL strategy through EV have better speaking skill achievement than those taught not through CL strategy and EV.

This study, however, also focuses on one of the factors, namely teaching method as implemented in the teaching strategy. Learning strategies play a crucial role in second or foreign language acquisition. Learning strategies also help learners to gather new information and then assimilate those acquired information into their existing knowledge. In some universities of Kalimantan, specially, the implementation of cooperative teaching strategy is still monotonous. Some of the learners use conventional learning strategies. Slavin (1995) states that any relationship between strategy use and language proficiency, more proficient language learners use more learning strategies but less proficient language learners use less learning strategies. The results of study show that the successful language learners use more high level strategies than less successful learners. For More detailed discussion of language learning strategy, Griffiths (2003) proposed that learners with higher language proficiency expose themselves more frequently to the employment of language learning strategies. Based on these arguments, the possibility that the appropriate and effective strategy use might contribute to successful language learning is made accordingly and we cannot deny the positive relationship between speaking strategy use and successful learning.

Appropriate learning strategies help explains the performance of good language learners; similarly, inappropriate learning strategies would add the misunderstanding for the poor language learning. During the past decade, many researchers have focused on learning strategy use and effective language learning and the difference of reading strategy use between successful and less successful learners were highly discussed in various research studies.

Based on the strategies theory and the problems above, the writer ensures that CL strategies is one of the best vehicles for implementing a process oriented approach to teaching speaking skill. The writer intends to study it by investigating its effectiveness compared to the conventional strategy. The present study is intended to see the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategy over conventional one, not through Cooperative learning and EV, in teaching and learning of oral proficiency of speaking course. The effectiveness is to be measured in terms of achievement in speaking skill. In other words, it is to see whether the cooperative learning (CL) strategy through EV model leads to better achievement in speaking skill on the part of the students. Put in a question forms, the general problem to be answered through the present study is : Do the students taught with CL strategy through EV have better communicative and academic language function of speaking skill achievement on the post test than on the pretest .

*B. English Village as EFL*

English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have been seen as rather distinct learning contexts. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), ESL is frequently understood as referring to acquisition of English as an additional language in a setting where it is the dominant mode of communication, while EFL is envisioned as classroom study in a region where English does not play much of a role internally. EFL programs where in learners are exposed to a target language in small doses over a long period are sometimes referred to as drip feeding. While this is probably the most common experience of classroom foreign language learners, it has been found relatively ineffective in leading to functional fluency (Baker, 2011). Drip-feed EFL contexts have been associated with supposedly less-motivated learners. According to Gass and Selinker (2001) there also tends to be minimal access to English speakers, and therefore fewer learning opportunities. The view of the second/foreign continuum, according to prominence of a target language in a learners’ community and the extent to which learning occurs in classrooms.

II. METHOD

*A. Research Design*

This study is intended for testing hypotheses about the effect of CL strategy through EV of teaching speaking skill toward improvement of students’ speaking achievement in terms of general, academic language types and communicative language types of function. Ary et al. (2002: 280) state the term experimental design refers to the conceptual framework within which the experiment is conducted. The most important criterion is that design must be appropriate for testing the particular hypotheses of the study. In addition, Best (1981:68) defines experimental design is the blueprint of the procedures that enable the researcher to the test hypothesis by reaching valid conclusions about the relationships between independent and dependent variables.

The following table is an illustration of research design:

TABLE 1  
RESEARCH DESIGN OF ONE GROUP PRETEST-POSTTEST DESIGN

Pre-test	independent variable	post-test
Y1	X	Y2

Where:  
Y1: refers to observation in the pre-test  
X: refers to the treatment  
Y2: refers to the observation in the post-test

This study was intended for testing hypotheses about the effect of CL strategy through EV for teaching English speaking skill for both functions communicative and academic function. Of the explanation above, it denotes that design of the research is experimental. Experimental research is powerful research method to establish cause-and-effect relationship (Borg., Gall, 1989: 639) As stated in previous chapter, general hypothesis designed into two specifications that tested in the present study. The first specification of hypotheses says that the students who are taught with the CL strategy through EV have better communicative language function of speaking skill achievement. The hypothesis is stated such as, the students who are taught with the CL strategy through EV have better achievement in communicative language function of speaking skill on the post test than on the pre test. To put into null form. The hypothesis is stated such as, the students who are taught with the CL strategy through EV have no better achievement in communicative language function of speaking skill on the post test than on the pre test.

The research design employed in this study is one group, pretest-post test design. The number of the available subjects for the experiment of this study is 45. In addition, after the pretest is held so the subjects remained not to know which of the answers are correct and which are wrong. Finally, the length of the treatment, which lasted for four months, ensured that the subjects would not remember the items of the test. The evaluation is made on the basis of the lectures' observation of students' performance in speaking classes, participation in classroom activities, and speaking habits. The participants of the conference agreed to chance the position of the some subjects.

### B. Treatment

As mentioned earlier, speaking teaching strategy through EV was studied in this research. In this case, teaching approach was cooperative language teaching CLT. Prior to the implementation of this teaching strategy through EV, the subjects were pretested to see their ability of communicative function of speaking.

### C. Population and Sample

According to Ary et al. (2002:163) a population is defined as all members of any-well defined class of people, events or objects, the larger group about the generalization made is called a population. In this study, and the small group that is observed is called a sample. The target population is all the students of English department of private universities throughout in South Kalimantan who are at the third semester. This is under the assumption that they have many features in common. Some of the students never join UMPTN Test that conducted by state university. Most of them are inputs from SMA graduates so that they have same prior educational background and that they are relatively the same age. The populations of this study are students of the English Department of UNISKA Banjarmasin Indonesia who are programming speaking course in the third semester of the 2014/2015 academic year. The sample of this study is 45 students. Those students were assigned to the experimental group.

### D. Instruments and Technique of Collecting Data

The study employed speaking test as the basic instrument for collecting data. The test was in interviews, speech, debate and role play format. The writer chooses those formats because they include task that involve relatively long stretches of interactive discourse. Discussing for solving problem, debating contest, role play and Interview were done to assess the students' speaking skill. Specially for interview test is to anticipate the leak of the questions, another students were not allowed to attend at the place where the interview taking place. Each student got the same questions.

## III. FINDINGS

The results of the data analysis are presented in percentage of the students' result, and presented non parametric analysis for the students' internal factor self confidence, self-interest, and self-regulation. For the students' score in the pre test and the post test and for the increasing the students' internal factor used pre-questionnaire and post questionnaire. While the students' achievement in both communicative and academic functions of speaking using t-test analysis. The results of analysis are elaborated as follows:

Frequency of Students' Communicative Language Function of Speaking Indicator for students' ability Communicative Language Function of Speaking skill is based on pretest and posttest result.

TABLE 1  
QUALIFICATION OF THE STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE FUNCTION OF SPEAKING

Pre-Test			Post-Test		
Score	Qualification	Students	Score	Qualification	Students
≥ 21	A	0	≥ 21	A	9
16-20	B	5	16-20	B	36
11-15	C	30	11-15	C	0
≤ 10	D	10	≤ 10	D	0

The table shows the frequency of students before teaching speaking skill using CLT strategy through EV. 0 student (0.00%) got A qualification, 5 students (11.11%) got B qualification, 30 students (66.67%) got C qualification, 10 students (22.22%) got D qualification. The frequency of the students after the teaching of speaking skill using CLT

strategy through EV. 9 students (20.00%) got A qualification. 36 students (80.00%) got B qualification, no students (0.00%) got C qualification and no students (0.00%) got D qualification.

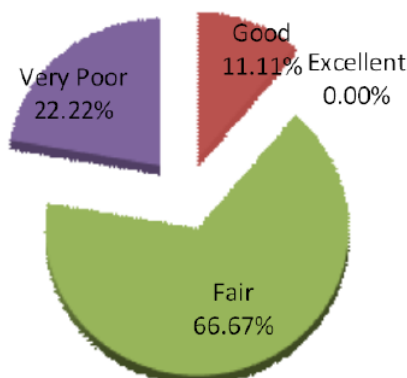


Figure 1 Percentage of the students' communicative language function of speaking before the teaching of speaking skill using CLT strategy through EV

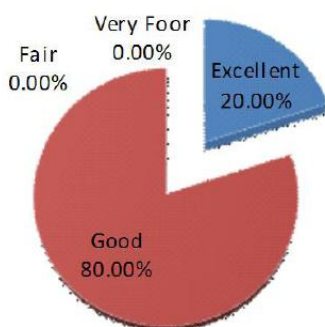


Figure 2 Percentage of the students' result on communicative language function after the teaching of speaking skill using CLT strategy through EV

TABLE 2  
QUALIFICATION OF THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION OF SPEAKING

Pre-Test			Post-Test		
Score	Qualification	Students	Score	Qualification	Students
≥ 21	A	0	≥ 21	A	6
16-20	B	6	16-20	B	26
11-15	C	29	11-15	C	11
≤ 10	D	10	≤ 10	D	2

The table shows the frequency of students before the teaching of speaking skill using CLT strategy through EV. 0 student (0.00%) got A qualification, 6 students (11.11%) got B qualification, 29 students (64.65%) got C qualification, 10 students (22.22%) got D qualification. The frequency of the students after the teaching of speaking skill using CLT strategy through EV. 6 students (13.33%) got A qualification. 26 students (57.78%) got B qualification, 11 students (24.45%) and 2 students (4.44%) got C qualification.

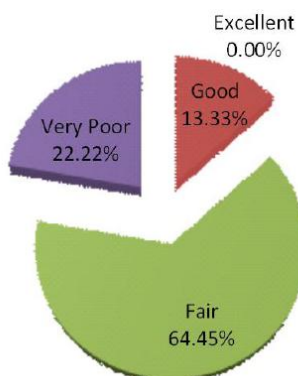


Figure 3 Percentage of the students' result on academic language function before the teaching of speaking skill using CLT strategy through EV

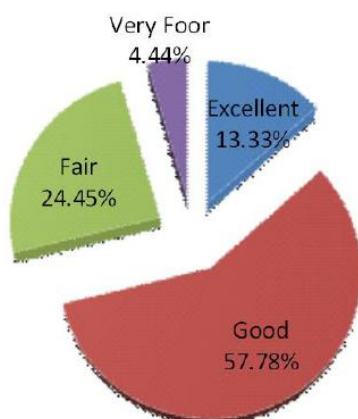


Figure 4 Percentage of the students' result on academic language function after the teaching of speaking skill using CL strategy through EV

Result of t-test for Students' Performance of Communicative and Academic Language Function of Speaking After doing two kinds of the test (pre test and post test) of communicative language function of speaking and computing the results that are summarized in table 4.3

TABLE.3  
SUMMARY OF COMPUTATION FOR T-TEST FOR COMMUNICATIVE AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION OF SPEAKING

Communicative		Academic	
N	= 45	N	= 45
$\sum D$	= 306	$\sum D$	= 338
D	= 6.800	D	= 5.822
SD	= 2.455	SD	= 2.102

The data shows that the average of the differences between the two means (D) of the students' score in communicative function of speaking is 6.800 while in academic function of speaking is 5.822 Next, the standard deviation of the differences (SD) of the students' scores in communicative function of speaking is 2.455 while in academic function of speaking is 2.102. Computation of the standard error of the mean for the differences (SXD) in communicative function of speaking is 0.365 while in academic function of speaking is 0.313 Finally, by dividing the average of the differences between the two means (D) and standard error of the mean for the differences, the t-value was obtained. In the present study the obtained t-value for the communicative function of speaking was 18.580 while the t-value for the academic function of speaking was 18.573 (see appendix on page 235). to the critical value of t at  $p < 0.01$  level significance of one-tailed test was 3.307 (d.f =44).

**Testing Hypothesis**

On the basis of the results obtained from the data analysis, the working hypotheses as stated in chapter 1 were formulated as presented in chapter III. In order that the testing hypotheses could be restated here. The null hypotheses were formulated as follows:

Students' score in communicative function of speaking who are taught with CL strategy through EV was not significantly higher on the post-test than on the pre-test.

Students' score in transactional function of speaking who are taught with the CL strategy who are taught through EV was not significantly higher on the post-test than on the pre-test.

**Testing Hypothesis for Communicative Function of Speaking**

The working hypothesis to be tested in this section states that the score of the students who are taught with CL through EV is higher on the post test than on the pre test. The t test analysis performed on the data of the students' score in communicative function of speaking comes to finding that t-value is 24.026 while the critical value of t at  $p < .001$  of one tailed test is 3.307 this indicates that the obtained t-value exceeds the critical t-value. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that the students' score in communicative function of speaking who are taught with CL through EV is not significantly higher on the post test than on the pre-test is rejected. On the other hand, the working hypotheses stating that the students score in communicative function of speaking who are taught with CL through EV is significantly higher on the post-test than on the pre-test is accepted. This indicates that CL strategy through EV turns out to be more effective to the students' speaking ability in communicative function of speaking.

**Testing Hypothesis for Academic Function of Speaking**

The hypothesis for the students' score in academic function of speaking who are taught with CL strategy through EV is significantly higher on the post-test than on the pre-test. The computation using a t-test finds the obtained t-value is 22.784 while the required critical t-value is at  $p < 0.001$  of one-tailed is 3.307 this indicates that the obtained t-value exceeds the critical t-value. As the result, the null hypotheses stating that the students' score in academic language function of speaking who are taught with the CL trough EV is not significantly higher on the posttest than on the pre-

test is rejected. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that CL through EV of teaching speaking turns out to be more effective to improve the students' ability in academic function of speaking.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

In a finding, it shows the Effectiveness of CL strategy Through English Village of Teaching Speaking in communicative language function. The application of CL Strategy through EV brings about positive effect to the students' speaking ability in communicative function of speaking. That is students who are taught with CL strategy through EV get better score in communicative function of speaking on the post test than on their pre test. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the working hypothesis is accepted. It denotes that the present study proves that CL strategy more effectively to be applied through EV to increase students' speaking ability in communicative function of speaking.

In this study, it can relate to Yang' point of view (2005) states that the use of CL techniques can lead to positive attitudes towards CL and increased speaking skills. It must be admitted that students who interact and speak achieve better in oral skills in most cases than those who always keep silent. It is urgent that English speaking ability is one of the most important skills to be developed and enhanced in language learners, particularly in an academic and communicative setting.

For academic function of speaking analysis succeeds in proving that the students who are taught with CL strategy through EV have significantly better score in academic function of speaking on the post test than on their pre test. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, whereas the working hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that CL strategy turns to be more effective to develop students' speaking ability in academic function of speaking through EV.

Related to this academic language function. Townsend at al. (2012: 92) states academic language function is a specialized language both oral and written, of academic settings that facilitates communication and thinking about disciplinary content. In addition, they explained that academic language is a functional tool that allows for discussion and reflection on the types of complex ideas and phenomenon that comprise the middle grade curricula.

Using CL strategy through EV succeed and more efficient and effective to improve the students' speaking skill in academic language function. The students' oral communication after joining the program is much better than before. This study agrees with exiting theories of how languages are learnt. The theories states that there are some factors affecting second language learning, they are intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation, learners preferences, learners beliefs, age of acquisition, and environment. Of the all factors, there are two factors who have given great contribution to the students' speaking achievement in both functions of this study, they are students' motivation and environment.

The use of good strategy in improving the learners' speaking skill may accelerate the students' speaking competence whether the communicative abilities or academic ability. Slavin (1995) states that any relationship between strategy use and language proficiency. more proficient language learners use more learning strategies but less proficient language learners use less learning strategies. In addition, Bruen (2001) assumed that a high level of strategy use was related to high language proficiency and successful learners' use more learning strategies.

This study is most significant in that it has moved studies on CL a step further. The findings of this study have demonstrated the effectiveness of CL strategy through EV in the teaching and learning of speaking skill for the English department students. It is also significant in that it demonstrated the effects of teaching and learning that using CL strategy through EV to increase the students' self interest, self confidence and self regulation.

#### V. CONCLUSION

From the results of the data analyses as reported in Chapter IV and discussed in chapter V, the following conclusions are then made. Using CL strategy in teaching speaking skill through EV and no using CL strategy have different impact on students' speaking skill achievement. In this case, students who are taught speaking skill using CL strategy through EV tend to have better speaking skill achievement after being taught than before. In other words, the former strategy facilitates learning more than latter.

As far as the communicative function of speaking skill is concerned, by using CL strategy through EV, it is able to assure that the result must be more effective, the students tend to have better performance on communicative language function of speaking. It is proven from the data that shows the higher students' speaking skill performance on the post test than on the pretest. This indicates that the students who are taught speaking skill with CL strategy through EV have better score after being taught or after joining the program.

Using CL strategy through EV for the teaching of speaking skill is more effective. It is proven from the data that shows the higher students' speaking skill achievement on the post test than on the pretest. This indicates that the students who are taught speaking skill with CL strategy through EV have better score after being taught than before.

In short, the use of the CL strategy for the teaching of speaking skill in academic language function through EV is in general more effective after being taught than before. However, when viewed from the types of language function, the communicative language function of speaking skill is much more effective.

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# Metaphors for Educators: A Cultural Cognitive Approach

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**Abstract**—Cognitive Linguistics maintains that metaphor is one of the basic ways of thinking and the cognitive tool for talking about and understanding abstract concepts. The present research focuses on metaphors for educators and attempts to uncover the underlying cognitive mechanism for the metaphorical construe or conceptions of educators. This research is committed to the investigation of the cognitive function of metaphors and attempts to explore and explain the cross-cultural variation and universality between metaphors for educators in Chinese and English through cultural models and cognitive models. This research not only broadens the research perspectives of conceptual metaphor, but also enriches the contents of cross-cultural metaphorical research.

**Index Terms**—educators, conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, cognitive model, cultural model

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is always closely connected to metaphor. As an indispensable participant in education activity, educator as a cover term for teacher, instructor, mentor, director, etc., carries types of relevant metaphors which are deeply embedded in cognition and culture. This paper is concerned with metaphors for educators in both Chinese and English.

Previous research on metaphors for educator in educational context mainly focuses on the investigation of historical evolvement (Kasten 1998). The ongoing researches have barely done from the perspective of cognitive basis and cultural cognitive approach. Moreover, few studies and researches are conducted in comparisons of metaphors for educators between different countries cognitively and culturally. The lack of systematicness is the biggest problem.

Talking about cognitive foundation of metaphor, embodied experience and knowledge serve as the basis of metaphors regarded as a way of thinking. They influence the way one acts, thinks and speaks so as to influence his mind about the world (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). When it comes to cultural cognitive explanation, Gannon (2001) puts metaphor into culture for consideration and puts forward cultural metaphor as a typical symbol of customs to make a distinction between different nations. Ungerer & Schmid (2013) put forward cognitive models and cultural models. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, “cognitive model, as the term suggests, represent a cognitive, basically psychological, view of the stored knowledge about a certain field.” and “cognitive models can be seen as cognitive models that are shared by people belonging to a social group or subgroup”. Still some other researchers also claims that culture play a vital role on metaphor (Kovecses 2005 etc.). Accordingly, metaphors for educator are also cognitive and cultural oriented. Therefore, as a new approach on researches of metaphor for educators, comparisons between Chinese and English educator metaphor on the basis of cognitive cultural approach which would be probed in detail would explore the influence of cognition and culture on educational metaphor, most importantly, will promote the development of teaching and communication between Chinese and Western.

## II. METAPHORS FOR EDUCATORS IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH

Conceptual Metaphor is the mapping across conceptual domains between two domains: source domain and target domain (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff & Turner 1989, Sweetser, 1990). In other words, a conceptual metaphor includes four basic elements: source domain, target domain, experience and mapping. Educator refers to someone who educates people, including teacher, professor, mentor, master, etc. Meanwhile, as one of the most important participants in education, educator can tie into almost every facet of education. The EDUCATOR domain consists of such sub-concepts EDUCATOR, EDUCATEE, TEACHING PROCESS, TEACHING EFFECT, TEACHING MEANS, LEARNING, SCHOOL, CLASS, BLACKBOARD, CHALK, etc. In those conceptual metaphors for educator concluded below in both Chinese and English, we would find: what kind of source domain can be related to EDUCATOR domain? How can some characteristics of the source domain map onto those of the target domain? What are the cognitive basis and cultural explanations for those metaphors?

As mentioned above, all those data of linguistic metaphors for educators presented in the following mainly are based on some famous people’s quotes on teachers, students, education, etc., some authoritative corpus and some internet data.

### A. *Metaphors for Educators in both Chinese and English*

Analyzing data of metaphors for educator in both Chinese and English individually, we found that five conceptual

metaphors as following are frequently used in both Chinese and English educational context: EDUCATOR IS GUIDE, EDUCATOR IS GARDENER, EDUCATOR IS ARTIST, EDUCATOR IS FEEDER, and EDUCATOR IS STUFFER.

### EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES

In the metaphor EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES, the target conceptual domain EDUCATORS is understood in terms of the source conceptual domain GUIDES. How are mappings between these two conceptual domains established? Guide refers to someone or something that shows the way by leading or advising. Educators are conceived as guide for they share some correlations. Thus in the source domain GUIDES, it contains some concepts such as LEADING/DIRECTING/ACTIVATING, JOURNEY DESTINATION, ENCOUNTERING OBSTACLES, ROUTES etc., all of which can be mapped onto some concepts of the target domain like EDUCATING, PURPOSE OF EDUCATING, ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES, TEACHING APPROACHES, etc. Those concepts can be reflected in following (1) to (4).

(1) 老师是天上最亮的**北极星**，为我们**指引**前方的道。

Teachers are the brightest **North Star** in the sky, **directing** our way ahead.

(2) 好的老师是好的**舵手**，总能把你人生的小船恰到好处地**引向**宽阔的水域。

A good teacher is a good **coxswain** who can always **lead** your boat of life to open water.

(3) And in language teaching, the idea that the teacher should **direct** the progress of learners has been questioned on the grounds that such direction impedes the natural process of learning.

(4) If he is indeed wise he does not **bid** you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather **leads** you to the threshold of your own mind.

### EDUCATORS ARE GARDENERS

Gardener as a positive image in both Chinese and English has been used as a source domain for many professions due to its connotations of good characters, such as diligence and conscientiousness. In conceptual metaphor EDUCATORS ARE GARDENERS, we compare the educator to gardener for they share some correlated concepts, in other words, the target domain EDUCATORS is understood in terms of the source domain GARDENERS. GARDENING, GARDENS, PLANTS/SEEDS, FRUIT, REAPING HARVEST, etc. as some basic sub-concepts of GARDENERS can be mapped onto some sub-concepts of EDUCATORS such as, TEACHING, UNEDUCATED EDUCATEES, EDUCATED EDUCATEES, SCHOOLS, TEACHING RESULT, etc.

(5) 老师用汗水**浇灌**了我们，让我们去的**丰收**。

Teachers **irrigate** us with their sweat so that we can **reap a harvest**.

(6) 小树不修不直溜，**人不修理梗啾啾**。

Young trees cannot keep straight if nobody **prunes** their branches. And young people will make troubles if nobody supervises and instructs them.

(7) The task of the modern educator is not to **cut down jungles**, but to **irrigate** deserts.

(8) In school, your teacher is the **fruit picker** and you are the open **fruit basket**. **EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS**

The famous educator B. A. Cyxomjnhcknn regards schools as instruments which can play beautiful melodies and influence the soul of every student. The only way to play these beautiful melodies is tuning up those instruments by someone who is called “teacher”. Thus, teacher can be called an artist as well. When we gather and analyze abundant linguistic metaphors data, other educators in other working areas have this concept in common. Consequently, we have a conceptual metaphor EDUCATOR IS ARTIST here. Some Concepts as ART PROCESSING, RAW MATERIALS, ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS, etc., in the source domain ARTIST can be compared to the corresponding concepts PROCESS OF TEACHING, EDUCATEES, TEACHING RESULTS, etc.

(9) 老师是出色的**工匠**，不拘一格地**雕刻**着所有**雕像**。您雕的不只是我们充实的知识，更是我们方正的品格。

Teachers are excellent **craftsmen**, **carving out** all the statues without set patterns. In your **carving work**, you **shaped** not only our rich knowledge but also our decent personality.

(10) 每个孩子都一块块**璞玉**，需要我们去发现他们的价值，进行**精雕细琢**，让他们成为件件**精品**”。

Every child is an uncut jade, waiting for us to discover their value and carve them in an excelsior way so as to make everyone a masterpiece.

(11) His progressive education philosophy, developed in the early 1900s, portrays the teacher as an **artist** who facilitates the development of the child as artist.

(12) Through her interactions with the children, the **teacher** is engaged in a continual process of **crafting** and recrafting the environment, building on their existing collaborative resources, and gradually extending the range of collaboration which children choose and are able to engage in by themselves.

### EDUCATORS ARE FEEDERS

Based on experiences, we usually tend to see getting knowledge as a process of eating. We use many verbs in the EATING category and FEEDING category to depict learning and teaching processes. Probably it has some collections to our cultures of eating. After the analysis of data in English, many linguistic metaphors can be found to describe education as a process of eating and feeding. We conclude a conceptual metaphor EDUCATORS ARE FEEDERS. The source domain FEEDERS can be construed in terms of the target domain EDUCATORS. Some concepts link to the source domain FEEDERS: FEEDING, FOODS, HUNGRY MEN, AFTER FEEDING, etc., in the source domain are understood in terms of concepts like TEACHING, KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATEES, TEACHING RESULTS etc.



(13) 面对“嗷嗷待哺”的学生，老师应该知道如何去哺育他们。

Teachers are expected to know how to **feed starving** students.

(14) 我们感谢敬爱的老师，用知识和爱哺育我们成长。

Thanks to our teacher, **feeding** our growth with knowledge and love.

(15) When we **feed** students answers instead of strategies, we only provide for one completed written paper.

**(16) Spoon feeding** in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon. **EDUCATORS ARE STUFFERS**

In our daily activities, we often compare 3ducates to containers. Stuffer draws an image of someone who fills an empty container to be full. Equally, teaching is a process to fill 3ducates with knowledge or wisdom. Thus, EDUCATORS can be conceived with reference to the conceptual domain STUFFERS. Some target concepts TEACHING, KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATEES in EDUCATORS domain are understood in terms of FILLING, FILLERS, CONTAINERS, etc.

(17) 乡村教师填补了教育达不到的地方。

Village school teachers **fills the gap** where education cannot reach.

(18) 老师把所有精力都倾注在我们身上。

Teachers **pour** their energy into us.

(19) His job status to how well his students do on tests. It's a teacher's job, Jackson said, to **instill** students with a desire to succeed.

(20) "In the wild struggle for existence, we want to have something that endures, and so we **fill our minds with** rubbish and facts, in the silly hope of keeping our place.

#### B. Chinese-specific Metaphors for Educators

Although metaphors are pervasive, based on different cultures among countries, there must be some conceptual metaphors for educators that cannot be found in other culture. Culture influence people's thoughts so as to affect the use of metaphors for some specific entities. In China, teachers appear on the stage of history from the primitive society. Kövecses (2005) claimed that conceptual metaphors would change with the change of culture. China has its bright culture and different cultural connotation, so for some concepts Chinese hold different cognitive model and cultural model. After conclusion, we excavate the elaboration of two Chinese metaphors for educators in Chinese only as follows: EDUCATOR IS LIGHT SOURCE, EDUCATOR IS ANIMAL.

##### EDUCATORS ARE LIGHT SOURCES

Light always brings hope and warmth so the image of light is extremely positive both in China or western countries. On the basis of metaphor data, a conceptual metaphor concluded is EDUCATION IS LIGHT SOURCE which is pervasive in China and rare in English. Light sources can light the way, which is correlated to the process of education. Thus, some concepts CANDLES/LIGHTS/SUN....., LIGHTING/BURNING, DISPELLING DARKNESS, BURNING OUT, BRING WARTH/BRIGHTNESS etc. in the source domain can be mapped onto some related concepts EDUCATORS, TEACHING, SOLVING PROBLEMS, DEDICATING, RESULTS, and TEACHING RESULTS.

(21) 老师一只蜡烛，燃烧自己，照亮别人。

Teachers are **candles, burning** themselves, however, **illuminating** others.

(22) 每一句话，每一个行为都给学生带去温暖。

They bring the students **warmth** through their words and behaviors.

(23) 每当我沮丧时，老师总能如光一样驱散我内心的黑暗。

Teachers are the **lights** that **dispel** the darkness inside me whenever I am depressed.

##### EDUCATORS ARE ANIMALS

Animal in this dissertation refers to non-human members of creatures. Animals have very close relationship with human beings since human beings appear. In China, animals have rooted deeply in Chinese culture, especially some image of diligent animals are even respected by people. Based on data analysis, we get a conceptual metaphor EDUCATORS ARE ANIMALS. We would construe the target domain ANIMALS in terms of the source domain EDUCATORS. Some concepts OX/COWS/BEES/SILKWORMS..., LABORING, LABORING OBJECTS, OUTPUTS, DEDICATING etc., in the source domain ANIMALS can be compared to these concepts EDUCATORS, TEACHING, EDUCATEES, TEACHING RESULTS, etc., in the target EDUCATORS.

(24) 我们耳濡目染了老师们“俯首甘为孺子牛”的奉献精神。

We are impressed by teachers' dedication like a **head-bowed willing ox**.

(25) 老师是蜜蜂，辛勤地劳作。

Teachers are **bees** working diligently.

(26) 三尺讲台，传道解惑，春蚕吐丝，烛照人寰。

On the platform, teachers impart knowledge and solve puzzles, like **silkworms producing silk and candles lighting for the mankind**.

In China, people are inclined to use those animals to compare to educators. During the educating processes, being humble and diligent is vital important and precious character of a good educator.

### C. *English-specific Metaphors for Educators*

Just as China, in western countries, undoubtedly there are some metaphors for educators that cannot match in those of Chinese due to different cognitive model and cultural model. Western countries own its own culture, reflecting its own thinking pattern about something. Different language communities will hold different perception of the world. Some metaphors for educators in English only are concluded into EDUCATORS ARE PROCESSERS, EDUCATORS ARE PRISON OFFICERS.

#### **EDUCATOR ARE PRODUCERS**

This conceptual metaphor EDUCATORS ARE PROCESSERS concluded is widely demonstrated in several data of linguistic metaphors in English which is far more than in Chinese. In this conceptual cross-domain mapping, some concepts of the source PRODUCERS are drawn upon to account for relevant concepts in the target domain EDUCATORS. In the source domain PRODUCERS, some concepts PRODUCING, PREDETERMINED ACTIONS, RAW MATERIAL, PRODUCTS, ASSEMBLY LINES/FACTORY, etc., as are mapped onto the source domain EDUCATOR's concepts TEACHING, RESTRICTED TEACHING PATTERNS, EDUCATEES, ENVIROMENTS, etc.

(27) College is the **grinding machine** of the Mathematical Establishment, a conveyor belt that takes individuals from one cookie cutter to another so that the **product** comes within tight control limits out of the **assembly line**.

(28) Teachers have their sights set on the real goal: not to **produce** Ivy League graduates, but to encourage the development of naturally curious, confident, flexible, and happy learners who are ready for whatever the future has in store.

(29) Kids' hearts are **malleable**, but once they gel it's hard to get them back the way they were.

From (27) to (29), we will have a clear idea about why we can compare educators to producers. "produce" (28) and "malleable" (29) can be the demonstrations of concepts of the teaching process; "grinding machine" and "assembly line" (27) are compared to the teaching environment.

#### **EDUCATORS ARE PRISON OFFICERS**

There is no doubt that this is also a negative conclusion. In this conceptual metaphor EDUCATOR ARE PRISON OFFICERS, the target domain EDUCATOR is construed in terms of the source domain PRISON OFFICERS. PRISON OFFICERS are related to such concepts as PRISONS, PRISONERS, GUARDING PRISONERS, etc., as are mapped onto the concepts EDUCATORS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, EDUCATEES, TEACHING, etc.

(30) Going to school is going to **prison**...you have about two weeks to establish your credibility, failing which And to these are necessarily added the time-serving priest or teacher, as the case may be, supported and protected by the government, to render the spirit of the people **servile** and make them docile under the **yoke**.

(31) Changes in curriculum and the **monitoring** of pupil progress have placed tremendous demands on teacher time and supervising out of school hours clubs and teams may feature low on priorities.

(32) Typically, the teacher will **oversee** the student's schedule, learning location, and pace. That requires weekly scheduling and daily **monitoring** of each student.

As mentioned above, we are able to conceptualize EDUCATORS AS PRISON OFFICERS due to the conceptual mappings from many sub-concepts of prison officers to those of educators. From (30) to (32), "yoke", "monitoring", and "oversee" can be compared to "guarding", which displayed that 4ducates are under control of educators in both knowledge and discipline. In (30), "prison" can be mapped onto the concept of some educational institutions, so prisoners are conceptually construed as "4ducates". The reason lies in its control on 4ducates.

### III. COGNITIVE BASIS OF METAPHORS FOR EDUCATORS

As to cognitive linguistics, the cognitive basis of metaphors is the image schema motivating metaphors and servers as the ground of metaphors (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Yu 1998; Kovesces 2010). Are there differences between the same conceptual metaphors shared by both Chinese and English? In order to answer these questions, we will explore them from the perspective of the cognitive basis of metaphors for educators and cultural cognitive approach to metaphors for educators.

#### A. *Embodied Experience and Image Schema*

According to experientialism in philosophy, human conceptual structures and systems are metaphorical essentially so we can present it in another way—thinking or cognition is metaphorical essentially (Yu 1998; Wen 2014). Since, our cognition comes from embodied experiences. Thus, the embodied experiential basis of metaphors is metaphors' cognitive basis. Through the conceptualizations of the bodily experiences, image schemas are pervasive, including CONTAINER SCHEMA, PATH SCHEMA, LINK SCHEMA, BALANCE SCHEMA, SCALARITY SCHEMA, OBJECTS SCHEMA, FORCES SCHEMA. Some others represent orientational and relational schemas, such as PART-WHOLE SCHEMA, CENTER-PERIPHERY SCHEMA, FRONT-BACK SCHEMA, and so on (Turner 1990).

Lakoff (1987a) claims that image schematic structure is a preconceptual structure in our embodied experiences so as to cause conceptual structure. However, because conceptual structures metaphors are metaphorical, and metaphors are ways of thinking which can be understood as conceptual structures as well. Thus, metaphors are on the basis of image schemas, or rather, the embodied experiences of image schemas are the cognitive basis of metaphors.

However, what is the embodied experiential basis or image schemas for the source domains occurring in those

conceptual metaphors including GUIDE, GARDENER ARTIST, FEEDER, STUFFER, LIGHT SOURCE, ANIMAL, PROCESSER, JAILER? How are they functioning in our cognition? We will have a logical demonstration in the following part.

### *B. Experiential Basis of Metaphors for Educators*

As has mentioned above, the cognitive basis of metaphors is the image schemas, so in order to provide a satisfying and convincing account for those questions raised above, in the first place, we have to generalize the commonest characteristics of educators in terms of these conceptual metaphors for educators: EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES, EDUCATORS ARE GARDENERS, EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS, EDUCATORS ARE FEEDERS, EDUCATORS ARE STUFFERS, EDUCATORS ARE LIGHT SOURCES, EDUCATORS ARE ANIMALS, EDUCATORS ARE PRODUCERS, and EDUCATORS ARE PRISON OFFICERS, that is, “cause of change”, or rather, “cause of change” refers to “cause of educatees’ intellectual change”. As a teacher, there must have numerous characteristics they are possessed of, however, to find the image schemas as cognitive basis of metaphor for educators, we can only resort to some commonest characteristics, and we have to try to highlight something and hide others. Thus, upon closer analysis, “cause of educatees’ intellectual change” is evacuated.

Since all the nine conceptual metaphors for educators are very specific, so based on “cause of educatees’ intellectual change” characteristic, they can further deduce some general metaphors as following: CAUSES OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM ORIGINS TO DESTINATIONS, CAUSES OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM SEEDS TO PLANTS, CAUSES OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM RAW MATERIALS TO MASTERPIECES, CAUSES OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM BEING STARVING TO BEING FULL, CAUSES OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM BEING EMPTY TO BEING FILLED, CAUSES OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM BEING DARK TO BEING BRIGHT, CAUSES OF CHANGE IS CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM BEING FLOWERS TO FRUITS, CAUSES OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM RAW MATERIALS TO PRODUCTS, CAUSE OF CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENT FROM BEING FREE TO IMPRISONED, all of which can be categorized into a more general conceptual metaphor: CAUSE OF INTELLECTUAL CHANGE ARE CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS FROM LOCATIONS/STATES TO LOCATIONS/STATES.

Lakoff (1993a, 1993b, 1994) and Yu (1998) emphasize one primary metaphors of the Event Structure Metaphor: CAUSES ARE FORCES (CONTROLLING MOVEMENT TO OR FROM LOCATIONS (STATES)). Subsequently, the primary metaphor of all those conceptual metaphors above can be distilled in terms of CAUSES ARE FORCES, that is, CAUSES OF INTELLECTUAL CHANGE ARE FORCE (CONTROLLING MOVEMENTS FROM OR TO LOCATIONS/STATES). Moreover, according to Lakoff (1993a, 1993b, 1994) two particular systems to display a duality of the Event Structure Metaphor: location system and object system. Thus, in the location system, CAUSES OF INTELLECTUAL CHANGE ARE FORCES (CONTROLLING MOVEMENTS FROM OR TO LOCATIONS/STATES); In the object system, CAUSES OF INTELLECTUAL CHANGE ARE FORCES (CONTROLLING MOVEMENTS OF POSSESSION)( GIVING). Both of the two versions can be conceptualized mainly in terms of our sensorimotor schemas such as FORCE schema, SOURCE-GOAL schema, CONTAINER schema, UP-DOWN schema etc.

We often embody the experience of the performance of specific movements of us and something. Thus, in order to finish our movements, we will exert a force on our movements so as to enable us to reach the goal. This force derives from our sense of potential energy which is related to the performance of some task specific. Taking the mountain-climbing for example, we can climb the mountain from the root to the top because we have a potential force to control our movement to finish the task of climbing mountain. These experiences can abstract the FORCE schema (ENABLE schema and compulsory schema) (Evans & Green, 2006), SOURCE-GOAL schema.

Based on our embodied experiences, a universal embodied experience “cause of change” in all the conceptual metaphors can be metaphorically mapped on the FORCE schema. Therefore, based on ENABLE schema, in the characterization of educators, they can be described as “enable to cause of change from origins to destinations” as exemplified by EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES; “enable to cause of change from seeds to fruits” in EDUCATORS ARE GARDENERS, “enable to cause of change from jade to masterpiece” in EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS, “enable to cause of change from starving to being full” in EDUCATORS ARE FEEDER, “enable to cause of change from being empty to being filled” in EDUCATORS ARE STUFFERS, “enable to cause of change from being dark to being bright” in EDUCATORS ARE LIGHT SOURCES, “enable to cause of change from flowers to fruits” in EDUCATORS ARE ANIMALS, “enable to cause of change from raw materials to products” in EDUCATORS ARE PRODUCTS and “enable to cause of change from being free to being imprisoned” in EDUCATORS ARE PRISON OFFICERS. When we concentrate on the object system, we should understand “cause of intellectual change” from the perspective of movements of the possession, such as “taking away (pruning) trees’ branches to change them to be straighter” in EDUCATORS ARE GARDENERS, “taking away crude jades’ imperfections so as to change them to masterpiece” as is exemplified in EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS.

According to daily bodily experiences, container as an image schema is rooted in human being’s conceptualizations of experiences. As a container, it must be a bounded space with some materials in or out, thus, comparing to human’s breath in or breath out, and eating or excretion, human bodies are conceived as contains as well not only for some

physical “in or out”, but also for some intellectual “in or out”. Another property which has to mention is that containers are supposed to be full or empty, and unfilled or filled through the capacity of containers, which is like materials’ state of rising-up and falling-down. Based on this embodied experience, educators’ “cause intellectual change” characteristic can be mapped onto “cause the change of capacity of the container”. “cause of change from being staving to being full” in EDUCATORS ARE FEEDERS, and “cause of change from being empty to being filled” in EDUCATORS ARE STUFFERS.

#### IV. CULTURAL COGNITIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR METAPHORS FOR EDUCATORS

Based on cognitive basis of metaphors for educators above, we can find that all these image schemas are universal, which determines that there must be some conceptual metaphors for educators that are universal as well, all of which are on the basis of shared embodied experiences in similar cognitive model, especially those metaphors in general levels. Those metaphors that are in less general levels are not universal for their different embodied experiences. Many famous linguistics and anthropologists claim that our embodied experiences themselves are on the basis of cultural contexts (Csordas 1994; Strathern 1996; Quinn 1991). Since conceptual metaphors are conceptualized in terms of human embodied experiences as well, we establish the enterprise of metaphors culturally and socially. “Cultural models work for individuals and collective communities in shaping what people believe, how they act, and how they speak about the world and their own experiences.” (Gibbs 1999: 154). Thus, in the final analysis, in educational contexts, some metaphors for educators are universal due to share embodied experiences molded by similar cognitive models (from a psychological perspective) while metaphors for educators which are specific are on the basis of cultural models (from a socio-cultural perspective).

##### A. Cognitive Model for Educators

Cognitive models are the stored cognitive representations pertaining to a certain field (Ungerer & Schmid 2013), which is more individual. Therefore, among various cognitive models for educators, there must have a prototypical cognitive model for educators which are centered on a large number of cognitive models. In cognitive linguistics, prototype is not only regarded as “best example of a category” and “clearest cases of category membership”, “most representative of things included in a class” or “central and typical members” (Lakoff 1986; Brown 1990) but more importantly also a psychological representations and cognitive reference point (Ungerer & Schmid 2013). Thus, a prototypical cognitive model is mentally represented and cognitively refers to other cognitive models for the category EDUCATOR, and all conceptual metaphors for educators and other related concepts converge on a prototypical cognitive model or models for the category EDUCATOR. In the conceptual metaphors we conclude, all of them represent some similar and different cognitive models across cultures for educators. Therefore, in order to find out the prototypical cognitive model for educators, we have to resolve to the cognitive basis of metaphors educators. From the primary metaphor CAUSES OF INTELLECTUAL CHANGE ARE FORCE (CONTROLLING MOVEMENTS FROM OR TO LOCATIONS/STATES), we can draw a conclusion that educators are causes of intellectual change, but why do we deem educators as causes? Why do educatees have intellectual change? The reason is that educators cause educatees’ intellectual change through the movement of knowledge.

Thus, we can outline a cognitive model for EDUCATORS, as is illustrated in Figure1.

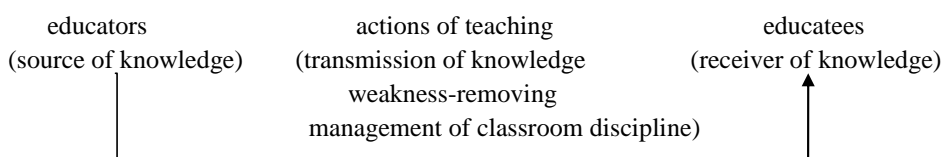


Figure1. Cognitive model for EDUCATORS

In this figure, “educators” are mainly understood metaphorically as “source of knowledge”, “educatees” as “receivers of knowledge”. Specifically, “educators” as “source of knowledge” make intellectual change of “educatees” as “receiver of knowledge” through actions of teaching which primarily include three aspects: transmission of knowledge, weakness-removing, and management of classroom discipline. For example, “transmission of knowledge” can be exemplified by EDUCATORS ARE FEEDERS, EDUCATORS ARE STUFFERS, etc., “weakness-removing” by EDUCATORS ARE GARDENERS, EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS, etc., and “management of classroom discipline” by EDUCATORS ARE PRISON OFFICERS, etc. Subsequently, any other conceptual metaphor for educators around this prototypical cognitive model or these components is conceived as an educator. However, although all metaphors are metaphors for educators but the realizations of those mappings from different source domains to the same target domain, which are in specific level, are rooted in cultural variations.

##### B. Explanations for Cultural Variations of Metaphors for Educators

In those conceptual metaphors, a particular target domain EDUCATORS is conceptualized by a variety of source

domains GUIDES, GARDENERS, ARTISTS, FEEDERS, STUFFERS, LIGHT SOURCES, ANIMALS, PRODUCERS and PRISON OFFICERS. In addition to universality, in educational contexts, there will be cultural variations in those metaphors for educators, some of which are common to both Chinese and English, some specific to Chinese and some specific to English. For example, in both Chinese and English educational contexts, the process of guiding is compared to the process of teaching; in Chinese educational context, regarding the process of lighting as teaching is not salient in English, while the conceptualization of educators as prison officers are especially prominent in English. Thus, we list a comparison between conceptual metaphors for educators, as is represented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
COMPARISON BETWEEN METAPHORS FOR EDUCATORS IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Metaphors in both educational contexts	Metaphors in Chinese educational context	Metaphors in English educational context
EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES	+	+
EDUCATORS ARE GARGENER	+	+
EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS	+	+
EDUCATORS ARE FEEDERS	+	+
EDUCATORS ARE STUFFERS	+	+
EDUCATORS ARE LIGHT SOURCES	+	—
EDUCATORS ARE ANIMALS	+	—
EDUCATORS ARE PRODUCERS	—	+
EDUCATORS ARE PRISON OFFICERS	—	+

According to Kovesces (2010)’s categorization of cultural variations, conceptual metaphors for educators is embedded in the following two likely possibilities:

- a. Variation in particular elaborations of conceptual metaphors for educators.
- b. Variation in potential sources domains, or the range of conceptual metaphors, for the target EDUCATORS.

**Variation in elaboration**

Variation in elaboration is a situation where the set of conceptual metaphors are shared by two different languages or cultures, but those metaphors are elaborated in different way. In the common cases of metaphors for educators in both Chinese and English educational contexts, EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES and EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS are cases shared by both Chinese and English but are elaborated in different way. EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES in both Chinese and English share the same sub-cognitive basis for metaphors for educators that the cause of educatees’ intellectual change are control of movements from origins to destinations, but they display huge differences in the representations of “guides” and process of guiding. Talking about representations of guides, guides are typically compared to many professions or entities such as “coxswain”, “road metals”, “north star”, and “beacons” which are less salient using in English to describe a guide in this way. While English tends to apply those images like “compass”, “bridge” and “party host” as guides but Chinese seldom use. Comparing those representations, those Chinese-specific “guides” emphasize its absolute leading even “holy” position, while, in English educational context, those qualities do not exist but highlight practical use much more. When it comes to the process of guiding, those Chinese-specific linguistic metaphors much more are teachers-centered but English-specific ones are particularly students-centered.

The reasons for these cultural variations have to come back to history, early in the Spring and Autumn and Warring Stage Period when educators are entitled as the embodiment of saints who are models of wisdom and morality and guiding people to be civilized under the influence of Confucianism. Confucius ever said that “Heaven having produced the inferior people, made for them rulers and teachers” (天降下民，作之君，作之師). Modern Chinese people inherit this attitude toward educators, regarding educators as guides which are represented by many absolute leading entities even shrouded in sort of “holy” atmosphere with centered position. As to English culture, numerous ideological emancipation movements have burst out since ancient time such as Renaissance Exists. English people are more likely to break with conventions in order to pursuit freedom, equality and individuality. Thus, they treat education as a process of individuality realizations. In class, educators are more likely like assistants to put students into the center so as to guide them to realize themselves, or rather, they guide students in the process of students’ building of individualities.

Another conceptual metaphor shared by both English and Chinese EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS illustrates something very interesting. In Chinese educational context, the source domain ARTISTS is confined to “craftsmen” especially for “jades” whereas in English educational context, the source domain ARTISTS points to a lot of conceptions such as “craftsmen” (especially “sculptors”), “entertainers” and “directors”. The explanations for the differences lie in the following: since China has been through agricultural society for several thousand years, the productive forces level was very low in ancient times. Thus, people daily activities are inextricably bound up with nature and the objects of art are very limited so that the kinds of craftsmen are also few. Why people select jades as the commonest object? That is because jades are very rare and valuable. In addition, a good artifact of jade is from a crude jade to a masterpiece by chiseling repeatedly and carefully. Therefore, in Chinese educational context, people are inclined to compare educators to craftsmen and educatees to crude jades. In English culture, due to fast social productive force and high industrialization, especially after Industrial Revolution, people began to release the control of

nature. Thus, based on various needs and desires, more professions appear so as artists.

#### Variation in range

Except for those cases shared by both Chinese and English, some ranges of conceptual metaphor are available mainly to Chinese or English. As to Chinese-specific conceptual metaphor EDUCATORS ARE LIGHTSOURCE, it seldom appears in English to describe educators. Otherwise, for those conceptions selected, most of which are candles, lights, reflecting the qualities of brightness, warmth and self-dedication. Another specific Chinese one EDUCATORS ARE ANIMALS also contains some animals that are widely regarded as the embodiments of diligence and self-dedication, such as “ox”, “cow”, “honey bees”, and “silkworms”.

On the whole, all those conceptions in two conceptual metaphors intentionally figure educators’ noble moralities and huge responsibilities for whole society.

With the development of society, educators’ role have gradually been transferred from saints to the figure of “public servant” since China’s reform and opening up in 1980s. At that time, when the People’s Republic of China was established, everything needs to be recovered, educators are laden with heavy responsibilities for education in new China. At that time, educators are taken for granted that they are supposed to have the spirit of dedication and character of diligence. Thus, many conceptions embodying the spirit of self-dedication are selected to be the metaphors for educators. That is why people are apt to choose “ox”, “cow”, “honey bees”, and “silkworms” to compare to educators for they are all the representatives of self-dedication and make contributions to people and the world. While in English culture, educators are seldom endowed with self-dedication, for in English culture, unlike the worship of collectivism which emphasis self-dedication and contributions to the society in China, English culture is rooted in individualism which worships the development of selves.

Unlike China as an agricultural society for a long time, western countries began their industrialization from 1860s, and now industrialization of many western countries such as America and British is tremendously developed. Industrialization as a symbol of English culture, are rooted in western people’s minds for industrialization changes people’s material and spiritual life enormously and has affected every field of the society including education. Everything people need is produced from raw materials by producers with machines in assembly lines so western people are inclined to compare the process of producing to education. Because the process of industrialization in China is under developed, so that is why in English culture, people tend to use producers as educators and conceptual metaphor EDUCATORS ARE PRODUCERS appears in English educational context more frequently.

Talking about EDUCATORS ARE PRISON OFFICERS, the first thing we can figure out is “jails” and “prisoners”, which are the working place and working objects for prison officers. In English culture, prison is frequently mentioned many literatures or movies for as we have mentioned before, freedom and individuality are people’s value, thus, being a prisoner means being a man who is deprived of freedom and individuality and jail is a place one changing his state of being free to being imprisoned. Thus, prison officers in the jail are becoming a person who will control their freedom directly. Therefore, in English educational contexts, people who do not like school life will compare schools to jails due to the loss of their freedom and compare educators to prison officers due to their control on their freedom and individualities. In Chinese history, jails as a symbol of a society always exist, but why we seldom compare educators to prison officer? The reason must lie in our collectivism values as well.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have mainly explored metaphors for educators in both Chinese and English educational contexts from the perspective of cognitive basis, and cultural cognitive explanations. On the basis of numerous data of linguistic metaphors used in educational contexts, we find that some of them are common to both English and Chinese, and some of them are Chinese-specific and English-specific, as is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
CLASSIFICATION OF METAPHORS FOR EDUCATORS

Metaphors in both educational contexts	Metaphors in Chinese educational context	Metaphors in English educational context
EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES	EDUCATORS ARE LIGHT SOURCES	EDUCATORS ARE PRODUCERS
EDUCATORS ARE GARDENERS	EDUCATORS ARE ANIMALS	EDUCATORS ARE TURNKEYS
EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS		
EDUCATORS ARE FEEDERS		
EDUCATORS ARE STUFFERS		

All those metaphors above are cognitive and cultural oriented. Metaphors for educators are derived from the primary metaphor EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor—CAUSE IS FORCE, which can be conceptualized mainly in terms of our sensorimotor schemas: FORCE schema, SOURCE-GOAL schema, CONTAINER schema, UP-DOWN schema etc. therefore, some metaphors especially those are in general level for educators share the same cognitive basis are universal, but for those metaphors which are in some specific levels, their differences are on the basis of cultural variations. We categorize the cultural variations of metaphors for educators in the following two aspects:

a. Variation in particular elaborations of conceptual metaphors for educators. In the cases of metaphors for educators EDUCATORS ARE GUIDES and EDUCATORS ARE ARTISTS, are common to both Chinese and English educational contexts, but are elaborated in different way.

b. Variation in potential sources domains, or the range of conceptual metaphors. In the cases of metaphors for educators which are Chinese-specific and English-specific, LIGHT SOURCE and ANIMALS are specific to Chinese while PRODUCER and PRISON OFFICERS are specific to English.

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# Persistence of Baroque Trauerspiel in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* as a Postmodern Literature: Rejection of Metanarrative

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**Abstract**—Metanarrative is a conventional style of narration in literature which features tragedy in Greek model's sense. In this type, metanarrative follows the conventions set by Aristotle; these conventions range different ones; time, one of the most important elements of narration, is linear. Therefore, in this regard, tragedy follows succession of events based on chronological orders. Moreover, metanarrative signifies stability of human deeds and meanings; therefore, what human beings do or say is stable and truthful. Moreover, in metanarrative, death is considered to be the ceasing moment of life in which continuation of life takes place in afterlife. This means that there is no ending or beginning since life is just a confusing cycle. Melancholy is used in Freudian sense that signifies suffering from hallucination and paranoia. These key concepts have composed metanarrative in conventional sense, and consequently metanarrative has been the base of tragedies in Greek sense. However, by emergence of Benjamin's ideas regarding Trauerspiel, the fundamentals of metanarrative were challenged. Therefore, postmodern narrative started to take the place of conventional metanarrative, so that the ideas of time, language, melancholy, and death approached postmodern features. The failure of metanarrative and approach to postmodern literature can be traced in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* in which there is no chronological order within the play. Moreover, conveying meaning through language fails, and life as an endless cycle, dominates the whole play. Consequently, the metanarrative and tragedy genre of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* can be replaced by postmodern narrative and Baroque Trauerspiel.

**Index Terms**—tragedy, metanarrative, Trauerspiel, language, time, melancholia

## I. INTRODUCTION

In literary sense, tragedy is not “everyday disasters in newspapers, on television, or on the internet” (Bushnell, 2008, p. 52). On the contrary, Aristotle establishes principles, according to which “the horrific accident, random violence, or mere unhappiness are not ‘tragedies’ in themselves, even though they make us profoundly sad” (Bushnell, 2008, p. 53). It means that “when Aristotle speaks of” tragedy, “he is” actually “referring to” the question that how the story is told: plot”; not that how much the incident was harrowing (Rush, 2005, p.31). From this viewpoint, indeed, plot becomes the most important element in genre of tragedy.

Considering Aristotle's idea of the proper structure of narrative form, Aristotle especially deals with “the closure and configuration” which in his thought should be “given to the sequence of the events” through establishing a beginning-middle-end structure (Carr, 1986, p. 118). To Aristotle, plot as a narrative form, in which the action is accomplished time, “a synthesis of heterogeneous in which disparate elements of human world\_ agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results, etc.\_ are brought together and harmonized” (Carr, 1986, p. 15) is considered a “mode of comprehension and a cognitive instrument” (Carr, 1986, p. 11). In other words, the narrative practice as the only form of cognitive and perceptual structure “should have [a] beginning, [a] middle and [an] end”; an accomplished time. There are five basic component of dramatic structure which follows Aristotle's theory on the unity of dramatic plot\_ beginning, middle and end; namely State of Equilibrium, Rising action, Climax, Falling action, and New State of Equilibrium.

In 1964, Tom Stoppard, a Czechoslovakian-born British playwright, wrote “a one-act verse burlesque” (Bloom 139) entitled *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear*. Stoppard in June of that year described the work to Smith like this: “Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Hamlet are joined on the boat by the Player, and since the Player represents the Hamlet-figure in *The Murder of Gonzago*, the Player is made up to look like Hamlet ... He is a man stuck in space, a man caught out of the action. It is a bit screwy, but fun” (Fleming, 2002, p. 30). Then in 1966, Tom Stoppard introduced a revision of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* (henceforth *Ros* and *Guil*), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* that put



him among the great playwrights as Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tom Stoppard assumes two marginal and inconsequential characters in the plays of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to tell the whole story of Hamlet from the perspective of the two.

## II. METHODOLOGY

In this model of tragedy, loss avoidance is very significant. The avoidance of Loss is considered to be Old\_ a state that neither the beginning nor the end of it, is conceivable. Such an understanding does not carry Loss to the end of time because Greek tragic drama is based on *Einmaligkeit*<sup>1</sup>; the factor that in Benjamin's viewpoint is directly related to the structure of Greek Tragedic drama. In the other words, the world, which the Greek Tragedy depicts through its five-steeps, is nothing but an attempt to avoid the loss that is Old.

Despite the "certain superficial resemblance" between Trauerspiel and Tragedy (Gilloch, 2002, p.73), for Benjamin Nothing distinguishes Trauerspiel from tragedy more clearly than" (Gilloch, 2002, p.78) its tendency toward loss; indeed, loss is not only presented in the content but also in the structure of Trauerspiel genre and it is because in the Benjamin's view, "history was the source of Trauerspiel" (Gilloch, 2002, p.75). Myth and history are the most significant elements that can distinguish these two genres from each other. Benjamin specifies the tendency to History and "Historical life as" (Benjamin, 1998, p. 62).the most important and fundamental substantial differences between Greek Tragedy and Trauerspiel genre.

Actually, whereas for Benjamin Trauerspiel is located inside of historical time, aforementioned, "Greek tragedy presents the intercourse of mortals, gods and fantastic beings, located them outside of ordinary life", (Gilloch, 2002, p.75) can even impress the common existing understanding of Fate. Namely, in Greek Tragedy Fate \_ something that has been written in the past as destiny mostly by gods- is an individual destiny which is placed as an individual responsibility only on the shoulders of a hero. But in Trauerspiel, in fact, the Fate is a communal destiny that tied with the baroque God-forsaken world which abandoned human in a mere material world and its "earthly condition" because the genre is built on history, and historical time as an absolute time (Pensky, 1993, p.80).

From this perspective, Fate is what Man himself has made it during the historical time and intended it as a destination for himself, so that finding liberation from it seems impossible. However, Freudian idea which is accepted as historical fate through Man brings nothing just a false circulation from one object to the other in the abandoned material world.

As it has been noted earlier, the passivity that Freud and the followers of him are accused of by a melancholic person more than anything, imbued his own pathological way, whereas for Benjamin "madness is a form of perception alien to the community" (Bullock, 1996, p. I: 92). Even so radical, the work of mourning which was considered as the only redemptive way to reach the health in Freudian idea, for Benjamin it is nothing but a narcissistic way that leads to narcissism.

A melancholic person inevitably after losing the love-object in a moment reaches a state in which the world with all its natural laws and human laws was depicted as a mask decoration. In fact, he realized that the truth of the world that the loss in the world as a condition of possibility, is prominently deficit not transitory.

### **Melancholy in Tragedy versus Melancholy Trauerspiel**

It is known that plot is more superior to character in Aristotle's tragedy; it makes the genre of tragedy more action based than dialogue based. In tragedy, it is quite obvious and clear that much of the dialogue is in the service of the plot of the play because there is no freedom for characters to express and reveal themselves. In fact, the reason is that gods rule over humanity, so that there would be no will to express themselves. In this mythical world, the physical tension or violence does not come from mental state but the source would be the gods fighting with each other. Accordingly, for Benjamin the mythical violence is "a mere manifestation of gods" (Benjamin, 1998, p. 248) existence; "fate must triumph" (Benjamin, 1998, p. 248) in this challenge. However, the role of mind should not be completely ignored; in other words, the mental features which causes the "self-loath and self-reproach" (Ferber, 2012, p. 17) in the hero and where upon diminishes "the instinct which compels every living thing to cling to life" (Freud, 2001, 264) has been tied vividly with the mental features Freud declares for melancholy. Freud puts these mental features in this way: "The ... mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feeling to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-reviling, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment" (Freud, 2001, p. 224).

In tragedy, such tremendous decline of the sense of self-regard which is only present in Freudian idea of melancholy can be seen; in tragedy hero suffers "a loss in regard to an object" as melancholia; and what the suffer "tells us points a loss in regard to his ego" (Freud, 2001, p. 247). Hero internalizes the lost love-object that makes his ego divides in two part, "one part of the ego" which is "commonly called 'conscience'" wildly and dangerously "sets itself over against the

<sup>1</sup> The *Einmaligkeit* literally as singularity is the potentiality of the Greek tragedy idea for the emergence of the new rules, which finally introduces tragedy as an individual singularity. The Singularity of tragedy means that every tragedy differs from each other because each tragedy itself is the new law.

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Newton founded classical mechanics on the view that *space* is distinct from body and that *time* passes uniformly without regard to whether anything happens in the world. For this reason, he spoke of *absolute space* and *absolute time*, so as to distinguish these entities from the various ways by which we measure them (which he called *relative spaces* and *relative times*). <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/newton-stm/>

other, judges it critically, and, ... takes it as its object" (Freud, 2001, p. 247). Moreover, this makes the person to lose his "ego's self-love" and accepts fate-imposed violence which is nothing just death (Freud, 2001, p. 252).

In Trauerspiel, characters' dialogues are entirely in the hands of their inner thoughts. In the other words, such plays are full of dialogue and monologue that portray characters' internal thoughts.

Melancholic person tries to represent "an empty act of what was once meaningful", indeed; he is the one who in Benjamin definition of history as a shock takes on the train brakes (Ferber, 2012, p. 31). Thus, what can be observed in Trauerspiel genre is a dynamic that no other genre has depicted it.

For Benjamin, melancholy does not betray the world of lost love-object, because the truth for him lies in the objects that have been left the Freudian real world, and it explains why he introduces a melancholic person as a philosopher of its own community; someone who has seen the loss as the condition of the possibility of the world. In fact, a melancholic is not a fool but a genius person.

#### **Death and Language in Tragedy versus Death and Language in Trauerspiel**

Tragedy as a genre based on myth, in the process of concept making, always functions as the individual fulfilled time "which can be ... defined here than historical time" (Bullock 1996, p. 56). This makes the death\_ loss of life\_ in the world of tragedy quite opposite to the real world that is drawn by Trauerspiel. In fact, the death of tragic hero is in accordance with time and determinates the play. Benjamin articulates such component of tragedy in Trauerspielbuch: "But in respect of its victim, the hero, the tragic sacrifice differs from any other kind, being at once a first and a final sacrifice. A final sacrifice in the sense of the atoning sacrifice to gods who are upholding an ancient right; a first sacrifice in the sense of the representative action, in which new aspects of the life of the nation become manifest" (1998, p.106-7)

Such sacrifice that in tragedy is a first and final sacrifice of tragic hero, indeed, brings new earth and heaven through eradication of Man's pain and suffering in one hand and in the other, draws a rigid boundary between gods and man through the emergence of new rule. Thus, death in tragedy "mark[s] the end of epoch" (Benjamin, 1998, p. 135); the "break between pre-historical age of mythical laws and the new ethical political community" (White, 2014, p. 21) vividly through forming "new conceptions" (Benjamin, 1998, p. 107).

That is, the Loss-avoidance and gods' desire for victims blend together in the matter of the death of a hero to create meaning for life; a sublime meaning.

However, "to obtain a deeper understanding of" the Greek tragedy's loss-avoidance through the concept making, "we should perhaps look not just at" action like death but also language as human speech (Bullock, 1996, p.56). Indeed, "there is an essential connection between" the tragic action and tragic language for giving meaning to life (Bullock, 1996, p.56). For Benjamin Greek Tragedy genre is based on human speech; "The tragic is situated in the laws governing the spoken words between human beings ... Tragedy is not just confined exclusively to the realm of dramatic human speech; it is the only form proper to human dialogue. That is to say, no tragedy exists outside human dialogue, and the only form in which human dialogue can appear is that of tragedy" (Bullock, 1996, p.59).

In the other words, tragedy as a law-maker exchanges the gods' action to the human speech\_ dialogue. That is why there is no tragedy without dialogue. For Benjamin the linguistic sign is symbol, which brings out new laws from gods' action and inject into the realms of generations.

For Benjamin "Symbol is about identity between the word and the thing, the 'indivisible unity of form and content'" (Broadfoot, 1991, p. 8). In fact, more than ever symbol is in direct contact with the Aristotelian definition of tragedy. Tragedy for Aristotle depicts nature as ideal, the world of gods, goddess, immortals, and demi-gods, and such features have been emerged from interrelation between the idea of the fulfillment of action and time.

For Benjamin, the presence of ghost traces the burred border between life and death. In this scene the role of ghost is to present death, in one hand as not ending mark of life and in the other, the integration of time. Benjamin in "a mystical-philosophical understanding of language" (Gilloch, 2002, p.61) which is split up into two\_ pre- and post-Fall epochs, articulates "the linguistic being of man to name things" (Bullock, 1996, p. 64): "The linguistic being of things is their language; this proposition, applied to man, means: the linguistic being of man is his language, which signifies: man communicates his own mental being in his language. However, the language of man speaks in words. Man therefore communicates his own mental being (insofar as it is communicable) by naming all other things" (Bullock, 1996, p.64)

Such a view translates man as The Namer, the Being that "God created him in his image" and "did not named him" (Bullock, 1996, p.68) has been summoned for naming things. The naming, away from the Bourgeoisie language\_ "the language as a mere instrument of communication and arbitrary sign system" (Gilloch, 2002, p. 61), is exactly the mental being of things. But "once man has fallen from the paradisiacal state that knew only one language" namely, the paradisiacal language, "the creative word of God, ... in the profound sense in which Kierkegaard uses" turns to "prattle" (Bullock, 1996, p.71). In a word, we can say that "The Fall is the catastrophic end to the paradisiacal state of naming" (Gilloch, 2002, p. 62), and the beginning of the human language in which "thing[s] being misnamed [or better say] overnamed" (Bullock, 1996, p. 62).

#### **Metanarrative**

In Meta-narratives a word is composed of two parts, a prefix, Meta- and a noun, narrative; a narrative is a story, story in telling of story, and the prefix meta- before the narrative is from the Greek and it means a comprehensive idea; the

thing that is behind or even beyond a narrative and only through the transcending of a story is accessible. So a metanarrative is this: it is a more comprehensive idea behind a story – something that is more comprehensive. In the other words, a metanarrative is a comprehensive story common to all. Thus every metanarrative would have the matter for all people through drawing a comprehensive idea, a law making.

In fact, this is Metanarrative that through offering a transcending narrative gives legitimacy to what mankind has done or achieved. Thus, what makes a narrative to be a metanarrative is its power in legitimizing or illegitimizing the mankind's deeds and it is clear that this particular feature of metanarrative is not achievable except for shaping a redemptive whole, a "totalitarian thinking" (Spivakovsky, 2015, p. 1360). Moreover, this, by Benjamin, has been named as law making, the prominent feature of the mythical world. Accordingly, a meta-narrative as a form of narrative for being able to continue to be a lawmaking follows the conventional style of narrative organization which has a beginning-middle-end structure (Simon24). Indeed, metanarrative mechanism in narrative directly originates from a "totalitarian thinking" that is common in tragedy, the way in which narrator 'separates the past from the present and reorients expectations toward the future' (Donham, 1999, p. XV).

### III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Death and language in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead***

In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Ros and Guil as Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* who demonstrate human life as an absurd waiting, challenge the conventional thought of death. To make the idea Stoppard puts tragedians' troupe on Ros and Guil way who, as the name refers, are the ardent and tenacious followers of dramatic rules:

PLAYER: Act two! Positions!

GUIL: Wasn't that the end?

PLAYER: Do you call that an ending? - With practically everyone on his feet? My goodness no - over your dead body...

PLAYER (switching off his smile): Decides? It is written. Now if you're going to be subtle, we'll miss each other in the dark. I'm referring to oral tradition. So to speak. We're tragedians, you see. We follow directions-there is no choice involved. The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means. (58-9)

For tragedian there is nothing but "oral tradition", the particular rules which is shaped on "the only beginning is birth and the only end is death" (Ferber, 2012, p. 28). Accordingly, there is no act unless has a beginning and a place for rest. Then to the Player the questions of Ros and Guil's are intangible and laughable because the death instead of being a help to understand how life is absurd is simply for them a mean to fill it.

For Stoppard the question of existence is located on the analysis and attitude that his characters Ros and Guil express toward the issue of death itself. The issue that at first sight reveals the "hidden fears" (Easterling, 1982, p. 7) that is laid in men like Ros and Guil.

ROS: ...Do you ever think of yourself as actually dead, lying in a box with a lid on it?

GUIL:No.

ROS:Nor do I, really..... I mean one thinks of it like being alive in a box, one keeps forgetting to take into account the fact that one is dead ...

ROS: I wouldn't think about it, if I were you. You'd only get depressed. (Pause.) Eternity is a terrible thought. I mean, where's it going to end? (51)

Unlike the tragedians that for them death is death, the termination of Hardships and in a word "a haven and a reward", for Ros and Guil it is the source of terror and anxiety. Such a reaction to the death makes us face with influx of questions; what approach is selected by Ros and Guil in facing death? Is it a reliable scientific one? Alternatively, is it possible that their fear of death comes from their lack of knowledge about it or not?

Guil as one who has philosophical insight that is visible in his analytical approach toward the world which every coin lands on a head, states the fear of death as:

GUIL: And then again, what is so terrible about death? As Socrates so philosophically put it, since we don't know what death is, it is illogical to fear it. It might be ... very nice. (75)

In such method, "the status of nails and hair in the living body" as part is constructed from inanimate (dead) materials as Keratin in one hand and "in comparison to their status in the corpse" as material is growth after the death (Ferber, 2012, p. 109) in another not only "places this image of being not dead but no longer alive..." (Ferber, 2012, p. 109) but also the image of the growth of fingernails and hair "as hybrid entities" (Ferber, 2012, p. 109) reveals a "bitter truth" (Esslin, 2001, p. 13) that "where life and death meet" (Ferber, 2012, p. 109), before Beginning has been a stream of eternity. Then Death in no longer the end of life.

Such fathom of the profane world condition, "having neither a beginning nor an end" (Esslin, 2001, p. 3-4) makes the real human of the real world, unlike the mythical world of tragedy, that is watered by a fake new state of equilibriums, with thirst of the truth to be abated. So the death of the main characters as Ros and Guil in real profane world is not heroic nor tragic but absurd, a death without the slightest result.

Moreover, in such world not only the "most human endeavor" is absurd and inconclusive but also the "communication between [the exile] human beings is well-nigh impossible" (Esslin, 2001, p. 13) because as Benjamin

says the paradise language lost its ability of Naming and falls in Overnaming; the human language in which human no longer knows as Namer. Guil reminds Ros of the missed duty like this:

“GUIL: We can't afford anything quite so arbitrary. Nor did we come all this way for a christening. All that - preceded us. But we are comparatively fortunate; we might have been left to sift the whole field of human nomenclature, like two blind men looting a bazaar for their own portraits... At least we are presented with alternatives” (34).

As “an only possible namer” (Ferber, 2012, p. 138) who is exiled and departed from the scope of naming, Guil tries to check human language for bringing back the purity of language; however, he knows well that this as a blind man who wants to see himself in the mirror is impossible. Then human language as an overnamed language act more as an assistant to give meaning to human speech, “acts as a barrier to communication, which in turn isolates the individual even more, thus making speech almost futile”(Gordon, 2002, p.55). We can see such features of overnamed language which is “essentially intertwining with loss” (Ferber, 2012, p. 120) in greeting of queen and king of Denmark to Ros and Guil.

CLAUDIUS: Welcome, dear Rosencrantz... (he raises a hand at GUIL while ROS bows - GUIL bows late and hurriedly)... and Guildenstern.(He raises a hand at ROS while GUIL bows to him - ROS is still straightening up from his previous bow and half way up he bows down again. With his head down, he twists to look at GUIL, who is on the way up.)

GERTRUDE: Thanks, Guildenstern (turning to ROS, who bows as GUIL checks upward movement to bow too - both bent double, squinting at each other)... and gentle Rosencrantz. (Turning to GUIL, both straightening up - GUIL checks again and bows again.)(31)

Such overnaming, indeed puts the identity and individuality of the characters, Ros and Guil, at risk of destabilization because this is language that by putting up the name separately, constructs independent identity for people. Therefore, the name of a person is his/her identity which detaches him/her from the others. Moreover, Ros and Guil themselves, through their verbal game, entirely deprives the language of any kind of ability of being meaningful. In fact, their Question and Answer game is based on this assumption that in language every question is a knot and the answer opens it; the efficient system in language that is designed to understand the vague and problematic issues. But in finding out the cause of the melancholic behavior of Hamlet such verbal game ridiculously fails.

GUIL: He's not himself.

ROS: He's changed.

GUIL: I could see that. (Beat.) Glean what afflicts him.

ROS: Me?...

ROS: Who am I then?

GUIL: You're yourself.

ROS: And he's you?

GUIL: Not a bit of it.

ROS: Are you afflicted?

GUIL: That's the idea. Are you ready?...

GUIL (great control): I don't think you quite understand. What we are attempting is a hypothesis in which I answer for him, while you ask me questions. (38)

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the possible cause(s) of Hamlet's behavior Guil suggests the question-and-answer game in which Guil wants Ros to pretend to be Guildenstern, while Guil himself pretends to be Hamlet, however, such strategy abandons Guil and Ros in confusion and bewilderment. Actually, unlike Tragedy's inquiry-based dialogues that deliver a definitive answer as we see in Oedipus Rex about the issue of the murderer of previous king of Thebes in Trauerspiel there is a disproportion and incongruity between the questions it asked and the answer that is given. Such dramatic difference between Tragedy and Trauerspiel, indeed, directly relate to the law-making and law-destroying function of language.

#### **Melancholy in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead***

The non-pathological picture of melancholy that Benjamin demonstrates in Trauerspielbuch totally stands against the Freudian idea. In fact, unlike Freud's theory of melancholy in which the melancholic not only does not know what exactly has been lost but also he or she cannot demarcate with something that is missing, Benjamin's melancholic has a full acknowledgment of the lost object. This difference in attitude toward melancholy makes the Trauerspiel dramatic structure truly be more consistence with real world than tragic one. And Ros and Guil in Stoppard do not dispose of Benjaminian melancholy. Stoppard's characters, Ros and Guil are completely aware of such loss. They know the initial loss, the loss of individuality. They see themselves as two servants who are summoned by the order of the king of Denmark.

ROS: We were sent for.

GUIL: Yes.

ROS: That's why we're here...

ROS (dramatically): It was urgent - a matter of extreme urgency, a royal summons, his very words: official business and no questions asked - lights in the stable-yard; saddle up and off headlong and hotfoot across the land, our guides outstripped in breakneck pursuit of our duty! Fearful lest we come too late. (24)

In The Middle Ages people were at the service of royal families So that the king was “as God’s holy representative on earth” and disobeying of the King’s orders was equal to defying the orders of God. (Mazur). Because that was a royal summon Ros and Guil didn’t come to Elsinore willingly and even when the king and queen ask them why they are brought here. To Stoppard, Ros and Guil unlike Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Hamlet are completely two individual characters. They as Stoppard depicts in the first act especially the coin-tossing have two different personality and characteristics; Guild philosophically explores the issue of coin which comes down on the head:

GUIL: It must be indicative of something, besides the redistribution of wealth. (He muses.) List of possible explanations. One: I’m willing it. Inside where nothing shows, I’m the essence of a man spinning double-headed coins, and betting against himself in private atonement for an unremembered past. (He spins a coin at ROS.)

ROS: Heads.

GUIL: Two: time has stopped dead...

ROS: I’ve never known anything like it... (22-3)

Though Ros has not the insight to be as sharp as Guild’s insight, but knows one thing very well and it is that he is at the service of the royal family and could not return home. He does not lose such authority in making decision for going back home. Therefore, Ros and Guil unlike Polonius who naively was the king’s servant begin the process of Natural history. But, such decision means standing in front of Historical Fate. In such world, everything depends on the will of those in power, who not in the least heed human identity and wishes. Since people as Ros and Guil “are non-entities to the King and Queen and even to their former companion, Hamlet (Jenkins41).In fact, for Historical Fate, Ros and Guil are not two individuals but a servant in uniform.

Ros and Guil know well the initial loss, the loss of authority and freewill which is achieved by the lack of attention to individual identity.

GUIL: As soon as we make a move they’ll come pouring in from every side, shouting obscure instructions, confusing us with ridiculous remarks, messing us about from here to breakfast and getting our names wrong. (61)

However, in Elsinore there are people who honestly serve the King of Denmark, people like Polonius:

CLAUDIUS: Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS: Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,

I hold my duty as I hold my soul,

As it hath used to do, that I have found

The very cause of Hamlet’s lunacy... (33)

As we see, for Polonius also as the follower of Historical Fate the king of Denmark is the stewards of God while as the advisor and minister of king of Denmark he is regarded as an intelligent man. And such loyalty and allegiance is as Camus says in his essay, “The Myth of Sisyphus” originates from the fact that the characters like Polonius “get into the habit of living before acquiring the habit of thinking” (8).

On the contrary of such thinking, Ros and Guil are rebellions with a blade of Benjaminian melancholic philosophy, Natural History, revolt against the common tricks of society. What they embody, the loss of identity and freewill, through Natural history is the confluence of Benjaminian melancholy and Trauerspiel’s dramatic structure. In fact, to a community as the community which Ros and Guil live in, People like Ros and Guil are considered as melancholic due to their disproportion speech; Guil explains this general principle of community as such: “I think I have it. A man talking sense to himself is no madder than a man talking nonsense not to himself”(49-50).therefore in the perspective of community Natural History is a decaying process which is not adaptable by philosophy but through melancholy. In this regard, such misperception about the Natural History makes that every motion unlike the conventional thinking causes Double-alienation in the target society and such social reaction has not escaped the watchful eyes of Stoppard’s main characters.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

It is known that a metanarrative unlike postmodernism follows the Aristotelian principles; specially “the Aristotelian perception of time with a pre-kowntelos (an ultimate object or aim.) And [for depicting an] authentic whole” (Nojoumian, 2003, p. 60).Accordingly, Tragedy as a genre is as close to a Metanarrative as possible whose reversal of this relation is also possible: indeed, every metanarrative is a tragedy and every tragedy is a metanarrative. Therefore, in such circumstances, tragedy as a genre cannot be in postmodernism because according to what was mentioned earlier only Trauerspiel is the undisputed genre of postmodern literature. However, through applying different key terms to Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, it could be realized that the principle of metanarrative, and consequently the model of Aristotlian tragedy are not employed in this play. The play was non-chronological in which death has shown to be absurd and meaningless. Moreover, the language could not carry any meanings, and the characters have been melancholic who and aware of their loss from both individual and social aspects. Therefore, Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is categorized as Trauerspiel.

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# Investigating Chinese EFL Learners' Comprehension of English Idioms

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**Abstract**—This study investigates how Chinese EFL learners' understanding of English idioms is associated with their judgments of idiom familiarity, transparency. Another factor, context is also explored for its role in idiom comprehension. Results show learners' familiarity rating is positively correlated with their idiomatic knowledge, transparency rating does not indicate clear correlation; it is easier for learners to understand high-familiar and high-transparent idioms. Context exerts a facilitating role in learners' interpretation of idioms, and there are significant interaction effects between familiarity and context. The findings provide pedagogical implications for teachers to use classroom activities or exercises to increase learners' exposure to English idioms.

**Index Terms**—idiom familiarity, idiom transparency, context, idiom comprehension

## I. INTRODUCTION

English is replete with idioms and other types of figurative language, such as metaphors, similes and irony. These types of figurative or nonliteral language enrich and enliven human communication. Idioms are groups of words that take on new, or figurative semantic meaning (Makkai, Boatner & Gates, 1995). Idiomatic expressions are difficult to master because their meanings cannot be determined through a literal analysis of the individual word meanings. For instance, the figurative meanings of the idiom “to kick the bucket” (to die) can not be predicted through its constituent words “kick, the, bucket”. Cooper (1999) pointed out idioms pose particular difficulties for virtually all groups of learners because the figurative meanings were unpredictable.

However, idiomatic expressions occur frequently in daily spoken and written communication. Pollie et al. (1977) found idiomatic expressions arose every 3 to 4 minutes in conversation. Milosky (1994) reported the frequent use of nonliteral expressions in social contexts (e.g., occurring 10 times per min of conversation) and in mass media outlets (e.g., 38 figurative uses on a single page of a teen magazine). Lazar et al. (1989) found at the kindergarten level (ages 5-6 years), approximately 5% of teachers' classroom utterances directed to students contained at least one idiom, increasing to 20% by Grade 8 (ages 13-14years). In examining students' literature books, Nippold (1990) also reported at Grade 3 (ages 8-9 years), an average of 6% of sentences contained at least one idiom, increasing to 10% at Grade 8. Levorato and Cacciari (1992) reported that mass media, textbooks and everyday language were rich with idiomatic expressions. As for foreign language learners, Nippold & Martin (1989) stressed failure to grasp the meanings of idioms can impinge upon people's understanding of language in social, academic and vocative settings. Qualls & Harris (1999) also asserted that the ability to understand idioms is important for successful communication. Therefore, it is necessary for learners to know how to interpret nonliteral figurative meanings of idiomatic expressions for effective communication. Otherwise, there is potential for communication breakdown during verbal and written interactions.

The majority of research has been conducted on native English speakers' comprehension of idioms, especially children and adolescents. Previous work has widely examined variables that may influence the comprehension of English idiomatic expressions. Among them, three factors have been focused on, namely, familiarity, transparency, and context. However, limited empirical studies have investigated the role of these three factors in Chinese EFL learners' comprehension of idioms. This study intends to fill this gap concerning Chinese EFL learners' idiom comprehension under the influence of these factors.

## II. FACTORS AFFECTING IDIOM COMPREHENSION

### *Familiarity and transparency of idioms*

Idiom familiarity is a measure of how frequently an idiom occurs in the language (Nippold & Taylor, 1993). For example, *a piece of cake* is an idiom that often occurs in English, but *to talk through one's hat* is one that rarely occurs. Familiarity effects have been interpreted within a “language experience” hypothesis of figurative development, which claims that development of figurative language depends on the amount of meaningful exposure one has to nonliteral expressions (Nippold & Taylor, 2002). This hypothesis means idioms which occur more often are probably learned earlier.

Transparency is a measure of the degree to which the literal and figurative meanings of an idiom are related. When the literal and figurative meanings are related closely, idioms are regarded transparent, but when the two types of

meanings are unrelated, idioms are regarded as opaque. For example, the figurative meaning of the idiom *to get away with murder* (to escape punishment for something serious) can be easily derived from the literal interpretation of the constituent words, whereas the figurative meaning of *to keep one's shirt on* (to remain calm and not overreact) can not be inferred from the individual words in the phrase.

Some researchers have studied the role of familiarity and transparency in English idiom comprehension for native children and adolescents. Levorato & Cacciari (1992) examined 7-year and 9-year old children's comprehension of idioms and their judgments of idiom familiarity and found it was easier for children to understand high-familiar idiom. Nippold & Rudzinski (1993), Nippold & Taylor (1995) investigated the effects of familiarity and transparency on different age groups of children's understanding of idioms. The results showed there was significant correlation between the children's judgments of familiarity, transparency and their comprehension of idioms no matter what age group they were in. High-familiar and high-transparent idioms were easier to be understood. Later, Nippold & Taylor (2002) found children's accurate understanding of idioms increased as age developed, younger children had lower judgments of idiom familiarity, but there was no significant difference between the judgments of transparency for different age groups of children. In a cross-cultural study, Qualls & Harris (1999) investigated the effect of familiarity on idiom comprehension of African American and European American fifth graders, and found the two groups performed differently in understanding idioms with low familiarity, whereas had similar performance in understanding idioms with moderate and high familiarity.

Recently a few studies have focused on the way how EFL/ESL learners comprehend English idioms. Sameer (2013) compared two groups of college students' judgments of familiarity and transparency and their comprehension of English idioms in Saudi Arabia, and the results showed Level 4 students rated the idioms higher in familiarity and comprehended them more accurately than L1 students did. However, the two groups performed similarly on the idiom transparency task. Majuri (2014) investigated the effect of frequency and transparency on Finnish and Italian students' recognition of the meanings of English idioms. The finding showed frequency did not seem to have a large effect on the learners while transparency was of assistance. Tiv (2016) studied how transparency and ambiguity affected learning of unfamiliar idioms. The results showed when only these two properties were used to predict learners' accuracy of idiom comprehension, transparency has a robustly significant effect on learning.

#### **Context and idiom comprehension**

There is a considerable body of research on the probable effect context exerts on understanding and interpreting L1 idioms (Ackerman, 1982; Cacciari & Levorato, 1989; Gibbs, 1987, 1995; Levorato & Cacciari, 1992; Laval, 2003; Liontas, 2003; Nippold & Martin, 1989; Qualls et al., 2003; Ortony, Schallert, Reynolds, et al., 1978). Ortony, Schallert, Reynolds, and Antos (1978) examined the effects of either short or long contexts on metaphorical and idiomatic phrases or literal phrases interpretation, and found the subjects spent longer time understanding metaphorical phrases than literal phrases in the short context condition. Ackerman (1982) investigated the role of contextual information and the conventional forms of idioms in children's comprehension of idioms. The results revealed that 6-year and 8-year-olds could correctly understand the sentences in idiomatic contexts, whereas the 10-year-olds and the adults could understand the sentences not only in idiomatic contexts but also in literal and neutral contexts. This suggested that younger children needed idiomatically biasing contexts more than older children to figure out the real meanings of idioms. In Nippold & Martin's (1989) study, adolescents at age 14 to 17 were asked to interpret idioms presented with and without contextual information. The results demonstrated that linguistic contextual information did enhance adolescents' interpretation of idioms, and the accuracy of understanding improved as the age increased, no matter whether the context was presented or not. Liontas (2003) explored the effect of context on adult Spanish learners' idiom comprehension and also found context was a big help in the construction of the idiomatic meanings.

Concerning the effect of context on EFL/ESL learners' idiom comprehension, some studies have provided support for the similar view that facilitating roles do occur. Norton (1979) found the existence of context was helpful for learners to understand idiomatic expressions in narrative passages. Atai & Akbarian (2003) also proved different contexts had significant effects on EFL learners' acquisition of idioms. Research on EFL idiom processing strategies has also proved context plays an important role in idiom comprehension. Cooper (1999) investigated the on-line processing strategies used by ESL learners who were asked to state out the meanings of selected idioms presented with a written context and found guessing from context was most frequently used among the variety of strategies adopted. Bulut et al's study on Turkish teachers of English also found in their idiom interpretation, the contextual clues were used more often than any other clue (Bulut & Çelik-Yazici, 2004). Rohani et al (2012) investigated the effect of context on the strategies Iranian EFL learners utilized to process idioms and concluded that creating the appropriate context would prove productive in enhancing the language learning process.

From the aforementioned review, we can see the related empirical studies have mainly investigated the effects of familiarity, transparency and context on idiom comprehension by native speakers, whereas limited empirical studies have been carried out to explore the roles of these factors on Chinese EFL learners' idiom understanding. This study is an attempt, intending to address three questions:

1. What is the relationship between familiarity, transparency and idiom comprehension for Chinese EFL learners?
2. What effect does context exert on Chinese EFL learners' understanding of English idioms?
3. Is there any interaction effect among idiom familiarity, transparency and context on Chinese EFL learners' understanding of English idioms?



comprehension of English idioms?

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

#### *Subjects*

A total of 70 sophomore students in two natural classes from a key university in Shanghai participated in this research. They had no previous experience of participation in any kind of exercises or tests on English idioms. All of them voluntarily took part in the experiments.

#### *Materials*

##### *Idiom Comprehension Task (ICT)*

This task consisted of 20 English idioms selected from published research and reference books of idioms (Gibbs, 1995; Makkai et al., 1995; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993; Nippold & Taylor, 1995, 2002; Qualls & Harris, 1999, 2003). These particular idioms were selected because previous research had shown they represented a wide range of familiarity and transparency levels. To address the effect of context on idiom comprehension, two versions of the ICT (in isolation and in context) were constructed for this study. In the first condition the 20 idioms were listed without contextual information. The subjects were asked to write down their own understanding of these idioms in English or in Chinese. In the second condition, each idiom was presented with a brief narrative context. In the final sentence, a question concerning what the idiom meant was posted. Under these two conditions, the subjects got one score if they wrote down the correct meaning of each idiom. The score range was 0 to 20.

##### *Familiarity Judgmental Task*

In this task, the set of 20 idioms randomly ordered were given on a booklet. The participants were asked to indicate how often they had heard or read each idiom before, using a 3-point scale and circle the number and associated descriptive term (e.g. 2=several times) with which they most agreed. Finishing this task, the subjects got the score range of 20 to 60. An example was as follows:

I have heard or read this idiom: *let the cat out of the bag*

1= rarely      2= several times      3= many times

##### *Transparency Judgment Task*

Like the familiarity task, the participants were given a booklet containing the same set of 20 idioms. For each idiom, they were asked to indicate how closely they believed the literal and figurative meanings were related using a 3-point scale and circle the number and associated descriptive term (e.g. 2 = somewhat related) with which they most agreed. The subjects got the score range from 20 to 60. An example was presented as follows:

*To miss the boat:*

Literal meaning: to miss the time to get aboard

Figurative meaning: to lose a good chance

The meanings of this idiom are:

1= not related      2= somewhat related      3= closely related

Before the tasks were administered, a pilot study was conducted with a group of 30 students who were not the subjects in the study to test the reliability, familiarity judgment task,  $r=.73$ ; transparency judgment task,  $r=.78$ ; idiom comprehension test (with context),  $r=.81$ ; idiom comprehension test (without context),  $r=.76$ , which proved the designed tests had high reliability.

#### *Procedure*

The participants from two natural classes were tested in their respective English class time. They were asked to perform the tasks in the following order: Familiarity Judgment Task, Idiom Comprehension Task (in isolation), Idiom Comprehension Task (in context), and Transparency Judgment Task. This particular sequence was adopted to obtain an unbiased estimate of participants' exposure to the tested idioms. The Idiom Comprehension Test, which asked the participants to write down their understanding of idioms in isolation and in context conditions, had to occur before the Transparency Task, which presented both the literal and figurative meanings of the idioms.

#### *Data analysis*

For the Familiarity and Transparency Judgment Tasks, the raw data of every idiom was taken down and the total scores of every participant were calculated. In the Idiom Comprehension Task (both in isolation and in context conditions), when the correct figurative meaning was presented, 1 score was given; if the wrong answer was put forth, 0 score was given. In the later analysis of the data, SPSS19.0 was adopted.

### IV. RESULTS

#### *Familiarity, transparency and idiom comprehension*

Table 1 shows the overall performance of Chinese EFL learners in Familiarity Judgment Task, Transparency Judgment Task and Idiom Comprehension Task. As can be seen from this table, the mean raw score of students' familiarity judgment of the 20 idioms was only 32.40, a bit over the half of the total score (60). This indicates students' familiarity with the idioms was rather low, they have limited exposure to the idioms in their prior studying experience. On the transparency judgment, the mean score of 41.46 was found which proves the students tend to think there is always somewhat relationship between the literal meaning and figurative meaning of every idiom in their

understanding.

TABLE 1.  
MEAN RATINGS, SCORES, STANDARD DEVIATION AND RANGE

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Familiarity Judgment Task	32.40	5.21	23.00	45.00
Transparency Judgment Task	41.46	6.86	26.00	54.00
ICT (in isolation)	6.21	1.78	2.00	10.00
ICT (in context)	12.31	2.52	5.00	18.00

Table 2 shows the list of the 20 idioms in the order of increasing accuracy of students' performance on the Idiom Comprehension Task (with the contextual information). The mean familiarity rating and transparency rating are shown as well. To determine if idiom familiarity and transparency were associated with idiom comprehension, two types of correlation analyses were carried out. First, using the means for each idiom reported in Table 2, correlation coefficients were calculated for familiarity and comprehension, and for transparency and comprehension respectively. The results were statistically significant for familiarity judgment task and comprehension tasks under two conditions (comprehension in isolation:  $r = .732$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; comprehension in context:  $r = .562$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However, the results were not statistically significant for transparency task and both conditions of comprehension (comprehension in isolation:  $r = .383$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; comprehension in context:  $r = .352$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Second, correlation analyses were also performed using each subject's total raw scores in the familiarity, transparency, and comprehension tasks. The results were not statistically significant for familiarity and comprehension (comprehension in isolation:  $r = -.038$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; comprehension in context:  $r = -.105$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ); for transparency and comprehension (comprehension in isolation:  $r = .08$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; comprehension in context:  $r = .023$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). These insignificant findings may reflect the relative homogeneity of this set of idioms, given the small standard deviations for each of the key properties reported in Table 2.

TABLE 2.  
LIST OF IDIOMS WITH MEAN FAMILIARITY AND TRANSPARENCY RATINGS AND COMPREHENSION SCORES

Idiom	Familiarity	Transparency	ICT (in context)	ICT(in isolation)
Let sleeping dogs lie	1.39	2.09	0.19	0.19
Turn the other cheek	1.17	2.04	0.24	0.01
Pull one's leg	1.81	1.83	0.26	0
Pain in the neck	1.53	2.1	0.31	0.01
Go into one's shell	1.23	2.04	0.33	0.03
Make a mountain out of a molehill	1.3	2.11	0.37	0.07
Face the music	1.29	2.01	0.44	0.19
Get away with murder	1.33	2.19	0.53	0.04
Be all ears	1.53	2.1	0.56	0.36
Talk through one's hat	1.17	1.93	0.56	0
Cry over spilled milk	2.07	2.06	0.69	0.47
See eye to eye	1.91	1.9	0.77	0.03
Skate on thin ice	1.84	2.07	0.81	0.93
Cold shoulder	1.37	2.07	0.84	0.23
A piece of cake	2.66	2.21	0.87	0.89
Miss the boat	1.39	2.29	0.87	0.37
Let the cat out of the bag	1.71	2.17	0.87	0.36
Keep someone at arm's length	1.73	2.09	0.9	0.39
Get in one ear and out the other	2.2	2.09	0.94	0.96
Be led by the nose	1.8	2.07	0.96	0.7
Mean	1.62	2.07	0.62	0.31
Std. Deviation	0.39	0.10	0.27	0.33
Range	1.17-2.66	1.83-2.29	0.19-0.96	0-0.96

To examine further the association between familiarity, transparency, and idiom comprehension, the five easiest and the five most difficult idioms were identified based on their mean comprehension score in the condition with contextual information. For each set of idioms – easiest and most difficult – each subject was assigned a raw score for the correctly comprehended idioms ( $1 \times 5 = 5$  possible per set) and the total score in rating the idioms familiarity ( $3 \times 5 = 15$  possible per set) and transparency ( $3 \times 5 = 15$  possible per set). The results are reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3.  
MEAN FAMILIARITY AND TRANSPARENCY RATINGS AND COMPREHENSION SCORES (IN CONTEXT) FOR THE FIVE EASIEST AND FIVE MOST DIFFICULT IDIOMS

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Familiarity	Easiest	10.10	1.88	0.22
	Most difficult	7.13	1.93	0.23
Transparency	Easiest	10.63	3.15	0.38
	Most difficult	10.10	1.99	0.24
ICT (in context)	Easiest	4.40	0.84	0.10
	Most difficult	1.10	0.95	0.11

It can be seen that the mean familiarity ratings of the easiest and most difficult sets of idioms were 10.10 and 7.13,

which indicates the easiest set of idioms were more familiar to the students. For the mean transparency ratings of the two sets of idioms, there was slight difference between 10.63 and 10.10. As for the means of comprehension scores of the easiest idioms and most difficult idioms, there was a big difference between 4.40 and 1.10. To test whether the differences on these three measures for the two sets of idioms were significant, Paired Samples Test was conducted. The results demonstrate that easiest idioms were significantly more familiar ( $t=10.825, p<0.05$ ) than the most difficult ones. No significant difference was found on the transparency ratings of the two sets ( $t=1.237, p=.220$ ). In addition, there was also significant difference between the easiest sets of idioms and the most difficult set of idioms concerning student's correct comprehension.

**Context and idiom comprehension**

Referring to Table 1, students' performance on idiom comprehension in both conditions were rather dissatisfying. In the condition with supportive context, the mean score of accuracy was 12.31, the answering rate being 61.55%; while in the isolation condition, the mean score of comprehension was much lower, 6.21, the answering rate being even lower, 31.05%. Although the general picture was very gloomy, the facilitating role of context in idiom comprehension can be testified clearly. With the aid of supportive context, students' correct comprehension of idioms improved to a great extent.

To examine further how context facilitates the better understanding of idioms, Table 2 should be mentioned again. Comparing the mean comprehension score of every idiom in the isolation condition and in the context condition, we can see the mean accuracy score increased more or less for most idioms. Especially in students' correct understanding the figurative meanings of the idioms, *see eye to eye, cold shoulder, let the cat out of the bag* and *keep someone at arm's length*, their accuracy comprehension increased by over 50%. For the idioms of *talk through one's hat, pull one's leg, pain in the neck* and *turn the other cheek*, in the isolation condition, students could hardly figure out the actual figurative meanings of theirs, only to give the literal translations of the constitute words. However, when these idioms were presented in the context, they could work out the figurative meanings more easily. Checking students' familiarity of these idioms, low exposure frequencies were found, which show these idioms are new and strange to them. However, with the support of contextual information, students' grasp of the figurative meanings of these idioms became better.

**Interaction effects between context and familiarity**

On account of no significant difference found in the transparency ratings of all idioms (mean rating range: 1.83-2.29) and no correlation existing between transparency and idiom comprehension, this factor will not be explored further in this part. However, the previous section has shown in understanding unfamiliar idioms, context facilitates students' correct comprehension of the figurative meanings of idioms. Therefore, the interaction effects of familiarity and context on idiom comprehension will be further analyzed.

Based on the mean familiarity ratings shown in Table 2, five most familiar and unfamiliar idioms were chosen as the high familiarity set and low familiarity set of idioms. Each subject's raw scores on these two sets of idioms in both conditions were summed and calculated, their mean scores and standard deviations were displayed in Table 4.

TABLE 4.  
PERFORMANCE ON THE IDIOM COMPREHENSION TASK BY CONDITION AND FAMILIARITY

	High familiarity		Low familiarity	
	Mean score	Std. Deviation	Mean score	Std. Deviation
ICT (in isolation)	3.27	0.82	0.30	0.49
ICT (in context)	4.09	0.90	1.94	1.26

Students' performance varied across conditions and familiarity levels. Results indicated significant differences by familiarity levels for students' comprehension of idioms in the isolation and context conditions. When no supportive context was available, students' mean score was 3.27 for high-familiar idioms comprehension, for low-familiar idioms the mean score was only 0.30. With the aid of contextual information, students' correct comprehension became much better, with the mean score rising to 4.09 in understanding high-familiar idioms and 1.94 in understanding low-familiar idioms.

TABLE 5.  
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
HC-HI	.81429	.90558	.10824	.59836	1.03021	7.523	69	.000
LC-LI	1.64286	1.12978	.13503	1.37347	1.91224	12.166	69	.000
HC-LC	2.14286	1.48700	.17773	1.78829	2.49742	12.057	69	.000
HI-LI	2.97143	.81599	.09753	2.77686	3.16599	30.467	69	.000
HC-LI	3.78571	1.00568	.12020	3.54592	4.02551	31.495	69	.000
HI-LC	1.32857	1.30463	.15593	1.01749	1.63965	8.520	69	.000

**Note:** HC stands for high-familiar idioms presented in context; HI stands for high familiar idioms presented in isolation; LC stands for low-familiar idioms presented in context; LI stands for low familiar idioms presented in isolation)

A series of Paired Samples Tests was conducted to prove whether the differences were statistically significant (see Table 5). It was found that in both conditions of idiom comprehension, the students performed significantly better for the high-familiar idioms as compared to the low-familiar idioms (in the isolation condition:  $t=30.467$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; in the context condition:  $t=12.057$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Moreover, both in their comprehension of high-familiar and low-familiar idioms, the students performed better in the context condition in comparison with the condition of isolation (High-familiar idioms:  $t=7.523$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; Low-familiarity:  $t=12.116$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). There were also significant differences between students' correct interpretation of figurative meanings of the high-familiar idioms in the context condition and low-familiar idioms in the isolation condition ( $t=31.495$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and between their understanding high-familiar idioms in the isolation condition and low-familiar idioms with the contextual information ( $t=8.520$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

ANOVA was used to test the interaction effects of idiom presentation conditions and idiom familiarity level. "The scores of correct comprehension of idioms" was adopted as the dependent variable, familiarity and presentation conditions were used as the independent variables, Repeated Measures ANOVA were used. Figure 1 shows the mean answering rate by context and familiarity level. The analysis yielded a significant effect of context ( $F=128.013$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and idiom familiarity ( $F=554.579$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and significant interactions between context and idiom familiarity ( $F=14.556$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). From this figure, it can be seen clearly students performed best in understanding high-familiar idioms when the supportive context was available, they did worst in comprehending low-familiar idioms when no context was available. It also demonstrated that especially in students' comprehension of low-familiar idioms, context played a more important facilitating role as compared to their understanding of high-familiarity idioms (the answering rate rising by 32.8%). Another important finding was the facilitating role of familiarity was stronger than that of context.

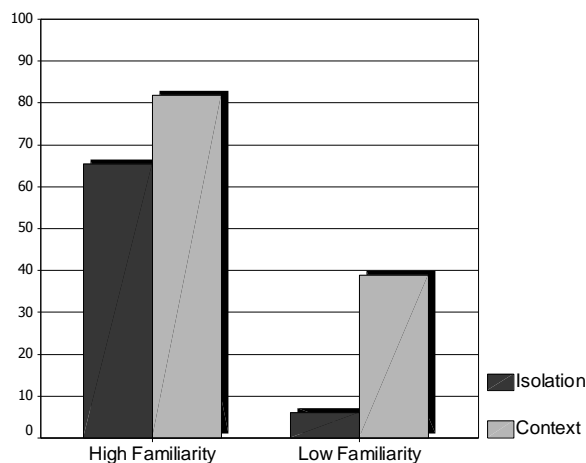


Figure 1. Mean idiomatic answering rate by context and familiarity level

To sum up, in both conditions of idiom comprehension, high-familiar idioms showed higher mean scores in comparison with low-familiar idioms. Moreover, regardless of familiarity level of idioms, students' performance in comprehending them was better with the help of contextual information as compared to their performance when no context was reachable.

## V. DISCUSSION

This study has investigated the roles of three factors in Chinese EFL learners' comprehension of idioms: idiom familiarity, idiom transparency, and context in the presentation of idioms.

Concerning the role of familiarity, based on students' own rating scale of the idioms, the results of low total score (32.40) indicated that Chinese students were not familiar with the idioms, and had a dissatisfying performance in comprehending the idioms correctly. This may be due to the drawbacks of English teaching in China. First, English idioms were not so stressed in Chinese English teaching classes. Teachers don't attach much importance to the teaching or explaining idioms. Therefore, in the learning process students do not spare any efforts to figure out what an idiom means when they are exposed to the idioms. Second, there are few systematic explanations and exercises on English idioms in textbooks or teaching materials. Teachers seldom use idioms in their oral presentation of lessons owing to their own limited idiomatic knowledge. In order for language acquisition to take place, the acquirer must receive comprehensible input through reading or hearing language structures that slightly exceed their current ability (Brown, 2000). Lacking sufficient input of idiom learning, learners are in adverse conditions to make improvements in idiom comprehension. Though students generally were less familiar with the tested idioms, they had better performance when high-familiar idioms were presented. This finding supports "language experience hypothesis" which was testified in developmental studies on native English speakers (Levorato & Cacciari, 1992; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993; Nippold & Taylor, 1995, 2002; Ortony et al., 1985). For Chinese EFL learners, the easiest idioms to understand are those much

more familiar to them.

Previous developmental studies of younger English native speakers find it is easier for learners to do better when comprehending high-transparency idioms (Gibbs, 1987, 1991; Levorato & Cacciari, 1999; Nippold & Taylor, 1995, 2002). In other words, when the literal meaning and figurative meaning of an idiom is more closely related, the difficulty of accurate idiom comprehension will decrease. However, this study found no strong correlation between learners' ratings of idiom transparency and their performance in the idiom comprehension. The small range of transparency rating for each idiom (1.83-2.29) shows learners tend to have similar judgments of how closely the literal and nonliteral meanings of each expression are related. This result provides evidence to the suggestion that transparency is a relatively fixed property of idioms again (Nippold & Taylor, 2002).

The findings regarding context are consistent with previous research on English native speaker and EFL/ESL learners as well (Atai & Akbarian, 2003; Bulut & Çelik-Yazici, 2004; Cacciari & Levorato, 1989; Cooper, 1999; Gibbs, 1987; Nippold & Martin, 1989; Qualls et al, 2003). Students' comprehension of idioms became better when the supportive context information was available compared to their performance when no context was presented. Qualls et al. (2003) proposes "proportionality theory" to explain idiom comprehension will decrease proportionally as the amount of context decreases. He compared rural English native adolescents' comprehension of idioms in three contexts: idioms in a story context, idioms in isolation, and idioms in verification task and found the story context yielded the greatest accuracy. In this study, the results indicate that "proportionality theory" is also applicable to Chinese EFL learners. Foreign language learners are able to increase their correct understanding of figurative meanings of idioms if the amount of context enlarges. Generally, idioms in a story context are explained more accurately than when they are presented in isolation. Context might facilitate the interpretation of figurative language by providing the necessary semantic information from which the reader (or listener) can extract or infer the appropriate sense of the expression. It may be more important for less common idioms whose meanings are not yet fully known, particularly for unfamiliar opaque idioms whose meanings are not fully derivable through semantic analysis of the phrases.

The results in the present study show familiarity and context not only play facilitating roles on their own, but also cause learners' accurate comprehension to increase when they are combined. When idioms were less familiar to them, contextual information enabled comprehension. And when the supportive context was not available, the frequency of prior meaningful exposure would influence learners' accurate responses. High-familiar idioms indicated greater accuracy. This finding suggests that EFL learners are able to overcome the boundary of unfamiliarity by using contextual cues or avail themselves of their former exposure amount to the idioms in the absence of contextual information. As a result, the two factors of familiarity and context may complement each other for learners to comprehend idioms well.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated Chinese EFL learners' understanding of English idioms by revealing several variables' effects and their interactions, including familiarity, transparency and contextual factors. The findings provide supportive evidence that familiarity and context both contribute to Chinese learners' accurate comprehension of English idioms. If learners are very familiar with idioms, and in the presence of contextual information, it will be easier for them to guess or figure out the figurative meanings of idioms.

The results provide implications for English language researchers and teachers. To improve foreign language learners' idiomatic knowledge, increasing their exposure opportunities to idioms is highly important. Language researchers and teachers may consider inclusion of more idiomatic expressions in the compilation of textbooks or exercise books, teachers may create more activities, listening or speaking, to teach and explain more idioms, thus increasing their meaningful exposure amount to this kind of figurative language. In the class time, teachers should purposefully elaborate on the formation of idioms and their figurative meanings, and design some activities to provide meaningful contexts, thus giving learners better chances to understand idioms.

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# Effect of Elaborative Text Modification on Pre-intermediate Male and Female EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension

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**Abstract**—The current study was carried out to investigate whether elaborative text modification improves reading comprehension ability of pre-intermediate male and female EFL learners. To do this, 60 pre-intermediate learners were chosen based on their performance on a standard version of Longman's New Opportunities Placement Test. The participants also received a piloted version of a researcher-made reading comprehension test as the pretest to ascertain their homogeneity. The participants were then divided into two equal groups to represent the experimental and the control groups. Each group was further subdivided into male and female groups. Five reading passages in two formats (unmodified and elaborated) were administered to the participants in five weeks which was followed by a posttest. The experimental group received the elaborated texts, while the control group received the unmodified baseline texts. The results of a Two-way ANOVA indicated no significant effect for gender but there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control groups' reading comprehension. Findings of the study suggest that elaborative text modification can be a worthy option in EFL reading classes.

**Index Terms**—elaboration, text modification, input hypothesis, reading comprehension

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension has drawn the attention of many second and foreign language researchers, and has been studied from different perspectives. This is because, reading is the most important source of input for second language learners. However, input needs to be comprehended by second language learners for acquisition to take place (Chaudron, 1985).

Facilitating the process of reading for second or foreign language learners is of high priority for language researchers, teachers, and, of course, language learners. The question of how to make the reading process easier and more effective has resulted in the creation of a wide variety of theories, approaches and texts (Esfandiari Asl & Zoghi, 2016). Recent research on input modification addresses the relative effectiveness of two different types of modification: simplification and elaboration (Oh, 2001). It is claimed that if elaborated textual material is provided, EFL learners' reading comprehension will improve. This study addressed the effect of this type of modification on reading comprehension of pre-intermediate EFL students. It also investigated the effect of gender on EFL students' reading comprehension after modifying the texts to which they were exposed. Generally, a brief look at the related literature reveals that the findings are mixed and we are still in need of further research to confirm or disconfirm the effectiveness of elaborative text modification and its interaction with gender of the participants. This study was carried out to answer the following research questions:

**RQ<sub>1</sub>**: Does elaborative text modification have any significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension?

**RQ<sub>2</sub>**: Does gender have any significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension?

**RQ<sub>3</sub>**: Can any significant interaction effect be identified between text elaboration and gender in terms of intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension?

Three null research hypotheses were derived from the above research questions as follows:

**H<sub>01</sub>**: Elaborative text modification does not have any significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension.

**H<sub>02</sub>**: Gender does not have any significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension.

**H<sub>03</sub>**: No significant interaction effect can be identified between text elaboration and gender in terms of intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension.

## II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

There is a plethora of theoretical and empirical studies and research reports on the effectiveness of pre-modification of input in language teaching and learning (Kim, 2006; Maxwell, 2011; Ragan, 2006; Oh, 2001; Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994). But a review of the literature indicates that there is a scarcity of empirical research dealing with elaborative text modification and its effect on reading comprehension of male and female EFL learners in Iran.

Maxwell (2011) compared the effects of simplification and elaboration and found no indication of a significant effect that text modification can have on elementary ESL learners' reading comprehension. Brewer (2008) investigated if lexical simplification and modification had any effect on his learners' sentence-level comprehension. As in the case of Maxwell's study, the results of the test showed no significant difference in comprehension for items that had been simplified, elaborated, or left intact. In a study of L2 Korean learners, Kong (2007) showed that both simplified and elaborated input promoted the participants' reading comprehension yet again with no significant difference between the two. Chung (1995, as cited in Urano, 2000) hypothesized that both simplification and elaboration would facilitate L2 reading comprehension. Esfandiari Asl & Zoghi (2016), too, found no significant difference between the elaborated and baseline conditions.

Young (1999) concluded that simplification, as another kind of text modification, will not necessarily aid comprehension of a text, a point that reflected findings referred to above in relation to elaboration. Pica, Doughty, and Young (1986) also found that simplification is not superior to elaborative modification, at least not consistently. Loschky (1994) even went on to say that not only pre-modified input can sometimes fail to improve learners' comprehension but also it can be detrimental to their comprehension.

The majority of research (e.g., Jeong, 1987; Lee, 1986; Oh, 2001; Strother & Ulijn, 1987, as cited in Oh, 2001; Yano et. al., 1994) has been centered on the effects of simplifying the vocabulary and syntax of written texts. Studies done on the effects of simplification and elaboration on aural input comprehension and retention have been limited; but these studies have overwhelmingly shown that both of these techniques enhance comprehension with elaboration being more effective than linguistic simplification (Chaudron, 1983).

Mary E. O'Donnell (2005) argued that L2 readers of short literary texts modified elaboratively can recall more information of the texts they have read. Students reading these types of texts are able to identify more of the vocabulary that appear within the text. Kim (2003) stated that input modified by elaboration is preferred in SLA on the grounds that elaborated input retains the original material that L2 learners need for developing their interlanguage (as cited in Xiaohui, 2010).

Following the same line of investigation, Urano (2002) confirmed that lexical elaboration is superior to lexical simplification in terms of L2 reading comprehension as well as vocabulary acquisition. Ellis (1995), likewise, revealed that interactionally modified input, which is similar to elaboration, is more effective in vocabulary acquisition. Long (1983), in a similar vein, showed that modification is helpful in the amount of perceived comprehension. Ragan (2006) too, adopting a psychological approach, stated that elaborative text modification might help alleviate the difficulties less skilled readers have when relying on imprecise or incorrect background knowledge.

In regard to gender, Bugel and Buunk (1996) found that males outperformed females on passages about cars and football players, while females outperformed males on readings about midwives, and sad stories. Brantmeier (2002) reported no significant difference arising from gender in the comprehension of passages. Wei Wei (2009) studied the relationship between gender differences and reading comprehension in China. The findings indicated that female learners are more global and prefer guessing meaning from context while male learners are more analytic and attend more to words. Peart & Barnett (2013) examined the effects of gender on Spanish L2 reading comprehension. In this study participants read three literary passages and completed two measures that assessed their reading comprehension. Statistical analysis demonstrated a significant difference between female and male participants' comprehension of passages' content. These mixed findings support the idea that more empirical studies on the effect of gender on reading comprehension are needed.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Participants of the current study were 60 pre-intermediate male and female EFL students selected from among the 90 students studying at Rose Language Institute in Ardabil, Iran. All of the participants enjoyed the same level of language proficiency according to their performance on the standard placement test (Longman's New Opportunities Placement Tests) given to them prior to beginning of the study. The participants who were at the pre-intermediate level of proficiency were divided into two equal experimental and control groups. Each of these groups was further subdivided into two separate only-male and only-female classes of 15.

Following the study done by Esfandiari Asl & Zoghi (2016), after assigning the chosen students to different groups, a researcher-made test of reading comprehension was developed based on the level of the learners. Two reading comprehension passages were selected from the book *"Reading and Vocabulary Development 2 (Thoughts and Notions)"* by Ackert and Lee (2005). After that, 20 items in different formats, namely, MCQs, T/F, and open-ended were developed based on the same passages. The test was piloted among 30 students with the same characteristics (age, gender, level) for calculating its reliability. The test was then evaluated and malfunctioning and non-functioning items were either discarded or corrected. The results represented that the mean and standard deviation of the revised test were 13.5 and 1.61, respectively, with a reliability index of .74 as calculated by KR-21 formula.



This test, which comprised 20 items, was used both as the pre-test and post-test in the present study to measure and compare the participants' reading comprehension before and after the study. The pretest was administered at the beginning of the study in order to ensure homogeneity of the learners reading comprehension ability. The posttest was administered at the end of the experiment to check for the effect of the treatment on the reading comprehension ability of the learners.

The five selected texts for treatment purposes were all relatively short, ranging from 142 to 246 words in unmodified form. To prepare the elaborated version of the texts, all of baseline texts underwent modification and two packages of baseline and elaborated texts were prepared to be used in the control and experimental groups, respectively.

Elaboration has been shown to increase text length (Rose, Souza, & Hanna, 1996). The elaborated versions ranged from 217 to 429 words. Readers of the elaborated versions were expected to read the passages and answer the following multiple-choice reading comprehension questions in the same amount of time as the students who read the unmodified texts. The students received approximately fifteen minutes to read each passage and respond the following questions.

At final stage of the data collection process, the answer sheets were scored and the data were tabulated. To get as accurate results as possible, and to accept or reject hypotheses of the study, various data analyses techniques were used throughout the study the list of which goes as follows:

1. Descriptive statistics of pre- and post-test
2. Normality tests
3. A One-way ANOVA run on the reading comprehension pretest scores to determine homogeneity of the groups
4. A Two-way ANOVA to measure the main and interaction effects

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the first step in data analysis, it was necessary to check if the distribution of scores were normal at the pretest stage to warrant the use of ANOVA for finding the possible difference(s) among the groups. Table I shows the results of a 1-sample K-S test run on the pretest scores for this purpose. All of the obtained *Sig.* values are above .05 which point to the normality of the distributions.

TABLE I.  
NORMALITY TESTS RUN ON PRETEST SCORES

		male control pretest	male experimental pretest	female control pretest	female experimental pretest
N		15	15	15	15
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	14.8000	14.4000	14.0667	14.0667
	Std. Deviation	2.30527	1.76473	2.31352	1.98086
Test Statistic		.165	.166	.147	.113
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>	.200 <sup>c,d</sup>	.200 <sup>c,d</sup>	.200 <sup>c,d</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

To be able to use One-way ANOVA, it is also necessary to check for the homogeneity of the groups as its other assumption. Table II shows the result of this test. From the *Sig.* value larger than .05, it is clear that this assumption has not been violated and therefore running One-way ANOVA was authorized.

TABLE II.  
HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES AT THE PRETEST STAGE

Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.880	3	56	.457

Table III, which reflects the result of the One-way ANOVA run on the pretest scores, indicates that the groups have not been different from each other in terms of their reading comprehension ability at  $P = .95$  level with  $F(3, 56) = .412$ ,  $\alpha = .745 > .05$  at the beginning of the study.

TABLE III.  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE RUN ON THE PRETEST SCORES

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.467	3	1.822	.412	.745
Within Groups	247.867	56	4.426		
Total	253.333	59			

Findings from the pretest data analysis revealed that the groups had not been significantly different from each other in terms of reading comprehension and therefore any difference identified at the posttest stage could confidently be attributed to the effect(s) of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Since there were two categorical variables (group and gender) each with two levels and just one dependent variable (reading comprehension), the statistical procedure of choice was Two-way Analysis of Variance. It is necessary to point out that, the variable *group* at this stage was comprised of experimental and control groups.

The most important assumptions of the two-way ANOVA are as follows:

- The samples must be normally or approximately normally distributed.
- The samples must be independent, that is, no participant should attend both conditions.
- The variances of the samples must be almost equal.
- The sizes of the samples must be the same.

Assumptions two and four were automatically satisfied in this study because all groups were of the same size and none of the participants attended both conditions. Assumptions one and three, however, needed examining. Table IV shows the results of normality tests run on the posttest scores for both experimental and control groups. As in the case of the pretest, all distributions were normal.

TABLE IV.  
NORMALITY TESTS RUN ON POSTTEST SCORES

		male control posttest	male experimental posttest	female control posttest	female experimental posttest
N		15	15	15	15
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	16.9333	15.2667	15.5333	15.1333
	Std. Deviation	1.57963	1.09978	1.95911	1.64172
Test Statistic		.183	.204	.183	.201
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.186 <sup>c</sup>	.093 <sup>c</sup>	.188 <sup>c</sup>	.105 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

Levene's test of homogeneity of group variances was also non-significant (*Sig.* = .09), as shown in Table V below.

TABLE V.  
EQUALITY OF ERROR VARIANCES AT POSTTEST STAGE  
Dependent Variable: posttest scores

F	df1	df2	Sig.
2.233	3	56	.094

Since all assumptions of the Two-way ANOVA were met, we were allowed to run this test to find out about the interaction and main effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Table VI shows the results of this test.

TABLE VI.  
INTERACTION AND MAIN EFFECTS OF THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES ON THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	30.850 <sup>a</sup>	3	10.283	4.018	.012	.177	.813
Intercept	14820.817	1	14820.817	5790.459	.000	.990	1.000
Group posttest	16.017	1	16.017	6.258	.015	.101	.691
Gender posttest	8.817	1	8.817	3.445	.069	.058	.446
Group posttest * gender posttest	6.017	1	6.017	2.351	.131	.040	.326
Error	143.333	56	2.560				
Total	14995.000	60					
Corrected Total	174.183	59					

As the first step in interpreting the results of a Two-way ANOVA we should look at the interaction effect. Finding a significant effect for interaction complicates the interpretation process because, according to Pallant (2013), to describe the influence of one of the independent variables the effect of the other should also be taken into account. Fortunately, in Table VI the *Sig.* value calculated for the interaction effect is larger than .05 which means that we should only look at the main effects of the independent variables. The lack of interaction between the independent variables is schematically represented in Figure 1 below by non-crossing lines.

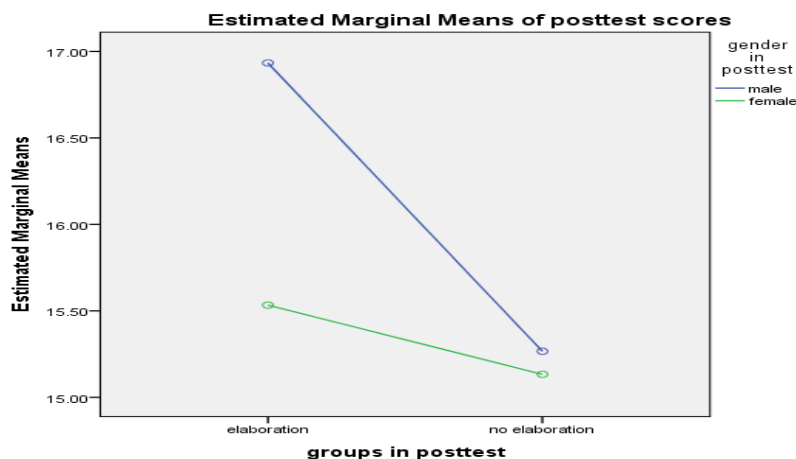


Figure I. Lack of interaction between the independent variables

The main effect for the instructional condition, specified as Group Posttest in Table VI, has been statistically significant,  $F(2, 56) = 6.25, P = .015$ . This finding suggests that without considering the gender difference, there has been a significant difference between the experimental and control groups' reading comprehension performance at the post-test stage. This means that the first null hypothesis of the research (Elaborative text modification does not have any significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension) should be rejected.

The main effect for the independent variable *gender* is not statistically significant,  $F(1, 56) = 3.44, P = .069$ . That is, without considering the instructional conditions, there has been no difference between the male and the female groups in terms of their reading comprehension performance. Therefore, the second null hypothesis (Gender does not have any significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension) was accepted. Finally, as explained above, there was no statistically significant interaction effect between the independent variables in relation to reading comprehension at the posttest stage,  $F(1, 56) = 2.35, P = .13$ . This indicates that the third research hypothesis (No significant interaction effect can be identified between text elaboration and gender in terms of intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension) should be accepted.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to determine whether elaborative text modification can improve reading comprehension performance of Iranian pre-intermediate male and female EFL learners. To sum up the findings of the study, it can be said that, elaborative text modification had a statistically significant effect on the pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension. This finding is in conformity with the finding of Le (2011) who stated that regarding the effects of pre-modified input, input elaboration is likely to be a facilitating factor of students' comprehension (Esfandiari Asl & Zoghi, 2016). The result also confirms findings about text elaboration by many other researchers (e.g., Brewer, 2008; Kong, 2007; Loschky, 1994; Maxwell, 2011; Pica, Doughty, & Young, 1986).

The results, also, showed that there was no significant difference between the male and the female participants in terms of their reading comprehension performance. Brantmeier's (2003) study showed no significant difference between mean scores for males and females on overall comprehension of the passages as revealed by ANOVAs run on the test results. However, she found that intermediate-level males outperformed females on a male-oriented passage and females outperformed males on a female-oriented passage. Brantmeier concluded that passage content clearly affected how male and female readers comprehended a passage. Mehrpour, Razmjoo, and Kian (2011), also, found that gender had no significant impact on learners' reading comprehension performance and vocabulary knowledge. While the previous results are not unanimous, the general consensus is that gender, along with the type of reading comprehension selected and assessment strategy (recall, sentence completion, and multiple choice) are all influential factors (Peart & Barnett, 2013). These findings are in conflict with the finding of this study that gender has no significant effect on the reading comprehension of pre-intermediate EFL students.

As noted, simplification has some drawbacks elaborated on by several researchers. For example, Yano et al., (1994) concluded that linguistically simplified texts create less realistic models of the language which can negatively affect language learning. On the other hand, the technique of elaboration provides learners with opportunities to encounter, more or less, authentic materials and assist them in more successful comprehension. Elaboration, therefore, seems to constitute an important alternative to simplification for written input, and is worthy of greater attention by scholars, English language teachers, and EFL learners (Esfandiari Asl & Zoghi, 2016).

The present study may augment our knowledge of the effectiveness of pre-modified input in general and elaborative text modification in particular. According to the results of this study, we can maintain that less proficient EFL learners' reading comprehension will enhance if teachers pay more attention to providing appropriate elaborated texts for them. In conclusion, it cannot be denied that input modification can promote comprehension, especially in reading and

vocabulary learning (Esfandiari Asl & Zoghi, 2016).

The limited framework of the current study does not allow broad generalizations of the results. This study, for example, did not consider the Interaction Hypothesis and its role in facilitating language learning. So, further research is needed to be done to deepen our understanding of the effects of modification and the way it facilitates reading comprehension.

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# Bloomfield's Concept of Meaning\*

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**Abstract**—Bloomfield's book *Language* has long been recognized for laying down the foundation of formal descriptive linguistic analysis. However, he was criticized too often for his dismissal of serious study of meaning in linguistics. The fact is that in his 1933 book *Language*, a separate chapter is devoted to the discussion of meaning and some of the most important formal units of linguistic analysis introduced by Bloomfield like phoneme and morpheme could not have been properly defined without involving meaning. He forcefully challenged the contemporary popular mentalism in linguistic study, as has often been bypassed. His contention that linguistic study must start from form not meaning should not be taken at face value as neglect of meaning but in the historical context as an opposition to mentalistic subjective interpretation of meaning.

**Index Terms**—Bloomfield, language as science, mentalism, concept of meaning

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a landmark in American linguistics, Leonard Bloomfield's book *Language* has long been recognized for laying down the foundation of formal descriptive linguistic analysis. However, to talk about his "concept" of meaning, or even "meaning" itself, may immediately sound *a-Bloomfieldian*, since Bloomfield's abandonment of mentalism went to such extremes that he was opposed to using terms like 'concept', 'idea', 'notion' etc. (Bloomfield, 1936) in linguistic study, and he was criticized too often for his dismissal of serious study of meaning in linguistics. But the fact is that in his 1933 book *Language*, a separate chapter is devoted to the discussion of meaning and some of the most important formal units of linguistic analysis introduced by Bloomfield like phoneme and morpheme could not have been properly defined without involving meaning. Thus a closer look at Bloomfield's view of meaning is indispensable to an overall understanding of his philosophy of language.

## II. BLOOMFIELD'S VIEW OF LINGUISTIC STUDY

Reflecting on the history of language study, Bloomfield pointed out that some major faults in the 19<sup>th</sup> historical linguistics represented by Hermann Paul, namely, "neglect of descriptive language study" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.15) and "insistence upon 'psychological' interpretation" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.16). For one thing, Bloomfield agrees with Saussure on that linguistic study is composed of synchronic descriptive study and diachronic comparative study. This general congruence is well illustrated by the layout of his book *Language* (1933/2001), the first few chapters of which are devoted to a general outline of linguistic science, the middle to synchronic issues and the latter diachronic ones. And he stresses that descriptions of language must be "unprejudiced" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.19). For another, he rejects any psychological account of linguistic phenomenon on the basis that it adds nothing to but rather obscures the discussion of the latter (Bloomfield 1933/2001, p.16). He goes further to dismiss terminology of mentalism and animism such as "consciousness", "mind", "perception", "ideas" etc. and to assert that "linguistics as actually practised employs only such terms as are translatable into the language of physical and biological science" (Bloomfield, 1936, p. 89).

This rather reductionist approach of Bloomfield's may have stemmed from his role as a "restless opponent of mentalism" (Passos, 2006) and as an active advocate of making the study of language a science. He is "one of those who believe...the entire baggage of mentalism to be empty and useless" (Bloomfield, 1935, p.502). In Bloomfield's perspective,

*science shall deal only with events that are accessible in their time and place to any and all observers (strict behaviorism) or only with events that are placed in co-ordinates of time and space (mechanism), or ... shall employ only such initial statements and predictions as lead to definite handling operations (operationalism), or only terms such as are derivable by rigid definition from a set of everyday terms concerning physical happenings (physicalism).* (Bloomfield, 1939, p.13, quoted from Passos, 2006).

Several points may be noted here about Bloomfield's notion of science. First, the object of scientific study is physically accessible observables. Second, scientific inquiry is carried out by "definite handling operations", i.e. observation, collecting of specimens, experiment (Bloomfield, 1935, p.499). Thirdly, materialistic or mechanistic terms rather than mental ones are to be used to achieve rigorous discussion of science.

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\* The research is supported by "the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities" (JB2015107).

Taking into consideration the historical context, it is important to recognize Bloomfield's contribution for his strong opposition to the prevalent mentalism and his pursuit of making linguistics a science, though he went to extremes when adopting a behaviorist view of language. But caution is needed when further interpretation of Bloomfield's theory is to be done, especially in terms of his discussion of meaning, which seems to have received the most misunderstanding and misinterpretation from linguists and students of language alike.

### III. BLOOMFIELD'S VIEW ON STUDY OF MEANING IN LINGUISTICS

To understand Bloomfield's concept of meaning, we need to start with his behaviorist approach to the study of human speech. In pursuing linguistics as a science, Bloomfield, under the influence of the behaviorist psychologist A. P. Weiss (Belyi, 1967/1999, p.115-118), put forward a behaviorist account of human speech in purely mechanistic terms. He first distinguished the *act of speech* and *practical events* based on the Jack-and-Jill story.

...the incident consists of three parts, in order of time:

A. Practical events preceding the act of speech.

B. Speech.

C. Practical events following the act of speech.

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p. 22)

Then the incident was theorized into the following famous diagram:

$S \longrightarrow r \dots\dots s \longrightarrow R$

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.25)

(S= practical stimulus, r= linguistic substitute reaction

s= linguistic substitute stimulus, R= practical reaction)

To put it into a whole, *the practical events* preceding the act of speech, the speaker's stimulus (S), including the speaker, Jill's physical state of being hungry, her seeing the apple, her relation with Jack, etc., prompt her to make an *act of speech*, which serves at the same time a linguistic substitute reaction (r) to her own condition and a linguistic substitute stimulus (s) for Jack, setting him into practical reaction (R) of getting the apple for her.

Bloomfield pointed out that "speech utterance", the major concern of linguistic study, "trivial and unimportant in itself, is important because it has a *meaning*: the meaning consists of the important things with which the speech-utterance (B) is connected, namely the practical events (A and C)" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.26). In other words, language is important precisely because it has a meaning: the practical events connected with speech (Passos, 2006). It may be suspected that Bloomfield might have downplayed the significance of language *per se* by labeling "speech utterance" as "trivial and unimportant", but it is very clear that he attached great importance to meaning, which he considered as the link between speech utterance and practical events. In other words, he pinpointed the relation between language with the human society, and his concept of meaning was tinged with a pragmatic nature, i.e. getting things done by speech.

At another point Bloomfield also stressed the place of the study of meaning in linguistics.

*Man utters many kinds of vocal noise and makes use of the variety: under certain types of stimuli he produces certain vocal sounds, and his fellows, hearing these same sounds, make the appropriate response. To put it briefly, in human speech, different sounds have different meanings. To study this co-ordination of certain sounds with certain meanings is to study language.*

*This co-ordination makes it possible for man to interact with great precision.*

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.27)

This clear statement of Bloomfield's on the object of language study reflects his more comprehensive view of language study than many suppose it to be. For him, meaning is an inseparable part of language study. Linguistic study is not only concerned with the "*biophysical* aspect of language", *sounds*, and the "sound producing movements and resultant sound waves and the vibration of the hearer's eardrums", but also the "*biosocial* aspect of language", *meaning*, and how "the persons in a community have been trained to produce these sounds in certain situations and to respond to them by appropriate actions" (Bloomfield, 1939, p.8, quoted from Belyi, 1967/1999, p. 117). People get through to each other by way of sound-waves which stimulate meaningful actions. Language is not just biological and physical, but also social and interpersonal; this co-ordination between sound and meaning is not just of a physiological nature, but of a sociological one.

However, Bloomfield's pursuit of objectivism in linguistic study led him to rely too much on "scientific knowledge" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.145) and "a superficial reading of his discussions of mentalism and mechanism" (Fries, 1954/1999, p.86) contribute to the popular belief that Bloomfield ignored the study of meaning. But the fact that he devoted a separate chapter of the book *Language* (1933/2001) to meaning is self-evident. In this chapter, he not only discussed the definition of meaning, but also analyzed in detail different types and aspects of meaning.

#### A. Bloomfield's Definition of Meaning

The "meaning of a linguistic form" is defined as "the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response which it calls forth in the hearer" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.145). Apparently, this definition is consistent with what has been discussed concerning meaning in the above-mentioned quotations and Bloomfield's main point about meaning is

reiterated, namely, meaning is practical events (some practical events in a certain situation that stimulate the speaker to utter the linguistic form, and the resultant responsive actions on the part of the hearer) connected with speech. And he chose to “discuss and define meanings in terms of a speaker’s stimulus” because it “will usually present a simpler aspect than the hearer’s response” (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.145). We must realize that by this definition of meaning, Bloomfield pointed out two important factors in human communication, namely, situations and participants, both of which are indispensable to the production and conveyance of meaning between people. However, his further exposition on these two main points of the definition of meaning were so closely aligned with his opposition to mentalism and pursuit of scientific objectivity that it may be suspected of causing misunderstanding of his position on the study of meaning and even diverting his followers from serious study of meaning in linguistics.

As to by what means we should define meaning, Bloomfield stressed the importance of scientific knowledge.

*The situations which prompt people to utter speech, include every object and happening in their universe. In order to give a scientifically accurate definition of meaning for every form of a language, we should have to have a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speakers’ world. The actual extent of human knowledge is very small, compared to this. We can define the meaning of a speech-form accurately when this meaning has to do with some matter of which we possess scientific knowledge. We can define the names of minerals, for example, in terms of chemistry and mineralogy, as when we say that the ordinary meaning of the English word salt is ‘sodium chloride (NaCl)’...*

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.145)

It cannot be denied that part of the meaning of salt is indeed “sodium chloride”, but it is not properly or sufficiently defined just as such. As is defined as “a crystalline compound NaCl that consists of sodium chloride, is abundant in nature, and is used especially to season or preserve food or in industry” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary), salt has not only scientific identity but also functional significance, both of which are fundamental to its basic meaning. Besides, usually a housewife does not need to know the chemical composition of “salt” to be “sodium chloride” to understand what “salt” means and what it is used for, which may well imply that the importance of the functional significance of salt in some cases even overrides that of its scientific composition. At the same time, it must be realized that to “define the names of plants or animals by means of the technical terms of botany or zoology” (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.145) is mainly the task of the botanist or zoologist; it is no doubt that the linguist does benefit from scientific knowledge, but does not stop at that, his major concern with the semantic layer of language being far more complicated. Also it is plain that ordinary people will not be able to communicate well only in scientific or technical terminology.

Therefore, it is clear that in his efforts of pursuing objectivity and making linguistics a science, Bloomfield exaggerated the role of scientific knowledge in human speech and confused the language of science with that of daily life. And in this vein of discussion, he dismissed the defining of affection-loaded words like “love” and “hate” for lack of scientific knowledge, since in his time psychology was associated with mentalism which he strongly opposed. However, he soon made the problem more complex by pointing to discrepancies between scientific classification and linguistic categorization in different languages (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.146), which do exist. The examples he gave are color terms and kinship terminology, which later prove to be hot topics for study of vague language. Bloomfield then concluded that “the statement of meaning is therefore the weak point in language study, and will remain so until human knowledge advances very far beyond its present state” (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.146), which cannot be taken as a negation of meaning or dismissal of the study of meaning in linguistics, but as a result of vigorous opposition to mentalism. As Fries pointed out, “[Bloomfield’s] efforts to achieve statements in physical rather than ‘mentalistic’ terms do not lead to the conclusion that he ‘ignores meaning’ or that ‘he takes no account of meaning.’” (Fries, 1954/1999, p.84), though he might have gone to extremes in a certain sense.

As to the role of situation, Bloomfield stated:

*A very important part of every situation is the state of the speaker’s body. This includes, of course, the predisposition of his nervous system, which results from all of his experiences, linguistic and other, up to this very moment—not to speak of hereditary and pre-natal factors. If we could keep an external situation ideally uniform, and put different speakers into it, we should still be unable to measure the equipment each speaker brought with him, and unable, therefore, to predict what speech-forms he would utter, or, for that matter, whether he would utter any speech at all.*

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.147)

It should be noted that on one hand Bloomfield was right to recognize its importance in communication, that is, a speaker is to be influenced by “every object and happening” in his surroundings and the hearer need have an accurate knowledge of the speakers’ world to understand him. In other words, we can say that the speaker and the hearer must have shared background knowledge for any communication to be successful. Interestingly, Bloomfield seemed to contradict himself when he pointed out the unpredictability of speech-forms of the speaker given ideally the same external situation. But his identifying in passing the predisposition of the speaker’s nervous system resulting from all the experiences of the speaker, and his hereditary and pre-natal factors as factors influencing the state of the speaker’s body seems not without similarity to embodied experientialism of the latter embodied experientialism of cognitive linguistics. Besides, it also points to the scientific study of human neurology and even hereditary studies in relation to human speech, neither of which was very advanced at Bloomfield’s time. Therefore, it is unjustifiable to say that Bloomfield was ignorant of the study of meaning in linguistics, but rather he was aware of the difficulty of this aspect of linguistic study since it may be related to many other aspects of human life, which requires interdisciplinary research

for more accurate knowledge and more profound understanding.

In a word, Bloomfield's purpose was not to downplay the importance of semantic study but to show its difficulty given the current state of arts. As was expressed by him, "the present-day knowledge does not suffice to unravel all the entanglements of meaning." (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.155) Up till now, semantics is still a tricky subject of study in linguistics though we have taken many steps forward since Bloomfield's time. Despite its obvious defects such as a reductionist view the process of human communication and a neglect of cognitive factors in human speech, the behaviorist definition of meaning has disclosed to some extent the pragmatic aspect of a linguistic form, and the defining in terms of situation, speaker and hearer, and the notion of appropriateness of response are not without some significance for non-behaviorist interpretation of speech utterances. Moreover, Bloomfield's more detailed analyses of different types of meaning are not without value to semantic study of language.

### B. Bloomfield's Taxonomy of Meaning

Bloomfield's further discussion of meaning can be summarized into two types, lexical meaning, and grammatical meaning (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.173-4). And he also touched upon different aspects of meaning, such as pragmatic and dialectal etc. Although he did not really develop a systematic theory of semantic study, it cannot be denied that he conducted serious study on meaning.

#### a. Lexical Meaning

One of the most important features of Bloomfield's discussion of lexical meaning is that he distinguished *normal* (or *central*) meanings and *marginal* (*metaphoric* or *transferred*) meanings (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.158). He gave many examples of lexical metaphors and examined the motivations for these metaphorical expressions. One of the reasons that forces people to look to a transferred meaning lies in "some feature of the practical situation" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.156). For example, in the sentence "He married a lemon", the word "lemon" is not to be taken literally because "we know that men do not go through a marriage ceremony with a piece of fruit" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.156). Another factor for the generation of transferred meaning is "the structure of the language: (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.157), or in other words, "a transferred meaning is *linguistically determined* by an accompanying form." (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.156) The examples are *cat* in *catkin*, *pussy* in *pussy-willow*, *eye* in *eyelet*, *dog* in *to dog someone's footsteps* etc. It is noteworthy that Bloomfield pointed out not only extralinguistic or contextual factors but also linguistic or textual factors for transferred meanings. Despite that he did not give any clear definitions as to central meanings and transferred meanings, the distinction definitely has certain pragmatic and even etymological significance in actual analysis. For example, in the sentence "Old Mr. Smith is a fox", the metaphorical meaning of "fox" is an "unscrupulous and clever person" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.156), its meaning being transferred pragmatically from an animal to a person. And for the word "catkin", referring to a certain plant, it bears a metaphorical link with cat as it originates from a resemblance in shape with a kitten's tail.

#### b. Grammatical Meaning

Bloomfield's discussion of form-classes and class-meanings in Chapter 9 is actually about grammatical aspect of meaning. According to him, form-classes are form groups "by some recognizable phonetic or grammatical feature", and "in any one form-class, every form contains an element, the class-meaning, which is the same for all forms of this form-class" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.152). A good case in point is pronouns, e.g. "somebody, someone have the class-meanings of substantives, singulars, personals" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.153). This reminds us of the latter popular discussion of semantic fields in formal semantics.

But more significantly, Bloomfield further expounded in Chapter 10 and Chapter 16 on grammatical meaning in relation to form-classes, which is of great value not only to descriptive analysis of language but also to a proper understanding of the relation between form and meaning, as manifested in the following passages.

*A phonetic form with its meaning is a linguistic form; a tactic form with its meaning is a grammatical form.*

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.173-4)

*Any utterance can be fully described in terms of lexical and grammatical forms; we must remember only that the meanings cannot be defined in terms of our science.*

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.175)

*The meaningful features of linguistic signaling are of two kinds: lexical forms, which consist of phonemes, and grammatical forms, which consist of taxemes.*

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p. 279)

*Meaningful unit of linguistic signaling, smallest or complex: linguistic form; the meaning of a linguistic form is a linguistic meaning;*

*a) lexical: lexical form; the meaning of a lexical form is a lexical meaning;*

*b) grammatical: grammatical form; the meaning of a grammatical form is a grammatical meaning.*

(Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.279)

It can be clearly seen that Bloomfield considered grammatical forms and meanings as inseparable, as is reiterated many times throughout the book, and he stated clearly that he remained doubtful as to the study of meanings to be fully conducted in "our science" (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.175), i.e. linguistics. It is in no way to be taken superficially as a negation of meaning or a dismissal of semantic study in linguistics. Besides, Bloomfield also pointed out four ways of arrangement of linguistic forms, namely, selection, order, modulation and phonetic modification, all of which together



contribute to the meaning of a linguistic form. Furthermore, Bloomfield classified the grammatical forms of a language into three great classes, that is, sentence-types, constructions and substitutions (Bloomfield, 1933/2001, p.176-7), which allow for study of grammatical meanings at these different levels of linguistic forms.

#### IV. LIMITATIONS OF BLOOMFIELD'S VIEW OF MEANING

Although Bloomfield's attention to the study of meaning may be proved scanty, his position on this point is worth rethinking. First and foremost, ontologically, as to the question of what meaning is, Bloomfield provided only a behaviorist account, locating meaning in a stimulus-response relation and reducing it to the practical events that stimulate responses. Such a partial view does not help greatly to unveil the complex nature of meaning, especially the cognitive aspect of meaning. Second, epistemologically, Bloomfield exaggerated the role of scientific knowledge, ignoring non-physical aspects which cannot be explained in terms of physics or mathematics alike. This position, misunderstood by many, almost led to a kind of agnosticism. Thirdly, methodologically, Bloomfield was limited to observation and dismissed any so-called mentalistic methods such as introspection. However, language is different from objects of study in natural sciences. Much language phenomena are not directly observable. Moreover, language is so closely related to human thought that it is unimaginable to study it by such simple and undiversified ways. Apart from all these philosophical drawbacks, Bloomfield's study of meaning also has some confusion in its own system, for example, his discussion of meaning was not consistently in the behaviorist vein when it concerns formal analysis of language, which turns out a blessing. And lexical and grammatical meanings may not be as clear-cut as he stated it to be in actual human speech since lexicon and grammar are very often interrelated.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Nevertheless, Bloomfield's contribution to linguistic study and his influence on generations of linguists are immense, not only because he set the foundation for descriptive linguistics as has been generally recognized, but because he forcefully challenged the contemporary popular mentalism in linguistic study, as has often been bypassed. His contention that linguistic study must start from form not meaning should not be taken at face value as neglect of meaning but in the historical context as an opposition to mentalistic subjective interpretation of meaning. An advocate of making linguistics a science, Bloomfield also indirectly pointed to the necessity of interdisciplinary research of language, as he stated in an article on meaning, "...we should have to wait for manuals of physiology and sociology that would read as unambiguously as do our present manuals of botany" (Bloomfield, 1943, p.102, quoted from Esper, 1968/1999, p.133). Fortunately, the advancements in science and technology have made all this feasible and the interdisciplinary studies not only contribute to linguistics but other sciences as well, and human understanding of the world and themselves have come to an unprecedented height.

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# The Effect of Structured Academic Controversy on English Proficiency Level within Communicative Language Teaching Context

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**Abstract**—This study aimed at investigating the effect of Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) on English proficiency level of Iranian intermediate EFL learners within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) context. To this end, the Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT) as the pre-test was administered to 90 EFL learners at Khayyam University of Mashhad, Iran. Based on the results and according to the test guidelines, only the intermediate EFL learners were selected as the final participants (N=60). Then, they were randomly divided into two groups of control and experimental, each group consisting of 30 subjects. Then, a t-test analysis was conducted to ensure that the two groups were not different in their English proficiency level before treatment. The experimental group was taught English based on a CLT syllabus supplemented by SAC techniques, whereas the control group received the same instruction but without being aided with the SAC techniques. After treatment, the participants received the same CEPT as the post-test. The t-test results for this test revealed a significant effect of SAC on the experimental group's performance on the post test, which means that SAC can play a role in EFL learners' English language proficiency improvement.

**Index Terms**—communicative language teaching (CLT), English proficiency level, structured academic controversy (SAC), EFL learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

Not being specific to language learning and teaching, structured academic controversy (SAC) has been defined and/or exemplified by different researchers and scholars in various scientific disciplines (Claudia Khourey-Bowers, 2012; Johnson, 1997; Moore & Zainuddin, 2003; Pappas, 2013). Some practitioners have employed SAC in their classroom or professional context. Bull (2007) used SAC in a graduate course in nursing. Nathan and Lee (2004) used SAC in the social studies classroom. In another attempt to employ SAC in a real context, Wright (2013) used SAC in an Advanced American Studies classroom. All of these researchers reported the positive effects of SAC on their learners' achievement.

However, when it comes to employing SAC in the field of language learning and teaching, the literature is evidently poor. In a position paper, Moore and Zainuddin (2003) advocate the use of SAC to improve critical thinking among English language learners. A rare research study involving SAC has been carried out by Hosseini (2009), in which he compared the effect of SAC with that of the competitive team-based learning (CTBL) on the overall proficiency of EFL college students. He reported that SAC contributed to CTBL in terms of improving learners' English proficiency. To the researchers' best knowledge, no other empirical study involving the implementation of SAC in EFL context has been reported in the related literature. As a result, further research is needed to fill this gap. This is what the present study has pursued to accomplish.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)

The Structured Academic Controversy was theorized and introduced by Johnson and Johnson (1997), who were working at University of Minnesota's Cooperative Learning Center. Khourey-Bowers (2012) states that:

Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) is a teaching approach in which students will research one or several points of view and then communicate their findings in a structured format. The goals of a SAC are for students to gain content knowledge about issues, appreciate and respect multiple viewpoints, and learn how to build consensus. SACs promote

teaching about a controversy without requiring students to take a dualistic stance, straining classroom interactions between students with diverse views, or marginalizing students whose personal beliefs are different from those of the majority. (p.1)

According to Hess (2004), SAC promotes cooperative learning and cooperative method of research. Through a structured academic controversy lesson, learners are able to learn different aspects of a debatable issue- how to defend their position when supporting a particular aspect of that issue, and how to ventilate differing and/or contradictory views about an issue in an academic way. This method enables learners to formulate, classify, and comprehend ideas and information about a controversial issue. Moreover, it elicits informed responses from the learners.

Various step-by-step procedures have been suggested for the implementation of SAC. A more well-known step-by-step procedure is offered by Oxford learning institute of University of Oxford (2012). This institute proposes the following procedures for the smooth implementation of SAC in the classroom:

Students are placed in groups of four (two pairs). Each pair must: 1. Research and prepare a position on a given dilemma/controversial question; 2. Present and advocate their position; 3. Engage in open discussion, refuting the opposing position and rebutting attacks on their own position; 4. Reverse perspectives (forcefully present the other pair's position, including any arguments they believe the 'opposition' has failed to incorporate); 5. Synthesise and integrate the best evidence and reasoning into an agreed joint position. (p.1)

In the present study, the above procedures were customized and then used to implement SAC in the language classroom. (See "Procedure" section)

### B. *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*

CLT approach arose as a reaction to the failure of the previous methods to develop sufficient communicative competence in the learners. Galloway (1993), for instance, states that learners are at "a loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied" (p.10). According to Widdowson (1989), the use of the target language in real-life situations would not be possible without the knowledge of the language and, more importantly, the ability to use that knowledge in real situations. CLT attempts to take all these issues into account, which were not sufficiently addressed by the previous approaches and methods. Richards (2006) states that:

Communicative language teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. (p.2)

What follows is an elaboration on the basic tenets of this approach.

#### 1. *The communicative approach (CA)*

According to Ellis (1993), the communicative approach to language teaching is aimed at providing learners with ample opportunities to communicate readily in the target language. The natural outcome of this approach was a shift from form to meaning, with the main focus on the "learners' needs, motivation, characteristics, abilities, limitation, and resources" (Yalden, 1996, p.163). Indeed, what distinguishes communicative approach from other methods is the fact that apart from emphasis on grammar, CA maintains that if a learner is to be successful in language learning, s/he must acquire the communicative skills of a native speaker (Spolsky, 1989). Based on the characteristics of CA outlined above, a special type of language learning classroom, well-known as the learner-centered classroom, is required.

#### 2. *The communicative classroom*

Below is the description of a number of features defining the communicative classroom. These features relate to the roles of the learning materials, students and teachers.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2006), if any type of material is to fulfill the requirements of the communicative approach, it should:

1. Improve students' abilities to interpret, express and negotiate.
2. Focus on comprehensible communication instead of grammatical form.
3. Provide learners with opportunities to stimulate their interest, intelligence and creativity.
4. Utilize texts and media of various types to enable students to improve their competence via different activities and tasks.

In a class in which CA is employed, Taylor (1983) states that students should do their best to acquire the target language, not by studying it, but by using it in a real way. This implies that students should take the responsibility of their own learning and that it is better to present language input to students in a simple language. Rodgers (2001) has compared students to negotiators and improvisers, meaning that each learner is supposed to interact with other learners in search of information and feedback.

As for the role of the teacher, the teacher himself acts like a negotiator. Just as students provide feedback to each other, the teacher also gives them feedback, and sometimes may even receive feedback from students. Teachers provide solutions and assistance where necessary (Gutierrez, 2005). Teachers act like a guide, a planner, a facilitator of learning, a consultant, and a monitor. Thus, a communicative class is far from being a teacher-centered class.

Another description of the roles of teachers and learners is offered by Richards (2006). He states that:

Learners now had to participate in classroom activities that were based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students had to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher for a model. They were expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their

own learning. And teachers now had to assume the role of facilitator and monitor. Rather than being a model for correct speech and writing and one with the primary responsibility of making students produce plenty of error-free sentences, the teacher had to develop a different view of learners' errors and of her/his own role in facilitating language learning. (p.5)

### 3. *The communicative activities*

What matters most in providing students with situations to use the target language is to employ communicative activities. According to Tait (2001), these are such activities that are fluency-based and promote both meaningful and purposeful interactions among L2 learners. In such interactions, students are both the receivers and providers of information, exchanging feedback with each other, etc. (Gower, Walter & Phillips, 1995; Harmer, 2003). The basic requirement for such situations and activities to occur is that the class should be student-oriented and activities must be geared to be, in Richards and Rodgers's (1982) words, "interactive, authentic, purposive, and contextualized" (p.201). According to the Longman English Language Teaching (2007), the following characteristics help define a useful communicative activity:

1. Creating a desire in the learner to communicate.
2. Being built upon a communicative purpose
3. Concentrating on language content rather than forms
4. Variation in the use of target language
5. Minimizing the degree of teacher intervention.
6. Avoiding simplifying the materials.

Richards (2006) enumerated seven CLT activities, some of which are as follows:

1. Information-gap activities such as jig-saw activities. Richards (2006) explains jig-saw activity in the following terms:

the class is divided into groups and each group has part of the information needed to complete an activity. The class must fit the pieces together to complete the whole. In so doing, they must use their language resources to communicate meaningfully and so take part in meaningful communication practice. The following are examples of jigsaw activities. (p.19)

2. Task-completions activities in which learners have to rely on their own linguistic knowledge to accomplish a task. e.g. puzzles, map-reading, etc.

3. Role play activities in which learners are asked to adopt roles and communicate with each other, in way that simulates real-life situations.

4. Information-gathering activities in which learners should collect information by means of survey, interview, etc, provided that they use the target language to carry out such activities.

Having defined and exemplified CLT activities, Richards (2006) highlights that

Most of the activities discussed reflect an important aspect of classroom tasks in CLT, namely that they are designed to be carried out in pairs or small groups. Through completing activities in this way, it is argued, learners will obtain several benefits: 1. They can learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group. 2. They will produce a greater amount of language than they would use in teacher-fronted activities. 3. Their motivational level is likely to increase. 4. They will have the chance to develop fluency. Teaching and classroom materials today consequently make use of a wide variety of small-group activities. (p.20)

Given the importance of the learner's ability to use the target language communicatively, this study sought to explore the role of the SAC in developing EFL learners English language proficiency. For this purpose, the following research question was posed in order to test the corresponding hypothesis.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

The present study was an attempt to answer the following research question:

Does Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) within the CLT context affect Iranian intermediate EFL learners' English proficiency?

The following null hypothesis is assumed for the above question:

Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) within the CLT context does not affect Iranian intermediate EFL learners' English proficiency.

## IV. METHOD

### A. *Participants*

The sample of the present study consisted of 60 (40 females and 20 males) Iranian intermediate EFL learners, selected out of a total number of 90 EFL learners at Khayyam University of Mashhad, Iran. They were all sophomores, aging from 18 to 20. They were homogenized across the intermediate language proficiency level based on the results of the proficiency test described below.

### B. *Instrumentation*

### 1. Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT)

This test was used to homogenize the subjects in terms of English Proficiency. It consists of 25 items to be answered in 20 minutes. The items move from the easiest to the most difficult. Based on the test manual, those scores falling somewhere from 13 to 17 out of 25 are considered intermediate. According to this guideline, 60 intermediate participants were extracted from the total number of 90 learners. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the test was calculated at 0.823, which indicated a high reliability index.

### C. Procedures

Initially, the CEPT as the pre-test was administered to 90 EFL learners. The results were used to screen the subjects for intermediate language proficiency level. Thus, 60 intermediate EFL learners were selected as mentioned earlier. Then, the participants were randomly divided into two groups of experimental and control, each with 30 members. As for treatment, the experimental group was taught English based on a CLT-oriented syllabus supplemented by the SAC techniques, whereas the control group within the same CLT context did not receive the SAC techniques. The participants in the experimental group were required to discover how English can be better learned from the viewpoints of different scholars and practitioners such as linguists, language teachers and psychologists

The following step-by-step procedure was employed to implement SAC techniques:

(1) The class was divided into 3 groups. Students had to find their relevant materials from online and offline resources (i.e. internet, libraries, etc). The EFL learners in each group were supposed to study their own materials and get prepared to play the roles of linguists, language teachers and psychologists. They were encouraged to remain open-minded and value the findings of other groups and what they contribute to the discussion.

(2) Each group wrote a summary of their findings in the respective scientific field. It was recommended that the summary be typed on 2 – 3 pages. A representative of each group was supposed to read the summary of the group in the class. The other two groups had to listen, comment and ask questions.

(3) The representative was expected to be ready to answer any questions about his/her group's findings.

(4) At the end of the class session, all three groups were asked to discuss how the perspectives of linguists, language teachers and psychologists might complement each other.

It goes without saying that the teacher of this class was adequately instructed how to implement the above-mentioned elaborate procedure. Finally, the researchers administered the CEPT test again as the posttest to explore any differences between the experimental and control groups' English language proficiency after treatment.

## V. RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

### A. T-test Results for Homogeneity of Groups

An independent-samples t-test was used to compare the two groups' performance on the CEPT test (pretest) in order to ensure the homogeneity of both groups in terms of English language proficiency level before treatment. The results revealed no significant difference between the mean scores of the control group ( $M$ : 14.50,  $SD$ : 1.10), and experimental group ( $M$ : 15.40,  $SD$ : 0.67;  $t(47.9) = 3.8$ ,  $p = 0.071$ ). Thus both groups were homogenous regarding their English proficiency. Table 1 and Table 2 below report the descriptive statistics and t-test results of the analysis, respectively.

TABLE 1.  
GROUP STATISTICS FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (PRE-TEST)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English Proficiency of Learners Before Treatment	Control	30	14.50	1.10	0.20
	Experimental	30	15.40	0.67	0.12

TABLE 2.  
INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES TEST FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (PRE-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	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	11.85	0.001	-3.8	58	0.067	-0.90	0.23	-1.37360	-0.42640
Equal variances not assumed			-3.8	47.9	0.071	-0.90	0.23	-1.37572	-0.42428

$P > 0.05$

### B. Findings for the Research Question

In order to investigate the research question of the study, the researchers conducted another independent-samples T-test analysis to study any difference between the control and experimental groups' performance on the CEPT after treatment (posttest). The results of t-test indicated a significant difference between the control group ( $M$ = 14.96,  $SD$  =

1.06), and the experimental group [ $M = 20.93, SD = 4.17; t(32.76), p = -7.58,$ ], indicating that SAC did have a positive effect in improving the experimental group’s English proficiency. The magnitude of the difference, i.e., the effect size, was large (eta square = 0.49), based on Cohen’s (1988) ratings (as cited in Pallant, 2001, p.175). This means that about 49 percent of the variance in the post-test is explained by the usage of SAC. The results for the analysis are given in Table.3 and Table.4

TABLE 3.  
GROUP STATISTICS FOR THE IMPACT OF SAC ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (POST-TEST)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English Proficiency of Learners Before Treatment	Control	30	14.96	1.06	0.19
	Experimental	30	20.93	4.17	0.76

TABLE 4.  
INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES TEST FOR THE IMPACT OF SAC ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (POST-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	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	53.20	0.000	-7.58	58	0.000	-5.96	0.78	-7.54	-4.39
Equal variances not assumed			-7.58	32.7	0.000	-5.96	0.78	-7.56	-4.36

P < 0.05  
Eta Square: 0.49

VI. DISCUSSION

The finding of the study that SAC can have a positive effect on EFL learners’ English proficiency is in line with the findings of Bull (2007) Nathan and Lee (2004), and Wright (2013) who also found the facilitative effects of SAC in their respective fields of study. The reason why the participants in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group regarding performance on the language proficiency posttest may be accounted for in several ways.

Firstly, during the study, the experimental group had the opportunity to read various English-language texts such books, magazines, articles, etc, both online and offline. Reading such a wide range of resources seems to have improved experimental group students’ reading ability and vocabulary size. Secondly, they had the opportunity to write a summary of their findings, present and discuss them orally at each class session. This, in turn, provided them with an opportunity to practice their writing ability, speaking ability and listening skill in an organized way offered by SAC.

Nevertheless, the finding of the present study is not to be taken as conclusive. It could be fruitfully replicated by other researchers to further explore any possible effect of SAC in other relevant contexts with different participants. Further research can also be conducted to investigate the effect of SAC on individual characteristics such as anxiety, self-esteem, etc. Any research in this area can improve our understanding of the psychological impact of SAC on L2 learners.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The finding of the present study may carry several pedagogical implications. First of all, the study contributes to the current situation of language learning and teaching in an Iranian context and potentially beyond, encouraging a careful implementation of SAC in any context in which CLT is practiced. The study also suggests that CLT, despite its widespread popularity, is not an absolute perfection that cannot be further enhanced. This study is an example of how to increase the functionality of CLT. Another implication is that the role of learners is of utmost importance. Although CLT, even without the implementation of SAC, is by itself a learner-centered approach, the study suggests that the role of learners through the implementation of SAC can become even far more conspicuous. It is recommended that the EFL teachers should make learners familiar with SAC through some explicit explanations and warm-up activities similar to SAC. Therefore, learners become affectively and cognitively better prepared to cope with what SAC demands.

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# The Effectiveness of Application of Writing Strategies in Writing Instruction

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**Abstract**—Research on writing strategies has been a well-established field in second language writing research and the application of writing strategies in pedagogy has been widely acknowledged to effectively improve the process and product of English composition. This article explores how English as a foreign language learner's writing strategy use within both traditional cognitive views and sociocultural perspective. While ESL composition research actively investigates writing strategies on English majors in university, less attention has been directed to non-English majors and their composing situations differ from those of English majors. This article attempts to begin to fill this gap. The findings from this study are concluded about the specific solutions that can be practiced in writing instruction and suggest future directions of writing strategy research.

**Index Terms**—writing strategies, sociocultural approach, cognitive strategy, College English course, EFL learners, mediated actions

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency, L1 writing competence, use of cohesive devices, metacognitive knowledge about the writing task, writing strategies and writers' personal characteristics, all these factors has been illustrated by Angelova (1999) to affect the process and product of English as foreign language (EFL) writing. Among all above factors, writing strategies seem exceedingly significant to ESL writing since many researchers (Arndt, 1987; Victori, 1995; Zamel, 1982; Beare, 2000) assert that "it is the writing strategies that primarily separate successful from less successful writers" (Mu, 2005, p.1). To my knowledge, one of the earliest researches on ESL writing strategies is Arndt's investigation in the year of 1987. She focused on six Chinese EFL students about their activities of writing composition and analyzed their written texts produced by both their first language and foreign language. Eight categories were adopted to code Chinese students' writing strategies: planning, global planning, rehearsing, repeating, re-reading, questioning, revising and editing. The other example of writing strategies' studies is investigated by Wenden (1991). Wenden investigated eight ESL students by requiring them to compose a writing task at the computer and researched how the learners used metacognitive strategies in their writing. According to her findings, metacognitive strategies involving planning, evaluation and monitoring are mental operations that learners use to regulate their learning. The features of these two researches are to see writing as essentially a cognitive process in which "writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel, 1983, p.165) and consider that writers use a series of cognitive strategies to accomplish writing assignments.

In contrast to traditional cognitive view of writing strategies, some specialists (e.g., Engeström, 1987; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf, 2006) drew on sociocultural studies to "understand how mental functioning is related to cultural, institutional, and historical context" (Wertsch, 1998, p.24). The key to the sociocultural approach is Vygotsky (1978)'s view of mediation, which indicated that humans "are able to make indirect connections between incoming stimulation and their responses through various links" (Lei, 2008, p.219). Such indirect connections are seen as "mediation", which is realized via two means: tools and signs (Vygotsky, 1978). By the means of tools, people learn to control their behaviors from the outside; via the application of signs, it is possible for people to regulate their mind from the inside. Therefore, the idea of mediation by both tools and signs build a bridge between humans and society and culture.

The concept of mediation was developed into Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987, 1999) by situating individuals' behaviors in collective activities. Several L2 specialists such as Donato and McCormick (1994) have directly explored the implication of activity theory for SLA. In terms of writing research, some experts (e.g., Prior, 2001, 2006; Russell, 1995, 1997; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996) pay more attentions on the application of mediation analysis and Activity Theory. According to Activity Theory, Lei (2008, 2012) argued that writing strategies are "mediated actions which are consciously taken to facilitate writer's practices in communities" (Lei, 2008, p.220) and identified four types of writing strategies by drawing on the Activity Theory. They are artifact-mediated, rule-mediated, role-mediated and community-mediated strategies.

In the study of ESL writing history, Silva (1990) roughly divided ESL writing instruction into four stages which separately are achieved by four approaches: the controlled approach, the current-traditional rhetoric approach, the process approach and the social approach. Mu (2005) in his studies stated that four approaches in these four stages of ESL writing instruction are supported by four important theories related to ESL writing. They are Contrastive Rhetoric Theory, Cognitive Development Theory, Communication Theory and Social Constructionist Theory. The relationship

between writing instruction approaches and theories of classification of writing strategies is displayed in Table 1. The Contrastive Rhetoric Theory, Cognitive Developmental Theory and Social Constructionist Theory correspond with the current-traditional rhetoric approach, the process approach and the social approach of ESL writing instruction respectively. The Communication Theory is reflected in all these four approaches of ESL writing instruction.

TABLE. 1

Writing instruction approaches	Theories of classification of writing strategies
Current-traditional rhetoric approach	Contrastive Rhetoric Theory
Process approach	Cognitive Developmental Theory
Social approach	Social Constructionist Theory
Controlled approach	Communication Theory
Current-traditional rhetoric approach	
Process approach	
Social approach	

Combining classification of writing strategies of Mu (2005) with exploration of writing strategies within the Activity Theory framework From Lei's (2008, 2012) investigation, I will discuss how writing strategies make implication of pedagogy in College English Course, which is a compulsory course for freshmen and sophomore except for English majors. Strategy use, in my opinion, should not be emphasized on either traditional-cognitive strategies or sociocultural strategies. Therefore, based on comprehensive consideration from two perspectives of writing strategies, six aspects are on following discussion. Contrastive rhetoric theory, Cognitive Development theory, Communication theory and artifact-mediated, rule-mediated strategies are attributed into Mu and Lei's classification of writing strategies respectively. Society-mediated strategy is one of subcategories of Community-mediated strategies according to Lei (2008, 2012). Nevertheless, Mu (2006) identified social factors into a category of writing strategies: social Constructionist Theory. It is suggested that society-mediated strategies are mainly discussed. Additionally, I strongly consider that role-mediated strategies are closely related to social-mediated strategies, which will be analyzed in part of social-mediated strategies as well.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to explore the solutions of following problems revealed from practical instruction in College English Course with the results of writing strategy research.

- For college students, it is seldom difficult to analyze the elements of paragraph during the reading course by correctly pointing out topic sentences and support sentences and understanding where to use classification, exemplification, comparison and definition. However, while composing writings, they present their ideas just with simple sentences and disordered paragraph structure. Especially for those good EFL learners, there is an embarrassing situation that they are not able to break the barrier between what they have learnt and what they want to write. They always have a habit of expressing in easy words and sentences that makes a negative influence on facilitation of writing. Perl concludes this phenomenon as "stable composing process" (Perl, 1979, p.328) for unskilled writers but in my experience there is no exception for most skilled writers. The single difference is differently "stable" composing process.

- Improper use of the Internet. Instead of collecting useful information, obtaining brainstorming ideas, and reading some online samples writings via the Internet, many learners tend to depend on an online thesaurus completely. They are addicted to use online dictionary to resolve all problems, not realizing that the differences between L1 and L2 and they are not entitled to use any dictionaries in examinations. It is commonly realized that in College English class some novice students might come upon an embarrassing situation that he or she submits a same composition as his or her classmates. They do not know how to write in English but download from the Internet.

- Most EFL learners in College English Course view each skill of English acquisition separately and commonly believe that their reading ability is better than writing ability, which they extremely are confused how to improve it or have a very limited notion of what composing involves. Moreover, through daily observation of EFL learners in College English class, they seldom develop their writing ability by obtaining assistance from others except for the in-class instruction from teachers as a result of emotional elements such as pudency and ignorance of problems.

- Some students can easier translate an English sentence into Chinese than translate same sentence from Chinese to English. Additionally, while reading an English article, some students can understand what it means, but cannot speak it out in Chinese with the proper language transformation.

## III. DISCUSSION

### A. Contrastive Rhetoric Theory

Contrastive rhetoric theory is proposed by Kaplan (1966) in his essay 'Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Communication'. Research in contrastive rhetoric indicated that textual differences written by native and non-native speakers of English were related to their respective cultural differences. Since this theory was emerged it has experienced numerous criticisms; however, even with so many criticisms for a number of years, contrastive rhetoric has

played a very important role in ESL writing classroom (Silva, 1990). As Silva (1990) noted, the elements of paragraphs such as topic sentences, support sentences, and transitions as well as various choices for its development such as illustration, exemplification, comparison, contrast, classification and definition are involved in the theory of contrastive rhetoric.

Although it is a distinct question that most less-proficiency EFL learners have already realized, they have no ideas how to resolve it and facilitate their writings effectively. Instructors could help learners make more commitment on capturing a topic sentence that entirely and correctly summarize certain paragraph and stating supported details logically. To those who have occupied correct grammatical expectations and conventions, instructors should encourage them to use skills such as classification, exemplification, definition and contrast to facilitate writings. Additionally, interpretation of reading material and ideas refinement is the practical pedagogies based on contrastive rhetoric theory. For instance, in the textbook 'New Horizon College English' (second edition) Book 3, there is a reading text about "iron deficiency". Interpretation of problems on iron deficiency and refining suggestions to prevent iron deficiency are beneficial of composing under relevant topics such as how to keep health, women health, adult health, healthy diet, etc. From another text about solitude recorded in book--New Horizon College English (second edition) Book 4, students seems to hardly impress how an artist opts a solitary living style to obtain the inspiration. Teachers could help learners conclude the advantages and disadvantages of living alone or living with roommates and set an example to how to expand these objectives into some writing topics: "what is your ideas about dormitory life? ", "what is your opinions about the Internet life-style?" which breaks an illusion for some learners that identical opinions cannot support different topics.

### *B. Cognitive Development Theory*

Cognitive development theory, "which emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century, was concerned with nature of knowledge and with the structures and processes by which it is acquired" (Mu, 2005, p.2). Perhaps the most contribution of cognitive development theory is to raise the discussion of process that is obviously associated with Flower and Hayes's model (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia's model (1987). Flower and Hayes (1981) viewed English writing as a recursive process in which planning, generating, translating and editing need to work together without regular procedure as well as a single process for all writers in which skilled writers do the same as less-skilled ones. Consequently, Flower and Hayes's model (1981) revealed an obvious limitation that it was not able to account for the differences between proficient writers and novice writers. Based on think-aloud protocol analysis, experimental research and direct observation, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) propose two models of writing: knowledge-telling model for novice writers and knowledge-transformation model for expert ones. The former model does not involve any complex problem-solving activities while the latter model requires writers to produce a series of reflective behaviors that involve transformations of information to solve content and rhetorical problems during the period of composition.

Although limitations existed in both theories, Flower and Hayes's model and Bereiter and Scardamalia's model gave a good indication of research on ESL writing. In College English class, identical requirement of writing assignment for all students is clearly an unadvisable decision. Given the practical instruction, I all along insist on applying for different pedagogies to guide novice and expert writers to compose. The primary prospective for novice is to cultivate them to tell ideas in writing conventions that are acceptable to native English speakers. Conservative expressions, which mean structures are easily mastered, combined with less rhetoric transformation should be encouraged by doing more trainings in writings for novices. Through such goal-directed practice, novice writers could write smoothly and exactly express their ideas by avoiding some grammar errors both in routine assignments and exam task. This point can be emphasized by a negative example that novice writers usually entirely depend on online-translation device to finish composition since it is seen as an impossible mission beyond their English proficiency. In contrast, for good ESL learners, there is no virtual facilitation for their writing under the instruction of knowledge-telling theory. Therefore, instructors need to endeavor to deliver knowledge transforming process of writing through revising their writings. Instead of merely focusing on grammatical errors, improvement on writing should be paid more concentration in terms of proper use of vocabulary, complex sentence structure, connecting, etc.

### *C. Communication Theory*

Kennedy (1998) indicated that it is the social and political purposes of discourse rituals that Communication theory highlights, "specifically discourse-in-use, where interpersonal communication is grounded in beliefs about individualism and independent interaction in society and investigates multiple levels of discourse (economical, social, material, institutional, and cultural)" (Mu, 2005, p.3). To realize the connection between communication theory and writing studies, discourse is obviously emphasized to reach an important position. According to communication theories, different discourses are compatible with different communicative purposes. Cooper and Odell (1977) have identified various styles of written discourses such as dramatic, personal, academic writing, business writing, technical writing, fiction and poetry. Writing strategies of discourse is no doubt to guide the effective writing for ESL learners, which is proved by the instruction of academic writing. For most College English learners, writing is just a written expression that is simply transformed from oral expression in English. It is general to see some oral expressions in learners' essays, which seems too much like a record of a speech. Students should be required to understand disciplines of academic writing and master the genres and conventions of an academic discourse community to write a real academic essay.

With the correct direction of communicative strategies, writing becomes a process to express writers' ideas in a most effective way. This is also the definition of communicative strategies from Cohen (1998).

#### *D. Artifact-mediated Strategies*

Since the artifacts include tools and signs, artifact-mediated strategies are categorized as tool-mediated and sign-mediated strategies. According to the results of investigation from Lei (2012), four types of artifacts---English literary works, the Internet, the L1 (Chinese) language and the L2 (English) language---are mainly used by EFL learners to mediate into their writing. Both the Internet-mediated and literary work-mediated strategies are classified into the tool-mediated strategies while L1 and L2 language are the most prominent subcategories of sign-mediated strategies.

With regard to the promotion of EFL learners in College English Course, I have the experience that these subcategories could function simultaneously and complementary to boost learners' English proficiency of writing. I hold a strong agreement with Lei (2012) that English literary works can be used as a major artifact to develop students' writing strategy use. However, in the class of College English course, students who are unlike English majors rarely read any English literary works other than materials in textbooks, which means instructors need to employ textbooks comprehensively to not only enhance reading ability but also importantly raise their writing competence.

Facing with vocabularies and sentence structures in readings that can be easily transferred into compositions, experienced teachers should lecture learners to use brains actively by imitating the language use in literary works with their own expressions. Moreover, instructors should enhance positive transformation both from Chinese to English and English to Chinese, avoiding Chinglish expression. Teachers should balance the exercises of translations. When students are having a habit of translating from English to Chinese, teachers should consciously guide them to do more practices oppositely---from Chinese to English---with the instruction of similarities and differences between two languages. As it is difficult to immerse in an English environment while living in a Chinese-speaking society for most college students, the more effective practices is to master the differences and similarities between L1 and L2 and further remedy Chinglish expression.

There is no any objection that the Internet is fast, convenient, up-to-date, and full of resource. However, under my observation, its disadvantages surpass its advantages constantly with the lack of cognition of the Internet's weaknesses and excessive exaggeration of its strengths. Some students make an equation with dictionary and the Internet with frequent using of online thesaurus. The neglect of usage of words is not beneficial of writing. Therefore, instructors necessarily encourage learners use non-electronic dictionary to pinpoint vague words in their minds, check the usage of some words they knew, explore new meanings of words they have learnt and analyze sample sentences to imitate in their own compositions. In fact, the Internet that is viewed as a main source of information is definitely worthy of advocating, especially in the preparation period of writing. For instance, various opinions of a topic easily scanned on the Internet could make a brainstorming for learners; relevant information of topic collected via the Internet could purposefully enrich materials for writing activities.

The artifact-mediated strategies significantly contribute to ESL learners' writing. However, its function on writing is not always constant. Misunderstanding of certain subcategories of artifact-mediated strategies could produce some negative effects on composition, which should be avoided by appropriate instruction. Instructors prefer to raise learners' consciousness of using artifacts in writing and enhance their ability to use them effectively.

#### *E. Rule-mediated Strategies*

Rules refer to "the norms and sanctions that specify and regulate the expected correct procedures and acceptable interactions among the participants" (Cole & Engeström, 1993, p.7). According to Lei's (2012) investigation, three types of rule-mediated strategies in her participants' writing are actively employed: rhetoric-mediated, assignment vs. exam rule-mediated, and evaluation criteria-mediated strategies. In my opinion, the term of rhetoric-mediated strategy is similar to the Contrastive Rhetoric theory of Wu's (2005) research. In this section, I draw more attention to two other subcategories of rule-mediated strategies: assignment vs. exam rule-mediated and evaluation criteria-mediated strategies.

In Lei's investigation (2012), the participants are English majors who are free to express ideas in the assignment; in contrast they consciously please examiners to get a high score by pursuing various vocabularies and performing their writing abilities. However, in College English class there is a different situation. Some students copy good sentences or even employ online-translation device to complete assignments with the purpose of giving teachers a good impression. When they are in a real exam, especially confronting an unfamiliar topic, due to lack of effective and accurate practices in peacetime, these learners difficultly achieve a piece of "perfect" composition like they do in daily task. Although instructors have few opportunities to supervise students to write in class, they would emphasize the correct writing methods with the combination of artifact-mediated and rule-mediated strategies and clarify that one of the goals to write is to explode mistakes and weaknesses. Additionally, instructors should as well encourage them to write articles within the duration as exam provides and without any assists from any dictionaries. Through these practices, students are no longer afraid of writing when they are in exam.

To write an assignment well, students all know that they have to follow certain evaluation criteria. I used to hear an argument from one of my students that her writing is very good because it accords with requirement of her middle

school's English teacher. And it is another common phenomenon that tedious narrations replace summarized arguments in genre of argumentative writing, which gives me a signal that evaluation criteria of writing in college education should be instructed to learners primarily. Natural English expression, profound thoughts, clear-organized structure, clear logic and accurate diction that are definitely the characteristics of a good writing should be valued greatly in college students' mind to evaluate their composition.

#### *F. Society-mediated Strategies*

Social constructionists believe that we do not "find or discover concepts, models, and knowledge as much as we construct or make them" (Mu, 2005, p. 3). In regard of the function of society-mediated strategies to composition instruction, the importance of teaching within students' zones of proximal development (ZPD) should be highlighted. According to Vygotsky's (1978) work, Carol stated that "teachers can bridge the gap between the level of performance attained by the student in independent problem solving and the level attained in collaborative problem solving with the teacher and more knowledgeable other" (Carol, 1992, p.162), a gap that Vygotsky refers to as the ZPD. Standing on the angel of learners, Dixon-Krauss (1996) believed that learning to write within the ZPD occurs when students engage in a task that is too difficult for them to perform independently, forced them to seek support and assistance from more capable peers for their writing performance or organize peers to complete collectively.

For the above perspective, teachers can scaffold learning in various ways to teach within students' learning zones. For example, teachers can help some students who have difficulties knowing what information to include ask a series of graduated questions that push students retrieve relevant information. Moreover, teachers can organize some activities to give rise new understandings and awarenesses by using students' everyday knowledge and experiences.

In Lei's (2008) studies, all participants alerted that they would actively and consciously find assistance from competent peers, English elites, and even communication in virtual communities; whereas in Lei's (2012) research, in terms of society-mediated strategies, participants believed that the "ultimate goal of their learning to write on campus was to socialize with people in society" (Lei, 2012, p.182). With the comparison of two researches, society-mediated strategies are reflected in the process of writing composition and the goal of writing. That is to say that teachers should adopt society-mediated strategies in response to different desires from students and society-mediated strategies, as a subcategories of community-mediated strategies, is firmly compatible with role-mediated strategies.

The community comprises "multiple individuals and/or subgroups who share the same general object and who construct themselves as distinct from other communities" (Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, 2007). Role describes "the continuously negotiated distribution of tasks, powers, and responsibilities among the participants of the activity system" (Cole & Engeström, 1993, p.7). In same or different community, each individual could play different role. Teachers who effectively involve with community-mediated and role-mediated strategies can improve writing competence for students and raise learners' consciousness of participation. Students naturally have a habit of being a novice facing their teachers. To fulfill a same assignment, instructors probably position students in the role of experts to explain, readers to evaluate where students can practice discourse, skills, strategy and other abilities. Except for the instructors, peers play also an important role in supplementary impacts on learning writing. With the combination of community-mediated and role-mediated strategies, teachers can encourage learners to participate in various community activities such as group discussion, writing interesting groups, peer revision where learners with same level of English proficiency can socialize with other community members and get information from their peers. Role of certain individual probably is not a learners but an instructor. Students-to-student interactive dialogues are more functional instead of teacher-to-student interactive dialogue that is a traditional kind of feedback for English learning. Lastly, instructors can enrich writing contents for future careers such as CV, proposal, speech, project and discipline, agreement, enhancing their social consciousness by transforming their role from simple English language learners to language users.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

These findings lead to conclusions about the solutions of questions appearing in regular educational practice posed at the beginning of the study, and have implications of mediation of writing instruction. Lastly, the emphasis on raising to self-consciousness that EFL learner should employ various strategies and strategy adaptations, more importantly, reach interactions between across various writing strategies.

In this article, research on application of writing strategies is conducted to examine the effectiveness of instructing students in writing where the real goal is to achieve authentic and meaningful communication. As mentioned above, learners in College English Course are not like English majors, who can engage in regular exclusive writing courses and obtain systematic and professional instructions within a small-scale class. Therefore, the appropriate application of writing strategies that provides an effective teaching to EFL learners should be paid more attention. The writing strategies guided by Contrastive rhetoric theory lead to the correct and proper expressions in writing progress and interpretation of reading materials rather than isolating writing from reading skills. The cognitive development theory implies that distinct pedagogies are employed to skilled- or unskilled EFL learners while confronting students with a wide range of English proficiency. Emphasis on discourse is inevitable explaining the application of communication theory in writing studies, which has been commonly approved and widely practiced in EFL education.

Mediation serves as a key-word in discussion of writing strategies from the sociocultural perspective. Artifact-mediated and rule-mediated writing strategies through English literacy works, the Internet, L1 & L2 language, assignment vs. exam rule and evaluation criteria, are used to effectively complete the composition. In addition, writing should be presented as a collaborative and social activity rather than a solitary. Involving the relationship between society-mediated, role-mediated and community-mediated strategies, I draw a conclusion that instructors should create various communities to encourage learners to be different roles in order to make learners understand the importance of society-mediated strategies affecting the process and product of writing. The learners should break the traditions that writing is a private experience with few opportunities to interact.

Despite above discussed mediations in writing instruction, awareness of audience and purpose of writing is consciously mediated into EFL writing by teachers. Writers' purpose should be the communication with a certain potential reader as Zamel (1983) indicated that skilled ESL writers "understood the importance of taking into account a reader's expectations" (Zamel, 1983, p.178). It is a good means that in the course of composing writers tend to establish an audience for its composition and view the task as lively dialogic interaction with a reader to make more improvement on the writing instead of seeing the task solely just as a linguistic assignment. Instructors should encourage students to do more sophisticated understanding of themselves as authors to fulfill the requirement from their audiences in the literacy community.

Each writing strategy could not be considered being solitary. To realize the purposes of effectiveness of writing instruction, in the classroom given the different situation of learners and teaching experience, combination of various writing strategies to convey language knowledge and techniques should be served as a priority. While realizing that the meaning embedded in highly structured learning materials is not sufficient to transfer to students, some teachers began to use the concept of mediation in their class. However, instructors should clarify that not every mediation affect learner's English proficiency though they received a great deal mediations in the progress of interaction. Consequently, teachers primarily aim at assisting students distinguish which writing strategy and what kind of mediation can positively influence on their writing and enhance their ability of improving composition without the guidance of instructors.

Writing is not just as one of the language skills to be mastered, or the most prominent skills to be learned, but as an effective way for an EFL learner to accumulate vocabulary, generate sentences, experience chunks of discourses and ultimately communicate them in English language.

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# Action Research as a Bottom-up Approach to Foster Teacher Involvement in Language Curriculum Change

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**Abstract**—Despite the popularity of action research in the field of teacher education and professional development, not much is found regarding the role of action research in language curriculum development. This lack of interest may stem from the dominance of top-down approach over curriculum development in some EFL contexts where no special place is given to the local needs and wants. This paper starts with the definition and some basic characteristics of action research and then follows with a brief overview of its origins as well as different types. How action research can make changes in a curriculum is discussed next. Then it looks at the role action research may play in creating positive changes in teachers' roles in curriculum development. Some of the challenges of implementing action research are mentioned later. Finally, the paper ends with some guidelines for teachers to make improvements as a result of conducting action research.

**Index Terms**—action research, bottom-up curriculum, curriculum development, top-down curriculum

## I. INTRODUCTION

Action research (hereafter referred to as AR) is not a new concept applicable to only second language education. Rather, it is a well-known practice in several fields. As the word indicates, AR has a simultaneous focus on action and research and it is often problem-oriented and interventionist (Burns, 2005b; Van Lier, 2004). The purpose of AR, according to Mckernan (1987, p. 7), is to help practitioners understand and hopefully solve curriculum problems. The literature is replete with numerous definitions of AR, among which a definition offered by Carr and Kemmis's (1986) is frequently cited. They define AR as "it is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (p. 162). To Mckernan (1987), multiple definitions of AR may not be useful to solve curriculum problems, but they can offer perspectives on the curriculum problems to be resolved. The main concern of AR, according to Elliot (1991), is unifying teaching, curriculum development, evaluation, educational research, and professional development.

In second language teaching/learning studies, AR emerged as a means of professional development paralleled with evolving interest in learner-centered curriculum and classroom-based research (Burns, 2009). According to Van Lier (1994, p. 31), "AR is a type of research through which the practitioners are assumed the best people to carry out research on their own practices, sometimes with the help of outsiders and academics who have some relevant expertise to offer". Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, as cited in Nunan, 1992) point out that AR mainly has three major characteristics: It is carried out by practitioners, it is collaborative, and it is aimed at changing things. Moreover, according to Burns (2005a), the central characteristics of AR are the enhancement of practice, the development of new theoretical understandings, and the introduction of change into the social enterprise.

Besides, AR as a valid approach that involves teachers in research gives eminence to the role of the teacher in curriculum development. This view is particularly significant in fields such as language teaching. The range of teacher involvement in curriculum development is determined by how the term curriculum is defined. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2004), the curriculum was seen as a plan for action during the early 1900s. Along these lines of characterizing, the curriculum was also called the content-centered, objectives or traditional approach (p.9). In this approach, teacher involvement in curriculum development was centered to a great extent on implementing the content to obtain the product. Hence, teachers' involvement in the configuration or distribution and assessment stages was not stressed. However, with the development of learner-centered approach in the late 1960s and 1970s, the role of teachers and students and their cooperation in curriculum decisions has been greatly emphasized (Ramparsad, 2001). To Burns (2011), this change in teachers' role as curriculum negotiators results from AR.



The purpose of this paper, accordingly, is to argue for a need to incorporate AR practices as a bottom-up approach to change and modify the curriculum and enhance teacher involvement in curriculum development.

## II. ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF AR

In second language education, AR emerged only from the late 1980s (Burns, 2005b, 2009, 2011). However, its origin traces back to some decades ago.

As McKernan (1987, 1988, 2008) mentions, AR firstly emerged in *The Science in Education Movement* in the early 19<sup>th</sup>, during which scholars such as Dewey (1910, as cited in McKernan, 1987) asserted that scientific methodology can be adopted in educational research to improve the curriculum in a collective way among the researchers and practitioners (Burns, 1999). However, curriculum development was not yet in the hands of practitioners in classrooms (McKernan, 1987). Teachers were viewed as researchers working scientifically in their classrooms although several progressive thinkers later labeled this image as 'a teacher as a scientist' (McKernan, 1988). According to Clark (1987) during this period, AR was influenced by progressive philosophy in which learners were becoming responsible for their own learning which was paralleled with a similar concern for teachers becoming responsible for improving their own teaching in the classrooms.

Later on, Kurt Lewin (1946, 1948, as cited in Burns, 1999), a social psychologist in the USA, discussed AR as a form of experimental research aimed at groups experiencing social problems. McKernan (1987, 1988, 2008) calls this period as *Group Dynamics Movements*. Lewin, who has been generally regarded as "the father of action research" (McNiff, 1988, as cited in Burns, 2005a, p. 242), argued that social problems should be the main focus of social science research. He then proposed a mode of research composed of action cycles including analysis, fact-finding, planning and evaluation of action steps (Burns, 1999; McKernan, 1987, 1988). Like Dewey, Lewin emphasized the collaborative nature of AR.

While different variations of Lewin's model have been proposed over the decades, the best-known version is given by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, as cited in Burns, 1999) as a four-stage process namely, *planning, action, observation, and reflection*. Teachers should first develop a plan of action to improve the situation. Then they act to implement the plan followed by observation of the effect of this action. Finally, they reflect on these effects for further planning.

However, inherent problems of this type of AR such as intergroup relations and prejudice led a shift of attention to classrooms and materials (McKernan, 1987, 1988). Corey's (as cited in Burns, 2005a) work in AR in the United States was one of the first attempts to integrate the so-called scientific AR into education although his work was then criticized for its inability to be validated in terms of scientific method standards (Burns, 1999, 2005a). It was the time for the decline of AR in the United States, from which AR basic tenets were gradually permeated other countries (McTaggart, 1991, as cited in Burns, 1999).

According to Burns (1999), a renewed interest in AR was linked to the emergence of the curriculum as a field of educational research which became popular in the British educational context in the 1970s. McKernan (1987, 1988, 2008) calls this period as *Teacher-as- Researcher Movement* which was mainly followed by Stenhouse (1975, as cited in Burns, 1999, 2005a, 2005b, 2011) who saw AR as a key component in the testability of curriculum concepts. Stenhouse developed a vision of teachers who could benefit from case studies in their own classrooms as practical knowledge resources to inform educational policy and practice (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009). Stenhouse' ideas were then extended by some of his colleagues such as Elliot (1991) who considered teaching as a moral and theoretical activity shaped by teachers' context-bound values. Recent attempts in teacher professionalism, in-service education, school-based curriculum development, and professional self-evaluation are rooted in the teacher as researcher movement (Burns, 1999; McKernan, 1987, 1988, 2008).

## III. APPROACHES TO AR IN CURRICULUM

AR can be implemented in different ways depending on its purpose. For the purpose of curriculum change or testability of curriculum concepts, it is believed that AR should be implemented in collaboration between local teachers and outsiders such as educational researchers, curriculum developers, policy makers, etc. However, there is a degree in such collaboration.

In a taxonomy of approaches to AR, Hendricks (as cited in Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2014, p. 551) refers to four types of AR. While classroom AR involves teachers in their classrooms (it may involve groups of teachers as well), collaborative AR, critical AR, and participatory AR are mainly relied on collaboration. To Hendricks, collaborative AR involves multiple researchers such as school and university personnel or teachers and school administrators. Critical AR needs wide collaboration including university researchers, school administrators, teachers, and community members and participatory one involves collaboration among stakeholders in a social process. The purpose of the last two is largely yielded social change and even transformation in the case of participatory AR.

With another well-known classification, Carr and Kemmis (1996, p. 202) distinguish between three kinds of AR: *Technical, practical, and critical-emancipatory* although Zeichner (1993) believes this classification creates a hierarchy that devalues practitioners. Each type is briefly discussed below.

To Burns (2005a, 2009), technical AR is the same Corey's (as cited in Burns, 2005a) scientific method through which teachers can seek improvements to their practice. According to Carr and Kemmis (1996), technical AR occurs when teachers are asked by outsiders to test the findings of external research in their own local classrooms where the main concern is the development and extension of research literature, not the practitioners' own reflective practices. Such studies, Carr and Kemmis believe, may lead to improvement in practices from the viewpoint of outsiders, and even from the perspectives of teachers themselves but they may only be authentic in outsiders' viewpoints. The relationship between insiders and outsiders, therefore, is limited and one-way imposed from the above and cooperation and collaboration are seldom emphasized in this kind.

In practical AR, "outside facilitators form cooperative relationships with practitioners, helping them to articulate their own concerns, plan strategic action for change, monitor the problems and effects of changes, and reflect on the value and consequences of the changes actually achieved" (Karr & Kemis, 1986, p. 203). Therefore, the main concern in practical AR, according to Carr and Kemmis, is to develop the practical reasoning of teachers as individuals and perhaps that is why it is labeled as 'practical'. The practical is also connected to the process rather than the product of research (Mckernan, 1996, as cited in Burns, 2005a). By referring to Mckernan, Burns (2005a, 2005b, 2009) also connects practical AR to Stenhouse's and Elliot's (1991) works in the teacher as researcher movement.

Practical AR is also conceptualized, in narrow terms, as classroom AR. As one type of classroom research (Mackey, 2009), this kind of AR is mainly localized and unpublished (Burns, 2009). According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, pp. 273-274), "classroom AR typically involves the use of qualitative interpretive modes of inquiry and data collection by teachers for making judgments about how to improve their own teaching practices and hence enhance students' learning." In this line, there is no need to imposed, cooperative, or collaborative relations between teachers and facilitators.

The third approach to AR is Critical-emancipatory which has been introduced first by Carr and Kemmis in 1986. Carr and Kemmis were not satisfied with a problem-solving approach to AR. They asserted that there is an urgent need for a critical dimension to be added to AR which means going beyond the immediate practices of the individual classrooms to analyze critically how these practices are mediated by the unexamined assumptions of the educational system (Crookes, 1993).

Carr and Kemmis (pp. 203-204) argued that in contrast to practical AR that focused on individualistic judgments, the form of AR which best embodies the values of a critical AR is emancipatory. They believe emancipatory AR paves the way for testing and improving educational practices. At the level of teaching and learning, it provides a method by which teachers and students can explore and improve their own classroom practices. At the level of the curriculum, it provides a method for exploring and improving the practices which constitute the curriculum. Thus, as Carr and Kemmis stress, emancipatory AR includes forms of practical AR but extends it into a collaborative context.

Crookes (1993) argues that critical-emancipatory AR has gone without any representation in the field of second language teaching, where the individual type has been much more emphasized to empower professional development. Somekh and Zeichner (2009) believe that Carr and Kemmis have described a vision for the future rather than a current reality, and more recently they themselves (Carr & Kemmis, 2005, as cited in Somekh & Zeichner, 2009) admit that some key aspects of their perspectives toward AR have not been realized.

#### IV. AR AND CURRICULUM CHANGE

Reviewing different approaches to AR, one probably reaches a conclusion that AR is conducted either collaboratively or individually. While the former focuses on curriculum change or improvement usually with cooperation and collaboration among all participants, the latter just focuses on teachers' local practices, reflections, and learning improvements mainly by the individual teachers and practitioners not necessarily aided from the outside. The collaboration in this case, therefore, is shared between the classroom teacher and students and possibly other teachers and students.

One point which is argued in this article is that AR is not performed in a vacuum. So, AR can't likely be classified as collaborative and individual, since every type of AR is done in a social classroom context, within a community composed of at least a teacher and some students and so individualized AR in micro level seems meaningless in this sense. Collaboration in local classroom AR could be defined between the teacher and the students as actual participants and even between teachers as a community to share their experiences and provide with each other guidance and assistance. Depending on the purpose of AR, hence, the kind and level of collaboration can be varied.

As the literature indicates, the fundamental importance of collaboration is strongly accentuated in AR. According to Burns (1999), the major goal of AR is to bring about changes in social situations as a result of group problem solving and collaboration. Even Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, as cited in Burns, 1999) believe that the approach is only AR when it is collaborative. More importantly, Burns (1999) argues that collaborative AR is more empowering than individualized type since it offers a strong framework for whole-curriculum change. Policies and practices are open to change when these changes are brought up through collaborative pressures since the results are more reliable and valid than those of individual ARs (Burns, 1999).

Despite the significant place of collaborative AR in the curriculum, it is rare in current activities in the ELT field (Burns, 2009, 2011). One noticeable example, however, is Mathew's (1997, as cited in Mathew, 2006) study which

described a large-scale curriculum implementation project in India aimed to evaluate the different aspects of a new English curriculum with a communicative framework in secondary schools. The Project involved teachers as researchers in understanding the curriculum-as-reality. To this end, teachers were trained to do AR to assess the feasibility of a communicative curriculum in their own local schools. The impacts of this longitudinal AR (1993-1997) have been summarized by Mathew (2006) as follows: a) effective instruction including better student-student interaction, more opportunities for skills practice, and more efficient evaluation procedures, b) an awareness of CLT principles, c) a feeling of satisfaction and confidence, d) better self-concept, e) becoming self-observant and more critical, and f) seeing oneself as a change agent.

However, according to Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, p. 277), not all theorists of AR place this emphasis on collaboration. Rather, these theorists argue that AR is frequently a solitary process of systematic self-reflection. Nunan (1992), also, does not believe that collaboration should be seen as a defining characteristic of AR. He asserts that many teachers who are interested in exploring the process of teaching and learning in their own classrooms are unable or reluctant to do collaborative research. The work that such people carry out should not be disregarded as AR.

Nunan also argues that AR should not necessarily be concerned with change. He believes a descriptive case study of a particular classroom, group of learners, or even a single learner is an AR if it is initiated by a question, is supported by data and interpretation and is carried out by a teacher investigating aspects of his or her own context. It is probably arguable that classroom AR is unwillingly adhered to the curriculum change since the whole process of curriculum development is so prolonged and sophisticated that some minor changes in individual classrooms have no special room to form major changes.

Nunan (1994), elsewhere, truly discusses that AR may not work all the time. He refers to the results of his three case studies of action research in different ESL and EFL contexts. Each of these projects suffered from serious problems. According to Nunan, the effectiveness of AR largely depends on the context in which it exists.

According to Zeichner (1993), also, separations between technical and critical AR and/or micro and macro AR are distortions. He argues the critical AR is in reality embedded in the technical and in the micro-level of the local teachers and this means that every classroom has a critical dimension. Zeichner holds that while we cannot ignore efforts to change or restructure the curriculum pillars, the classroom is an important context for critical AR connected to the struggle for greater educational equity and social justice. Like Nunan (1992), Zeichner believes that teachers may not be able to change unjust societal structures through their classroom AR, but they can make important changes in terms of affecting the life chances of their students. He believes that there is no need for teachers to necessarily move out of their classrooms to connect AR with the struggle for educational reform and social justice. To Zeichner, these efforts should be encouraged and supported, but not at the expense of classroom AR and the dignity of teachers.

## V. AR AND TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

AR is a progressive approach which offers bottom-up curriculum renewal where there is a shift from the ready-made top-down curriculum to support a local bottom-up one involving teachers in their own development programs (Clark, 1987). According to Ramparsad (2001), many schools, for the most part, used to purchase a canned curriculum and afterward utilize conventional staff training/development to train teachers how to use the curriculum. To Wong (2009), however, a new curriculum needs to be adapted to or modified by the realities of the local classroom which therefore needs to undergo a process of mediation in which bottom-up participation of teachers and students comes into play. According to Carless (1999, as cited in Wong, 2009) in bottom-up curriculum development usually a general direction is outlined from above, but classroom implementation is controlled by the teachers. Similarly, McKernan (2008) refers to *school-based curriculum development* that has emerged as a result of the failure of large expert-led national curriculum projects in England. This conception of curriculum planning derives from the needs and wants of learners. It further suggests that schools should be responsive to their own environment. In addressing this environment, it is vital that teachers be researchers and curriculum developers in adapting learning to its own local contexts (McKernan, 2008).

AR with its self-reflective nature changes the traditional role of the teacher in the curriculum from a technician within the classroom to a “decision-maker, consultant, curriculum developer, analyst, activist, and school leader” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 17). Therefore, AR by confirming teachers as experts inside the classroom setting permits new space for teachers to investigate (Price & Valli, 2005). Teachers can participate in decision making and curriculum theorizing. They get to be mindful and responsive to both theory and practice (Manfra, 2009; Sarac-Suzer, 2007). In other words, AR puts the teachers in the dual role of producer and user of educational theory (Riding, Fowell, & Levy, 1995). It means that teachers are not only followers of new methodologies but also the source and maker of the theoretical premise of their own implementation techniques, getting to be researchers inside the regions of their own classroom. It additionally supplies teachers with ownership in deciding both the content and procedure of their own curriculum (Ramparsad, 2001). Hence, without considering its type, AR can change teachers roles from passive practitioners, who are probably imposed from the top-down model, to be active agents in bottom-up curriculum development.

Changing the nature of teacher involvement in curriculum, AR leads self-directed teachers to promote their own professional self-development (Nunan, 1990, p.64). It can also enable teachers to be changed by pushing a teacher out

of his/her comfortable state and thus stimulating personal and professional development. The difficulties teachers faced when being pushed out of a comfort zone are essential, especially in classroom practice to prompt positive change. According to Mertler (2006), AR puts the teacher in numerous new roles such as researcher, decision maker, and change agent. Performing AR process has helped notify daily instruction and it has changed and extended teachers' curriculum points of view, decisions, and thinking.

Furthermore, according to Nunan (1990), reflection is one of the key characteristics of self-directed teachers who conduct AR. Carr and Kemmis (1986) additionally expound on the advantages of reflection in AR claiming "while practical experience can be gained through unsystematic reflection on action, a rational understanding of practice can only be gained through systematic reflection on the action by the actor involved. The knowledge developed by action researchers about their own practices is of this kind" (p.189).

Taking part in AR can also affect teachers' every day and future instructional practices. Based on Ferrance (2000) and Sax and Fisher's (2001) studies, AR gives teachers more trust in their own work. According to them, teachers by carrying out AR seemed to be more in control of and sure about every day and future pedagogical practices and choices. According to Parsons and Brown (2002), AR prompts enhancements in educational practice. In addition, AR process makes teachers more aware of their teaching practices and more discerning of their students' needs. In particular, educators can particularly examine how the AR process affirms, confirms, or extends specific instructional practices and curriculum programs. AR process as stated by teachers can also make them more conscious of new procedures and strategies and give them the confidence to try them. Besides, according to Manfra (2009), AR formalizes teachers' investigation and enables them to influence their insider knowledge to change classroom practice. He believes AR changes the customary outside-in relationship between teachers and educational community.

Finally, changing and developing the nature of classrooms as a result of doing AR may lead to curriculum change (Brown, 2012). Field (1998, p.49, as cited in Brown, 2012) refers to two important reasons for classroom AR which might be beneficial to curriculum change, especially in the ELT field. The first reason proposed by Field is that despite universal similarities between classrooms, each one is unique in reality because of various factors such as student background, motivation, nationalities, personalities, and different levels. Therefore, AR is required to be matched to the unique circumstances of each particular classroom that leads to curriculum change. The second reason as Field mentions is what he calls the *compelling argument*. It means that AR releases teachers from the restricts and confines of tradition. He asserts, "We need to recognize that much of what passes as good practice in ELT has no scientific evidence to back it up. It is simply the result of an amalgam of experience, myth, and wishful thinking" (p.49). Moreover, considering that theories of language teaching are changing frequently and none of them are even scientifically confirmed, AR is used to help teachers discover what works and what does not in a particular situation.

## VI. CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING AR IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In spite of the various benefits of AR, there are seemingly various difficulties experienced in performing it. One of the most important difficulties recognized by Burns (1995, p.11) in his project was "teachers having the time to carry out research in addition to their usual teaching" and the related problem of "the logistics of documenting or collecting data during busy classroom time." Each teacher can refer to the problem of lack of time in his or her teaching and claims that performing research can just add to this. Time is an important obstruction for AR as well as the entire matter of curriculum development. As a result, many teachers, due to lack of time, prefer to use the ready-made top-down curriculum despite the attractiveness and usefulness of participating in AR and curriculum development projects. Therefore, Nunan (1989) suggests that "If language teachers are to be charged with the responsibility of developing their own curricula, they need more time and greater skills and more support than if they are implementing a curriculum developed by others" (p. 3).

Carr and Kemmis (1986, p.152-153) notice another possible challenge of AR including the traditional "separation of educational research from educational practice" causing an inclination for individuals not to normally create AR groups. They propose that mediation is important to make the acknowledgment of a requirement for AR despite the fact that this has its own particular problems in increasing the individual mediation to that of "someone with superior knowledge" which overcomes the principle of "participatory, collaborative forms of critical self-reflection" which are indispensable parts of AR.

Another significant argument has been the capacity of teachers to take the responsibility of research because it is claimed that they are instructed to teach and not to research (Burns, 2011). A further point of view on this discussion has been in admiration of the irrational requests that AR puts on teachers. Offering the question "Is AR a 'natural' activity for teachers?", Allwright (2005) asserts that AR compels teachers to accept "research aptitudes taken from the scholastic collection" (p. 355).

McKernan (1993) led an overview of constraints on AR amongst 40 projects conducted in educational settings in the USA, UK, and Ireland. The most frequent constraints were lack of time, resources, research skills, and school organizational features. Besides, obtaining consent/support to research, language of research, pressure of student examination, and disapproval of principal were considered as constraints. Regarding human factors, McKernan further found disapproval of colleagues, beliefs about the role of the teacher, professional factors (union policies, contract), and student disapproval as causes of restrictions.

Although such a broad study has not been conducted in the field of second language teaching, different scholars have proposed that these sorts of limitations are comparatively a reality for most TESOL teachers (e.g. Allwright, 1993; Brindley, 1991; Burton & Mican, 1993; Nunan, 1993; van Lier, 1994, as cited in Burns, 1999).

## VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the most prominent areas of educational research, according to McKernan (2008), is the curriculum because knowledge is communicated through this medium. How the curriculum is planned, implemented, and evaluated depends on many factors, among which policy has a potential role (McKernan, 2008). While according to Nunan (1989), it is difficult for a top-down or centralized curriculum system to work in the field of ELT curriculum development, many EFL contexts, such as Iran (the researchers' native country), still rely heavily on this type. AR is a potential way to make a possible shift from top-down to a local bottom-up approach in curriculum development. Curriculum change starts with the developing and changing the nature of classrooms and teacher involvement (Brown 2012), since, according to Somekh and Zeichner (2009) AR is grounded in the values and culture of its participant-researchers and hence, it is flexible to the local agency.

Moreover, according to Brown (2012), the advantages of AR in the field of language teaching and curriculum development overwhelmingly surpass the problems in spite of the fact that the issues of time, training, and interest must be taken into consideration before the development of AR in a particular educational setting. AR, previously utilized in various educational settings, is a significant device to advance curriculum change particularly in fields such as language teaching and situations where the teacher endures a great amount of responsibility for curriculum development. In addition, AR encourages professional self-development and is appropriate for teachers' own particular class situations. It manages actual issues that teachers are encountering and gives them not only a practical mechanism to enhance their own teaching practices but also a step towards curriculum change at all institutional levels. To sum up, AR is an effective approach that influences on daily and/or future teaching and elicits changes in curriculum development.

However, although teacher involvement is crucial to the achievement of a curriculum, teachers alone cannot develop and support it. Curriculum results could be better accomplished when the curriculum is contextualized to the requirements of its beneficiaries. As a result, the voices of all curriculum stakeholders should be included to obtain intended curriculum outcomes (Wiles & Bondi, 2007).

At last but not least, some recommendations for teachers are mentioned to improve the curriculum with the help of AR:

- Teachers should start with themselves. The change of teacher's attitude to see teachers as change agents is crucial. Teachers as action researchers should undergo a *personal change* in their theory of teaching, including their views of the nature of the teaching and assessment processes, and of themselves as teachers, such as strengths, weaknesses, areas needing improvement, and so on. (Li, Yu, Lam & Fok, 1999)

- Collaborative AR should be emphasized as well. As Burns (2009) argue, this kind of AR is rarely preferred in EFL settings. Teachers should share their knowledge and experiences collaboratively to solve their own problems. Some scholars such as Wells and Wells (1992, as Cited in Burns, 2009) offer a notion of communities of inquiry where opportunities are set up for teachers and researchers to construct knowledge about AR collectively over time. Pedagogical knowledge construction thus occurs through dialectic interaction and critical exchange.

- As Crookes (1993) mentions, teachers should put an emphasis on critical AR to facing up to the unquestioned values embodied in educational contexts.

- And finally, Successful change agents are the result of self-realization and initiation supported by appropriate staff development programs as well as initial and in-service training programs (Li, et al., 1999).

All these may not be achieved if we don't admit a lack of interest in doing AR in our own intended context. If the lack of AR is properly understood, relevant support can be given to practitioners to carry out AR and curriculum improvements (Li, et al., 1999).

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# Cultural Background on Reading Comprehension in Junior High School

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**Abstract**—Reading ability is the important part of English learning and the close relationship between language and culture determines the significant impact of cultural background knowledge on reading comprehension. The cultivation of students' English cultural awareness and sensitivity of English culture should be paid attention at the beginning. In this paper, the impact of the cultural knowledge on reading comprehension here is emphasized. And how to improve the junior high school students' cultural background is also discussed further.

**Index Terms**—cultural background, reading comprehension, ways, improve

## I. INTRODUCTION

English as a tool of communication has been playing a more significant part in the modern society; it is the main channel to obtain information in foreign language. Many countries especially China has regarded it as the second language or first foreign language to learn to adapt to the society's developing. As Juri Lotman ever said: "no language can exist unless it is stepped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have, at its corner, the structure of natural language." (Lotman, 1978, pp23-211) Language and culture are interdependent. It is language that distinguishes humankind from other animals. The belief that there is a very close relationship between language and culture has long been held by anthropologists.

In recent years, with the deepening and popularizing of the research of the intercultural communication, more and more foreign language teachers have formed such a consensus, foreign language teaching is not only for cultivating students' ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing, but also helping students possess another competence---cultural competence. At the same time, cultural competence will retroact to students' English learning especially the English reading competence which is the most important part of English learning. Nevertheless, the current situation of reading teaching in junior high school is not optimistic since many students are still lack of necessary background knowledge or awareness of cultural difference. It is necessary for teachers intentionally to help improve students' cultural background knowledge. The culture teaching which aims to improve students' reading competence should follow some principles and measures. And this will be discussed in this paper.

## II. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF READING COMPREHENSION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Reading is a highly complicated human behavior. It is a thinking process that sets two people in interactivity together---an author and a reader. It is by no means an easy job to give a definition. Many researchers prefer not providing a definition of reading as simple definitions usually misrepresent complex cognitive processes of reading. In Grabe's view, "a description of reading has to account for the notions that fluent reading is rapid, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, flexible, and gradually developing." (Grabe, 1997, pp198) He suggests that description of basic knowledge and processes required for fluent reading is a more appropriate starting point.

English reading ability is the important part of English learning. English reading has been playing a more significant part in acquiring cultural, economic, scientific and technical knowledge, for collecting worldwide information and carrying out international exchange and cooperation. Hence, the importance of English reading is self-evident; it is the most important measure to absorb English language materials. Alderson and Urquhart believe that it has significant influence on one's academic research, professional success and personal development.

Moreover, though reading is an issue at all grade levels; it is increasingly significant in middle school. In the field of basic education, the significance of reading in English is overtly recognized in China. The New English Curriculum Standard regulates that the middle school English teaching should lay particular emphasis on the cultivation of reading competence. This is reflected in the paper of Senior High School Entrance Exam of English in China with full mark of 150. 50 marks are directly for reading comprehension and other 40 marks are associated with reading ability. Reading skills are essential to the academic achievement of middle and high school students.

At last, reading has proved to be an efficient way to cultivate a good language sense and accumulate language experience. To Chinese who take English as a foreign language rather than the second language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing are four basic skills in English study. Of the four skills, reading means the most, it is the basic and prerequisite of the other three language skills---listening, speaking, and writing as well as the main method for students



to expand their vocabulary, and it is just like a natural green house where students can grow vocabulary in their mind as much as they like to.

As the importance of reading has been in focus for so long, enough attention has been paid to how to improve the English reading comprehension. However, though many experts have devoted into the English reading teaching research, the result is not satisfied.

The current situation of reading teaching in junior high school is not optimistic since it is universal to see that after three years' education of junior high school; however, many students in senior middle school of China still lack sufficient proficiency as readers. They are unable to read effectively, and frequently fail to comprehend texts. As a matter of fact, our traditional English reading teaching has long been affected by the Grammar-Translation Approach (GT approach), which is inspired by the teaching of Greek in 19th century. GT approach views that, as the basic unit of language, written sentence consisting of a series of describable rules. Only when students know these rules and master enough vocabulary can they translate quickly and accurately from foreign language to mother tongue. It considers mother tongue as the basis of learning a foreign language, and students should translate the text properly into their mother tongue so that they can comprehend the text. Actually, for a variety of reasons, in most junior high schools of China, this traditional way of teaching still prevails.

In real EFL classrooms of junior school, teachers pay more attention to the translation of the text, emphasizing the new words, important phrases and grammar in an attempt to help students improve reading comprehension. They think that if students could acquire the meaning of each word, each sentence, and each paragraph, they will have no difficulties in comprehending the whole text in this way. However, the fact is on the contrary. In many cases, the majority of the junior students misunderstand or feel puzzled over the meaning of the text, even though they understand every single word and all the grammatical structures. They cannot get the general idea or give proper response after reading a text. Sometimes they are slow in interpreting texts with relatively more new words or complicated sentence structures in them because they have to consult the dictionary from time to time.

And during the English reading teaching class, everything is arranged well by the teachers, including what students to learn, how to learn, even what to learn for. Teachers make full use of every minute in class to "teach" their students so as to ensure that students can understand. Accordingly, the students are busy taking notes when listening to their teacher attentively. However, they are only mechanical note-takers. Because they are put into a very passive position in this way, they only bring their ears to class, and they have no chance to express their ideas, let alone discuss with the teacher or with other students. Therefore, the teaching process is prolonged and some students may feel boring and tired of reading comprehension gradually. What is more, the effect is not apparent, some students even do not understand the general idea of the text after being taught in light of paying too much attention to the individual language points instead of the over-all meaning of the information that passage carries.

### III. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND READING COMPREHENSION

As we have discussed above, the role of background knowledge in language comprehension has been formalized as schema theory. According to schema theory, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Text cannot be understood correctly without cultural background knowledge. Many experts claim that there are two factors affecting reading comprehension; the first one is the degree and speed of brain's perception of word symbols, it means the readers' linguistic knowledge in other words; the other one is the effect of "something behind the eyes". The so-called "something behind the eyes" refers to the readers' cultural background knowledge. Therefore, necessarily cultural background knowledge is very important to reading. As far as background knowledge is concerned, Carrel said: "In the EFL/ESL classroom, we must be particularly sensitive to reading problems that result from the implicit cultural background knowledge presupposed by a text." (Carrel, 1983) The term "cultural background knowledge" is also sometimes referred to as all the information and ideas, all the perceptions and concepts, as well as the intellectual residues of emotional expressions, held in long-term memory by readers. Paulston and Bruder also point out that learning to read is easier "when the cultural background is familiar and students can draw on cultural information in the decoding process", in their book, *Teaching English as a Second Language: Techniques and Procedures* (Paulston, 1976, pp5-6).

Heilman et al. In 1986 proposed that "background knowledge can be thought of as an individual's experiential/conceptual background for (1) written text (word recognition capabilities, concept of print, understanding word order, and understanding word meanings) as well as for (2) the content of what he is reading" Reading comprehension is a function of cultural knowledge. (Heilman, 1999, PP 25-32).

In every text that we are teaching, many words and sentences are culture-loaded. In other words, they found that cultural knowledge plays a vital role in reading comprehension. Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own cultural background knowledge.

China has lagged behind in the culture teaching of foreign languages compared with the Western countries. In the past half century, there has been a strong commitment to include culture in the language curriculum. During the next two decades, people were entirely prohibited from learning anything from foreign culture due to be motivated by the intention of protecting the home culture and maintaining its tradition. With the opening up of China, international contact increased rapidly, English, as a tool of communication, has been paid more attention to. Meanwhile, many

books and articles concerning language and culture came out. Nowadays the importance of culture teaching has been widely recognized in teaching English as a foreign language, and the cultivation of cultural awareness has been prescribed clearly in the new English Curriculum Standard as one of the five basic goals in English teaching, which takes the new Junior English for China as its source material, the new English Curriculum Standards as its foundation and junior high school students as its specific objects. However, although most of the EFL teachers have already recognized the importance of cultural background knowledge, the study of these issues remains superficial and rarely achieves any substantial progress, especially in junior high school. Actually, the English teachers in junior school usually neglect culture teaching intentionally or unintentionally or sometimes select some of aspects of culture in English teaching due to time limitation. In addition, many students see little or no connection between language learning and culture learning. According to the current situation, the author has concluded three current problems existing in the English culture teaching in China.

#### A. *The Limit of the English Tests*

Liu Runqin pointed anxiously in his article English Teaching in 21 Century that the present English teaching is more from a business purpose instead of developing culture and social. (Liu, 1988) This is what sensible people worried. Today, most of the English teachers still cannot get away of the bondage of the exam baton though they have realized the important significance of cultural knowledge in the English language learning process. At present, all kinds of test blots out the sky, and most of the exam content is to check students' mastering of the English language knowledge. Whether students' learning includes cultural content doesn't have much influence on their final scores in the test. In this guidance of examination, the cultural content is rare involved in the exercises and exam papers students usually do, teachers inevitably pay much more attention to the teaching of language knowledge, and neglect the cultural content contained in language during the teaching process.

#### B. *The Environment and the Pressure*

Affected by Chinese deeply rooted traditional culture, students feel difficult to accept in thought and emotion when facing the new Western culture. It is hard for students to cultivate the cross-cultural awareness due to lack of authentic environment for cross-cultural communication even in the English classes. Occasionally, when there have chances for them to communicate with the foreign friends face by face, the cultural mistakes they make when disturbed by cultural differences will be understood by the foreign friends consider the restriction of students' age and language knowledge.

What's more, English is just one of the many subjects the junior students have to learn every day. To distribute the study time of each course reasonably determines students not to spend much time to study the cultural content contained in language, or acquaint themselves with some simple polite expressions and cultural customs in the situational dialogues related to the test at most. More of their time and energy are put into memorizing new words and phrases, reciting the text and doing exercises.

#### C. *The Restriction of the Teachers' Qualities*

Fostering talents with cultural consciousness need teachers with high language quality and literary attainments. At present, almost all the English teachers in China are native Chinese whose mother tongue is not English, and their living environment and background are nearly the same with students', so there are not big cultural differences between teachers and students. The cultural knowledge they possessed is acquired indirectly from books, and doesn't have the vitality. So in cultural teaching, part of the language teachers take the attitude of withdrawal as they think the content is too deep, complex and not easy to operate. Even though in the teaching of cultural knowledge, they just echo what books say, rigid and boring. Consequently, the improvement of English teachers' quality and accomplishment is the primary task of smoothly cultural teaching.

However, although there are many theories about culture teaching in foreign language education and the importance of teaching culture in foreign language education has been realized, it is rarely discussed how to integrate culture teaching and foreign language instruction in junior high school and how to apply theories to real classroom activities. Thus how to improve students' cultural background knowledge becomes an urgent and foremost requirement for English teachers.

### IV. WAYS TO IMPROVE CULTURAL BACKGROUND IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

As the importance of cultural background knowledge has been recognized in the past few decades, great efforts have been made in order to promote the English cultural teaching and some good results have been achieved. But just as we have seen, the present English culture teaching, still being incomprehensive, imperfect and unsystematic, has not integrated language teaching well with culture teaching. Here are some suggestions for foreign culture teaching.

#### A. *The Principles of Culture Teaching*

The foreign culture teaching should be carried out in accordance with these three principles: The Assimilative Principle, The Phasic Principle and The Comparative Principle.

The Assimilative Principle is to transform and assimilate the parts of target culture which are identified benefit to native culture, and let the useful parts become parts of native culture gradually. Essentially, the absorption is to live

better and develop better, in order to enrich local culture, and make it distinctive to the world culture. The Phasic Principle in fact is the principle which request the introduction of cultural content should be step by step. To determine the cultural content according to students' language level, receiving and comprehending ability, go from the shallower to the deeper, from simple to complex and from phenomena to essence. And the Comparative Principle is an attempt to make a comparison between the students' own culture and target culture so as to find out their similarities and differences. It is necessary for the teachers intentionally to make the students aware of the diversities between two cultures through such methods as differentiating, contrasting or comparing so as to make the alien culture part of the students. To make comparison is perhaps one activity that may help Chinese EFL students to understand foreign culture as well as their home culture.

#### B. *Role-playing*

Role-playing or dramatization is a very useful way for junior students to learn the English language culture, as students can be engaged in the topic and their understandings and cultural background knowledge can be activated. Students may get access to real life experiences in the role-play activities, especially activities concerning cultural differences. For example, students can do a role-playing where they act out the scenes which respectively happened in the shops in China and the Western countries. When shopping in shops of China, the salesman or saleswoman usually would ask "what do you want?" to the customers, while this sentence is very impolite to Western people. Actually in the Western countries they are used to say "Can I help you?" or "What can I do for you?" Besides, students can also do the role-playing activities offered in the English books, and discuss if the situations are common in the western countries. There is a conversation in Lesson 17 in JEFB Book 3.

A: Hello, you look tired today.

B: Yes, I went to bed too late last night...

A: You'd better go to bed earlier tonight if you can.

This suggestion is actually more widespread in China. However, in token of concern in English-speaking countries, A should say "I'm sorry to hear that" "Take good care of yourself" or "I do hope you'll be feeling better soon". Through this way, students' cultural awareness and knowledge would be strengthened and improved as it offers students the opportunity to be involved in cross-cultural learning and response upon cultural differences.

#### C. *After-class Reading*

Reading is the main method to gain information. As the cultural background knowledge is extremely limited in junior students' text books, reading after-class is an effective way to help students to improve their cultural knowledge. On one hand, students should learn cultural knowledge actively after class, they should not learn the cultural knowledge selectively according to the test content or just neglect it in order to have more time to prepare for the exam in which the cultural knowledge is not required; on the other hand, students should expand their knowledge horizons. They can get well known with the art, history, customs and habits directly through reading the English original works such as the English literary works, newspapers, magazines and watching movies from the English spoken countries. For example, students can get familiar with the western table manners through reading "Table Manners". Through the after-class reading, they will know that the Herculean task is a very difficult task which Hercules is the Roman name for the Greek mythological hero Heracles, and the Watergate scandal is one of the most inglorious political scandals in American history. In addition, students can make full use of the Internet to acquire more aspects of the foreign cultural information and understand the cultural differences which cannot be learned in class.

#### D. *Talking with the English Native Speakers*

Talking with the English native speakers is the best and direct way for students to get well known with the cultural differences as a nation's culture background is reflected through its people's manners and ways of thinking. With the fast development of the economy of the world, there are many chances for communicating with foreigners/English native speakers. Students should talk with the English speakers as more as possible. They can learn much knowledge that cannot be found in the text books and reference books which is the English speakers' personal experience. It can help junior students to check whether the foreign language knowledge they learned consistent with the foreign cultural background knowledge.

Take the greeting way for example, when people meet in the Western countries, they would say "hello" or "how are you?" or "good morning/afternoon/evening?" and the subject they usually talk is about the weather. However in China, people generally ask "have you had your lunch? (你吃了没?) " as the greeting way. In addition, talking with the English speakers will not only promote the students' comprehending the foreign cultural knowledge but also help them to overcome the effect of cultural differences and know well with the cultural knowledge entirely and exactly. For instance: the Chinese greeting "have you had your lunch?" may arouse the misunderstanding of the Western people. Since in China, it is just regarded as a common greeting which is no more than a western way of saying hello or hi, nevertheless, to the Westerners, it could indicate an invitation to a meal, it might mean "I haven't either, let's go together and get something to eat." or "if you haven't, I am just going to invite you to my place." Thus, when a student asks the foreign this question to show friendliness during their communication, he may be misunderstood but simultaneously corrected by the foreign.

Therefore, through talking with the English native speakers, students' knowledge about the English speaking countries' social life, customs, greeting ways and the modes of thinking would be promoted immediately.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Reading is a comprehending process which combines the known information with the unknown information. Possessing the related culture background knowledge will contribute to the students' accurate understanding of the texts as more known information can promote comprehension. According to Schema theory, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Text can't be understood correctly without cultural background knowledge. Therefore, in English teaching, teachers should try to make students understand the language in its cultural context. Students can never be expected to learn English well without learning and understanding the culture of the native English speakers. In the EFL classroom in junior high school, teachers should attach great importance to cultural factors in the language learning process and integrate cultural knowledge and information into the teaching curricula.

Besides, the culture teaching and learning should be carried out according to the three principles mentioned in the article. Teachers should not only improve personal qualities to teach the cultural background knowledge more accurately, comprehensively and widely, but also help improve students' cultural awareness and lead the students to attach importance to cultural language learning. Meanwhile, students should also lay emphasis on the cultivation of their cultural background knowledge on their initiatives. They can accumulate and rich their background knowledge through the English text-supplementary materials (e.g. workbooks, and reading passages in the collection of practice tests) as well as the other readings (e.g. English novels, stories, newspapers and journals), try to make full use of the Internet and make themselves more contact with the foreign cultural knowledge. In conclusion, students' reading comprehension competence will have great improvement if they are well known of the cultural background knowledge (Lia, 2001).

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# Critical Thinking and Willingness to Communicate among EFL Students

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**Abstract**—The purpose of the study has been to determine the existence of any significant relationship between willingness to communicate as a determining factor in language learning and critical thinking and its psychological constructs. The five psychological levels of critical thinking are inference ability, recognizing assumption ability, deduction ability, interpretation ability and argument evaluation ability. There were two instruments implemented so as to obtain as valid data as possible. First, Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ) was adapted from MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Conrod (2001) to measure students' willingness to communicate. The second instrument was Critical Thinking Questionnaire (CTQ) which was adapted from Watson & Glaser (1994), and it was intended to gauge critical thinking and the related psychological constructs. The sample of the study included 360 BA English students who were selected based on the multistage random sampling from the English students at Islamic Azad University branches of Tehran province. The research has been conducted based on a descriptive correlational study which resulted in the existence of significant positive correlation between all psychological levels of critical thinking and willingness to communicate. Moreover, critical thinking as a major variable was also found significantly correlated with willingness to communicate.

**Index Terms**—willingness to communicate, critical thinking, inference making, recognition of assumptions, deduction, interpretation, evaluation of arguments

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to cognitivists, learning is a cognitive process in which learners add new concepts to their previous knowledge. According to this theory, language learning is also a process that needs thinking. For this reason, meaningful learning and problem solving are emphasized in recent methodologies of language teaching. This process of thinking, problem solving and raising logical questions which leads to a proper evaluation, correct beliefs, or appropriate actions is called critical thinking (CT). Pennycook (1996) defined critical thinking as an improvement in learning from memorizing and repeating to a continuously developing process of discovering, asking logical questions and restating ideas. And according to Scriven and Paul (2004, p.1), critical thinking is the mentally well-organized manner of "actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information obtained through observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, which leads to an accurate and proper belief or action". Moreover, critical thinking is also defined as a kind of thinking about different subjects, contents, and problems that the thinker increases the quality of his or her cognition by skillfully using the innate capability of cognition and implanting rational standards to organize them (Paul, Fisher and Nosich, 1993).

Five sub-area of critical thinking are identified which can assess critical thinking ability comprehensively. The first area is inference making, which is defined as "discriminating among degrees of truth or falsity of inferences drawn from given data." The second area is recognition of assumptions, and is defined as "recognizing unstated assumptions or presuppositions in given statements or assertions." The third area is deduction, which means "determining whether certain conclusions necessarily follow from information in given statements or premises." The fourth area is interpretation, which is "weighing evidence and deciding if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted." And the last area is evaluation of arguments, which is "distinguishing between arguments that are strong and relevant and those that are weak or irrelevant to a particular question at issue" (Watson & Glaser 1994, pp. 9-10).

Based on the above definitions, it can be found that critical thinking has been frequently considered as an influential factor in learning. And many studies supported the idea of teaching critical thinking in different sciences including English teaching. And much of this owes to the claim that CT can improve learners' thinking and cognition.

On the other hand, based on constructivism, cognition and communication are considered interrelated. And willingness to communicate (WTC) can be taken as the one which triggers cognition and thinking. WTC is well-defined as "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using an L2" (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 547). Thus, the higher level of WTC among language learners can increase the opportunity of using L2 both inside and outside of the classroom (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998). Riasati & Noordin (2011) referred to the same point of view and claim that the aim of modern language teaching is motivating language learners to use the target language for communication both inside and outside of the classroom.

McCroskey (1992) stated some items to assess willingness to communicate among second language learners such as, public speaking, talking in meetings, group discussions, and interpersonal conversations. He also identified different

types of receivers such as stranger, acquaintance, and friend which can affect the level of ETC. And these different types are defined according to the points that the language learners achieve based on the WTC scale.

To focus on the significance of the study, it can be discussed that thinking critically about language learning and answering to questions like why a new language should be learnt and how communication can be helpful in the process of language learning may accelerate this process more effectively. And this can be done through increasing the level of willingness to communicate among the second language learners which motivates them to use the target language communicatively, and increase the experience of using it in authentic contexts. The results of the current study can also help find out possible means of improving willingness to communicate among second language learners. And all these can be supported by the major theory that the ultimate goal of learning a second or foreign language is having the ability to use the target language for communication.

The present study is aimed at investigating the relationship between critical thinking and willingness to communicate among university students who were studying English as a foreign language. And this study can be pursued by other practical studies to find out whether teaching critical thinking to the L2 learners can affect the level of willingness to communicate among them.

Like any other study, the present study was also bound by several delimitations imposed by the researcher to guarantee more reliability and validity of the study, and it was also faced a number of limitations imposed from outside. As for the delimitations, this study was exclusively conducted on the Iranian EFL university students who studied English as a foreign language in Islamic Azad University in Tehran province. And concerning the limitations, because of the large number of population in this study, simple random sampling was not possible, and cluster multistage random sampling method was used instead.

## II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

### A. *Critical Thinking (CT)*

Today, critical thinking is a fashionable expression in psychological, philosophical and educational fields of study. In general, critical thinking is the familiar method of scientific investigation which contains some steps. For this process, first we have the research question and the relevant hypothesis in mind, then the data collection process is conducted, the hypothesis is verified, and finally the conclusion is elicited from the result (Schafersman, 1991). Thus, it can be claimed that all of the skills of scientific investigation are matched by critical thinking. Therefore, according to Schafersman (1991), critical thinking is nothing more than scientific method used in everyday life by common people rather than in particular fields of study. In other words, critical thinking is scientific thinking which is the ability to think reliably and responsibly and make some decisions that affect someone's life.

According to Nickerson (1987, as cited in Schafersman, 1991), a good critical thinker can be defined in terms of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and the usual behaviors. Schafersman (1991) also stated some characteristics of a critical thinker as: having the ability to use evidence skillfully and fairly, organizing and stating thoughts logically, realizing valid and invalid conclusions, recognizing the differences between reasoning and rationalizing, trying to predict the possible conclusions of alternative actions, having the ability to learn autonomously, applying problem-solving methods in the broader contexts, trying to challenge own thoughts and find the assumptions that are critical to those thoughts and the inferences of the thoughts, being sensitive about the differences between the validity of an idea and the its strength, knowing that our understanding is always limited, being aware of the fallibility of own opinions, realizing that assumptions can be affected by bias, and being conscious about judging evidence according to personal preferences.

Elder and Paul (1996) stated a stage theory in order to be a critical thinker and claimed that learners should pass six different stages to develop the critical thinking skills. These stages are: the unreflective thinker, the challenged thinker, the beginning thinker, the practicing thinker, the advanced thinker, and the accomplished thinker.

Moreover, Duron, Limbach and Waugh (2006) stated a 5-step model to move students toward critical thinking and claimed that this model is a framework which can be used in any classroom or educational setting to help students increase critical thinking skills. Figure 1 shows the 5-step model stated by Duron et al. (2006).

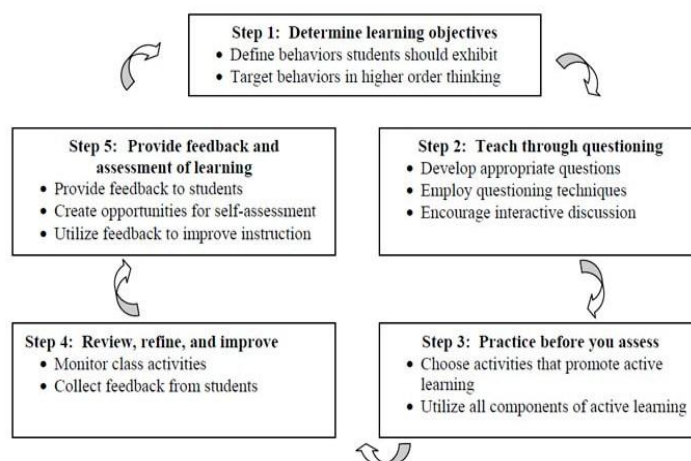


Figure 1. The 5-step model to move students toward critical thinking (Duron et al., 2006)

**B. Willingness to Communicate (WTC)**

Willingness to communicate is well-defined as “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using an L2” (MacIntyre, et al., 1998, p. 547). For the first time, McCroskey and Baer (1985, as cited in Ghonsooly, Hosseini Fatemi, & Khajavy, 2014) proposed the notion of WTC in first language. They stated that human being gradually acquires language by communicating with other people. However, Lately, WTC has been reinterpreted as a situational variable which can be changed according to the context in second or foreign language (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

WTC is different when considered in the second language. In fact, In an L2 context, communicative competence is different among different people. It is stated that WTC in second language “can range from almost no L2 competence (0%) to full L2 competence (100%)” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 546). Therefore, there should be some variables involved. It is stated that WTC in second language is related to both characteristic traits and external variables. Some variables such as "state of communicative self confidence, desire to communicate with a specific person; self-confidence, intergroup and interpersonal motivation; communicative competence, social attitudes, and intergroup attitudes; and personality and intergroup climate" can affect WTC in a second language context (MacIntyre et al., as cited in Ghonsooly, Khajavy, & Asadpour, 2012, p.198).

According to MacIntyre (2007), some people choose to speak and the others remain silent when they have opportunity to use their second language. It means that WTC shows the psychological readiness to use the second language. And it is usually considered as the main reason of being aggressive in using the second language (Yu, Li, & Gou, 2011). This refers to a willingness to communicate which generates the opportunities to communicate in the target language. “Being willing to communicate is part of becoming fluent in a second language, which often is the ultimate goal of L2 learners” (MacIntyre and Doucette, 2010, p. 1).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggested a conceptual pyramid model to represent the individual differences in making communication in the second language. Having communication with specific people at a specific time is at the top of the pyramid. Therefore, it means that WTC is considered as the final step before opening the conversation in the second language. The other parts of the model maintain the goal of starting communication according to the specific situation. The conceptual pyramid model refers to situations that there is a specific person who starts communication with others with the desire and self-confidence to talk to them. In many cases this desire is related to affiliation and control motives. Affiliation motives are related to people who are somehow attractive or visited frequently, such as friends. On the other hand, control motives are related to any condition that people look for to influence each other.

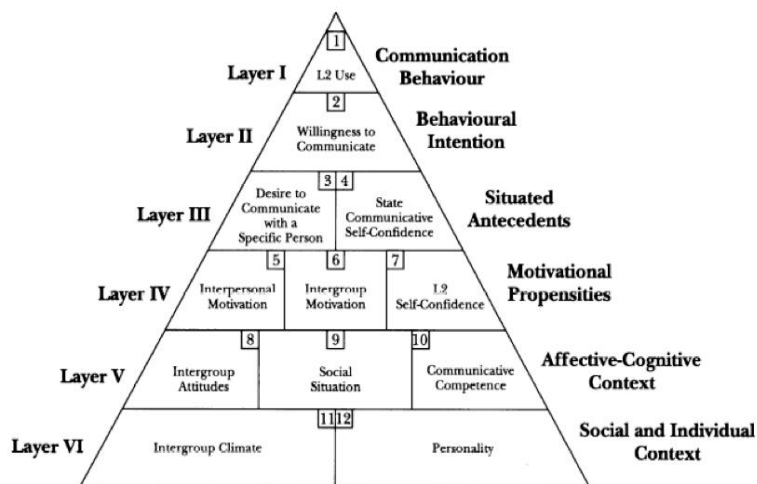


Figure 2. Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al. 1998)

### C. The Possible Relationship between CT and WTC

Today, many people in Iran are trying to learn English as a foreign language for different purposes such as, business, study and travel. It means that they need English in order to communicate with other people. But, many Iranian EFL students have been faced a lot of problems while speaking English and many of them cannot speak fluently and appropriately. Therefore, based on the above mentioned ideas, WTC can be seen as an effective variable on improving communicating in English, and this variable might be deeply related to critical thinking which is considered essential in learning.

According to what mentioned above, the present study tried to investigate the relationship between the critical thinking and willingness to communicate in Iran. Moreover, the researcher has intended to examine the magnitude of possible correlations between the five psychological constructs of critical thinking (inference ability, interpretation ability, deduction ability, recognizing assumption ability and argument evaluation ability) and the learners' willingness to communicate. Accordingly, the following null research hypotheses were proposed:

1. There is no significant relationship between inference ability and willingness to communicate among English language students at IAU branches of Tehran province.
2. There is no significant relationship between interpretation ability and willingness to communicate among English language students at IAU branches of Tehran province.
3. There is no significant relationship between deduction ability and willingness to communicate among English language students at IAU branches of Tehran province.
4. There is no significant relationship between recognizing assumption ability and willingness to communicate among English language students at IAU branches of Tehran province.
5. There is no significant relationship between argument evaluation ability and willingness to communicate among English language students at IAU branches of Tehran province.
6. There is no significant relationship between critical thinking and willingness to communicate among English language students at IAU branches of Tehran province.

## III. METHOD

### A. Participants

The target population of the study included the subset of the English Language student population at Islamic Azad University branches of Tehran province. They were both male and female, and doing BA (Bachelor of Arts) in the field of English language. The samples were selected based on a multistage area random sampling that is also known as cluster sampling. Due to the research requirements, three branches in Tehran province were selected randomly, namely Roudehen, Eslamshahr and Tehran Shomal. Second, eight classes were selected from each of these university branches. Third, sixty male and sixty female English senior students were randomly selected from the classes of each branch to have 360 participants, and the instruments of the study were administered to these students.

It is pertinent to mention that some necessary measures were taken for the selection of participants in order to increase the internal validity of the results by eliminating some intervening variables. Firstly, the same proportion of male and female students was selected. This decision helped the researcher to eliminate the gender factor as an intervening variable. Secondly, only senior English students with reasonable English backgrounds took part in this study. By seniors, the researcher has referred to those students who were at the last two years of BA. As a matter of fact, the researcher preferred to use senior student who were able to answer the questionnaires of the study which were in



English. And as the last one, the age of the participants was also limited between 20 and 30. This age limitation might have been fruitful to the research due to the fact that the age factor might also serve as an intervening variable.

All the subjects were informed of the sensitivity of the study to cooperate with extensive care, and were well informed that taking part in the research can be a good estimation of their own willingness to communicate and critical thinking ability. And those students who preferred to write their names on the answer sheets were informed of the results on the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ) and the Critical Thinking Questionnaire (CTQ) within two weeks.

Fortunately, most of the subjects were truly active participants in answering both instruments cooperatively and with care. Finally, 344 students cooperated with the researcher to the desired extent, and the data analysis of the study was based on the data collected from them. Moreover, the authorities and teachers in the universities were very courteous, kind and cooperative in the process of data collection.

### B. Instruments

There were two instruments implemented in the research so as to obtain as valid data as possible. First, WTCQ was adapted from MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Conrod (2001) to measure students' willingness to communicate. The questionnaire was operationalized in four basic skill areas listening, speaking, reading and writing to indicate how much willing they would be to communicate. The scale includes 27 items and the range is 1 to 5 (1 = almost never willing, 2 = sometimes willing, 3 = willing half of the time, 4 = usually willing, and 5 = almost always willing). Regarding the reliability of the instrument, in the following quotation, Zarrinabadi and Abdi (2011) referred to the reliability estimation of the questionnaire developer and the one they did to estimate the reliability in the context of Iran.

MacIntyre et al. (2001) report this scale to be a valid and reliable one (alpha levels indicate reliability estimates): speaking (8 items,  $\alpha = .81$ ), comprehension (5 items,  $\alpha = .83$ ), reading (6 items,  $\alpha = .83$ ), and writing (8 items,  $\alpha = .88$ ). The alpha reliability estimates for this instrument in the current study are as follows: speaking (8 items,  $\alpha = .78$ ), comprehension (5 items,  $\alpha = .79$ ), reading (6 items,  $\alpha = .85$ ), and writing (8 items,  $\alpha = .85$ ). (Zarrinabadi & Abdi, 2011, p. 208)

The second instrument was Critical Thinking Questionnaire (CTQ) which was intended to tap into critical thinking in general. Sharp and Herbert (2003) present the following description on the instrument based on the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal derived from the WGCTA Manual. The CTQ is a 28-item multiple-choice format measure. Each item has only one correct answer. Further, the CTQ required less time to be answered than other existing critical thinking measures. The CTQ was developed to measure five specific sub-areas of critical thinking: inference making, recognition of assumptions, deduction, interpretation and evaluation of arguments (Watson & Glaser, 1994).

## IV. RESULTS

In the core of this study, the researcher has intended to examine the magnitude of possible correlations between critical thinking and its five psychological constructs (inference ability, interpretation ability, deduction ability, recognizing assumption ability and argument evaluation ability) and the learners' willingness to communicate in order to examine the research hypotheses.

Since the present data were analyzed through the parametric tests of Pearson correlation, the relevant assumptions were met. The data were measured on the interval scale. The subjects were independent. And the data were normally distributed with skewness of -0.145 and kurtosis of -0.171 for CT and skewness of -0.97 and kurtosis of -0.724 for WTC. The values are within the ranges of +/- 1.96.

In order to answer the first research question, the researcher correlated the students' scores of the inference ability section of the Critical Thinking Questionnaire (CTQ) with the scores of the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ). The obtained correlation coefficient between the two variables stood at 0.515 which was positive and significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stressed the nonexistence of any significant relationship between inference ability and willingness to communicate was rejected.

To verify the second research question, the correlational analysis was applied to the relevant data. And as the finding, the correlation between interpretation ability and willingness to communicate was positive and significant at the 0.05 level. The amount of correlation coefficient came out to be 0.503. Hence, in consequence of the result, the second null hypothesis was also rejected which claimed the nonexistence of any meaningful relationship between the two variables.

Then with the intention of deciding on the third hypothesis, the gathered data were examined to search for any significant relationship between the deduction ability dimension of critical thinking and willingness to communicate. The *r*-observed was found to be 0.331 which was positive, low but significant. Therefore, based on the result, the null hypothesis which claimed the nonexistence of any significant relationship between the variables was rejected.

The fourth research hypothesis of the study was intended to examine the correlation between recognizing assumption ability and willingness to communicate. The correlation between these two factors was positive and significant at the 0.05 level. The amount of correlation coefficient came out to be 0.406. Hence, in consequence of the result, the fourth null hypothesis was also rejected.

Then in order to answer the fifth research question, the gathered data were examined to search for any significant relationship between the argument evaluation ability dimension of critical thinking and willingness to communicate.

The  $r$ -observed was found to be 0.420 which was positive, low but significant. Therefore, based on the result, the null hypothesis which claimed the nonexistence of any significant relationship between the variables was rejected.

The sixth research question investigated the possible significant correlation between the major variable, critical thinking and willingness to communicate. The correlation between these two factors was positive and significant at the 0.05 level. The amount of correlation coefficient came out to be 0.435. Hence, in consequence of the result, the sixth null hypothesis was also rejected which claimed the nonexistence of any meaningful relationship between the two major variables.

## V. DISCUSSION

To look at other investigations and the related findings, mostly a two way connection were stressed upon. For instance, Nussbaun (2002) suggested that participation in oral discussions develops students' critical thinking skills. This statement is in line with the findings of the present study and reinforces the presence of meaningful relationship between willingness to communicate and critical thinking.

From another point of view, Scholars like Datar, Garvin and Cullen (2010) presented the idea that thinking critically and communicating clearly are closely related, and again somehow this reinforces the findings of the present study. To support this idea Halpern (1998) found that college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically could communicate more effectively.

Furthermore, Quitadamo and Kurtz (2007) investigated the factors affecting the written communication and interestingly they found that thinking critically is a significant variable which can affect the written communication positively among biology students.

## VI. CONCLUSION

### A. Findings

As mentioned, the main problem which triggered the researcher to open the study was considering critical thinking as an individual difference which enables the language learners to communicate better due to the fact that willingness to communicate can be triggered by thinking critically. Through this investigation, the null hypotheses which stressed the nonexistence of any significant relationships between the psychological constructs of critical thinking and willingness to communicate at an EFL context were investigated.

In the course of these investigations, significance of positive and low/moderate correlations between the psychological constructs of critical thinking and willingness to communicate were found. Thus, in the light of the findings, the six null hypotheses of the study were rejected and critical thinking was found related to willingness to communicate. Table 1 depicts the finding of the study at a glance.

TABLE I.  
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Hypotheses	Correlation	Conclusion
One	0.515*	Rejected
Two	0.503*	Rejected
Three	0.331*	Rejected
Four	0.406*	Rejected
Five	0.420*	Rejected
Six	0.435*	Rejected

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

### B. Implications

Based on the findings of the present study and with the help of the future applied studies which can stress upon the effectiveness of critical thinking on willingness to communicate, curriculum developers can be advised to implement critical thinking courses in order to foster willingness to communicate among foreign language learners.

Moreover, Syllabus designers can also use critical thinking tasks which can trigger willingness to communicate. There is no doubt where willingness to communicate gets increased communication and language learning can also be improved.

Teachers should also be informed on the practicality and importance of critical thinking tasks to invest enough time and energy on them to have better communication and better language learning in their classes.

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# A New Model and Its Practice in Language Learning Strategy Training\*

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**Abstract**—Learning will be facilitated if students are explicitly trained to become more aware of and proficient in the use of a broad range of strategies that can be utilized in the language learning process. A new learning strategy training model, TCLTSP Model, is designed, focusing on the understanding of learners themselves, understanding the target, and understanding learning strategies, aiming at taking conscious control of learning process. Two examples – learner preference and vocabulary learning strategy training class are demonstrated to illustrate how to practice this model in authentic classes.

**Index Terms**—learning strategy training, TCLTSP Model, learner preference, vocabulary learning strategy, teaching practice

## I. INTRODUCTION

As the research of language learning and teaching enters a new century, learning strategy training, which is an important way for helping students become more autonomous and self-regulated, has become one of the prominent themes (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990; Wenden 1991; Cohen 2000). Cohen (2000) states that “foreign language program administrators can contribute to this effort by offering strategy training to students as part of the foreign language curriculum”. (p.67) However, strategy training does not mean simply instructing the same strategies to be regularly adopted and used by language learners; it should be conducted based on the analysis of individual learner's factors and under the guidance of an appropriate model. Therefore, after analyzing five strategy-training models, this article discusses the design and authentic practice of a new model – TCLTSP Model for explicit foreign language learning strategy training. This article aims at demonstrating how strategy training program based on TCLTSP model for freshmen is carried out in Southwest Petroleum University in China, hoping to give teachers implication on foreign language strategy instruction in authentic classes.

## II. REVIEW OF FIVE STRATEGY TRAINING MODELS

Learning strategy models are helpful in illustrating the ways in which research findings can be converted into classroom practice. Among instructional models designed in the researches of strategy training, the following five models are most famous: The Strategic Teaching Model, developed by Jones et al. (1987) (cited from O'Malley & Chamot(1990)); The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) model, designed by O'Malley & Chamot (1990); The CRAPEL Model (the Centre de Recherches et d' Applications Pédagogiques en Langues) (Oxford, 1990, P.217); The Flower Model(Leni Dam's approach to primary school language instruction in Denmark) (Oxford, 1990); Oxford's model (1990).

All of these five models boast their particular features which set them apart from their competitors – investigating strategies adopted by learners and developing learners' motivation in The Strategic Teaching Model; bringing content subjects, academic language skills and learning strategies together in CALLA Model; assigning a “helper” in CRAPEL Model; focusing on the interdependence of Objectives, Activities, Outcomes, Evaluation, Pupils' Contributions, and Materials in Flower Model; making sure the learners aware of the rationale for strategy use in Oxford's model. These models all place more weight on discussions about the use and value of strategies, encourage conscious and purposeful strategy use and transfer, and allow students to monitor their performance and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they are using.

## III. TCLTSP MODEL

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TCLTSP Model is designed in the practices of learning strategy training for Chinese learners who study English as a foreign language from the year of 2008 to 2015. Compared with the above five models which focus on instructing language learning strategies, TCLTSP Model owns five points of difference: (1) Learning strategy use is closely combined with learners' factors. The above five models require instructors understand learners' present language strategy use before training, while TCLTSP model emphasizes instructors understand learners' factors before training, such as learners' preference, self-learning goals and monition, etc. (2) Learning strategy use is closely combined with the feature of target language. The above models do not require learners to understand target language, while this model argues that foreign language learners may have misunderstanding on the features of target language, which influence learners' strategy use, therefore learners need to understand the features of target language in training, such as understanding the nature and feature of listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary learning, etc. (3) "Classroom activities" are applied in above models to help learners understand and learn strategy, and "task experience" is applied in TCLTSP model. "Classroom activities" only have language learning purposes, while "tasks" own non-language learning purpose, which is more communicative, open and interactive, such as the task "learners listen to a piece of absolute music, and write down pictures in their mind brought by this music, and then reflect why different learner has different picture." Here the purpose of this task is not to improve learners' language proficiency, but to make them feel the importance of prior knowledge. (4) "Reflection" is not mentioned in the above five models, while TCLTSP model emphasizes reflecting task experience. Learners are required to think how to carry out tasks correctly and effectively, recall the task experience and reflect their strategy use and difficulties they met in task-doing. Especially, "reflection" is integrated into training content, learners are required not only to reflect "reflection strategy", but also to experience "how to use reflection strategy". (5) A "helper" is assigned in CRAPEL Model, and learners groups are arranged in other existing models; while TCLTSP model has one lecturer and several assistant teachers, and these assistants are assigned in each learners' group, which strengthen the cooperation among teachers through co-teaching, and that of teachers-learners through group activities, and teachers' monitoring, guiding and helping.

The TCLTSP Model is theoretically based on self-regulated learning and experiential learning. Self-regulated learning (SRL) is learning that is guided by metacognition (thinking about one's thinking), strategic action (planning, monitoring, and evaluating personal progress against a standard), and motivation to learn (Zimmerman, 1990). "Self-regulated" describes a process of taking control of and evaluating one's own learning and behavior. It involves three phases – forethought phase (learners analyze tasks and enhance self-motivation beliefs), performance phase (learners adopt strategies to make self-control and self-observation) and self-reflection phase (learners make self-judgment and self-reaction). In self-regulated process, learners understand why, how, when, where and how to learn. TCLTSP Model is based on self-regulated learning, for the model emphasizes recognizing and reflecting learners' effective strategy use, with the aim of taking control language learning process. Based on earlier work by John Dewey and Kurt Levin, American education theorist David A. Kolb believes "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (1984, p.38), in which four stages are involved – concrete experience (learners actively experience activities), reflective observation (learners consciously reflect back on that experience), abstract conceptualization (learners conceptualize what is observed), active experimentation (learners try to test what is conceptualized and plan for a forthcoming experience). TCLTSP Model is also based on experiential learning, for the model emphasizes acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitude in task practice and reflective practice, through experience, perception and cognition.

LTSTC Model has six phases and six components. The six phases are not carried out step by step, but integrated into different components, and each component contains two or three phases.

These six phases are:

Phase 1– experience, learners are encouraged to do one or several tasks to raise their awareness in knowing their learner factors and language proficiency at present level, in recognizing features of learner factors and learning process, and in learning to effectively use strategies instructed by teacher in task experience phase.

Phase 2 – discussion, learners are asked to discuss how they finish the task, what difficulties they have when they experience the task, and how they use strategies when they are doing tasks with the aid of tutors. After Phase 1, learners must have perception on their task experience respectively; however, what they observed or felt is restricted in individual perception. Therefore, Discussion Phase can help learners fully and thoroughly understand what and how they did while they are experiencing tasks by sharing thoughts and ideas with group members.

Phase 3 – expansion, learners are instructed: (a) the definition, categories and features of learner factors and learning processes (namely, listening, reading, writing, speaking, and vocabulary study processes) explicitly; (b) important language learning strategies and how to use these strategies effectively. As to one language skill, one or two important strategies may be instructed in depth; the other strategies are introduced in simpler way.

Phase 4– re-experience, learners are encouraged to apply more strategies in new tasks. In the process, they are required to think over why and how to use these new strategies by themselves and asked to transfer new strategies through different tasks. Eventually, after repeatedly selecting and adjusting strategies they used in new tasks, learners find self- adaptive language learning strategies.

Phase 5– reflection, learners make reflection on their experience processes and re-experience processes. In experience process, learners reflect their learning habits, their comfort zones in strategy use, their questions and

difficulties on language learning process. In re-experience process, learners reflect how they select and adjust strategies based on the characteristics of themselves, and eventually they conceptualize their self-adaptive language learning strategy repertoire.

Phase 6 – evaluation, learners are helped to evaluate the changes they have in recognition on their learner factors, the target language and strategies adaptive to themselves, and the changes in attitude toward foreign language learning, with the help of learner portfolio. And learners also evaluate whether they can use their new self-adaptive learning strategy repertoire effectively and automatically.

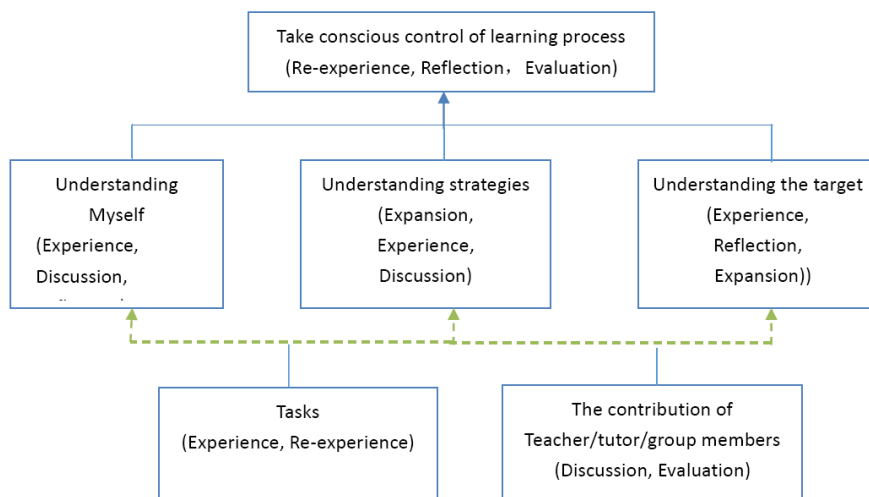


Figure 1: TCLTSP Model

The components in TCLTSP Model are implemented based on task experience. In the model, “T” stands for “Tasks experiencing”, “C” for “Contribution of teacher/ tutors/group members”, “L” for “Learners’ self-understanding”, “T” for “understanding of Target”, “S” for “understanding learning Strategies”, and “P” for “taking conscious control of learning Process”.

“Tasks experiencing” and “Contribution of teacher/ tutors/group members” are supporting components of the model. “Tasks experiencing” contains two phases – experience and re-experience phases. Learners finish different kinds of tasks designed by teacher, and at the same time, they perceive their task doing and language learning processes. “Contribution of teacher/ tutors/group members” also contains two phases – discussion and evaluation; it refers that teacher and tutors provide learning materials and tasks to learners, discuss with learners in groups, give advices to learners when asked, and help learners use portfolio to make reflection and evaluation, meanwhile tutors need to observe and monitor learners in and after classes.

“Learners’ self-understanding”, “understanding of Target”, and “understanding learning Strategies” are core components of the model, which also are distinguish elements of TCLTSP Model. Cohen & Weaver (2006) put forward that strategies can be classified by skill area, which includes the receptive skills of listening and reading and the productive skills of speaking and writing and skill-related strategies that cut across all four skill areas, such as vocabulary strategies and intercultural communication strategies. Furthermore, Oxford (2001) maintained that language learner strategies need to be viewed through the perspective of some learner factors. Therefore, both the target language (language skills and cultural awareness) and learner factors are covered in the three core components.

In “Learners’ self-understanding” component, by experiencing tasks, making discussion and reflection, learners get knowledge on their present learner preferences, roles in a group and identities in intercultural communication, the features of their memory, their goals, motivation, determination, EQ/IQ/AQ, and their behaviors as a foreign language listener/speaker/reader/writer/vocabulary learner, aiming at understanding their cognition schema intellectually and non-intellectually.

By experiencing tasks, making reflection and getting expansion from teachers, learners “understand target” – definition, classification and features of learner preference, group working, foreign language learning goals, learners’ motivation, determination, EQ/IQ/AQ; and the essence of target language learning (listening, reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary study and intercultural communication).

By teacher’s expansion, learner’s experience and discussion, teacher introduces foreign language learning strategies and how to use these strategies effectively to learners and let them use these strategies in the component of “understanding learning Strategies”. In teacher’s expansion phase, learners have a thorough understanding on language learning strategies. In experience phase, learners try to use these strategies in tasks, and in discussion phase, they discuss how they use these strategies and whether they can use them effectively.

“Taking conscious control of learning Process” is the target component of the model; it contains three phases – re-experience, reflection and evaluation. Learners repeated experience different tasks and reflect in and on their

experiencing processes, simultaneously they choose the strategies which are best adaptive to themselves. And finally they evaluate whether they can control their language learning process. In this component, reflection is very important, for learners need to gain their self-adaptive learning strategy repertoire through their self-reflecting.

TABLE 1:  
FEATURES OF TCLTSP MODEL

Self-understanding	Target-understanding	Strategies instruction	
My learner preference	Learner preference	Explore my comfort zone in learner preference; Recognize individual difference in learner preference	Learner Factors (Experience “reflection”)
My goal My motivation My determination My Adversity Quotient	Goal Motivation Determination Adversity quotient	Set my goals; Make use of motivation; Enhance my determination; Enhance my AQ	
Myself as a team member	Roles in a team	Position myself in a team	
My memory characteristics	Memory curve	Memory strategies	
Myself in vocabulary study	Vocabulary study process	Vocabulary study strategies	
Myself as a listener	Listening process	Listening strategies	Target Language (Experience “reflection”)
Myself as a speaker	Speaking process	Speaking strategies	
Myself as a reader	Reading process	Reading strategies	
Myself as a writer	Writing process	Writing strategies	
My intercultural sensitivity	Hidden core of culture	Strategies to develop intercultural competence	
My reflective practice	Reflection	Reflective strategies	Higher order thinking (Reflect “reflection”)

In summary, TCLTSP Model integrates learner factors and target language study into self-understanding and target-understanding (see Table 1). By analyzing task experiences, learners understand their present learner factors and their present behavior in target language learning, finding their weaknesses and strengths in these aspects. By reflecting their task experience and getting instruction from teacher, learners can understand deeply on learner factors and catch language study essence so that they can try to stretch their comfort zones and mend their fences after repeated practice, and form correct language learning belief. What’s more, teacher’s instruction of language learning strategies is based on learners’ full understanding of their learner factors and target language. Only by doing so, can they form learning strategy repertoire which are best adaptive to themselves.

TABLE 2  
THE CURRICULUM OF TCLTSP MODEL STRATEGY TRAINING

Unit 1 Learner Preference	Experience “Reflection”
Unit 2 Goals, Motivation and Perseverance	
Unit 8 Positioning in a Grouping	
Unit 3 Memory (and Vocabulary)	
Unit 3 (Memory and) Vocabulary	
Unit 4 Listening	
Unit 5 Speaking	
Unit 6 Reading	
Unit 7 Writing	
Unit 9 Cross-Cultural Communication	Reflect “Reflection”
Unit 10 Reflections	

IV. APPLICATION OF TCLTSP MODEL IN STRATEGY TRAINING

A group of teachers and graduate students in SWPU set out a language learning strategy training program, aiming to orientate freshmen how to learn a foreign language effectively. As for “learner factors”, learners are first aided to identify their learner preferences, goals, motivation, determination, EQ/IQ/AQ, their membership in a team, and their memory characteristics, and then they are given a thorough, systematical and detailed instruction to concept and categories of “learner preference, goals, motivation, determination, EQ/IQ/AQ, roles in a team and memory curve”, and finally learners are aided to master strategies – “explore my comfort zone in learner preference; recognize individual difference in learner preference; set my goals; make use of motivation; enhance my determination; enhance my AQ; position myself in a team; memory strategies. As for “target language”, learners are first aided to understand their present performance as language learner – “myself in vocabulary study; myself as a listener; myself as a speaker; myself as a reader; myself as a writer; my intercultural sensitivity”, and then they are given a thorough, systematical and detailed instruction to definition, categories and function of “vocabulary study process, listening process, speaking

process, reading process, writing process, and hidden core of culture”, and finally learners are helped to master vocabulary study strategies, listening/speaking/reading/ writing strategies, and strategies to develop intercultural competence. As for “higher order thinking”, learners first recall their reflective practice in language learning, and they get full comprehension on definition, categories and function of “reflection” by teacher instruction, and finally learners are helped to master reflective strategies. (See Table 1) The curriculum of TCLTSP Model Strategy Training for foreign language freshmen can be seen in table 2.

#### A. Practice of TCLTSP Model in Learner Preference

Lecture on “learner preference” is a typical example of how this strategy training program develops learners’ strategies on learner factors, which casts us lights on non-intelligence factors training.

**Time arranged:** 135 minutes

**Teaching method:** team teaching (professor instructing and assistants participating in group discussion, monitoring and observing learners)

**Teaching objective:** (1) Understanding learner preference; (2) Identifying your own learner preference; (3) Consciously taking control of the learning process.

**Warm-up Activities:** Teacher raises questions among students: “Have you ever thought about what types of lessons you prefer most in school? Do you like reading from the text on your own? Would you rather listen to others reading from the book? Do you like working with your classmates or would you rather complete an assignment by yourself?” The aim of this questions-raising activity is to let students know their preferences tell the tendencies they will learn a language, especially when they facing a multitude of learning strategies. Therefore, to be an effective learner, they might as well know themselves first, and select learning strategies in accordance with their own learner preferences.

#### Understanding Yourself as a Learner

Students are asked to do a survey task, and then draw a picture with the aid of assistant teachers. Students are told to count how many Vs, As, and Ks they circled, to divide each number by 7 and multiply by 15, to find the point on their corresponding line (A stands for Aural; V visual; K kinesthetic), and then to connect three points and get a triangle (see figure 2). The survey is as following (Zeng, 2011):

1. You are driving to your friend’s house, but you don’t know his address. Would you like him to:
  - V. draw you a map? A. tell you directions? K. collect you in their car?
2. You are going to cook a dessert as a special treat for your family. Do you:
  - K. cook something usual? A. ask for advice from others?
  - V. look for ideas from a cookbook’s pictures and instructions?
3. When you got your first mobile phone, how did you learn to use it best? by:
  - V. visual clues-pictures, diagrams, charts and written instructions?
  - A. listening to your friends’ experience? K. using it?
4. You are about to learn how to use a new program on a computer. Would you:
  - K. ask a friend to show you? A. telephone a friend and ask questions about it?
  - V. read the handbook which comes with the program?
5. You are not sure whether a word should be spelled “dependent” or “dependant”. Do you:
  - V. imagine it in mind and choose the best way it looks? A. sound it out?
  - K. write both versions down or look up the dictionary?
6. Which of these games do you prefer?
  - V. Pictionary? A. Whisper game? K. Charades?
7. Do you prefer a lecturer/teacher who likes to use?
  - V. flow diagrams, charts, slides (PPT)? A. discussion, guest speakers?
  - K. field trips, labs, practical sessions?

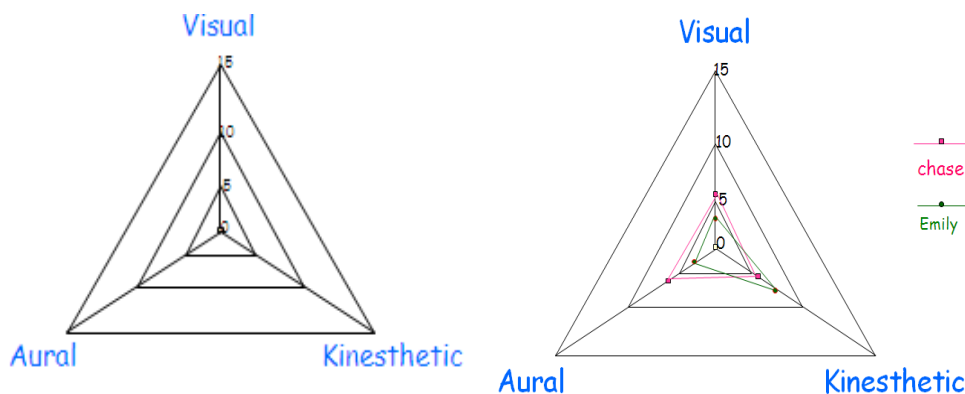


Figure 2: Sensory preferences, cited from Zeng (2011)

#### Understanding Learner Preferences



Teacher instructs what visual/aural/kinesthetic learners are by exemplifying: Visual learners “prefer using pictures, colors, and maps to organize information; see pictures, numbers, or words in his/her mind; understand /remember things better if he/she writes them down.” Aural learners “remember things better if he/she discusses them with someone; like to listen to music when he/she studies; when turning on the TV, he/she listens to the sound more than watches the screen.” Kinesthetic learners “often use more body languages to communicate; like thinking out issues, ideas and problems by moving around; enjoy learning by doing.”

**Learner Preferences and Foreign Language Learning**

Teacher gives advices to learners of different sensory preferences, for example: visual learners “rely more on the scene of sight and learn best through visual means (books, video, charts, pictures)” ; aural learners “prefer listening and speaking activities (discussions, role-plays, lectures)” ; kinesthetic learners “benefit from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around the room (games, conducting experiments).” Meanwhile, the weaknesses of each sensory preferences learners in language study are also instructed, for example: visual learners “are poor in speaking; have trouble in following spoken directions; not retain what they hear for very long” ; aural learners “distracted by noise; write smoothly and not always readable; are poor in reading comprehension” ; kinesthetic learners “are poor spellers; are not good readers; don’t hear things well” .

Students discuss in groups, identify their sensory preferences, and analyze their learning features related to these preferences with the help of assistant teachers. For example, one student report “I prefer aural and kinesthetic learning, for I like to play my pen and hair when studying and I like listening to something when studying and when getting bed. I think listening can help me focus my attention, so I like listening better. But still, I also like to imagine picture in my mind when studying.” Another student says” I prefer visual learning, but I know listening is very important.”

**Understanding Learner Preferences**

Teacher instructs other learner preferences to students: in personality types, there are extroverted/introverted learners and open/ closure-oriented learners; in cognitive styles, there are global and analytic learners. Features for each learner preference are also instructed, for example: extroverted learners “are Energized by the outside world; are active, interaction-oriented, and outgoing; have broad interests; tend to reflect later” ; introverted learners “are Energized by the inner world; prefer concentration; focus on thoughts and concepts; have fewer interests, but deeper ones; like to be reflective” ; open learners “are Information gatherer; like to take in a lot of information and experience before making a decision, have a high tolerance for ambiguity; tend to be flexible and open to change; find deadlines as artificial and arbitrary” ; closure-oriented learners “ are decision makers; action takers; make and follow tips; want quick closure and control; have a low tolerance for ambiguity, find deadlines helpful” ; global learners “enjoy getting the main idea and are comfortable communicating even if they do not know all the words or concepts” ; analytic learners “need specific examples to understand fully; pay attention to specific factors or information; are good at catching new phrases or words” .

**Understanding Yourself as a Learner**

Students are asked to do a survey and they are told to circle their immediate responses to six items, multiply each score by two, find the point on their corresponding line (E stands for extroverted; I introverted; C closure; O open; G global; A analytic), connect all points with adjoining points, and get a hexagon (see figure 3). The survey is as following (Zeng, 2011):

- 0=never 1=rarely 2=sometimes 3=often 4=usually 5=always
- E. I meet new people easily by jumping into the conversation. 0 1 2 3 4 5
- I. When I am in a large group, I tend to keep silent and listen. 0 1 2 3 4 5
- C. I like to be certain about what things mean in English. 0 1 2 3 4 5
- O.I don't feel the need to come to rapid conclusions about a topic. 0 1 2 3 4 5
- G. When I tell an old story, I tend to forget lots of specific details. 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A. I need very specific examples in order to understand fully. 0 1 2 3 4 5

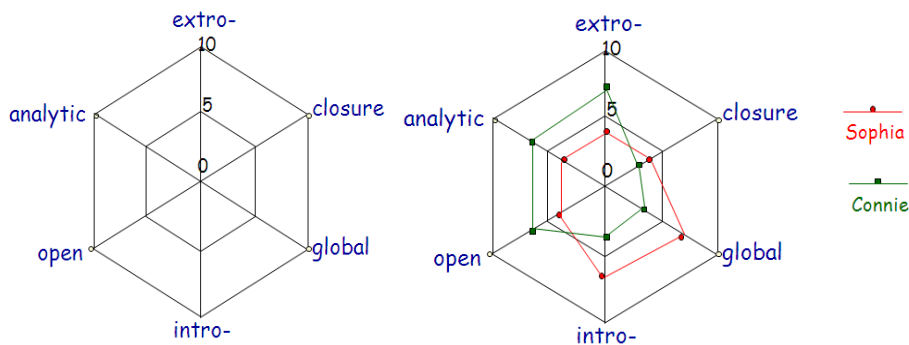


Figure 3: Personality and Cognitive Preferences, cited from Zeng (2011)

**Learner Preferences and Foreign Language Learning**

Students discuss in groups their learning features related to their learner preferences. For example, one student reports “sometimes I’m extroverted and sometimes I’m introverted, I like to chat and discuss with others, and I also like to do my homework alone. I’m more closure-oriented learner for I always make plan. I’m more global learner for I always get general ideas, even when I can’t understand others’ conversations, therefore I don’t focus on details and I feel I’m lazy in thinking. Now I recognize this weak point, and I will force myself focus more on details in my learning processes.” Another student reports “I’m a more extroverted girl, and I like group activities and present my opinion to others, but sometimes I still do my business alone. I’m very interested in western culture, so I like English, but my poor grammar gets me stuck. I think this is because I’m more global learner and do not focus on details. So I will change this weak point step by step. I’m more open learner, and I like learn in free atmosphere, so I always feel my mind is oppressed and want get out of the classroom to breathe fresh air when I attend class for longer time.”

Teacher explains to students that everyone is unique and individual differences are existed in our study, what more, there is no good or bad learner preference and there are strong and weak points for each preference. Therefore, what students need to do is analyzing themselves and identifying their learner preferences, so that they can adjust their preference in given context for better foreign language study.

#### **Assignment**

Two tasks are assigned to students in this class. One is investigating task. Students are asked to observe or interview one of their teachers, analyze and exemplify his/her learner preferences and teaching characteristics. And then students need to compare this teacher with themselves and find weather their preference differences bring conflicts to their learning.

Another is reflective journal. Students are asked to summarize their learner preference and foreign language learning characteristics and reflect how they better themselves. For example, one student writes “I’m very interested in my own learner preference and the learning strategies, because knowing my strengths and weaknesses is good for my study. I can find the right way to learn English well. But some professional terms in this unit are hard for me, because they are strange, I think. I can’t understand them easily.” Another student writes “I think ‘Understand Yourself as a Learner’ and ‘Understanding Learner Preferences’ are interesting. Through these parts, I get a clear understanding of myself, and make me a more resourceful English learner. On the one hand, I am happy when I discuss with my friends, on the other hand, I can become more aware of my strengths and weaknesses. It is so useful to improve my learning efficiency. So, I like these parts.”

#### ***B. Practice of TCLTSP Model in Vocabulary Learning Strategy Training***

Lecture on “Vocabulary learning strategy training” is a typical example of how this strategy training program develops learners’ strategies on language skills study.

**Time arranged:** 135 minutes

**Teaching method:** team teaching (professor instructing and assistants participating in group discussion, monitoring and observing learners)

**Teaching objective:** (1) Left-brained or right-brained? Do you understand your brain? (2) What should be known when we are learning new words? (3) Understanding certain strategies on vocabulary learning and retaining.

**Warm-up Activities:** Students listen to a piece of audio clip and try to note down the important points according to what they are hearing. And then, students do group discussion, comparing notes each group member have put down and reflecting the Question (a) “Why do our notes vary from each other?”

Students get different contents from this piece of audio clip: learners preferring left-ear hearing get the content “One kind of vacation that many of Americans enjoy is camping. Each summer, millions of Americans drive to the countryside where they find places to camp. The National Parks, many of which are in the mountain are favorite camping places. Campers enjoy fresh air, the lakes and the forests which they find in these parks”; learners preferring right-ear hearing get the content “Most Americans business are open five days a week. American school children attend school five days a week as well. American families usually have a two-day weekend. The weekend is Saturday and Sunday. Over the weekend, people spend their time in many different ways. Many families enjoy weekends together.” By discussing Question (a), learners can find: some individuals prefer left-ear hearing, some prefer right-ear hearing; some individuals even write down notes from left-ear hearing at one time and notes from right-ear hearing at another time. This task can help learners feel they are left/right-brained preference learner, and they can feel the individual difference in their daily study.

#### **Understanding Yourself as a Learner**

Students discuss in groups Question (b) “Are you more left-brained or right-brained? What might this preference indicate?” Question (b) is an in-depth question of Question (a). After experiencing the difference of left and right brain control, learners need to judge their preference and analyze the advantages of different preference for their language learning. For example, one student argues “*I am more left-brained. I don’t know what does this mean, but I am always good at mathematics.*” And another student reflects “*I am more of a right-brained type. And I guess that’s the reason why I have a special interest in music and art.*”

After discussing Question (b), teacher shows pictures which demonstrate different functions of left and right brain –“Left Brain: Right-hand Control, Language, Mathematics, Scientific skills, Logical Reasoning, Focus on details; Right Brain: Left-hand Control, Music & Art Awareness, Imagination, Focus on the general ideas.” Teacher explains to

learners: They may belong to left/right-brained preference learner, and these preferences endow them with different advantages, therefore each learner should try his/ her best to find their strong points; besides, their weaknesses can be compensated by consciously using learning strategies.

To demonstrate learners can compensate their weaknesses brought by the left/right brain preference by using strategies, students are asked to finish the task “Memorize 20 words in 10 minutes.” These 20 words are new words for freshmen, and spelling, part of speech, pronunciation, English meaning and Chinese meaning of these words are provided to learners. 10 minutes later, students are asked to do a spelling test and to report how they memorize these words. Learners’ reports show that most learners think words which are regularly structured or are easy to pronounce can be easily memorized, and words which are strange and are difficult to separate into morphemes can rarely be memorized. For example, one student mentions his memorizing process “When I memorize the word ‘entangle’, I recall my senior high school teacher Mr. Tang whose class is always bustle, and I think a phrase ‘in Tang’s class’.” Another student reports “I like to watch NBA programs; therefore, I think the word ‘defensible’ is easy to memorize”. And another one says “I think the word ‘sophisticated’ is easy to memorize because I like high technology and I also believe it is hard to be a man of the world.” By group discussing, learners can share memorizing methods and enlarge their strategy use zone; besides, they can recognize that although right-brained learners may not be good at language learning, they can compensate it by making full use of “imagination” to help them learn and memorize vocabularies.

### **Understanding Vocabulary Learning**

Teacher asks students to reflect the “memorizing 20 words” task and discuss another in-depth Question(c) “When you say you have learned a word, what exactly do you know about the word?” In this discussion, assistants teachers need to help students understand: (1) five factors of a word should be covered when we memorizing it – spelling, pronunciation, meaning, collocation, and part of speech; (2) how large is their vocabulary, and a university graduate will have a vocabulary of around 20,000 word families (Goulden, Nation and Read, 1990); (3) one reason why some words are very strange to them and some are familiar is that there are high-frequency words and low-frequency words.

### **Learning Strategies Use**

Vocabulary learning strategies focus on two questions: Question (d) What methods were used in order to learn and memorize new words? Question (e) What will you do if you meet a new word in your reading or listening activity?

To answer Question (d), assistant teacher helps learners recall methods they use in “memorizing 20 words” task. Learners have various reflections, such as: “I analyzed the words I need to memorize, finding roots and affixes in them”; “I like to read these words again and again, so that I can get deep impression on them”; “I try to read these words and put them down at the same time”; “I like to associate these words with words which I’m familiar with”; “I like to memorize through my imagination and their pronunciations”; “I prefer to use dictionary to help me memorize these words”. After discussion, teacher demonstrates some particular methods learners used in this discussion, such as “when I memorize the word ‘bewilder’, I associate it with “wild” – the word I have learnt long ago”; “I imagine Tango when I memorize the word ‘entangle’; “I like to put words in context, so I think of a specific picture of ‘exhibition’ when I memorize it”. Finally, teacher shows and explains “Ebbinghaus Curve” to students, and emphasizes the importance of reviewing in vocabulary memorizing.

To answer Question (e), assistant teachers help learners to reflect their daily English learning activity. One group’s answers are: when I meet new word, I “look into dictionary; guess its meaning in context; guess its meaning according to its morpheme; underline this new words; ignore it; at least judge its part of speech.” This group’s answers can illustrate students have different degree of tolerance on new words, which may bring to different learner responses to them.

After discussing Question (d) and (e), teacher instructs two strategies on how to deal with new words – word guessing and consulting a dictionary.

For word guessing, teacher instructs how to guess word meaning based on word formation – affixation (eg., export, import, support, transport, transportation, porter), compounding (eg., record-breaking, chain-smoke), and blending (eg., motel, brunch), and how to guess word meaning based on context clues – definition (eg., The harbor is protected by a jetty ---a wall built out into the water.), example (eg., Cold beverages, like iced tea, fruit juice, coca-cola, and milk shakes are sold everywhere on a hot day.), restatement (eg., He had a wan look. He was so pale and weak that we thought he was ill.), synonym (eg., The new tax law supersedes, or replaces, the law that was in effect last year.), antonym (eg., Unlike her gregarious sister, Jane is a shy, unsociable person who does not like to go to parties or to make new friends.), Inference( eg., My father is a versatile man; he is a successful businessman, sportsman, author, and sports car mechanic.), general knowledge (eg., Mark got on the motorbike, I sat behind him on the pillion, and we roared off into the night.), and logic relation(eg. The State of Texas revoked that driver’s license because he had had too many accidents.)

For consulting dictionary, teacher instructs types of dictionary (monolingual, bilingual; general and special, pocket; medium-sized and unabridged; encyclopaedias and encyclopedic; electronic and online), characteristics of e-dictionary and paper-dictionary, and how to choose a proper dictionary.

“Learning Strategies Use” aims to enlarge learner’s cognition on vocabulary strategies and improve their strategy repertoire by group discussing, sharing and teacher instruction.

### **Assignment**

Two tasks are assigned to students in this class. One is group work task –imitate teacher’s demo “hair” (see figure 4) and design “word in network”. The key word chosen by groups are various, such as “PLA, flower, music, organ, earth, food, etc”. Of course, students’ problems are found in this task, for example, some students have not participated in the group work; some students are not familiar with the work their groups have done; some students just do the task, but do not memorize words in their groups’ network.

Another task is reflective journal. Students are required to write down what they have learnt on vocabulary strategies, and the change of their cognition on vocabulary learning. For example, some reflections are: “I used to remember new words by writing them down while reading aloud, again and again. Now I know that I have to change the way I remember vocabulary. I should make a ‘reviewing—regularly plan’ to memorize new words, because memorizing has its regular pattern.” “I used to view English vocabulary as the most horrible nightmare I had ever had. Now I have realized if I can master some good ways, it would be so easy. I can use vivid image by associating new words with something else that produces memorable image and by visualizing the words. I can connect what I already known to newly acquired vocabulary. Word formation can help me enlarge my vocabulary memory bank. Most importantly, in order to understand one word very well, an English-to-English dictionary is a must.”

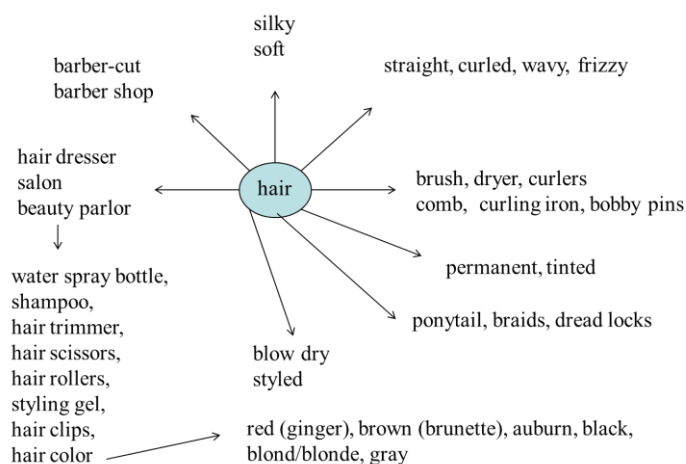


Figure 4. “hair” in network

## V. IMPLICATION

The practice of TCLTSP Model in learner preference and vocabulary strategy training not only demonstrates how teacher train strategies among students, but also displays learners’ thinking processes in training class. This practice suggests that compared to simply instructing learning strategies, understanding learner factors and target language in training can help learners better adjust and choose self-adaptive strategies; meanwhile, a lot of tasks are finished in groups in this practice, which encourage learners to share individuals’ learning methods and promote their motivation to find their strengths and weaknesses, and eventually choose their adaptive strategies in foreign language learning.

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# The Effect of Using SMS as a Post Task Activity on Iranian EFL Learners' Grammar Knowledge

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**Abstract**—The current study aimed at investigating the effect of using SMS on Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' grammar learning. Moreover, the effect of using SMS on the Iranian EFL students' autonomy and their perception of it as an educational tool was investigated. The participants of the present study consisted of 60 upper-intermediate Iranian EFL learners. Different instrumentations including the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), grammar test, and Autonomy Questionnaire were used in this study. Through adopting a quasi-experimental design with a pretest- treatment-posttest sequence, participants were divided into Experimental and Control group. The data was analyzed and inferentially compared using independent sample and paired sample t-test. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest means of experimental and control group regarding their performance in grammar test. The results showed that experimental group learners outperformed the learners in control group. Therefore, using SMS had a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' effective learning of grammatical structures; in addition, it helped students to increase their autonomy towards learning. As an implication of this study, it is proposed that SMS usage can be incorporated into language classroom effectively to enhance learners' learning of different language skills.

**Index Terms**—SMS, grammar learning, EFL learners, autonomy

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world in which technology and science are quickly expanding, distance communication through wireless technology is not very surprising. Since mobile phones with a variety of usages creep into all dimensions of our lives, it is expected that this multipurpose device will soon turn into an indispensable part of our everyday life. Then, widespread access this fashionable device with competitive prices has almost revolutionized e-learning in many different ways. According to Prensky (2005), among the important technologies available for the students in the language classroom, mobile phone plays a very important role. They are user-friendly devices with lots of applications helpful for the process of learning a foreign language. O'Malley et al. (2003) consider mobile learning as the learning that is not in a fixed state and can take place at any time and in any place, and so extends language learning outside the walls of the classroom. Klopfer et al. (2002) identified the following properties of mobile learning: 1) connectivity: it's possible to connect mobile devices to each other or to connect them to an established network, 2) social interactivity: mobile phones enable us to exchange data and collaborate with other learners, 3) context sensitivity: the data on the mobile devices can be collected and replied exclusively to the existing location and time, 4) portability: mobile phone are easily handled and are available anywhere and anytime, and 5) individuality: mobile phones can be easily customized for a particular person. Using mobile phones in the language classroom introduced a new concept in teaching languages that is Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Over the past decade, MALL has developed into a sophisticated field within its own right and a large number of articles have examined different mobile devices within various environments. Kukulska-Hulme (2013, p. 3701) defines MALL as the use of "mobile technologies in language learning, especially in situations where device portability offers specific advantages". According to him, Mobile learning consists of the use of any portable learning materials including portable radios, cell phones, audio cassettes, DVD players and audio CDs. Alexander (2004) defines mobile learning as a type of learning that has established the legitimacy of 'nomadic' learners. Nowadays, you can find a mobile phone easily in the market that is affordable for most of the people and incorporate high technology within itself. This can be considered as a valuable opportunity to save time for all people doing their affairs. The advent of mobile computing technology has evolved

definition of M-learning. Using E-learning, if students have cell phone, they can learn anytime and anywhere, can use materials repeatedly, and can repeat the difficult part for them.

By the late 1970s, due to the eagerness shown from students for authentic and real world materials, Audio-lingual method gave its place to more communicative based methods of language teaching. Emergence of cognitive and sociolinguistic approaches, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, emphasized on the learner's engagement with authentic, meaningful and contextualized material and there was a thorough change in the use of technology in classroom. Today's mobile devices have the capacity for offering authentic language learning materials (for instance 3G/4G smartphones, tablet PC) and have been removing the lines between classroom and home. Moreover, the boundaries between the mobile devices and PCs are getting blurred (Yang, 2013). Mobile assisted language learning can be considered as a new subcategory of computer assisted language learning in line with the latest horizon report which highlighted educational potential of tablet computing and mobiles (Johnson et al., 2013; Johnson, Adams, & Cummins, 2012).

One of the most applied applications of mobiles in language learning is short message services - SMS. According to Starovoit (2012), Text messaging or "texting" was only established and publicized in the mid-1990s. He claims that By 2009, 60 percent of the world's inhabitants already had contact with cell phone, and SMS was the second most shared way to employ the technology to communicate, after speaking person-to-person. Researches about how text messaging touch reading and writing initiated in the early 2000s. It was palpable that with an almost worldwide limit of 160 characters and a minute, stropy keyboard that was frequently QWERTY-based, the mainstream of text message employers would likely lost precise use of language for speed. Texting language looks like speaking, with artless syntax, imperfect sentences and casual structure. As for English, the spelling conventions are fairly unlike Standard English, and the practice of abbreviations and phonetic spelling is regularly happening. In consort with the text message phenomenon, forewarnings of linguistic troubles that would be set free by text messaging ascended. Some of these were: "Texting uses new and nonstandard orthography, texting will inevitably erode children's ability to spell, punctuate, and capitalize correctly – an ability already thought to be poor, inevitably [to] transfer these new habits into the rest of their schoolwork" (Crystal, 2008, p.151).

However, Short messages service (SMS) can be of paramount help to English language instruction in particular and to languages in general. It can be damaging if not restricted and left to admit make up words, choppy lingo, sloppy spelling and grammatical errors to get a rapid and short message through (Starovoit, 2012). On the other hand, it can be a very worthy instrument to lift language skills and sub skills if used skillfully and written in correct English especially that it encompasses the main mass of people's communication. It can be reflected as an essential way to give speedy attention to words (Nation, 2001). Also, it is potential to emphasis on restricted amount of information, since too much amount of information can be puzzling and disheartening. In addition, they are inspiring for students, because they can learn the lessons delivered to them through SMS any time and in any location they like.

#### **Grammar in Foreign language classroom**

Grammar instruction should not be ignored. Efficient language use needs grammar knowledge since it will help language users combine words and sentences and turn them to meaningful utterances. High knowledge of grammar assists users construct accurate sentences in speaking and writing. High knowledge of grammar assists users construct unambiguous sentences and texts. Inappropriate use of structures does not create meaningful messages. Grammar instruction is to understand the mechanism of language. Appropriate grammar instruction helps learners use the language properly. Azar (2007) emphasizes the importance grammar instruction by stating that grammar teaching makes learners aware of the nature of language (that language is made of predictable patterns that make what we speak, read, listen and write understandable. Without grammar, there would have been only words or sounds, images, and body movements to convey and understand meaning. Grammar weaves the words to create the final product (Azar, 2007). To create accurate sentences, grammar knowledge is indispensable. One of the effective ways to incorporate grammar teaching is through SMS (short message service). SMS has been largely utilized in educational setting. However, they are mainly used for administrative purposes rather and not for instructional ones. Riordan and Traxler (2005), for instance, studied the role of curriculum modifications in favor of using the technology and pointed out that technology in general terms, significantly enhances students learning. Other studies have investigated the effectiveness of SMS as a learning strategy. Thornton and Houser (2001), for example, studied the role of SMS in 'pushing' learning resources to learners; the results revealed the effective role of SMS. They stated that in their study SMS technology helped learning in four different ways: first, SMS was effective for vocabulary learning; second, students like SMS; third, read their course content even without having the chance to reply to SMS appealed to the students; fourth, students open the messages as soon as they receive messages. Balasundaram and Ramadoss (2007) offers a strategy for the incorporation of SMS to testing through delivering short quizzes to students; they interacted with other students and teachers through reading and replying to the quizzes. In this study, the researcher aimed at exploring the teaching and learning of grammar to EFL students through the use of SMS. The following research questions have been posed by the researcher to achieve the goals of the study:

**Q1:** Does employment of SMS has any significant effects on Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' Grammar achievement?

**Q2:** Does employment of SMS has any significant effects on Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' autonomy?

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is a mix of theories concerning grammar teaching. Some academics, for example Prabhu (1987), follow the prohibition of grammar learning, whereas other scholars accentuate the necessity to contain grammar instruction in CLT (for instance, Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Nassaji, 2000; Spada & Lightbown, 1993). The theory of acquisition versus learning, formulated by Krashen (1982, 1985), had a significant influence on the idea that concentrating solely on meaning is adequate for SLA. In his premise, Krashen suggests that there is a division between acquisition and learning. He considers that acquisition takes place naturally, on condition that learners obtain satisfactory comprehensible input, and that merely acquired knowledge can cause effortless communication. Similarly, Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis recommends that explicit form teaching simply functions as an instrument for observing learners' language. That is, learners pick up grammatical rules just to monitor the rightness of their language practice, which is additional to what has been acquired. Nevertheless, the backers of explicit grammar teaching maintain that it is insufficient to acquire a L2, if meaning is the only center. Long (1991) discriminates between focus on forms and focus on form. He outlines focus on forms as learning language structures, and focus on form as pushing students toward grammar in activities and tasks. In the last twenty years or so, some scholars have resumed the inquiry of form-focused instruction in CLT (for example, Celce-Murcia, 1991; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 1993; Long & Crookes, 1992). The research on language accurateness of students in an immersion platform in Canada delivered vital suggestions that form focused teaching is desired (e.g. Harley & Swain, 1984; Swain, 1985). These immersion learners received huge quantities of input and had ample opportunities of communication in the program for a period of time, but their speech still included grammatical mistakes. On account of withdrawing form-focused teaching, the learners' output showed lack of accuracy (Williams, 1995). Regardless of the undesirable reports about immersion platforms related to language acquisition, examinations specified the triumph of French immersion programs in Canada. The learners in the programs did better than those who educated French as a distinct theme in their total proficiency in French besides their awareness of the target language culture (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Lessow-Hurley, 2009). Many educationalists misinterpret focus on form as instruction and learning of grammatical rules. Conversely, form-focused instruction does not signify offering rules to learners. A number of examinations (e.g. Doughty, 1991; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown, 1991; Trahey & White, 1993; White, 1991) have scrutinized the efficiency of focusing on form and designated that pupils with form-focused instruction outdone those deprived of teaching on the targeted forms. The outcomes of these researches are very imperative, as they back the role of form-focused instruction. Some instructors consider that form-focused teaching and communicative tasks, where the emphasis is on meaning, should be disconnected. Teachers think that leading students' attention toward grammar, as they are appealing to meaning, may have destructive outcomes (Lightbown, 1998). Nevertheless, some academics claim that form-focused instruction and communicative activities should be mutual. Students notice the target forms, and the forms become more outstanding, if students absorb them in context (Foto, 1994; Lightbown, 1998; Nassaji, 2000; Wang, 2009). Scholars argue that in line with the methodology of CLT, task based language teaching has been proposed.

Interests toward task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been highly expressed during the last 30 years. Interests in TBLT highlight the role of tasks in second and foreign language learning context. TBLT, which is extensively used in language acquisition classes (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007), is expected to be known as an approach which has the power to compensate for the insufficiencies of communicative approach to language instruction and can be regarded as a natural expansion of CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Techniques, principles, and process-/product-based incorporation of TBLT and its role in learning a second or foreign language has been one of the most studied areas of the field of second language learning during the last three decades (Klapper, 2003; McDonough, 1995; Szymanski, 2002). TBLT, in which students are provided with authentic, natural, and daily language related problems, is regarded as one of the most recent strands of applied linguistics. According to Nunan (2004), task-based language learning draws on the process of transformation and lets student fall into the real word language related activities. Based on TBLT principles, language is considered as an instrument for accomplishing tasks not simply as a subject. Simply put, language is viewed as an instrument to communicate and not an independent end.

Some previous studies have investigated the role of SMS in learning a new language. Kennedy and Levy (2008) and Levy and Kennedy (2005), for instance, report a strategy toward the incorporation of SMS to language classes. In these studies learners were provided with Italian vocabularies, expressions, and sample sentences as SMS messages through their cell phones. Both studies reported that the incorporation of SMS as an instructional tool was successful. Moreover, participants held a positive perception about the incorporation of SMS as a learning tool. Li and Erben (2007) found out that the use of SMS in language classes enhances language learners' intercultural awareness as well as critical thinking skills. Two other studies (Thornton & Houser, 2005; Zhang et al., 2011) studied the role of SMS in enhancing language learners' vocabulary acquisition. The results were in line with previous studies (i.e. effectiveness of SMS). Lu (2008), recruited 30 senior high school students and through adopting a quasi-experimental design, divided them into two groups. The experimental group acquired English vocabulary through SMS, while the control group took the usual paper based materials. The findings revealed that experimental group participants achieved higher scores than control group participants in their vocabulary test. Zhang et al. (2011) in a similar study confirmed Lu (2008) findings. In another study Motallebzadeh and Ganjali (2011) studied the role of SMS in enhancing vocabulary knowledge and



reading comprehension of 40 English learners. The findings showed that SMS utilization results in the development of vocabulary knowledge as well as reading comprehension skills.

### III. METHODOLOGY

In this part, the researcher examined the participants, materials and procedure of this study.

#### A. *Participants and Setting*

Sixty upper-intermediate EFL learners studying English as their foreign language in Khorasan language institute were selected based on oxford placement test (OPT). The age of these participants ranged from 12 to 15. Due to gender segregation in these language institutes only male learners were selected. These participants were randomly assigned into two groups: experimental and control. The institute has been working in this field for more than 10 years with the average of 300 students in each semester. Each semester finishes in 3 months. The girls and the boys are separated from each other in a way that Saturday and Wednesday are the days for girls and Sunday and Tuesday are the days for boys. Age range of students who register in this institute is from 4 to 25 where there are elementary, secondary, high school and university students. This study was performed in the spring semester in 2015. At the beginning of the study, the students who were chosen to participate in the study were given a consent form to fill and were asked to inform their parents about the study. The researcher also held a session with the educational supervisor of the institute, describing the procedure in detail for him. The educational supervisor agreed to help the researcher in the research process by providing her with a large class with enough chairs and a suitable time for the students.

#### B. *Instrumentation*

Different instruments have been used in this study for different purposes. The researcher used an oxford placement test at the beginning of the study in order to find the qualified participants for the study. Touchstone 2 (lower-intermediate) was used in order to teach experimental and control groups the grammatical structures. There was learner autonomy questionnaire developed by Kashefian (2002) which was used to estimate what were the effects of technology use on the students learning autonomy. Also, in order to investigate the study results about students' grammar learning, the researcher conducted two grammar tests as pretest and posttest based on Touchstone 2 book.

##### 1. **Oxford placement test**

Proficiency tests refer to norm-referenced tests which are expected to "measure global language abilities" (Brown, 2005, p. 2). One feature of a proficiency tests is that they need to provide scores which are normally distributed and lets relative interpretations of the test scores in terms of how each participant performed in relation to the performances of all other participants. The next feature of these tests is its structure; generally they are quite long and include a wide range of question content types and usually consist of a few subsections on rather general language skills including reading comprehension, listening comprehension, grammar, and writing. Moreover, the third characteristic of these tests is that they produce a wide range of scores so that interpretations of the differences among test takers be. Simply put, a proficiency test tends to measure participants' general language proficiency. OPT is divided into two sections: listening and grammar. The listening section consists of 100 items. It takes about ten minutes to take the listening test. Test-takers are required to select the correct alternative which they hear in short sentences from among two existing alternatives. Buck (2001) refer to these types of tests as phonemic discrimination tasks in which the test-takers are expected to distinguish two words which differ by one phoneme. The grammar section of OPT has 100 items. Test takers have 50 minutes to complete the test. They are required to fill in the blanks using one of the three options which follow the stem.

##### 2. **Grammar test**

As the purpose of this study was improving learners' grammatical knowledge by the use of technology, the researcher made two different grammar tests as pre and posttests to limit the effect of test retest procedure. The test items were taken from the grammatical structures that are specified in Touchstone 2 syllabus. Both tests consist of 60 multiple-choice grammar items checking learners' understanding of different parts of the grammar. The learners had forty minutes to answer the questions. Both tests were pilot tested to check for their reliability and validity by the help of a group of 10 learners. The results of Cronbach alpha test should that the pretest and posttest enjoyed a reliability of 0.79 and 0.82, respectively. Also, the validity test depicted 0.73 and 0.78 scores for the pretest and posttest.

##### 3. **Learner Autonomy Questionnaire**

In order to measure EFL learners' autonomy, a questionnaire developed by Kashefian (2002, as cited in Hashemian & Fadaei, 2013) was administered to the participants of both groups. The questionnaire consists of two sections: The first section is related to the demographic information of the participants while the second section consists of 40 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) (see Appendix B). The items asked about the learner's attitude toward the role of the teacher/the learner, self-evaluation, learner's goal, planning, ability, progression, and mistakes throughout the process of learning, all of which make a contribution to the development of learner autonomy. In order to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher asked 25 students to fill it and then used Cronbach Alpha to give the index of reliability. The Cronbach Alpha showed the value of 0.69 for the questionnaire that can be considered a good index for the reliability. The questionnaire was given to the students as a

pretest before the beginning of the study. The aim was to estimate whether the students' autonomy toward stress pattern learning specially learning by the help of new technology was improved or not. Therefore, at the end of the study, the questionnaire was given to the both groups again and was analyzed by the help of SPSS package (version 19) in order to see if there has been any improvement or not.

### C. Procedure

One hundred learners in the language institute participated in Oxford placement test. Among these learners, 60 individuals who scored between 80-100 were selected as lower intermediate learners. These learners were randomly assigned into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. All these learners took the OPD and their scores were documented. All of them were also asked to fill the autonomy questionnaire. For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed an SMS sending platform. With the help of this platform, the teachers were able to send SMS to all the learners in experimental group in the daily basis. The messages sent to the learners comprised of grammatical topics including reported speech and tenses, Simple and progressive past and simple and progressive present.

The learners in the experimental group received Educational SMS from the SMS service. The texts consist of 20 to 25 words explaining the grammatical rules. These SMS were sent to the learners in the daily basis for 8 weeks. The learners were required to memorize the grammatical rules and proactive them in the class with teacher. When the learners attended in the classroom, the teacher reviewed the rules with the learners and the learners were required to do some exercises on these topics.

The learners in the control group didn't receive SMS. They participated in the grammar class one a week and practiced the grammar lessons with the teachers. The teachers explained the grammar points to them one in each session and they were required to do the exercises related to these points.

At the end of the treatment, the learners in both groups underwent the posttest. Also beside that they were given the learners' autonomy questionnaire and were asked to fill it at home and give it back to the teacher.

In order to teach grammar to the learners the communicative language teaching approach was selected. The description of it is as follow:

**Communicative: Task based** Instruction in which students are provided with the task to be done in the classroom context presupposes that transacting tasks in this way would engage naturalistic learning system, make the existing interlanguage system be extended, and enhance learning. (Skehan, 1997). However, some previous studies revealed that small-group tasks may not have similar function (Seedhouse, 1999); these studies are contrast with the considerable evidence that explicit grammar instruction is likely to enhance learning.

**Task-based + focus on form** A communicative task, with incidental focus on form explicitly attracts students' attention to linguistic points as they come up incidentally during instruction whose principal focus is on meaning or communication (Long, 1991). They may be based on, for instance, error correction, noticing of salient forms in texts, or teacher or student-initiated attention to a grammatical point, originally: unplanned and brief (Long, 1991), but later largely planned and extended (Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2002; Shak & Gardner, 2008)

### D. Study Design

This study enjoyed a quasi-experimental pretest posttest design. The learners were randomly assigned into two groups of experimental and control. The data were analyzed by the use of SPSS software version 21. The researcher used independent sample t-test to analyze the data from pretest and posttest and questionnaire.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for the First Research Question and Hypothesis

The oxford placement test was conducted at the beginning of the study to check for the homogeneity of learners in the experimental and control groups. The results are provided below:

TABLE 1  
OPT DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Opt	120	59.00	95.00	79.1083	8.58061	73.627
Valid (listwise)	120					

The descriptive statistics for the control group's pretest scores is provided in Table 1 below:

TABLE 2.  
CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PRETEST'S SCORES

	sms	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Class	1.00	38	79.3684	2.11073	.34241
	2.00	36	81.4722	3.31651	.55275

According to Table 2, the number of students who took the test in class one is 38 and the mean of their scores is 79.36 with a standard deviation of 2.11 and the number of learners who took the test is in class two is 36 with 81.47 means.

TABLE 3  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST  
Levene's Test for Equality of  
Variances

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2 tailed)	Mean Difference
class	Equal variances assumed	6.053	.016	-3.273	72	.002	-2.10380
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.236	58.822	.002	-2.10380

According to Table3 and based on the independent sample t-test result, the difference between experimental and control groups' scores in the pretest is not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) with  $t = 3.27$  and  $sig = .016$ . So based on this result, the first null hypothesis is approved.

Then, the researcher examined whether the difference between control and experimental groups' posttests' results is significant or not. The experimental group has undergone treatment and the grammar were taught to them by the use of SMS while the control group has learned the grammar in the classroom.

The descriptive statistics for the control group's posttest scores is provided in Table 14 below:

TABLE 4  
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP POSTTEST'S SCORES

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Smspost	38	76.00	87.00	81.3947	3.25111	10.570
Valid N (listwise)	38					

The following table provides the post-test results for the experimental group.

TABLE 5  
CONTROL GROUP POSTTEST'S SCORES

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
classpost	38	76.00	84.00	79.3684	2.11073	4.455
Valid N (listwise)	38					

In the following table, you can see both groups' statistics.

TABLE 6  
GROUP STATISTICS

	VAR00001	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Class	1.00	38	80.4737	2.23893	.36320
	2.00	38	84.7368	3.55409	.57655

The following table provided the results of independent sample t-test.

TABLE 7  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE POSTTEST  
Levene's Test for Equality of  
Variances

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Class	Equal variances assumed	26.132	.000	-6.256	74	.000	-4.26316
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.256	62.371	.000	-4.26316

As you can see in the above table, the difference between learners' scores in the posttests are significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*B. Descriptive Statistics of the Autonomy Questionnaire.*

To investigate the effect of podcasting on word stress pattern learning of Iranian EFL learners' autonomy, the Autonomy Questionnaire developed by Kashefian (2002, as cited in Hashemian & Fadaei, 2013) (see Appendix C) was given to both control and experimental groups.

**1. The results of the autonomy Questionnaire Pretest and Posttest in control group.** Table 18 represents the descriptive statistics of the autonomy Questionnaire for Pre-Test and Post-Test in control group. In this table you can find the mean of students' scores for each question in the questionnaire.

TABLE 8

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PRE AND POSTTEST COLLABORATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONTROL GROUP		
Number	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
1	1.64	2.21
2	1.26	2.17
3	1.84	2.03
4	1.29	1.98
5	2.42	2.21
6	2.42	2.15
7	2.36	2.24
8	1.92	1.78
9	1.43	1.62
10	1.52	1.73
11	1.46	1.25
12	1.79	1.59
13	2.58	1.72
14	4.36	4.42
15	3.75	4.89
16	3.56	3.43
17	3.78	4.12
18	3.56	4.01
19	3.98	3.91
20	2.12	3.85
21	0.99	3.00
22	4.23	4.62
23	3.98	4.72
24	4.12	4.05
25	3.85	3.65
26	3.78	3.84
27	3.76	3.99
28	3.63	3.56
29	3.99	4.48
30	3.75	4.25
31	4.24	4.72
32	4.26	4.42
33	3.36	3.53
34	3.92	3.84
35	2.89	3.96
36	3.24	3.12
37	1.58	2.43
38	3.26	3.45
39	1.76	2.85
40	3.25	3.44

As it is represented in the above table, you can find small differences between the pretest and posttest's means of learners' scores in the questionnaire

## 2. The results of the autonomy Questionnaire Pretest and Posttest in experimental group.

Table 19 represents the descriptive statistics of the autonomy Questionnaire for Pre-Test and Post-Test in experimental group. In this table you can find the means of students' scores for each question in the questionnaire.

TABLE 9  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PRE AND POSTTEST COLLABORATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Number	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
1	1.23	3.79
2	1.56	4.41
3	1.12	4.32
4	1.01	3.74
5	0.99	4.36
6	1.78	3.63
7	1.25	3.36
8	1.36	3.54
9	0.85	3.87
10	1.25	3.48
11	1.12	3.63
12	1.54	2.42
13	3.22	1.96
14	4.12	2.78
15	3.68	2.52
16	3.72	4.46
17	3.98	2.53
18	3.56	1.72
19	3.44	2.93
20	2.78	1.23
21	1.94	0.98
22	4.12	1.75
23	3.39	1.42
24	4.18	2.53
25	3.46	1.26
26	3.62	1.78
27	3.98	1.44
28	3.53	1.56
29	3.87	1.78
30	3.75	1.43
31	4.25	1.54
32	4.63	2.45
33	3.98	0.89
34	3.52	2.23
35	1.84	4.80
36	3.65	1.68
37	1.25	4.02
38	3.18	1.78
39	1.63	3.54
40	3.26	1.68

As Table 9 shows, the learners’ means in Autonomy questionnaire has changed drastically from pretest to posttest.

V. DISCUSSION

The learning and teaching environments of the twenty first century is changing very fast due to unprecedented opportunities advancement of information and communication technologies have created for education. After around half a century of integrating computers into instruction, the rapid evolution of mobile devices is opening up a whole world of new learning experiences with technology. Mobile learning is a type of learning that takes place with the help of mobile devices (Kukulska-Hulme& Shield, 2008) and simply means learning anywhere and at any time. While at the beginning, mobile learning focused on the role of mobile technologies and devices in education, in the recent years mobile learning is characterized with the mobility of the user and the informal learning that happens out of the classroom (Sharples, 2006). In this case, any portable and palmtop devices such as portable media player devices, tablets, and mobile phones contribute to mobile learning. Mobile phone and SMS are user friendly and people have been utilizing these tools for many years, almost since the primary generations of mobile phone so the learnability and utilization of technology is to a large extent greater. All in all, the utilization of SMS with mobile phones has very different instances of successful usage in language learning as in this study also reveals. Hence school administrators and policy makers should take into account SMS with mobile phones as another educational tool that has many latent advantages for education.

The findings of the present study revealed the effectiveness of SMS on EFL learners' grammar learning. The findings of the present study suggest that in the short term, there was considerable difference between learning vocabulary through SMS and learning it through using dictionary and learning vocabulary through SMS assisted the participants in the experimental group to develop their grammar knowledge in the post test. This suggests that using SMS helps to convey grammar structures into learners' long term memory. Since learners are used to spending a lot of time using their mobiles, so having grammatical structures on their mobiles might have assisted them to review the grammar points on a

more regular basis. This can be claimed by the fact that in the posttest students of the experimental group progressed significantly and performed significantly better than the participants of the control group.

Significantly, better performance of the learners in the experimental group after the treatment was accredited to the advantages of using SMS to make a more enjoyable learning atmosphere by engaging students in authentic and real life way of learning in which they can cooperate to the benefits of each other. Experiencing something new with the help of technology which made it more modern and different from previous experiences, gave the learners a feel that learning can be much more fun and enjoyable in friendly and stress-free atmosphere where help and support have prominent importance.

As one of the chief drives of this study was to appraise the efficiency of SMS as a tool for grammar learning, the researcher, with the backing of the results of her research is willing to humbly present her creative technique in grammar learning, which can be considered a great help to the scientific society, specifically ELT community.

It can be concluded that in order to let learners put more emphasis and energy on studying new grammatical points, they need to shoulder the responsibility of the learning process. Furthermore, teaching methods need to be in a way that urges learners to review and study the instructed structures based on a more regular plan and take advantage of their object of interest (in the context of the present study, mobile phone).

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings obtained from quantitative data, there was a statistically significant mean difference between the pretest and the posttest scores of the grammar test and autonomy questionnaire.

The obtained findings of the analysis of the results of the quantitative data revealed that SMS had a statistically significant effect on the increasing of the upper intermediate Iranian EFL learners' grammar knowledge, their effective learning of grammar as the cornerstone of language learning, their autonomy. Therefore, the findings provided enough strong evidence to reject first and second null hypothesis.

It is noteworthy to mention that along with SMS classroom learning of grammar itself as the treatment means of control group also had a statistically significant effect on the increasing the upper intermediate Iranian EFL learners' grammar knowledge, although it didn't improve students Autonomy.

Moreover, the findings showed some specific points about the effectiveness of SMS. The findings revealed that:

Working with authentic, daily life software of learning English- especially those used for vocabulary knowledge and involving in the process of discussing how to use it practically and effectively- attracted students' attention and affected their performance and achievement in course and created a positive attitude towards it.

Students, who are engaged in the process of learning, feel largely autonomous and take the responsibility for their own and other students' learning, practice with partners or in teams and share information and pay more attention to other learners' problems, achieve higher scores in the courses and adopt a positive attitude toward learning.

### A. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings of this study following implications were obtained:

This study has investigated the effect of using SMS on Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' grammar knowledge, and autonomy. In order to investigate the effect of SMS on other skills and sub-skills such as speaking, listening, reading, writing and grammar more studies should be conducted.

Since SMS verified being successful and effective in it, probably it would be successful and effective in other learning areas. Therefore, as another pedagogical implication of this study, it is suggested to use SMS in other areas of learning separate from language learning.

Since the productivity of SMS as an educational tool was intertwined with different factors, as other pedagogical implications of this study, it is suggested that before its implementation in language learning curriculum, all the factors affecting its use such as internet connections, smartphones, students' social class, etc should be taken into consideration.

Moreover, being tangled in a new process of learning, learners would alter their outmoded habits of language learning such as rote learning for better learning practices. Furthermore, having the responsibility for learning and feeling autonomous make students independent in their process of learning and at the same time help them to work cooperatively, share information and care about each other's problems in a fun and enjoyable atmosphere.

Based on the findings of this study, it is inferred that experiencing learning with the help of an innovative technique such as SMS in a completely new environment, at first make students somehow feel anxious but as they go further, they feel that they are experiencing something modern and different and as a result, it develops a positive attitude towards learning.

It can be inferred from the findings of this study that one of the main elements in the process of language learning is having fun. Caring and supportive peers and teacher, nice and lovely environment and feeling of autonomy and responsibility all increases the students' achievements significantly, creates a positive attitude towards learning, and makes the learning experience fun, enjoyable, and memorable for the learners.

Replication of this study on different proficiency levels, different age samples, other language skills, and in other learning situations is speculated to present more detailed and more thorough findings. These studies would better reveal

if SMS is effective for a wider range of age groups, proficiency levels, other skills, and in other educational contexts or not.

### B. Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study and literature review following suggestions can be offered:

#### 1. Suggestions for teachers.

Bearing in mind the trouble of managerial and controlling tasks in classrooms- particularly for lower age groups- it is desired to use SMS in a class with large number of students. In addition, the number of students in the classes can be increased provided that they are following teachers' instructions. Also the teacher some have a specifically developed language syllabus for each group and each class of students.

As Iranian learners are used to learning in a traditional educational system with great dependence on the instructor as the foremost foundation of organizing the knowledge, decision maker, problem solver, and almost the authority in the classroom, at the beginning of a course it is kind of difficult for the learners to accept the fact that they can also be the authority and decision maker of their own learning. Furthermore, it is tough for them to succeed in trusting their peer learners and themselves as knowledge source to deliver information and share it with others. Therefore, as a matter of fact, at the beginning of the way, the learners have problems involving in the course and sometimes so what seems to be necessary is teachers' patience and clarity in the whole process of learning.

The teacher should give the students assignments that the purpose and aims of their course are determined. Students can be asked to practice collaborative learning in their traditional classrooms before being mainstreamed in the new environment. Teachers can hold frequent sessions with students in order to help them and provide them with the necessary regulation.

Since the students who participated in the study, experienced their first experience of learning a language in a completely technological environment which is far from their old sanctuary, it is recommended that they are used as knowledgeable people in this field who can help the other students in the process.

Using SMS is only one manifestation of using new and interactive technologies in the classroom, however, the teachers, students and researchers are recommended to use other different technological innovations such as podcasting, wikis, blogs, second life, etc. to improve the process of language learning.

**2. Suggestions for students.** Observing and monitoring the process of this study, the researcher suggests that the students should be willing to experience something new in their process of learning; otherwise the efforts will not produce desired results. Some students are naturally unwilling to change and experience something new and some of them believe that the old ways of learning are the best. While engaging in group activities in technology-based learning, one of the vital elements is that each and every group member should be responsible for others' improvement, in terms of their learning and erudition. It should not be neglected that new technologies can bring learners much closer to each other and so students should use this opportunity not only to improve their learning skills but also to improve their social skills.

**3. Suggestions for textbook writers.** According to the results of this study and other studies in applying new technologies in the language learning process, it is suggested that the lack of attention and place for new technologies in modern language learning textbooks should be taken into consideration. It is revealed that using SMS as an innovative tool in language learning can be very amusing and operational if it is fully recognized. English textbooks used in schools in Iran include old texts and the educational methods underlying them are also very old (going back to the grammar translation method). Recently, there has been some emphasis from the ministry of education to incorporate new technologies in the learning process. However, it seems that achieving to this goal needs a lot of patience and will take ages. But researches such as the current paper can help the teachers, learners, stakeholder and everybody who is responsible in this topic to move faster along the line of progress.

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# A Study on Chinese EFL Learners' Phonetic Obstacles to Listening Comprehension\*

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**Abstract**—Perceiving and identifying speech sounds are greatly important in listening comprehension. This paper aims to analyze Chinese EFL learners' Phonetic Obstacles to listening comprehension in terms of individual segments, sound change in fluent speech, stress, rhythm, intonation and English varieties. Based on the analysis, suggestions are proposed about how to overcome phonetic obstacles to improve Chinese EFL learners' ability of listening, including increasing phonetic teaching in listening, memorizing the sound form of words and designing tasks of dictation.

**Index Terms**—phonetic obstacles, listening comprehension, Chinese EFL learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

In China, college English teaching has played an increasing emphasis on cultivating English application ability, especially English listening and speaking ability since reform of college English teaching in 2004. Most colleges and universities offer non-English majors a listening course in order to improve their listening ability. However, listening is still regarded as the weakest link in learning English.

Listening proficiency is influenced by many factors, such as knowledge about the topic, size of the listeners' vocabulary, mastery of the grammar, knowledge about the discourse, lack of listening strategies, excessive anxiety in listening and so on. Amongst these variables, the phonetic factor is too important to be neglected. In the process of teaching English listening, the author finds it common that some students, especially the low-achieving Chinese EFL learners, have great difficulties in identifying pronunciation of some phonemes or cutting stream of speech into cognizable words. The paper aims to analyze Chinese EFL learners' phonetic obstacles to listening comprehension and put forward some suggestions about improving listening proficiency by way of overcoming phonetic barriers.

## II. PHONETICS AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Rost (2002) explored the process of listening comprehension, from the standpoint of neurology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, and pedagogy, which reveals that listening comprehension is actually a very complicated process. The previous studies on listening comprehension provided some models to explain the process of listening comprehension.

### A. Bottom-up Model

Shannon & Weaver (1949) proposed the bottom-up processing model, according to which, listeners begin to comprehend the vocal message from the smallest auditory unit—segment or phoneme. From segments to words, phrases, clauses and then the whole sentence, sentences are formed into meaning, concepts and relationship. On the basis of this model, knowledge needed in listening comprehension is applied in a linear and hierarchical manner. In the process of communication, the speaker encodes the message, which is transmitted into the listener who decodes the message. If there is no message lost in transmission and the same codes are used by the speaker and listener, the communication between them is sure to succeed (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005).

According bottom-up model, listening comprehension starts with understanding message of speech sounds. Without identifying and understanding speech sound, comprehension of the whole sentence or even the passage can hardly be achieved.

### B. Up-down Model

That the contextual knowledge or knowledge about the world dominates the perception of vocal message is known as up-down processing model (Anderson, 2000). This model values the influence of previous knowledge of the listener instead of perception of individual segments on processing message.

Listeners will apply the structure of knowledge and discourse structure previously stored to understand speech. The

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\* This paper is part of results of Planning and Research Project of Social Science granted by Social Science Planning and Management Office of Shandong Province (15CWZJ21): *Studies on EFL Learners' Aesthetic Ability in Phonetics and Phonetic Acquisition* and it is also supported by Reform Project of Education and Teaching granted by Jining Medical University (14054) and Scientific Research Project granted by Jining Medical University (JY2013RW026).

previously stored knowledge is known as schema. Once stored in form of schema, structure of some incident will help people to understand incidents taking place in the future and predict when the same or similar thing happens. This model can successfully explain such a case in which the more familiar the listener gets with the topic of the passage, the easier he will understand.

According to this model, knowing the text structure and meaning macroscopically can compensate for comprehension at microscopic level, such as identifying segments, words and so on.

### C. Interactive Model

Most studies have indicated that second language learners adopt both bottom-up processing and up-down processing model, which is known as interactive model. That is to say, listeners, on the one hand, comprehend sentence meaning by identifying segments and words, on the other hand, they also apply the previous knowledge to help their understanding.

However, learners of different levels tend to adopt different ways of processing. Hildyard & Olson (1982) found that high-proficiency learners are inclined to adopt both bottom-up and up-down processing while low-proficiency learners are apt to focus on the details of the listening materials. The author also found that many lower-proficiency learners make a complaint about problems about identifying segments or cutting streams, which proves that effective up-down processing is based on bottom-up processing.

### D. Three-stage Model

Cognitive psychology takes comprehension as processing of message (Neisser, 1967). Anderson (1995, 2000) believes that language comprehension can be divided into three stages, consisting of perception and processing, analysis and application. In the stage of perception and processing of oral language, the main task of a listener is to identify speech sounds, namely, to cut speech into segments and identify them. The second stage is also called syntactic analysis. Listeners cut speech into words and phrases according to syntactic structure and semantic clues. And meaningful mental representation is constructed based on linguistic structure, rules and semantic constraints. In the third stage, listeners apply their mental representation through combining mental representation of the textual meaning with proposition or schemata in long-term memory.

### E. Poelmans' Model

Poelmans (2003) believes that the process of comprehending spoken language can be described as an inference process based on perceiving clues, rather than a process of simple match between sound and meaning. Listening comprehension is a process consisting of four sub-processes: perception of sounds, classification of sounds, identification of words and comprehension.

First, perception of sounds helps listeners to make a distinction between human vocal sounds and background sound. Second, listeners classify the perceived input sounds according to phonetic categories of the language in question. Phones can be classified from different angles. For example, sounds can be classified into voiceless sounds and voiced sounds. Moreover, oral language has suprasegmental features, which are concerned with whole syllables or bigger units instead of a certain segment. Listeners cut successive speech into smaller units of language according to these suprasegmental features, such as pause, tone, stress and so on. Third, words that are retrieved from successive speech are matched with the meaning stored in long-term memory. Fourth, communicative purpose of the speaker is reconstructed by comprehending sentences combined by identified words according to their order.

Although there are several models about listening comprehension, it has been acknowledged that perception and identification of segments is the basic step to processing speech or vocal symbols. Comprehension of speech usually begins with perceiving or identifying speech, i.e. cutting streams into recognizable segments, syllables or words. Hence, identifying segments and cutting streams correctly is a most important and basic link in processing speech.

There are also some empirical studies proving that phonetic ability has a relationship with listening comprehension. (Yao, 2009; Li, 2010; Fan, 2012)

If listeners have difficulty in perceiving and identifying segments or successive speech, listening comprehension will be greatly hindered.

## III. ANALYSIS ON CHINESE EFL LEARNERS' PHONETIC OBSTACLES TO LISTENING COMPREHENSION

In this part, based on the author's experience of teaching Chinese EFL learners, obstacles from individual segments, sound changes in successive speech, stress, rhythm, intonation and English varieties will be explored.

### A. Obstacles from Individual Segments

Due to the difference between Chinese and English, it is difficult for Chinese EFL learners to identify some English segments.

Firstly, some learners have great difficulty in identifying between short and long vowels, such as /ɪ/ and /i:/, and /ʊ/ and /u:/. So, in listening, *fit* /fɪt/ is heard as *feet* /fi:t/, and *pool* /pu:l/ as *pull* /pʊl/, to name but a few.

Secondly, some similar sounds like /e/ and /æ/, /ɑ: / and /ʌ/, /s/ , /ʃ/ and /θ/, and /v/ and /w/ often lead Chinese EFL learners into great confusion when listening. *Bed* is often heard as *bad*, while *staff* as *stuff* and so on.

As we know, these phonemes mentioned above are contrastive in that change of one into the other one will bring

about change of meaning of words. If the listener can't identify or perceive the segments correctly, he or she will get a different word or meaning far from the target word.

### B. Obstacles from Sound Change in Fluent Speech

Apart from perceiving and identifying individual segments, listeners should also get familiar with various changes of the segments in fluent speech. Otherwise, they will feel like being faced with a strange string of sounds without any meaning or even perceived as a completely different word. Barriers from sound change in fluent speech mainly include the following categories.

1. Linking: Linking is a phonetic phenomenon commonly occurring in natural speech. According to Wang (2005: 120), when speakers of English are speaking, they arrange words into groups and join together the stressed and unstressed words within the group. They move smoothly from one word to the next without making any sudden stops. So when we listen to their speech, we hear the end of one word flow straight into the beginning of the next.

Look at the following examples:

3-1 I need<sup>1</sup>it<sup>1</sup> on.

3-2 John won<sup>1</sup> an<sup>1</sup> air ticket.

3-3 later<sup>1</sup> on

3-4 my<sup>1</sup> arm

These examples show that linking often occurs between a former word ending with a consonant or /r/ sound and a latter word ending with a vowel, which can be seen in sentence 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3. Besides, linking can also occur when the preceding word ends with a vowel and the following word begins also with a vowel, as is shown in 3-4, and usually a slight /j/ or /w/ is added between two words.

In the process of listening, lots of learners, especially low-proficiency learners, often fail to perceive the linking between words, which results in confusion about the meaning of the string of sound. Examples in dictation will be cited here to illustrate the barriers from linking.

TABLE I.  
MISTAKES RESULTING FROM LINKING OBSTACLES

Target sentences for listening	Mistaken sentences in listening
1. We often go over to <b>my<sup>1</sup> uncle's</b> .	We often go over to my <b>young course</b> .
2. You are not <b>safe<sup>1</sup> on</b> the road.	You are not <b>safe from</b> the road.
3. <b>My<sup>1</sup> ears</b> hurt.	<b>My years</b> hurt.
4. <b>Tell<sup>1</sup> us</b> all about it.	<b>Telas</b> all about it.

In table I, the left column shows the target sentences for listening, while the right column shows the mistaken sentences in listening. This table shows the mistakes resulting from linking obstacles when Chinese EFL learners listen to sentences. Because the listener does not master linking in English speech, he cannot cut the stream of sound correctly into sounds encoded originally by the speaker, which lead into a distorted meaning.

2. Assimilation: assimilation is a process in which one sound is changed into another sound similar to its neighboring sound. In regressive assimilation, the former sound is influenced by the latter sound. For example, *five past*/faɪpɑːst/ is pronounced as /faɪpɑːst/. In progressive assimilation the latter sound is influenced by the former one. For example, *cabs*/kæbs/ is pronounced as /kæbz/. In reciprocal assimilation, two neighboring sounds influence each other and change into a new sound. For example, *last year*/lɑːstjɪə/ is pronounced as /lɑːstjɪə/. In this example, /t/ and /j/ influence each other and change into a completely different sound /tʃ/.

If the listener can't perceive the change of the sound when assimilation occurs, mistakes will be made in listening. Mistakes resulting from not identifying assimilation are shown in the following table.

TABLE II.  
MISTAKES RESULTING FROM ASSIMILATION OBSTACLES

Target linguistic forms	Mistakes in listening
1. It doesn't <b>fit you</b> .	It doesn't <b>fetch her</b> .
2. love to	<b>larf</b> to

In table II, the left column shows the target linguistic forms while the right column shows mistakes made when Chinese EFL learners listen to them. Because of obstacles from assimilation, the listener can't perceive the correct forms of the target sentence or phrase.

3. Loss of plosion: when a word ends with a plosive sound, and the next word begins with another plosive or fricatives, affricates, nasals and laterals, the former plosive will lose plosion. For example:

*what time*/wɒt<sup>2</sup>tʌɪm/,

*sit down*/sɪt<sup>2</sup>dʌʊn/,

*good father*/gʊd<sup>2</sup>fɑːðə/,

<sup>1</sup> The symbol "1" is used to indicate there is a linking when two neighboring words are quickly spoken out.

<sup>2</sup> A line under the segment means that it loses plosion.

*big jeep* /bɪgdʒi : p/  
*mad man* / mæd mæn /

Besides, loss of plosion takes place within a word. For example, *picture* / pɪktʃə / and *notebook* / nəʊtbʊk /.

Loss of plosion is just like losing a sound in a successive speech, which definitely brings about obstacles in identifying words and phrases. Here are some examples resulting from failing to identify loss of plosion.

TABLE III.  
 MISTAKES DUE TO OBSTACLES FROM LOSS OF PLOSION

Target linguistic forms	Mistakes in listening
1. He <b>asked</b> twice.	He <b>ask</b> twice.
2. They <b>came</b> at last.	They <b>camer</b> last
3. <b>lamppost</b>	<b>lampost</b>

Table III shows mistakes due to obstacles from loss of plosion. Chinese EFL learners have difficulties in identifying the past tense of a word ending with -ed when it is followed by a word beginning with a plosive, like in example 1 in the table. The mistake occurred in example 2 is due to the fact that the listener fails to perceive the existence of sound /t/ in *at* because it loses plosion when it is followed by the next word starting with a lateral /l/, although the listener perceives the link between *came* and *at*. Mistakes resulting from failing to perceiving loss of plosion often take place within a word, like in example 3.

4. Weak forms: many function words in English have two pronunciations: a strong form (or stressed form) and a weak form (or reduced form, unstressed form). Weak forms are often adopted in fluent speech.

TABLE IV.  
 STRONG FORMS AND WEAK FORMS OF SOME FREQUENTLY USED WORDS

Words	Strong form	Weak form
1.a	/eɪ/	/ ə /
2.the	/ði:/	/ðə/
3.he	/hi:/	/hɪ/, /ɪ/
4.her	/hə:/	/ hə /, / ə:/, /ə/
5.are	/ɑ:/	/ə/
6.have	/hæ v/	/həv/, /əv/, /v/
7.for	/fɔ : /	/f ə /, /fɪ/
8.and	/ænd/	/ənd/, /ən/, /nd/, /n/
9. there	/ðeə/	/ð ə /

Table IV shows strong forms and weak forms of some frequently used words. And there are other words with weak forms, which are not listed one by one. It is important to use the weak forms in English. Learners who are not familiar with the use of weak forms are likely to have difficulties in understanding native speakers. Some faults resulting from failing to identifying the weak forms are shown in the below table.

TABLE V.  
 MISTAKES DUE TO OBSTACLES FROM WEAK FORMS

Target linguistic forms	Mistakes in listening
1. What's her name?	What's a name?
2. What did he do?	What did do?
3. We had fish and chips.	We had fishing chips.

In table V, *her* in the first sentence adopts the weak form / ə / and further / ə / is linked to the former / wɒts /, changing into / wɒtsə /, which can explain why “*what's her name?*” is perceived as “*What's a name?*” Similarly, in example 2 in the above table, the listener doesn't perceive the weak form of *he*, resulting in loss of sound / ɪ /. In listening the third sentence, the listener makes a mistake resulting from not perceiving the weak of *and*, taking “*fish and*” as “*fishing*”.

All in all, in successive speech, some sounds are changed due to linking, assimilation, loss of plosion or adopting weak forms. Chinese EFL learners make some mistakes in listening because of failing to perceiving and identifying these sound changes.

C. *Obstacles from Stress*

In English, there are two kinds of stress, depending on the context in which stress is considered: word stress and sentence stress.

The location of stress can distinguish meaning. Word stress, sometimes, is the only standard for distinguishing two words. For example, *import* (stress on the first syllable) is different from *import* (stress on the second syllable). If the learners ignore the remembrance of stress of the words when learning a new word, they will not be sensitive to the movement of stress. In addition, learners always meet obstacles from the stress movement when hearing a derivational form of a word. For example, it's much easier for Chinese EFL learners to perceive *sincere* than *sincerity*.

Sentence stress refers to the relative force given to the components of a sentence. Whichever part of the sentence is stressed is mainly determined by the speaker's intention. Meaning of a sentence is changed with changes of sentence stress. For example:

3-5 I went to the bar.

As for sentence 3-5, if stress is on the word *I*, it means “I”, not other persons, went to the bar. If the stress is on the word *bar*, instead of other words, the sentence means that I went to the bar instead of other places. If the listener doesn’t focus on the stressed word, he will not get the real meaning of the speaker.

To sum up, perceiving stress of a word and a sentence is very important in listening, especially in listening to a conversation and a passage. Without identifying stress, the listener will maybe fail to understand the intention of the speaker.

#### D. Obstacles from Rhythm

Every language has its own rhythmic patterns. Chinese rhythm represents itself in the collocation among its various tones, while English rhythm is realized by alternative appearance of the stressed and unstressed syllables. In addition, Chinese is syllable-timed, while English is stress-timed. That’s to say, it will take more time to say a Chinese sentence with more words than that with less words. In English, it will take the same time to say a sentence with the same number of syllables, without considering the number of words in the sentence. For example:

3-6 这个男孩很想扩大他的词汇量。

3-7 每天进步很大。

3-8 The <sup>3</sup>boy is 'interested in en'larging his vo'cabulary.

3-9 'Great 'progress in 'made 'daily.

There are two Chinese sentences, sentence 3-6 and sentence 3-7. There are thirteen words in sentence 3-6, and six words in sentence 3-7. Obviously, it will take more time for a Chinese to say sentence 3-6 than sentence 3-7. Sentences 3-8 and 3-9 are the corresponding English sentence for 3-6 and 3-7. Although these two English sentences have different number of words, they both have four stressed syllables. Hence, it will take the same time to say these two English sentences.

Chinese EFL learners are not familiar the English stress-timed rhythm. Some of the learners think that the speaker speaks sometimes faster and sometimes slower, and it’s difficult for them to understand the quicker part of the sentence.

#### E. Obstacles from Intonation

When pitch, stress and sound length are tied to the sentence rather than the word in isolation, they are collectively known as intonation. English has two basic intonation patterns: the falling tone and the rising tone. When they go together, they can make a falling-rising tone. Generally speaking, the falling tone indicates that the speaker is stating a fact, the rising tone often makes a question of what is said, and the falling-rising tone often indicates that there is an implied message. Intonation plays an important role in conveying meaning in English. For example:

3-10 I can’t eat anything.

The above sentence 3-10 means that I can eat nothing if said in a falling tone, while it implies that there are particular things that I can’t eat if said in a fall-rise tone.

Chinese is not an intonation language, but a tone language. It has four tones: the first tone is level, the second rise, the third fall-rise and fourth fall. If a word is spoken in different tones, it has totally different meaning.

For some Chinese EFL learners, it is difficult for them to perceive the different meaning due to change of intonation. And sometimes they don’t catch the speaker’s meaning accurately or even misunderstand the speaker.

#### F. Obstacles from English Varieties

English has become an international language as time goes by and there are a couple of varieties, such as British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English and so on. In China, EFL learners mainly have access to British English and American English. At the beginning, they learn British English pronunciation, while after a while or entering colleges, they mainly listen to American English. Therefore, most listeners get confused about identifying some words owing to their different pronunciation. For example, words easily bringing about difficulties include *class*, *hard*, *path*, *schedule*, *bottle*, *city*, etc. Even though they knew the different pronunciation of the word in British English and American English as some listeners reported, it would take them much time to identify which word it is exactly, which then affects perceiving the following information.

Based on what is discussed above, we are confirmed that Chinese EFL learners have encountered many phonetic barriers on listening due to the difference between Chinese and English pronunciation features.

### IV. SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVING LISTENING COMPREHENSION BY OVERCOMING PHONETIC OBSTACLES

Identifying and perceiving sound of speech is vital to listening comprehension. Overcoming phonetic obstacles is obviously an effective way to improving listening comprehension.

In China, according to the undergraduate program for English majors, the course of English pronunciation is only provided in the first semester of the first year in almost all the colleges and universities. What’s worse, there is no independent phonetic course for non-English majors. Pronunciation is rarely involved in later learning.

<sup>3</sup> The symbol “<sup>3</sup>” stands for stress on the syllable.

On the one hand, in the course of English listening, most teachers place stress on explanation of meaning and usage of new words, introducing background information related with the topic, and explanation of long sentences that cause difficulties in reading. They seldom lead students to pay attention to difficulties causing by phonetics. On other hand, students pay more attention to the meaning and spelling of a new word instead of its pronunciation. The result is that they know the word when they see it, while sometimes they can't even perceive it when they listen to it, not to speak of identifying similar sounds, sound change in fluent speech, and other aspects. Based on this situation, suggestions are given below.

#### A. *Increasing Phonetic Teaching in Listening*

1. Increasing phonetic teaching for Chinese non-English majors. In China, non-English majors are neither offered English phonetic course, nor taught any knowledge of English phonetics systematically in class, because it is believed that they have taught phonetic knowledge in middle school. In fact, they don't receive any formal teaching about English phonetics, partly because phonetic knowledge is not the most important part in college entrance examination. College English teachers should spend longer time in teaching phonetics in class or by way of Micro-Course Online Video.

2. Increasing phonetic teaching for English majors. In China, English majors are offered English phonetics course in the first semester. In fact, it's impossible for students to completely master English pronunciation and intonation, especially sound change in fluent speech in such a short time. So, it's necessary for teachers not to ignore teaching of pronunciation especially in the course of English listening. Whenever students make mistakes due to obstacles from English phonetics, teachers should point it out immediately and appeal students' attention to analyze the mistakes from the perspective of phonetics.

Similar sound distinction, sound change in speech, stress, rhythm, intonation and different pronunciation between British English and American English should be emphasized.

#### B. *Memorizing the Sound Form of a Word*

Chinese EFL learners are always playing stress on reading and writing ability, rather than listening and speaking ability. It is common to find that students only memorize the spelling form and meaning when they meet a new word. Given the neglect of memorizing the sound form of a word, students are required to make great efforts to memorize their sound forms. Once the relationship between the sound form and its meaning is established, it will be easier and quicker to understand meaning.

1. Memorizing words through listening. Obstacles from phonetics are basically due to lack of listening. In China, EFL learners spend most of the time in intensively and extensively reading passages. In contrast, they seldom spend time in practicing listening. It is acknowledged that frequency plays an important role in language acquisition (Ellis, 2002; Bybee, 2008; Ellis, 2012). Learners can acquire a word by listening more to it. The more learners listen to words, and sentences, the quicker they retrieve them from the brain.

2. Memorizing words through reading. Lu (2001) pointed out, effective reading is basic to listening comprehension and it can directly promote improvement of listening ability. Effective reading means reading with standard pronunciation, natural sound change, good rhythm, and proper intonation.

Memorizing the sound form of a word should include not only the strong form, but also weak form, its stress, and even intonation of the word. Once familiar with the sound form of a word, students will speed their decoding of the word and connecting the sound to its meaning.

#### C. *Dictation*

Dictation is a kind of intensive listening. Every words should be written down while learners listening. So, it's an effective way to test accuracy of listening comprehension. With more dictation, listeners can find their weaknesses in identifying similar sounds, sound changes, stress, rhythm, intonation and British English or American English.

Teachers can design some tasks of dictation. From dictating words and phrases to sentences and passages, students can sum up experience from dictation by overcoming obstacle from phonetics.

### V. CONCLUSION

Listening comprehension is a complicated process, in which whether identifying segments, especially similar segments and perceiving sound change in speech, movement of stress, rhythm, intonation, and varieties are vital to listening comprehension. Getting knowledge of phonetic obstacles in listening can help to improve Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension. Increasing phonetic teaching in listening, memorizing the sound form of the word and designing dictation tasks are suggested to improve Chinese EF Learners' listening comprehension from the perspective of overcoming phonetic obstacles.

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# Effect of Elementary EFL Learners' Negotiation on Their Classroom Participation and Grammatical Achievement

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**Abstract**—The principal concern of the present study was to explore the effects of two types of negotiation (group work and pair work) on the degree of elementary EFL students' participation and its corollary impact on their grammatical achievement. Both classes in the study received grammar instruction for twenty sessions. The learners took two grammar tests before and after the treatment in the multiple-choice format. The results showed that negotiation in pairs leads to less participation but better grammatical achievement. In other words, while students in the group work negotiated more, their grammatical achievement was significantly less than the students in the pair work who participated less. It could be concluded, therefore, that while group work leads to more participation, higher grammatical knowledge is possible to be obtained by less participative students.

**Index Terms**—pair work, group work, participation, negotiation, grammatical achievement

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), participation or engagement of the students is a key factor in their learning process. Emphasizing participation is similar to what Nunan (1999) says about language that it is a system for expressing meaning. In this system, classroom participation and learning are closely associated and evaluation is done based on the amount and quality of student talk (Warayet, 2011). In the last few decades more attention has been paid to the social and interpersonal aspects of language learning. Social issues are no less important than cognitive issues in language acquisition. One of the issues which has attracted a lot of attention in second and foreign language research is negotiation. The first and foremost goal of language learning is communication and negotiation in the classroom is a means of developing communication skills. Moreover, since humans use language in different contexts to convey messages, language theories with a communicative bend put strong emphasis on interaction, "to get one idea out of your head and into the head of another person and vice versa" (Brown, 1994, p. 159). On the other hand, any interaction entails a form of participation which happens inside the classroom and it is believed that participation and learning are intertwined. The relationship between participation and learning and the definitions of learning and participation have been subjects of extensive and ongoing discussions (e.g., Block 2003; Firth & Wagner 1997, 1998, 2007; Gass 1998; Lantolf 2000; Long 1997; Mondada & Pekarek-Doehler 2004; Sfarid 1998).

A very commonly observed scenario by many language instructors in EFL classrooms is the students' reticent behavior. Students' silence or reluctance to participate or speak using the target language has always been seen as the main source of students' failure and teachers' frustration (Flowerdew & Miller, 1995; Jackson, 2002; Zhang & Head, 2009). Lack of negotiation and participation together constitute a major obstacle for students to develop oral proficiency in the English language as compared to the development of reading and listening skills (Jenkins, 2008). This passive attitude disrupts instructional plans and makes it hard for instructors to facilitate active learning among students. Moreover, most of the time, instructors have to find ways to break the uncomfortable silence in interaction in order to minimize the feeling of discomfort. As this problem has become one of the key issues and a challenge in the field of English language teaching, many Asian EFL instructors have always tried to seek an answer to it. However, the explanations given are usually simple and lay the blame with students by relying on stereotypical characteristics of passivity and uncooperativeness (Harumi, 2001). Thus, there is a pressing need to examine this phenomenon to have a better understanding of it. Students' participation should not be thought of in terms of physical presence only; they should be mentally present in the classroom as well. Mental presence manifests itself in students' interest in classroom material, listening to teacher, and answering questions. However, in spite of such beliefs and encouragement from teachers' side, still many students remain passive in the classroom.

Classroom participation has been studied from psychological and sociolinguistic perspectives. Such studies have found that two sets of factors may affect classroom participation. These factors include social and organizational factors.

Examples of the former are age, gender and students and teachers' culture (Fassinger, 1995). Examples of the latter are class size and curriculum design (Howard et al., 1996). Individual differences were also important because whether a student elects to participate orally or remains silent differs from one student to the next (Meyer, 2007).

In Iran, EFL classroom teachers are not native speakers of English. These teachers do not have access or exposure to native contexts. This is the first problem. Second, these teachers are considered as authority by their students which can have effects on their behavior and attitudes. Moreover, the educational system is teacher-centered by far and the students are mostly passive in the classroom. Due to the importance of participation and the role it plays in learning, and because of the relatively passive role that Iranian students play in learning English, this study attempted to investigate which method of teaching would increase classroom participation and what would be the increased participation's effect on the students' learning of grammar.

This study was designed to investigate the effect of classroom negotiation on the EFL learners' participation and grammatical achievement. The research questions were:

**RQ<sub>1</sub>:** Is there a significant difference in the amount of students' participation between the two levels of negotiation, that is, pair work and group work?

**RQ<sub>2</sub>:** Is there a significant difference in the amount of students' grammatical achievement between the two levels of participation, that is, low and high participation?

The stated research questions led to the formulation of the following null research hypotheses:

**RH<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the amount of students' participation between the two levels of negotiation, that is, pair work and group work.

**RH<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the amount of students' grammatical achievement between the two levels of participation, that is, low and high participation.

## II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Many studies have tried to provide an acceptable definition for classroom participation. Vandrick (2000) argues that most of teachers have a limited idea of participation. According to him, real participation requires students to join in the discussions, answer the questions, and make comments. Fritschner (2000) defines participation in terms of 'talkers' and 'non-talkers.' Talkers participate through doing different things. They are attentive, listen actively, sit patiently, do homework, and are prepared (2000). Others like Heyman and Sailors (2011) have a different definition of classroom participation. They see participation as an active learning where students are publicly engaged in the course material. However, Dancer and Kamvounias (2005) believe that participation should be made part of assessment requirements to encourage students to develop their oral communication skills. Dallimore et al. (2010) are of the belief that participation, in addition, should demonstrate other skills such as interacting and cooperating with peers and the tutor. They consider these features as essential for participation to lead to better performance and improved retention of course content.

The general pattern of classroom participation seems to be verbal. Oral involvement is the main indicator of students' participation. In fact, there is no agreement upon which type of classroom participation is the most important. Dallimore et al. (2004), for example, indicated that student participation means more than speaking as it includes a variety of non-oral features. The same idea is resounded by Fritschner (2000). This means that classroom participation should involve not only oral engagement but also meaningful non-oral acts related to the ongoing activity. Therefore, it is clear that students should engage in classroom discussions through both oral and non-oral participation.

Negotiation has other definitions like that of a discussion which tries to reach an agreement (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1993). In second language research, it means communication between learners of a second language. In SLA research negotiation, in particular, is the process through which speakers make an effort to understand one another (Long, 1985, 1996; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), produce correct linguistic structures and/or relevant information regarding a particular topic (Rulon & McCreary, 1986; Van den Branden, 1997).

It has been known for a long time that negotiated interaction between teachers and students in L2 classrooms has a facilitating effect. Negotiation allows SL learners to produce language meaningfully, to access to meaningful language, and to improve through comprehensibility (e.g., Long, 1985, 1987, 1996; Swain, 1995, 1998).

Three types of content, meaning, and form negotiation are referred to in the literature (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Van den Branden, 1997). Van Lier (1988) makes a distinction between conversational and didactic repair. Drawing on this distinction, Lyster and Ranta (1997) attribute a conversational function and a didactic function to conversational repair. The focus of conversational function is on negotiation of meaning while the didactic function is concerned with form.

The purpose of negotiation of meaning is to reach at mutual understanding through resolving communication problems (Gass, 1997). Unlike negotiation of meaning, which is triggered by an indication of non-understanding, negotiation of form is prompted by inappropriate or inaccurate use of forms. In form negotiation one participant pushes the other participant to produce a well formed utterance (Van den Branden, 1997). In negotiation of content, as defined by many researchers (e.g., Rulon & McCreary, 1986), the participants aim at keeping the conversation flow not at grammatical accuracy. For example, hearing "He didn't attended the party yesterday", an interlocutor may only ask "why?" to elicit another response.

Research has testified to the positive effect of cooperation (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Purportedly, participants who are involved in cooperative learning learn better than those who are involved a competitive learning activity (Slavin, 1995). Findings have also revealed that cooperative learning has a positive effect on the students' relationship, confidence, long-term storage of information, and deep understanding of materials (Kagan, 1999). Cooperation is claimed to be one of the most constructive learning strategies.

Willing (1987) reports that 'pair work and language games' are among the least-liked activities among the ESL learners he surveyed in Australia. Nunan (1989) claims that learners often favor 'traditional' activities to 'communicative' showing a preference for teacher-centered style of teaching. Group and pair work have also been challenged on the grounds that they do not ensure satisfactory outcomes. Wells (1999) sees the problem in the ephemeral nature of spoken discourse which makes it difficult for participants to be sure that progress has been made. Students also have difficulty in understanding the nature of this progress.

Ellis (1994) argued that students reveal more interest to communicate if they are given more opportunities to speak. It has been observed that Asian students are reluctant to express their ideas and want others to speak for them (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Harmer (1991) claims that group and pair work are strategies to resolve this problem because they allow students to work in a favorable and enabling environment. Group work, according to Gower (1987) has a number of advantages as it encourages learners' to experience various types of interaction and helps generate a more relaxed and cooperative classroom atmosphere.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design since the participants took part in the experimental groups without being randomly selected. The study had two levels. During the first phase, it applied negotiation of form, what Ellis (2004) calls consciousness-raising task, at the two levels of pair work and group work as the treatment. A total of twenty lessons were presented during the 20 sessions of the study to each group and the teacher asked questions about the target structures to trigger negotiation. The students' hand raising attempts to answer the target questions were counted, recorded, and then aggregated for each session. Therefore, negotiation type was the independent variable and the students' hand-raising or participation the dependent variable. In other words, the total of hand-raising attempts for each student, or their participation during the course, constituted the values of the dependent variable. Participation itself, however, was the nested independent variable whose effect was measured to see if it affected the participants' grammatical achievement. Therefore, in the second phase of the study, participation at the two levels of low participation and high participation, was the independent variable with grammatical achievement as the dependent variable.

#### *Participants*

The participants of this study were second-grade high school students attending two English classes during the academic year 2016. The high school is located in Ardabil, Iran. There was an average of 20 students in each class. All of the students were almost of the same age, i.e., 14. They sat two English classes each week. Both groups were approximately equal in number.

#### *Instruments*

##### a) Textbook

The textbook used in this study was the *Prospect* textbook taught in Iranian high schools. The grammar points to be worked on were chosen from this textbook.

##### b) Participation checklist

The participation checklist was designed for registering the hand-raising attempts of the participants for answering questions addressing the target structures. At the end, these values were aggregated and used as the participants' participation profiles. These profiles or sets of scores, each belonging to one of the groups, were used in the data analysis stage.

##### c) Grammar pretest and posttest

The textbook used in the study was the source of all grammatical structures taught. The pretest and posttest both were in the multiple-choice format and exactly the same. Since twenty structures were investigated, the test contained twenty questions each addressing one of the structures such as simple present tense. The reliability of the tests was estimated through running a Cronbach Alpha test which equaled .079. This value is within the acceptable range.

#### *Procedure*

The procedure for conducting this research included the following steps:

##### a) Participant selection

The two participating classes were chosen randomly from among second-grade high school classes in Ardabil, Iran. Each class contained 20 learners.

##### b) Grouping

There were two intact classes each with 20 students. Thus, one of the classes was randomly named as the first experimental group. In this, the students negotiated in pairs. The other class was considered to be the second experimental group. The students in this class negotiated in groups.

##### c) Treatment

The treatments lasted for ten weeks, with two class meetings each week. A total of twenty lessons were presented during the 20 sessions and the teacher asked questions about the target structures to trigger negotiation. The students' hand raising attempts to answer the target questions were recorded and aggregated for each session.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At each phase of the study with one independent variable having two levels and a continuous dependent variable, it was necessary to run an independent-samples T-test. But, as one of its assumptions, the distribution of scores in this test should be normal. To make sure that the data gathered were normal, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was run on the data at each level. But the distribution of scores in neither of the conditions was normal. Therefore, the non-parametric alternative of the Independent-samples T-test, that is, Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the research hypotheses.

##### *Testing the First Null Hypothesis*

The first research hypothesis stated that, there is no significant difference in the amount of students' participation between the two levels of negotiation, that is, pair work and group work. Since the distribution of scores was not normal, a Mann-Whitney U test was used. The independent variable was negotiation with the two levels of pair work and group work and the dependent variable was the students' degree of participation. Table 1 shows the result of this test. The finding shows that the degree of participation differed significantly between the pair work and group work conditions. This finding convinces us to reject our first null hypothesis. However to know which group outperformed the other, we have to look at the Ranks Table (Table 2) that follows Table 1.

TABLE 1.  
MANN-WHITNEY U TEST RESULT FOR DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION

	degree of participation
Mann-Whitney U	.000
Wilcoxon W	210.000
Z	-5.414
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000 <sup>b</sup>

a. Grouping Variable: class type  
b. Not corrected for ties.

TABLE 2.  
THE MEAN AND TOTAL PARTICIPATION ATTEMPTS IN THE TWO GROUPS

	Negotiation	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
degree of participation	Pair work	20	10.50	210.00
	Group work	20	30.50	610.00
	Total	40		

In the Ranks table (Table 2), we can see that the mean participation attempt in the pair work condition is 10.50 but in the group work condition it is 30.50. The total hand-raising or participation attempts are given in the column under Sum of Ranks. From the findings we can conclude that participation in the group work condition has been much more than participation in the pair work condition.

##### *Testing the second null hypothesis*

The second null hypothesis postulated that there is no significant difference in the amount of students' grammatical achievement between the two levels of participation, that is, low and high participation.

Since our comparison of the pair work and group work conditions revealed that the amount of participation in the group work was almost three times more than the amount of participation in the pair work and since only a couple of student in the pair work had participated more than a few students in the group work, the pair work and group work participation results were taken as equal to the low participation and high participation groups. This means that, the normality assumption of parametric tests was not met to run an independent-samples T-test, like in testing of the first hypothesis; therefore the same procedure, i.e., running Mann-Whitney U test, was applied to this hypothesis as well. The test result indicated that changes in the degree of participation as a result of negotiation type has affected the participants' gains in terms of grammatical knowledge with  $Sig < .0001$  at  $P = .95$ . Since the difference is significant, the second null hypothesis is also rejected. However, the direction of change is not clear yet. That is, it is not clear whether more participation or less participation has resulted in better performance in the grammar test.

TABLE 3.  
MANN-WHITNEY U TEST RESULTS FOR GRAMMATICAL ACHIEVEMENT

	Grammatical Achievement
Mann-Whitney U	43.500
Wilcoxon W	253.500
Z	-4.346
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000 <sup>b</sup>

a. Grouping Variable: class type  
b. Not corrected for ties.

As in the first hypothesis, to know about the direction of influence, we have to look at the Ranks Table. This table can help us to find out which group gained more in terms of grammatical knowledge. We also would like to know if the degree of participation resulting from negotiation type has been influential in this improvement. Table 4 answers these two questions.

TABLE 4.  
THE MEAN AND TOTAL GRAMMATICAL ACHIEVEMENT SCORES IN THE TWO GROUPS

	Participation	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Grammatical achievement	Low participation	20	28.33	566.50
	High participation	20	12.68	253.50
	Total	40		

As it is evident in Table 4, direction of the difference has been to the advantage of the low participation condition or pair work class. In this class the students obtained a mean rank score more than twice as big as the mean score of the high participation condition or group work class. This means that more participation did not result in higher grammatical scores in the posttest and students in the low participation condition or pair work class obtained significantly higher scores in the grammar test.

The hand-raising attempts or participation in the group work negotiation were much more than hand-raising attempts in the pair work negotiation. This finding rejected the first null hypothesis. There are some contradictory opinions relating to the usefulness of group work. Tiberius (1995) counts a number of reasons why group work might not work. The two most important reasons he expresses are that, some teachers may experience difficulty with handling group work and the feeling that this detracts their status and therefore be disinterested in this method of teaching. Weaver and Hybles (2004), also, believe that group discussions could bore some students and appear as a waste of time.

However, there is a great body of research which supports the use of group work. There has been a great deal of research regarding the issue of interaction in language acquisition (e.g., Gass, 1997; Long, 1996). Ellis (1994), also, believes that students' motivation increases when they have more opportunities to speak as when they are put in groups. In some cultures, as in Asian cultures, students are very anxious about making mistakes in front of others (Weaver & Hybles, 2004). Even though there are shortcomings, it seems inevitable to implement group work in the classroom.

The benefit of group work is twofold. First, it improves language learning, and second it releases stress due to the student-centered atmosphere that it creates. As Gower (1987) has pointed out, group work has the potential to improve different kinds of interaction among learners and can produce a less stressful as well as more cooperative classroom mood.

Regarding the second null hypothesis, the results revealed that there was a difference to the advantage of the pair-work class which obtained a mean score more than twice as big as the mean score of the group work class. It was found that pair work affected the grammatical achievement of the participants more than group work. The reasons for this may vary, but it seems to be possible that 'peer talk' and 'peer correction' lead to better performance in producing correct grammatical outcomes. It may be discussed that the pair work assignments are dealt with in more depth than the assignments in group work.

The positive contributions of the pair work in building positive inter-personal relationships have always been confirmed in research (Chiba, 2010; Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Varonis & Gass, 1985). This negotiation type has the property of providing a variety of opportunities for L2 learners to interact with each other using communicative language tasks that will promote the acquisition of language (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983).

## V. CONCLUSION

Despite being important parts of collaborative teaching and learning, group work and pair work are generally neglected in public and private institutions of Iran. In Iran, school teachers employ lecturing more than any other method for teaching English. The classes are also overpopulated and there is little interaction between students and the teachers. In fact, here the teacher acts like an authoritarian knower not a facilitator. Ellis (1994) noted that generally students learn successfully in natural settings. Group work and pair work activities are very similar to natural settings. Group activities have the advantage of improving thinking and solidifying information more than traditional approaches. Interaction or negotiation can also foster active learning.

Working together is valuable in education because it increases the amount of students talking time (Harmer, 1991). Students who take the initiative in learning, according to Hedge (2000), learn more things and learn better than passive students waiting for the teacher to teach. Working in groups and pairs is also fun for students and acts as a source of intrinsic motivation for them. In group and pair work students communicate with each other, share suggestions, insights, and feedback about successful or unsuccessful attempts of each other. Researchers also claim that teacher-dominated atmosphere kills students' interests (Kundo & Tutto, 1989). Accordingly, the teaching methodology of English in Iranian high schools needs to be revised. From the outcome of this study, it can be claimed that group work and pair work have a potentially positive impact on the learning of EFL learners, but participation is not a good predictor of grammatical achievement.

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# Views and Attitudes of Intercultural Awareness in Chinese Teaching and Learning in Shanxi Provincial Universities Context

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**Abstract**—The perceptions of academic staffs and overseas students to the significance of intercultural awareness in Chinese teaching/learning as foreign language were studied to provide suggestions for enhancing their intercultural communication competence in the context of Shanxi Provincial universities. The participants of 273 students and 52 staffs took part in the questionnaire and 25 of them accepted semi-structured interview. The combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis indicated a significant correlation between intercultural experience, length of Chinese teaching/learning and the enthusiasm in target language involved programs, regardless of age or gender. The attitudes to cultural diversity, misunderstanding even conflicts unavoidably existed in these universities influenced target language and culture mastery. This study suggested the promotion of intercultural awareness among staffs as well as students was important to help international students take advantage of opportunities available at campus or beyond to improve their effective intercultural communication. And much more intercultural strategies, including more positive learning environment, appropriated curriculum, further exploration, concentrated on improving target language proficiency and extending cultural experience in Chinese classes should be implemented to motivate students' intercultural enthusiasm and competence.

**Index Terms**—Chinese teaching/learning as foreign language, target language and culture mastery, intercultural awareness, cultural diversity, intercultural communication competence

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Globalization is influencing universities worldwide through market competition. The growth of international education over recent 5 years has provided China an opportunity to develop international market (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Internationalization of education has become a significant development in Chinese universities. From 2010 to 2015, international students in China rose from 265,090 to 397,635 (150 %).

As we all know, learning a foreign language is one of the best way to make people conscious of outside world and culture. With 'the silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Maritime Silk Road (B&R)' initiative of China in 2014, more and more international students from nearly 60 countries in Eurasia participated in on-line, in-country and face-to-face Chinese teaching modes. Any country or person planed to operate globally in accordance with current global trends can benefit socially, economically and personally (Chinese National Development and Reform Commission, 2015). China universities offer short-term or long term programs to provide overseas students an opportunity to learn Chinese in a natural immersion environment.

However, because of different social backgrounds, social systems, and customs, people have difficulties in understanding and communicating with each other (Petrakis, 2013). This is also a problem that has troubled both teachers and learners. It is well known that teaching or learning a foreign language cannot be only linguistic skills like phonology, morphology, vocabulary or syntax (Forsman, 2012). Language learning and target cultures cannot realistically be separated. Mak (2010) asserts language learning is a deep, conceptual activity which involves explicit analysis of language and culture.

Therefore, intercultural awareness is required for a foreign language learner to promote intercultural communication competence (Leask, 2009). Bodycott and Lai (2012) mention that foreign language learners should be aware to actively intermingle their own culture with target culture. Colvin *et al* (2012) points out intercultural awareness helps learners broaden mind, increase tolerance and achieve cultural empathy and sensitivity. Intercultural awareness is a consciousness and an ability to put intercultural conceptions into practice in an real-time cross-cultural context (Baker, 2011). Thus, intercultural awareness is a learning process in which we become adapt to the target language and cultural situations and principles (Leung & Chiu, 2010). In foreign language teaching/learning, an awareness of target language and culture needs to be carefully considered. Otherwise, the potential cross-cultural communication problems arise from lacking mutual untranslatable speech or behavior. There is no question that successful integration of culture could contribute significantly to target language teaching/learning (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006).

Therefore, this study was to investigate the perceptions of academic staff members and overseas students towards the significance of intercultural awareness in Chinese teaching/ learning in Shanxi Provincial universities, including Shanxi



University, Taiyuan Science & Technology University, Shanxi Agriculture University, Taiyuan Normal University, and Shanxi Finance and Economy University. The following research objectives were set out: to investigate staff and students' perceptions towards the significance of intercultural awareness in Chinese teaching/learning; to provide some suggestions for enhancing intercultural communication competence in Chinese teaching and learning in Shanxi Provincial tertiary educational context

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. There were 273 students and 52 academic staff members from the universities of Shanxi Province took part in the research. Participants were given informed consent and the right to withdraw at any stage. They were assured of their anonymity and the destruction of the recordings five years after reporting of this research. All these strategies ensured the participants could give responses confidently, and thus the investigation outcomes are credible.

Data collection methods including questionnaire (see in Appendices I, II) and semi-structured interview (see in Appendices III), which were concerned about participants' views and attitudes towards the significance of intercultural awareness in Chinese teaching/learning as foreign language. The questionnaire employed during Phase 1 adopted "Likert Scale" format (Likert, 1932). Interviews were guided by one set of five questions for staffs/students (Phase 2). The completed questionnaires were conducted in two ways: paper-based (given face-to-face) and web-based (Potential participants were contacted by email explaining the research objectives and inviting them to participate in). The email also contained an attachment of questionnaire. During Phase 1, a 40-items questionnaire was distributed to 325 academic staffs and oversea students. Table1 shows the details of the participants.

TABLE I  
DETAILED INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY

Items		Staff participants		Student participants	
		Count	% of total	Count	% of total
Gender	Male	17	32.7	112	41.0
	Female	35	67.3	161	59.0
Age	18-22 years	0	0.0	41	15.0
	23-30 years	5	9.6	102	37.4
	31-40 years	33	63.5	72	26.4
	41-50 years	15	28.8	53	19.4
	51 years +	9	17.3	5	1.8
Years of teaching/learning Chinese as foreign language	0-1 year	1	1.9	57	20.9
	1-3 years	4	7.7	103	37.7
	3-5 years	16	30.8	75	27.5
	5 years +	31	59.6	38	13.9

Data gathered from this stage were analyzed with Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 19.0. During Phase 2, semi-structured interviews were organized among 6 staffs and 19 students. The interviews were recorded using a portable digital recorder and transcribed, analyzed predominantly using CA approach (Paul *et al*, 2006).

Since sample data were not normally distributed, Kruskal-Wallis test was used in this study to determine whether statistically significant differences existed among four independent variables (occupation, gender, age, length of teaching/studying). If significant differences were found using Kruskal-Wallis tests, Mann Whitney U tests was then conducted to identify which group had significant differences ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

## III. RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

### A. Result and Quantitative Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics of the participants' responses in terms of 3 themes: personal intercultural experience, views of intercultural awareness, intercultural awareness and language teaching and learning were analyzed. And descriptive statistics of the participants' responses were showed by six sub-themes in this section.

#### 1. Views and attitudes about China and world

As seen from Table 2, all participants had a positive view in relation to these items. The participants view China as a culturally diverse society (Q6). They also agreed intercultural awareness played an important role in China (Q7) and international students were an important source of this multicultural awareness (Q8). Such a high degree of agreement signified no further tests were necessary.

TABLE 2  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON VIEWS ABOUT CHINA AND THE WORLD

Items		SA	A	NS	D	SD	Total
Q6. China is a nation of cultural diversity now.	count	135	169	15	6	0	325
	% of total	41.5	52.1	4.6	1.8	0	100
Q7. Intercultural awareness is important to China.	count	202	114	2	6	0	325
	% of total	62.3	35.2	0.6	1.9	0	100
Q8. International students are an important source of intercultural awareness.	count	74	181	36	33	1	325
	% of total	22.7	55.6	11.0	10.1	0.3	100

## 2. Personal intercultural experience

Generally speaking, most of the participants agreed that they enjoy traveling to other countries (16.3% disagreed), appreciated food from other countries (20.7% disagreed), and interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds (3.8% disagreed). The low degree of disagreements (Table3) suggested that there was no need for further investigations about this topic.

TABLE 3  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON PERSONAL INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Items		SA	A	NS	D	SD	Total
Q9. I like to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds.	count	68	153	51	25	28	325
	% of total	20.8	47.2	15.7	7.8	8.5	100
Q10. I like eating food from other countries.	count	92	69	97	41	27	325
	% of total	28.3	21.1	29.9	12.5	8.2	100
Q11. I like to travel overseas.	count	165	147	1	10	2	325
	% of total	50.7	45.1	0.4	3.1	0.7	100

## 3. Aspects of intercultural awareness

Table4 demonstrated that participants held positive views on all of the statements in this section. At least 75% of participants agreed each item. Similarly, the high degree of agreement suggested no need for further investigations and more tests.

TABLE 4  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

Items		SA	A	NS	D	SD	Total
Q12. Intercultural awareness enriches one's life.	count	94	166	56	6	2	325
	% of total	28.9	51.2	17.3	1.9	0.7	100
Q13. Intercultural awareness widens one's worldview.	count	90	165	56	7	3	321
	% of total	27.6	50.9	17.3	2.1	0.8	98.7
Q14. Intercultural awareness enhances understanding of one's own culture.	count	119	153	45	4	4	325
	% of total	36.7	47	13.7	1.3	1.3	100
Q15. Intercultural awareness enhances world peace.	count	145	119	32	16	10	321
	% of total	44.5	36.6	9.8	4.9	3.1	98.9
Q16. Intercultural awareness is hard to develop.	count	106	128	29	49	10	323
	% of total	32.7	39.6	8.9	15.3	2.8	99.3
Q17. Travel enhances intercultural awareness.	count	121	140	27	11	26	325
	% of total	37.1	43.2	8.2	3.4	8.1	100
Q18. Interacting with migrants enhances intercultural awareness.	count	127	145	9	11	33	325
	% of total	39.1	44.7	2.7	3.3	10.2	100
Q19. Interacting with oversea students enhances intercultural awareness	count	110	129	62	9	13	323
	% of total	33.8	39.7	19.2	2.7	4.1	99.5
Q20. The internet plays an important role in intercultural awareness.	count	155	124	24	9	13	325
	% of total	47.8	38	7.3	2.7	4.1	99.9

Notes: The reason why total percentage of some items were not 100 was because participants did not put check-mark on any option of these items.

## 4. Intercultural awareness and language teaching/earning

Further, as indicated in the Table5, they generally agreed that there were benefits resulting from the inclusion of cultural components in a language course. The agreement percentage of each item was range from 74% to 97%, and the disagreement percentage of each was lower than 5%. Once again, the high level of agreement to statements was achieved.

TABLE 5  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING/LEARNING

Items		SA	A	NS	D	SD	Total
Q21. Learning Chinese involves learning its culture.	count	201	114	6	0	3	324
	% of total	61.9	35.2	1.7	0	0.9	99.7
Q22 Cultural component provides meaningful context for Chinese language course.	count	107	141	54	17	2	321
	% of total	32.9	43.4	16.5	5.3	0.7	98.8
Q23. Cultural components enhances students' motivation towards target language.	count	130	181	10	1	2	323
	% of total	39.9	55.7	3.1	0.2	0.5	99.4
Q24. Cultural component promotes students' curiosity about Chinese language.	count	97	158	30	1	11	297
	% of total	29.7	48.6	9.3	0.4	3.3	91.3
Q25. Cultural component does not impede students' Chinese acquisition.	count	149	96	43	12	5	303
	% of total	45.8	29.4	13.1	3.7	1.5	93.5

Notes: The reason why total percentage of some items were not 100 was because participants did not put check-mark on any option of these items.

5. Intercultural awareness in course design

It was found from Table6 that the participants mostly agreed that culture should be part of language course and integrated into language teaching (87.7%). They commonly accepted that students in a language program should be introduced to a native speaker (56.5%), and textbooks in a language program should be written by native speakers of the target language too (59.6%). A majority (98.9%) of the participants strongly believed that part from textbooks, there were other useful resources for teaching in language program. However, whether or not foreign students should be involved in a language program, the participants' views were divided: 39.4% agreed, but 32% disagreed, and 20.8% were not sure. Also, interestingly, about compulsory professional course, half agreed (48.9%), but another half (45.7%) disagreed that they should be taught in English. Therefore, further analysis was conducted to identify factors that influenced participants' views on these questions. The Kruskal-Wallis Test or Mann-Whitney U test was chosen to determine whether these questions were associated with participants' occupation, gender, age group, and length of Chinese teaching/studying as foreign language.

TABLE 6  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

Items		SA	A	NS	D	SD	Total
Q26. Culture should be part of Chinese language course.	count	125	160	12	15	0	312
	% of total	38.6	49.1	3.6	4.7	0.1	96.1
Q27. Culture should be integrated into Chinese teaching.	count	151	145	11	8	3	319
	% of total	46.6	44.7	3.5	2.5	0.8	98.1
Q28. Students in a language program should be introduced to native Chinese speaker.	count	118	66	45	51	32	312
	% of total	36.2	20.3	13.9	15.8	9.7	95.9
Q29. Foreign students should be introduced to a Chinese language program.	count	56	72	68	66	38	300
	% of total	17.3	22.1	20.8	20.4	11.6	92.2
Q30. Textbooks in a language program should be written by native Chinese speakers.	count	99	127	26	37	9	298
	% of total	30.5	29.1	17.9	11.3	2.8	91.6
Q31. Translation should be avoided in language teaching.	count	77	71	61	80	16	305
	% of total	23.7	21.9	18.7	24.6	4.9	93.8
Q32. Apart from textbooks, there are other resources for teaching in Chinese language program.	count	186	135	1	3	0	325
	% of total	57.3	41.6	0.2	0.8	0	99.9
Q33. Some compulsory professional courses should be taught in English, not Chinese.	count	64	95	6	66	83	313
	% of total	19.8	29.1	1.7	20.3	25.4	96.3

Notes: The reason why total percentage of some items were not 100 was because participants did not put check-mark on any option of these items.

It was found from Table6 that the participants mostly agreed that culture should be part of language course and integrated into language teaching (87.7%). They commonly accepted that students in a language program should be introduced to a native speaker (56.5%), and textbooks in a language program should be written by native speakers of the target language too (59.6%). A majority (98.9%) of the participants strongly believed that part from textbooks, there were other useful resources for teaching in language program. However, whether or not foreign students should be involved in a language program, the participants' views were divided: 39.4% agreed, but 32% disagreed, and 20.8% were not sure. Also, interestingly, about compulsory professional course, half agreed (48.9%), but another half (45.7%) disagreed that they should be taught in English. Therefore, further analysis was conducted to identify factors that influenced participants' views on these questions. The Kruskal-Wallis Test or Mann-Whitney U test was chosen to determine whether these questions were associated with participants' occupation, gender, age group, and length of Chinese teaching/studying as foreign language.

6. Personal experience in a language program

TABLE7  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

Items		SA	A	NS	D	SD	Total
Q34. The Chinese language program I have taught/studied is practical.	count	99	124	44	24	9	300
	% of total	30.6	38.1	13.4	7.3	2.9	92.3
Q35. The Chinese language program I have taught/studied pays much attention to the culture.	count	122	127	31	17	23	319
	% of total	37.5	39.1	9.4	5.2	7.1	98.3
Q36. The Chinese language program I taught/studied deals adequately with intercultural awareness.	count	85	136	61	22	15	319
	% of total	26.2	41.9	18.8	6.8	4.5	98.2
Q37. The Chinese language program I have taught/studied helps me to appreciate other cultures.	count	102	82	36	44	24	288
	% of total	31.4	25.2	11.2	13.6	7.3	88.7
Q38. The Chinese language program I taught/studied inspires me to interact with people of different cultures.	count	119	181	8	7	11	325
	% of total	36.5	55.7	2.4	2.1	3.3	100
Q39. The Chinese language program I have taught/studied enhances my intercultural awareness.	count	148	104	19	16	15	302
	% of total	45.6	32.1	5.7	4.9	4.5	92.8

Notes: The reason why total percentage of some items were not 100 was because participants did not put check-mark on any option of these items.

As shown in Table7, the participants (68.7%) generally agreed that they were quite satisfied with the language programs they undertook. However, they generally agreed with the rest of the statements in this section (the agreement percentage of each item range from 56% to 91%).

#### 7. Factors influence the views or attitudes to language program

To check whether such factors as participants' occupation, gender, age group, and years of teaching/studying were associated with their views on the intercultural awareness in Shanxi Provincial Universities, Mann-Whitney U tests or Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed on Q29, and Q33.

##### 7.1 Influence of Participants' occupation on their response to Q29

TABLE8  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO Q29 CLASSIFIED BY OCCUPATION

Participants' occupation		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank Mean
A(staff)	count	89	17	30	137	42	36.4
	% of total	27.5	5.2	9.3	42.0		
B(student)	count	39	51	74	163	51	55.8
	% of total	11.9	15.6	22.7	50.2		

*Mann-Whitney U=623.5, Wilcoxon W=1526.5, Z=3.707, p=0.001*

The result (Table8) showed that 65.5% ((SA+A)/Total%) of staffs agreed that foreign students should be introduced to a language program, but only 23.7% ((SA+A)/Total%) of students agreed, which meant participant's occupation influenced their view on Q29 significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ), and the academic staffs much more firmly believed that overseas students should be introduced into a foreign language program.

##### 7.2 Influence of staffs/students' gender, age, teaching/learning length on their response to Q29

TABLE9  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO Q29 CLASSIFIED BY GENDER

Participants' gender		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank Mean
A(male)	count	62	36	55	152	47	40.8
	% of total	19.1	11	16.8	46.9		
B(female)	count	66	32	49	147	46	44.9
	% of total	20.3	9.8	15.2	45.3		

*Mann-Whitney U=1012.5, Wilcoxon W=2047.5, Z=0.377, p=0.706*

It was found there was no asymptotic significance ( $p > 0.05$ ) between male (40.8%) and female participants' agreement percentage (44.9%), which meant the gender did not influence their response to Q29.

TABLE10  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO Q29 CLASSIFIED BY AGE GROUP

Age group		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank mean
A(18-22 years)	count	27	17	20	64	20	45.7
	% of total	8.2	5.1	6.3	19.6		
B(23-30 years)	count	26	12	20	58	18	45.5
	% of total	7.9	3.7	6.2	17.8		
C(31-40 years)	count	26	13	20	59	19	45.5
	% of total	8.0	4.1	6.1	18.2		
D(41-50 years)	count	23	13	22	59	18	48.6
	% of total	7.2	4.0	6.8	18.0		
E(51 years +)	count	26	13	21	60	19	47.1
	% of total	8.1	3.9	6.6	18.6		

$\chi^2=0.221, df=4, p=0.994$

Table 10 was the Kruskal-Wallis test result of Participants' response to Q29. It indicated that there were no asymptotic significance among the 4 age groups ( $p > 0.05$ ), which suggested that staffs' or students' age did not influence his/her opinion on whether foreign students should be introduced to a language program or not.

The analysis result (Table11) of participants' agreement percentage among different group classified by length of teaching/studying Chinese as foreign language revealed asymptotic significance ( $p < 0.01$ ), which meant there was a significant association between the amount of teaching/studying years and his/her attitude to the language program. Then post Hoc multiple comparisons were performed to determine which group was significantly different from one another (Table12).

TABLE11  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO Q29 CLASSIFIED BY YEARS OF TEACHING/STUDYING

Years of Chinese teaching/ studying as foreign language		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank mean
A (0-1 year)	count	40	48	18	106	32	42.9
	% of total	12.3	14.8	5.4	32.5		
B(1-3 years)	count	14	15	38	66	21	59.4
	% of total	4.3	4.5	11.6	20.4		
C(3-5 years)	count	18	4	35	58	18	56.2
	% of total	5.6	1.3	10.9	17.8		
D(5 years +)	count	56	1	13	70	21	30.8
	% of total	17.2	0.2	4.1	21.5		
$\chi^2=17.444, df=3, p=0.002$							

Furthermore the result above showed that the agreement percentage of B and C groups (more than 1, but less than 5 years) were significantly higher than A (less than 1 year) and D (more than 5 years) group. It was inferred that novices (<1 year) or veterans (>5 years) at foreign language teaching/studying did not care about the language program, while those who already passed the initial stage and involved in improvement phrase (2~5 years) were much more interested in such program idea because they expected more intercultural theoretical target language application and practical experience. We might speculate the new Chinese teachers/learners probably focused on basic knowledge in the first year, not touched upon intercultural awareness yet, meanwhile the old hands in intensification phrase almost had unambiguous intercultural awareness and abundant intercultural conversation experience. It seemed that either too much or too little intercultural experience might reduce one's enthusiasm in language program.

TABLE12  
THE POST HOC MULTIPLE COMPARISONS BETWEEN EVERY 2 GROUPS

Group comparisons	Rank mean <sub>1</sub>	Rank mean <sub>2</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
A vs B	22.6	33.6	32	21	7.263	1	0.007
A vs C	22.6	30.1	32	18	3.893	1	0.048
A vs D	30.6	21.5	32	21	5.501	1	0.019
B vs C	20.3	19.7	21	18	0.031	1	0.860
B vs D	27.5	15.4	21	21	12.372	1	0.001
C vs D	24.9	15.8	18	21	8.323	1	0.004

7.3 Influence of staffs/students' gender, age, teaching/learning length on their response to Q33

The result (Table13) showed that there was significant difference between staff and student on the statement of Q33 ( $p < 0.01$ ). 36.9% ((SA+A)/Total%) of the staffs and 67.3% ((SA+A)/Total%) of students agreed, while 61.4% of the staffs and 30.9% of students disagreed that the compulsory professional lecture should be taught in English other than Chinese. The possibility of difference was their attitude to the lecture language. It was inferred most of the staffs considered the professional lecture as an intercultural experience for foreign students too, so they persisted in that lectures should be taught in target language, while the majority of students thought the English lecture could be more easily for them to understand.

TABLE13  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO Q33 CLASSIFIED BY OCCUPATION

Participants' occupation		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank mean
A(staff)	count	63	3	104	170	52	55.9
	% of total	19.3	0.9	32.1	52.3		
B(student)	count	96	3	44	143	45	41.0
	% of total	29.6	0.8	13.6	44.0		
$Mann-Whitney U=808.5, Wilcoxon W=1843.5, Z=2.991, p=0.003$							

It was found from Table14 that there was no significant difference between male and female participants about their opinion on whether the compulsory professional classes should be taught in English or not ( $p > 0.05$ ), which meant that gender was not a factor affected the responses to Q33.

TABLE14  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO Q33 CLASSIFIED BY GENDER

Participants' gender		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank mean
A(male)	count	81	3	75	158	49	48.7
	% of total	24.8	0.8	23	48.6		
B(female)	count	78	3	74	155	48	49.3
	% of total	24.1	0.8	22.7	47.7		

*Mann-Whitney U=1164.0, Wilcoxon W=2389.0, Z=0.099, p=0.921*

The Table15 showed that there was no significant difference among different age groups' standpoint on whether the compulsory professional classes should be taught in English or not ( $p>0.05$ ), which meant that participants' age was not a factor impacted the responses to Q33 either.

TABLE15  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO Q33 CLASSIFIED BY AGE GROUP

Age group		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank mean
A(18-22 years)	count	32	2	29	64	20	48.6
	% of total	9.9	0.7	9	19.6		
B(23-30 years)	count	32	0	29	60	19	48.4
	% of total	9.8	0	8.8	18.6		
C(31-40 years)	count	32	1	30	63	19	48.5
	% of total	9.7	0.4	9.2	19.3		
D(41-50 years)	count	30	2	33	65	20	51.0
	% of total	9.2	0.6	10.1	19.9		
E(51 years +)	count	33	0	28	61	19	48.5
	% of total	10.3	0	8.6	18.9		

$\chi^2=0.171, df=4, p=0.997$

The Table16 indicated that there was significant difference among different groups classified by the length of teaching/studying Chinese as foreign language ( $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore post Hoc multiple comparisons (Table17) were developed to reveal the relationship between amount of teaching or learning years and the point of view on intercultural awareness.

TABLE16  
PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON Q33 CLASSIFIED BY YEARS OF TEACHING/STUDYING

Years of teaching/studying Chinese as foreign language		SA+A	NS	D+SD	Total	N	Rank mean
A(0-1 year)	count	76	2	24	102	32	37.1
	% of total	23.5	0.7	7.3	31.5		
B(1-3 years)	count	41	3	26	69	22	44.6
	% of total	12.5	0.8	7.9	21.2		
C(3-5 years)	count	31	1	33	65	20	50.3
	% of total	9.6	0.2	10.1	19.9		
D(5 years +)	count	11	0	66	77	23	68.5
	% of total	3.3	0	20.4	23.7		

$\chi^2=22.703, df=3, p=0.001$

Obviously, the post Hoc multiple comparison of these 4 groups stated clearly that the response of every group was significantly different from another. From Table16 and 17, the agreement percentage ((SA+A)/Total%: 74.6% of A group, 58.9% of B group, 48.2% of C group, 13.9% of D group agreed) and disagreement percentage ((D+SD)/Total%: 23.1% of A group, 37.2% of B group, 50.7% of C group, 86.1% of D group) of Q33 revealed an interesting and excited result that the longer taught/learned Chinese as a foreign language, the more Chinese classes they expected, because they wanted much more intercultural experience, and the Chinese professional lecture could be a potential to strengthen the intercultural communication capability.

TABLE17  
THE POST HOC MULTIPLE COMPARISONS BETWEEN EVERY 2 GROUPS

Group comparisons	Rank mean <sub>1</sub>	Rank mean <sub>2</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
A vs B	25.7	30.1	32	22	1.506	1	0.220
A vs C	23.8	30.7	32	20	3.727	1	0.054
A vs D	20.6	38.4	32	23	21.596	1	0.001
B vs C	20.4	22.8	22	20	0.523	1	0.469
B vs D	17.2	28.5	22	23	11.547	1	0.001
C vs D	17.8	25.7	20	23	6.766	1	0.009

Overall, the quantitative data analysis suggested that the survey which integrated cultural awareness into foreign language teaching and learning was valuable. In order to ascertain participants' views and attitudes to intercultural awareness in Chinese teaching/learning, influential factors and their statistical relationships to participants' responses were studied by further qualitative data analysis.

**B. Result and Qualitative Data Analysis**

As we all knew, semi-structured interviews was congruent with grounded theory methodology as it allowed the interviewee to talked about key questions from researcher well and truly, but also allowed flexibility and depth in questions exploration simultaneously, which could be in relation to the views or attitudes addressed in this study. So the qualitative comprehensible data from semi-structured interview was collected and analyzed in this part.

**1. The interview questions design**

The interview questions were designed to focus on the three aspects of objectives. Table18 showed the details of the specific interview question items and the objectives they addressed.

TABLE 18  
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTION ITEMS

Research objectives	Question items
Views and attitude of staffs/students' intercultural awareness in general.	Open-ended section and Q1, Q2.
Significance of intercultural awareness in Chinese teaching/learning	Q3, Q4
Suggestions to enhance intercultural awareness and competence in Shanxi Provincial university context.	Q4, Q5

**2 The interviewee background**

A total of 25 respondents including 6 staffs and 19 foreign students who were working or studying at Shanxi Provincial Universities from July 2014 to June 2016 participated in semi-structured interviews. All 6 staff participants were native Chinese speaker. A total of 19 foreign students interviewed were from different countries, including American, Britain, Spanish, Italian, Ukraine, Russian, Armenia, Mexican, Nigeria, Uganda, Cameroon, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The demographic information of the interviewee participants were summarized in Table 19. And all interview participants were numbered.

TABLE19  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE INTERVIEWEE PARTICIPANTS

Items		Staff participants(6)		Student participants (19)	
		n/N	% of total	n/N	% of total
Gender	Male	4/6	16	12/19	48
	female	2/6	8	7/19	28
Age	18-22 years	0/6	0	6/19	24
	23-30 years	1/6	4	8/19	32
	31-40 years	3/6	12	4/19	16
	41-50 years	2/6	8	1/19	4
	51 years +	0/6	0	0/19	0
Years of Chinese teaching/learning as foreign language	0-1 year	0/6	0	2/19	8
	1-3 years	2/6	8	10/19	40
	3-5 years	3/6	12	3/19	12
	5 years +	1/6	4	2/19	8

**3. The themes analysis from interview**

**3.1 Theme 1: Views and attitudes of intercultural awareness.**

The participants demonstrated their understanding of intercultural awareness from different perspectives: personal understanding, conceptualization, cultural background and social environment *etc.*

*Basically, The intercultural awareness enabled people to interact effectively and acceptable to others in a group whose members had different cultural background (from staff4). Overall, To survive today's world, people should understand different culture, which could help people to adjust to unfamiliar environment they met, work, and live (from student 15). Adjustment and positive attitudes toward different cultures prompted people to take active roles in the diverse society' (from staff 2).*

Meanwhile, racial discrimination is a sensitive and unavoidable issue that is commonly discussed within intercultural contexts. Some student participants from African mentioned their experience of being discriminated by other cultural background, which meant people's upbringing played an important role in their intercultural awareness.

*One staff proposed that there are some cases in daily life in which we might highly motivated but lack the knowledge or the skills to communicate appropriately and effectively (from staff 6).*

Besides, studying abroad is a recommendable way to promote one's intercultural competence.

*I still find that it's only by studying a language that I began to seek more literature to read about that language and culture. (from Student 4)*

Therefore, acquisition of intercultural competence, the capacity to change one's attitudes and behaviors to be open to other cultures, had become a critical issue to survive in globalized society.

**3.2 Theme 2: Significance of intercultural awareness in foreign language teaching/studying.**

It was found that there was not much difference between staffs and students on this concept. Moreover, there was a high agreement that language and culture were closely related that language was a special component of culture.

*If seeing culture as an all-embracing general idea, language belong to the general culture of human being (from staff 4). A man with the capability of language must live in a language environment. To master a language, like Chinese, one*

*must live in the very language cultural environment (from staff 5).*

Obviously, it was inevitable to master Chinese, as a foreign language for international students, they should learn cultural structure of the language, besides expression or semantic meaning. And the teachers were the key for effective culture input, and they were not only language knowledge transmitters, but designer, organizer and participants of intercultural communication activities.

*Teacher themselves should use every means available to enlarge their intercultural knowledge and help international students to familiarize the target language culture (from student 10).*

*once foreign students in anxiety of intercultural failure, they are easily to lose motivation of language study, so teacher should help them as much as possible to get out of intercultural dilemma. (from staff 4)*

The important aspect proposed in this study was the foreigners' willingness to talk with the local people use target language. The majority of participants considered this as prerequisite to master target language.

*It was amazing for me when I helped someone to use the telephone first time communicated with somebody not native to either of us. (from Student 9)*

It was inferred that the cultural structure was the sum of all users of the language and life style of that nation, including geographic environments, folklore, fables, mythologies, social history development, customs, religious believes, values, science and technology, literature and art. Different cultures generated distinctive value system and perception of meaning. To be effective in target language-Chinese teaching/studying, the involved parties should be fully aware of the intercultural difference. Intercultural awareness enabled Chinese teacher and foreign students to modify their Chinese teaching/learning and communication patterns to be congruent with the cues of unfamiliar interaction parties. Change of teaching/studying and behavior would help them reach a mutual understanding.

3.3 Theme 3: suggestions to enhance intercultural awareness and competence in the context of Shanxi Provincial universities.

One purpose of this study was to collect suggestions of integration intercultural awareness into Chinese teaching/studying in Shanxi provincial Universities.

*Chinese studying as a foreign language is so important for anyone wanted to communicate with Chinese, but try to keep in mind that language is more than a vehicle of communication. It teaches Chinese life style and pattern of interacting. (from student 12)*

*Chinese believe that talk has limitations and meaning resides beyond mere words. First, hidden meaning is highly desirable in Chinese culture. Second, language could influence manner in which you send and receive message from members of Chinese culture. (from staff 7)*

Most of the interviewees approved that cultural component should ingrate into language course. Some creative ideas were put forward to enhance intercultural awareness and capability of teachers and students involved in Chinese teaching/studying.

*I like the use of real life situations, reading short stories, chatting with native people. (from student 3)*

The foreign students also suggested more cultural component in Chinese class, like 'language, society and culture', 'Literature in Chinese' and etc.

*Teachers can use authentic materials, films, news broadcasts, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials. (from student 5)*

*Not only celebrating cultures of all types, but establishing critical views to develop students' critical intercultural awareness so that they will be able to accept all students in the Chinese class regardless of race, color, social class, age, sexual orientation, educational level, and ideology. (from staff 2)*

In sum, most of participants focused on how to raise students' awareness on the importance of cultural topics and to help students become interested in the target culture. Teachers are called upon to find alternatives to help international students to reduce misrepresentations through more pertinent materials in which cultural conflicts, behaviors, and ideologies could be discussed. Through research program or development of class activities about language and culture, they could be able to instruct their students on intercultural awareness and communication competence and help them face the current process of globalization by creating an open atmosphere in classroom itself, where members surely from diverse backgrounds.

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The quantitative and qualitative data analysis of this research indicated that the intercultural awareness played an important role in Chinese teaching/studying as foreign language, which was recognized by most of teaching staffs and international students. The findings showed a strong correlation between intercultural experience, length of teaching/studying Chinese as foreign language and the enthusiasm in target language involved lectures or programs, regardless of age and gender. Their views and attitudes to intercultural awareness impacted target language and culture teaching and learning. The fact that cultural diversity, cultural misunderstanding or even conflicts unavoidable existed in Shanxi provincial universities should be understood and surmounted.

Intercultural awareness was in relation to particular contexts, and an awareness of the dynamic relationship between foreign language and its diverse social-cultural settings (Forsman, 2012). This study also suggested that the promotion of intercultural awareness among staffs as well as students to help international students take advantage of variety of



opportunities available at campus or beyond to improve their effective intercultural communication. Much more intercultural strategies concentrated on improving target language proficiency and extending cultural experience in Chinese classes should be implemented or investigated to motivate students' intercultural enthusiasm through more positive learning environment, appropriated curriculum, further exploration, *etc.*

The great gift human have for each other was not an exotic experiences but an opportunity which could be accomplished only by interacting with others who did not share the same system (Messner, 2016). The advancement of intercultural communication capability depended on the motivating force to pursue communicative interaction. The process may or may not succeed but provided an opportunity to modify their skills in the developmental learning cycle, in which an in-depth awareness developed through on-going reflections, intercultural conversations, and understanding of cultural similarities and differences. Besides, the intercultural awareness and competence required not an awareness of cultural similarities but differences to enhance effective communication in a Chinese as foreign language classroom.

In sum, the development of oversea students' intercultural awareness and understanding recognized value of Chinese language teaching/learning as a resource to promote critical thinking about cultural assumptions and intercultural competence. Nonetheless, the teachers' motivation was pivotal to facilitating communication in culturally diverse classes. A cognitive willingness coupled with open-minded and positive attitude to manage intercultural difference, diversity or even conflict would contribute to target language and cultural mastery and application.

#### V. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study were based on the views and perceptions of academic staff members and overseas students in the Shanxi Provincial universities. The number of participants was relatively small. Consequently, the respondents' attitudes were particular to this teaching/learning environment, and any attempt to generalize findings to other contexts should be careful. And further research could be conducted to explore more deep insights about how intercultural awareness and communication competence manifest in Chinese teaching/learning methodology and materials.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express profound gratitude to Shanxi Scholarship Council of China (Project NO.2016-021) and Shanxi Provincial Education Department (Project NO. 2015210) for granting our research. Besides I am deeply grateful to the participants of this study, the teachers and students from the Colleges or Universities in Shanxi Province.

#### APPENDIX I. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

This questionnaire consists of two parts and is designed to collect data about your views and attitudes towards intercultural awareness. It takes about 10 minutes to complete it and your assistance will be deeply appreciated. If you are interested in participating in a 30 minutes' interview, please contact the researchers for further information.

Directions: Please put a check-mark (√) on the item that applies to you or specify the information about yourself in the other category.

##### **Part I: Demographic Information**

1. Gender a. Male b. Female
2. Age a. 16-22yrs b. 23-30yrs c. 31-40yrs d. 41-50yrs e. over 50 yrs
3. Chinese is your mother tongue  
a. Yes b. No (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. University at which you work  
a. Shanxi University  
b. Taiyuan Science & Technology University  
c. Shanxi Agriculture University  
d. Taiyuan Normal University  
e. Shanxi Finance and Economy University
5. Years of teaching Chinese as foreign language at this University  
a. less than 1yr b. 1-3yrs c. 3-5yrs d. over 5 yrs

##### **Part II: Please circle your most appropriate response.**

Directions: Please indicate your most appropriate response by using the following criteria:

SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; NS= Not Sure; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

<b>About China and world</b>					
Q6. China is a nation of cultural diversity now.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q7. Intercultural awareness is important to China.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q8. International students are an important source of intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Personal intercultural experience</b>					
Q9. I like to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q10. I like eating food from other countries.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q11. I like to travel overseas.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Aspect of intercultural awareness</b>					
Q12. Intercultural awareness enriches one's life.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q13. Intercultural awareness widens one's worldview.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q14. Intercultural awareness enhances understanding of one's own culture.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q15. Intercultural awareness enhances world peace.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q16. Intercultural awareness is hard to develop.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q17. Travel enhances intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q18. Interacting with migrants enhances intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q19. Interacting with international students enhances intercultural awareness	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q20. The internet plays an important role in intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Intercultural awareness and language teaching</b>					
Q21. Learning Chinese involves learning its culture.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q22. Cultural component provides meaningful context for Chinese language course.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q23. Cultural components enhances students' motivation towards target language.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q24. Cultural component promotes students' curiosity about Chinese language.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q25. Cultural component does not impede students' Chinese acquisition.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Intercultural awareness and course design</b>					
Q26. Culture should be part of Chinese language course.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q27. Culture should be integrated into Chinese teaching.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q28. Students in a language program should be introduced to native Chinese speaker.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q29. Foreign students should be introduced to a Chinese language program.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q30. Textbooks in a language program should be written by native Chinese speakers.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q31. Translation should be avoided in language teaching.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q32. Apart from textbooks, there are other useful resources for teaching in Chinese language program.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q33. Some compulsory professional course should be taught in English, other than Chinese.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Personal experience in language program</b>					
Q34. The Chinese language program I have taught is too theoretical.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q35. The Chinese language program I have taught pays little attention to the culture.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q36. The Chinese language program I have taught deals adequately with intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q37. The Chinese language program I have taught helps me to appreciate other cultures.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q398. The Chinese language program I have taught inspires me to interact with people of different cultures.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q39. The Chinese language program I have taught enhances my intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD

**Any other relevant information you wish to add?**

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## APPENDIX II. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OVERSEA STUDENTS

This questionnaire consists of two parts and is designed to collect data about your views and attitudes towards intercultural awareness. It takes about 10 minutes to complete it and your assistance will be deeply appreciated. If you are interested in participating in a 30 minutes' interview, please contact the researchers for further information.

Directions: Please put a check-mark (✓) on the item that applies to you or specify the information about yourself in the other category.

### Part I: Demographic Information

- Gender a. Male b. Female
- Age a. 16-22yrs b. 23-30yrs c. 31-40yrs d. 41-50yrs e. over 50 yrs
- English is your mother tongue  
a. Yes b. No (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- University in which you study right now  
a. Shanxi University

- b. Taiyuan Science & Technology University
- C. Shanxi Agriculture University
- d. Taiyuan Normal University
- e. Shanxi Finance and Economy University
- 5. Years of learning Chinese as foreign language in this University
  - a. less than 1yr    b. 1-3yrs    c. 3-5yrs    d. over 5 yrs

**Part II: Please circle your most appropriate response.**

Directions: Please indicate your most appropriate response by using the following criteria:

SA= Strongly Agree;    A= Agree;    NS= Not Sure;    D= Disagree;    SD= Strongly Disagree

<b>About China and world</b>					
Q6. China is a nation of cultural diversity now.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q7. Intercultural awareness is important to China.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q8. International students are an important source of intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Personal intercultural experience</b>					
Q9. I like to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q10. I like eating food from other countries.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q11. I like to travel overseas.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Aspect of intercultural awareness</b>					
Q12. Intercultural awareness enriches one's life.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q13. Intercultural awareness widens one's worldview.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q14. Intercultural awareness enhances understanding of one's own culture.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q15. Intercultural awareness enhances world peace.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q16. Intercultural awareness is hard to develop.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q17. Travel enhances intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q18. Interacting with migrants enhances intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q19. Interacting with international students enhances intercultural awareness	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q20. The internet plays an important role in intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Intercultural awareness and language teaching</b>					
Q21. Learning Chinese involves learning its culture.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q22. Cultural component provides meaningful context for Chinese language course.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q23. Cultural components enhances students' motivation towards target language.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q24. Cultural component promotes students' curiosity about Chinese language.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q25. Cultural component does not impede students' Chinese acquisition.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Intercultural awareness and course design</b>					
Q26. Culture should be part of Chinese language course.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q27. Culture should be integrated into Chinese teaching.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q28. Students in a language program should be introduced to native Chinese speaker.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q29. Foreign students should be introduced to a Chinese language program.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q30. Textbooks in a language program should be written by native Chinese speakers.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q31. Translation should be avoided in language teaching.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q32. Apart from textbooks, there are other useful resources for teaching in Chinese language program.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q33. Some compulsory professional course should be taught in English, other than Chinese.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
<b>Personal experience in language program</b>					
Q34. The Chinese language program I have learned is too theoretical.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q35. The Chinese language program I have learned pays little attention to the culture.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q36. The Chinese language program I have learned deals adequately with intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q37. The Chinese language program I have learned helps me to appreciate other cultures.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q398. The Chinese language program I have learned inspires me to interact with people of different cultures.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Q39. The Chinese language program I have learned enhances my intercultural awareness.	SA	A	NS	D	SD

**Any other relevant information you wish to add?**

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APPENDIX III. VIEWS AND ATTITUDES OF STAFFS AND OVERSEA STUDENTS TOWARDS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SHANXI PROVINCIAL UNIVERSITIES CONTEXT

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE****Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_**School:** \_\_\_\_\_**Participant No.:** \_\_\_\_\_**Place:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_**Interview starting time:** \_\_\_\_\_**Interview finishing time:** \_\_\_\_\_**Interview duration:** \_\_\_\_\_

*There are 5 questions. Please feel free to give as much detail as you wish in your answers. If you are unclear about the meaning of any question, please ask for clarification.*

1 Do you think studying abroad could improve the intercultural competence?

2 What are the important factors could impact personal intercultural awareness and capability?

3 What did the Chinese teaching/studying as foreign language change your intercultural awareness and capability?

4 What should the teacher do in Chinese teaching as foreign language to enlarge students' cultural background?

5 How could the universities or colleges improve staffs' or students' intercultural awareness and capability?

*This concludes the questions for the interview. Thank you very much for your cooperation.*

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# EFL Teachers' Reflective Teaching, Use of Motivational Strategies, and Their Sense of Efficacy

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**Abstract**—The present study aimed at systematically investigating the relationship among EFL teachers' Reflective Teaching (RT), Use of Motivational Strategies (UMS), and Sense of Efficacy (SE). The participants of the study were 194 male and female EFL teachers, between 20 to 30 years of age ( $M_{age} = 25$ ) and with 1 to 10 years of teaching experience. The participants were asked to fill out three questionnaires: the RT questionnaire by Akbari, Behzadpour, and Dadvand (2010), the questionnaire of UMS by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), and the questionnaire of SE by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Analyzing the data through running the non-parametric Spearman's rank order coefficient of correlation indicated that there was a significant and positive correlation between RT and UMS, RT and SE, and between UMS and SE. Furthermore, running a multiple regression analysis revealed that RT could more significantly predict the SE among EFL teachers. Regarding the limitations and drawing upon the findings, the article concludes with some pedagogical implications and some avenues for future research.

**Index Terms**—reflective teaching, sense of efficacy, use of motivational strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

New pedagogical trends in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) have been paying increasing attention to the active, effective, and enabling role of ELT practitioners in teaching contexts (Akbari, Kiany, Imani Naeeni, & Karimi Allvar, 2008; Nosratinia & Zaker, 2014, 2017). Although numerous factors can influence the effectiveness of ELT practice, teachers' Sense of Efficacy (SE) is believed to be a major factor which can positively affect teaching behaviors and students' Second Language (L2) learning (Henson, Kogan, & Vacha-Hassa, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

SE, initially proposed by Bandura (1994), has been described as "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). SE is supposed to "determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will prove in the face of adverse situations" (Pajares, 1996, p. 544). Considering that in ELT contexts, teachers' autonomy, effort, and resilience have always been among desirable characteristics (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017), it is no wonder to observe that SE is considered an asset to ELT teachers (Brouwers & Tomic, 2003).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' SE has been defined as "teacher's belief that he or she has the skills necessary to effect positive change in student learning" (Distad & Brownstein, 2004, p. 7). According to Brouwers and Tomic (2003), teachers with high SE are more open to new ideas, more willing to accept innovations, are less likely to experience burnout, support pupils' autonomy to a greater extent, and are more attentive to low ability students; they are also more confident, reveal greater enthusiasm for teaching, have greater loyalty for teaching, and are more likely to stay in the teaching profession (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Moreover, EFL teachers' SE can contribute to EFL learners' SE (Bandura, 1995). On the other hand, it has been stated that teachers with low level of SE have poor teaching and have less effort in dealing with challenges (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

According to Akbari and Moradkhani (2009), there is a direct relationship between EFL teachers' SE and their years of teaching experience. That is, SE would naturally develop over time. However, in order to enhance the effectiveness of ELT teacher education programs, it is essential to look for methods and techniques for developing novice and prospective teachers' SE. Research has shown that human behaviors (including those of EFL teachers) are highly affected by their internal, cognitive, metacognitive, and personality factors which in many cases interact with each other (Fahim & Zaker, 2014; Nosratinia, Zaker, & Saveiy, 2015; Zaker, 2015, 2016a). Consequently, it is legitimate to inspect the way SE is associated with EFL teachers' internal factors and teaching behaviors as a means for developing their SE.

Reflective Teaching (RT) is a major mental construct, reflected through teachers' teaching practice, which according to Calderhead and Gates (1993) and Dellinger, Bobbett, Dianne, and Chad (2008), can significantly develop EFL

teachers' SE. RT is also believed to exert a positive impact on EFL learners' language proficiency (Akbari et al., 2008; Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017). Dewey (1933, as cited in Akbari et al., 2008) postulates that reflection is "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends" (p. 9).

RT is "an approach to second language classroom instruction in which current and prospective teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection" (Richards & Lockart, 1994, as cited in Murphy, 2001, p. 500). It is a widely-held belief that if EFL teachers do not reflect on their teaching practice, they are bound to become slaves to routine (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017). Akbari (2007) postulates that "teachers have always been reflecting on what they have been doing in their classes"... and it is "impossible to imagine a context in which we have human interaction on a cognitive level and no reflection going on" (p. 9). However, RT, as defined in the ELT domain, has some principles and practical guidelines (Calderhead & Gates, 1993) which, if implemented, can function as an assisting tool for EFL teachers.

Motivating EFL learners, using Motivational Strategies (MS), in other words Use of Motivational Strategies (UMS), is believed to be another influential factor in ELT practice (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007), and language teachers are believed to play the most determining role in developing L2 learners' motivation (Dörnyei, 1994; Tanaka, 2005). Motivation "includes the attitudes and affective states that affect the degree of learners' effort to learn an L2" (Ellis, 1997, p. 75). Some have argued that motivation is the biggest single factor affecting L2 learners' success (Harmer, 2001). In an ELT context, MS refer to techniques teachers implement in order to promote and maintain learners' motivation to learn (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Guilleaumeaux, 2008).

As stated above, a myriad of studies have assumed significant roles for RT (e.g. Dellinger et al., 2008) and UMS (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007) in developing ELT practitioners' teaching practice and SE. However, the systematic comparison between RT and UMS in predicting SE as well as the systematic inspection of the way these three variables are associated are the areas which have not been touched in the ELT domain so far. Such an attempt would enhance our level of understanding of these mental constructs. Furthermore, this comparison would enable teacher educators to come up with more appropriate decisions when attempting to enhance novice teachers' SE. Motivated by these premises, the researchers formulated the following research questions:

**Research Question 1:** *Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' reflective teaching and use of motivational strategies?*

**Research Question 2:** *Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' reflective teaching and sense of efficacy?*

**Research Question 3:** *Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' use of motivational strategies and sense of efficacy?*

**Research Question 4:** *Is there any significant difference between EFL teachers' reflective teaching and use of motivational strategies in predicting their sense of efficacy?*

## II. METHOD

### **Participants**

The individuals taking part in this study were 194 male and female (56 males and 138 females) EFL teachers within the age range of 20 to 30 ( $M_{age} = 25$ ) and with 1 to 10 years of teaching experience. These participants were studying ELT, English Translation, and English Literature at Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran and Payame-Noor University, Tehran. They were selected based on convenient non-random sampling. It should be noted that the initial number of participants was 206; however, 12 individuals were excluded due to providing careless and incomplete answers.

### **Instrumentation**

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, the following instruments were utilized:

1. English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory developed by Akbari, Behzadpour, and Dadvand (2010);
2. Motivational Strategies Questionnaire developed by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007); and
3. Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001).

### **English Language Reflection Inventory Questionnaire**

The English Language Reflection Inventory Questionnaire was developed by Akbari et al. (2010). The questionnaire covers six different components of reflective teaching, namely *Practical Element*, *Cognitive Element*, *Learner Element* (*affective*), *Metacognitive Element*, *Critical Element*, and *Moral Element*. The questionnaire includes 29 items on a 5-point Likert-scale format ranging from *never* (1 point), *seldom* (2 points), *sometimes* (3 points), *often* (4 points), and *always* (5 points). The instrument reportedly enjoys high reliability and validity (Akbari et al., 2010; Yesilbursa, 2013). The allocated time for answering the questionnaire is 15 minutes and the scores of the questionnaire range from 29 to 145. The reliability of RT questionnaire in this study was estimated to be 0.70 using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

### **Motivational Strategies Questionnaire**

The Motivational Strategies Questionnaire was developed by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007). It consists of ten macro strategies namely *Proper Teacher Behavior*, *Recognize Students' Effort*, *Promote Learners' Self-Confidence*, *Creating a Pleasant Classroom Climate*, *Present Tasks Properly*, *Increase Learners' Goal-Orientedness*, *Make the Learning Tasks*

*Stimulating, Familiarize Learners with L2-Related Values, Promote Group Cohesiveness and Group Norms, and Promote Learner Autonomy.* The questionnaire contains 48 items. Responses to the individual items are scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 6, *hardly ever* to *very often*. The participants were allocated 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The ultimate score was computed in the possible range of 48 to 288. The reliability of the UMS questionnaire in this study was estimated to be 0.71 using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

**Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Scale**

The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale was developed and validated by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) to measure SE beliefs of teachers. This scale consists of three components, namely *Efficacy for Instructional Strategies*, *Efficacy for Students' Engagement*, and *Efficacy for Classroom Management*. Each component is assessed by 8 items. Therefore, the scale is composed of 24 items on 9 point Likert-scale from 1 to 9, ranging from *Nothing* to *Great Deal*. The allocated time for answering the questionnaire is 15 minutes and the possible range of participants' scores is from 24 to 216. The reliability of this scale in this study was estimated to be 0.68 using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

**Procedure**

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the researchers followed certain steps, stated in a chronological order in this section. After obtaining a formal approval for conducting this research in the universities mentioned above (see participants), fourteen classes were selected. All the three questionnaires were distributed in one package. Before administering the packages, the researchers deliberately randomized the order of the questionnaires in every package in order to curb the influence of order on the answering process. The required explanations were given to the participants, and the participants were informed about the aim of the study. Also, the researchers informed the participants that the collected data would be confidentially employed for answering the questions of this research.

Afterwards, the packages were administered to 206 individuals. The allocated time for answering the three questionnaires was 60 minutes. The researchers monitored the filling out process randomly in order to ensure that the participants were able to totally understand the questions and responses. After 1 hour, the questionnaires, now answered, were collected, and they were scored. From the initial 206 sets of administered questionnaires, a number of 194 sets were completed carefully. The data obtained from these 194 sets were employed for carrying out the statistical analyses.

III. RESULTS

**Preliminary Analyses**

Prior to answering the research questions of the study, it was essential to examine a number of assumptions and carry out some initial analyses. Initially, the assumptions of interval data and independence of subjects/participants (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) were already met since the data scale was interval and the participants were independent of one another. Furthermore, some other significant assumptions had to be checked. These assumptions, as stated by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), are:

1. Linear relation between each pair of variables,
2. Homoscedasticity, and
3. Normality of the distribution of variables.

In order to inspect the linearity of relations, the researchers created a multiple scatterplot which confirmed the linearity of relations (Figure 1). Moreover, the distribution of scores was not funnel shape, i.e. wide at one end and narrow at the other; therefore, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met for these variables.

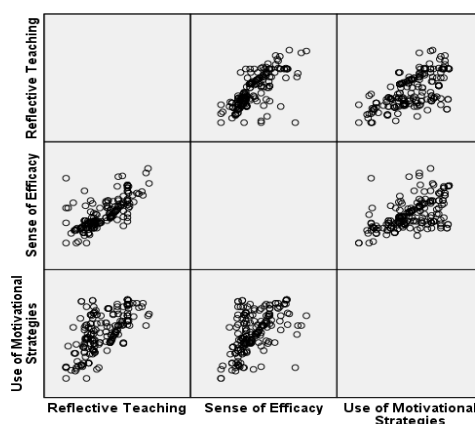


Figure 1: Multiple scatterplot of reflective teaching, sense of efficacy, and use of motivational strategies

For checking the normality of the distributions, first, the descriptive statistics of the data were obtained and kurtosis and skewness ratios were calculated. The obtained results indicated that the distributions of the scores were not normal as one skewness ratio value and two kurtosis ratio values did not fall within the range of -1.96 and +1.96. Second, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run, results of which are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1:  
TESTS OF NORMALITY OF THE SCORES

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Reflective Teaching	.138	194	.000	.964	194	.000
Sense of Efficacy	.141	194	.000	.948	194	.000
Use of Motivational Strategies	.073	194	.014	.972	194	.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As presented in Table 1, all the Sig. values for the scores of the three variables of the study are lower than the critical value (.05). Therefore, it was concluded that the assumption of normality of distribution is violated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Considering the results reported so far, it was systematically suggested that the assumption of normality is violated for the scores of RT, SE, and UMS. Therefore, the research questions were answered through employing non-parametric tests.

### **The First Research Question**

The first motivating force behind conducting this study was to systematically inspect the relationship between EFL teachers' RT and UMS. To do so, the data were analyzed using the Spearman rank order coefficient of correlation (Table 2).

TABLE 2:  
SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION BETWEEN REFLECTIVE TEACHING AND USE OF MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

			Reflective Teaching	Use of Motivational Strategies
Spearman's rho	Reflective Teaching	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.623**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	194	194
	Use of Motivational Strategies	Correlation Coefficient	.623**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	194	194

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

According to the results of the analysis reported in Table 2, it was concluded that there was a significant and positive correlation between RT and UMS,  $\rho = .623$ ,  $n = 194$ ,  $p < .01$ . According to Cohen (1988), this signified a large effect size (99% confidence intervals: 0.496 – 0.724).

### **The Second Research Question**

The second intention of this study was to systematically investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' RT and SE. In order to answer this question, the data were analyzed using the Spearman rank order coefficient of correlation (Table 3).

TABLE 3:  
SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION BETWEEN REFLECTIVE TEACHING AND SENSE OF EFFICACY

			Reflective Teaching	Sense of Efficacy
Spearman's rho	Reflective Teaching	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.763**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	194	194
	Sense of Efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	.763**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	194	194

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

According to the results of the analysis reported in Table 3, it was concluded that there was a significant and positive correlation between RT and SE,  $\rho = .763$ ,  $n = 194$ ,  $p < .01$ , signifying a large effect size (99% confidence intervals: 0.674 – 0.83).

### **The Third Research Question**

The third intention of this study was to systematically investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' UMS and SE. In order to answer this question, the data were analyzed using the Spearman rank order coefficient of correlation (Table 4).



TABLE 4:  
SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION BETWEEN USE OF MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES AND SENSE OF EFFICACY

		Use of Motivational Strategies		Sense of Efficacy
Spearman's rho	Use of Motivational Strategies	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.567**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	194	194
	Sense of Efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	.567**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	194	194

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

According to the results of the analysis reported in Table 4, it was concluded that there was a significant and positive correlation between UMS and SE,  $\rho = .567, n = 194, p < .01$ , signifying a large effect size (99% confidence intervals: 0.428 – 0.68).

Based on the findings stated above, both RT and UMS were significantly related to SE. As a result, the researchers could consider answering the fourth research question, considering RT and UMS the predictor variables of the predicted variable, SE.

**Preliminary Analyses Pertinent to the Fourth Research Question**

In order to answer the fourth research question, a multiple regression analysis was run. However, a number of assumptions had to be checked prior to performing the analysis. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), these assumptions are:

1. Sample size
2. Multicollinearity
3. Normality
4. Outliers

According to Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) formula, the sample in such a study should include more than 66 participants. Including 194 cases, the sample pool seemed to be large enough to meet this assumption. In order to inspect the possibility of multicollinearity, the Tolerance and VIF values were obtained (Table 5). Both of the Tolerance values were higher than .1, and the VIF values were lower than 10. Therefore, it was concluded that multicollinearity did not exist in this sample.

TABLE 5:  
TOLERANCE AND VIF VALUES

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		
	Reflective Teaching	.600	1.667
	Use of Motivational Strategies	.600	1.667

Next, for checking the normality, the Normal Probability Plot (P-P) was inspected. (Figure 2), suggesting no major deviation from normality.

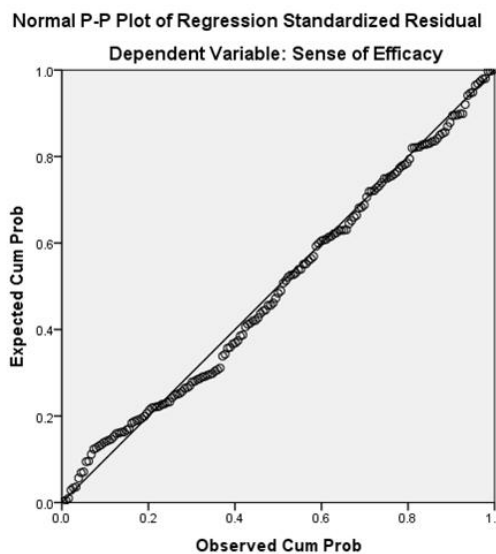


Figure 2: The normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual

Finally, in order to check the presence of outliers, the researchers inspected the Mahalanobis distance value (Table 6).

TABLE 6:  
RESIDUALS STATISTICS

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mahal. Distance	.036	10.077	1.990	1.713	194
Cook's Distance	.000	.331	.007	.026	194

a. Dependent Variable: Sense of Efficacy

Table 6 reported that the highest Mahalanobis value in this sample is 10.077 which is way below the critical level (13.28). Also, Cook's Distance values were desirably smaller than the critical value 1. As a result, the researchers could argue that the assumption pertinent to the outliers is met. Based on the results of the abovementioned preliminary analyses, it was proper to run a multiple regression for answering the fourth research question.

#### The Fourth Research Question

In order to answer this question, a standard multiple regression was run. In this analysis, RT and UMS were the predictor variables, and SE was the predicted variable. Table 7 presents the regression model summary including the  $R$  and  $R^2$ .

TABLE 7:  
MODEL SUMMARY – R AND R SQUARE

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.743 <sup>a</sup>	.553	.548	13.383

a. Predictors: (Constant), Use of Motivational Strategies, Reflective Teaching

b. Dependent Variable: Sense of Efficacy

As reported in Table 7,  $R$  was 0.743 and  $R^2$  was 0.553. This indicates that the model explains 55.3 percent of the variance in SE (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Moreover,  $f^2 = 1.237$  indicated a large effect size for the regression. Table 8 reports the results of ANOVA ( $F(2, 191) = 118.007$ ,  $p = 0.0005$ ), the results of which were considered significant. This means that the model can significantly predict EFL teachers' SE.

TABLE 8:  
REGRESSION OUTPUT: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42270.194	2	21135.097	118.007	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	34208.059	191	179.100		
	Total	76478.253	193			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Use of Motivational Strategies, Reflective Teaching

b. Dependent Variable: Sense of Efficacy

Table 9 demonstrates the Standardized Beta Coefficients. Inspecting of the Sig. values indicated that both RT and UMS make statistically significant unique contributions to the equation as their Sig. values are less than .05.

TABLE 9:  
REGRESSION OUTPUT: COEFFICIENTS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Significance	Part Correlation
		B	SE	$\beta$			
1	(Constant)	51.838	10.333		5.017	.000	
	Reflective Teaching	.695	.067	.645	10.320	.000	.499
	Use of Motivational Strategies	.129	.057	.143	2.285	.023	.111

The comparison of  $\beta$  values revealed that RT has the largest  $\beta$  coefficient ( $\beta = 0.645$ ,  $t = 10.32$ ,  $p = 0.0005$ ), meaning that it makes the strongest statistically significant unique contribution to explaining SE. Consequently, it was deduced that RT could more significantly predict the SE scores of the participants. Moreover, UMS was ranked as the second predictor of SE. Finally, the inspection of Part correlation revealed that RT uniquely explains 24.9 percent of the variance in SE ( $.499 \times .499 = .249$ ).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

In recent years, the ELT pedagogy has been becoming increasingly conscious of the significance of teachers' role in materializing pedagogical goals (Akbari et al., 2008; Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017). Consequently, and quite reasonably, there has been a penchant for indicating those factors which have the highest contribution to ELT practitioners' success and learners' language learning (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017). Among these factors, SE is believed, unanimously, to be a key asset to ELT teachers (Henson et al., 2001).

Rooted in the abovementioned premise, it seemed reasonable to inspect the way SE is associated with EFL teachers'

internal factors and teaching behaviors as a means for developing their SE. Consequently, the present study attempted to inspect the way EFL teachers' RT and UMS interact with their SE. The literature abounds with studies which assume a major role for RT (Dellinger et al., 2008; Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017) and UMS (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007) in determining EFL teachers' pedagogical triumph and SE directly and indirectly. However, the systematic comparison between RT and UMS in predicting SE as well as the systematic inspection of the way these three variables are associated are among areas which had not been touched before this study.

This descriptive study considered RT and UMS the predictor variables and SE the predicted variable. As it was systematically suggested that the assumption of normality is violated for the scores of RT, SE, and UMS, the formulated research questions (see Introduction) were answered through employing non-parametric tests. Answering the first research question indicated that there was a significant and positive correlation between RT and UMS. As stated earlier, these two variables, or teaching behaviors, are both crucial to ELT practitioners' success and SE. The observed significant correlation is evidence that RT and UMS share some features and underlying factors, making both of them effective in developing the pedagogical practice. This implies that the assumption of the relevance of variables, needed for the prediction question (see Research Question 4) is met (Best & Kahn, 2006).

A further driving force of this study was inspecting the association between RT and SE. Numerous studies have suggested that these two mental constructs interact with each other (Akbari, 2007; Lowery, 2003). Answering the second research question indicated that RT and SE are significantly correlated. This is to say that high levels of RT result in observing high levels of SE, and vice versa. This result confirmed the results of two other studies, focusing on the association between RT and SE (Moradian & Ahmadi, 2014; Noormohammadi, 2014). This confirmation, according to the principles of meta-analysis (Best & Kahn, 2006), suggests that there is a causal relationship between RT and SE, making it more and more legitimate for EFL teacher education programs to invest in developing EFL teachers' RT as a means for developing their SE and success.

The third research question focused on the way UMS and SE are associated. UMS, according to many ELT scholars, is highly influential in ELT practice (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007), and it can directly and indirectly contribute to teachers' success and SE (Harmer, 2001). The existence of such a significant relationship was confirmed through answering the third research question. As a result, systematic support is provided for the notion that UMS can enhance the level of SE among EFL teachers. This point seems to have pedagogical implications for teacher training programs, stated in the next section.

As stated above, both RT and UMS were significantly related to SE. Put another way, both RT and UMS can predict EFL teachers' SE. However, comparing their predictive power was something which the researchers dealt with while answering the fourth research question. Results indicated that RT makes the strongest statistically significant unique contribution to explaining EFL teachers' SE. This is to say that, compared to UMS, RT is a better predictor of EFL teachers' SE. This finding highlights the importance of RT in teacher education programs even further. The last point to be made is that participants' internal factors, which are highly diverse and influential (Zaker, 2016b), along with other features of the context and participants can influence the findings of studies in the ELT domain (Best & Kahn, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007); this suggests that the advantage of RT over UMS in predicting EFL teachers' SE should be checked and confirmed in other ELT contexts.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at systematically investigating the association among EFL teachers' RT, UMS, and SE. ELT teachers' SE is now believed to be a major factor in promoting L2 learning (Henson et al., 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), making it an asset to ELT teachers (Brouwers & Tomic, 2003). Using a descriptive design, this study attempted to inspect the way SE is associated with two other major pedagogical behaviors, RT and UMS.

As stated earlier, the literature abounds with studies which assume a major role for RT (Dellinger et al., 2008; Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017) and UMS (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007) in determining EFL teachers' pedagogical triumph and SE directly and indirectly. The obtained results indicated that SE, RT, and UMS are significantly associated. Moreover, it was concluded that RT is a better predictor of SE, when compared with UMS. Basically, the findings provided support for the widely held belief that reflective practice in ELT contexts develops teachers' behavior and triggers positive change (Farrell, 2003). However, it is important to consider that UMS and the way it influences the pedagogical practice is context-bound and highly affected by culture (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). As a result, the advantage of RT over UMS regarding predicting SE needs to be checked in other contexts with different cultures.

All in all, based on the obtained results and considering the limitations and peculiarities of this study, the researchers came up with the following conclusions:

- a) EFL teachers can develop their SE if they attempt to implement RT and UMS.
- b) RT and UMS share some underlying components.
- c) Between RT and UMS, the former has a higher level of pedagogical advantage for developing the ELT practice.

The key implication of the findings of the present study concerns the EFL teachers. The findings of this study provide reasonable support for suggesting that EFL teachers should invest in developing their knowledge of RT. They should also delve into the models of RT and enhance their familiarity with the ways using which they can function as reflective teachers. According to Dewey (1933), the key attitudes essential for engaging in a reflective teaching practice

are:

- 1) Open-mindedness,
- 2) Responsibility, and
- 3) Wholeheartedness.

Implementing these key factors, EFL teachers should function as reflective practitioners and evaluate their teaching practice. More specifically, EFL teachers should "collect data about their teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching" (Farrell, 2008, p. 2). They should also attempt to enhance their familiarity with different teaching methods and, implementing a reflective and critical vision, and inspect their practicality in different teaching contexts (Philips, 2007).

In addition to the focus on a reflective practice, EFL teachers are also suggested to implement MS through which they can develop their performance and SE. Needless to say, EFL teachers should observe the different motivational techniques available in the literature; however, when it comes to implementing these MS, they should consider the cultural suitability and relevance of the techniques, which, as stated earlier, can determine how these strategies affect learning. In implementing MS, EFL teachers are suggested to (Oxford & Shearin, 1994):

- a) spot learners' actual reasons for L2 learning;
- b) assist learners in setting challenging yet realistic goals;
- c) inform the learners about the advantages of L2 learning;
- d) provide a secure, friendly, and non-threatening environment; and
- e) motivate learners to develop high but realistic intrinsic motivation.

Teacher education programs should attempt to familiarize the prospective teachers with the components of RT so that the teachers are enabled to function in a more pedagogically appropriate way in EFL classrooms (Ferguson, 1998; Goldhaber, 2002; Sanders, 2000). In addition, EFL syllabus designers are encouraged to prepare EFL materials in a way that EFL teachers are encouraged to implement RT and modify the classroom procedure whenever needed. Furthermore, EFL syllabi should familiarize the teachers with MS and highlight the significance of motivating the learners when offering pedagogical suggestions and guidelines.

Considering the peculiarities of the present study, there are some possible avenues for future research. First, this study was conducted among EFL teachers having 1 to 10 years of teaching experience; therefore, the same study could be conducted among more experienced teachers. Second, it is suggested to replicate this study in a way that the numbers of male and female participants are equal so that gender might not function as an intervening variable. Third, this study can be replicated while implementing some qualitative data collection measures in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the obtained results and pertinent interpretations. Finally, other researchers are recommended to employ pure/simple random sampling while replicating this study in order to enhance the validity of the findings.

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# Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

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- Pedagogical techniques
- Teaching and curricular practices
- Curriculum development and teaching methods
- Programme, syllabus, and materials design
- Second and foreign language teaching and learning
- Classroom-centered research
- Literacy
- Language education
- Teacher education and professional development
- Teacher training
- Cross-cultural studies
- Child, second, and foreign language acquisition
- Bilingual and multilingual education
- Translation
- Teaching of specific skills
- Language teaching for specific purposes
- New technologies in language teaching
- Testing and evaluation
- Language representation
- Language planning
- Literature, language, and linguistics
- Applied linguistics
- Phonetics, phonology, and morphology
- Syntax and semantics
- Sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics
- Discourse analysis
- Stylistics
- Language and culture, cognition, and pragmatics
- Language teaching and psychology, anthropology, sociology
- Theories and practice in related fields

## Special Issue Guidelines

Special issues feature specifically aimed and targeted topics of interest contributed by authors responding to a particular Call for Papers or by invitation, edited by guest editor(s). We encourage you to submit proposals for creating special issues in areas that are of interest to the Journal. Preference will be given to proposals that cover some unique aspect of the technology and ones that include subjects that are timely and useful to the readers of the Journal. A Special Issue is typically made of 15 to 30 papers, with each paper 8 to 12 pages of length.

A special issue can also be proposed for selected top papers of a conference/workshop. In this case, the special issue is usually released in association with the committee members of the conference/workshop like general chairs and/or program chairs who are appointed as the Guest Editors of the Special Issue.

The following information should be included as part of the proposal:

- Proposed title for the Special Issue
- Description of the topic area to be focused upon and justification
- Review process for the selection and rejection of papers
- Name, contact, position, affiliation, and biography of the Guest Editor(s)
- List of potential reviewers if available
- Potential authors to the issue if available
- Estimated number of papers to accept to the special issue
- Tentative time-table for the call for papers and reviews, including
  - o Submission of extended version
  - o Notification of acceptance
  - o Final submission due
  - o Time to deliver final package to the publisher

If the proposal is for selected papers of a conference/workshop, the following information should be included as part of the proposal as well:

- The name of the conference/workshop, and the URL of the event.
- A brief description of the technical issues that the conference/workshop addresses, highlighting the relevance for the journal.
- A brief description of the event, including: number of submitted and accepted papers, and number of attendees. If these numbers are not yet available, please refer to previous events. First time conference/workshops, please report the estimated figures.
- Publisher and indexing of the conference proceedings.

If a proposal is accepted, the guest editor will be responsible for:

- Preparing the "Call for Papers" to be included on the Journal's Web site.
- Distribution of the Call for Papers broadly to various mailing lists and sites.
- Getting submissions, arranging review process, making decisions, and carrying out all correspondence with the authors. Authors should be informed the Author Guide.
- Providing us the completed and approved final versions of the papers formatted in the Journal's style, together with all authors' contact information.
- Writing a one- or two-page introductory editorial to be published in the Special Issue.

More information is available on the web site at <http://www.academypublication.com/jltr/>





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Views and Attitudes of Intercultural Awareness in Chinese Teaching and Learning in Shanxi Provincial Universities Context <i>Junqing Wang</i>	418
EFL Teachers' Reflective Teaching, Use of Motivational Strategies, and Their Sense of Efficacy <i>Mania Nosratinia and Zahra Moradi</i>	431

---

An Analysis of Phonics Teaching in Mainland China <i>Min Cao</i>	286
The Effectiveness of Meaningful Approach in Enhancing Students' Speaking Skill at German Language Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar <i>Misnawaty Usman, Alimuddin Mahmud, Muhammad Asfah Rahman, Darman Manda</i>	291
On the Translation of English Hard News under Inter-cultural Background <i>Yurong Hao</i>	297
The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning Strategy through English Village for Teaching Speaking Skill <i>Hengki, Baso Jabu, and Kisman Salija</i>	306
Metaphors for Educators: A Cultural Cognitive Approach <i>Mei Tao</i>	313
Persistence of Baroque Trauerspiel in Tom Stoppard's <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i> as a Postmodern Literature: Rejection of Metanarrative <i>Abouzar Mostafalou and Hossein Moradi</i>	322
Investigating Chinese EFL Learners' Comprehension of English Idioms <i>Hua Xie</i>	329
Effect of Elaborative Text Modification on Pre-intermediate Male and Female EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension <i>Shahram Esfandiari Asl and Asgar Mahmoudi</i>	337
Bloomfield's Concept of Meaning <i>Suping Duan</i>	343
The Effect of Structured Academic Controversy on English Proficiency Level within Communicative Language Teaching Context <i>Reza Tavakoli, Seyed Hesamuddin Aliasin, and Fariba Mobini</i>	349
The Effectiveness of Application of Writing Strategies in Writing Instruction <i>Chenrong Han</i>	355
Action Research as a Bottom-up Approach to Foster Teacher Involvement in Language Curriculum Change <i>Mina Saghaieh Bolghari and Arezoo Hajimaghsodi</i>	362
Cultural Background on Reading Comprehension in Junior High School <i>Xiaoling Yang</i>	370
Critical Thinking and Willingness to Communicate among EFL Students <i>Ahmad Yaghoubi</i>	375
A New Model and Its Practice in Language Learning Strategy Training <i>Li Gao, Yun He, and Jie Zeng</i>	382
The Effect of Using SMS as a Post Task Activity on Iranian EFL Learners' Grammar Knowledge <i>Mohamad Reza Farangi, Jamileh Kamyab, Majid Izanlu, and Nazanin Ghodrat</i>	392
A Study on Chinese EFL Learners' Phonetic Obstacles to Listening Comprehension <i>Fanghui Hu</i>	404
Effect of Elementary EFL Learners' Negotiation on Their Classroom Participation and Grammatical Achievement <i>Fatemeh Saboonchi and Asgar Mahmoudi</i>	411

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